

**Re-imagining space:
Placemaking through physical activity in super-diverse
neighbourhoods**

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Abstract

In this thesis I discuss placemaking through physical activity as it connects to multiculturalism. Three bodies of literature form the conceptual framework: placemaking, urban diversity, and the spatiality of physical activity. Placemaking is further conceptualised utilising Henri Lefebvre's (1991) spatial triad. Applying this triad to multiculturalism enables the fleshing out of the multiple dimensions of multiculturalism and their effect on everyday lived experiences. Urban diversity is conceptualised utilising the concepts of everyday multiculturalism, which is a growing body of literature popularised by Amanda Wise and Selvaraj Velayutham (2015). The third body of literature is concerned with social construction and spatialisation of physical activity (cf. Koch, 2017). This thesis builds on and contributes to a small but growing body of literature on physical activity as both spatial practice and a way to connect spatially to a super-diverse urbanity (Aquino et al., 2020; Rosbrook-Thompson, 2020; 2018).

I developed both an ethnographic design and a methodology to immerse myself in the field as a researcher, and to capture the everyday experiences of diversity and use of public space over a period of 1.5 years. The geographical focus of the study is multiple physical activity spaces in the City of Maribyrnong, Melbourne, which is one of Australia's most diverse inner-suburban areas. Chapter 4 describes the City of Maribyrnong following Lefebvre's (1991) spatial triad that describes the three dimensions: spatial practices, representation of space, and representational space.

The data is presented in five chapters. In chapters 5-8, I discuss placemaking in relation of multiculturalism in four unique yet relationally constituted contexts: sports clubs, a sport-based migrant settlement service, community centres, and pick-up games in parks. In each context, placemaking in relation to multiculturalism is performed differently. Thus, possibilities of both intercultural and co-ethnic coming together open up that may foster spatial connection to diverse

urbanity. In each context, too, different challenges to multiculturalism emerge, including access to space among pick-up games and a diverse membership base.

In this thesis, I critically reflect on my positionality, multiculturalism, and decoloniality. I do so by employing a *complicity* approach (Spivak, 1999). This enables me to critique multiculturalism as a form of population management, for its postcolonising tendencies, and to address ‘whiteness’ in academia. This is of particular relevance in Australia as it is a *postcolonising* country (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, 2003).

As I demonstrate and based on the data, the different ways of using public space for physical activities facilitate unique types of placemaking. The four contexts of physical activity are relationally constituted, forming the collective flows and rhythms of the physical activity space. The main argument of this thesis is to re-imagine and prioritise public space for physical activity use. Valuing the everyday conditions of co-ethnic coming together, intercultural mingling, or temporal sharing of public space for physical activity in diverse forms through multiple trajectories (cf. Massey, 2005) can foster democratic modes of living together and planning with difference (Fincher & Iveson, 2008) in a constantly changing urban environment.

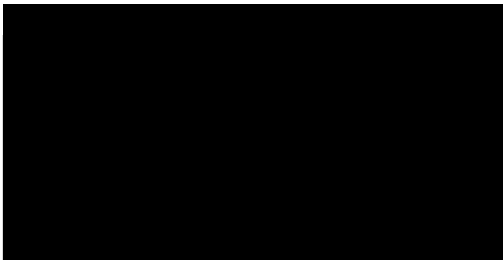
Student declaration

I, Jora Broerse, declare that the PhD thesis entitled ‘Re-imagining space: Placemaking through physical activity in super-diverse neighbourhoods’ is no more than 100,000 words in length including quotes and excluding tables, figures, appendices, bibliography, references and footnotes. This thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

I have conducted my research in alignment with the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#) and [Victoria University’s Higher Degree by Research Policy and Procedures](#).

Signature:

Date:

A large black rectangular box redacting the student's signature.

November 30, 2021

Acknowledgements

Mirring-gnay-bir-nong – I can hear a ringtail possum

This thesis was written on the land of the Kulin Nation. I pay my respect to the Traditional Custodians of the Woiwurrung and Boonwurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation who have learned and communicated their traditions and the changes in the land, waterways, sky, human and non-human life forms and the Dreamtime for more than 65,000 years. Maribyrnong, the Melbourne Council area in which I studied, worked and lived over the duration of my doctorate – and continue to do so – is the Anglicised version of the Aboriginal term Mirring-gnay-bir-nong that translates as ‘I can hear a ringtail possum’. I acknowledge that I reside on and benefit from the land of the Woiwurrung and Boonwurrung, now known as part of Melbourne, which always was, and always will be, Aboriginal land, and that it remains unceded land.

I extend much gratitude to the Sport and Social Change Living Lab at the Institute for Health and Sport, Victoria University, where its research group offers a supportive and enjoyable environment in which postgraduates can learn, work and write. Prof Ramón Spaaij and A/Prof Brent McDonald: as supervisors you gave me space to explore my academic interests and offered valuable advice and support throughout the years. Your support would often go beyond the PhD. Dr Sarah Oxford: I am grateful for all the laughter you brought to work. Seeing you finish your PhD and finding your career path offered me valuable and relatable inspiration for the future. Dr Carla Luguetti and Dr Luiza Gonçalves: I am grateful for our friendship that goes beyond work. I am looking forward to the moment that you return to Melbourne. Suzanne Ryders: we shared our academic paths over the past ten years, and I am ever grateful that we could share our personal lives as well. We became friends in the first year of our Sport Management Bachelor's degree, unaware of where our friendship and academic careers would take us. Dr Bojana Klepac Pogrmilovic: our bond grew from being PhD colleagues, to friends, to work colleagues. I am grateful to be sharing personal and professional journeys with you. Jeff, Cam, Jack and Lisa: I will miss our lunch chats!

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Working as a Postgraduate Representative with the Multiculturalism, Ethnicity and Migration thematic group at The Australian Sociological Association enabled me to connect with many inspiring Australian sociologists and become part of an academic network. This has been invaluable for me as a foreign PhD student. Moreover, I am grateful for the friendships that have developed within the postgraduate representative team and for its support, in particular from Dr Charlotte Young and Dr Heidi Hetz. May we find stability and joy in an insecure industry.

I joined the Institute of Postcolonial Studies in late 2019. The Institute, and in particular the reading group, played an important role in developing my understanding of postcolonialism in relation to multiculturalism. I reflect on this relation throughout my dissertation, relying on texts from and discussions with the group. Carlos, thank you for creating this space.

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Abbreviations

CC	Community Centre
COVID-19	Coronavirus 2019
RSG	Ready Settle Go program
DSI	Diversity and Social Inclusion team
WBCF	Western Bulldogs Community Foundation
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
SfD	Sport for Development

Chapter 1: Introduction

Urban placemaking through physical activity

After a day in the office, I go for a bike ride through Maidstone near my house. I enjoy cycling as a way to get to know the neighbourhood better and to spend time outdoors. In this area of the neighbourhood, cars drive slowly. It is sunny, many people are outside; Spring is in the air. People, including small children, are on their bikes. Others are going for a run, some using headphones. I turn left and pass Johnson Reserve, a large green space of about the size of 1.5 soccer pitches. Last weekend, predominantly white female soccer players were playing a match. Team gear and chairs were positioned along the sideline and the club house was open. This afternoon, young adult male soccer players of Asian appearance presumably gather at the field opposite the clubhouse. They sit on the grass, put their boots on, while some use the trunks of their cars to change clothes for a pick-up soccer game. At the far opposite end of Johnson Reserve, young children play at a playground alongside mid-childhood children in the skatepark. On my way home, I pass Triangle Park, a small and shady green space where elderly people (Croatian-Australian migrants I learn later) play bocce. They chat and sit on the park benches or on their own camping chairs they have pulled from their car trunks.

(Field notes, 2 October 2018)

This excerpt sketches a neighbourhood scene on a sunny afternoon in Spring. In October 2018, I was preparing data collection for this PhD dissertation, preparing to ‘enter’ the field I was already taking part in. This bike ride – a physical activity and placemaking performance that is very close to my own Dutch ethno-cultural positionality (Kuipers, 2012) – took me past a few public green spaces where people engaged in various forms of physical activity. The elderly Croatian bocce players were gathered in a quiet, small park, a group of young adult male Asian soccer players

were preparing for a pick-up game at Johnson Reserve, the home ground of a women's soccer club, while young and mid-childhood children were using the playground and skatepark at the opposite end of the Reserve. A few months later I was watching one of the pick-up game when a young child accompanied by his dad passed on his scooter. The child asked, "Daddy, how many people are playing on the field? Maybe 100 people?" "Yes, there are a lot of people playing," his dad responds. While official soccer games only host eleven players per side, there were nearly 30 men playing soccer in front of us without a distinctly appointed referee, thus demonstrating the flexibility of pick-up games. This, then, provides us with a snapshot of the super-diversity in this neighbourhood, in which physical activity is a form of super-diversity in itself.

Critical questions arise from this anecdote regarding the organisation of these performances in public space. Who uses and who does not use public spaces for physical activity? Who has access to these spaces, and who does not have access? What are the temporal and spatial aspects of public spaces? What perceptions of public spaces are held by residents in a multicultural city?

The continuing shift towards urbanisation, living in and with (increasing) diversity, changing patterns in the use of public space for physical activities (learning to use public space for activities (Byrne & Goodall, 2014), as well as how people engage in physical activities¹ pose the question of how these issues come together in a super-diverse neighbourhood. Viewing public spaces for physical activity and recreation as a public good "means that these spaces need to be inclusive" (Croy & Glober, 2009, p. 1), and marginalising non-users should be prevented. Previous research, however, suggests that some minority groups use public green spaces differently or are less inclined to use parks (Risbeth et al., 2019; Byrne & Goodall, 2013; Croy & Glober, 2009; Sandercock, 2003; O'Connor, 1998). The public space is often described and imagined in particular Western humanistic terms that it "is automatically open to all, within certain prescribed guidelines of appropriate behaviour" (Williamson, 2015, p. 40). However, as

¹ See, for example, O'Connor and Penney (2021), and Jeanes et al. (2019) on changing physical activity patterns describing a shift towards 'informally' and self-organised physical activities away from sports-club based activities.

Rebecca Williamson (2015) reminds us, who belongs to ‘the public’ is socially patterned and complicated by ethnic, classed, gendered, generational, religious and cultural ideas of who belongs to space. Public space in Australian cities, as other cities around the globe, are racially patterned (Kern, 2020; Keith, 2005). Physical activity spaces, too, are patterned along racial, gender and other forms of diversity lines (Koch, 2017; Nelson, 2017). COVID related restrictions have further impacted diversity policies in the physical activity realm and enhancing already existing inequalities (Spaaij in Aquina, 2020; Fullagar, 2020). This raises questions over whose voices are heard in a multicultural and inclusive society.

Melbourne and Sydney represent most of Australia’s ethnic diversity. In 2019, 29.7% of Australia’s population was born overseas with most arrivals settling in the big cities (ABS, 2020). In 2016, 46.2% of people in Greater Melbourne had both parents born overseas while 36.4% had both parents born in Australia (ABS, 2017). The City of Maribyrnong where this research took place has one of the most ethnically diverse populations in Victoria, with 40% of its residents born overseas (Maribyrnong City Council, 2021b).

This thesis explores these questions in the context of physical activity by applying the conceptual lenses of placemaking (Lefebvre, 1991) and everyday multiculturalism (Wise & Velayutham, 2009). Placemaking is useful to look critically at the interaction between the organisation of social spheres and the built environment. It enables us to ask questions not only related to power relations and access to spaces, but also to place attachment. Placemaking is shaped through Lefebvre’s (1991) spatial triad, that is, spatial practices (how do people move through an urban space?), spatial representations (how is the urban space represented in formal documents and communications?), and lived experiences of space. In a super-diverse context such as the City of Maribyrnong, everyday multiculturalism is a valuable concept to explore how these three dimensions come together. Negotiation of and conflict over urban space are carried out through the everyday, and it is in the day-to-day routines and rhythms that people establish a connection to space (Harris, 2009). The process of connection to place is, although influenced by spatial practices and representations of space, a personal process mediated through memories of overseas or otherwise different spaces. In this thesis, I approach diversity as a lived, everyday

phenomenon. Placemaking and multiculturalism are mutually constitutive, while diversity emerges in the three spatial triad layers that are interconnected and influence one another.

This thesis is concerned with the everyday sharing of space for physical activity. Physical activity spaces function as key sites for social interaction in Australian society, with sport having a considerable impact on promoting inclusion and diversity in Australian communities (Clearinghouse for Sport, 2015). Further, intercultural spaces “enable newly arrived youth to come together, share experiences, have social opportunities and play sport with multiple cultures within the Australian context” (Baker-Lewton et al., 2016, p. 24). However, these spaces tend to preserve hegemonic practices (e.g., Jeanes et al., 2020). Despite the significance of sport in Australia that can either support or challenge inclusion and feelings of belonging, sport has not been applied largely to lived multiculturalism studies². Conceptualising sport spaces as sites of (re)production of norms, (in)equalities and discourses, and acknowledging the local geographical influences makes it possible to study the role of recreational sport in the creation of attitudes towards diversity, as well as the local translation of regional and national discourses and policies. Understanding these processes is vital to successfully design local and regional policies around multiculturalism.

Sport, and physical activity more broadly, have become spaces for the implementation of local diversity policy³ (e.g., Victoria State Government, 2021; Australian Multicultural Advisory Council, 2017). Thus, these spaces are more than solely leisure spaces unaffected by broader social developments. Additionally, different sporting contexts (sports clubs, settlement through sport programs, community centres, and pick-up sport) have different relationships to policy and council intervention.

Physical activity localities within ethnically diverse neighbourhoods is the focus of burgeoning academic inquiry. Highlighting the relevance of the topic at hand, multiple academic studies from Australia and other Western countries were published during the course of this PhD process. Using predominantly qualitative research methods, these studies contribute to a growing

³ Interculturalism policy in the case of City of Maribyrnong.

field that connects physical activity, urban diversity/super-diversity, and multiculturalism (e.g., Aquino et al., 2020; Rosbrook-Thompson, 2020; 2018; Broerse & Spaaij, 2019; Knijnik & Spaaij, 2017; Knijnik, 2018), as well as research concerned with pick-up sport and everyday multiculturalism (Wise et al., 2018). This thesis, then, contributes to this particular field of research by bringing together different physical activity contexts that create and are created by super-diverse demographics. Moreover, this thesis contributes to the sport/lived multiculturalism nexus through a vigorous theoretical framework that fuses the sociology of sport with the sociology (and geography) of everyday multiculturalism.

Ethnography is the main data collection method and writing style in this thesis. Ethnography, particularly participant observation and in-depth interviews, has a long tradition in sociology and geography. Participant observation and interviews have been key in the development of central concepts of this thesis, including placemaking and everyday multiculturalism (cf. Wise & Velayutham, 2009). Physical activity, predominantly the intersection of sport and diversity, has become commonplace for ethnographic analyses, in part given the growing recognition that this intersection is an important site where broader societal processes and issues are reflected, and at an institution level where social norms, values, ideologies and power relations can be critically challenged or reinforced (Spaaij et al., 2015; Hylton, 2015). Various contexts include integration (see Smith et al., 2019 for a literature review; Baker-Lewton et al., 2016), migrant integration through sport clubs (McDonald et al., 2019; Spaaij, 2013a); ethno-specific spaces (Broerse & Spaaij, 2019), and pick-up sport (Aquino et al., 2020; Thangaraj, 2015).

This thesis explains how people who engage in physical activity spaces in the City of Maribyrnong participate in placemaking in relation to multiculturalism. I not only ask how urban spaces shape multicultural belongings, but also how multiculturalism is lived and managed in four distinct physical activity spaces. My overarching research question is: How is placemaking performed in a super-diverse urban neighbourhood through physical activity? The sub-questions are:

- How is placemaking, conceptualised by Lefebvre's (1991) spatial triad, performed in relation to multiculturalism in the City of Maribyrnong?
- How is placemaking performed in relation to multiculturalism in four different physical activity contexts? How do the four contexts compare to each other?
- How do physical activity spaces offer a vehicle for spatial connection in and to a super-diverse neighbourhood?

The first sub-question will be addressed in Chapter 4, which is concerned with broader diversity practices and offers a foundation for the data chapters that follow. Chapters 5-8 will grapple with the subsequent sub-questions by each focussing on one of the physical activity contexts (sport club, settlement program, community centre, and public parks). Collectively, these chapters will answer the third question. Importantly, while this thesis is concerned with everyday multiculturalism, I acknowledge that this takes place in a broader, super-diverse setting.

All three theoretical domains – placemaking, urban diversity, and physical activity – are prominent features of Melbourne's west, with their combination making it possible to unravel questions about this particular social setting and its equivalents in other ethnically diverse (and super-diverse) cities in Australia and worldwide. Now that I have positioned the research questions, the remainder of this chapter will define the main concepts used in this thesis: *space, place, and placemaking; urban diversity; and multiculturalism in Australia.*

Defining space, place, and placemaking

‘Place’ and ‘space’ are key terms in this thesis. While widely used in academic literature as well as in conversational language, these terms have been poorly defined – an academic tradition in its own right. Andrew Merrifield⁴ (1993) points out that while space tends to be ontologically understood in abstract forms, space is not an abstract theorisation; rather, both place and space are “embodied in material processes – namely, real human activities” (p. 52) that melt into each other. In a similar vein, Doreen Massey (2002, p. 25) argues against abstract definitions of space: “Space is concrete and embedded too.” Just like place, it is continuously being made and “no more than the sum of all our relations and connections (friendly and antagonistic),” “from the immensity of the global to the intimately tiny” (Massey, 2005, p. 9).

Merrifield (1993, p. 520) writes that space “takes on meaning through place; and each part (i.e., each place) in its interconnection with other parts (places) engenders the space of the whole.” Place is often understood as the sphere of the everyday, a geographical source of meaning, or the local. Setha Low (2003) offers a similar definition, that is, urban space is created from social production and social construction. Here, social production refers to a “process responsible for the material creation of space as they combine social, economic, ideological and technological factors” (p. 19). Further, Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga (2003) argue that social construction “defines the experiences of space through which people’s social exchanges, memories, images and daily use of the material setting (place) transform it and give it meaning” (p. 19). For Low, the ‘material’ can be both space and place, depending on the level of lived experience.

John Friedmann’s (2010) definition of place touches on an additional four criteria. The author proposes: 1) to adopt an exclusively local approach to place defined as “from the inside out” (p. 152) with the neighbourhood defined on a “pedestrian scale” (p. 154); 2) place needs to

⁴ Merrifield (1993) offers this position on place and space following a capitalist Marxist tradition and Lefebvre’s (1991) work. In capitalist terms, space forms the realm of flows of capital, money, commodity and information, and place “comprises the locus and a sort of stopping of these flows, a specific moment in the dynamics of space-relations under capitalism. Place is shaped by the grounding (the ‘thingification’, if you will), of these material flows” (Merrifield, 1993, p. 525).

be inhabited and thus excludes non-places such as department stores, shopping malls and office buildings⁵; 3) there needs to be an attachment to place, with this subjective and normally invisible attribute becoming visible in times of conflict or change; and 4) for the formation of place, centres or spaces of encounter and/or gathering need to exist. Hence, following British anthropologist Feuchtwang (2004), placemaking involves gathering, centring and linking.

This is where *placemaking* comes in. Placemaking is a combination of Low's understanding of social production and construction. If place refers to the everyday, *placemaking* is the active creation of the everyday influenced by various factors. The act of placemaking is formed through what Lefebvre (1991) describes as the spatial triad: spatial practices, representation of space, and representational space. The three spaces are created through, but also interact, in temporal and spatial places. Thus, temporal and spatial moments (re)create spaces.

For the purpose of this thesis, I am concerned with placemaking in *(semi)public spaces*. First, what is public space and how does it differ from private (domestic) and other forms of spaces in the urban environment? Various typologies of the public-private dichotomy exist. In western societies, public space can refer to social locations offered not only in the streets, parks, media, internet and shopping malls, but also those sanctioned by national governments and local neighbourhoods (Low & Smith, 2006). The term 'public space' has a broad definition referring to places that differ vastly both culturally and politically, but it is clear they differ from the private sphere "in terms of the rules of access, the source and nature of control over entry to a space, individual and collective behaviour sanctioned in specific spaces" (Low & Smith, 2006, pp. 3-4).

Ali Madanipour (2003) writes that the relation between public-private has become binary; however, "A close scrutiny of each sphere...casts a shadow on the clarity of this distinction" (p. 104). The author exemplifies households coming together in one home⁶, which is normally described as a private domain. Further, "The state and the city/country that reflect this space, are

⁵ Interestingly, in the lived multiculturalism literature (e.g., Wessendorf, 2014) shopping malls and similar *places* where people 'rub shoulders' are described as key sites of potential intercultural interactions contributing to understandings of *space*.

⁶ The private does not always refer to home, nor does the public refer to streets, parks or squares as Ayona Datta (2009) finds in her research on Muslim spaces.

on the other hand a mixture of many layers of private, semi-private, semi-public and public spheres” (p. 104). Whereas public spaces are regarded as being accessible to anyone and offer one-time encounters with strangers, semi-public spaces (such as community centres, sports clubs, and libraries) are situated between the public and private continuum and offers prolonged or repetitive interactions among people.

At last, *scale* further shapes the understanding of space, place and placemaking because the “social construction of scale affects cultural and political landscapes” (Howitt, 2003, p. 138). The concept of scale refers to the size of an area or map which a geographer is concerned with, this can represent the global scale but also smaller scales like a city or districts within that city (Jonas, 2015). As Andrew Jonas (2015) emphasis, and this is what sets it apart from space and place, is that scale also represents to the territorial hierarchy of powers of a geographical place. Political power is spatially constituted and power can be practiced by nation-state, city regions, Councils, but also non-governmental institutions. Scale is shaped by (nation) state practices, capital, labor, political parties and political activist (Marston, 2000).

In the context of this thesis, place is analyzed on different scales, from the local park, neighborhood, the Western suburbs of Melbourne, or on nation-state level. The levels are in constant flux; ideas of how interviewees imagine their place in and connection to the neighborhood are often understood in relation of a national framework of multicultural citizenry.

Urban diversity

This thesis is concerned with placemaking in a super-diverse urban area. Given this, what do place/space and placemaking mean in relation to multiculturalism and urban diversity? Human and infrastructure density is generally the most important defining aspect of cities. Cities are about who lives in its boundaries, but also about activities and entities that populate them (Latham et al., 2008). This makes cities sites of interaction and association, potentially involving new forms of relationships. The question of living together and sharing public space is what Massey (2005) calls, “the event of place,” or “throwntogetherness,” “the unavoidable challenge of negotiating a

here-and-now ... and a negotiation which must take place within and between both human and nonhuman” (p. 140).

Place plays an ambiguous role in the context of international migration, globalisation and diversity. Gupta and Ferguson (1992) refer to place as a geographical locality traditionally connected to an ethnic-culture. While its location is stable, its meaning may change as a result of globalisation and also be captured through the concept of time-space compression (Harvey, 1989). Place defined by human geographers is created through human and nonhuman interactions and is fleeting in its temporality and spatiality.

Massey (2005) writes that place is claimed or rejected under the assumption that place is “closed, coherent, integrated as authentic, as ‘home’, a secure retreat,” and is already divided up (p. 6). The author encourages the reader to refuse this summation and rather give space, literally, to open up the imagination from a single narrative to a multiplicity of trajectories. Can someone create a new home or secure retreat away from the place of birth? Can place boundaries be broken open and re-imagined? In the context of diversifying or changing demographics of neighbourhoods, can space be re-divided equally?

This state of change is central to Gupta and Ferguson (1992) definition of multiculturalism. The authors argue that multiculturalism “is both feeble acknowledgement of the fact that cultures have lost their moorings in definite places and an attempt to subsume this plurality of cultures within the framework of a national identity” (p. 7). This thesis, then, is about the placemaking experiences of people from a variety of ethno-cultural backgrounds who attempt to “subsume this plurality” (p. 7), how these experiences are created and, in turn, how they create other experiences against the backdrop of a super-diverse geographical context.

In this thesis, I explore urban diversity through everyday multiculturalism. With a focus on the lived and everyday experiences of people using public space for physical activity (cf. Wise & Velayutham, 2015), I ask how spaces are shared, rhythms are formed, and how the lived, the represented and the imagined coalesce. This study took place in the context of the City of Maribyrnong (also referred to as and part of ‘the West’ or ‘the Western suburbs’), a super-diverse neighbourhood (cf. Vertovec, 2007). Urban diversity is not only characterised by migrant

minorities, but also by religious and linguistic differences, education, economic background, residence status in ‘host’ country, and class. ‘Multicultural populations’ in a popular sense often refers to non-English speaking or non-Anglo-Celtic populations. On this, diversity scholars such as Koerner and Pillay (2020) argue for the importance of recognising ‘the white elephant in the room’ or the role of whiteness and ‘non-immigrants’ in understanding ethnic and cultural identity and belonging. This is where the spatial triad comes back in. How is meaning given to multiculturalism in the City of Maribyrnong through the three different spaces: spatial practices, representation of space, and representational space?

This thesis contributed to the existing literature in various ways. The study of placemaking in the context of urban studies is well established in Australia and overseas. The application to physical activity spaces, as well as approaching physical activity as an academic discipline, is, however, still lacking. Physical activity comes in various forms and like music, food or ethno-cultural festivals, it contributes to the super-diverse fabric of urban areas. In this thesis I further contribute to this discussion by approaching physical activity as an institution that produces but is also shaped by broader social norms and values. The geography of sport has centralised the institutional character with a strong focus on professional leagues, national or global federations involved in sporting competition (Conner, 2014), or stadiums and the politics of urban space (Bale, 1994; John & McDonald, 2019). Previous work has started exploring the issue of urban everyday physical activity, albeit often not in the context of urban diversity. This thesis contributes to the diversity, placemaking and physical activity nexus by presenting four sites of physical activity, that in connectivity capture the workings of the physical activity space.

Multiculturalism in Australia

Multiculturalism is a key concept in my research. In this thesis I use the term ‘multiculturality’ to refer to the factual description of a social setting in which people of various ethnic backgrounds come to live together, and the term ‘multiculturalism’ to refer to the way multiculturality is given meaning by an individual’s lived experience, and at an institutional policy level. In this section, I

will offer a definition of multiculturalism, briefly describe multiculturalism in the Australian context, and describe the main critiques on multiculturalism.

At a federal political level, multiculturalism has many different meanings (Hall, 2000); indeed, as Werbner (1997) observes, “there are as many multiculturalisms as political arenas” (p. 263). Nye (2007) describes multiculturalism as an ideological concept or “social programme of change” (p. 111) that aims to create a level of social equality and social justice, and also suggests two other forms of multiculturalism: as a social issue and as a topic for academic study. As a social issue, multiculturalism refers to a context “where there is some level of perceived (and recognised) diversity” (p. 112), particularly cultural and ethnic diversity. Nye points out that multiculturalism as academic study is about understanding and analysing contexts and personal experiences of diversity and about a process of state management and governance. Overall, multiculturalism is a way to talk about difference in a given society⁷.

Australian multiculturalism has its own specificities and until the mid-1960s followed a strict immigration policy: The Immigration Restriction Act, also known as The White Australia Policy, was introduced soon after Australia’s Federation in 1901. Non-European, non-whites, and/or non-English speaking migrants were excluded, and those who were accepted as new Australian citizens were expected to assimilate and shed their cultures and languages to become indistinguishable from the host population. After World War II, immigration was used as a nation-building tactic, to manage demographic transitions and to strengthen the economy. From the mid-1960s until 1973, however, the Government progressively dismantled The Immigration Restriction Act and questioned assumptions about assimilation.

The Whitlam Labor Government first introduced multiculturalism as a public policy in Australia in 1973. The then Minister for Immigration, Al Grassby, issued a reference paper entitled *A multi-cultural society for the future*. Two years later, in 1975, multiculturalism became

⁷ Interculturalism is a similar concept to multiculturalism in its aim to create social equality and social justice. For the purpose of this thesis, I focus on multiculturalism. See Chapter 4 for a discussion of interculturalism in the City of Maribyrnong.

a major political priority⁸. In the years to come, awareness-raising institutes (e.g., the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs), councils, grants, reports and policy statements were published or released in support of an inclusive, equitable and multicultural society. Australia's latest multicultural statement, *Multicultural Australia – united, strong, successful* was launched in 2017 by the Liberal Government under Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull.

Australia's multiculturalism was a "response to the realisation that the pursuit of a fully assimilated population was impossible to achieve in the face of mounting and unprecedented diversification" (Ang, 2010, p. 6). In the words of the Government, "large numbers of migrants, especially those whose first language was not English, experienced hardships as they settled in Australia, and required more direct assistance" (Home Affairs, 2021, para. 3). The multiculturalism narrative was simultaneously a mode to negotiate the symbolic requirements of nationalism and unity, and a way to deal with the pressures of internal ethnic and racial difference (Ang, 2010). Ang concludes that multicultural nationalism is more effective than assimilationist nationalism because of its flexible relationship to the global context, while at the same time borders are still strengthened.

Multiculturalism in Australia is consistently highly endorsed by the population as good for the country (Markus, 2019). In the context of this thesis, the Maribyrnong City Council states on its website that it is proud of its "cultural diversity and Indigenous heritage and welcomes people of all backgrounds and faiths" (Maribyrnong City Council, 2021b). Since October 2018, the City of Maribyrnong has been an Intercultural Cities Network member. Network members review existing urban policies and practices through an inclusive lens and encourage more mixing between diverse groups in public spaces.

Yet, multiculturalism as a political agenda has also been criticised. Ang (2010) reminds us of the uneasy relation between multiculturalism as a product of a globalised mobile world and the inward-looking governance of diversity within the national framework, known as

⁸ In 1975, the Racial Discrimination Act was introduced as a legislative expression of a new commitment to multiculturalism and to protect people across Australia from unfair treatment on the basis of their race, colour, descent, or national/ethnic origin.

methodological nationalism (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002). Rasheed Araeen (2000) also finds multiculturalism problematic and points to the inherent contradictions found in Nye's (2007) typologies. Hence, multiculturalism cannot form the basis for equality (ideology) as long as it is about the dominant cultural group accommodating those who have no power (management of diversity).

In public opinion, politics and within academic writing, multiculturalism is often described from the migrant's point of view. Multiculturalism "has been the central story of how to understand difference under the umbrella of Australian identity. The story of migrancy and cultural difference built a national identity focussed on tolerance of diverse-but-equal groups" (Koerner & Pillay, 2020, p. 3). Catherine Koerner and Soma Pillay (2020) apply theories of critical race and whiteness studies to unpack complexities of the social construction of race and identity in Australia, and argue that whiteness is at the heart of diverse-but-equal politics. In this sense, multiculturalism is portrayed not as an effort to create an inclusive Australian nation that sees diverse ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds as the basis of Australian national identity, but as a 'whiteness issue' and a way to control immigration, cultural diversity and the consequently diversifying demographics (Hage, 2000). In other words, the racial hierarchy that enabled colonisation – and was at the heart of the White Australia policy – remains.

Moreover, multiculturalism as a political agenda does not take away racism and practices grounded in idealised notions of ethno-cultural homogeneity (Nunn, 2017; Moran, 2011; Hage, 2000). This 'celebratory multicultural image' coexists with mono-cultural localities in Maribyrnong, with high rates of unemployment and a high percentage of people not fluent in English (Marotta, 2006). A study on Footscray (part of the City of Maribyrnong) reports similar 'mono-cultural' tendencies within the broader multicultural setting, as Footscray is home to many ethnic community hubs and "bridging across these networks remained difficult" (Oke et al., 2018, p. 11). While for some residents Footscray's diversity provides a 'safe haven' and makes them feel less visible compared to their being in a 'white-bread' sanitised suburb, others are "drawn to the suburb for the experience of living with multiculturalism" (Oke et al., 2018, p. 15).

The latter takes place in the broader development since the 1980s of marketization of multiculturalism (Walsh, 2014) and the neoliberal framework of ‘productive diversity’ in which cultural diversity serves political and economic ends (Forbes-Mewett et al., 2021).

The changes in multiculturalism discourses in Australia impact the governance of multiculturalism on local level. Australian local governments have been faced with an increasingly localized implementation of diversity policies (Boese & Phillips, 2017; Dunn et al., 2001); a similar trend is described overseas (Hoekstra & Pinkster, 2019). The conflation of localization of multiculturalism policies, marketization of multiculturalism may lead ‘multicultural imaginary’ in which a depolitised and racialized form of diversity politics is practiced (Forbes-Mewett et al., 2021).

This thesis is concerned with placemaking and multiculturalism in a super-diverse context. To this point I have discussed the varied ways individuals engage in placemaking and approached the placemaking-multiculturalism intersection as much as an issue of whiteness as a multicultural-through-migration issue. The latter brings me to the concept of complicity, to which I will now turn.

Complicity

Throughout this thesis, I build on and return to the topic of complicity (Spivak, 1999). I will touch upon positionality briefly here and provide a more in-depth discussion in Chapter 3. So, how do I position myself as a researcher, resident of the City of Maribyrnong, and Dutch migrant in this study? Over the course of my PhD I have attempted to integrate multiculturalism studies with my interest and drive to study diversity from a postcolonial perspective. This pursuit was further impacted by my being born in and having spent the first 27 years of my life in the Netherlands, a colonial empire. Moving to Australia and being more directly exposed to the ongoing local Indigenous-settler conflict forced me to question my Dutch identity and my socialisation into hegemonic conceptions of coloniser and colonised. In the Dutch context, Gloria Wekker (2016a) lays out the argument that encapsulates the paradoxes and denial of racial discrimination. As Wekker (2016b) points out:

In that story we are a progressive country ... we also like to tell ourselves that we are colour-blind and anti-racist ... but we have a history of 400 years of colonial rule and that colonialism has left traces in the Netherlands.

Hence, innocence and ignorance of racism and the idea of colour-blindness are stories told about Dutch identity that silence conversations about ethnic/racial inequality and white privilege.

Wekker's (2016a, 2016b) 'colonial innocence' concurs with the way in which Koerner and Pillay (2020) and Hage (2000) discuss multiculturalism as a political ideology and as an academic concept. It is in just such an environment that I developed as an academic and framed not only my individual positionality but also the positionality of this thesis; that is, the frameworks provided to study cultural diversity. Thus, I confronted the issue of how to incorporate postcolonial critique on diversity studies and continue to seek best practices.

The work presented in this thesis does not include collaborations with Indigenous people; it is however carried out on Indigenous land in a postcolonising society (cf. Moreton-Robinson, 2003) and on a topic (multiculturalism) that is critiqued for marginalising and, yet again, excluding Indigenous people. I felt it was important to engage in postcolonial work, but was unsure how and pondered questions such as: Is multiculturalism an illegitimate academic framework? If I include postcolonial critique of academic frameworks developed by canonical figures, or as Sarah Oxford (2018, p. 100) calls them those "notable sociology rock star theorists whose work is reviewed and re-viewed through every possible lens," can I still use these frameworks or would that be hypocritical?

To address these questions, I follow Gayatri Spivak's (1999) approach to postcolonialism. Subsequent interpretation of the conceptualisation is discussed by Benjamin Davis and Jason Walsh (2020). Davis and Walsh ask how Spivak engages with "the politics of knowledge production, that is, the existence of a relationship between social position and epistemic position" (p. 2). Central to Spivak's work are 1) the notion of constructive complicity, 2) locating the figure of the intellectual, 3) her critique of political programs relying on grand

narratives, and 4) pedagogy as a form of political practice. I will focus on the former three. Spivak asks theorists to acknowledge their complicity and “position themselves with respect to canonical European philosophical figures.” Further, “ignoring an author’s text could ignore the parts of our worlds informed by, or at least reflective of, those authors and texts” (Spivak in Davis & Walsh, 2020, p. 3). Hence, it is more about *how* authors are read. Not reading canonical texts or replacing these texts with non-canonical readings would lead to polarisation, which “is too much a legitimisation-by-reversal of the colonial attitude itself” (Spivak, 1999, p. 37). Closely related to constructive complicity and reading, then, is engaging with the limitation of canonical figures and the limits of grand narratives.

So what does this mean for this thesis? How can I read Lefebvre’s work and other canonical and non-canonical texts? What are the limitations of these texts? How has the theory of production of space developed since Lefebvre’s (1991) publication? These are all pertinent questions that will be addressed in Chapter 2. Furthermore, following Clare Land (2015), the decolonial project is complex⁹ not dependent on and, in the first place, should happen outside working with Indigenous people. Self-reflection, in fact, is the first step. As Gary Foley notes, “You need to look in the mirror” (in Land, 2015, p. 164). As Land explains, developing self-understanding is critical in “gaining a clearer view of the workings of race and of white privilege” (p. 163).

Thesis outline

This thesis is structured as follows. Chapter 2 outlines the theoretical framework. This thesis builds on and is framed by three distinct theoretical pillars: placemaking, urban diversity, and physical activity. In the first section, I conceptualise placemaking. Placemaking is conceptualised via Lefebvre’s (1991) ‘spatial triad’: spatial practices, representation of space, and representational space. Together, the three dimensions describe multiculturalism from different perspectives as well as the connection among dimensions.

⁹ The decolonial project is complex and ‘intellectual decolonisation’ is subject to colonising practices itself (Moosavi, 2021).

Placemaking and the spatial triad are applied to a vastly changing urban environment. The second theoretical pillar is urban diversity studies, with a focus on how local diversity is lived on an everyday basis. Diversity studies, as a humanistic discipline building on migration and multiculturalism studies, are concerned with the coming together of diverse populations. Everyday multiculturalism is concerned with social encounters among people of different backgrounds in ordinary social spaces. Recent perspectives on lived multiculturalism focus on convivial and often unproblematic inter-ethnic encounters (e.g., Harris, 2009; Noble, 2009; Wise & Velayutham, 2009; Massey, 2005; Gilroy, 2004; Amin, 2002). However, this position does not ignore conflict situations, cultural tensions, religious tensions or discord; rather, it seeks to reposition the discussion and include the coexistence of each other and the often spontaneous forms of multicultural interactions (Neal et al., 2013). The starting point of these studies is not migration *per se*, but “the negotiation of cultural diversity and ‘mixing’ in urban environments” (Moroşanu, 2018, p. 5). In this section I will also conceptualise the neighbourhood and the advantages and limitations of its study.

The third theoretical pillar focuses on bringing together placemaking and urban diversity in the context of physical activity. The physical activity context offers conceptual tools and contexts to critically look at power relations that connect sport to global social issues including race, class, ablism and gender. Sport in this sense is approached as an institution that produces but is also shaped by broader social norms and values. The geography of sport is concerned with “how scale, place and identity come to life in a grounded fashion in diverse settings around the world” (Koch, 2017, p. 1), and are embedded in power relations. As such, it is concerned with the spatialisation of and placemaking through physical activity.

After a detailed outline of the current theoretical knowledge, Chapter 3 describes the ethnographic methods and design of this project. Data collection took place in the City of Maribyrnong area from mid-2018 to the end of 2019. The selected fieldwork sites are presented in four data chapters: a sport club, a migrant settlement program, community centres, and parks. I employed an ethnographic approach to data collection, involving active participation in all fieldwork sites (including fieldwork notes) and 43 interviews.

Chapter 4 describes the City of Maribyrnong following Lefebvre's (1991) spatial triad model. The chapter starts with laying out the spatial practices using Lefebvre's rhythmanalysis: physical layout, temporal rhythms, and everyday socialities, as my guide. It describes demographic and spatial characteristics, the City's temporal rhythms and everyday socialities. Here, I will take the reader for a 'walk' through the City. With the representation of space dimension, I describe the City's multicultural policies, public space policies, and how physical activity spaces are represented. This official story of the City is then followed up by the third dimension: spaces of representation, or lived space. I present ethnographic data about the lived experiences of the (diversity) of the City. This chapter provides the foundation for the four chapters, each focussing on a specific physical activity context: a sport club, a migrant settlement program, neighbourhood community centres, and pick-up games in parks. The main research question on placemaking in a diverse neighbourhood will be applied to all sporting contexts.

Chapters 5-8 follow a similar structure. Each chapter begins with a brief historical account of the particular physical activity space, followed by an overview of what that space looks like in the City of Maribyrnong. These chapters then present the main placemaking themes in (a) particular fieldwork site(s). All chapters, either in the background or data section, discuss their relationship with diversity politics or Council diversity policies. The chapters conclude with remarks that circle back to the main research questions: how multiculturalism is enabled through placemaking, and how the particular physical activity space offer a vehicle for spatial connection in and to a super-diverse neighbourhood. These chapters form the backbone of the main argument of this thesis. All chapters contribute to further understanding the theoretical framework. Multiplicity of space (Massey, 2005) captures the breath of the argument. Massey (2005) describes multiplicity as going beyond a singular narrative of what space could mean and what it could be used for. Massey (1999) argues that if there is only one narrative, "one future towards which we are all marching (in the way in which we imagine the world), then we have suppressed the genuine and potential multiplicities of the spatial" (p. 11). However, for a multiplicity of histories to co-exist, "there must be space;" "there must be the recognition that there is more than one story going on in the world and that these stories have, at least, a relative autonomy" (p. 7).

In the context of physical activity, this means the sharing of public spaces rather than approaching sport spaces as already divided up (Massey, 2005). Chapters 5-8 describe how each space enables or restricts multiplicity.

Chapter 5 presents data on a women's soccer club. The club represents the dominant form of organising sport in Australia. Yet, as a female-only club, it simultaneously challenges the hegemonic sporting structure that is traditionally male-dominated and orientated. The chapter embeds the club and its ('rock solid') pavilion in the changing demographic and built environment. The placemaking themes speak to how members make a public sphere their home, engage in place attachment, and establish a wider place connection through traveling to away matches. Interview participants, particularly newly arrived migrants, have described the club as a vehicle to get to know people, make friends, and feel welcome. The chapter touches on conflict over diversity and place by describing the history of ethnic clubs in Melbourne and the use of language and swearing in matches. Over the past 10 years, the female-only club has seen the neighbourhood become more gentrified and the club's membership base (particularly the juniors) drawn from more affluent families. Albeit still ethnically and racially diverse, the club engages with multiculturalism by aiming to enhance its diverse profile.

Chapter 6 discusses placemaking practices at a migrant settlement through its sport service. The Ready Settle Go program collaborates with English language schools and offers settlement services, primarily sports activities, to newly arrived migrants. In this chapter, sport in Australia is as much a topic in its own right as a migrant integration tool. As sport is considered an important aspect of Australian culture, the aim of the settlement service is to offer participants an understanding of this social sphere to facilitate integration into the broader society. Newly arrived migrants – the participants – perform placemaking through social connections and visiting indoor and outdoor sport facilities. The participants are notably future-oriented and emphasise how their participation will facilitate their 'future' settlement and citizenship. Conflict situations that may impact placemaking (and mainly concern cultural differences in gender roles) are discussed toward the end of the chapter. Dominant Australian social norms about the accepted (and expected) participation of women and girls in physical activity set expectations for migrants

who may not share the same values. The main conclusions of this chapter are that settlement services design programs within a strict framework that includes gender expectations, that these services carry an understanding of how Australian culture is captured in settlement programs and what ‘knowledge’ is required to integrate, and that a rigid timeframe is enforced. This all affects experiences of placemaking by newly arrived migrants.

Chapter 7 describes the physical activity context of neighbourhood community centres, which offer activities for no/low cost. The City of Maribyrnong has eight community centres that are in part coordinated and funded by the City Council. These centres play a key role in the local implementation of diversity policies through facilitating intercultural interactions, enhancing social cohesion, and fostering belonging to a diverse geographical area. This chapter describes data collected with a women’s walking group organised by one of the community centres. Most walkers are in their 60s and 70s, have an international and/or interstate migrant background, and navigate life as it changes with the years: retirement, loss of loved ones, new partners, or grandchildren. The women engage in local placemaking through the spatial and temporal rhythms of walking. Their weekly walks take them through different neighbourhood settings including the Maribyrnong River, various nature areas (with gum trees, olive and lemon trees, rose bushes), as well as improvements to the built environment that not only facilitate the walking route but also create new spatial layers. While walking, the women often share their memories of nature from their places of birth, memories that connect them with the current place and time. This chapter highlights the importance of community centres in offering spaces for intercultural interactions, as well as physical activities for all ages and abilities.

Chapter 8 describes pick-up games in public parks, which is yet another form of physical activity and use of public space. The chapter describes placemaking by a male Bangladeshi/multicultural soccer team and a Croatian bocce group. The use of public space for pick-up games (i.e., ‘informal’, self-organised training and games) face different challenges and engage differently in placemaking compared to that which occurs in other physical activity spaces. While for the bocce players ‘their’ park is almost always available for them, the soccer players face greater difficulty in finding a suitable pitch for their weekly training. The main

conclusion of this chapter is that public space is contested, and that in super-diverse neighbourhoods facility needs and forms of physical activity differ. To create inclusive spatial connection, these needs need to be catered for to allow for spatial connections to be fostered.

This thesis was written during the 2020 COVID-19 (Coronavirus 2019) pandemic. I was lucky enough to have completed data collection just before Melbourne's first lockdown. Melbourne's lockdowns were amongst the strictest in the world and lasted for several months. During the 'hard' lockdown periods, people in the City of Maribyrnong (part of Melbourne's council collective) were not permitted to travel further than 5 kilometres from their home without policy permission. As the lockdowns severely impacted people's mobility and their use of public space, I will briefly discuss how the respective contexts were affected by the lockdowns at the end of Chapters 5-8.

Chapter 9 provides the conclusions of this thesis. In this chapter, I tie together the different contexts and discuss how placemaking is performed in unique ways. In each setting placemaking is performed differently, each context faces its own challenges in the use of public space, and each context engages differently with multiculturalism. However, the spaces are also connected through what Massey (2005) calls a relationally constituted process. The places define and are defined by each other, boundaries can be drawn in counterposition to each other, and the places flow into each other. The places are governed through similar presentational and representational spaces dominant in the City of Maribyrnong. As an example, various contexts use the same physical space (e.g., the same park) or flow into each other, such as the migrant settlement through sport services that define sport club participation as a sustainable form of migrant integration.

The methodology, theoretical framework, and the five data chapters work towards the main argument of this thesis. As urban diversity in public space planning poses one of the main challenges of the 21st century, Leoni Sandercock (2003) proposes that new kinds of public spaces be designed. This is in line with how spaces (all three dimensions as per a Lefebvrian approach) are re-imagined that impact how places are shaped and performed. This also concurs with Massey's (2005) understanding of the multiplicity of trajectories. Applied to the context of

physical activity and interculturalism, City of Maribyrnong's official strategy to manage diversity supports a rethinking of the standard sports club model as to who belongs in public space. Multiple trajectories do not reject the current dominant modes; rather, they open up space for a multiplicity of trajectories.

Chapter 2: Theoretical framework

Introduction

The question of placemaking through physical activity in a changing urban environment is complex, and to explore this I borrow conceptual approaches from both sociology and urban geography. The research question sits at the intersection of three main bodies of literature: placemaking, the everyday workings of a super-diverse urban area, and physical activity as a site where placemaking and super-diversity play out. All three bodies of literature have a strong connection with place and the body. In this chapter I discuss the three sections separately, before conflating them and explaining how they form the conceptual framework of this thesis.

Placemaking originates from geographical traditions and has been developed by prominent (feminist) academics over the past four decades. It offers the tools to unravel how people actively establish a connection to place through interactions with other humans and with the non-human material surroundings. This research specifically looks at an inner sub-urban super-diverse environment. The literature concerned with everyday workings of diversity and how residents (or people using neighbourhood facilities more broadly) navigate this diversity offers tools to explore how multiculturalism is lived on a day-to-day basis. Additionally, it explores the interaction between politicised, bureaucratic, and lived multiculturalism. Finally, the research question is further narrowed by prioritising placemaking activities in spaces of physical activity. The third section in this chapter discusses the current knowledge of connections among physical activity, diversity/multiculturalism, and geographical aspects. This field is dominated by sociological research, with studies by academics situated in the human geographical sciences escalating.

The theoretical contribution of this thesis lies in pulling together the three pillars. Together, the pillars fill a gap in the academic literature. Placemaking, or the process of connection to place, in the context of (diversifying) urban studies is well established. Scholarly writing is abundant on the topic of how multiculturalism as national or urban political framing is

in narrow connection to the formation of identity and how newcomers foster belonging to a new homeland. Physical activity, or sport more specifically, has been functioned as a research site, and to a lesser extent as conceptual tool in itself, in combination with scholarly writing in urban studies on the one hand and diversity studies on the other hand. There is scarce academic development of the role of physical activity in diversifying urban areas and how participating in everyday physical activity routines contribute to fostering connection to place. The body pulls the three pillars together. Physical performances are key for being in place, the body is communicator and carrier of diversity, visible and invisible in the super-diverse context, and for physical activity, the body is understood in yet another, complimentary way, namely as the tool to perform a physical activity.

First pillar: Placemaking

Introducing urban geography

In 1980, Anne Buttimer and David Seamon published *The Human Experience of Space and Place*. The foreword reads: “Librarians will find it difficult to select a suitable place on their shelves for this book;” indeed, the authors set out to describe “ordinary people’s experience of the geography which touches the skin in daily doings and dreams” (Hägerstrand in Buttimer & Seamon, 1980, p. IX). In the late 20th century, humanistic geography remained underdeveloped and ‘paralysed’ by positivist and dualistic thinking (Mels, 2004). Buttimer (1976) broke away from positivist geographical thinking and contributed in an exceptional way to humanistic geography. In a phenomenological manner, Buttimer (1976) emphasises that the deepest levels of human experience are as spatial as they are temporal and need to be explored as spatiotemporal configurations.

It was only 20 years earlier that urban geography emerged as a distinctive sub-discipline focussed on quantitatively-based spatial science. According to Bennett, urban geography was originally underpinned by the cultural turn that involved a threefold rejection of Marxism, ethnography, and a commitment to social constructionism (in Latham et al., 2008). In the early 1960s, urban geography was mainly concerned with “general laws that defined the formation of

geographical relationships” (p. 5). Following the Chicago School tradition, urban geographers came to see the city as a ready-made research laboratory and asked questions, for example, why some cities were so large and appeared to be getting larger, why some industries were concentrated in some places and not others, and “what determined the flow of people and information between different cities” (p. 8).

These exploratory questions refer to the growing centrality of global urbanisation. Today, urban dwellers outnumber rural residents and the level of urbanisation is likely to increase. Urbanisation is part of a trend towards unification, globalisation and cosmopolitanism. After the Second World War, cities underwent a shift from industrial production towards services and specialised niche markets. This so-called ‘advanced capitalism’ “was accompanied by an increasing globalisation of the economy” (Pacione, 2009, p. 4) and globalisation of human movement.

Buttimer (1980) and many other influential feminist geographers such as Susan Hansen, Linda McDowell, Gillian Rose, Doreen Massey, Nigel Thrift and Ed Soja entered the scene in the ensuing decades, but their work must be understood in terms of broader developments in social and geographical sciences, namely, the rise of Marxist and feminist theories. Influenced by French theorists (e.g., Foucault, Lefebvre, de Certeau, Virilio), vocabulary in geography started to include the relationship between power and space, including Doreen Massey’s (1993) power geometry and David Harvey’s (1989) space-time compression. The spatial turn also influenced thinking in humanities, which returned to urban theory and renewed its interest in the microcosms of everyday life amidst the macrocosms of global flows. Harvey’s use of Marxist concepts in urban geography is seen as a turning point in urban geography, as was Lefebvre’s (1991) work on urbanisation and capitalism.

The questions asked by urban geographers are multidisciplinary. This is illustrated by the fact that while a sub-discipline may be influenced by many other disciplines, there is wide interest in space-place by academics outside geography including those in philosophy, sociology, economics, development theory, and gender studies. An intimately-related issue within the

discipline of geography involves studies on spatiality of gender and race, to which I will return after an introductory discussion on placemaking.

Placemaking and the spatial triad

The various placemaking conceptual frameworks have in common the centrality of people and the human experience in the design of ideal places. In *Production of Space*, Lefebvre (1991) sets out his life-long intellectual work and seeks to describe “the nature of the urban and the importance of everyday life in the perpetuation and expanded reproduction of the capitalist mode of production” (in Merrifield, 1993, p. 522). This quote demonstrates Lefebvre’s interest in Marx’s early humanist work on the social class struggles and the role of capital in organising late-industrial societies. It is always in specific localities that meaning is given to abstract concepts that then enter and produce people’s life worlds. In his work, Lefebvre aims to transcend the dualistic Cartesian thinking that was formerly prevalent in the discipline of geography (Merrifield, 1993). As Lefebvre asserts, “Relations with two elements boil down to oppositions, contrasts or antagonisms. They are defined by significant effects: echoes, repercussions, mirror effects” (p. 39). Thus, organising the world in a polarised manner with the subjective and the objective on either side results in a “large intellectual gap [which] exists between our senses of being an actor in the world, of always being in place” (Entrikin, 1991, p. 7).

This thesis will follow Lefebvre’s (1991) conceptualisation of placemaking using the spatial triad: spatial practices, representation of space and representational space. First, spatial practices refer to the processes of materiality that produce social space. It is empirically observable and measurable; these are the “particular locations and spatial sets characteristic of each social formation” (p. 33). Lefebvre warns us that physical space is not neutral; power dynamics are always prevalent, and that “individuals (children, adolescents) who are, paradoxically, already within it, must pass tests. This has the effect of setting up reserved spaces, such as places of initiation, within social space” (p. 35). This means that not all spaces are always open to anyone; some spaces are ‘closed’ and ‘open’ or available to use and thus produce a parallel social space. Spatial practices can be subdivided into three sections following rhythmanalysis

(Lefebvre, 1991): its physical layout, temporal rhythms, and everyday socialities. These rhythms ultimately contribute to the way we 43acializ space (Friedmann, 2007).

Second in the spatial triad is the representation of space – the dominant mode of production in any society. It is the domain of “scientist, planners, urbanist, technocratic subdividers and social engineers, as of a certain type of artist with a scientific bent” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 38). The use of ‘artist’ alludes to how space can be represented in many forms and presented to the residents and consumers of space, who will then have to do the work to translate it into lived experiences. As Lefebvre points out, “Representations of space have a practical impact, that they intervene in and modify spatial *textures* which are informed by effective knowledge and ideology” (p. 42, italics in original). In Cresswell’s (1992) terms, placemaking is about political struggles over space, revealing who is ‘in-place’ and who is ‘out-of-place’.

Cultural imaginations are an ensemble of “images and fantasies, thoughts and expectations, feelings and values that we mentally attach to the idea of the city” (Healy, 2003, p. 56). The question then is how dominant ideas in certain geographical areas are produced that form urban imaginations. Stratford (1999) invites us to see dominant images “not simply as individual perceptions, but as something which is socially constructed in the workings of power” (p. 15). A whole range of institutional practices and discourses as well as individual actions and ideological frameworks shape the way individuals see their world. Stratford (1999) suggests that the following five sources contribute to a dominant urban conception: historical documents, legal documents, policy documents, performative actions (such as festivals), and an understanding of self. These five elements show that a geographic area is a cultural and mental construct as much as it is a physical reality and that the two shape and are shaped by each other. All five elements are included in this research, with specific focus on the second, fourth and fifth elements. With regards the fourth element, multicultural festivals are organised on a regular basis in Melbourne’s west and contribute to the urban imaginary of ‘Multicultural Maribyrnong’. In this research, performative actions not only include occasional festivals such as big (sport) events and parades, but also daily mundane actions, for example, recreational sport activities.

Third, Lefebvre (1991) describes the spaces of representation, or lived space. Lived spaces are about the lived experiences, the raw emotions and down-to-earth civilities that dominate everyday spheres. It is different to representation of spaces in that nothing is planned; realities are the result of everyday messiness. It also provides an alternative or deeper understanding of the social complexities of neighbourhoods. “Representational space is alive: it speaks” and “need obey no rules of consistency or cohesiveness” (pp. 42-43).

Jamie Kalven (2020) highlights that placemaking can also be a negative process, which is racialized as ‘place(un)making’. For Kalven, “substituting an existing place with one that is perceived to be a better version of it is, in fact, a process that may assault the identities of residents of the place and subsequently exclude them” (in Hes et al., 2020, p. 6).

These three dimensions are connected. Going back to Healy (2003), urban cultural imaginations affect people’s lived experiences of cities. Thus, understandings of cities “underpin the way in which we organise our lives in cities, and may determine ... the kinds of interactions we initiate on a street, or the buildings we enter” (p. 56). This makes the city not only a built, material environment, but also an imagined place that is formed through dominant discourses and affects people’s lived experiences.

Racialised and gendered placemaking

In this section I discuss the gendered and racialized aspects of placemaking, and note that race was largely ignored in original placemaking theories. As outlined above, urban geography shifted towards a social constructionist approach 20 years after the inception of the discipline. However, as Steven Holloway (2000) argues, the conceptual foundations remain inadequate to study race-related issues and that they need to be “reworked from a social constructionist perspective that takes seriously the importance of identity and contingency” (p. 197).

When neoclassical urban geography was developing as a discipline in the 1960s and 1970s, race was not part of the science of space (Kobayashi, 2014). The author argues in line with modernity thinking that “External and abstract truths were considered to be independent to those who discovered them” (p. 645). Kobayashi explains that race was not considered part of the urban

geography discipline (as it was in anthropology) as its focus was solely on the science of space, a “convenient way of avoiding difficult questions” (p. 646). The work by the Chicago School, including Robert Park and others, comes closest to how the urban geography discipline is defined today and discusses race as a structural determinant (Kobayashi, 2014). This work influenced a broader humanistic turn around the 1970s, shifting away from race as a biological fact to cultural and social structural accounts of race. In the context of migrant groups, Anoo Nayak (2011) notes the shift away from denoting ‘race’ as a term towards the “focus upon the discursive production of race within the landscape” (p. 552). Another shift Nayak describes is the move away from mapping, monitoring and segregation towards “conflicting representational strategies and signs that surround particular racialized places and events” (p. 553).

Race is particularly important in discussions of multiculturalism in the Australian context. As Koerner and Pillay (2020) write, “the discourse of multiculturalism has been the central story of how to understand difference under the umbrella of Australian identity” (p. 3). Australian identity is marked by (migrancy) diverse-but-equal groups, and this approach, as the authors note, has replaced race with culture.

Patricia Price (2010) offers the following two avenues to criticality approach placemaking.¹⁰ First, Price argues that there is a need to engage with “intellectual and political engagement with provocative critiques of anti-racism and multiculturalism” (pp. 167-168). Further, there is a need to address “the troublesome separation between geographies of race on the one hand, and on the other geographic scholarship on ethnicity and immigration.” Going back to multiculturalism, Sandercock’s (2003) foreword in a special issue on ethno-cultural diversity

¹⁰ This is the case for race as a research issue and for what Minelle Mahtani (2014) calls “toxic geographies, or emotionally toxic material spaces, for geographers of colour” (p. 360). Mahtani suggests that there remains a disconnection between the growing body of literature on race and colonialism “contrasted against the ongoing subordination and marginalisation of scholars of colour within geography departments” (p. 360). The continued ignorance towards race and the deeply seated positivist foundations of geography seeing race as a stable unit of analysis become evident in Mahtani’s piece where she writes that several scholars “deliberately no longer identify as geographers, even while employed in a geography department, preferring to engage with scholars in other disciplines such as sociology and anthropology” (p. 366). The author suggests enhancing the commitment towards interdisciplinary working and seeking lessons from other fields of study to work towards an anti-colonial and anti-racist geography.

and planning concludes that there are “unresolved theoretical issues in regard to multiculturalism and planning” (p. 320) in 46 racialized liberal democracies, including in Australia.

In contrast to the spatiality of race, gendered geographies have been mainstays of critical scrutiny. Judith Butler’s (1988) work famously describes gender and sexualities as performed rather than as fixed givens. The strong tradition in gender within English-language human geography is not entirely surprising, since the discipline is strongly influenced and defined by feminist geographers as discussed above. Liz Bondi and Damaris Rose (2003) identify two main bodies of work: scholarship that focuses on how cities constrain and oppress women, and scholarship that focuses on how cities liberate women. This is in line with Elizabeth Wilson’s (2001) ground-breaking work. She finds that within urban feminist literature, women in urban space can be disadvantaged, representationally excluded or even extirpated; alternatively, women are able to appropriate the shifting space that a city offers.

Looking at spatialisation and the urban in relation to gender, the question is how gender is experienced and constructed, and how gender inequalities are maintained/challenged. In the context of gender, Leslie Kern (2020) observes that “once built, our cities continue to shape and influence social relations, power, inequality and so on. ... their form helps keep some things seeming normal and right, and others ‘out of place’ and wrong” (p. 14). While historical capitalist patriarchal structures are reproduced through urban spatiality, feminist geography has influenced gender studies by demonstrating the importance of place and space for the construction and performance of gender and sexuality.

Complicity in placemaking

Recent developments in human geography (and geography more broadly) include a decolonial push. As with most other academic disciplines, geography has its origins in Western thought systems and have contributed to colonial practices. Tuhiwai Smith (2012) in particular refers to Western knowledge systems in which the discipline is situated and, consequently, the types of knowledge it (re)produces and the other forms of knowing it continues to undermine.

The meaning of home and what homemaking practices are in Australia are often described in Anglo-Celtic and migratory terms. The meaning of home and connection to place from a Western perspective differs starkly from an Indigenous Australian's understanding. As Aileen Moreton-Robinson (2003) describes, "Indigenous people's sense of belonging is derived from an ontological relationship to country derived from the Dreaming, which provides the precedents of what is believed to have occurred in the beginning in the original form of social living created by ancestral beings" (2003, p. 31). Moreton-Robinson explains that ancestral beings (creatures of the Dreaming) created animals, plants, humans, and the physiographic features of Country, thereby creating the Indigenous way of life. Humans are born out of ancestral spirits; thus they are born from the earth and on passing away become part of the earth again. This highlights unity with the earth, or Country, rather than separation between humans and the earth (as is common in Western thought). Country "is a spiritual entity: she is Mother" (Foster & Paterson Kinniburg, 2020, p. 68). Moreover, Country cannot be owned; rather people belong to Country. The ongoing legacy of modernism is that the built environment is a discrete site demarcated by boundaries. However, Indigenous Australians' understanding of Country differs from a Westernised, capitalist view of place, that is, that only one group can 'own' a place. Instead, "it is possible for many peoples to belong to the same Country" (p. 70).

Furthermore, how Indigenous Australians experience social relationships is different from how non-indigenous Australians experience these phenomena. The indigenous "ontological relationship to land is one that the nation state has sought to diminish through its social, legal and cultural practices" (Moreton-Robinson, 2003, p. 35). After colonisation, the Indigenous population was removed from Country and placed on reserves, missions and cattle stations where their everyday lives were lived under regimes of surveillance. As the author observes, Indigenous Australians' removal from Country that constituted their way of life took away their essence of life.

As Moreton-Robinson explains, "This ontological relation to land constitutes a subject position that we do not share, and which cannot be shared, with the postcolonial subject whose sense of belonging in this place is tied to migrancy" (p. 31).

A key historical moment in Australia was the Mabo decision and the implementation of the Native Title Act. In 1992, Terra Nullius was refuted for the first time by the High Court of Australia in the Mabo vs Queensland legal case. After a decade of court hearings and legal fights, Koiko Mabo and others won the case in which the existence of Indigenous proprietary rights in land was recognised by the High Court. However, “Confirmation of the Indigenous belonging to country is dependent on the words of white people” (Moreton-Robinson, 2003, p. 36). Hence, for most Indigenous Australians, these court decisions have not impacted their everyday lives. Who belongs and who does not belong depends on ideas of white possession. The coloniser/colonised axis continues to inform legal and cultural practices; thus, Moreton-Robinson argues for a postcolonising nation-state, instead of the completed postcolonial state of being. The adjective ‘postcolonising’ refers to “the active, the current and the continuing nature of the colonising relationship that positions us [Indigenous Australians] as belonging but not belonging” (p. 38). Therefore, Indigenous belonging challenges the assumption that Australia is postcolonial; rather, it “continues to unsettle non-Indigenous belonging based on illegal dispossession” (p. 31).

Two hundred and fifty years after the arrival of the first fleet from the UK that symbolises the start of colonisation of what we now know as Australia, the questions remain: Who belongs and who does not belong? Emily Potter (2012) points to a “lack of indigenous views in the urban environment because of the belief no aboriginals live in cities. Australian cities had no need to account for their presence, in spatial, cultural, or political terms” (p. 133). In their chapter *No place like (without) country*, Shannon Foster and Joanne Paterson Kinniburgh (2020) regard the place on which they work and write, Wann Country (also known as Sydney Olympic Park), as the third author. They suggest a move away from placemaking and to use instead ‘making place’ to first highlight “spatial (hi)stories to reclaim the sites they have always occupied, and (ii) for the very occupants and stories that are ordinarily overlooked in urban and spatial design practice” (p. 64).

I have included Indigenous understanding of placemaking in this theoretical framework rather than in the conclusion and discussion chapter where it would function as a reflection rather

than an attempt to read with complicity (cf. Spivak in Davis & Walsh, 2020)¹¹. Concepts such as spatial triad, rhythmanalysis, and the common conceptualisation of placemaking are products of Western ‘scientific’ geographical traditions. Reading and writing with complicity aims to position itself with respect to canonical European philosophical figures and “involve ... an honest reckoning with the limitations of canonical figures” (Davis & Walsh, 2020, p. 3).

Second pillar: Urban diversity

The previous section demonstrates how people, places, and politics shape one another. The production of locality happens in the context of globalisation, international migration and unequal mobility patterns. How, then, can we make sense of the production of day-to-day dynamics at the local level within these macro global shifts? How is placemaking performed in relation to multiculturalism in suburban super-diverse neighbourhoods?

In what follows I will discuss the theorisation of urban diversity through five threads. I will introduce the field of urban diversity followed by a more specific way of studying urban diversity, namely, through everyday multiculturalism. Then I will look at migrant placemaking and the potentials of public space, and follow this with a section on the active management of public space. I ask: Who belongs and who does not? Who has a right to the city? I will finish with a section on reading with complicity in diversity studies.

Mette Louise Berg and Nando Sigona (2013) also configure a triad to categorise diversity in three dimensions: narrative and counter-narrative, social fact, and policy. The first dimension refers “to public narratives in which ‘diversity’ is celebrated as marketable good” (p. 350), the second dimension refers to the ‘observable’ multiple ethnicities and countries of origin and intersection variables, while the third dimension defines “policies aimed at managing the

¹¹ See chapters 1 and 3 for an in-depth discussion of positionality and complicity.

integration and fostering social cohesion” (p. 350). Scholars also argue for the importance of lived and everyday diversity, to which I will turn in the next section.

Introducing urban diversity

Diversity studies is a humanistic discipline building on migration and multiculturalism studies and is concerned with human movements to, from, and within geographical areas. In so-called ‘global neighbourhoods’, diversity in its many forms is the norm rather than the exception (Logan & Zhang, 2010). Researchers emphasise the importance of local modes of belonging and local ties that cross ethnic communities (e.g., Olwig, 2013; Flazon, 2009; Amin & Thrift, 2002; Escobar, 2001). In addition to these local ties, Berg and Sigona (2013) remind us of the dynamics of globalisation and time-space compressions that enable migrants “to stay connected with their places of origin as well as to other co-ethnics settled elsewhere, producing even more multi-layered practises and patterns of belonging and identification” (p. 352). Although remote and rural areas in Australia are gaining more interest from academics into the workings of (everyday) multiculturalism and migrant settlement studies (e.g., Koerner & Pillay, 2020; Boese, 2015), cities remain the “metropolitical-academic preoccupation” (Massey, 2005, p. 155), and this current study is no exception.

Migration research has long focussed on territorially-fixed nation-state populations (Castles, 2007). Normalising the nation-state as the only container of society is referred to as methodological nationalism (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002) or metaphysical sedentarism (Cresswell, 2006). While the research focus may have shifted, in the Australian context, Hage (2000) points to the continued prevalence of ethnic homogeneity in migrant discussions. While legal citizenship papers may acknowledge newly arrived migrants as legal residents of the national territory, they do not guarantee non-official acceptance and rather operate as proof of non-belonging, as Hage (2000) and Castles (2000) argue. In a similar vein, Catherine Nash (2003) describes how the modern notions of nation are “models of belonging that naturalise the nation as sealed, exclusive and culturally uniform” (p. 180). Cultural identity, bounded places, and roots

overlap in these national genealogies. Yet genealogy continues to be characterised by “the language of ownership, possession and inheritance” (p. 181).

In sedentary models of society “migrants disrupt foundational myths about national sovereignty and citizenry, including ideas about singular loyalty, ethnic homogeneity and political solidarity” (Williamson, 2015, p. 25; see also Baumann, 1999). The question of local diversity is a response to – and critique of – migration studies and the conceptualising of migrants solely as border-crossing bodies.

The study of urban diversity, density and encounters was first developed by Jane Jacobs (1961) in her study of the creation of social solidarity in urban villages. Ever since, scholars have developed conceptual tools to go beyond the national models of belonging and the overemphasis on ethnic and cultural identities. Super-diversity (Vertovec, 2007) and hyper-diversity (Noble, 2011) concepts^{12,13} are valuable as they broaden the often essentialised focus on migrants’ cultural and national identities to other modes of identification and differentiation (Olwig, 2013). With these concepts, Vertovec (2007) and Noble (2011) aim to capture the increasingly diversifying urban areas, with urban diversity characterised not only by migrant minorities, but also religious and linguistic differences, educational, economic background, residence in ‘host’ country and class¹⁴.

¹² A more recently introduced concept in the context of sport sociology is ‘granular essentialism’ (Rosbrook-Thompson, 2018). While critiquing super-diversity, granular essentialism refers to the “bewildering diversity which surrounded” a group of young male football players (p. 640). Light-heartedness and irony were part of the mitigation strategy through which incidents of racism were denied or downplayed. The construction of essentialism was based on “players’ shared status as foreigners, their day-to-day experience of the inner city and the perceived hostility of a group of suburban outsiders. However, “the potentially offensive nature of granular assertions was downgraded through strategies of mitigation, a dynamic which underlines the importance of refining the focus of superdiversity” (p. 651).

¹³ Hyper-diversity is considered to be an unfortunate term: 1) it conveys a unidimensional model; and 2) “hyper- can inherently suggest that something is overexcited, out of control and therefore generally negative or undesirable” (Meissner & Vertovec, 2015, p. 545).

¹⁴ It must be noted, however, that before super-diversity was introduced in 2007 and became a mainstream academic concept a few years later, the diversifying migration flows (in the context of Europe) were already recognised by the International Organisation for Migration (Meissner & Vertovec, 2015). Moreover, in a similar way as the concept of intersectionality, a “social scientist should be aware of the combined workings of several variables” at work (p. 545).

As part of a recent development, the study of multiculturalism in the context of multi-ethnic neighbourhoods is taken further by looking into the role of material agents, atmosphere and environment context in the shaping of *textures of diversity* (Kuruoğlu & Woodward, 2021). This recognition of socio-material arrangements “may serve to solve or express diversity through the aesthetic organisation of human and non-human factors” (p. 1).

Vertovec (2019), who coined the concept ‘super-diversity’, lists the seven ways in which the concept is used: “a contemporary synonym of diversity, a backdrop for a study, a call for methodological reassessment, a way of simply talking about more ethnicity, a multidimensional reconfiguration of social forms, a call to move beyond ethnicity, and a device for drawing attention to new social complexities” (p. 125). In this research project, super-diversity is the backdrop of the study and a device to draw attention to social complexities and intersectionalities. I write about ethnicity by acknowledging and emphasising other (more relevant) markers of differences. For this study, super-diversity is a reminder that placemaking can be performed in many different ways. As such, how are differences played out through placemaking in the local context?

Everyday multicultural localities

People with varying backgrounds share public spaces in these super-diverse urban areas and live with difference on a day-to-day basis. In this research project, urban diversity is explored through everyday multiculturalism. Multiculturalism is understood, as Anita Harris (2009) defines it, as “a dynamic, lived field of action within which social actors both construct and deconstruct ideas of cultural difference, national belonging and place-making” (p. 188). Wise and Noble (2016, p. 427) demonstrate how the concepts of conviviality and the urban are closely linked:

[S]paces and times of convivial relations rest as much on material environs as they do on interpersonal and social relations. The physical organisation of social space, and the ways humans make use of this space, is fundamental to the logic of connection or disconnection: systems of transport, the flow of bodies through public space, the use of

site facilities and so on all represent *affordance* of conviviality through shared social recourse.

Everyday multiculturalism¹⁵ is concerned with social encounters among people of different backgrounds in ordinary social spaces. Social encounters can be both in-group as well as among strangers. This type of lived multiculturalism or diversity, opposed to macro-theoretical approaches of multicultural citizenship, is captured in the everyday. The everydayness offers a way to understand how “we *live* with difference and how the mundane is experienced and mediated” (Wise & Velayutham, 2009, p. 2). Unpredictability is a reoccurring aspect in everyday multiculturalism studies (e.g., Watson, 2009). Depending on the physical activity context, encounters can be more structural or indeed unpredictable.

Mundane interactions and modes of negotiating ethnic and cultural differences persist in everyday life (Harris, 2009; Noble, 2009; Wise & Velayutham, 2009; Massey, 2005; Gilroy, 2004; Amin, 2002). It is through small-scale, face-to-face interactions that people actively construct and give meaning to ethnic or cultural identities (Amin, 2002). These interactions can be in-group or among strangers. This thesis is primarily concerned with various groups using and negotiating public space. Susanne Wessendorf (2014) describes everyday encounters with difference as rarely conflictual, “unlike most of the current media and political debate on diversity” (p. 3). This encouraged Wessendorf to look beyond cultural diversity, find more pressing categories of differentiation, and focus on where diversity is commonplace and where it is not. This position does not ignore conflict situations, cultural tensions, religious tensions or discord, but does try to recalibrate the discussion to include the coexistence of one another and the often spontaneous forms of multicultural interactions (Hoekstra & Pinkster, 2019; Neal et al., 2013).

¹⁵ A plethora of concepts describe everyday encounters of difference, including commonplace diversity (Wessendorf, 2014), everyday multiculturalism (Neal et al., 2013; Wise & Velayutham, 2009), conviviality (Wise & Noble, 2016; Gilroy, 2004), everyday cosmopolitanism (Delanty, 2011), working-class cosmopolitanism (Werbner, 2006), and granular essentialisms (Rosbrook-Thompson, 2020; 2018). Although these concepts differ, their shared focus is the micro-geographies of interaction (Kesten et al., 2011) and the spatiality of encounters cutting through axes of difference.

The geographical setting and potential convivial encounters describe a hypothetical situation in which historical and power mechanisms are missing (Clayton, 2009; Valentine, 2008). Given this, how does the use of space facilitate convivial encounters through which urban imaginaries (dominant or alternative) are produced? Gill Valentine (2008) argues that social contact can create or reinforce negative perceptions depending on existing patterns of social inequality.

Cultural and racial conflicts are discussed as part of everyday multiculturalism. Philomena Essed (1991) describes racism as “inherent in culture and social order” and are “routinely created and reinforced through everyday practices” (p. 1). Thus, as the author argues, racism should be understood as a process created through intersecting macro and micro dimensions, most visible through everyday racism. Critical here is that Essed’s understanding of ‘the everyday’ differs, for example, from Wise and Velaytham’s (2009) and Lefebvre’s (1991) description of the phenomenon as mundane, unseen, and taken for granted. Instead of a philosophy and experiences of everyday life, Essed describes the everyday in terms of “structures of everyday life” and the “categories of social relations operative in everyday life” (p. 8). These structures include social networks but also the knowledge needed to cope with everyday life. It is when “racist notions and actions infiltrate the everyday life and become part of the reproduction of the system, the system reproduces everyday racism” (p. 9).

In this thesis, I approach the two distinct definitions of the everyday as a continuum, with ‘mundane everyday experiences’ at one end and ‘social everyday structures’ at the other. Essed (1991) argues for the latter, because mundane experiences would be insufficient to theorise everyday racism and should otherwise be seen solely as experiences of everyday racism. Yet the above definition by Harris (2009) highlights the social actors who construct and deconstruct ideas of diversity, with Clayton (2009) and Valentine (2008) emphasising that convivial encounters cannot be understood without underlying historical and power mechanisms, or the macro dimensions in Essed’s (1991) terms.

Academic interest at the everyday local level coincides with a shift at municipal level from nation state governance of issues, what Amin (2005) calls the *localisation of the social*. Jan

Willem Duyvendak (2011) adds that everyday encounters are the settings where multiculturalism as a national discourse (governmental policy and public debate) is implemented and where one might find its local effects. This thesis applies the concept of everyday multiculturalism and closely aligned concepts to draw attention to how people engage with diversity in (semi)public spaces in the context of physical activity.

Migrant placemaking

Relevant for this thesis is a specific section of multiculturalism literature that is concerned with migrant placemaking. The identity of places are closely connected to social identity and belonging, and cultural practices mark out spatial and identity boundaries (Fortier, 1999). Given this, how do migrants perform placemaking in their new country? By leaving their first homeland(s), migrants are displaced in a sense that they are without familiar places that are their own. As Massey (2005) describes, places are the product of ‘roots’ and ‘routes’, and are the sites within which multiple identities and histories are created. Local placemaking, then, is central to migrant settlement as it gives them a “spatial foothold” (Byrne & Goodall, 2013, p. 65).

Before placemaking in a new country takes place, migrants go through a *migrant experience* which can be understood as a violation of expectations and thus “leads to a disruption of pre-conceptions, predisposition and our everyday routinised life” (Marotta, 2020, p. 5). The migrant experience is a disruption of what the “migrant thought was real (their taken-for-granted world),” and they “begin to question the nature of reality, existence and their place in the world” on personal and societal levels (pp. 14-15).

Placemaking can be understood in a similar manner, as migrants get a foothold on *their* place in a new place. Thus, migrant placemaking is understood as a way to assert a collective identity amongst host populations (Castles & Davidson, 2000). As Wood and Waite (2011) explain, “belonging is a dynamic emotional attachment that relates people to the material and social worlds that they inhabit and experience. It is about feeling ‘at home’ and ‘secure’ but it is equally about being recognized and understood” (p. 201). While it can provide an opportunity to retain national identity in their new home country, it can also lead to conflict and issues of

exclusion (Amith, 2005). Migrant placemaking may facilitate solidarity among migrants and provide a way to express ‘belonging’ to place, while at the same time inscribing a degree of exclusivity (Jordan et al., 2009). Multicultural placemaking, as the authors explain, may intensify existing intra- and intergroup tensions.

Migrant placemaking is further conceptualised by Paolo Boccagni and Pierette Hondagneu-Sotelo (2021) as ‘homemaking’, that is, a way to go beyond the contraposition between assimilation and transnationalism. The authors emphasise the importance of “migrants’ interactions with specific local structures of opportunities, including people and institutions as much as the built and natural environment” (p. 1). Given this, they advance a multidimensional and multi-scalar conceptualisation of migrant placemaking that includes material, emotional and relational aspects of integration.

Migrant placemaking is described in relation to public parks (Byrne & Goodall, 2013), with the authors explaining that migrants bring “into the park many of the perceptual habits, cultural ‘ways’, and expectations about nature that were formed in their homelands” (p. 63). Here, the park triggers memories of their homelands. A similar study examines how asylum seekers and refugees experience urban greenspaces (Rishbeth et al., 2019). The authors point out that while accessing urban greenspaces is often ignored in refugee resettlement support, spending time outdoors in local recreational spaces such as parks can have positive wellbeing outcomes. Interviews demonstrate the barriers against migrants’ outdoor experiences, including “information, legibility, ... cultural capital and confidence needed to venture out” (p. 125).

In the context of super-diverse neighbourhoods, Simon Pemberton and Jenny Phillimore (2018) contest that these types of neighbourhoods are liminal spaces where no dominant neighbourhood identity becomes embedded; hence, new arrivals can identify with the place in multiple ways. The importance of “the history and familiarity of places with diversity, the speed

of change, the openness of neighbouring places to diversity and the power dynamics operating within places” (p. 749) are how placemaking is enabled and performed.¹⁶

Managing diversity in public spaces

Who belongs to the urban imagination and who has political power over public spaces? How are inclusive cities created in the context of localisation of diversity policies? Habermas (1991) describes the public sphere as an inclusive and agonistic sphere where private people come together as the public. How inclusive and democratic is the public sphere in reality? In the introduction, I defined (semi)public space as accessible to anyone and offering brief on-time or continued encounters with strangers. This type of space is situated between the public and private continuum and offers prolonged or repetitive interactions between people (Madanipour, 2003). The two previous sections described everyday multiculturalism and migrant placemaking. How, then, do these two come together to express a voice in urban living?

The public space is often described and imagined in particular Western humanistic conceptions, that is, “automatically open to all, within certain prescribed guidelines of appropriate behaviour” (Williamson, 2015, p. 40). However, the author argues that who belongs to ‘the public’ is socially patterned and complicated by ethnic, classed, gendered, generational, religious and cultural ideas of who belongs to space. As Lefebvre (1996, p. 158) asks, who has a “voice to the city?”

¹⁶ I make a brief connection to migrant integration here, as migrant placemaking should be understood as the broader (re)settlement process. The conceptualisation of migrant integration has undergone academic scrutiny and development. Instead of describing migrant integration as a one-way process (also called assimilation), migrant integration can only be fully achieved when both newcomer and ‘established’ adapt and grow towards each other (Ager & Strang, 2008). Often, however, the emotional, physical and time-consuming work of settlement is done by the newcomer. Meissner and Tilmann (2020) take a step further and argue that key problems with European uses of migrant integration “cannot be resolved through redefinitions or reappreciation” (p. 1). Rather, the authors introduce the concept of ‘convivial disintegration’. Building on the idea that the production of difference is always hierarchical in thought and oppressive in practice (Schinkel, 2018; Alexander & Alleyne, 2002), Meissner and Heil (2020) see disintegration “as part of the social dynamics that emerge from understanding the [making of] difference in relational terms” (p. 3). In this sense, convivial disintegration highlights the potential everyday and naturally occurring tensions of living with differences. Differences is thus embraced rather than feared.

Lefebvre (2002, 1996) sees the city as a work produced through the labour and daily actions of those who live in it. As part of Lefebvre's interest in urban life under capitalism, the right to the city signifies the right to produce urban life on new terms (Attoh, 2011). Put simply, Lefebvre defines the academic concept of *right to the city* as a "transformed and renewed right to urban life" (p. 158). The rights to the city, then, consists of appropriation (to take/possess the city) and participation (to govern the city) (Pierce, 2019).

It must be noted, however, that sharing space 'justly' is not straightforward.¹⁷ For Lefebvre (1996), 'right to the city' is predominantly focused on inclusion in decision-making processes and "politics that would produce a guarantee of access to space" (in Pierce, 2019, p. 10). In contrast, Massey sees the plural use of space, that is, to be 'open', as a way to reach spatial justice (in Pierce, 2019).

The right to one's own spatiality has been described as an essential part of the right to the city (Fincher & Iveson, 2008). Sandercock (2003) writes that planning for ethnic-cultural cities is one of the main challenges in 21st century urban planning of public spaces. While her work is nearly 20 years' old, it is still highly relevant. As she observes, "If different cultures use public and recreational space differently, then new kinds of public spaces may need to be designed" (p. 322). In order to create new 'kinds of public spaces', urban imaginaries will be affected. Urban imaginaries are metanarratives and cognitive mappings of urban reality (Soja, 2000), and are in line with what Lefebvre (1991) describes as representation of space. Urban imaginaries (or the representation of space dimension in the spatial triad) inform migrant and multiculturalism as (problematic) policy discourses (Barbehön & München, 2016). On this, Hoekstra (2018) argues that although urban policies are considered to be more pragmatic in their approach compared to national level policies in governing (ethnic) diversity, 'urban imaginaries' impact understandings of the place of the migrant in the urban community.

¹⁷ Moreover, Attoh (2011) argues that what constitutes 'rights' is not clearly defined.

Complicity in diversity studies

When writing about diversity, questions arise: Who has access to the city? What kind of diversity is prioritised? Who has a voice? Which diverse voices are dominating the ‘diversity field’? In this section I will discuss some of the main postcolonial critiques on conceptual thinking including diversity and multiculturalism. This section is not about the political, legislative or everyday challenges related to multiculturalism as ideology or diversity within a nation-state; rather, it focuses on the underlying issues with academic definitions and implementation of such concepts.

Walter Mignolo and Catherine Walsh (2018, p. 57) argue that multiculturalism is a “component part of the logic on neoliberalism and its project to pacify resistance, fragment movements, and bring the excluded into global capitalism’s all-consuming framework and structure.” The authors refer to First Nation (Dene)¹⁸ scholar Glen Sean Coulthard (2014) who claims, “... for Indigenous peoples, this politics of recognition has meant little more than a repetition and reproduction of colonial relations” (pp. 57-58). Mignolo and Walsh describe the use of the term ‘interculturalism’ as a better alternative in the context of Colombia. Yet despite its more progressive ideals, interculturalism on its own will not untangle the complex structures of power.

In the context of migration, Willem Schinkel (2019) contends that all ideas related to integration and diversity have their historical antecedents in colonial history, “and what are now called ‘immigrants’ in Europe are in so many ways part of the delayed, or ongoing, responses to the initial plunder conducted in the name of Europe” (pp. 4-5).

The ideological project of multiculturalism is tangled up in the process of globalisation and cross-cutting and intersecting local and transnational forces that leave the national state a fragmented and disorderly social space (Ang, 2010). The author uses multiculturalism to uncover the problematic nature of all nation-states as claiming to be “a sovereign political entity serving a unique nation in a clearly bounded territorial unit” (p. 3). As described in the introduction to

¹⁸ In what is now called Canada.

this thesis, in this way multiculturalism is yet another form of state control of its population, specifically the ethnic, cultural, racial Other (non-white). Similarly, diversity studies often take immigration as the main contributor to diverse urban constellations. This field is a complex amalgam of academic interests, including migrant integration, ethnicity and race studies, and multiculturalism. However, as Meissner and Heil (2020) point out, migrant integration risks concealing and perpetuating power dynamics and (colonial) hierarchies.

Ang (2010, p. 4) states that existing international scholarship on multiculturalism “tends to be rather Eurocentric, taking the assumption of Western liberalism for granted as universal regime of value”¹⁹. Long before multiculturalism had a substantial foot in academia, Slavoj Žižek (1997) describes multiculturalism as a new form of racism. In the context of rural Australia, Butler and Ben (2020) focus on everyday multiculturalism and convivialities and argue, “that the histories and structures of settler colonialism be centred in research on rural multicultures, as these legacies and ongoing conditions shape social relationships in contemporary rural Australia” (p. 1). Thus, multiculturalism can be seen as a form of colonisation. Indigenous First Nations are expected “to join the multicultural nation as one of many equal-but-different cultural groups” (Koerner & Pillay, 2020, p. 5). This results in a fallacy that shifts the attention from “the discourse of Indigenous rights that engages with First Nation people’s status as the first occupants who are sovereign subjects” (p. 5).

The critique of diversity studies extends to the way academic disciplines are structured. Ramón Grosfoguel (2012) describes the dilemmas that ethnic study programs confront today, including disciplinary colonisation, liberal multiculturalism and identity politics. Ultimately, the author argues for a redefinition of ethnic studies departments/programs as ‘transmodern decolonial studies’. Current academic work on ethnic and racial minorities, situated in and defined by Western-centric capitalist disciplines, often contribute to the continued colonisation of ethnic

¹⁹ In her book, *The Intimacies of Four Continents*, Lisa Lowe (2015) extensively describes how Western liberalism itself is a product of and exists because of imperialism: “liberal philosophy, culture, economics, and governance have been commensurate with, and deeply implicated in, colonialism, slavery, capitalism, and empire” (p. 2). Further, Lowe points out that while liberal politics propose a narrative of freedom it also denies colonial slavery, and that its expansion depend on colonial ‘intimate ties’ among the four continents.

studies and will not “contribute an innovation in the field of knowledge production” (p. 82). Rather, defining ethnic study programs as transmodern decolonial studies will open themselves up to the epistemic diversity of the world “offering to think ‘from’ and ‘with’ those ‘others’ subalternised and inferiorised by Eurocentered modernity” (p. 88), and also add to liberation as the political project.

Third pillar: Physical activity, placemaking and urban diversity

In the third theoretical thread of this thesis, the questions are: How do people and the built environment shape each other in diverse suburban areas, specifically in spaces of physical activity? Which academic work has been produced on the topic of physical activity and placemaking in diverse urban areas? This pillar is divided in the following four sections. I will start by describing physical activity as a socially constructed context, then address the literature on physical activity and diversity/multiculturalism followed by physical activity and placemaking. I will then discuss the specific literature niche on placemaking, urban diversity and context of physical activity.

Physical activity as socially constructed

In this thesis, I approach physical activity as a socially constructed space. The physical activity space offers conceptual tools to critically look at power relations that connect physical activity to global social issues including race, class, ablism and gender. Sport in this sense is approached as an institution that produces but is also shaped by broader social norms and values. It is about the “rules and processes that exist within the formal and informal design and makeup of sport” (Delaney & Madigan, 2015, p. 5). Sport sociologists and geographers have described sport and physical activity more broadly as a socially constructed site that “reflects and reinforces broader hierarchical structures; how it serves as a site both for inclusion and exclusion ... [and] is ultimately a site for social reproduction of hierarchy and social stratification” (Spaaij et al., 2015, p. 400). As institutions change temporally, culturally and geographically, so also is sport (physical activity and more broadly leisure) defined by time, culture and place.

Previous research demonstrates how physical activity is a racialized and gendered institution. Massao and Fasting (2010) observe that sport is “organised around social, economic and political structures that historically have privileged, and continue to privilege, dominant groups in society” (p. 159). Indeed, Kevin Hylton (2008) opines that current white-dominated power structures engage solely in symbolic acts of anti-racism. In their study on racism in junior sports matches in Australia, Karen Farquharson et al. (2019) find that “structural and cultural factors result in the maintenance of an on-field sporting culture where racism is essentially tolerated, even when lip service is given to its inappropriateness” (p. 165).

Physical activity can be organised in many forms, of which sport is one. The competitive sports structure has been the dominant way of organising physical activity for many decades, with states and cities responsible for organising political space (Koch, 2017). Definitions of physical activity vary across cultures. Sudjatmiko et al. (2018) illustrate this by describing swimming in Indonesia by its Muslim population as an activity possible because the Almighty gifted them bodies that they should take care of. Physical activity has also been described as a “surplus energy approach, which actually resembles very much the Western industrial concept of leisure as being free from obligations to earn a living and getting daily life organized, falls into the category of pastimes in terms of time ‘... being free from ...’ obligations/duties” (Modi & Kamhorst, 2018, p. 2). For example, while skateboarding has been described as a form of play (Abulhawa, 2015), it is in fact part of the broader sport, games and organised forms of the play domain.

Physical activity and placemaking

This thesis builds on the growing body of work into physical activity and placemaking. The socially constructed aspect of sport and physical activity is strongly shared by human geography colleagues, notably by Natalie Koch (2017). In *Critical Geographies of Sport*, she describes the developing character of the geography of sport and writes that existing work on sports geography is currently diffuse, lacks a clear centre, and has had little impact on the broader interdisciplinary field of sports studied. The spaces produced in and through sport practices remain under-

examined and under-theorised. Despite the lack of funding opportunities (and initiatives to write funding applications) in combination with a history of stigmatisation, Koch points out that sports geography is now maturing and ready for the next specialisations. I will contribute to the process of this maturation through a ‘scaled down version’ (cf. Nelson, 2017) and look at the spatialised everyday lived experiences in the physical activity context.²⁰

An early contributor to sports geography, Bale (2003) argues that “virtually all sports are, in essence, struggles over space” (p. 11). As Silk and Andrews (2011)²¹ explain, a spatial approach is motivated by the need to better understand the process of “sociocultural organization, representation, and experience of active embodiment” (p. 7). Through spatial practice, specific power relations (Friedman & van Ingen, 2011) and other social formations are produced and reproduced; this makes ‘place’ both the medium and outcome of social relations.

Further, Tiffany Muller Myrdahl (2011) contends that it is about “social spaces that are both produced through and are productive of the intersections of sport and social relations” (p. 154). Sport spaces may be perceived and valued as apolitical spaces where nationalist discourses and practices are performed; in fact, they are inherently apolitical (Muller Myrdahl, 2011) as most sports geographers and sociologist will attest.

Sports clubs and their grounds and stadiums have been described in relation to (attachment to) place. Clubs can be a representation of supporters’ local community, with their stadiums one of the most enduring symbols of a home team and associated with people’s fondest memories (Giulianotti, 2004; Bale, 2003). Football supporters have described sport clubs as imbued with qualities of home, place attachment, and the importance of social interactions (Charleston, 2009). In the latter study, ‘home’ refers to a place where people feel safe and in control, a place that provides a retreat from daily life and even psychological comfort.

²⁰ This contrasts with sports geography literature that often focuses on professional leagues, national or global federations involved in sporting competition (Conner, 2014), or stadiums and the politics of urban space (Bale, 1994; John & McDonald, 2019).

²¹ Silk and Andrews’ (2011) book is situated within physical cultural studies (PCS). PCS are relevant to mention within the context of sport and placemaking as a site note. Friedman and van Ingen (2011) (see also van Ingen, 2003) contribute to bridging PCS and production of space by arguing that the body is better understood “as environment and social relations are analysed through spatial/body practices” (p. 85). The focus of PCS is concerned less with the rules, structures, and institutions of sport and exercise but more with the power relations embedded in the moving body and its environment.

Informal and self-organised physical activity has been described in relation to the urban environment. More than 20 years ago, Lüder Bach (1993) observed the use of urban spaces for informal sport, such as riding a bike, skateboarding in a supermarket parking lot, and playing ball in open spaces between buildings. Bach was far ahead of his time in suggesting that “urban development planning and municipal sports policy should, in the future, conceptualise and recognise such informal sports facilities as a new measure to parallel the traditional facilities” (p. 281). Within the informal scene, parkour (e.g., Gilchrist & Wheaton, 2017), skateboarding (e.g., Vivoni, 2009) and running (e.g., Cook et al., 2017; Borgers et al. 2016) are popular sites of sociological and geographical inquiry.

A spatial framework has been productively applied to the gender/sport nexus. Studies within the gym setting discuss how this environment shapes unequal gender norms and reinforces assumptions about appropriate use of bodies (e.g., Pavlidis, 2019; Fusco, 2004; Johnston, 1996). How children understand gendered spatiality develops very early through active play in primary school (Spark et al., 2019). Chloe Maclean (2019) describes the de/constructions of gendered embodiment in the context of mixed-sex karate and highlights the “minute ways in which unequal gender relations are naturalised, legitimised and done” (p. 818). In the Australian context, Adele Pavlidis (2018) argues that it is time to make ‘space’ for women and girls in sport and address the spatiality of gender inequality. She proposes a new materialist perspective to challenge structures and underlying exclusionary mechanisms, that is, “Rather than accepting taken-for-granted notions such as patriarchy and hegemony as the causes of women’s and girls’ exclusion from sport (and indeed that of other marginalised groups), we can examine the relational assemblages of human and non-human flows, finding sustainable and workable interventions ‘on place’” (p. 8).

A study by David Ekholm and Magnus Dahlstedt (2020) describes the role of place in governing social policy by comparing two sport-based interventions in Swedish suburban areas that are distinct from the rest of the city. The authors demonstrate the importance of discursive formation of place in that “it is the discourse of social problems and sport as a means of response that facilitates the construction of these places” (p. 184; see also Ekholm & Holmlid, 2020).

Some forms of physical activity have received particular attention in sports geography literature, including gyms, walking, skateboarding and parkour. First, I will consider walking and skateboarding. Lefebvre's (1991) *rhythms* have been widely applied to walking, with extensive literature in his wake on walking as an embodied physical activity. It has been defined as a form of leisure (Duvall & De Young, 2013) and, at other times, as an ordinary, everyday activity (Matos Wunderlich, 2008). Researchers have followed phenomenological traditions to describe walking as a taken-for-granted activity and a routine that "blends in and is indistinguishable from the wider world" (Wunderlich, 2008, p 136; see also Van Eck & Pijpers, 2016). From a phenomenological perspective, the experience of walking is not about urban design or planning; rather, it is about the everydayness and the individual experience of the social and material environment.

Skateboarding has received notable academic attention in the physical activity/built environment nexus. Iain Borden (2001) theorises skateboarding in relation to architecture and spatial production, whereas Nolan (2013) applies the conceptual lens of transgression to illuminate social norms in the construction of public space that are often invisible and taken for granted. Irvine and Taysom (1998) raise concerns about the disruption of consumptive logic of city space that are expressed in skateboarding, which has been described as space driving disputes over ownership and function of public space (Woolley & Johns, 2001). Indeed, Abulhawa (2015) describes skateboarding practices in public spaces as 'interruptions'. Here, interruptions refer to "an action that breaks the continuity of spatial practice, so as to represent another voice and approach to public space ... [and] to puncture the flow of dominant spatial practice with an alternative" (p. 30).

The gendered practices within skateboarding cultures have been critically described as well. Danielle Abulhawa (2020, 2015) considers how skateboarding as a form of play operates within the public built environment. Taking as her starting point the general lack of female involvement in public play performances, Abulhawa (2015) describes the "unknown feminine archetype that resists the commodification and forms of spectatorship inherent in spaces of 'commercial masculinity', and attempts to engender 'romantic space'" (p. 3). While skateboarding may operate within a masculine culture, the activity also redefines urban space and

offers a space in which new forms of masculinity and femininity are experimented with (Karsten & Pel, 2000), similar to roller derby (Pavlidis, 2012).

Sport has the potential to play an important role in imagining national identities (Bale, 2003; Wise, 2011). National identities are place-bound and for newcomers to a country or ‘outsiders’ as in the Dominican Republic (cf. Wise, 2011), placemaking and feeling in or out of place in a national context is intimately tied up with identity and belonging. The forging of national identities can be both to a homeland where the sporting activity takes place (Bale, 2003), abroad homelands (Wise, 2011; Conner, 2017), and transnational homelands (Spaaij & Broerse, 2019). Identities and forms of belonging are carefully “constructed through various socio-spatial notions of inclusion and exclusion” (Conner, 2017, p. 202).

The critical geography of sport understands the discursive formation of place and has taken on board intersections among race, gender, place and power. Spatial frameworks of physical activity enable scholars to see place both as a medium and outcome of social relations. As such, O’Connor and Penney (2021) ask which bodies are out of place, and who has the “knowledge, skills and understandings” (p. 3) to read environments for physical activity purposes.

Physical activity in the context of super-diversity

The concept of multiculturalism or cultural diversity more broadly has been widely applied to physical activity studies (e.g. Hallinan & Jackson, 2008). This is notable in sport management where cultural diversity is approached as a resource (DeSensi, 1994), migrant or minority integration through sport in a multicultural society (Hatzigeorgiadis et al., 2013; Conner, 2017), ethnic and cultural identity formation (Spaaij & Broerse, 2019; MacClancy, 1996, Wise, 2011), refugee settlement through sport and physical activity (Spaaij et al., 2019), experiences by women of non-English speaking backgrounds (Ahmad et al., 2020; Taylor & Toohey, 1998), and individual and diasporic cultural expression through sport (McSweeney & Nakamura, 2020; Spaaij & Broerse, 2019; Thangaraj, 2015; Joseph, 2014; Burdsey et al., 2013). This concept of multiculturalism is also notable in indigenous models of sport (Skille, 2019), ‘best practices’ for

multicultural and inclusive sports clubs (Spaaij et al., 2019b; Daal et al., 2006), and diversity challenges faced by sports clubs (Spaaij et al., 2020).

Going back to the second theoretical pillar, central in everyday multiculturalism are social encounters between people in ordinary spaces. In the context of physical activities, encounters (rivalry) between teams are as much at the heart of many competitive forms of sports²² as they are in the negotiation of use of public space for walking, cycling and other forms of physical activity.²³ In this section, I will discuss the literature concerned with everyday multiculturalism and physical activity as it relates to organised sports and super-diversity, and pick-up sports and super-diversity.

Organised sports and super-diversity

The conceptual frameworks that focus on everyday multiculturalism in relation to urban super-diversity have been applied to organised sports, sports spectators and community clubs. In the context of Sydney soccer fans, Jorge Knijnik (2018) describes bodily behaviour in public spaces in multicultural encounters (cf. Wise, 2010). By participating in chants, fans “reinforce their ties with place (‘we love this city’), but also show how much their identity is intrinsically connected to their everyday multicultural embodied (‘shoulder to shoulder’) encounters” (Knijnik, 2018, p. 483). In a similar vein, Clark (2006) describes how football offers a space for fans (dominantly male) to create new forms of multicultural conviviality and reshape their social identities.

Jorge Knijnik and Ramón Spaaij (2017) investigate how multiculturalism is performed and challenged among a multicultural cohort of soccer fans. More specifically, the authors are interested in “how the micro-social practices and interactions of these football fans reflect or challenge the official, governmental discourse of multiculturalism and its attendant policies” (p. 37). The authors conclude that fandom practices go against the club’s effort to promote a family-

²² For example, Jan Janssens and Paul Verweel’s (2014) study discusses excerpts of racial micro-aggressions in the community sports context. The authors use racial micro-aggressions to refer to brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to people of colour or ethnic minority groups.

²³ See, for example, Cook et al.’s (2017) chapter, ‘Running order: Urban public space, everyday citizenship, and sporting subjectivities’ in Koch (2017).

friendly form of fandom; instead, football fans create new forms of cross-cultural conviviality that challenge the country's official, governmental discourse of multiculturalism.

Jora Broerse and Ramón Spaaij (2018) draw a similar conclusion in the Dutch context. The everyday multicultural convivialities at a community soccer club in Amsterdam lay bare the tensions within the public expectation to 'be multicultural'. The authors write: "Everyday group-making practices among Portuguese and Brazilian players reinforce group boundaries and constrain intercultural interaction, thereby challenging normative multiculturalism that prescribes ethnic mixing" (p. 417). By presenting the club as a multicultural and welcoming environment, the club creates a socially accepted space for ethnically concentrated sport participation. These studies demonstrate that 'celebrated' multiculturalism is the "top-down, governmental multiculturalism that embraces cultural diversity in so much as it does not disrupt hegemonic cultural powers" (Knijnik & Spaaij, 2017, p. 49; cf. Hage, 2000). On the micro-level, it contests the concept of a trouble-free co-ethnic club and that being a 'good' citizen "includes being multicultural, rather than emphasizing one's ethnic background" (Broerse & Spaaij, 2019, p. 429).

In the context of an amateur soccer event, an ethnographic study by Burdsey (2008) at the World Cup Amsterdam suggests that cross-cultural interactions are "unpredictable, contingent and ephemeral" (p. 273). The author notes that while nationality-based teams may mingle, this happens among different minority ethnic groups rather than between these groups and white groups. The author also observes that these lived experiences may be impacted by regulatory practices of official multiculturalism, and that the event reflects some of the inequalities of the mainstream sporting world.

James Rosbrook-Thompson (2020; 2018) critiques and builds on Vertovec's (2009) super-diversity to describe how male community soccer players make sense of diversity. The author explains the interlocking understandings of how space, place and various categories of difference shape the attitudes to migration and ethnicity among the male players, all with migrant background themselves. Rosbrook-Thompson highlights the prevalence of conflict and racism within super-diverse urban areas and introduces the term "granular essentialisms" (2018, p. 640). Granular essentialisms refer to the diversity the players are surrounded with as well as the

intersections between categories of differences on which engagement across boundaries take place (Rosbrook-Thompson, 2018).

Pick-up sports and super-diversity

Organised sports represent only one form of organising physical activity. For example, so-called pick-up sports have gained attention in relation to super-diversity, notably by scholars with academic backgrounds in diversity and urban geography disciplines rather than the sociology of sport. The broader interest in the issue demonstrates the relevance of sports spaces as a social setting, and how these constitute a super-diverse urban environment.

Wise et al. (2018), widely cited for their concept of everyday multiculturalism, argue that access to public space for sport is crucial in developing and maintaining a sense of belonging, particularly for the most marginalised communities in society. Focussing on ‘pick-up sport’, the authors write that these public spaces are under pressure as populations grow, as does competition over playing fields. For newly arrived migrants, “getting involved in pick-up sport can be an important first step into the friendships and social networks that help a newcomer with settlement, integration and belonging” (para. 7).

In their Urban Diversity & Pickup Sport research program (Urban Multiculture), Wise et al. (2018) investigate “informal sport within its urban context to better understand the influence of different city forms and traditions of public space, and how new patterns of urban governance, privatisation and gentrification matter in the formation of diverse communities through sport” (para. 4). Building on this research, Wise and Aquino (2018, p. n/a) argue for “more policy conversation around how conviviality, redistribution and recognition for diverse others can be built into the planning and design of public space”. In a more recent publication, Aquino et al. (2020) describe outdoor informal sport and urban belonging in multicultural spaces. These authors argue that “the spontaneous coming together to play, creative use of public space and a range of convivial practices, generate a sense of urban belonging” (p. 1).

Stanley Thangaraj’s (2015) study with South Asian American men describes how pick-up basketball creates a space where racial and masculine stereotypes are addressed and

challenged. Basketball is a platform for racial and ethnic identity formation and, through exclusion of women, queer masculinities, and working-class masculinities, lays claim to cultural citizenship. Similarly, Kristine Aquino (2015) examines how Filipino-Australians use a style of 'street ball' "to engage with corporality as a mode of everyday anti-racism" (p. 166). In these two studies, the body is the communicator of diversity as well as playing style through which players give meaning to ethnic and racial identity.

In a study on labour regimes with Latino migrants in Rabun County (Georgia, US), the use of soccer pitches by migrants was a repeated issue in the interviews (see also Santos-Gómez, 2014). The well-maintained public grass soccer pitches (often empty) were not available to the male players for either a pick-up game or a formal one. The only place Latino migrants could play soccer was in an abandoned parking lot. Lise Nelson's (2017) work is an interesting contribution to this field, as her background is neither in sports studies nor in diversity studies *per se*. Early in Nelson's (2017) research "It became clear that soccer games represent a set of spatial practices that spoke directly to the profound tensions between economic recruitment and social-civic exclusion faced by low-wage, racialized, and 'illegal' workers" (p. 127).

Studies on other forms of pick-up sports (also called 'urban sports') such as bike riding, skateboarding, playing ball, parkour and running, are notable also as they work on the physical activity/placemaking/urban diversity nexus. Although these forms of physical activity are not included in this thesis, the theoretical underpinnings are useful for this thesis' conceptual framework. Nicola De Martini Ugolotti (2015) describes how young men of migrant parents perform narratives of self-worth, belonging and recognition within marginalising and excluding urban environments. Specifically, the author looks at capoeira and parkour (described as daily leisure activities) in Turin (Italy). The study is situated within Turin's multicultural policy, which is in stark contrast to the realities of its contemporary urban context. The author describes how identity negotiations "took place through a complex reinterpretation and redefinition of their bodies and of the spaces they daily lived and crossed" (p. 30). In his analysis of the Lefebvrian thesis of urban spaces as social constructions, De Martini Ugolotti (p. 30) poses questions for future research, including: "How [are] hegemonic representations of masculinity negotiated or

reproduced? How [do] the practices observed reproduce, reflect or challenge current spatial and gendered power relations in Turin public spaces?”

In a follow-up publication, Nicola De Martini Ugolotti and Eileen Moyer (2016) describe how, again, children of migrants use their bodies through capoeira and parkour “to contest and reappropriate public spaces, thereby challenging dominant visions about what constitutes the public, how it should be used and by whom” (p. 188). They assert that the children of migrants are barely portrayed in public discourses and are seen as a threat to a modern and ordered society. The youth participating in this study “tactically navigate urban spaces made treacherous by Turin’s contemporary politics” (p. 189), with the public spaces transformed into resources to draw imagined futures and trajectories.

Studies outlined above on both organised sport and pick-up sport demonstrate the relevance of sports spaces as constitutive of super-diverse urban settings. In its most specific form, this thesis aims to contribute to this section of the literature. Some studies use the term ‘placemaking’ in particular, while others describe ‘attachment to place’ as belonging or local identity. Some literature discussed in this section refers to migrant populations residing in multicultural societies, while other publications focus on multicultural society as a whole (or on super-diverse population or a dominant racial group).

The studies presented above are qualitatively-orientated and draw on similar academic discussions in the (im)migration field, multiculturalism, and questions around equal or creative use of urban public space. Most studies were published mid-2010. The studies are concerned with movement of and encounters between (migrant/racial and ethnically diverse) bodies through the city, but move away from the question of migrant integration to lived experiences of movement and encounter in urban spaces. All studies grapple with the question of how the performance of physical activity fits into an increasingly diversifying urban environment. This alludes not only to the growing trend of informal sports, but also perhaps to the growing individual agency found in these spaces. I will now turn to complicity in physical activity studies.

Complicity in physical activity studies

Paradoxically, sport has the potential to oppress Indigenous and ethnic and racial minority bodies, while simultaneously providing a means of resistance and personal empowerment (for discussions on the gender/race nexus, see McGuire-Adams, 2020; McDonald et al., 2019; Ratna & Samie, 2017)²⁴. While the ways in which physical activity serves as a tool for colonisation have received considerable attention (e.g., Forsyth & Wamsley, 2006), Tricia McGuire-Adams (2020) encourages writers to examine how physical activity “is framed within a decolonial praxis, or said another way, [how] physical activity is used as a tool for personal decolonisation” (p. 11).

Previous work on how sport studies are implicated within the ongoing process of settler colonialism includes research by Sykes (2014) on the Vancouver Olympics, and Chen and Mason (2019) on sport management studies. Such research helps to “visualise settler colonialism in the broader sport management scholarship and practices” (McGuire-Adams, 2020, p. 14). McGuire-Adams argues that by “encouraging settler scholars to uncover how settler colonialism is present in their scholarship and teaching, the authors contribute to disrupting the seeming invisibility of settler colonialism in their field” (p. 14).

The inclusion of Indigenous perspectives on sport and physical activities is another way in which settler colonialism has been addressed, particularly in studies by Skille (2019), and Forsyth and Giles (2013), and in Sport for Development studies by Oxford and Spaaij (2019), Oxford (2018), and Hayhurst et al. (2016). Phiona Stanley’s (2019) work with obese hikers, women hiking alone, and hikers of colour illustrates how national parks maintain legacies of frontier colonialism and default understandings of legitimate outdoors people as necessarily white, able-bodied, straight, and male.

Through engaging in complicity in reading and writing about physical activity, my aim in this thesis is to define colonisation as an all-encompassing presence in our lives and, more specifically, as the foundational way of organising and understanding physical activity. The postcolonising physical activity spaces (see Moreton-Robinson, 2003) impacts placemaking performances through dominant discourses.

²⁴ See Bale and Cronin (2003) for a discussion on the wide-reaching effect of postcolonialism and sport from child-workers to world class athletes.

Concluding remarks

Sport sociologists and geographers alike have paid extensive attention to questions around how physical activity interacts with ethnicity, race, gender, and other intersectionalities. However, they have “yet to look at how sporting institutions may act as sites for the accommodation of and/or resistance to super-diversity” (Rosbrook-Thompson, 2018, p. 640). While the studies discussed in the third pillar attest to the idea that sport/physical activity researchers have yet to look at the intersection of sport and diversity, I agree that this is a growing field, and it is where this thesis is embedded and contributes.

The three pillars are distinct yet complimentary. Lefebvre’s (1991) spatial triad offers a framework to consider spatial practices, representation of space (including the governing of space), and representational space in a particular geographic area. The three dimensions together paint a complex and multi-layered picture of placemaking. Placemaking is about everyday experiences of place, how people create and are created by their material environment, and the (governing) stories told about these spaces. The second pillar offers tools to conceptualise the super-diverse space in which this study is located. How is public space used, governed and lived from multiculturalism ideologies? Everyday multiculturalism is about how differences are experienced and mediated. With its focus on physical activities, the third pillar in this thesis deepens the conceptual framework by describing physical activity as a socially (and spatially) constructed site. As urban geographers emphasise, sport/physical activity places are never neutral (Koch, 2017; Muller Myrdahl, 2011).

Epistemologically, the three bodies of literature have in common an appreciation for the lived and embodied experience. It is through temporal routines and rhythms that public space is shared and experienced for the purpose of physical activity. Qualitative methods including ethnography and in-depth interviews are well suited to capture lived experiences, changes and conflict in diversity and physical activity. It is the issue of methodology to which I now turn.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

The methodological framework for this thesis is shaped by the main theoretical concepts discussed in the previous chapter and formed through fieldwork. This thesis is concerned with the use of public space, everyday multiculturalism and placemaking. I ask: How, in a super-diverse neighbourhood, do residents and people from other council areas engage in placemaking through physical activity? How can we study the continuous process of placemaking in which space shapes and is shaped by human interactions at both the individual and collective level (cf. Lefebvre, 1991; Massey, 2005)? How can we study a topic that is inherently material and human at the same time? How can we grasp the political struggles that reveal who is in and out of space in urban diverse area (cf. Cresswell, 1992)? To answer these questions, I apply geographical and sociological concepts that are concerned with physical activity and urban diversity.

Qualitative methods including ethnography and in-depth interviews lend themselves well to studying questions around lived experiences, placemaking, and use of (urban) space. It enables researchers to immerse themselves in a specific research area for an extensive period of time. Ethnography involves participating in “people’s daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said” (Atkinson & Hammersley, 2007, p. 3). In this case, participating in ‘people’s daily lives’ meant my participating in some of their physical activities.

Ethnography is both the methodology and guiding writing style in this thesis; given this, the data is presented in a holistic manner describing the life worlds of research participants. This thesis is the product of 1.5 years of in-depth research in an urban setting and engages with some of the complex dynamics of social life (Pardo & Prato, 2018). On the one hand it tells detailed stories about peoples’ lives and experiences, and on the other engages with macro-level discussions. Everyday events are translated into larger understandings of social and spatial relations. The ethnographic method is an inherently personal endeavour; data is collected though

in-depth interviews and through personal, bodily, experiences and observations that I captured in field notes. The methodology includes a critical reflection of my positionality, my activity participation, and ethnography as placemaking itself (Pink, 2008). In this chapter, I describe the methodological choices I made and challenges I faced in detail, including the data analysis approach.

Data collection: Design and methods

Data collection took place from May 2018 to December 2019. Interviews were collected in June 2018 and in November-December 2019. As I am a resident of the area, however, the line between official data collection and observing relevant developments is vague. ‘Leaving the field’ is only possible to a certain extent as I continue to live, socialise, volunteer, visit shops and cafés, exercise and engage in other leisure activities in the area. The mandatory restrictions imposed by the government during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic challenged the idea of ‘leaving the field’ further. A dramatic change in physical activity behaviour and use of (semi)public spaces during that time posed questions over (un)equal sharing of space. Sharing (semi)public spaces for physical activity in a super-diverse neighbourhood became ever relevant. For this reason, I have included a short section on physical activity during COVID-19 restrictions at the end of all four data chapter (sports clubs, migrant settlement through sport program, community centres, and public parks).

The following sections outline my working assumptions, fieldwork selection approach, how I observed and gathered field notes, interviews, document analysis, data analysis, and a note on excluded data. Over the years, I have followed social media accounts (Facebook and Twitter) as well as newsletters from the Swifts soccer club, community centres and official City Council accounts. My aim was to follow recent events and to compliment other data collection methods more so than to complete a full social media study.

Working assumptions

In this chapter, I describe how I selected fieldwork sites within the municipality. Before I do so, I note that neighbourhoods, cities and suburbs alike are social constructs. While signified geographical areas enable demographic statistics that can be compared with other areas (Arthurson, 2013), I worked from the assumption that geographical areas, in particular densely built urban spaces, are as much a spatial location as a form of culture or lifestyle (Latham et al., 2008). The spatial representation of a geographical area seems at first a coherent entity; however, there is great diversity within such an area. The City of Maribyrnong exemplifies this, encompassing as it does a range of separate spatial entities as well as a diversity of lifestyles.

Given this, my first assumption is that place is formative to social activity and the urban is constructed and constitutive of forms of diversity. I centralise the geographical ontology of the formative role of place structuring social activity. Questions that follow from this include: How does the meaning of place change during the day? How do social groups attach themselves to a locale? Who has the social power to decide what can happen in that space (Herbert, 2010; Sack, 1986)? Epistemologically, these questions can be approached by “direct experience with the group in question, through close contact and on-going interaction” (Herbert, 2010, p. 71). Social action is always significantly embedded in place, to follow human geographical ontology. Working from this assumption, I look at (semi)public places that not only facilitate social physical activities but also are shaped by people forming these activities.

How, then, to identify (semi)public spaces in a diverse area? Ethnic diversity and other forms of diversity can be found at many places in the City of Maribyrnong; in fact, the City’s fabric is construed from the diversity of its inhabitants. My second working assumption, then, is that the City not only ‘hosts’ people with a multitude of backgrounds but also is constructed and constitutive of these diversities. In other words, diversity is expressed everywhere in various forms. Moreover, a focus on diversity challenges us to rethink the value of small-scale ethnographic fieldwork sites investigating a group of migrants sharing the same ethnic background (Olwig, 2013). Furthermore, this means that the white non-migrant majority living in the City must be included in the definition of diversity. This avoids associating diversity with pre-defined notions of ethnic or migrant ‘other’ (Olwig, 2013). It is with these conceptual

discussions in mind that I aimed to select multiple ‘diverse’ fieldwork sites and invite interview participants.

My third working assumption is that the everyday is worth studying. Going beyond transnational ties, researchers emphasise the importance of local modes of belonging and local ties that cross ethnic communities (e.g., Olwig, 2013; Flazon, 2009; Amin & Thrift, 2002; Escobar, 2001). In super-diverse urban areas, these local ties and the more fleeting intercultural encounters take place every day. Hence, mundane sites play a significant role in how people engage with ethnic/cultural diversity (Harris, 2009; Nayak, 2003), give meaning to ethnic or cultural identities (Amin, 2002), and offer places where national discourses find their local effect (Duyvendak, 2011). To use Williamson’s (2015) phrase, it is the spatiality of “folk knowledge of everyday life” (p. 82) that forms enquiry in this thesis. These knowledges or spatial experiences can be described as mundane or even unseen (Soja, 2010), yet the everyday “provides a methodological entry point to theorising the operation of processes at various scales from the body to the global,” as feminist geographer Isabel Dyck notes (2005, p. 234). This micro and macro is evident in Essed’s (1991) work as well, where the everyday is seen not only as a mundane site but as a “category of social relations operative in everyday life” (p. 8).

Finally, my fourth working assumption sees physical activity as a socially constructed site that reflects not only society’s challenges and celebrations but also actively creates norms and values that see its impact outside of sport. Following Ramón Spaaij, Karen Farquharson, and Timothy Marjoribanks (2015), I approach sport, and physical activity more broadly, as an environment that “reflects and reinforce[s] broader hierarchical structures; how it serves as a site both for inclusion and exclusion... [and] is ultimately a site for social reproduction of hierarchy and social stratification” (p. 400). It is a way to explore society’s broader socio-cultural issues including gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, and even urban planning. Or as Alister John and Brent McDonald (2020) put it in the context of urban planning: “in Melbourne [elite] sport operates as ‘cultural glue’ to establish the logic of neoliberalism” (p. 1184).

Ethnographic fieldwork: Participatory research and placemaking

This research project focusses on a particular urban area and the use of public spaces and social interactions within this area. Ethnography is based on observing and engaging in the same activities as the participants (as much as possible), and subsequently documenting these sociocultural activities (Browner & Mabel Preloran, 2006). Through participation, a mutual relationship based on trust can be established between researcher and interlocutors. Rapport and trust are important aspects of ethnographic fieldwork. This kind of research is based on collaboration, and without this collaboration the research is not possible (Gottlieb, 2006). Building relationships and subjecting yourself, your body and your personality in the field makes it possible to get “close to them while they are responding to what life does to them ... [and] pick up on their minor grunts and groans as they respond to their situation” (Goffman, 1989, p. 125).

‘Hanging out’ in physical activity spaces and other relevant places in the neighbourhoods forms a basis in getting to know people and their use of space. As Caughy et al. (2001, p. 225) explain, social patterns and “beliefs regarding individual behaviours, can only be assessed by talking to neighbourhood residents.” Through talking with these residents and users of the neighbourhood facilities more broadly, both dominant as well as other views and experiences of a neighbourhood come to the fore. This is important, as Visser, Bolt, and van Kempen (2015), for example, state in their Dutch case study that youths’ experiences of their environments differs from the hegemonic discourse. In a similar vein, Hoekstra and Dahlvik (2018) describe how neighbourhood residents envision collective space differently and how selective governmental initiatives influence residents’ experiences. Ethnographic research provides suitable tools to look beyond the hegemonic opinion of, in this case, multiculturalism, and residents’ possibly fluid, multi-layered forms of placemaking and belonging (e.g., Oke et al., 2018; Hall, 1990; in the context of sport see: Aquino et al., 2020; Spaaij & Broerse, 2019; Spaaij & Broerse, 2018).

As the theoretical framework of this thesis demonstrates, placemaking is a varied and complex process. Ethnography is often described as an interpretivist approach that resists schemes or models that oversimplify the complexity of everyday life (O’Reilly & Bone, 2008; Denzin, 1971). One way to observe the multi-layered placemaking performances and the various (endless) routines that residents establish is through investing time and, as a resident, I was able to spend a

lot of time with people at ovals, parks and in community centres. A leisure walk after work, even before and after the ‘official’ data collection period, was always an opportunity to see groups of people I hadn’t seen before in the area or run into someone I had previously met and have a chat. Hence, I became part of the hourly, daily, seasonal and daylight/night spatial practices in public space. This is the reason Sarah Pink (2008) suggests theorising the ethnographic method itself as placemaking practice. This ‘sensory sociality of placemaking’ contributes to “understandings of both how people constitute urban environments through embodied and imaginative practices and how researchers become attuned to and constitute ethnographic places” (p. 177).

Because ethnography and particularly participant observation is an embodied practice, my body functioned as a method of data collection as much as my personal experiences formed a valuable source of data in understanding the topic at hand. Longhurst et al. (2008, p. 209), for example, use their bodies as “an instrument of research” in relation to knowledge production, with bodies emerging as primary frames of reference through which all interactions filter. Through interactions and being comfortable or uncomfortable and very aware of my own body and presence, learning takes place and reflection becomes possible.

Using one’s own body as a data collection method requires a body to ‘look’ in a particular way, be an appropriate presence, and to possess the required capabilities or skills. This is particularly important in performing ethnography in the sports context. Participating in numerous activities has its limits – physical limits. Throughout the course of fieldwork I learned that there is such a thing as too much physical activity and that meeting the demands of being a good and present soccer player, I had to cut down on other activities. More importantly, a certain level of fitness is essential. Previous research (Broerse & Spaaij, 2019) at a soccer club enabled me to build a particular ‘carnal knowhow’ (Wacquant, 2015) to function in the soccer space. Even though the entry level of this team was quite low and the team offered a place to play for players completely new to the game, the experience offered a welcoming familiarity with the game. All other activities required a low level of fitness and, in their individual form, there was no comparable team dependency as in the soccer team.

Having the ‘appropriate appearance’ should be extended to the male/female body and appropriate gender performances. Not in all spaces was I bodily comfortable. When visiting a futsal meeting organised through MeetUp at a Victoria University court, I was the only woman around and not comfortable watching a bunch of men playing futsal. The organiser was very busy and I didn’t have a chance to introduce myself. The players made teams and started playing. In a situation where there is no official competition, I felt it didn’t make sense to be a spectator. I really had no ‘legitimate’ reason to be there. Although I cannot remember players looking at me or giving me questioning looks, I felt uncomfortable as a woman in the men’s space that the court formed at that moment. I left after a few minutes and cycled home. While it didn’t work out on that particular day, I was able to participate in an all-male informal soccer team later on in the research.

Selection of fieldwork sites

The unit of analysis are the (semi)public spaces within the City of Maribyrnong that may be visited by residents of the designated area, but also from ‘outside’. The selection of fieldwork sites was a continuous and collaborative process.

Before I commenced ‘official’ data collection in May 2018, I had lived in the area for nearly a year after coming from overseas. During this period, I familiarised myself with different neighbourhoods within the Council area, explored small and large (semi)open public spaces including parks, ovals and other recreational areas, and performed casual observations as to who used the grounds and when. As a migrant and new to the area, I started on my own settlement journey as well. In the first year this included finding good running and cycling routes, and a swimming pool and squad where I felt comfortable.

Besides engaging in sporting activities for my personal recreation, not as a researcher, I started collecting and reading City Council documents on management of public open spaces and sports facilities. These Council documents and my own mapping of the physical activities and spaces in the neighbourhoods gave a solid (although never complete) overview of the different kinds of physical activities offered and performed. Based on this overview I selected (semi)public

sites where various forms of physical activity were performed: sports clubs, neighbourhood centres, and self-organised physical activities in public parks. Diversity in (the organisational form of) physical activities added another selection criterion to the above-mentioned ethnic diversity discussion. With this *comparative strategy* I chose, after Herbert (2010), “a particular arena of social action [or geographical places] to study, and then examine how and why it varies across space” (p. 77). This strategy enabled me to compare experiences of diversity and practices of placemaking within a governmental geographical area. It also enabled me to “discuss the relationships between places and various social forces,” and “to catalogue both the factors that generate difference and those that compel similarity” (p. 77).

The various fieldwork localities are used by a variety of social entities that form the basis of four data chapters: sports clubs, migrant settlement programs, community neighbourhood centres, and informal physical activity groups. While the social entities may vary in its exclusiveness of participants (e.g., not everyone can join a migrant settlement program, whereas neighbourhood centre activities are available to all/more people), they all use *public space* for their activities. At times, different social entities use the same public space. The line between localities and social activities, however, is not so clear-cut. In some cases a public space was the starting point (Johnson Reserve, home ground of the women’s only soccer club), whereas in other cases a social entity brought me to a public space (a Bangladeshi/multicultural male soccer group who visits Footscray Park on a daily basis).

All sites were contacted prior to my taking part in activities. First, I contacted the organisation or a contact person through email or phone to briefly discuss my research intentions. This was then followed up by a face-to-face meeting to discuss further and look for shared interests. In the case of the three community centres, the centre facilitators introduced me to the physical activity facilitators or walking groups. In the case of the soccer club, communication around the research project and my participation with board members took place mainly through email and one phone conversation; board members then introduced me to the team after a training session. After a few weeks at the club, competition teams were formed with new players commencing and other players quitting. The continuing coming and going of players in the state

4 team required an on-going commitment on my side to seek informed consent and introduce myself as a research as well as a player. Participation with the Spring into Summer series and other Council activities was enabled by the City of Maribyrnong Active Recreation team. A friend connected me with the Bangladeshi/multicultural soccer group, and I approached a bocce group whom I had seen playing multiple times through spending time in the neighbourhood.

Table 1 outlines details about the fieldwork locations and where they are presented in this thesis.

Table 1 Fieldwork locations.

Data chapters and fieldwork localities			
Activity		Period	Details and my role
Chapter 4: The Neighbourhood			
1	Quotes from relevant interviews		
Chapter 5: Sports clubs			
2	Maribyrnong Swifts Football Club	January – October	Player in a state 4 team
	(soccer)	2019	Volunteer in the 2020 and 2021 season
Chapter 6: Migrant Settlement program			
3	Western Bulldogs Community	May – October 2018	Evaluation of migrant settlement program
	Foundation (Australian football)		Partly participating, partly implementation support
Chapter 7: Community Centres			
4	Yoga and Tai Chi classes	February –	Maidstone, Maribyrnong and Braybrook
		December 2019	community centres
			Participant of classes
5	Walking group	March – June 2019	Organised by the Maribyrnong Community
			Centre
			Walking participant

6	Spring into Summer series	December 2018 and 2019	Organised by City of Maribyrnong council Participant
7	Walk 'n Talk winter series	July 2019	Informative walking tours through Maidstone/West-Footscray area aimed at encouraging residents to organise their own walking groups, organised by City Council at Maidstone Community centre. Walking participant

Chapter 8: Informal sports and parks

8	Bangladeshi/multicultural soccer team	October – December 2019	At Footscray Park Participant in weekly trainings/games after the competition season ended
9	Bocce group	April – November 2019	At Triangle Park Few chats with participants
10	Informal physical activity	Throughout 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020	Observations of and personal participation in physical activities throughout the City (e.g., tennis, cycling, walking, running). Interview participants were invited to share their experiences around such informal physical activities.

Field notes

Observations form an important source of data that are documented in the form of field notes and are written during and, more elaborately, after a day in the field. Thick descriptions, detailed and context-sensitive field notes (Geertz, 1973) of (personal) field experiences make it possible to re-

imagine the situation at a later stage in the research. These notes contain informal conversations among and with participants, as well as behavioural and contextual observations. My personal (bodily) experiences are included as well. All topics related to the research project that were discussed or physically performed are included in the journal, ranging from interactions and discussions among research participants and their social and physical surrounding to conversations with individuals about their personal histories.

Writing field notes, however, is not simply a process of jotting down facts about what happens. Rather, it involves active processes of interpretation and sense-making on the part of the researcher (Emerson et al., 1995). Also, the ethnographer is responsible for turning a witnessed event into a reconstructable account by writing down that which otherwise would not have been documented (Hirschauer, 2006; Geertz, 1973). There are various ways of dealing with such subjectivity in writing field notes. Emerson et al. (1995) aim for an understanding of what experiences of interlocutors means to them by talking to those involved about their impressions rather than jotting down (solely) observations. In addition, field notes should be seen as a continuing process which “builds new insight and understanding upon prior insights and understandings” (Emerson et al., 1995, p. 13). My field notes also lay the foundation for interview questions to ensure the continuation of building on insights and my interpretation of events in comparison with others’ visions.

Interviews

Interviews are central in qualitative research designs and can be well combined with a range of other methods. Towards the end of data collection, I started conducting interviews. Experiences, feelings and thoughts are not visible and only accessible via the spoken word. Sociologists and geographers interested in placemaking have used interviews with people from diverse heritages and backgrounds to unpack multicultural and multi-ethnic encounters and their impact on people’s sense of places (Peterson, 2019; Lobo, 2010; Wise 2010). Understanding the multiple ways of placemaking and of using place in a super-diverse neighbourhood demands an interview method that enables the exploration of different ways of knowing and experiences.

I met all interview participants at the fieldwork sites before inviting them to be interviewed. The interview cohort reflects super-diversity and identifies in many different and multiple ways, including age, sexualities, genders, ethnicities, religious affiliations, household types, socio-economic statuses, and varying migration backgrounds. Participants took part in different types of physical activities, including sport club based, pick-up games, community centre and informal participation, with some respondents engaging in multiple forms.

Before the interview, I provided a digital or hard-copy information sheet and informed consent form. Along with these forms, I invited all interview participants to take pictures of places where they prefer to be physically active and places where they do not feel welcome or comfortable being physically active. I provided a sheet with further details. Three interviewees took pictures and showed these to me during the interview. In the interviews without pictures, I asked interviewees to describe the places they prefer and prefer not to visit. Reasons for not taking pictures included not having time and not sure where to take the pictures.

The following six themes offered a guide in the interviews. The interviews resembled more of a discussion than an interview that followed a strict question regime. I invited participants to ask me questions too. Additionally, I included social demographics (year of birth, highest completed education level, occupation) of interviewees. In total, 43 people accepted the interview invitation. The 18 interviews with participants from fieldwork site 1 (Western Bulldogs Community Foundation) followed a slightly different interview topic list and were reinterpreted in light of the conceptual framework of this thesis.

Theme 1: Living in the neighbourhood. Which suburb do you live in? When and why did you move to this area? Where did you live before and why did you leave that area? Which facilities (including parks) do you make use of in your daily life? .

Theme 2: The neighbourhood and perceptions of urban diversity. How would you describe the City of Maribyrnong/your neighbourhood in terms of diversity? (Diversity can include ethnicity, religion, SES, education, lifestyles and other ways people express themselves.) What do you think of this diversity? How would you describe the people living in your neighbourhood? What kind

of interactions and where, if any, do interactions take place between residents? To which groups do you feel you belong most? Has the neighbourhood changed during the time you have lived there?

Theme 3: Identity and diversity. How would you describe your identity? How are you similar to or different from your friends? (In this theme we talked about how diversity matters, if at all, and what it means for them personally. This could range from sexuality, gender, religion, household type, socio-economic status, diversity in physical activity, and ethnicity and culture.)

Theme 4: (Family) migration history. *If applicable:* What was the reason for you, your parents or grandparents to migrate? Do you talk about ethnic (or cultural) topics with your family or friends?

Theme 5: Diversity, interactions, and physical activity. Can you tell me about your current physical activity engagement? (This includes the activity part of the research and other sites.) In terms of diversity at neighbourhood and individual level, how is that diversity reflected in sports activities? Do interactions with other people take place in physical activity spaces? If so, do these interactions traverse various forms of diversity? Do you feel welcome/at home in sports spaces?

Theme 6: Placemaking in physical activity. Building on the previous theme, which public parks do you make use of for physical activity? Do you visit these places for other reasons? How do you commute to these places? Where do you/where don't you feel welcome? *If applicable:* Of which places (places you prefer to go or avoid for physical activity purposes) did you take pictures?

Document analysis

Human experiences and bodily movements through neighbourhood spaces engage in a dialectic relationship with written policies. Throughout this project, I collected and analysed City Council documents and policies concerned with management of public spaces, sport facility plans, and topics around multiculturalism and interculturalism. Text is a central aspect in representation of space (one of the three dimensions in Lefebvre's (1991) spatial triad). All documents were available on the Council website and policy research agencies.

Data analysis

The raw data collection for this project, including interview transcripts, fieldwork diary, photos (my own and those of participants), were analysed using software NVIVO 11. I completed the analysis in two steps. The first analysis step, or open coding, involved the allocation of nodes and memos I came across reading the data, with this analysis step “not naïvely inductive, but iterative-inductive” (O’Reilly & Bone, 2008, p. 37). The second analysis step aligned the analyses of different documents and clarified subtle differences where needed. I then created themes out of a set of nodes that relate more closely to the literature such as use of place, meaning of place, (intercultural) interactions, and forms of physical activity. The themes constructed from these nodes provided the basis for the chapters. I took an iterative approach to analysing and writing that enabled me to go back and forth between the data, nodes/themes, and chapters. It was a constant process of revising, excluding and including (ir)relevant quotations and excerpts. As the use of quotes or small sections of an interview may run the risk of losing contextual information critical to correctly understand the meaning of a section, I included context where needed and edited quotes to enhance readability.

I entered this research with a pre-existing understanding of theoretical frameworks. Approaching the concepts of inductive and deductive research as ideal-types (Weber, 1910, in Calhoun et al., 2012), I took a grounded theory²⁵ approach that aimed at building and contributing to (existing) theories, going “back and forth, always mobilising some theoretical framework yet perpetually troubling that framework with the data at hand” (Herbert, 2010; p. 73).

Excluded data

Invitations to people to take part in a research project can be accepted or declined. Declines and exclusion of data from a research are important aspects of the research process. I hereby refer not to the plethora of data for which there was no room in this thesis or the two people that declined an interview invitation, but to ‘unsuccessful’ or harmful encounters in the field.

²⁵ See Glaser and Strauss (1967) for the most common description of grounded theory.

In an attempt to include more informal activities in the project, I approached groups through the MeetUp platform. The MeetUp website offers a platform for individuals or groups to get in contact and organise all types of leisure activities. People initiate an activity or can reach out to become member of a group. Some groups have requirements and are more exclusive than other groups which are open to anyone. The organiser can ask participants to pay them up to A\$5 as a token for their effort. Through the app I participated once in a walking group and visited a male pick-up futsal team.

The walking group organiser accepted my request to participate and was welcoming. I briefly introduced myself at the start of the activity and handed out information sheets and consent forms for people who were interested in taking part in an interview. Most walkers had known each other for a while and did not seem to be keen to have a researcher participating in their group activity. As per usual, the group consumed a coffee and breakfast after the walk and I sat and talked with two other first-time walkers. The core group did not express interest through verbal or bodily language; I thanked the organiser and decided not to join the group again. The pick-up futsal event described in the above section *Ethnographic fieldwork: Participatory research and placemaking* is another example of an ‘unsuccessful’ encounter. Not having had a chance to introduce myself, being the only female in the room and without other spectators like at a competition, I felt there was no ‘legitimat’ reason for me to be in this space.

One interview is not included in the thesis for a reason other than lack of relevant content. The interview was conducted with a middle-aged male who participated in a community centre activity and took place towards the end of the research project. We had seen and talked over the duration of the physical activity program, five sessions to be exact. I communicated to all interview participants recruited in this environment that the interview had to take place in a public space. This differed with people I had established long-term relations with, such as members of the female soccer team. The man and I agreed to meet in a park, which turned out to be in front of his house. I accepted the invitation to enter his house not wanting to lose the interview, but also crossed my safety boundaries. We immediately commenced the interview. We sat down on a couch and while I was introducing the interview and going through the formalities, he grabbed

my sheet with questions and asked if I had started the recording. I said yes and he started reading the questions out loud and provided answers. I tried to explain my working method in which I ask the question and we discuss the topics. He ignored this and replied that he did interviews for his medical job too so he understood the procedure. The total recording time was 29 minutes spread out over three recordings as he stopped the recording several times for a reason unknown to me. During the interview he slowly moved closer to me on the couch and touched my leg when asking what certain questions meant. Unable to retrieve control over the interview, I moved away from him and left.

I decided to exclude the interview data while including this experience of uninvited physical contact. It is a way to regain control over the situation, but also to normalise the act of writing about these issues. While sexual harassments, small, large, incidental or structural, are concerningly common, they tend to be marginalised in methodological discussions of ethnographic research (Kloß, 2017). On this, Hanson and Richards (2017) argue that unwanted interactions are often ignored in the ‘tale of the fields’ because they are irrelevant to the fieldwork at hand. The authors’ finding is based on 50 interviews with female ethnographic researchers looking into migrant populations, social movements, and sports and leisure activities. Moreover, these experiences shape the ethnographer, their research-related decisions, and thus the construction of ethnographic knowledge (Hanson & Richards, 2017). Leaving out data is one such decision. I follow Hanson and Richards’ (2017) reasoning that women’s experiences of harassment and sexualisation in the field should not be seen as unimportant or irrelevant to the construction of knowledge, as gender, sexuality, and embodiment are inherently part of that construction process. I will now continue the discussion of positionality.

Positionality

This section is composed of the following sections. I will start with a discussion on my Dutch background and, using the concept of complicity, reflect on my multiple roles in fieldwork.

Complicity in research

When describing my positionality, it is essential to look at the Dutch colonial context. From the 17th century, Dutch travelled the world establishing imperial outposts in different forms and in many different places worldwide. The main argument Wekker (2016b) makes is that after 400 years of imperialism based on racial categorisation and white superiority, racism is ingrained in the consciousness of the nation. This racism and its present-day effects, however, are ignored and as Wekker (2016b: 49) writes:

there is also a specificity to Dutch racism, which includes the Dutch inability so far to seriously work through and come to terms with the Dutch colonial past, its strong attachment to a self-image that stresses being an innocent and just, small ethical nation, being a victim rather than a perpetrator of violence.

Thus, the national inability to come to terms with the country's colonial past enables similar forms of racism to continue.

Throughout my PhD, I engaged in a process to understand how Dutch colonialism forms my positionality and how it influences my research. Living and working in Australia – another country that is unable to come to terms with its colonial past and the continued impacts that are highly present in daily life²⁶ – was the main driver to question this part of my positionality. Whereas in the Netherlands I am an 'insider' and part of the discussion, my 'outsider' position in Australia makes it easier to be critical, and consequently turn the critical gaze back on myself. This process has been a struggle. Finding definitive answers to how colonial history and continued consequences shape my research has not been straightforward. At the time of writing this, I had spent ten years in academia. Academia, forms of legitimate scientific knowledge, use of theory, as well as valuing the written word over verbal stories are Western constructs, as Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) famously wrote.

²⁶ This is not to say there is no continued colonial impact from the Dutch colonial empire.

The positional reflection goes hand in hand with a postcolonial reading of multiculturalism and diversity studies; as such, I have incorporated these readings throughout this thesis. Benjamin Davis and Jason Walsh's (2020) article on the politics of positionality outlining the differences between post-, anti-, and de-colonial methods has been particularly useful. I will follow their outline of postcolonialism, illustrated through Gayatri Spivak's (1999) work. The concept of 'complicity' and locating the figure of the intellectual are central.

For Spivak (1999), the theorist should acknowledge their complicity in what they aim to critique. They should also position themselves with respect to canonical European philosophical figures and "involve an honest reckoning with the limitations of canonical figures while foregrounding an emphasis on reading for productive purpose in the present" (Spivak in Davis & Walsh, 2020, p. 3). This 'constructive complicity' encourages the reader to read critically and 'ab-use' the text: "a kind of use that lacks fidelity to original intention and instead employs a method for its own purpose" (p. 4). Clearly, Lefebvre's (1991) theory is foundational in this thesis and is just such a 'canonical figure'.²⁷ I use his concepts throughout this thesis and thus may not have fully 'ab-used' his texts in Spivak's terms. Reading his texts with 'complicity' and including critique on his work as well as critical/postcolonial diversity studies offers a less homogenous theoretical framework.

Second, Spivak (in Davis & Walsh, 2020) encourages the researcher to call into question one's own position. Specifically, she sees positionality "as a method of noting and making explicit exclusions that are always already present, if hidden" (p. 5). Indeed, theoretical attention should be turned from "speaking for another to speaking about one's own position" (p. 5). Positionality is widely discussed within and outside postcolonial studies. The next section will dive into how

²⁷ The following excerpt from Smith (2012, pp. 50-51) is constructive here: "Lefebvre argues that the notion of space has been 'appropriated by mathematics' which has claimed an ideological position of dominance over what space means. Mathematics has constructed a language which attempts to define with absolute exactness the parameters, dimensions, qualities and possibilities of space. This language of space influences the way the West thinks about the world beyond earth (cosmology), the ways in which society is viewed (public/private space, city/country space), the ways in which gender roles were defined (public/domestic, home/work) and the ways in which the social world of people could be determined (marketplace/theatre). Compartmentalized, space can be better defined and measured." See also my discussion in Chapter 2 on the disruption of Lefebvre's spatial coherency offered by Doreen Massey (2005), and an Australian Indigenous understanding of place that involves a deep (spiritual) connection to place and earth.

my positionality in combination with the multiple roles that I took up in fieldwork situates my knowledges.

*Multiple roles and situated knowledges*²⁸

During the course of my fieldwork, I embodied multiple forms of being in the field. Besides being a student/researcher, I am a resident of the City of Maribyrnong, a migrant, and an active participant. Working in the diversity space and coming into contact with people of different walks of life, the multiple forms of being enabled various forms of making connection. Depending on the situation, I would emphasise one identity or a combination of identities. It must be noted that these identities complemented my central role as researcher/student. This research took place in the area where Victoria University is situated, and some of the people I met at research sites were in classes I tutored.

Donna Haraway (1988), a celebrated and widely referenced sociologist and feminist, argues that there is no such notion of a singular world or scientific objectivity. To compliment Spivak's idea of positionality, I follow Haraway's work. My view on the world as researcher does not provide or enable a better view of reality, but it does offer a partial perspective. Haraway calls for an embodied objectivity that highlights situatedness of knowledge, with 'objectively' referring to "particular and specific embodiment" (p. 582).

Going beyond the politics of difference and of representation is a personal endeavour on the part of the researcher as well. Stuart Aitken (2010) writes that the researcher must cross multiple axes of difference in order to *learn with* others and approach difference as vectors of connectedness. Through learning with others, encounters are turned into productive spatialities. In this section, I discuss my positionality related to the research topics at hand and how it shaped the project.

In sociology and geography, the work of feminist and other critical thinkers has been crucial in reflecting upon the multiple positionalities of the researcher (Kobayashi, 2003;

²⁸ Knowledges, knowledge in plural, refers to the countless forms of knowledges and disrupts the idea of a single truth or a single knowledge system.

Mohammad, 2001; Skelton, 2001), and the ways in which various identities may influence and shape research encounters, processes and outcomes (e.g., Hopkins, 2007; Valentine, 2005). My socioeconomic and other characteristics (female, white, heterosexual, Dutch migrant, university-educated, a 'gentrifier') influence the way I perceive the world, assumptions I make, and the research questions I ask. Also, a key dimension of this research is that I am a migrant myself. My personal migration story is one of choice rather than one forced on me by war, an unstable political home environment, or an unsafe situation in any other way. Being a 'migrant of choice' asks for sensitivity towards others' situations who are not as mobile as me, do not have the option to travel to their home country any time soon, and are living in multicultural, at times stigmatised, urban areas not of their choosing. My choice to migrate to Melbourne for educational reasons is often received with surprise by people who had to forcefully leave their homes. 'There is good education system in the Netherlands, right?' is a question I was often asked by people trying to make sense of why I of all people would make such a move.

This understanding extends to my personal behaviour and experiences. I have kept a self-reflexive journal to track changes in my own perceptions of multiculturalism, placemaking, and relevant topics. An example of a moment of reflection is captured in the following excerpt. In March 2019, I attended a multicultural neighbourhood meeting organised by a local Somali Women's organisation. The organisation is concerned with empowering women and assisting newly arrived migrants and refugees (mainly from the horn of Africa) in their resettlement. Besides offering support to newly arrived migrants, the organisation aims to create a well-connected neighbourhood and enhance intercultural contact among residents of the Footscray/Maidstone/Sunshine/Braybrook area. They organise monthly bonding-and-bridging meetings in which cultural traditions are shared. Most attendees were born in Somalia or have Somali-born parents, others have Ukrainian, Kenyan, Philippian, or Australian heritages. I participated in four meetings and in the first meeting we sat on chairs in a circle and introduced ourselves. I introduced myself as a student from Victoria University who migrated from the Netherlands with my partner for study purposes. As in previous instances, people tried to make

sense of my migration motivations and also asked if my partner is Australian or Dutch. I responded:

‘Yes, my partner is Dutch too. We were both born in Amsterdam.’ The woman sitting next to me said she has relatives living in the Netherlands and that there is a big Somali community there. I smiled and nodded yes. Then a silence took over the room. The eleven women in the room watched me as if they were waiting for me to continue talking about myself or my partner. I hesitated for a second to talk more about my partner’s family history, with his Jewish mother coming from Israel and moving to the Netherlands in the 1980s to live with his father. I decided not to. Marcia, today’s convener, took over again and asked the woman on my left to introduce herself.

Why was I so hesitant to talk about my partner’s Jewish background in a room filled with mainly Somali Muslim women? And should I have talked about it, for the purpose of sharing and breaking down cultural or religious barriers? My decision not to talk about my Jewish connections might have been because I assumed that hijab-wearing women probably did not want to be associated with Jewishness, or might not have trusted me if I disclosed this information. This question haunted me for the rest of the week, and still I wonder if as a researcher I should have taken responsibility for further sharing, ignoring Jewish-Muslim conflicts raging in various places in the world, with Israel representing the geopolitical source of this conflict, and aligning myself with the purpose of this meeting: bonding and bridging difference. Instead, I chose to let these conflicts enter this room and to let it affect my behaviour. Was I erring on the side of caution, being afraid I would shut down roads to connect with potential interlocutors? That brings me to the question: What, then, is more important: my (selfish) research imperatives or actually coming closer to my neighbours through being honest and open?

This shows the deeply intertwined and conflicting positions I adopt as a researcher. My own family background, my family-in-law’s background (who often say, “it is better not to tell

people we are Jewish”) as well as my recent migrant experiences and the many other factors come into play in these interactions, both in and outside the sports context.

Interest in diversity

Where does my academic and personal interest in living with diversity and sharing urban space with people from different walks of lives come from? Is it a need to understand a colonial history? Am I reproducing a foundational colonist fascination of the Other and bodies of difference? I am not yet able to answer these questions, but I can reflect on my first memories of ethnic grouping and spatiality that took place in the new neighbourhood I moved to as an eleven-year-old. After living until then in Amsterdam’s city centre, I moved with my family to the east part of Amsterdam. This is where my mother still lives, a 20-minute bicycle ride from the city centre; in the Netherlands, we measure distance based on cycling minutes. It was a newly-built neighbourhood on the former site of the old Amsterdam soccer stadium. I have fond memories of that time. The section where our house was located was finished before the rest of the neighbourhood; the building materials, piles of sand, ignoring ‘do-not-enter’ signs, and the general messiness of construction sites provided a fantastic playground. We – my younger brother and I – played with the neighbourhood children we grew to know over time. Another sharp memory from when I was growing up in this neighbourhood was the segregation of dominantly white families living on one side of the street in terraced houses and (white) elderly and migrant families living on the other side in the apartment building. The terraced house where my family lived has a front and back garden, three stories and multiple bedrooms. My two brothers and I had our own bedrooms and my parents had theirs on the second floor. The front gardens of the terraced houses were separated by bush fences. Depending on the preferences of house owners, the fences would be chest-height or over two metres, allowing or preventing eye contact and brief chats with neighbours on the left and right. On the opposite side of the street, there was a big apartment building, from memory four or five floors high, with the ground level consisting of two-level apartments. I remember two families living on the ground floor opposite from us in particular. One was a Dutch-Surinamese family with a mother, father and a few children of my

age. The other family (mother, father and three young daughters), from my memory, had migrated from Turkey and only the children spoke fluent Dutch at that time.

My brother and I and other kids from the terrace house families used to play or share the street/playing areas with the migrant family's kids. There was, however, always a particular 'differentness'. I recall a few children from the opposite side of the street being in the house of my neighbour's to the right of us; the parents were not at home. I was the oldest and remember not feeling comfortable with this because I sensed the parents of this family would not want these kids in their house. When the parents came home, the Dutch-Turkish children had left and their daughter told them they had visited. The parents got angry and told their daughter and son (and probably me indirectly as I spent a lot of time in their house) not to let them enter the house again. Although I don't remember the parents' exact wording, I do remember a feeling of seeing the children as different and not belonging on this side of the street even though it was only twenty metres from one side of the street to the other. Looking back at this, I am not sure if we had ever gotten along or if our relationship was mediated by our parents' opinions. Even though we shared playing areas and we could look into each other's bedrooms from our windows, we lived in separate worlds. This segregation extended into the primary and high schools I attended, both dominantly white Montessori schools.

My Dutch feminist upbringing combined with a critical sociological education taught me to ask critical questions and be direct and straightforward in interactions with people. In my youth, it was my Mum, in comparison with my Dad, who earned the most money and was very career-focussed. My Dad had paid jobs as well as photographer and postman, and took on most household roles such as picking up my brothers and I from school, cleaning and cooking. In an earlier study (Broerse, 2019), I reflect on how my positionality and being honest/direct is not necessarily in line with others' values. Working in the diversity space, which includes working with people from many different walks of lives, there are important ethical considerations and ways of interacting. Leitner (2012) writes that discussing encounters with difference and the specific forms in which 'othering' takes place is often imbued with strong emotions, with individuals negotiating narratives through their positionality.

As I am a migrant and have a Dutch accent, when I meet new people interactions are often marked by one of the following questions:

- I can hear an accent, where is home? (Maidstone would be confusing, and not the answer the person posing the question is looking for).
- What kind of visa are you on and when does it end?
- What do you want to do after?
- Is your family here?

These questions are useful to get a conversation started and sometimes to make a connection when sharing a migration trajectory with someone. Anna Tsalapatanis' (2017) work is useful in analysing the strong desire to understand where people's accent or skin colour originates. The author argues that people try to fit others into the frames of the nation; in fact, we do not have the freedom to identify ourselves as the categories are pre-fixed. As innocent as the questions might seem, they reinforce the citizen-non-citizen binary and touch on a sense of belonging.

In this section I have demonstrated that my positionality not only impacts my research interactions, but also that my being is just as much part of this research project as are the research participants. As much as we can critique the 'territorialisation of the world', a 'groupist' approach is also a categorisation system that makes society function (cf. Brubaker, 2004). 'Where are you from?' is often, too, a question from interested hearts in an attempt to 'bond'. Thus, it is more a question of how we produce knowledge about ethnic groups. Wessendorf (2013), and Semi et al. (2009) seek to go beyond a "celebration of processualism" (Semi et al., 2009, p. 82) by combining actors' essentialist views with a processual approach. In this thesis I follow this approach, building on an earlier study by Broerse and Spaaij (2019) that grappled with this issue. Hence, I approach ethnicity "as a skilled practical accomplishment ... [in which] categories are made relevant" (Brubaker et al., 2004, p. 35).

Ethics

This study was approved by the Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee in June 2018. This approval provided institutional permission to carry out the research. In approaching and working with people, there are on-going issues and challenges concerned with informed consent that I discuss below.

Ongoing informed consent

With some research methods, written or verbal formal consent does not yield problems or disruptive moments. In the case of formal interviews, verbal consent can easily be recorded at the start of the interview. It is in informal and unplanned encounters that formal informed consent potentially disrupts interactions in the field. In what follows, I briefly discuss alternative methods that ensure the protection of participants and informed consent.

The unwritten and non-formalised verbal consent, Silverman (2003) explains, is the model that suits ethnographic fieldwork best. This “means that people’s consent must be renewed each day – through their continuing interaction with the researcher and the project, through their help, co-operation and assent” (p. 117). Derrida (1999) invites ethnographers to go beyond taking solely responsibility for the physical bodies of subjects and include the social life they are connected to. This asks for additional skills of the ethnographer to establish field relations and engage not only with “the body but the complex and dynamic relational worlds which anthropologists enter and in which research subjects live and exercise their own ethical and emotional sensibilities” (Derrida, 1999, in Simpson, 2011, p. 385). This quote places emphasis on the idea of taking subjects’ own ethical and emotional sensibilities into consideration, and thereby invites the researcher to evaluate the norms and values of the subjects rather than present them with a ‘contract’, which is often the case with formal written consent forms.

In this current study, written consent forms on some occasions were disruptive, with participants’ illiteracy or limited understanding of the English language resulting in misunderstandings. In response, a Neighbourhood Community Centre manager advised me to

rewrite the consent form in more everyday English. My first day at a Centre I took part in a yoga class with eight other participants. After my introduction by the yoga instructor, some would fill out the consent form whereas others preferred to take it home to read it carefully first. One female participant with limited English language was using Google Translate App on her phone to read the text. She hovered her phone above the text and the translation appeared on her phone. I went up to the woman and she was smiling and nodding. She filled out the form and returned it to me. We had brief eye contacts and brief chats in following classes, but I decided to leave out this data as I was still unsure if I was able to make her understand my intentions at the yoga class.

While consent forms are important, they can also be disruptive if there is no time to establish basic human interaction and understanding. In this case it would have been more suitable to first verbally introduce myself (as the yoga instructor did), participate in a few classes and then invite people to take part in the research or opt out. Through participating in a few classes, spending time together and exchanging a few (short) conversations, I sensed I would have established a more trustworthy relationship.

Anonymity

Interview participants were asked to decide if they prefer to use a synonym in this thesis (and publications) and if so to pick a name themselves. While anonymity is generally assumed to be ‘good practice’ in institutional ethical codes to protect interviewees, it can be judged to be paternalistic and as “an affront to intellectual property or denial of recognition” (Macdonald, 2010, p. 8). Therefore, I left the discussion around remaining anonymous open. When ethically appropriate (for example, unless it causes an unacceptable risk of harm for themselves or others), interviewees could choose whether they preferred to be anonymised or not. From 43 interview participants, eight chose to use their own name and 35 went by a synonym, of whom 10 chose their own synonym. Synonyms could refer to a favourite movie star, elite soccer player or a relative. Where I chose synonyms for interview participants, I was sensitive to the religious or national backgrounds of their original names. However, some interviewees who chose their own synonyms chose a name different from their own national name (e.g., Vietnamese or Croatian).

Methodological challenges

Some methodological challenges arose during this study. Multiculturalism, ethnicity, race and placemaking at times arise or form the foundation for structural societal dilemmas. Participating, analysing and writing about these topics should thus be done in a critical manner. Moreover, using one's own body as research tool in physical activity gives rise to a second set of methodological dilemmas. Both are highly sensuous and 'embodied' in different ways. I will briefly discuss the main challenges that arose during this study guided by urban diversity studies and sports ethnography.

Studying urban diversity

Each fieldwork site and topic poses its own unique challenges, including research diversity. In the context of sociolinguistics, Jan Blommaert (2013) writes that "Complexity is the order of superdiversity" (p. 107), and that this complexity can be studied through longitudinal ethnographic immersion and sensitivity to dynamic structures. Blommaert calls this 'layered simultaneity' in which historical "effects of power, ownership, legitimacy of usages and identity are connected" (p. 108). Furthermore, studying this layered simultaneity or a "real social environment" has "severe methodological consequences" (p. 113), with no clear beginning or ending to patterns, no boundedness.

How, then, to capture this 'logic of change' or 'commonplace diversity' (Wessendorf, 2014)? Karen Fog Olwig (2013) describes this as a processual approach, that is, going beyond referring to countries of origin that equate to certain ethnic identities. Rather, Olwig encourages the researcher to investigate "particular places of identification" and to "look at processes of social interaction and not assume the existence of stable, unchanging local communities" (p. 473).

A challenge in studying super-diversity is that a single researcher will not be equipped with the broad knowledge on all forms and shapes of diversity, including language, deep cultural knowledge, and diversity in sexualities. Embodying the subject position as scientific 'knower'

and acknowledging the diversity of these positions in a context of super-diversity is what Haraway (1988) calls, “the search for the fetishized perfect subject of oppositional history” (p. 586). So, where does super-diversity begin and where does it end? As Blommaert (2013) writes, there is no clear beginning or ending and one needs to subject oneself to the complexity. Relevant in this project, then, is Wessendorf’s (2014) discussion on ‘civility towards diversity’. Civility, following Lyn Lofland’s (1989) work, does not refer to a specific appreciation of diversity, but it does mean treating people universally the same. Moreover, in her ethnographic fieldwork, Wessendorf notes that civility “is learned through everyday contact and interaction in a multiplicity of day-to-day social situations” (p. 64). In this sense, the researcher takes an active part in creating and learning civility. A focus on the everyday enfolding of diversity and the frictions that are involved is exactly what makes it possible to study super-diversity.

The vast diversity in languages spoken in the City of Maribyrnong is both a feature of super-diversity as well as a methodological challenge. Interviews were only possible in the languages I speak (English and Dutch), with the efficacy of the interviews depending on the English literacy of interview participants.

Talking about sensitive topics

Social research brings with it potential psychological and physical risks to both researcher and participants when working with human participants (Lee-Treweek & Linkogle, 2000). Topics related to multiculturalism include racism, illegality and difficult migration experiences, and although I am familiar with these topics as a researcher, at times I debriefed with colleagues. From the perspective of the participants, talking about topics related to multiculturalism such as racism and (forced) migration experiences can bring back unpleasant memories or experiences and potentially lead to emotional harm.

Before an interview took place, I had already established relationships with interviewees and participated in the activity at hand. This gave me a chance to introduce myself and if needed further explain my research interests. Based on these interactions, I would invite people directly, or ask them to express their interest in being interviewed. In order to protect interlocutors, Oliver

(2010) provides the following two interview strategies. First, make clear at the start of an interview that people can decline questions or ask to come back to it later on in the interview. The second interview technique that is useful in gaining confidentiality and setting the interviewee's mind at ease is to ask at the end of the interview whether they want to rephrase or reflect on anything they have said. As Oliver (2010) explains, this gives interviewees a moment to think and reflect on what has been said and a chance to re-express themselves.

Bodily limits and risks

There are bodily limits as to how much data can be collected through participating. This adds a layer of limitation to the depth and quantity of data collected by one person over the course of two years. More importantly, limits and risks are part of reflexivity in embodied research and an “invaluable part of doing embodied, ethical and political” ethnographic research (Olive & Thorpe, 2011, p. 424).

During the participatory fieldwork period, some months were quiet while others were busy with co-occurring activities. With all ethnographic fieldwork, and indeed any data collection, the amount of data that can be collected is limited. In busy months I had to be careful not to commit to too many physical activities and be selective where I could. This was especially important when my performance was at stake. Being a player on a soccer team demanded a certain physical readiness and I tried to prevent overtiredness or muscle soreness from other activities (e.g., Spring into Summer, walking groups). Planning wise, this meant that I took part in one soccer training (plus a match at the weekend) instead of two trainings. I also stopped participating in yoga classes at the Braybrook Community centre as soon as the soccer season started, and made room for other activities during the mid-season soccer break. It must be noted that while I encountered bodily limits, participating in physical activities elevated my mood and made me feel good mentally and physically.

Risk taking is a related but different topic to bodily limits and widely accepted in sporting environments. I made sure to wear appropriate shoes and additional protective gear (in the case

of soccer) and followed safety instructions closely (in the case of yoga and jiu-jitsu). I was lucky enough not to face lasting injuries and ‘only’ had to deal with heavy muscle pain or bleeding blisters after an intense training. The risk, however, was ever-present and influenced my emotions and behaviour, on the soccer pitch in particular. I prevented collisions with other players as much as possible by adapting a careful playing style, took few risks such as sliding tackles, and ran carefully on wet pitches. After nearly all games (and some trainings), players left with injuries and in some cases were taken to the hospital. Coming home to my partner with hospital stories posed yet another challenge: explaining why I put my health at risk ‘in the name of research’ (on meagre international student visa health cover).

Participating in a male-dominated environment and physical culture as a female ethnographer is a related topic. Earlier on, I touched on feeling uncomfortable being the only women in an indoor soccer court with an all-male team playing. It felt inappropriate to watch their pick-up game unfolding so I decided to leave. Although being warmly welcomed by most players, playing outdoor pick-up soccer with an all-male team with mostly Muslim players (fieldwork site 8) posed its own gendered and religiously layered challenges. Did these male players want to play with a woman? Was I good enough to play with them? Will the Muslim men be reluctant to touch me? Can I touch them when running for the ball or when defending? How can I position myself and construct my gender identity on the field?

Following Rebecca Olive and Holly Thorpe (2011), I understand these experiences and reflexivity more broadly as an invaluable part of doing embodied, ethical and political ethnographic research, or approaching research as praxis (Lather, 1986). Given this, I have incorporated reflexivity throughout this thesis. For example, while playing with the male team, I was overly conscience of not being too ‘caring’ (and behaving in too ‘feminine’ a way), and not wearing tight-fitting clothes; rather, I wore old loose-fitting sports clothes that hid my body shape.

Concluding remarks

The methodological approach of this research aims to capture complex interactions between the urban landscape and human behaviour. In this thesis, I discuss how people engage in placemaking

through the use of public space for physical activity in super-diverse neighbourhoods. Over the course of two years, I employed an ethnographic approach including participatory research and in-depth interviews.

The conceptual framework, methodological approach and research topics influence and shape one another. They have of course changed over time to follow developments and trends in academia and also to reflect issues ‘from the field’: issues experienced by policy planners, physical activity providers, and the physically active people engaged with and in public space.

Ethnography enables the researcher to engage in long-term relationships with people and places. In the chapters that follow, I will not only present everyday local experiences with diversity, but also reflect on changes and developments in the field. The ethnographic method also requires the researcher to be reflexively critical of their behaviour and experiences. I acknowledge that the writing and knowledge presented and produced in this thesis is not only a co-production by me and the research participants, but that I am also part of the research as much as are the research participants. The data are collected through my body, but my body (migrant, white, female, resident) *is* the research as well.

In what follows, I will describe the ‘neighbourhood’ using Lefebvre’s (1991) spatial triad. This will lay the foundation for the ensuing four chapters that focus on four different ways that placemaking is performed in the public space through physical activity.

Chapter 4: City of Maribyrnong: The material, ideological, and lived

Introduction

In this first data chapter (the only one of the four not focussed solely on physical activity), I offer a succinct description of the geographical area in which this research took place. My aim in this chapter is to provide a foundation on which to build the ensuing four chapters. In combination with other concepts, Lefebvre's (1991) spatial triad is used as a guide to discuss the different layers of spatiality in the City of Maribyrnong. I present interviewees' experiences of the neighbourhood and other sources of data, including Council policy documents, data from novels, photos, video material, and blogs that are concerned with the topics of living with diversity or in the geographical area. My overarching aim to present a complex yet coherent picture of the City of Maribyrnong and demonstrate that the three dimensions of Lefebvre's (1991) spatial triad: spatial practices, representation of space, and space representational space are intimately connected.

Spatial practices: Locality and temporal rhythms

Spatial practices refer to the processes of materiality that produce social space. They are empirically observable and measurable, and are the "particular locations and spatial sets characteristic of each social formation" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 33). Lefebvre warns us that physical space is not neutral; and that power dynamics are always prevalent: "individuals (children, adolescents) who are, paradoxically, already within it, must pass tests. This has the effect of setting up reserved spaces, such as places of initiation, within social space" (p. 35). This means that not all spaces are open to anyone at all times; some spaces are 'closed' and 'open' or available to use and thus produce a parallel social space. Spatial practices can be subdivided in three sections following Lefebvre's rhythmanalysis: physical layout, temporal rhythms, and everyday socialities.

Population and physical layout

Greater Melbourne is the metropolitan area of Melbourne, spanning over 9990 km², home to 5 million people, and divided into 31 municipalities. The City of Maribyrnong is one of these municipalities located in the Western suburbs of Melbourne (in short: the West), often referred to as the Inner West. The City is divided into nine suburbs: in the north is Maribyrnong, following the river east, south on the map is Footscray, then Seddon and Yarraville, with Kingsville, Tottenham and West Footscray situated at the centre of the City, and Braybrook and Maidstone in the northwest (see Figure 1 for a map with internal and external borders and Figure 2 for the view from the City to Melbourne's CBD). In 2018, the City of Maribyrnong had an estimated 91,387 residents and spanned an area of 31km². The population forecast in Melbourne is that it will rise from 5 million in 2019 to 8.6-12.2 million in 2066. This is part of a broader (global) urbanisation trend; in Australia, by 2027 the population in capital cities is projected to increase by 70% nationwide, and in Melbourne specifically this projection is 77% (ABS, 2018). The population forecast in the City of Maribyrnong for 2020 is 96,122 and is expected to grow to 156,794 by 2041 (.id, 2018a)²⁹. In other words, the population of this municipality will almost double within 20 years.

A Census is taken every five years with the most recent stemming from 2016. Compared to 2011, the City of Maribyrnong has seen an increase in population of over 10,000 people and this growth rate is predicted to continue. Let us have a look at developments between 2011 and 2016.

Overall, the age categories that grew the most are in line with population trends in Greater Melbourne: the Young Workforce (aged 25-34) making up 23.1% of the total population compared to 16.3% in Greater Melbourne, and Parents and Homebuilders (aged 35-49) making up 23.6% of the total population compared to 21.1% in Greater Melbourne. While the Young Workforce grew 7% more compared to the rest of Melbourne, the suburb shows a lower proportion of people in the younger age groups (0 to 17 years) as well as people in the older age group (50 years and older). And while the Empty Nesters and Retirees (age category 60-69) grew

²⁹ .id (informed decisions) compiled and presented ABS Census of Population and Housing 2011-2016 survey data.

by 1,243 people, it is only 6.8% of the population compared with 9.3% in Greater Melbourne. The age groups that shrank in size were the Seniors (age category 70-84) and Elderly Aged (age 85+). This is in line with migration flows in and out of the Council. The only two groups that represent a positive net migration statistic are the 18-24 and the 25-34 age categories. In all other groups, there were more people moving out of the area than in.

Compared to Greater Melbourne, unemployment rates are high in the City of Maribyrnong, with 8.3% of the population looking for full-time or part-time work and a 6.8% citywide average. The same difference of 1.5% was observed in 2011. For the working population, statistics on industry sector of employment are very much in line with trends in broader Melbourne. There are two outliers. The Accommodation and Food Services employs 8.9% of the population compared to 6.5% in Greater Melbourne and, remarkably, less people living in the City of Maribyrnong are employed in the Construction industry (5% compared to 8.2% of the Greater Melbourne population). Income wise, 23.9% of the households earned a high income (more than AUS\$2,500 per week) and 18.1% were low-income (less than A\$650 per week) households, compared to 22.9% and 16.7% respectively in Greater Melbourne. However, stark differences appear across the City. Low-income households range from as low as 11.6% in Maribyrnong, 12.2% in Yarraville, and 26.6% in Braybrook.

This socio-economic distribution overlaps with people with university degrees and foreign-born population. In the east side of the City more people have university degrees, are Australian-born, and live in English-speaking households, while the opposite characteristics are reported in the western part, including Braybrook and Maidstone.

Zooming in on the ethno-cultural diversity within the City, a multicultural picture presents itself. In 2016, 40% of residents in the City were born overseas, compared with 33.8% in Greater Melbourne (.id, 2018b). Most overseas-born residents in the City are from Vietnam (9.3% compared with 1.8% in Greater Melbourne) and India (4% compared with 3.6%). A smaller percentage of residents were born in China (2.8% compared with 3.5%) and United Kingdom (2.5% compared with 3.6%). The number of people born overseas in Vietnam and India continues

to rise, whereas residents born in Italy and Greece have declined (.id, 2018). The statistics clearly demonstrate a change in migration patterns.

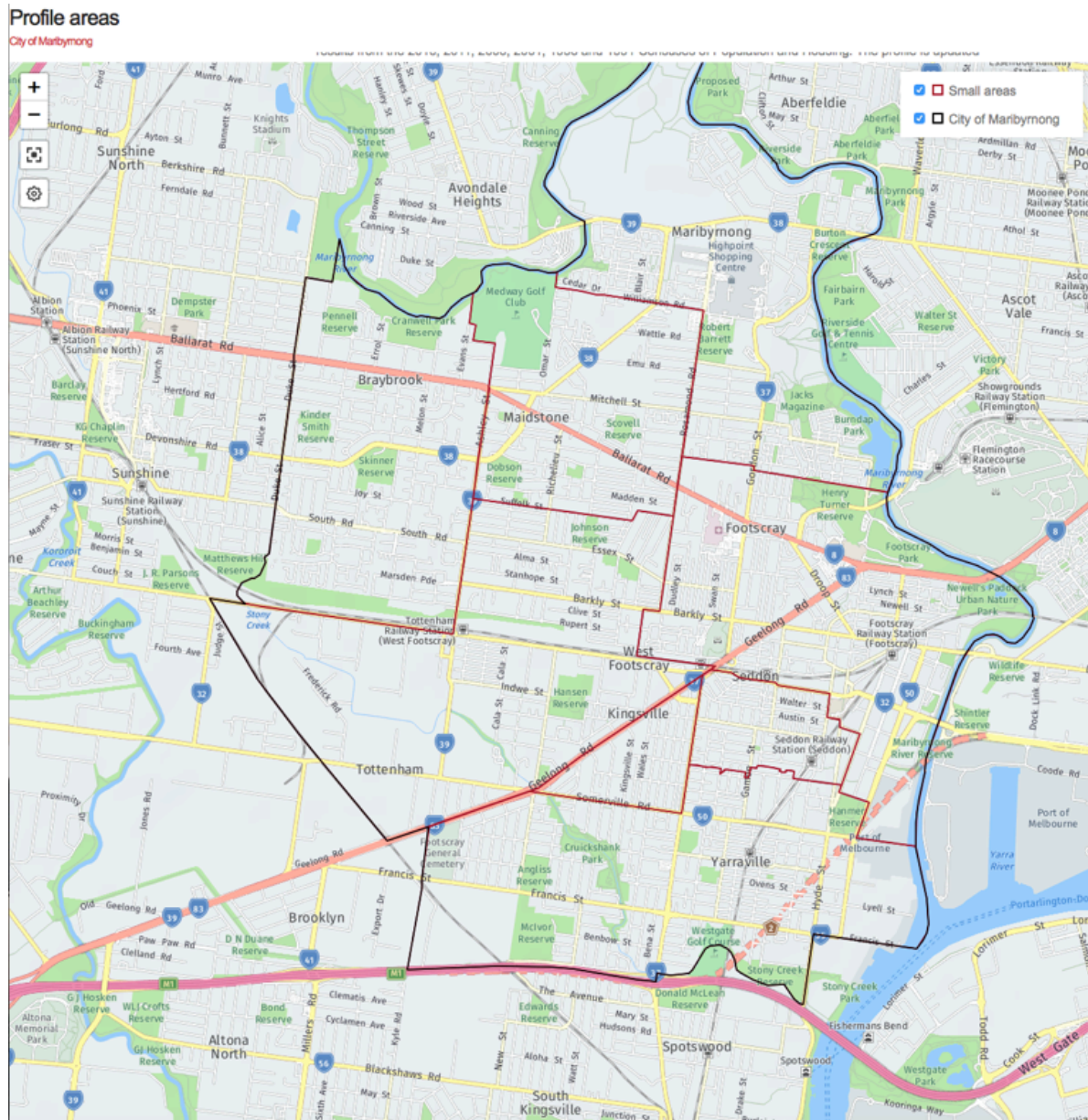


Figure 1 Internal and external borders of the City of Maribyrnong. Source: www.profile.id.com.au



Figure 2 View from Footscray Railway Station with the CBD in the background. Source: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-02-26/footscray-photo-essay-melting-pot-to-hipster-hotspot/7200366?nw=0>

A 'walk' through the city

Footscray is often described as the epicentre of the City of Maribyrnong. This is also where the Maribyrnong City Council is based. Footscray Train Station can be reached from other parts of the city in multiple ways. The one metro line brings you from Melbourne CBD to Footscray Station within 13 minutes. Buses and trams transport locals and visitors deeper into the City of Maribyrnong, while a few arterial roads guide traffic from urban centres to other parts of the City and to the highways surrounding the municipality. Princes Highway (i.e., Geelong Road) and Williamstown Road come from the south, Ballarat Road is towards the east and Military Road delivers traffic towards and from the north. Six bridges over the Maribyrnong River provide access to the suburbs east of the municipality towards the CBD. The West Gate Bridge spans the Yarra River and is located south of the City, and is a vital link between the inner city and Melbourne's western suburbs. It is one of the busiest road corridors in Australia.

A walk through Footscray offers many experiences. If you leave Footscray Train Station and take a stroll, you will see, smell and hear³⁰ what Alice Pung vividly describes as “the loudest and grottiest market in the Western world, although that term doesn’t mean much when you’re surrounded by brown faces” (pp. 2-3). Locals and visitors alike throng to Footscray Market, which is directly across from the station (see Figure 3). The market is a buzzing place seven days per week from early morning until early afternoon, home to “skinny people and fat pigs” and the “only market where you can peel and eat a whole mandarin before deciding whether to buy a kilo; where you can poke and prod holes in a mango to check its sweetness” (Pung, 2006, pp. 2-3). People Melbourne-wide throng to the market to do their weekly shopping and find their speciality foods. Pungent smells welcomes locals and visitors alike, with over thirty stalls selling fruit and vegetables originating from all over the world, and the meat section offering a wide variety of products including cows’ ears and packaged dried fish. Prices and product names are written in English and other languages, and are relatively low-priced compared to other shops in the neighbourhood, including supermarket giants Woolworths and Coles. Moving on, you come across a sea of miscellany that range from shopping trollies to clothing and cheap jewellery. The café section with colourful plastic chairs provides you with a place for a coffee and comparative calm amongst the business of shopping and the fast exchange of goods and money. Most visitors have an Asian appearance and a plethora of languages are spoken. “[T]here is much hand-gesticulating and furrowing of brow because the parties *do not spick da English velly good*” (Pung, p. 1, emphasis added). Walking through the market on a Saturday morning, I am often aware of my white skin and scant knowledge of most produce for sale. Some days I do buy a new fruit or vegetable to try, and ‘Google’ cooking instructions on arriving home.

Leaving the market at the opposite end, you emerge into Hopkins Street. Cars, trams and cyclists share the road, with shops on both sides. While the market is busy from early in the morning, the restaurants and shops open their doors around 9am and serve their clientele until late in the evening. Vietnamese bakeries, Pho restaurants, Bubble Tea shops and miscellaneous shops

³⁰ This is told from my personal point of view.

dominate the street scene. As Joan (an interview participant) tells me, some shop owners “don’t bother to translate their notes on the door into English. It is not their clientele.”

Following Hopkins Street east, you cross the Maribyrnong River after a few hundred metres and by doing so cross the City of Maribyrnong border. Heading west on Hopkins, you head in the direction of other suburbs, but first you have to cross or travel along Geelong Road. This is the crossroad from which all other suburbs can be reached, and one of the main roads running through the City of Maribyrnong and leading towards Highway M1.

The built environment has a distinct influence on bodily belonging. Some areas are welcoming and comfortable to walk and cycle; these include car free zones popping up throughout the municipality, in particular during and after the COVID-19 lockdowns. Other areas are built for different modes of movement and transport. For example, the walker will feel ‘at home’ as a pedestrian in the Hopkins area with its speed limit of 40 km/h, one car lane either way, lots of shops and public transport stops. This feeling of bodily belonging disappears after 700 metres when approaching Geelong Road with its 60 km/h speed limit and five lanes both ways. It is busy all day with cars, and few people cross the road by foot; most do so in the safer environment of a vehicle. Trucks appear later in the morning to generally leave the scene before the late afternoon traffic hour kicks in. An arterial thoroughfare such as Geelong Road is an ‘extreme separator’ in Lefebvre’s (1991) words, and paradoxical, “because it includes the most extreme separation between the places it links together” (p. 38).

Another ‘extreme separator’ is the Maribyrnong River, which forms a natural border to the west of the City of Maribyrnong. Crossing the river is equivalent to leaving the West. The river has been a meaningful place for many thousands of years; for the traditional custodians of the land, the river continues to function as a natural dividing line. The west side of the river is home to the Marin Balluk people; Boiberrit is another name for this particular clan and their dialect. The river and its banks have been important traveling and trading places as well as important ceremonial centres. Larry Walsh, from the Taunwarrung people and born in Mooroopna (Northern Victoria) is Aboriginal Cultural Officer for Melbourne’s Living Museum of the West. He explains:

An Aboriginal person, while travelling on this land, was allowed to pass through, regardless of their tribal association. There is also a story that you were only allowed to cross the Maribyrnong between the hours of sunrise and sunset. It was a significant dividing line or barrier between different clans (Melbourne's Living Museum of the West, 1996).

This is exceptional because, traditionally, Indigenous travellers needed to take part in welcome ceremonies to be granted permission to enter another tribe's land. Larry Walsh's (1996) observation demonstrates the traditionally welcoming and unique character of the river and its banks where people have met for millennia and, paradoxically its function as an 'extreme separator'.

Looking at the map of the City of Maribyrnong (pictures 1 and 5), the area is scattered with green spots. In total, 103 parks, (community) gardens, recreation areas and playgrounds soften the cityscape. All parks are accessible to the public with some exceptions such as Whitten Oval. Other major facilities include Highpoint Activity Centre, Western Bulldogs Football Club and Western Hospital, various primary and high schools where young lives are prepared for the future, and one cemetery where residents find their final (earthly and perhaps 'heavenly') resting place.



Figure 3 Footscray Market from Hopkins Street. Source: www.footscraymarketvictoria.com.au

A place to live: From vacant land with cows and sheep to (human) super-diversity

In 2016, 5.4% of the City residents were in social housing (profile.com.au). Commission housing has long been part of political strategies. In the 1960s the focus was on redeveloping ‘slum’ areas in Melbourne suburbs; however, the current political strategy is more focussed on helping vulnerable Victorians to get ahead (Andrews, 2020). Daniel Andrew’s 2018 Labor Party planned to embark on nine new sites in Footscray and Maidstone. When planning for social housing and determining future housing needs, Maribyrnong City Council considers the municipality’s high proportions of people aged 18-49, of couples with children, couples without children, and of single person households. The municipality attracts recent arrivals from Vietnam, China and India, and there are high levels of socio-economic disadvantage (Maribyrnong City Council, 2011). Most social housing facilities are concentrated in Braybrook and Maidstone, whereas in Seddon, Yarraville, and Maribyrnong very little commission housing is available. The Housing Strategy 2011 notes the following on newly arrived migrants’ and refugees’ needs:

Migrants and new arrivals from overseas comprise predominantly students and families, and tend

to have relatively high levels of social disadvantage. Newly arrived migrants often have difficulty accessing and affording private rental, with costs causing housing stress for many. Language barriers and the lack of financial and social capital as well as rental history also often prevent them from entering the private market. A key priority for newly arrived migrants is accessibility to social services, community groups and facilities, shops and employment opportunity. Many newly arrived migrants also prefer larger dwellings in order to accommodate large, multi-generational families. There are currently high concentrations of migrants and/or people not fluent in English in Braybrook, Maidstone, Seddon, Footscray and Kingsville.

Along with changes in ethno-cultural backgrounds of new residents that have made the City of Maribyrnong their home, so did the visual layout of the area change. Interview participants Sue and Marilyn remember doing their shopping in Footscray and “even then it wasn’t the Vietnamese and all that.” Nada’s husband used to run a Croatian butcher shop: “there were many Croatians at the time! Footscray was the centre for Croatians. There was a butcher shop and everyone did the shopping there.” Melbourne inner west has been a starting point for new migrants to settle for many decades. After World War II, south European migrants fled war-ravaged Europe and moved to Australia for a better life. In Footscray, this was quickly reflected in the architecture and shop fronts. Julia explains: “if you see the architecture of the houses you can guess which ethnic groups live in which kind of house.” She continues:

When we came here, friends told us, ‘Look, this house belongs to Asians and this house belongs to wogs.’ Me and my partner and our friends are all from Croatia; we are all wogs. They said: ‘Oh that’s us, that’s so *woggie*. They must be Italians, Greeks or Croatians’. So they have these orange kind of bricks and the Asian houses have these special ornaments.

One of the best known Italian-Australians is Franco Cozzo (see Figure 4), a businessman and furniture ‘giant’. His shop is located around the corner from Footscray Train Station. His iconic status is captured in a big mural, numerous written news articles, short clips, and even a feature-

length film to be released at the end of 2020. In December 2019, a ‘creative vandal’ added an ‘A’ in the Footscray Park entry sign along Ballarat Road to capture Cozzo’s famous articulation, ‘Foot-a-scray’. The letter was soon taken away.



Figure 4 Franco Cozzo mural in Footscray. Source: <https://www.danielbowen.com/2015/06/08/franco-cozzo-mural/>

Subsequent flows of migrants introduced traditional Chinese medicine shops, Vietnamese bakeries and speciality goods shops, with the latest addition the Bubble Tea shops, popular among many. Visible from afar is the iconic Heavenly Queen Temple located along the Maribyrnong River in Footscray. The temple opened in 2014 and is dedicated to Heavenly Queen, also known as ‘Mazu’, Lin Mo Laing (A.D. 960-987), born during the Sung dynasty in China. Scattered around the inner west, too, are shops and restaurants providing services and food from various African countries. This concentration of ethno-cultural shops attracts people from all over Melbourne.

The rise in population outlined above not only puts pressure on housing and all other facilities, but is also changing the built environment in the City, with high-rise apartment buildings popping up. Marilyn exclaims: “where we are sitting at the minute was vacant land when I moved here 30 years ago. Vacant land with cows and sheep!” Although this change will attract many new residents, concerns are that the surrounding infrastructure will not be able to facilitate the flows in and out the municipality. Roads are already chock-full with cars, buses and trams, and current residents have expressed their concerns: “where are new residents going to park their cars?” These are current issues that will demand creative urban planning as well as the creative use of public land. High rises are often government guided and in comparison with individually sold lots, residents do not have a say in the aesthetics of the building. If this trend continues, the question is how ethno-cultural characteristics might be expressed in these buildings, or might they be expressed in other ways such as street art or other forms of architecture. Future newcomers will not be introduced to the area in a similar way that Julia and Marilyn were.

Finally, in combination with the rising population, the local population’s characteristics are changing as well. More white, double income and double university degrees families are moving into the area which interacts with changing property styles and rising property prices. To my question on how the area has changed over the last 35 years, long-term residents Marg and Jim respond:

Marg: Oh massively, massively.

Jim: It changed where we are in Yarraville a lot because back in the 1960s and 70s, it was a lot of industry-like housing.

Marg: These were called the dormitory suburbs where people lived to work in the factories.

Jim: There were miles and miles of factories and warehouses. The typical house in our area would have been a weatherboard house [timber walls which are less robust than brick houses] on a sizable but not massive block with two bedrooms.

Now with the double income people coming in, these blocks get two-story houses and five bedrooms, three bathrooms, underground parking and they are spending in today's language 1-1.5 million to buy the house and then they spend half a million renovating how they want it so what used to be half a million-dollar house is now worth 1.5-2 million.

Marg and Jim's experiences demonstrate how both the looks and prices changed over time in their neighbourhood. Coffee shops symbolise another change in the area: gentrification and the way residents spend their money and time. Another quote from Marg and Jim's interview is telling and shows the intergenerational differences in attitudes towards coffee shops:

Jim: My mum and dad wouldn't dare to go to a café every day and have coffee and avocado on toast.

Marg: We brought his mum to a café, Brother Nancy, to have breakfast and was like... different. She could not get her head around it.

Jora: That you go to a cafe and spend money on breakfast and coffee?

Jim: Yeah, yeah, haha! They didn't have the money with five kids.

In some areas high rises dominate the street scene, while other areas host social housing. Replacing a weatherboard house on a sizable block with a multi-story house or multi-units is happening throughout the municipality. More houses are being built on the same space, which increases the living density.

Rhythms of space

Lefebvre (1991) offers various dimensions of how to look at and experience the city. The idea of 'rhythmanalysis' foregrounds the everyday flow of people, cars and all other moving objects, traffic lights, voices, noises and smell. It is a way to become part of "the production of urban dynamics" (p. 219), a way to explore the different geographies and temporalities of the city. The

movement of bodies in places interact with cyclical rhythms such as day and night, the seasons and climate. The repetitive, overlapping and conflicting rhythms create the symphony or “polyrhythmicity of the urban” (p. 223), with annual, weekly, daily, hourly and seasonal rhythms impacting how spaces are used. As much as rhythms are produced by individual, deeply personal experiences, it is the social construction of time-space rhythms that give meaning to space on another level. As Mels (2004) points out, “Not only are time-space rhythms of the body, meaning, and voluntary or enforced behaviour connected, they are also thoroughly embedded in the cultural context of social space, and hence orchestrated by imperatives and constraints of situated knowledges and power inequalities” (p. 6).

Williamson (2016) offers an excellent discussion of Lefebvre’s rhythms in the context of an ethno-cultural diverse neighbourhood. Looking at a multi-ethnic retail strip, Williamson describes non-exceptional, everyday spaces and how “micro-level processes of spatial legitimisation in a plural society” create multicultural rhythms (p. 38). While everyday rhythms are produced through micro-mobilities on the street and are central in elucidating the rhythms of urban multiculturalism, these rhythms also contest the politics of multiculturalism. In this section, I apply rhythmanalysis to the City of Maribyrnong, and zoom in on specific localities as well as paint a broader picture of the City, the people and its rhythms.

Temporal rhythms connect the sleepy and quiet neighbourhoods with busy roads and transportation hotspots. Taking Footscray Precinct once again as our venture point allows us to explore morning until night routines. Trains, buses and trams run to and from the CBD and all parts of the City from early morning until late at night. Shopping hubs, including Footscray Market, Highpoint Shopping Centre in Maribyrnong and Central West Shopping Centre in Braybrook, are busy places with people in cars and food deliverers in trucks coming and going. Morning peak hour on the roads start at 7.00am and ends around 8:30am. During that time, the roads fill with cars, people in suits on their way to office jobs, and small groups of people waiting for buses. Parents and caretakers walk or drive their young children to school and greet the volunteers in high visibility jackets at the traffic lights. In school drop-off and pick-up zones, traffic slows to a regulatory 40 km/h in the direct area, and families walking or pulling over in

their cars dominate the street scene. Young children are running and vocalising, getting ready for another day at school. Other residents with a bit more time in the morning make use of the breaking dawn for a run, walk with the dog, or an early gym visit. By 9:30am, the drop-off and pick-up zones are empty and silent; passing traffic takes over the scene, with cars and people on foot returning to these zones when school finishes.

People working outside normal 9.00am-5.00pm office hours, retirees and others go shopping, run errands, perhaps visit a library or attend classes at neighbourhood community centres. Families with pre-school children visit the playgrounds that are quiet during weekdays but become busy places again during the weekend. Cafés and bakeries fill up quickly around lunchtime, closing their doors early in the afternoon.

On a daily and weekly basis, the use of sports fields is regulated by residents' typical leisure hours in the evenings and throughout the weekend. Sports clubs open their doors and start their trainings when evening falls and during the weekends. During weekdays, the parks are used for other individual sporting activities, people walking their dogs, sitting at the benches, or walking through the parks to catch public transport to work and other places. Local people come and go, while some attending sporting activities arrive by car and then try to find parking close to facilities.

The use of parks and other sporting spaces are also regulated by the various competition seasons. For community football (soccer) and Australian Rules Football, the competition season runs from May to September for male and female teams that occupy the pitches during the colder fall and winter months. In the summer, indoor football sets off and occupies the indoor facilities alongside many other activities. Cricket players use the now available soccer or football pitches for their competition. Sport and physical activities that people engage in all year round include tennis, running, walking and cycling, to name a few.

The absence of streetlights makes some parks dark and uninviting places after sunset. While sometimes used by a lone commuter on their way home or a sole dog walker, the pitches are, so to say, pitch dark. After one of my team's soccer trainings at Hanson Reserve, I found the grass and pedestrian path hard to separate. Cycling home one night, I hoped not to get engaged in

an interaction with a stranger. The tennis courts were the only lit areas, putting the players in the spotlight. Public nightlife is only found in a few places, including Footscray's Hopkins Street area. Although there are numerous café and restaurant hubs scattered around the municipality, drinking (and dancing?) until the early morning happens exclusively in Footscray or in other parts in Melbourne.

Then, of course, the Melbourne weather impacts (physical) rhythms. Days of rain will leave the parks unattended during but also after the sun returns, and it can take days for the ground to absorb the rainwater or for natural evaporation to occur. Potholes make the fields inaccessible and a muddy exercise, which dogs, contrary to humans, seem to enjoy. Sunny days throughout the year are taken as an opportunity to get out of the house; parks (including sporting grounds), walking tracks and the dog park are busy places when the sun is out. People engage in all kinds of leisure activities, enjoying a takeaway coffee or having a picnic on the grass.

Along the Maribyrnong River a similar daylight rhythm can be observed. The river is an aesthetically pleasing and busy commute route for cyclists coming from the southern suburbs and heading north, but the route is dark in the evening. With winter's 5.00pm sunset, this causes concerns for office hours commuters finding their way home in the dark. In Julia's experience, this became too dangerous when she headed home after sunset, and she decided not to do this again.

Once I wanted to cycle home; I overstayed at university until 7pm. It was dark and this part is terrible when it is dark, there are no streetlights. So I will never repeat that again. I had lights on my bike but that wasn't enough to see the path, so I was using the light on my phone too. I felt really unsafe and I would have to drive really slow and cautious and [thought] I was going to bump into someone.

Parks provide spaces for annual festivals, community events and other big gatherings to take place. Examples in Footscray Park include the popular, child-friendly 9:30pm New Years' Eve fireworks, the yearly Laneway Festival in February, and African Day Sports Festival in April. For

the Laneway Festival, the entire park is closed to visitors other than ticket holders (who can afford the expensive tickets) with high fences closing off the area. The festival transforms the park for a few days and attracts people from greater Melbourne and other parts of Victoria, with live music from its events resounding through the City. During the African Day Sports Festival, which is accessible to anyone, the park is also transformed with temporary pitches, food stalls and a jumping castle for children. The formally and informally organised sports groups who normally make use of the grounds, however, have to use other areas or cancel their training sessions.

Another daily and weekly temporality includes religious activities. Some churches ring their bells at set times during the day and week to announce the start of their communal services and for other ceremonial purposes. The bells can be heard in the surrounding neighbourhood blocks, in people's houses and out on the streets. Mosques and other religious centres commence their services in silence. The only sign of collective worship is the gathering of people and the stream of prayers emanating from the centres. The presence as much as absence of sonance reminds residents of Australia's dominant and publicly sanctioned religious expressions.

Not many places are immune to the rhythms of the day, season or school holiday periods, with fast food chains Kentucky Fried Chicken (open 10:30am-10.00pm) and McDonalds (open 24hrs) being exceptions. Although their peak hours are around lunch and dinnertime, these places are never empty. These are also places visited by highly diverse population groups; here, age, racial and ethnic-cultural diversity can be observed like nowhere else in the area apart from train stations and the hospital. A stream of vehicles pull over for their occupants to buy burgers or other fast food snacks, including high-end cars such as Mercedes and Audi, typical family cars, and beaten-up, soon-to-be-falling-apart cars, all of which hint at the occupants socio-economic status.

For Williamson (2016), 'ethno-cultural rhythms' include both migrant homemaking practices and appropriation of difference. Footscray and other nodes in the City of Maribyrnong offer places for migrants to shop, speak their languages, and socialise with other migrants. A sense of belonging and recognition is established by visitors who (seemingly) easily navigate the various shops, read language instruction on packaged food in perhaps Vietnamese or Chinese,

and order or socialise in languages other than English. They fuse together in a way that only ‘insiders’ can.

Everyday socialities: “Cracking through the lines”

City rhythms and the built environment interact with everyday socialities that take place in the area. At (multicultural) festivals, interactions take place that are different from the everyday neighbourly interactions in the streets and the shops. Whereas chapters 5, 6 and 7 describe diverse everyday socialities and interactions in the sports contexts, this chapter will present interviewees’ experiences that are concerned with the neighbourhood more generally and outside of the sports context. This enable me to place experiences of physical activity in the broader neighbourhood setting, as I approach the spaces as overlapping, interactive spaces rather than separate entities. Given this, where do people meet and where do people aim to avoid each other? Which inter- and intracultural interactions take, or do not take, place?

Figure 5 shows six key activity centres. Clockwise these include Highpoint Activity Centre (shopping centre, cinema, gaming shops and restaurants), Melbourne Sport and Aquatic Centre, Footscray Shopping District, Yarraville Shopping Village, Central West Shopping Centre, and Gordon Street Village in the centre. These are places where many people ‘rub shoulders’; here, people might exchange only eye contact, or alternatively meet friends in one of the cafés. Busy places such as shopping centres, however, can be visited and no specific interactions take place, rather only the ephemeral interactions that constitute and are constituted by producing busy places together. Valery (community centre interview participant) lives in West Footscray and lists a few more ‘bumping places’: “Local cafes (we have 5 in a 1 km radius), churches, library, neighbourhood house, recreational centres including RecWest and sports clubs, Returned and Service Leagues clubs, sports grounds, school gates, playgrounds, local supermarket; and Barkly Village is also a bumping place.”

Leaving the main roads and busy activity centres behind, quieter areas appear in which everyday socialities occur. These everyday socialities can include fleeting encounters with

strangers, friends and relatives meeting up, as well as unplanned encounters. Thus, it is the daily bodily presence that produces and transforms public sites into social spaces.



Figure 5 Key activities centres. Source: Maribyrnong Housing Strategy 2011 (Maribyrnong City Council, 2011).

Essential in understanding where socialities take place is where they do not take place, or when interactions are avoided. Liam says that, at times, people turn their back on you, then “it

may not work when I say hello. What can I do?” For Margo, growing up in a rural small town in South Australia where social pressure is high, she at times enjoys the option of avoidance that big cities offer. She explains:

The city offers freedom; you don’t have to explain yourself to anyone and you don’t have to think about walking out on the street and having to talk to people if you cannot be bothered; it makes it awkward. That ambiguity stressed me out when I lived back home. There is more social pressure to interact.

Lefebvre (1901-1991) lived in a pre-social media era, in particular, one that predated mobile phones. Now, people can interact via this medium, or avoid it. Daisy’s comment reminds us of the ever-present phones in our daily socialities and the significance of the social:

I think the problem with our world now is that we live such isolated lives, we go to a café and sit down and sit on our phone. We don’t interact with anyone; we are not looking to have an interaction. If you go to an art gallery and someone says something to you you’re like “leave me alone, I am looking at the art.” Or if you’re going to a band there is always someone pissing you off standing right next to you; “well you need just to bugger off.”

Differences and similarities are ever present in interactions, both with strangers and close others. While Margo says that her Croatian neighbour is difficult to communicate with because of the lack of a shared language, there is similarity that comes about through living in the same streets and sharing an interest in having a brief exchange of words. Age, family situation, occupation or type of house they live in are not mentioned as (dis)ablers in communication.

After Joan describes her neighbourhood in terms of diversity, she explains that actual intercultural interactions are not necessarily part of this: “Yeah it is much more I guess visual in the surroundings I’d say, whilst they know it’s a mix here it is also quite difficult to crack into the lines that they are going.” Language could be one of the barriers to “crack into the lines.” Margo

explains: “I’ve interacted with my Croatian neighbour a little bit but his English is really limited. But like the other day an ambulance rocked up to right there in front of his house but I have no idea why it was there. He seems alright now.”

Hana notes that some ethnic groups stick together, but intracultural interactions with other Japanese migrants is not something she is interested in. When I asked whether she feels part of a Japanese community (however diverse a community can be) she responds: “actually not really ... I try to approach in the past years into my uhm own sort of nationals but having this same passport doesn’t bond you.”

Moving away from the streetscapes, Joan gives an example of intercultural mingling. Joan used to work at an assembly line job for three years and most fulltime employees were Vietnamese migrants who “speak Vietnamese, and in the canteen, it is totally different to any other scene you have seen. The chatter they have, I don’t understand it, but it is hilarious!” After three years, the language barrier disenabled her to be fully part of and accepted, but “they are speaking their community language that is totally fine.” She has, however, developed friendships with a few of her Vietnamese co-workers who speak a little English:

They are so happy when they see you. Every time I bring them something and they are like ‘Jooaan!’. No one greets you like that in Australia. It is quite separated; I am an insider and outsider at the same time. I could go to their church for example and get the experience, but wouldn’t understand anything. There is that inclusion when she got a little bit of English and are very inviting which is good.

While Figure 2 shows the key activity areas in the municipality, meaningful interactions take place away from the busy centres, among residents in quiet streets and community centres.

Representations of space

“Council sees itself as representing a multicultural City where cultural diversity is part of everyday life” (2012-2017 Multicultural Policy, Maribyrnong City Council, 2012).

The City of Maribyrnong responds to its increasingly diversifying population by taking a celebratory approach that emphasises the positive aspects of its cultural diversity. ‘Multicultural Maribyrnong’ can be considered the current dominant discourse, with Footscray as its most diverse centre, and creates what Healy (2003) calls the *cultural imagination* of a city. Cultural imaginations are an ensemble of “images and fantasies, thoughts and expectations, feelings and values that we mentally attach to the idea of the city” (p. 56). For Lefebvre (1991), this is the *representation of space* and also the dominant mode of production in any society. It is the domain of “scientist, planners, urbanist, technocratic subdividers and social engineers, as of a certain type of artist with a scientific bent” (p. 38). The question is how dominant ideas in certain geographical areas are produced that form urban imaginations. Stratford (1999) invites us to see dominant images “not simply as individual perceptions, but as something which is socially constructed in the workings of power” (p. 15). Stratford (1999) suggests the following five sources that contribute to a dominant urban conception: historical documents, legal documents, policy documents, performative actions (such as festivals), and an understanding of self. In this section, I focus on the first four.

The following section focuses on how the City of Maribyrnong is imagined, marketed and managed by local decision-makers and policy-makers as a site for multicultural belonging. I discuss various Council plans and documents, starting with multicultural policies including the recent engagement with the international Intercultural Cities Network. The remainder of this chapter describes how public (sports) spaces are framed and ideological knowledges are produced. Finally, there is one group of people that breaks with conformity and has a rather powerful impact on how urban spaces are influenced: residential advocacy groups.

History of representation in a colonising land

History of representation is fundamental in the Australian context. The history of what we now collectively call City of Maribyrnong (along with street names, etc.) is an exemplar in its central role in imperialist production and representation of landscape. Australia was represented as

devoid of people and infrastructure, but rich in resources and ideal for (Western ideas of) farming land³¹.

History of representation and its relationship with ideology is visualised by the two pictures in Figure 6. It shows a building in Footscray that has had various functions over the years. It still carries the ghost sign of the Australian Natives Association (ANA) that made use of the building in the mid-1990s. The ANA was a friendly society offering its members and their widows and dependent children insurance against unemployment and illness. This society was established in 1871 and welcomed white Australian-born men from all occupations and social classes. The ANA was highly involved in the Federation movement; it sought to share Australia's nationhood and identity at the time of Federation. It was only in 1964 that the association accepted women as full members, and:

Although it lobbied government to redress injury and hardship to indigenous people resulting from government policies, the ANA was firmly of the view that Australia's future as a socially harmonious nation lay in it being a society for white people. Support of the White Australia Policy was one of the central pillars of Australian nationalism in the late 19th century (National Museum Australia, March 11, 2020).



Figure 6 Ghost signs of the Australian Natives Association building in Footscray. Source: www.melbournecircle.net

³¹ For an in-depth discussion on this topic, see Bruce Pascoe's (2019) *Dark Emu*.

These days, the representation of what the City of Maribyrnong is and the land on which it is placed has changed. Numerous official Council statements, events and practices work towards reconciliation and towards collaboration between traditional owners of the land and settlers/invasors. A central institutional structure in place in this municipality is the Maribyrnong Reconciliation Action Plan Advisory Committee (MRAPAC), chaired by the Mayor and including at least 50% Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people. It works alongside other Council advisory committees including elderly, youth, interfaith, and disability. The MRAPAC works with Council staff to develop and implement the Council's Reconciliation Action plan, advises on strategic policies and plans, is involved in advocacy and develops and delivers key events including during NAIDOC Week and Reconciliation Week. Still, in the broader context, racist institutional structures are prevalent in everyday Australian society, and former colonies generally are in a state of 'postcolonising' rather than being in a static state of being postcolonial (e.g., Moreton-Robinson, 2003). It is colonising, nevertheless, seen both in the built environment and the continued suppression of Indigenous populations.

Parks tell stories. Figure 7 shows a Pepper Tree in Kensington with red pepper corns. It comes with a sign describing the migrant history of the area. Kensington is located just east of the Maribyrnong River. The park carries an Aboriginal name from the Woi-Wurrung language, Warun Miik, meaning white gum tree country in English. A sign at the park entrance describes the connection between migrants and traditional custodians of the land: "Bunjil created us from country. That is why we the Wurundjeri People say 'our country, our land, our mother'. We believe that everything our country gives life to is our brother or sister, even the trees and animals. When you visit or live on our country then you too become part of our extended family."

A discursive relationship between traditional custodians of the land, migrants and natural environment is described on these signs. The South African pepper trees are planted next to a wide variety of eucalypts trees and native bushes. In a sense, it challenges the white settlers' hegemony of land. Rather, it welcomes all migrants to become part of a people and life world created by Bunjil. In the walking group section, the nature-migrant connection is further fleshed out.

As Cooke (2020) describes, Indigenous sovereignty in the management of green spaces has long been ignored as well as practices of caring-as-country in urban areas (Ngurra et al., 2019). Warun Miik Park is an example of how the ‘ignorance trend’ is changing positively. Pipemakers Park in the City of Maribyrnong offers another example. Situated along the Maribyrnong River, Pipemakers Park is in an area particularly rich in Indigenous traditions and customs. In 1992, a mosaic-artwork was created as part of the Wurundjeri Garden from the design of Indigenous artists Maree Clarke and Sonya Hodge (McKinnon, n.d.). The Wurundjeri Garden is a section of the bigger History of the Land Garden. The aim of the gardens is to tell the story “of how the occupants of this region changed the local landscape over time. The landscape resulting from thousands of years of Aboriginal occupation was drastically changed by European settlement from the 1830s, with the introduction of exotic plants, animals and artefacts” (Living Museum of the West, n.d.). On a rainy winter day in May, the Council in collaboration with the nearby Melbourne’s Living Museum of the West organised a tour through the gardens as part of Reconciliation Week. Local Indigenous and non-Indigenous community leaders and gardeners hosted the tour, starting with the Wurundjeri Garden and the Seven Sisters Dreamtime Story. This songline travels through many different language groups from the Central Desert to the west coast (Wroth, 2015).



Figure 7 Left: Pepper Tree and sign, part of



the Peppertree Cove at the Warun Miik Park

in Kensington (just outside of the City of Maribyrnong). Right: sections of mosaic-art telling Dreamtime Story of the local myth Seven Sisters (told by Robert Mate-Mate) in Wurundjeri Garden History, part of the History of the Land Gardens, Pipemakers Park, City of Maribyrnong. Source: all photos taken by Jora.

The tour took the visitors through the patchwork of small ornamental gardens each dedicated to a section of history, arrival of early settlers, British settlers, arrival of the Greek and Italian migrants (represented by olive trees), and so forth. The gardens, including the surrounding green areas and wetlands, are in constant development and fulfil a range of functions, from historically significant space to offering green leisure space. Walkers, runners and cyclists use the path next to the river for exercise, while the park also has an important ecological function for endangered plant and animal species due its large size and protective environment. For instance, the park's wetlands cleanse the rainwater entering the river and provide a habitat for wildlife.

Multicultural policies

Maribyrnong City Council has endorsed multiculturalism in its official policy for over fifteen years. Local policies are embedded in an international legislative context and are a result of Australia's federal push towards multiculturalism. Two examples of international legislation are the 1951 UN convention and protocol relating to the status of refugees and UNESCO's 2001 universal declaration on cultural diversity. On a national level, the Racial discrimination Act which came into effect in 1975 and the 2011 People of Australia – Australia's Multicultural Policy are foundational in the Council's multiculturalism policies. Further, the Victorian state government has specified acts and policies. Three examples are the 2010 Equal opportunity Act, the Victorian Racial and Religious Intolerance Act 2011, and the 2011 Multicultural Victoria Act. Council's multicultural policy is framed by the principles expressed in the latter act. The first state-wide act that explicates multiculturalism in its title is the Victorian Multicultural Commission Act (1993). The objectives of the Commission included the promotion of access by ethnic groups to government bodies, and to "encourage all of Victoria's ethnic groups to retain and express their social identity and cultural inheritance," promote unity between ethnic groups, and "promote better understanding of Victoria's ethnic groups within the Victorian community" (Victorian Multicultural Commission Act, 1993, pp. 1-2). This demonstrates that policies celebrating and highlighting the uniqueness of cultural diversity go back almost three decades. Unity among ethnic groups, identification of needs, and encouraging residents to culturally express themselves continue to be foundational aspects in current policies, for example, the Council's Multicultural Policy 2012-2017.

As part of the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities Policy and Action Plan 2006-2011, a number of initiatives were implemented that changed that way people with multicultural background participated in community life, and were supported and celebrated by Council. The Multicultural Policy 2012-2017 followed up on the 2006-2011 policy and committed to five objectives: participation, prosperity, amenity, advocacy, and capability. All objectives are concerned with making the City an inclusive, welcoming and safe place for diverse communities. For example, in terms of the amenity objective, Council aims to provide accessible places, open spaces and transport where people can meet and take part in social activities as well

to “develop a vibrant cultural precinct that reflect the cultural diversity of our community” (Maribyrnong City Council, 2017, p. 18).

Finally, a relevant document is the Community Plan 2040. The plan was initiated by the Council and written by and for the City of Maribyrnong community to reflect the concerns and hopes of residents. This is not an enforced policy, but rather a document that pushes various current and arising issues such as changing demographics, rising population density and the pressure this puts on infrastructure and public (green) spaces. It could be read as an advisory document, and is in line with the city’s focus on diversity, inclusion, and civic participation.

In June 2017, the 2017-2021 Council Plan was presented which includes a discussion of Council’s six objectives: strong leadership, healthy and inclusive communities, quality places and spaces, growth and prosperity, a mobile and connected city, and clean and green. The Plan builds on previous multicultural policies and commits to facilitating “the development of Maribyrnong as an ‘intercultural city’ that promotes inclusivity and diversity” (Maribyrnong City Council, 2017a, p. 16). Becoming part of the global Intercultural Cities Network is an important way in which the City’s multicultural policy is given further meaning.

Intercultural Cities Network

In October 2018, the City of Maribyrnong became a member of the Intercultural Cities Network. The network was initiated and developed by the Council of Europe, Europe’s leading human rights organisation. Intercultural Cities advocate respect for diversity and a pluralistic city identity. In partnership with business, civil society and public service professionals, “the city actively combats prejudice and discrimination and ensures equal opportunities for all by adapting its governance structures, institution and services” (Council of Europe, 2020). Besides reviewing existing urban policies and practices through an inclusive and intercultural lens, the Intercultural Cities Network also encourages more mixing and interaction between diverse groups in public spaces. For Australian members, this also includes a strong commitment to recognise/reconcile the first people.

The Network based its practices on academic resources such as Wood and Landry's (2008) *The Intercultural City: Planning for Diversity Advantage*, and is strongly focussed on the idea of 'unlocking' and facilitating the potentials of a diverse population. The Council of Europe made the conscious decision to use the term *interculturalism* over *multiculturalism*. The latter was said to focus on differences that reduce people to their ethnic background, rather than focus on living together and enabling cross-cultural contacts (Intercultural Cities Australasia Symposium, July 2019, Caroline Springs, US). Interculturalism is defined by Sandercock (2003, p. 321) as a planning approach that goes beyond supporting migrant groups, but "also works to incorporate migrants into cross-cultural activities, dialogues and organisations." The story time booklet (2018) and the March-August 2020 project are examples of the Council's commitment to the network.

Council's commitment to the Intercultural City programme is based on the residents' actual 'measured' diversity and also a way to represent space in an abstract manner that ideologises intercultural interactions and connectedness (see Figure 8). Before the programme materialised, it was the domain of urban planners and council employees who carefully designed and planned how the city is presented and marketed. It is a very people-focussed representation of the city that highlights the diversity of people living in the area and using it as a strength, compared to other councils that market their city around shopping precincts or nature aspects including woodlands, forests or beaches.

Organised sport targeting participants and/or supporters is one of the popular arenas where the programme is applied. A Council workshop exemplifies this. In March 2020, I was invited to a Council workshop aimed at designing a social media campaign to look specifically at interculturalism and gender equity, and made the following field notes. We brainstormed about places where intercultural interactions are likely to take place and that are experienced differently by various genders. Sport was often mentioned. As the workshop progressed, participants became increasingly critical of the heteronormative and masculine structures sport (re)produces, and questioned whether this was a suitable case study for a social media campaign. Places where intercultural contact takes place on an everyday basis, such as libraries, shopping precincts and

community centres were mentioned more frequently than ‘orchestrated’ sporting events (Field notes, March 2020).



Figure 8 Two pages from the 'Our Story is Intercultural' story time booklet (Maribyrnong City Council, 2018).

Representation of public open and green spaces

The City of Maribyrnong offers 150 open spaces (see Figure 9), covering 307.9 hectares of land, which equates to 9.9% of the municipality's land area. Open spaces are important for a range of reasons including liveability, as they offer not only recreational spaces but also play a role in mitigating urban heat build-up in higher density precincts.

The City defines public space as publicly owned land set aside for outdoor recreation and enjoyment; this includes public parks, reserves, gardens, waterways, and publicly owned urban plazas. A broader definition of public space commonly refers to the public realm, including streets used for transportation, car parks and public education institutions. Because these sites are not intended to service recreational needs, they are excluded from the City's definition. An exemption is ancillary open space, that is, streets that contribute to the value of and connect to open spaces, where people meet and socialise or use for walking and cycling.

In the Open Space Strategy document (2014), the City takes into account “unstructured recreation needs” as well as “structured (organised) sport and recreation needs” (2014, p. 4). Whereas the former refers to participation in activities that are initiated by individuals, the latter refers to activities that are “organised by a club, association, school or community group and

participation is by becoming a member of the club or on a fee-paying basis.” (p. 7). No monetary reference is applied to unstructured recreation. A third term, “informal use of space” refers to “the casual use of open space for non-active pursuits including sitting in the open space, picnicking, meeting people, reading a book, enjoying the ambience and relaxation” (p. 7).

Future changes that are predicted or already taking shape in the population will continue to grow, with the effect of climate change seeing the city become warmer and drier with more intense rainfall. All of these factors put pressure on public open spaces; indeed, only 28m² of open space are expected per person in 2031 (Community Plan, 2040). The Council aims to preserve and enhance parks and gardens, open space and wildlife habitats. Older industrial sites are being redeveloped while ensuring that “important industrial, cultural and public heritage sites are maintained and accessible and the community is educated on our city’s origins” (Maribyrnong City Council, 2019, p. 17).

Parks and green areas as we know them today are Anglo-Celtic (Western more broadly) ideas of outdoor urban spaces. Accessibility to parks and green areas (including beaches) has been characterised by inclusion and exclusion. In the late 17th and early 18th century, European parks were places reserved for the elite classes, with wandering at leisure around gardens and private estates an exclusively wealthy-people activity. Traditional public parks are said to have developed from a democratised version of the English country estates (Girling & Helphand, 1997). Eisenman (2013, p. 289) writes that as a result of social reforms prioritising healthy living and quality of life, parks were planned to achieve an “amelioration of health and well-being through improvements in the physical fabric of the city.” In the Australian context, open space and public parks were introduced in the early 20th century as “a major theme of the town planning movement” which aimed at “securing a healthy, happy and contented population” (Freestone, 2010, p. 251). As Volkanovski and Marshall (2015) observe, trends in park designs have changed with the times and societal trends, with age-friendly parks as one of the recent trends (Levinger et al., 2021). Some parks were seen as spaces to escape industrialised urban areas (Freestone, 2010), while others were influenced by enhancing relationships with the natural environment, supporting social and cultural objectives, and providing spaces for family and community development.

Approximately 30% of Maribyrnong's population cycles, 90% walks, and 81% travels by car (Road and Safety Strategy 2020). The Council aims to improve safe walking and cycling options, work on public transport, and improve road design and traffic flow. The Maribyrnong Bicycle Strategy 2020-30 aims to deliver a connected and protected bicycle network and to "see increased cycling participation by people of all ages, genders, and abilities by providing safe and improved conditions for cyclists" (Maribyrnong Messenger, 2020, p. 6). The improvements are part of a larger aim to enhance the liveability of the area against the backdrop of the so-called '20-minute city' (Maribyrnong City Council, 2017b), that is, residents should be able to access their daily needs within a 20 minutes' walk from their home. Here, a local focus enhances strong local connections. The Road Safety and Strategy 2020 document outlines Council plans for the upcoming ten years, and includes a walking and cycling strategy that works towards zero deaths and serious injuries on the roads.

The policies demonstrate the importance of public open spaces for the Council. Open (green) spaces serve various functions for the individual and for groups, including physical activities, small group picnics, and spaces for commuting. The Sustainability and Environment Guide (Maribyrnong City Council, 2017b) contains information on a selection of parks and community gardens, with the Council establishing partnerships with community centre volunteer groups. Community gardens offer a shared space for local residents where "people from all corners of the globe and with differing levels of gardening ability" are welcomed (Maribyrnong City Council, 2017b, p. 10). In other parks, the focus is on organising free socialising activities such as BBQs, bird watching, or planting and nurturing plants. The Stony Creek volunteer group offers walking tours, organises clean ups, and aims to improve the quality of the creek and surroundings for future generations.



Figure 9 Public green spaces in Maribyrnong. Source: Maribyrnong sustainability and environment guide 2017.



Figure 10 Map showing the four reserves part of the West Footscray Communities Facilities Plan. Source: <https://www.maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/Works-and-projects/WFSFP>

Representation of physical activity spaces

In 2017, Council operated one aquatic centre and a recreation centre that attracted 900,000 visitors per year, 37 sports grounds, and 29 sporting pavilions/clubhouses (e.g., lawn bowls, tennis). The Council also teaches swimming to approximately 3,500 people per year and runs over 50 weekly health and fitness classes such as yoga, tai chi and aerobics in community centres. As part of the Public Health and Wellbeing Plan and in line with the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008, the Council has committed to increasing active living. The priority is to increase healthy and active living through a wide range of investment areas (including sports and recreation clubs, Maribyrnong Aquatic Centre, Parks and Open Space, Maribyrnong Bicycle Strategy 2020-2030, Active Maribyrnong and Community Centre Programs) (Maribyrnong City Council, 2020). However, the strategy does not outline a multiculturally sensitive physical activity approach.

On average, 44% residents in the City of Maribyrnong do not meet physical activity guidelines, which is in line with the Victorian State-wide rate of physical inactivity (Victoria State Government, 2017). There are no statistics available for ethnically diverse populations and physical (in)activity rates. Among LGBTQI+, the percentage is higher at roughly 45% (Victorian Agency for Health Information, 2020).

Multiculturalism runs through the representations of sports spaces. An example is in *The People of Australia: Australia's Multicultural Policy* (2011). Building on the premise that sport and physical activity build social community cohesion, the Victorian Government (2011) established a Multicultural Youth Sports Partnership Program with the aim “to create connections and involve youth from new and emerging communities, and culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds” (p. 8). The commitment to the program ended in 2020.

During data collection, numerous redevelopment plans for sporting grounds were presented for community consultation. One of the identified key priorities in the 2017-2021 Council Plan is to focus on “multi-purpose sporting and recreation facilities for a growing population” (Maribyrnong City Council, 2017a, p. 18). An example is the West Footscray Community Facilities Plan that includes four reserves and aims to develop a West Footscray Sporting Precinct (see Figure 10). One is a dog park, which attracts people who live within

walking distance and those who arrive by car. The other three reserves host a fitness community centre and a scout club (Barrett Reserve), one women's soccer club (Johnson Reserve), and one cricket and Australian football club (Shorten Reserve). Various concept designs of the precinct were presented to residents and community groups. The four areas are walking distances apart. In July 2019, Council consulted with over twenty community groups, five sports clubs, and community representatives. Over 350 residents provided email feedback that included the following concerns/opinions: the importance of balance between active and passive spaces; the need for the condition and quality of sporting fields to be maintained carefully; the need for BBQs and toilet facilities; the tennis court, playground and skate area were well utilised and highly valued. Residents also highly valued the concept design featuring a fitness community centre that offered flexible, shared and multi-use spaces available for community use

Another development plan presented to the community focused on Footscray Park. Since 1998, Footscray Park has been constantly updated with three main master plans presented by Council in collaboration with partners such as Parks Victoria. Two are particularly relevant: the 2011 and 2019 master plans. The 2011 plan developed Footscray Park to its current state. This includes a formal sporting precinct, a river edge precinct featuring a cycling path, and fitness and play equipment. The Western Lawn area located at the centre of the park offers a large dog off-leash grass field and provides for overflow formal and casual sporting uses. This area was repurposed in the 2019 Master Plan draft. Other areas such as the heritage garden and playground areas offer space for other forms of leisure.

Aiming to increase diverse participation in community sports, Council developed a concept design of the Western Lawn area to include three football fields and one pavilion (see Figure 11, right). The plan was developed in collaboration with Melbourne Victory to build their elite soccer academy, which at that time was based in Melbourne City with training at various sites. However, community response to the official plans was not predicted. The issue split the city in two: proponents and opposition. There was little in between. Both sides developed into vocal resident advocacy groups, communicating their allegiance to their position via social media, their newly established websites and discussion meetings. The proponents saw the opportunity to

increase football facilities, particularly for junior and senior female players, as current facilities were under pressure and had reached capacity. The opposition argued that much-needed open space would be partially given to Melbourne Victory, thus privatising public land. Also, the Council “dominated by Labor and the Greens – was at odds with the community from the start. They quietly supported this project and were engaged in secret talks with Melbourne Victory for years. They set up a dodgy consultation process to try and push their plans through.” (The Socialist, 2020, para. 6). By selling merchandise and posting flyers throughout the city, the opposition campaign, ‘Save Footscray Park’ (Figure 11, left), drew much attention to the matter and eventually forced Council to withdraw the plans. Their statement on the website is as follows:

It was built on stolen land of the Wurundjeri, Woi Wurrung and Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation in 1911 after the people of Footscray lobbied for its creation. Locals helped to build the park by donating money, plants and labour, and the local technical school built the shelters. It continues to be loved and well-used by residents. But it is now under threat, and we need your help to save it. (www.savefootscraypark.com.au, 2019).

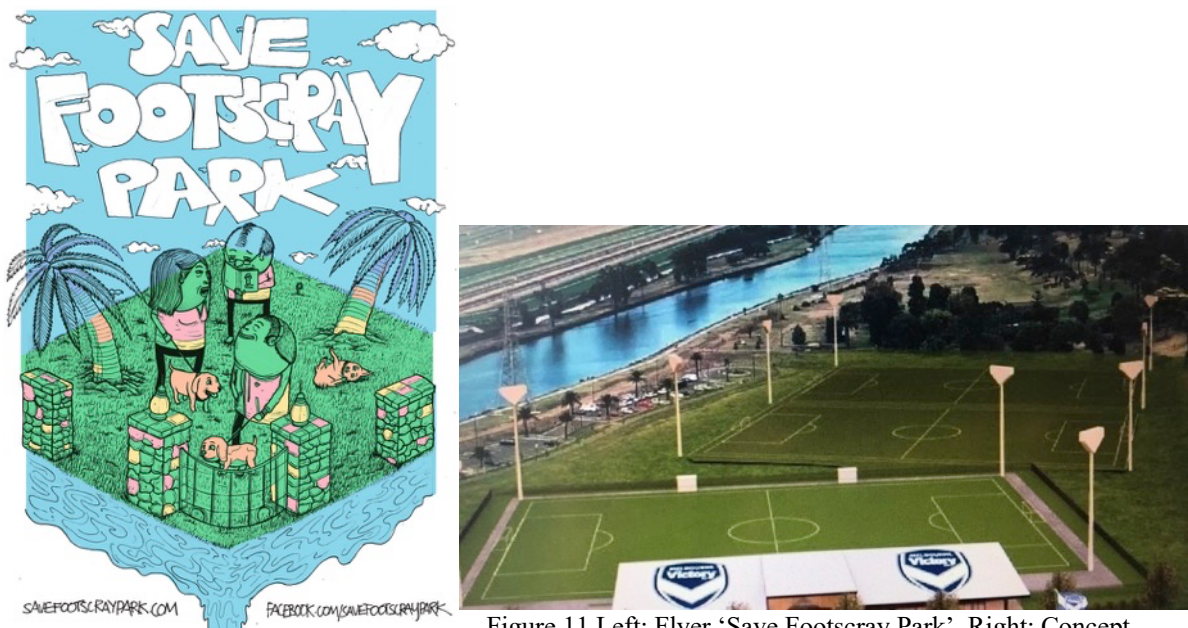


Figure 11 Left: Flyer 'Save Footscray Park'. Right: Concept design of three fields and pavilion. Source: www.savefootscraypark.com.au

Another example of public concern in late 2019 and early 2020 was the Western Bulldogs football club playground in West Footscray, which is highly used by the community. In December 2019, the Council deemed the playground unsafe and closed it as no measures were taken to improve the place. An online community petition was set up and signed by 413 supporters calling for it be reopened as well as to retain the place in future redevelopment plans. The playground has since been updated and reopened.

The repurposing plans of the Western Lawn and the playground provide two examples of conflicts over place. It also demonstrates that “planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 38) do not work in isolation but are influenced by (and influence, for that matter) third parties as to what priorities should be.

Besides the formalised, sport club-based policies, the Council offers two free trial physical activity programs that are part of Active Maribyrnong: Expo, and Spring into Summer. Both programs offer residents the opportunity to familiarise themselves with various forms of physical activity. The programs have grown over the past few years into highly successful ways to encourage over 4000 residents to be active. Lastly, the Active Maribyrnong Grants Program

offers eligible residents the “opportunity for a range of underrepresented young people in Maribyrnong to actively participate in community sport and recreation” (Maribyrnong City Council, 2020).

Spaces of representation/lived space

Cath Moore in Maxine Beneba Clarke et al.’s (2017) book *Growing up African in Australia* forcefully introduces an aspect of spaces of representation/lived space:

Australia’s ‘multicultural melting pot’ is a civilising notion constructed by idealist, watching the experiment unfold from a safe distance. How does it feel to be lumped into this category, under this term, thrown around by policymakers protected by the privilege of colonial whiteness? It is okay if your family are all the same colour. But a single white woman with a brown kid? Outside of Carroll Street I often catch a stranger’s furtive, accusatory glance. *Not aboriginal. Then what – adopted?* It feels like we have been charged with conspiracy to commit fraud and are perpetually awaiting trial” (p. 62, italics in original).

Spaces of representation are about the lived experiences – the raw emotions and everyday (in)civilities that dominate everyday spheres. Importantly, the concept differs to representation of spaces in that nothing is planned; realities are the result of everyday messiness (cf. Massey, 2005). It also provides an alternative, or a deeper understanding of the social complexities of neighbourhoods; in this case, it follows Beneba Clarke’s (2017) assertion of the lived experiences of an idealist constructing civilising notion of Australia’s multicultural melting pot. Gieseeking (2016) argues that reading territories solely “at the scale of the geopolitical replicates masculinist, heteronormative and colonial perspectives on place-making” (p. 264), and needs to be refined. The author argues that by adding a “vertical dimension” to how (in this instance marginalised LGBTQ) people enact their agency, it “continually reproduce [s] social territories as they navigate their everyday lives” (p. 264). Indeed, as Lefebvre (1991) contends, “Representational space is

alive: it speaks” and “need obey no rules of consistency or cohesiveness” (pp. 42-43). In addition, and returning to Healy (2003), urban cultural imaginations affect people’s lived experiences of cities. Understandings of the city “underpin the way in which we organize our lives in cities, and may determine ... the kinds of interactions we initiate on a street, or the buildings we enter” (p. 56). This makes the city not only a built, material environment, but also an imagined place that is formed through dominant discourses and affects people’s lived experiences. So what does this look like in the City of Maribyrnong?

The final section of this chapter comprises three sections based on the dominant themes that emerged from the interviews. Why and when did interviewees move into the area? How do they spatialise diversity in their neighbourhood? Gentrification, the topic of the third section, refers to a change in the area that impacts the production of space in various ways. In Brighties and Brondies, I end with a discussion on how the previously discussed industrial character of the inner west is internalised and *lived*.

Making the City of Maribyrnong home

Fifteen interview participants migrated to Australia, whereas 11 people were born in Australia, ranging the countryside of Queensland and South Australia to Sydney and Melbourne³². Participants moved to the City of Maribyrnong (or close areas) for both similar and different reasons. None of the interviewees identified as Indigenous.

Six interview participants moved with their parents to Australia at a young age. Teresa, Nella, Jim and Liam were born in European countries and have lived in Australia for multiple decades, seeking a future with more employment and education opportunities. Karim arrived from The Democratic Republic of Congo with his family on a humanitarian visa, while Ramya arrived from India with her mother and first lived in Sydney and Newcastle. Most interviewees arrived in Australia by plane, but Jim and his family left Ireland under the 10-pound passage scheme and arrived in Australia by ship, the *Fairsea* (the last to take the Suez Canal route). “Europe was full,

³² This excludes the interview participants presented in Chapter 8.

but Australia was underpopulated. There wasn't a migrant system back in the days like there is now. Nothing was paid for when we arrived in a migrant hotel in Broadmeadows" Jim remembers. Liam's arrival in Melbourne wasn't any more amusing. Upon arrival, Liam was only eight years old and his family was taken to a migrant hostel. He recalls his parents "crying, because they were told it was fantastic but the houses were terrible, the old metal ones. It was cold and raining, they were told Australia is sunny; 'you don't need a heavy coat' they were told. The posters told us it was all sunny and tropical. So they gave away all their warm cloths." Liam thinks the feeling of disappointed faded over time, "but deep down they were always Irish and they missed their homeland."

Kathy, Nada and Hana decided as adults to move from Ireland, Germany/Croatia and Japan, respectively, with their families to settle in Melbourne for employment reasons. Nai (Hong Kong), Julia (Croatia), LP (Malaysia), Enrique (Venezuela), and Mo and Nasim (Bangladesh) arrived as international students and are either still studying or remained after finishing their degrees and finding jobs. Some of them bought houses, married and had children.

Natalie (UK/Malta), and Ellen and Heidi (Vietnam) were born in Australia to migrant families. Both Ellen's and Heidi's parents took the dangerous trip by boat fleeing conflict. The family migration histories of all other interview participants (Margo, Joan, Daisy, Sam, Sue, Cheryl and Marilyn) are older and, as with all other interview participants, these histories perform different roles in how they describe their ethno-cultural identity. After data collection, Margo moved from Melbourne. Some of the younger interview participants considered moving elsewhere in Australia or overseas; however, older participants were more likely to stay in Melbourne. Some of the participants had also welcomed children and grandchildren into their families.



Figure 12 Mural on Asylum Seeker Resource Centre in Footscray with quote from Malcolm Fraser: “Australia is a proudly multicultural nation” Source: Ross (2015).

People came to live in the area for different reasons, some for practical reasons such as attending university or buying affordable property. Hana trusted her Australian partner’s choice to move to the West. “He always talked about the West, never the east.” Hana remembers the first few months and enjoyed seeing so much diversity out on the streets. In particular, she remembers the Malcolm Fraser mural in Footscray (Figure 12):

Of course I didn’t know anything about Australia. Then I was so happy to be around in this area especially when I was walking in Footscray and saw this [former] prime minister Malcolm [Fraser], that mural *oh my goodness!* I felt like *oh my goodness* I am so happy, because I am also part of this multicultural place. It was like a welcome message to me: you’re ok, you can stay here.

Through the mural and a welcoming message Hana was able to establish a sense of connecting to a place, being in the right place, being accepted as a multicultural (or non-Anglo-Celtic) resident. Later in the interview she explained she was in Australia on a bridging visa waiting for her

permanent residency to be processed (at the time of writing she had received permanent residency status).

Heidi was born and has always lived in the Maidstone/Braybrook area. Her parents fled the war in Vietnam and built a life here with their five children. Heidi reflects on growing up in the Western suburbs of Melbourne and says: “I think because I have grown up in this side of town where everyone kind of has a similar [migrant] background, my own migrant identity is not really a thing. There is that connection between us.”

With her partner and newborn baby, Sam had been in West Footscray for one year at the time of the interview. This suburb offered house prices that were much more affordable compared to other areas in Melbourne, “We know quite a few families from other sides who made the same decision as us.” Sam continues: “We were looking for a house around here and one house we inspected was sold because the previous owners moved into a nursing house. And you could tell from the interior style, it must have been an older Greek or Italian person.” She laughs and adds the house hadn’t been renovated for a long time. “I have heard around this area; you had a lot of post-WO2 migrants, the Italians and the Greeks, and as they get older, they move out to nursing homes or pass away. Their houses go up for sale and this new generation of families comes in.” The demographics are similar in Daisy’s street where most people are either young families or older Maltese and Italian people. Neither Sam or Daisy specify what ‘young families’ means in ethnic and racial terms, but elsewhere in the interview Sam mentions that there are many white Anglo-Saxon neighbours and families around.

Although this reads like the natural circle of life, Sam’s comments enliven the nameless census statistics: a young ‘Australian’ family moving into the area and replacing the older ‘migrant’ generation. As the population of the western suburbs becomes younger and less ethnically diverse, residents actively engage in homemaking practices. Lived experiences of production of space can be closely connected with the way spaces are represented in official policy, with Hana’s comments demonstrating that Fraser’s multiculturalism policy, translated into a mural, reached her on a very personal level and enabled placemaking.

Borders

Borders are central points of reference in how people imagine their neighbourhood. These borders often merge into each other seamlessly, and do not necessarily align with official suburb borders. When asked about her neighbourhood border, Julia responds: “I think it is Ballarat Road!” She laughs. “I don’t know why. Maybe because it is the main road that divides Maribyrnong from Footscray? And on the one side there is the Maribyrnong River. It is like a square, Ballarat Road, river on both sides and the tramline.” In answer to the same question, Hana explains that living close to the Maribyrnong River: “this side and the other side of the river are slightly different areas; I think the river is a sort of border.”

Although Sunshine is not officially part of the City, it is often included in ‘the West’ imaginary. For Hana, from the river all the way towards the West (including Sunshine) feels like her neighbourhood, whereas Sam, who works in Sunshine and lives closer to the official council border than Hana, does not describe Sunshine as her immediate neighbourhood:

Sunshine to me feels different in that it still feels more disadvantaged. You know, there are lots of issues with drugs and issues with police around all the time. Yeah, lots of people are taking drugs and there are many low socio-economic households. It is a great place, but there are still disadvantages. I never feel unsafe there, I should say. But I feel a bit sad sometimes, walking passed and seeing young parents doing drugs.

To outsiders, Sunshine is hardly distinguishable in a material sense from the surrounding suburbs and is often merged with the City of Maribyrnong as ‘the Inner West’, but it is clearly a border for Sam.

Daisy lives, works and engages in leisure and sport activities just south and north of the City, and explains that the official Council border runs right through her imagined neighbourhood. Her own neighbourhood (south of the City) has “a lot of older Maltese and Italian people. All the old houses get knocked down and new townhouses are being built. It is just an area of growth. West Footscray is already built, it has already grown. Similar demographics with families, but

West Footscray is a bit more established and has more older children in their teenage years, and here it is a really growing community with younger children.” It is similar to the dominant development story of the West that the further west you go, the less developed it is. The way borders are experienced and described tells us something about the ‘messiness’ of geographically being in place and how residents imagine their place in the world. The contrast with representations of space that have clear limits and borders is apparent. The following section focuses on borders of diversity.

Spatialising diversity

When I invited interview participants to describe their neighbourhood both in general terms and in terms of diversity, they offered the following responses. Interviewees often started by describing how diverse this part of Melbourne is, their responses were likely biased by the fact that I always introduced this project in terms of physical activity spaces and multiculturalism. Nevertheless, the ‘diversity’ story is consistent in all interviews and, at times, challenged.

Footscray is often at the heart of how people spatialise their neighbourhood. Even if they live in Maribyrnong or West Footscray, the shopping and restaurant district in Footscray is often mentioned in interviews. Joan comments: “I think Footscray is definitely the central hub, the busy bit. And loads of different cultures, jam-packed, it is blooming, lots of Chinese population, through to African and Vietnamese; the list goes on! There is not much English spoken if you walk around there and sometimes the signage is not in English; they just don’t care. For example, there is Thai Boxing and Muay Thai around the corner, so you can see people bring their cultures and activities.” Julia has a similar experience: “In Footscray you can really find anything from Ethiopian to Indian to Vietnamese or whatever you want. I would say the main street in Footscray primarily has Asian restaurants, maybe because people like their food better and you get big portions. The other side of Barkley Street has lots of African restaurants, whereas if I chose Indian, I would go closer to Barkley Street.” Julia continues to explain that this diversity is not reflected in the businesses or residents where she lives in Maribyrnong.

Diversity is something that ‘happens’ outside people’s direct lived environment. As Sam explains: “I don’t feel around Yarraville and here [West Footscray] that it is particularly culturally diverse; when I think about the West I know it is more culturally diverse than in other parts of Melbourne, but it is not really my experience. When I go to Footscray Market, that is really different and that feels extremely diverse.” Liam has a similar experience: “Most of our neighbours are Anglo-Saxon, but we still talk to others when they walk by the garden; only our neighbours across the street are Greek.” Socio-economic statuses are sparingly mentioned by interviewees.

In a sense, describing the municipality in terms of diversity and localising the ethno- and racial diversity in one hub makes it something that happens ‘somewhere else’ rather than in people’s own streets, as Sam illustrates. It is something to be observed, visited and consumed³³ through its strong connection with ethnic restaurants.

Times of coming and going

Growing up in the West meant that understanding cultural differences came quite naturally. It was the Europeans in the early days, then the Vietnamese, followed by a raft of other cultural inflows. We didn’t know it as multiculturalism then but it helped equip us for a rapidly assimilating Australia (Strambi, 2017, pp. 84-85).

When I asked interview participants to describe their neighbourhood in terms of diversity, this was often set against a timeline. A temporal dimension was added to make sense of diversity. There are times of coming and going of certain ethno-cultural groups. This is clearly illustrated in Lyell Strambi’s (2017) observations on the temporal aspect and its connection to the diversity it brought about. In the first half of this section I quote from Howie and O’Brien’s (2017) book *How the West was One* that includes Strambi’s comments, and provide interview responses to

³³ See for example Commaroff and Comaroff (2009) for a discussion on commodification of ethnicity and Walsh (2014) for a discussion on ‘marketisation of multiculturalism’.

describe ‘development’ since the mid 1990s. The second part focuses on the most recent newcomers: gentrifiers. So, what is gentrification, and how is this affecting the urban aesthetics and lived experiences of residing in the West?

Marg exemplifies the changes in her neighbourhood: “Back in the day, second and third generation white Anglo-Saxons lived here. They were almost unemployable; they were uneducated and on welfare. They were either factory workers or housewives. Then Macedonians, Greeks and Italians came into the neighbourhood and everyone was doing their best. Very working class. Now people have moved in from other parts of the city and have double income and double university degrees, so it is very different demographics.” When Lorraine Ryan (2017) was younger, the ‘New Australians’ moved into the neighbourhood. She vividly remembers: “The Susannis lived further down the street. A newly arrived Italian family – they were ‘New Australians’. They cooked strange food, spoke using words I had never heard before.” Another Italian family soon to arrive opened a delicatessen shop on the corner: “what were these weird sausages hanging up? The big blocks of cheese with pungent smells – not like the silver-wrapped Kraft I had in my sandwich” (p. 7). Interviewee Sue has a similar memory of how new sounds and languages were audible in the neighbourhood of Moonee Ponds, east of the Maribyrnong River.

I grew up in Moonee Ponds and mostly Australians used to live there. With my mum and my younger brother in the old baby pram pusher we used to go shopping up the road. It was there that for the first time I noticed Italian people. We must have had an influx. They were lovely and hardworking people. They were speaking different languages and you know, the looks. It was not like the Asians, Vietnamese or Greek people. It was first the Italian migrants and then other cultures coming over to the area.

Both Marg and Sue emphasise that the new migrant influx were hardworking people. Lina Caneva (2007) was a child of Italian migrants and describes her relationship with Italian and Australian food: “I ate my *peperonata* and salami-filled sandwiches down the side of the church wall at

lunchtimes so no one would call me out for eating wog tucker.” She convinced her parents to change her lunch box. “Finally, I could have a white bread, cheese and vegemite sandwich, a packet of chips and a Sunny-Boy frozen treat ... nicely fitting in with the rest of the mainly Anglo-Saxon students” (Caneva, 2017, p. 33, italics in original). For Lynne Larkin (2007), it was not about fitting in but about consuming culturally different food: “the highlight was getting our takeaway Chinese from Poon’s in Footscray – exotic orders of chow mien, special fried rice and dim sims” (p. 98). ‘Ethnic rhythms’ and ‘multicultural rhythms’ become apparent through the consumption of diversity, notably food, and thus becomes appropriated and presented through engineered and selected and sanitised presentations of diversity (Williamson, 2018; Hsu, 2018).

The latest wave of new residents are young families and so-called hipsters or ‘gentrifiers’. They are the face of ‘the’ gentrification process taking place in large cities and non-urban areas throughout the world. Gentrification is traditionally described as “a process in which those of higher social class displace lower class people from their housing” (Butler & Hamnett, 2009, p. 218). However, gentrification is a complex issue that goes beyond a dualistic higher and lower class. Luckins (2009) describes the complex (non-residential) factors that contribute to gentrification and argues for inclusion of abstract phenomena as cosmopolitanism. Gentrification also refers to policies designed to bring about urban regeneration (Davidson, 2008), and “simply an economic and social trend that must be addressed by governments” (Glow et al., 2014, p. 497). In the case of Melbourne, gentrification factors include rapid immigration, decline of industry in inner-western suburbs that has been replaced by residential properties, and “the attraction of a residential area that has long been characterised by ethnic diversity and an edgy, industrial culture” (Glow et al., 2014, p. 506). Local differences in how quickly gentrification develops can be explained by rental and ownership of houses. In places such as Maribyrnong and Maidstone, more houses are inhabited by their owners, whereas Footscray has a higher rate of renters, with renters generally moving out quickly and ‘gentrifiers’ having the option to move in. The rise in properties and rents, is argued to threaten diversity: “Gentrification of the inner west is increasingly threatening our social and cultural diversity” (Jorge Jorquera – Councillor for Maribyrnong, 2021a).

Numerous academic scholars, some in collaboration with the Council, have aimed to describe (and advise upon) gentrification changes in Footscray and Melbourne's Inner West in general (e.g., McConville & Oké, 2018; Oké et al., 2018; Widiarto, 2018; Charman et al., 2017; Dekker et al., 2017; Glow et al., 2014; Pannay et al., 2014). The tension inherent in urban planning in gentrifying areas lies in meeting the needs of current (older) residents and maintaining the 'historical characteristics' that attract new residents, while also meeting the needs and lifestyles of these new residents. Moreover, the question is whether urban development can enable inclusion and social equity. Fincher et al. (2016) argue that "Professional place-makers acknowledge inequality and poverty, but these matters are not explored and nor are they the subject of innovation in place-making practice, for the most part." Rather, place-making for social equity "involves strengthening the inside while inviting the outside in" (2016, p. 534).

This tension is further exemplified by Glow et al. (2004) who look at the provision of arts activities by Maribyrnong City Council. While arts activities can be a driver, they can also challenge gentrification (see also Widiarto, 2018). Hence, it is important to prevent facilitating the appetite for arts activities at the (already) gentrified centre while ignoring disadvantaged communities and thereby exacerbating the 'parallel communities'. Looking at an educational popup centre, Charman et al. (2017) propose the term 'consumptionscapes' to refer to a form of symbolic consumption and place identification. In this way, Footscray has become a gentrified commodity to be purchased by some sections of the population.

Pannay et al. (2014) report on the use of public space in relation to drinking. "An increased influx of wealthier residents has created new demands on the use of public space," and conclude that "public consumption of alcohol have arisen partly as a result of gentrification and growing socio-economic disparity in inner-urban areas" (p. 1091). However, the authors claim that it is only a particular consumption that is 'accepted': middle class picnics and outside licenced cafés; all other forms of public drinking are othered. They warn that "The construction of these forms of drinking as more appropriate than other forms of street drinking exacerbates the exclusion that has occurred as a result of street drinking laws" (p. 1092). Despite concerns around drinking in public, 'consumptionscapes' in arts, and the under-acknowledgement of inequality

and poverty, McConville and Oke (2018) argue that in Footscray gentrification does have a displacement effect, but “this is far from being the dominant force in changing the suburb or in the politics emerging from that change” (p. 124). Gentrifiers have limited political power and these authors argue that processes of gentrification should be understood “less as an agent driving class and ethnic displacement and more as a material and cultural process sharing networks and ethnicity, class and gender” (p. 124).

Finally, the 2015 movie *Pawno* provides an example from the arts scene. The movie tells the story of 12 individuals and revolves around a pawn (cash) store in Melbourne’s ‘hipster hotspot’ of Footscray. Over a period of one day, ethnically diverse actors portray the lives of 12 vastly different characters, “the Australia that we see when walking down the street and one rarely shown and often maligned in film” (Hoskin, 2016).

This movie, as well as academic scholars, aim to capture the changes in the neighbourhood, such as “the withdrawal of industry, a surging real estate market and an influx of wealthier, whiter and better-educated residents than its established inhabitants” (Glow et al., 2014, p. 506). In a photo series, ABC reporter Margaret Burin nicely captures the different ways Footscray’s diversity was experienced and enacted in 2016 (see Figure 13). Two men are sitting on a bench, one man is sitting on a rock, acknowledging the traditional owners of the land. A young couple ‘loving’ Footscray for its cultural diversity, vegetables, good shops, cheap beer and affordable housing. “It’s definitely becoming gentrified, because of people like you I guess, which is kind of sad” (Jack Brant in Burin, 2016). One picture captures a woman selling vegetables in a quiet corner of Footscray. Mostly, there are a few sellers sitting on the ground and presenting their fresh produce or flowers and plants. Interview participant Heidi speaks of her mother who sells her home-grown vegetables and fresh herbs on Saturday morning in Footscray: “She loves going there and selling vegetables, she loves the interaction with people. I have seen her English there as well.” Heidi laughs and says her mother is taking English classes now that she is near retirement age. Heidi further explains that “Council wanted to ban it, they said ‘you cannot sell there.’ There were people from the community writing saying we love this little environment that is creating fun.”

These quotes demonstrate an interesting dynamic. Jack Brant and his partner (in Burin, 2016) describe themselves as ‘the gentrifier’ and even say that the neighbourhood is becoming gentrified because of them, thus it incorporates a sense of guilt and blame. As McConville and Oke (2018) point out, it is unrealistic to ascribe that much agency to a single population cohort; rather, it is a complex interplay of powers between new and long-term residents, local business owners and political decision makers. The next and final section will describe the municipality in terms of stigmatisation.



Figure 13 Selection of photos showing the different activities residents engage in, from reportage ‘Footscray: Melting pot turned hipster hotspot’ by Margaret Burin (2016).

Brighties and Broadies: Stigmatisation of western suburbs

Outsiders' stigmatising the West is central for many interviewees in how they describe their neighbourhood. Both negative and positive experiences of living in the area or making use of its facilities and open spaces are framed around this phenomenon. The West has been stigmatised by outsiders for being an undesirable place to live, a place not to be visited but feared. Stigma includes perceptions of high crime rates, pollution by heavy industries, and an overall underdevelopment of business, housing and residents. Names such as 'Knifepoint' for Highpoint Shopping Centre and 'Scumshine' for Sunshine (just west of Braybrook and part of the Brimbank Council), are just two examples of how the West is described in a certain Melbournian collective mindset.

This has a lived impact on the collective imagination of the area. Most research participants would describe it as an externally applied stigma, and not something experienced by residents themselves. When Julia moved into the area to attend university, her supervisor advised her, "“please don't look at Footscray”; three years ago he thought it still wasn't safe.” Marg's experiences are similar. Marg used to go cycling with a 'ladies club' in Brighton (in the eastern suburbs. In the interview, she and her husband Jim reflect:

Marg: They were very much Brightie ladies, I looked like a Westie to them.

Jora: Can you explain?

Marg: Brighties are mostly blond and ehm...

Jim: Petite

Marg: Not all petite but well-spoken and I don't think anyone was better educated than me. They were all housewives with wealthy husbands. A few of them had never been across the [Westgate] bridge. They were just 'Oh, you're from the western suburbs?' and sometimes we would ride here and they would say, 'It's quite pretty here.' Well, yes...

Jim: Where I grew up in Broadmeadows, it had a real stigma attached to it for years but when you lived there, you couldn't see it. I don't know what all the fuss is

about. I am just a Broady. If I'd say I was from there, people would say, 'Oh a Broady boy; you must be tough!'.

Jim seems to have received the message that to 'survive' in the West, you must be 'tough'. As Ian Kennis (2018) writes, "[As children] we were blissfully unaware of the West's stigma as a polluted, industrial outpost of Melbourne" (p. 3). Lynne Larkan (2018) has a similar experience of outsider applying a stigma that was not in line with residents' lived experiences: "I never felt that we were underprivileged because we came from the West." It was only as a much older teenager that I realised that folk from the other side of the Yarra thought we were the underclass" (p. 101). Feeding into the theoretical framework of this chapter, these quotes again show that "representational space is alive: it speaks" and lived experience "need obey no rules of consistency or cohesiveness" (Lefebvre, 1991, pp. 42-43).

In a similar vein, Heidi remembers: "I met a friend of a friend who lives in the South-East Bayside, past St Kilda, and she asked me, 'What is it like growing up in Maidstone?' She had this expression on her face [that] it is kind of a dangerous industrial area. It has a reputation, but it has grown in the last couple of years and I think the reputation is less now." In a way, then, Heidi complies with the stigma story by emphasising that the adverse reputation has lessened; that there is a sense of development and progress.

For two walking group interview participants the stigma is not just an abstract idea but also a lived – and racialised – experience. Marilyn says that "I have been on a tram when there at times [are] not very nice people and once they bashed the driver so I am a bit worried about Somalis but I have nothing against them." Sue adds that "I once saw two Somali guys stealing a phone from a girl on the tram." Notably, the girl is not described in ethnic or racial terms but the boys are. In combination with recent news items around the so-called 'African gangs', this can engender a collective story of disadvantage.

Stigmatised stories can either be internalised, or alternative stories can be created. The latter is mostly true for the residents of the City of Maribyrnong. Interviewees generally have a positive attitude towards the West's 'edginess', and either counter argue stigmas or/and embrace

it. Sam, for example, embraces it by saying how her family home is located in an ‘open-air museum’. The industry makes the area special: “It is a reminder of the history of the area, in a park around the corner and they got the big smokestacks behind the field and I actually think it looks amazing with the open space and the industry behind it. I think it is just the balance of it, here I feel dwarfed by the industry.” This feeling changed for Sam when a factory 500 metres away from their house experienced a big fire. She and her family suddenly realised that they live in an industry-heavy part of Melbourne. The chemicals that were released during the fire polluted the entire area, including the creek that runs alongside their house and their garden soil. “Maybe it wasn’t as safe as we thought. And this might be the reason people don’t buy in this area.” Sam notes that “things *got to* be produced somewhere,” but it did impact their still fragile connection to the area.

A brief reference is useful here to Wacquant’s (2008) work on ‘blemish of place’, or how a poor neighbourhood’s reputation can lead to territorial stigma. Such a stigma “can project a virtual social identity on families and individuals and deprive people of acceptance from others,” and thus ‘blemish of space’ can add an additional layer of disadvantage “to existing stigma that is associated with people’s poverty or ethnic origins” (Arthurson, 2013, p. 432). Although we have seen changes and developments over the years, West stigma can still lead to deprivation of acceptance, as Marg’s example showed.

Concluding remarks

This chapter was organised following Lefebvre’s (1991) spatial triad to discuss and analyse the multiple layers of production of space: material spatiality, representation of space, and spaces of representation or lived space. The three are intimately connected. Hana’s experience with Malcom Fraser’s ‘We are a multicultural society’ mural (Figure 10) is an example. In the City’s busy hub of Footscray, federal and local policy ideologies³⁴ are incorporated by the residents. For Hana, it

³⁴ Multiculturalism is a policy as much as an ideological representation of a nation-state. Different from an observable, ‘objective’ multicultural society, multiculturalism can be formed and interpreted in many different ways. Hence, policy formed by multiculturalism can stagnate ideologically, or be implemented and reach residents to various degrees.

enables her to establish a connection to a place she has only heard of before. As Lefebvre (1991,) puts it: a person should be able to “move from one to another without confusion – so much is a logical necessity” (p. 49). Gentrification is another example of the entangled web that is the spatial triad: gentrification is an observable development, as much as it is urban planning and a lived experience.

Lefebvre’s (1991) work has been interpreted and redeveloped over the decades. Massey’s (2005) analysis and Gieseking’s (2006) vertical dimension exemplifies reworkings of his theoretical framework. Here, I aim to demonstrate how residents or users of the space enact their agency and “continually reproduce social territories as they navigate their everyday lives” (Gieseking, 2016, p. 264). Theories as well as social territories are reworked continuously. We saw this in the stigma example where residents counter argue or find ways to challenge non-westsiders who stigmatise the area in which the residents live. Residency advocacy groups are another example of how enacted agency reworks social territories. These groups aim to confront existing or proposed ways of representing spaces. They are changemakers that have a real life impact on how a neighbourhood is lived, consumed, and brought into being.

Over the past ten years, the City of Maribyrnong has received notable attention from urban (re)development researchers. Urban localities where ethnic mingling and mixing dominate the scene are scattered around the City of Maribyrnong, in Greater Melbourne, and throughout Australia. This chapter has embedded the study and its findings in an existing body of literature concerned with urban diversity and everyday multiculturalism. The following four chapters will build on this and describe four distinct physical activity localities: sports clubs, sports-based migrant settlement service, neighbourhood community centres, and public parks.

*Djilak-djirri – play*³⁵

³⁵ ‘Djilak-djirri’ means play in the Woiwurrung and Boonwurrung language (two of the five language groups in the Kulin Nation), by Bridget Caldwell (2017), a Jingli Mudburra writer and artist.

Chapter 5: Placemaking at a sport club

Introduction

Play, or djilak-djirri in Woiwurrung and Boonwurrung language, is central in most forms of physical activity. This is the first of four chapters to focus on play and physical activity in relation to placemaking and multiculturalism. Sports clubs are at the pinnacle in Australian sporting society, and a close connection with local government and community clubs has been established over the decades. Offering physical activity for various segments in society, sport clubs come in many shapes and forms. I have selected one club for an in-depth case study – The Maribyrnong Swifts Football Club. The Swifts is a women's soccer club located in West Footscray. Throughout the thesis I have referred and will continue to refer to European football as soccer, rather than as Australian football (or 'footy').

This chapter presents ethnographic data collected with the Swifts, and interview data collected with team players. To a lesser extent, the chapter presents relevant sports clubs interview data with research participants recruited from other sites (community centres/public spaces). My personal experiences as a migrant and related to placemaking through community sport are discussed and form a third layer. The central question is how placemaking and diversity come together in community sport.

This chapter is organised as follows. First, I will describe the sports club structure in Australia and its history with diversity. I then focus on the case study of this chapter: the women's soccer club Maribyrnong Swifts. I describe both the club and its direct surroundings in a quiet neighbourhood, and situate it in its historical, economic and socio-cultural context. First, Second, I present interview and ethnographic data concerned with placemaking and multiculturalism. Third, I present data related to conflict situations: inclusion and exclusion at ethnic clubs, and the use of language. In concluding, I make the argument that sports clubs facilitate unique forms of placemaking and facilitate intercultural interactions that are inherent in the organisation of the sporting form. MULTIPLICITY OF SPACE

Sports clubs and diversity – a brief background

Sport and national identity in Australia

What we currently understand as organised physical activity is an inherently Anglo-Celtic tradition of sport. Ideals of gender, sex and social class are socially produced through physical cultures. British games such as soccer and cricket were implemented in different ways throughout the colonies. From the first moment colonies in Australia were established, societies based upon power and position were formed. In colonial Australia, the lower echelons sought excitement in blood sports such as bare-knuckle prize-fighting, the troops played cricket and soccer, while the better-off classes engaged in yachting and the ‘sport of kings’, horse-racing (Horton, 2000). Sports clubs as we know them today stem from sporting traditions in private and public schools. In the late 19th century and early 20th century, English sporting traditions emerged in Australia and run parallel to the increased leisure time of working men and women. As historians have widely conveyed, public and private schools were intimately tied to ideals of manliness and “games became a crucial element in the construction of a chivalric, patriotic, physical and militarist ideal” (Crotty, 2000, p. 11).

Sport has played a central role in building an Australian national identity in many ways. First and foremost this is evident in the Anglo-Celtic history of most sports currently played in Australia³⁶, including rugby, soccer and cricket. In the early days of colonisation, engaging in sports from ‘back home’ offered some sort of connection to the previous homeland and continuity. Australia is often described as a sports-crazy nation. Its pleasant climate, amount of sunshine, wide-ranging outdoor options, and being a young nation state all contribute to the idea of it being

³⁶ The origin of Australian football remains a contested issue in the history of Australian sports. An oft-asked question is whether the game developed from an Indigenous game called marn-grook, meaning ball-foot and which refers to a variety of Aboriginal football games. For decades, sport history researchers (in a field dominated by non-indigenous people) have agreed that the evidence is both non-conclusive (e.g., Mangan & Nauright, 2000), and a rather powerful ‘myth’ (Hay, 2019). However, it is argued one of the sport’s founders Anglo-Australian Wills grew up on the land of Djab-Wurrung people and played indigenous games, learned their language. It is argued that Wills was most likely to be influenced by these games and that this potentially shaped the early development of Australian football (Gorman et al., 2015; Hallinan & Judd, 2014).

a nation connected through sports. In his book *Sport in Australian National Identity*, Tony Ward (2013) asks how sports became intimately connected with a national identity. More interestingly, the author discusses not only the reality behind this connection, but also the political agendas concerned with encouraging images that reinforce the connection when such images and national achievement do not always comply with reality. Two examples that Ward provides are that “Despite the ‘sports mad’ image of diehard fans, the wider social reach of sport in Australia is more due to the occasional fans, the ‘event goers’,” and “Although the dominant sporting image is of the young, bronzed Australian male, international success has often been more due to Australian women, and participation in sports has been increasingly by women and older people” (pp. 194-195).

Key factors in the development of the country’s dominant sporting psyche have been economic, technological and political developments. Early wealth in Australia enabled many people to attend sporting events, and technologies such as radio, television and the car had their impact on broadcasting of sporting events and people’s mobility. Political tensions still visible today are caused predominately by a fairly conservative Anglocentric view of national identity versus a more inclusive view. “Sport, and specifically cricket, formed an important part of Howard’s stated aim of a ‘relaxed and comfortable’ view of Australian identity. One critical commentator described this vision as ‘the white-flannelled view of history’” (Ward, 2013, p. 196). Such a ‘white-flannelled view of history’ becomes evident when reading documents concerning yulunga. In fact, yulunga describes over one hundred traditional Indigenous games and sports.

Another example of conservative framing of Australia as a sporting nation is reflected in the test for Australian citizenship effective December 2007. The aim of questions in the sport category was to “indicate that people know a lot of Australians are obsessed by sport” as then parliamentary secretary for immigration Andrew Robb MP explained (Ward, 2013, p. 196). Applicants were asked to name famous sportspeople or historical sporting dates. Critics, however, preferred to label it as ‘sports trivia’ more so than a serious citizenship test (Crawshaw, 2008). An aspect of nation building was the idea that sport offered a platform for the practice of conservative ideas more so than change that should include representative numbers of women,

indigenous populations and ethnic communities (Stoddart, 2008).

On change that was set in motion, Cathy Freeman is one of the prominent Indigenous Australian athletes that has formed how Australia sees itself and has played a key role in wider discussions about the future of Australian nation-state (White, 2008). Freeman, with her Olympic medals career from 1994-2000, she “came to personify the hopes and dreams for reconciliation between black and white Australia” (White, 2008, p. 2). The consistent use of the Aboriginal flag after victories drove the discussion in Australia what Australian identity is and how Aboriginal identity fits and is made to fit into this, in particular representations of the athlete by media highly influenced the way she was seen in Australia as well as overseas (White, 2008).

In the sport and migration literature, place clearly matters in two ways: place as a geographical locality in the world, and place as the unique space created through (lack of) interaction. It is being away from a shared home or country that binds a group of people together and to share ethno-cultural practices as much as a sporting activity. Negotiations of multiculturalism happen in specific localities that have different meanings (and matter more or less) outside the sports club in other parts of a city/country. This demonstrates the importance of place-based approaches and points us in the direction of human geography. How, then, do placemaking and diversity come together in the context of community sport?

Sports clubs in the City of Maribyrnong

Maribyrnong City Council has a designated team (within its Health and Wellbeing Development Team) that works for and with sports clubs in the City. In 2020, the municipality hosted 18 sports at 54 clubs, including 21 cricket clubs, nine football clubs, eight soccer clubs, four tennis clubs, and single club sports such as trugo³⁷, water sports, gridiron³⁸ and archery. Figure 14 shows the sports map of the City of Maribyrnong as of June 2015. The map includes 21 outdoor playing

³⁷ Trugo is a ‘true blue Aussie game’ played on a grass court by hitting rubber rings with a wooden mallet from goal posts at one end of the green to the other. The game is local to Western suburbs, invented by Thomas Grieves of Yarraville in 1926. Trugo, “a unique local industrial game of Melbourne,” originally was played by workmen at the Newport railway yards hitting components around the workshop (Victorian Trugo Association, 2020). With retired persons in the area in decline, trugo clubs new recruits to become part of the history of the game and keep the clubs alive.

³⁸ Or North American Football.

fields (yellow dots) scattered around the City. These are outdoor areas and could include multiple fields; for example, number 20 is Hansen Reserve in West Footscray with three fields (one cricket ground and three soccer pitches) separated by a cycling path, trees and low fences. One of the soccer pitches is multi-purpose, used for soccer, Australian Rules football, rugby, and a casual bocce game by a local, elderly group of men. A tennis court and indoor swimming centre are referred to separately on the map. Another example is number 23. In this area, an Australian football oval and a soccer pitch are located next to each other and separated by a low fence, walking path and a row of trees. Focussing on the organised sport environment, the map specifies three sports: hockey, golf and lawn bowls. This may have been done because these three sports require specific playing fields that cannot be easily used for other sports, whereas football and soccer fields can be.

Officially, sports club participation has been consistently high over the past two decades. From 2008-2012, an average of 84% of residents participated in a physical activity with one of the 55 sports clubs using sporting facilities (Maribyrnong City Council, 2015a). These numbers are questionably high, however, and mostly include physical activity in its broadest definition. Data presented by Sport and Recreation Spatial (2016) shows that 8.3% of the population engaged in eleven of the largest sports. This ranks the City 21st of 25 local city government areas in and around Melbourne, with 1 being the most active and 25 the least active.

Community sports clubs are part of a complex multilayered sporting governing system. The Australian Sports Commission oversees the national development of sport participation and distribution of funding and resources, while sport-specific peak bodies (e.g., Football Federation Australia) is responsible for national development and distribution of resources. State level associations (for soccer, this is Football Victoria) provide the connection between national level and local level for both local authorities and community clubs/associations. Community clubs (such as the Swifts) are further supported and governed by local councils or authorities. The council owns and manages indoor and outdoor facilities used by clubs, with most clubs hiring

facilities and rarely ‘owning’ their grounds or other facilities. In other words, these facilities are public space and available for use by all members of the community (Jeanes et al., 2019b).³⁹

Sports clubs and facilities leave a unique mark on the urban physical layout. The huge amount of space required for grass fields, tennis courts, other outdoor sport/physical activities and indoor facilities makes it not only a central issue in urban planning, but also provides connection points in how residents experience their neighbourhood. The other aspect of sports clubs is that sometimes club houses are shared with other clubs, while in other cases they are dedicated to one club. Club houses are material sites at which the culture of a club is expressed and history is relived through team photos, team outfits and trophies. While club houses and pavilions can be old and dusty buildings, the surrounding environment tends to change and develop at a quicker speed. So how did the Swifts and its surroundings develop over the past few decades? This chapter looks at placemaking and lived multiculturalism at exactly these places: sports pavilions and their grounds.

The Swifties: A case study

The club and the neighbourhood

Central to this chapter is a women’s soccer club called the Maribyrnong Swifts Football Club, also known as Swifts, or more affectionately, the Swifties. The club is located at Johnson Reserve in West Footscray and was established in 2014. In the 2019 season, the club facilitated three women’s teams, four girls’ teams and a few miniroos’ teams. Miniroos teams compete without keeping scores and encourage early socialisation into the sport from the age of 4. Parents often coach these teams and most players continue playing in girls’ teams as they grow older. The

³⁹ In May 2021, Football Victoria invited all soccer clubs in the City of Maribyrnong to form the Maribyrnong Football (Soccer) Alliance in response to changes to the management of soccer grounds. Councillor for Maribyrnong, Jorge Jorquera (2021b, para. 5) proposes that the alliance be mobilised to highlight the migrant histories of soccer clubs in the Maribyrnong area, and calls for inclusivity in management of the grounds. In particular, Jorquera highlights some of the issue that clubs face. For example, The Maribyrnong Greens have a proud Bosnian heritage but are struggling to ensure that their club survives and thrives, while in spite of their important work with African communities The Maribyrnong Lions currently have no training facilities for their teams.

Swifts senior teams participated in State Leagues 2, 3 and 4. At the end of the 2019 season, State 4 was degraded to State 5 league and the other two teams continued to play in the same league.

The Swifts pavilion is located on the west side of the playing field. The clubhouse has been upgraded over the years with the latest upgrade in April 2020 when the surrounding



Figure 14 Maribyrnong sports facilities map as presented in the 2015 Sports Development Strategy Draft (Maribyrnong City Council, 2015b).

concrete path replaced a muddy grassy area to facilitate access. The building is modest and an unobtrusive part of its surroundings. The grey bricks, straightforward box-like architecture and

sign free walls might make a passer-by wonder about the function of the building. The club is located in West Footscray near the north border with Maidstone. It is a typically ‘soft’ border that runs through the well-used but quiet neighbourhood of Suffolk Street and is surrounded by similarly quiet streets. Walking through Suffolk Street does not give the pedestrian the experience of passing a boundary, as can be experienced when crossing a busy street with bus lines, crossing lights and trucks streaking by.

While these quiet neighbourhood streets surround the club house and field, one road at the south end of the field, Essex Street, is used by car drivers, cyclists and pedestrians to connect suburbs, access a nearby shopping hub and primary school and service two bus lines. A few coffee shops opened their doors over the past five years around Essex Street, changing the aesthetics and use of the neighbourhood. The houses in the area are typical Edwardian-era and inter-war style houses. As these houses grow older, they are either renovated or replaced by modern style housing. Property prices in West Footscray vary from one-bedroom units with a median price of A\$275,000 to four-bedroom houses entering the market at A\$1,000,000. At the time of writing (April 2020), the most frequently sold house type (64 properties) was a three-bedroom house with a median price of A\$771,000 (Domain, 2020). While properties on one side of Johnson Reserve sell for around A\$1,000,000, public housing rentals dominate the other side of the reserve. Although this offers some diversity in residents’ demographics, the size of the most frequently sold house types with accompanying prices paints a picture of incoming residents: (young) families with money to spend looking for multiple bedrooms.

The Swifts clubhouse serves another club, that is, a cricket club that uses the facilities during summer (November–March), and for other purposes. Residents use the reserve for a plethora of activities including picnics, walking dogs, children playing, individual exercise, and small groups of people playing around with a football. Commuters cross the reserve on their way to work and on their way home in the evening. Festivals are organised year round. Apart from “damaging the *bloody* grass” according to Swifts’ committee members, residents gather for music festivals, carnivals targeting younger families, fireworks on public holidays and other gatherings.

The built environment

Although the exterior seems uninviting, the interior of the clubhouse welcomes the visitor with the typical smell of old soccer boots and a view of rugged lounge chairs. The layout of the club house is straightforward. From the front door, the referee room is on the left with the common room on the right, along with the kitchen, disabled toilet and shower. Straight ahead are the two changing rooms, toilets and showers. Both changing rooms can be closed by doors for private team discussions or personal privacy. However, the open design of the building (with doors to the outside on three sides) and needing to pass by the changing rooms to enter the toilets disrupts this privacy. The supply room is tucked away at the back of the building, and additional lockable storage containers outside contain more equipment, including goals. Trophies, team photos and event flyers decorate the common room walls. A TV is used for watching games, preferably the Melbourne-based national female soccer team Matildas (its name adopted from the Australian folksong ‘Waltzing Matilda’), but it is mostly turned off.

Stepping outside the clubhouse onto the new concrete path, a visitor sees the soccer pitch on the right hand side and an open grass field, skate park and playing ground with barbecue area on the right. On the Skatmaps website (n.d.), the ‘Micro Skatepark’ is described as a welcomed addition to the neighbourhood with “heaps to offer with steps, rails, ledges and a box.” The website entry comes with pictures, design models taken from the Maribyrnong City Council and a warning that the skate park is located “right next to a playground and is often crowded with toddlers learning to walk,” making it a mixed place but also a site of potential clashes. Behind the clubhouse there are two, public and free-use tennis courts, and in a corner of one of the court a basketball hoop is fixed to the wall. The courts are tucked away behind the pavilion and the Swifts’ outdoor storage containers, and are out of sight when standing on the soccer pitch. The basketball hoop is missing the net and the ground is surprisingly uneven for a tennis court, makes falling over when running for a ball a common part of a game here. No club uses this ground, which is the case at the Maidstone tennis court 600 meters down the road in Maidstone. The court is fenced with high nets that prevent balls from rolling onto Oxford Street or hitting passers-by, and also offers a safe playing area by preventing cyclists, runners or cars from entering the space.

It gives a sense of security not found elsewhere at Johnson Reserve (e.g., the playground is not fenced off) still allows interaction with the outside. This makes the court an ideal place for children of all ages to ‘hang out’ after school and in the weekends engage in many activities. Parents play tennis with their young children, older children cycle or scooter around in the court, and groups of children play basketball. Lots of other activities are likely being played out as well that my adult mind cannot grasp.

Finally, what does Johnson Reserve itself look like? Living around the corner, I would go for walk in the area and I remember the first time walking through Suffolk Street and being exposed to the field and seeing rows of Canary Island date palm trees surrounding the reserve. As a migrant from the Netherlands, I see palm trees as an absolute rarity representing exotic climates and faraway lands. Now I live in just such a faraway land, with palm trees in my neighbourhood. As I subsequently learned, palm trees are treasured by many people and in fact have been protected under Australian heritage law since July 2000. Francine Giffedder and Graeme Butler (in Barnard et al., 2000) describe the cultural significance of these trees in the ‘Historic Places – Significant Trees in the City of Maribyrnong’ Council document, which recommends conserving and enhancing the tree rows. The rows of palm trees are in line with three Australian Heritage Commission criteria: 1) their contribution to the distinctive inter-war public landscape created in the City; 2) their contribution to distinct land-use with their uncommon maturity and type; and 3) the trees were planted by parks and gardens curator David Matthews, a significant individual in the history of Footscray. Curator Matthew planted the 300 Canary Island date palm trees probably in 1934, which also marks the beginning of the park’s landscaping.

Before that, the reserve was “used for cattle grazing and was subject to vehicle crossing” (Barnard et al., 2000, p. 2). The cattle history may seem surprising in what is now a densely populated urban environment. In fact, it was quite common for white settlers/inlanders to buy Crown Land as early as 1843 and to use their property for pastoral purposes, agriculture or mixed farming (Barnard et al., 2000). Using land for pastoral purposes continued to be practiced after WWII. Another example is the Medway Golf Course area in Maribyrnong. In 1901, Thomas Williamson bought the land and intended using the property to fatten cattle (Williams, 1992).

The Council bought the 5-acre Johnson Reserve land in 1945 for A£3325, but it remained only partly developed for almost two decades. In the late 1960s the reserve “was used for tennis and field games with more to come” (Barnard et al., 2000, p. 2). One of the field games was cricket. The Barkley Street Methodist Cricket Club (that currently plays in Hoppers Crossing, a 30-minute drive east of Footscray), made use of the reserve from the 1947-1948 season before shifting to Footscray Park in the late 1950s. The church building was demolished in 2021.

Home ground: Place attachment solid as a rock

With the traditional sport club comes a physical meeting place. Pavilions or clubhouses and a ground prepared for particular sporting activities facilitate club members to meet and play. This results in a unique use of big sections of urban space, with clubhouses and grounds anchored in space and thereby having the character of immobility. As time passes, new houses, trees and footpaths are built around them and residents’ needs and demographics change. In a sense, the traditional sporting clubs are ‘solid as a rock’.

For the past five soccer seasons, the Swifts have used the clubhouse intensively during weeknights for trainings and during the weekends for junior and senior team home matches. Junior matches often start early in the morning and run until midday/early afternoon. Volunteers run the improvised outdoor canteen on the side of the clubhouse during the junior matches; the kitchen inside the clubhouse is rarely used. Volunteers prepare A\$2 snacks on the barbecue (an Australian snack consisting of a sausage on a piece of white bread with sauce of choice), bottled water, sodas, warm drinks and other (home-baked) bites. No alcohol license is held by the club. During the breaks and after the matches, parents, players and visitors make their transition from the sideline to the canteen area. Junior teams attract tens of supporters, mostly parents and caretakers. After consuming a drink or snack at the outdoor canteen and helping to store away match equipment, most junior players and supporters leave within an hour after the match. Senior home matches start later in the afternoon leaving a time gap between the junior and senior teams. Hence, they rarely meet on match days unless an effort is made. The canteen is mostly closed during senior matches, due to lack of interest or/and lack of volunteers.

Although the clubhouse and ground serve other purposes and in that sense demonstrate certain flexibility, the strong attachment to place is evident when the ground is unsuitable for play. During the 2019 season, the ground was deemed unsafe for players and harmful for the grass due to heavy rainfall up to eight times the normal. The Council frequently inspects the grounds in the area and communicates their decisions to the club committees. When the field is unavailable, coaches and supporting committee members are faced with three options: they cancel training, find another outdoor ground in the area, or move to an indoor facility. A standard indoor facility used as a backup plan is the Maribyrnong Action Indoor Sports Centre, a five-minute drive from the Swifts' home ground. The dusty (but dry and warm in winter) facility motivates many players to attend training, but also tends to enhance injuries due to differences between indoor and outdoor soccer, and comes with a price tag. Renting the facility financially burdens the club and although it is included in each year's budget, it has its limits.

Development work on Johnson Reserve is another reason that the use of the home ground can be interrupted. At the start of the 2020 season, Council laid a new layer of grass and drainage has was improved. As the club committee and members waited patiently for the ground to be reopened, it sought training space elsewhere. For the first few months, the three senior teams and the under 16 year-old players (U16) trained at Hanson Reserve (West Footscray), while the five junior teams found suitable space at Footscray Park (Footscray). Both fields are approximately a five-minute drive away from the home ground in opposite directions. Hanson Reserve and Footscray Park are used extensively for a variety of activities. For clubs to use the grounds, a formal Council approval has to be sought, which looks like this.

The use of public space by sports clubs other than their home grounds requires a few bureaucratic steps. In the case of the Swifts, a designated committee member submits an application to the Council department responsible for sports clubs and their venues. In this way, Council is able to track use of the parks and avoids disappointment when parks are fully booked.

This, however, is not a waterproof system as the following excerpt shows. On a Wednesday night in April 2020 I came to watch the junior teams play at Footscray Park and to volunteer at a soccer program for mums (and other female non-members). The junior teams

started their training at 6pm for the Soccer Mums program to commence at 6:30pm. I arrived around 6:15pm to prepare for this program and saw Polynesian-Australian⁴⁰ rugby players approaching. The women sat on the grass close to the junior teams and the parents/caretakers sat on the sideline. I had been here a few times before around this time on a Wednesday but this is the first time I had seen the rugby team. The seven women sat in the grass putting on their socks and boots and getting ready to train. Unsure where to set up the Soccer Mums field and the space the rugby team wanted to make use of, I approached them. We had the following conversation:

- Jora: Hi, you are getting ready to play too?
- Player 1: Yes.
- Jora: I am setting up a field but not sure where. Which part do you want to make use of?
- Player 2: [Players looking at each other, not being sure about the answer]. Maybe ask our coach [pointing to a man standing a few metres away finishing off a phone call].
- Jora: [Stood a distance from the group to wait for the coach to be available].
Hi, I am Jora and am with the Swifts. Just wanting to ask where you want to train and how we can share the ground?
- Coach: Not sure. [Coach looks at one of the players] This is our home ground, right?
- Player 2: Yes it is.

This brief interaction with strangers sharing a grassy area offers an example of space negotiation. I had asked ‘where do you want to play?’ which was important not only from a democratic point of view, but also because of the poor quality of the grass where the rugby players were sitting.

⁴⁰ Polynesia refers to an island group in the central southern Pacific Ocean (east of Australia) and consists of more than one thousand islands. Also referred to as the Polynesian Triangle, the islands stretch from Aotearoa (New Zealand) in the south to Hawaii in the north and Rapa Nui (Easter Island) in the east.

The juniors were playing on a lush green grassy area in the corner of the field. The two available areas included a muddy, grassless section of the field and a greener section two hundred meters away. After the coach said that this is their home ground, I was unsure about my and the Soccer Mums group's place. I got the impression they were not open for a discussion as the coach directed his vocal and bodily attention towards the players. I walked away and set up the field on the other side of the junior soccer teams, 200 hundred meters away. Where were we supposed to play if there were no clear demarcation lines and how could we equally share the space? In the question of equal access to space, power relations are essential to consider. How did the Swifts gain permission, or the power, to use the field?

Although the Swifts followed the official Council channels to use the ground on two days and at specific times, it was still regarded as stepping on someone else's 'home ground'. The word 'home' refers to a private and intimate sphere. A sphere someone is supposed to be invited into by the 'owner' of the space; unannounced appearances are generally not appreciated. Also, considering the importance of geographical locality for sports clubs and the sheer immobility of a club pavilion and ground, sporting spaces are not easily shared. Conversely, if we think about a walking group, the core activity for its members does not change dramatically when another walking group makes use of the same route.

The two groups had one thing in common: male coaches. Other than that, the groups differed starkly from each other. The junior soccer players were girls who were dominantly white, aged from 6-12 years, and engaged in skills training. During the situation outlined above, they were vocal in a young children's, laughing kind of way. There was little physical contact between the girls, apart from the inevitable contact when running for a ball and the hugs after a goal. In contrast, the rugby players engaged in overtly visceral training: a combination of sprinting and pushing the opponent to a sideline, boxing exercises, and other physical exercises that involved bumping and colliding bodies. With the punches and bodily collisions came loud expressions of encouragement and communication. I guess the players were in their early and late 20s, and apart from one individual, all players had a Polynesian appearance. Phenotypically this means dark hair, skin, and eye tones, which contrasted with my and most junior players' white skin. In other

words, on this Wednesday night, Footscray Park was not just organised along the lines of age, sports clubs and ideas of home, but was also organised along racial lines.

Race forces us to come back to the question of power relations. The coach's short answer to my question, "Where do you want to play?" was offered as a question to one of his players, rather than a direct answer to me. "This is our home ground, right?" he asked one of the players pointing to the grassy section the junior players were using. It was unknown to me, and irrelevant in an everyday interaction like this, whether this team applied for 'use of ground permission' through the Council channels and had used this ground perhaps at other times. The actual question should be about how placemaking is racialised. In this brief exchange of words and eye contact, place was taken away from this team and the white players were dominating. Perhaps it was because of numbers, perhaps because of time of arrival (first come, first serve) but the fact of the matter is that this team was pushed to the muddy section of their 'home' field.

This fieldwork moment represents an extremely brief moment; the interaction lasted less than a minute that includes the waiting time for the coach to finish his phone call. It nonetheless was a critical interaction that set the tone for the rest of the night. This is my interpretation of the rugby team's presence and I did not observe any other interaction with the junior teams (and their coaches and parents waiting and chatting at the sideline) and the rugby team. Also, while I initiated contact because of the practicalities of sharing space, my actions were also research-driven. Seeing this Polynesian rugby team for the first time, I had fancied a chat about their whereabouts and their plans on using this space, and to learn more about negotiation of space. Thus, in my mind I had already racialised the team just as much as I had put them in a gender category. By pulling apart this fieldwork experience, I have tried to demonstrate the complexities of diverse interactions.

Diversity of the club

Interviewees were invited to describe the diversity of the club in broad terms and in terms of multiculturalism. In five of the six interviews with Swifts players (i.e., Margo, Daisy, Sam, Ramya and Heidi), we talked about the diversity of the soccer club. Interviewees were aware of

the multiculturalism focus of the study and thus a specific form of diversity. At the beginning of the interview, I reminded interviewees that diversity could refer to many forms of difference and identities and invited them to talk about the forms that might be more relevant in their experience. Nonetheless, I am aware of a bias towards ethno-culturalism. Interviewees explained diversity in terms of gender, age, abilities, profession and ethno-culture.

As Swifts is a female-only club, its members find it a welcoming and inclusive environment. This sentiment is echoed many times in informal conversations among players and with me, and also in interviews. For women who had played at different soccer clubs, this female-only policy is one of the reasons that they joined Swifts. A few examples of how the club is experienced as a welcoming place include the fact that all attention and financial resources is directed towards female teams. Often, at sports clubs hosting both male and female teams a stark difference exists in spending, with male teams receiving a disproportionate amount. Wearing a match outfit that is designed specifically for female players instead of playing matches in written-off and worn male clothing imparts a feeling of equality. “We get all the attention, you know what I mean?” Margo explains, and continues: we don’t get the “sloppy second-hand and the scraps of the funding and facilities. I love that aspect, even though our facilities aren’t that good as a male-only club.” Daisy shared a similar experience: “I grew up playing at a club where my friends and I wanted to start an U16. We got the old boys kit, the old boys’ equipment, and played in the back. Coming into the Swifts, the girls and women were the priority; so different!” I can relate to this too. The Brunswick soccer club we visited early in the season for a match has a small club house. A male game was about to finish. There were only two changing rooms and these were not available for the female teams. I was not fully dressed in my soccer outfit yet, so had to choose between a small stinky toilet or hide behind the supporters’ benches at the sideline. I chose the toilet.

Sam, just like Daisy, briefly mentions the wide variety of players’ (dis)ability and level, from people who are new to the game to experienced players. “Nadia wants to be part of it all, but I think her body is sometimes not allowing her. I would have given up, but she really wants to play.” Age is the second oft-mentioned form of diversity at the club. “I was blown away by

how many older women there are with kids, I couldn't believe it," Sam, mother of a one-year old, shared. Ramya, recently graduated from her Master's and currently working full time observed differences, such as "If I look at Nadia or Hana, their daughters are involved in the club. They know so much about soccer and their involvement in the club is different. And then the mid-match food Hana brings! Everything was so healthy and I thought, 'is this how a mum thinks?'" For Ramya, playing in a team with women in various life stages was a learning experience.

With age and different life stages comes a wide variety of education and professional development. Sam: "And also diversity of jobs people are in. There are like political advisors and advisors for the Reserve Bank, researchers and then people working in bars, there are nurses and police officers." "I like how everyone is doing something different and there are students, people who work and mums. There is everything happening."

All five interviewees mention the ethno-cultural diversity of the club, either briefly in a sentence summing up multiple forms of diversity, or more elaborately as Margo does:

Margo: It's diverse but people stick to their groups I guess. When I am thinking about the soccer club, it's not that culturally diverse. Like it is mostly New Zealanders or white Australians. Uhm, yeah not really anyone who was from a different cultural background. I remember there was Gemmy. But yeah it is still pretty white there.

Jora: Okay.

Margo: Isn't this funny; I just realised we did have people with different cultural backgrounds. Just when you mentioned, I didn't even think about it. We've got Hana, Ramya, Elsa and Nai.

Jora: How come you think about it now?

Margo: I don't know, I guess I am just so used to hearing different accents like seeing different faces; it's all sort of the same I guess.

Jora: It becomes a person rather than an Indian migrant?

Margo: Yeah, yeah that probably is the case. I just don't think about it anymore. I remember when I was younger I wouldn't see it a lot; it was a novelty, but not anymore.

On first account, the club's ethnic and cultural diversity does not come to mind (what Wessendorf (2014) describe as commonplace diversity), but when thinking about it a bit more, Margo mentions various players with non-white appearances. In this sense, diversity is racialized, as Hana, Ramya, Elsa and Nai come from Japan, India, Hong Kong and China. Margo, for example, didn't mention my name, or other players with white, non-Anglo-Celtic cultural and racial backgrounds.

Heidi played at the Swifts in the 2018 and 2019 seasons, and she explains that the club's having multicultural members was the reason that she joined. She remembers: "I saw the multiculturalism at Swifts; that was great you know. I think I can connect better with groups that are a bit more multicultural." She continues: "I didn't just want a team that plays well but a team I could make friends in." The social aspect for Sam was important as well, and she describes how there was no dominant group culture at the Swifts:

I didn't feel like anyone was from Melbourne. I felt like everyone has come from somewhere ... else. Which I think is amazing. We are all from different places and maybe the reason a lot of us join the club is to get to meet or feel part of the community. Therefore we are open to get to know each other. There was no dominant, uhm, cultural group. It wasn't like most of us were from Melbourne, or most of just work as a profession. There was no core, no dominating 'threat'. Everyone was just very random, haha!

Sam was born in Sydney and lived in various places in Australia and overseas before settling with her partner in Melbourne's western suburbs. The comment "we are all from different places" refers to both geographical and non-geographical places. Similarly, 'culture' in this quote can be

understood in a wide-ranging sense, which Sam exemplifies earlier in the interview – by work profession, student status, family formation and age. Also relevant is the construction of the argument, that is, “not many people are from Melbourne,” instead of that some people come from overseas. When talking more about Sam’s place-based identity, I ask if she regards herself as a (interstate) migrant; She responds, “I never thought of myself as a migrant, but I still feel like, uhm, I definitely feel like I am *not* from Melbourne.”

Interpreting the data and connecting how diversity is explained with the women’s positionalities, a pattern can be observed. Whereas Margo, Daisy and Sam predominantly describe the club’s diversity in terms of gender, age, family structure and member’s occupation, Ramya and Heidi talk about ethno-cultural diversity in more specific terms. Margo, Daisy and Sam are white women born to Australian parents. Ramya was born in India, and Heidi was born in Melbourne to Vietnamese refugees. All women have completed tertiary education, are roughly the same age, and are familiar with the Australian sports clubs context. Ramya adds “To be honest, I think one of the few places I have seen which is that diverse.” In this concluding sentence, Ramya alludes to all forms of diversity that have been discussed. Nonetheless, the analysis demonstrates players with a non-white and non-Australian background are more likely to scan an environment for ethno-cultural diversity.

Part of everyday multiculturalism is the management of diversity, and to some extent the Swifts do manage diversity. Members’ club registration fees are reviewed on a yearly basis, mostly at one of the first committee meetings of the season. Compared with similar clubs in the neighbourhood, the registration fees at the Swifts are at the low end. Low registration fees for both junior and senior teams have been part of the club’s vision since the establishment. Driven by social justice and equity principles, the club strives to be inclusive and welcoming for people regardless of their socio-economic status. Lenient payment plans can also be arranged when requested by (parents/caretakers of) players.

As in other years, the first committee meetings of the 2020 Season started with a financial plan discussion. With rising costs and planned equipment purchases for this season, the question was raised as to whether the players should carry these costs. Although none of the current

committee members were part of the early Swifts days, the original equity principles still function, and the visions and principles of their predecessors continue to be respected and brought up in discussions. The argument was raised not to pass on rising costs to the members but find alternative financial resources through fund raising. This strategy, however, would have had to rely on limited volunteer labour; hence, the committee decided on a minimal fee increase for the 2020 season.

The inevitable fee increase is part of a broader development at the club: the decline in socio-economic and ethnic diversity. Connecting the two forms of diversity in a simplistic and deterministic manner, the 2020 season president explains: “broader gentrifying developments in the neighbourhood affect our club. Currently, the members are dominantly white and more middle and high income families join the club.” As the housing trends and demographics of residents change, so does membership.

For some sports clubs, ethnic monoculture is lacking or discouraged through societal pressure and federal legislation by recommending (after lifting a ban) that a club “embrace broad identities that are not tied to a single specific culture” (Football Victoria, 2019: para. 4). Football Federation Australia writes that they while they understand the importance of clubs being able to recognise their heritage, those clubs that celebrate diversity and have an inclusive club culture are more likely to succeed.

While the ban was not an issue for the Swifts, it widely impacted how soccer clubs project ethnic identity or heritage. Looking at this issue through an everyday multiculturalism and equity lens, it demonstrates how multicultural legislation and everyday experiences are intimately connected (Colic-Peisker & Farquharson, 2011; Wise & Velayutham, 2009; Lefebvre, 1991).

Placemaking and community sports

The preceding sections describe strong place-human connections, and in this section I describe the meaning of Swifts’ spaces for members and how they mark these spaces as theirs. What does placemaking mean in the context of a women’s soccer club? I describe placemaking in four

sections: arrival experiences, producing a home ground and feeling, travelling places, and wider place connection.

Arriving

The female-only environment at Swifts draws players from areas as far as a 40-minute car drive. Players take different modes of transportation to reach Johnson Reserve, with the area providing generous parking space. Because the club is situated in a quiet neighbourhood, cycling is a good option for some. For players who live in another neighbourhood, the route can put them off. For example, Sam explains: “I did [cycle] sometimes, but I also tended to drive there. The bike access issues are so interesting, it’s two or three kms to Johnson [beeline], but it will take me 20 minutes to cycle. I have to drive up to Sunshine Road and then cross at Tottenham. That puts me off a bit.” Daisy has a similar experience and explains, “I would like to be able to cycle, but I don’t want to have to drive on the Geelong Highway.” Both Sunshine Road and Geelong Highway are main access/exit multi-lane roads used by cars and trucks and provide no, or inconvenient, cycling paths or crossroads. Living only two streets from Johnson Reserve, I walked or cycled to the trainings and matches. While for me the cycling route was ideal, no designated parking spots for bicycles or other suitable objects are available to lock our bikes around the club house. Luckily, the railing at the entrance provides some safe spots to lock a bike. A creative mind goes a long way when cycling in Melbourne. Getting to the railing is not self-explanatory either; one must either ride over the grass or dismount and walk the final few metres. Although this might seem like a detail, arriving at a place is just as important as the route itself. Larsen (2017) shares the fascination with appropriating everyday objects for secure bicycle parking and locking, and describes the significance of immobility and ‘moorings’ to urban cycling in his London-based ethnographic study.

Both junior and senior teams trained at Hanson Reserve (West Footscray) during the preseason as Johnson Reserve was closed to the club and public while it was undergoing its yearly grass treatment. Whereas palm trees surround Johnson Reserve, training at Hanson Reserve happens with factories, eucalyptus trees and graffiti in the background. My cycling experience

from my home to Hanson Reserve is similar to that of Sam and Daisy's. Weather is still gentle and welcoming for a bicycle ride during the warmer preseason months. The route includes crossing two 'extreme dividers' (Lefebvre, 1991): a train track and a big intersection that connect one neighbourhood area to another. The limited railway crossings for cyclists and pedestrians force crossers to take the busy Princes Highway/Geelong Street intersection (see Figure 15, left). Crossing this intersection creates a feeling of interruption for cyclists and pedestrians between the two quiet neighbourhood areas on both sides. It is busy with cars and (often rusty, old and polluting) trucks of all sizes entering or leaving the Maribyrnong area. The big trucks are especially noisy, overwhelming and smelly. They make waiting at the traffic lights a daunting experience that reduces the individual to a small and fragile being. Compared to these trucks, my bike is a brittle piece of steel and my body a lost object in traffic land. Trying not to breathe to keep the gasoline smells out of my lungs, I make it to the other side safely, mostly alone, sometimes accompanied by other pedestrians or cyclists on their way to/from the train station. Being in these places makes me feel out of place in a city where, as a migrant, I may not understand how to navigate and use the roads properly.

Arriving at Hanson Reserve is a beautiful experience; a quiet and spacious green area opens up. Bicycle racks line the edges of the reserve near the car parks. Bicycle racks ordered as if you were parking your car hints at the centrality of cars in urban design and planning. The cycling path crossing the reserve takes me right to the training field. I find a suitable 'mooring' to secure my bike: the fence that marks the borders between the two soccer fields and provides an object for spectators to lean against.

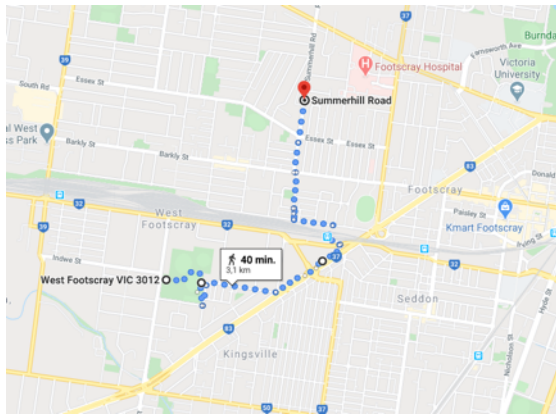


Figure 15 Senior players training at Hanson Reserve with factory, eucalyptus trees and graffiti in the background. Source: Hana's photo taken during preseason January 17, 2020.

A particular kind of smell welcomes the visitor at Hanson Reserve: an indefinable factory smell. Figure 15 (right) shows a few senior players doing their warming up drills in front of a factory. This area is still heavily industrial, hence the truck traffic. In chapter 4, Sam talks about her experience buying a house in this area that has a long history of processing raw materials and holds many warehouses. She understands products needs to be produced somewhere and mentions: “At Hanson Reserve, I love the edgy look of it,” she says. With Margo, I talked about the smell coming from these factories.

Margo: There is a creek near my house and it should be a nice place to walk, but it just is not very nice; it is next to the factories and warehouses.

Jora: Do you smell the factories?

Margo: Yes, even at Hanson you smell the factories.

Jora: Oh yeah, I remember, it is really gross. Especially when you're working out and breathing in so much oxygen.

Margo: It is really gross. Sometimes I alter my route when I am going on my walk. On my way back instead of going around the cricket oval [at Hanson Reserve], I might go straight home depending on where the wind is blowing. It just feels weird breathing in this poisonous smelling air.

Margo lives near Hanson Reserve and visits the place for her daily walks, both during the preseason and after training recommenced at Johnson Reserve. We both struggled to define the smell coming from a nearby factory. Margo's quote demonstrates the importance of sensory experiences when using public space; she would even alter her route depending on the wind. During one of the trainings, I remember the smell lingering around the field and being distracted by it. Is this unhealthy? Is this going to affect my lungs? It very likely does not create a threat to the public health in this densely built-up area, but it is a contradictory experience visiting a sports place to improve health and stamina and being concerned about perceived 'poisonous' smelling air. It also points to how spaces are experienced with the senses. One becomes aware of these mostly in extreme cases, whether it is positive or negative. The smell at Hanson Reserve or while crossing Geelong Road and my personal experience seeing the palm trees at Johnson Reserve are two examples.

Making the public home

A few nights per week Johnson Reserve lights were turned on and the clubhouse doors were open. Swift members inhabited the space for a few hours and then left, making room for other placemaking practices to be performed by other people. Placemaking occurs in different ways, and in this section I continue to describe member's placemaking practices.

Nai joined the club two weeks after arriving in Melbourne from Hong Kong and when she arrived at the field, she felt excited. She recalls the feeling from that first time: "Here you can just run as much as you want, and I like that there are no fences that lock up the area. So you feel like it is very safe to use it. You have the freedom to use it. No one will or can stop me." In preparation for our interview, Hana took a picture of Johnson Reserve as one of her favourite places to be physically active. "*Of course* I took a picture of Johnson Reserve. It's beautiful; at the moment it is a bit brown. But when I stand in the middle of it, I get this free feeling and then you just get all this energy!"



Figure 16 Left: Johnson Reserve, a place Hana prefers to be physically active. Right: toilet at her daughter's soccer training facility at another club. She dislikes the fact that toilets are shared with male players, that they are messy and unhygienic. Source: Hana's photos, taken for the purpose of this research.

Nai's quote about being able to run around and use the field however and whenever she likes should be understood in context. Coming from Hong Kong, she did not experience sporting spaces the same way in her densely-built home city.

In Hong Kong, we do have some parks, in the further area, or maybe at the harbour. I lived in places during my university that were being blocked by a lot of buildings around you. In that kind of environment it feel a bit depressed. Because you cannot see far away, just see next door, the building next to you and you feel like very confined into an area.

On moving to Melbourne, she says, "I think the first thing I did might be running in the parks. Johnson Reserve might have been the first places where I really did exercising." While outdoor space is taken for granted by long-term residents, the migrant way of experiencing and seeing a place for the first time illustrates how space is felt and embraced. Nai continues to shift from the material to the social aspect of place. The reason that Nai joined a community club was to make friends, "To make myself more comfortable in this place. So I could make this place my home." She explains: "At least I have some really nice friends. My fridge got broken the other day and a

Swifts player helped me. So apart from the happiness in participating in a sports, it was also good to meet some people.” These quotes demonstrate the inherent connection between place and people. Feeling at home in a geographic area ultimately depends on people around the interviewees. The club setting also facilitates the development of friendships in ways that are unique to the community club systems and different from encounters in parks and community centres.

At Hansen Reserve, the female teams are never alone. The reserve hosts multiple fields that are used by various clubs throughout the year; some are visiting teams like the Swifts, and for others the reserve is their home ground. An experience of gendered organisation of space that is relevant here is one that I observed during the 2019 preseason. The Swifts’ teams shared a field that hosts two soccer pitches, with one at the side of the factory where we played, and the other at the side of a cricket field where a male team trained. The other two sides were bordered by warehouses and another soccer pitch that were demarcated with trees and the rail where players would park their bike. In a sense, there were borders everywhere, except between the Swifts’ teams and a male soccer team. The Swifts senior teams and the senior male team would start around the same time. As there were around 30 players in the male team, there must have been two or three teams training together. I wrote the following in my field notes:

Tonight, we did a drill that involved burpees on a beep sound and toe touches on the ball when music started playing. The coach had selected a Spice Girls song. The male soccer players next to us passed us a few times when they were doing their runs around the field. When we did our runs around the field, we ran towards the factory and turned half-way on the field to stay on ‘our’ side. The male players ran around the entire field. Half of the men were playing without T-shirts and were southern European looking. I thought of this as a ‘typical’ ethnic, non-white team. (Field notes, 7 March 2019)

Let’s unpack this excerpt. There are three topics to explore that fall under the gendered use of the space umbrella: Spice Girls music, the male player’s (ethnic/browned) physical appearance, and

sharing/taking up space. First, the Spice Girls. The coach had brought a portable stereo connected to his phone. We were exercising in a group of 18 eighteen players dispersed over approximately 30 m², and we could all hear the music properly and so could people passing by. I had the impression that most players enjoyed training with pumping and slightly silly music (later in the session, players asked for more music as did I). Spice Girls music is well-known and highly feminised through how the singers look and the lyrics, and is directed at a predominately female audience. Generally, men are not expected to listen to or enjoy it. Training to this music made me feel feminised and set apart from my male counterparts engaging in the same sport in the same place.

Second, the male players were loud and dominant in their own ways. Whereas ‘we’ had the music (and a coach with a loud voice), ‘they’ were loud and dominant in their behaviour in different ways. As I wrote in my notes, some were running around bare-chested finding ways to cool off on this hot summer night and perhaps for other masculine aesthetic reasons I cannot confirm. The bare chests came with loud voices, lots of communication, and yelling from all sides of their soccer pitch. Some sentences included swear words that made the heads of female players turn, negatively surprised by the male players’ aggression. Some female players would communicate instructions to players positioned at other sides of the pitch and there were other ways Swifts players were vocally present, but in less provocative ways. Also, the male team was dominant in their numbers. That night it was a particularly big group and in one of their warm-up exercises they were running up and down the side lines of their pitch, one way facing the cricket pitch and the other way facing our side of the field. At that moment we were doing a stationary skill exercise. I remember the male players being lined up shoulder to shoulder and running towards us. The animal type this conjured up does not matter per se; it was the sight of 30-odd men sprinting in our direction, and us hoping they would stop on time. Only the dust behind them was missing from the picture. The group of male players expressed masculine behaviour and showed their (trained and muscled) bodies. One of the female players later said of the male team: “That is the reason I am here! Keep it coming!” The men were clearly sexualised.

Third and finally, the group of men made use of the space differently than did the women. Their first warm-up exercise was a run around the entire field. While our teams would do two or three laps around the pitch, the male teams would do one or two laps around the entire field, the two pitches. In doing so, they entered 'our' pitch and at times came very close to us when overtaking. We were running with a soccer ball, they were only running and talking. I did not notice much communication between males and females apart from the necessary bodily movement and silent negotiation of direction to avoid clashes. By the time we had started our Spice Girls exercise, they were doing their last lap or latecomers were starting their laps. Only a few men appeared surprised or 'checked out' our training or bodies. In conclusion, both on and around the pitch, the male players were dominant in use of space, use of their bodies, and in numbers.

Worth mentioning here is Iris Young's (1980) work on "modalities of feminine body comportment, manner of moving and relation in space" (p. 139). Building on the work of Simone de Beauvoir (1974), Young describes three modalities of female embodied disempowerment. These include ambiguous transcendence, inhibited intentionality, and discontinuous unity. The first modality is relevant here. In discussing *transcendence*, Young refers to the body as "pure presence to the world and openness upon its possibilities" and as "capacities by which it can approach, grasp, and appropriate its surroundings in the direction of its intensions" (1980, p. 145). However, as Young argues, transcendence in the case of feminine-lived bodies is *ambiguous* as the body does not move "in an open and unbroken directedness upon the world in action" (p. 145). Or, as Nikki Wedgewood (2004) observes, it refers to "women typically using much less space than is available to them" (p. 140).

The question that also should be asked is: were women in this case not using space available to them, or were men using space that, strictly speaking, was not available *to them*? Is this a case of 'ambiguous transcendence' on the part of the women or a case of 'ambiguous transgressive' behaviour on the part of the men?

Travelling places

At the heart of a soccer competition is visiting other clubs. All participating clubs in the same division face each other at least twice over the season, and once at both home grounds. The visiting club can be as close as a five-minute bike ride to a club in the neighbourhood, or a 1.5-hour drive to, in the case of my team, a club in Castlemaine. The (far)away games offer two main opportunities: to get to know team players better (for instance, to talk about non-soccer related topics), and provide a way to connect with places outside the neighbourhood.

Players in my team would travel to away games together if route and time allowed. I travelled by car with players a few times and took my turn driving to Castlemaine. All games, but particularly the away games, were big time investments and provided the opportunity for players to bond and get to know each other on a more personal level. On a few occasions we had lunch or a coffee after the match and shared the drive. Having a car and driver's license and being comfortable driving in Melbourne allowed me to travel by myself and not be dependent on team players. Moreover, it enabled me to 'take turns' in driving trips and offer players to drive with me. Topics we talked about during these trips that I wrote about in my field notes include not only our team and its ranking on the ladder and developments in the club, but also TV shows recommendations, life experiences and plans, and experiences related to other sporting environments. I found that driving together with team members allowed for quality talk-time. A car offers an intimate space that is not easily left or disrupted by someone (apart from a phone call to/from a passenger), but still also offers a connection with the outside through a constantly changing scenery. Depending on the flow of conversation, the driver and co-riders can decide to focus on the inside or the outside of the car. Moreover, a car ride offers an intimate setting that allows time for talking, thinking, asking questions, and silence. Silences allow moments to process discussions and is less awkward than silences in other situations because of the 'waiting' aspect in driving from point A to point B. In a way, this is the group interview car version⁴¹ of a

⁴¹ Few examples of go-along car interviews were found. One exception is a LGBT youth study (Porta et al., 2017), in which the authors argue for the potential dangers in doing a car interview. As I didn't use or announce the car drives as interviews nor use recorders in the car, the interaction can be seen more as an any car conversation. Ethical issues arise around the informality of data collection and the question of whether co-drivers are aware they contribute to data collection. My role as researcher was always clear and

go-along walking or cycling interview, as co-riders shared experiences and connections to places and objects we passed. A few examples: “I used to live/work here;” “This is such an impoverished/fancy neighbourhood;” or “I have never seen snow before in Australia.”

The away games took us to many places outside the City of Maribyrnong and even outside Melbourne heading north-west. Some fields were located in urban areas, cramped within blocks of houses. In these areas, it felt as if the soccer pitch took up an almost unfair, disproportionate amount of space. Other clubs we visited were located outside Greater Melbourne in small cities that had their soccer pitches at the border of the city, making it feel like we were visiting rural Victoria. In fact, this might only be a 40-minute drive from the City of Maribyrnong. One hundred percent of the places we visited for away games were places I would not have visited otherwise. This was the case for many players, except for those who used to live in the area or had friends or family reasons to go there. I asked my team player Nai: “We did quite a bit of traveling to other clubs, did you feel you got to know the neighbourhood like this?” She responded:

Yes absolutely. I wouldn't go to these kinds of suburbs for any other reason than with the team. You can have a feel of what this suburb is like. I don't have much knowledge about the suburbs around here, so each suburb would be very new to me. When I travel I would notice if [the area] is developed, if there are many farms around or if they are developing lots of townhouses. And I would look at the houses if they are well maintained and have an idea of the income level of that suburb.

Nai moved to Melbourne one year ago and gets to know Greater Melbourne through being part of a soccer team. Again, in the case of Castlemaine, it is not only the environment, racial diversity, weather and spaciousness that differ so much from the West Footscray urban setting. People's

at times players would ask how my PhD is going, which attests to the clarity of my role as both player and researcher.

accents also change with geographical location, demonstrating yet again another form of diversity.

Traveling to places that differ so starkly from one another gives an idea of what Melbourne and its surroundings look and feel like. Playing competitive soccer takes players in and out of spaces; and all these spaces are atypical. The idea of ‘entering the field’ thus, should be seen as a continuing act. It takes the feeling of being part of a neighbourly, local club feeling out of context; it is in a constant state of becoming in which learning takes place, new places are navigated, and different ways of being come together in an embodied experience.

Wider place connection by newcomers

Nai’s quote about getting to know new suburbs hints at the ways being part of a traditional sporting clubs facilitates connections with places that are now her new home. Being part of a community has a wider meaning for Hana and Sam that goes beyond being a member of the soccer club. For Hana, it gives meaning to a new country as a migrant.

I feel like I belong into the community, I am part of the community rather than just individual Japanese who is, you know, not an Australian national. But you know I just feel like I have my place in the society. I mean is you know I live in as a Japanese in the society and always feel like I am a minority but however going into this you know going into you know club I feel like I am part of the society. I have some place in this whole Australia that I belong to. I am connected to.

For Sam this works in a similar way. As an interstate migrant, she would not describe herself as a migrant, but she did experience settlement challenges during the first few years after moving to the western suburbs of Melbourne from Sydney where she was born. In the interview I asked her if playing with the Swifts enhanced the feeling of connection to this place. She answered: “Totally, yeah. Since being part of the club, I have felt much happier in Melbourne overall and happier in the west. Being out and about, I see people.” In the neighbourhood, Sam bumps into

other players from the club which gives her a familiar feeling for the place, and this occurs within the sports context too: “On Monday I went to play indoor filling in for some friends who aren’t from the club but I played against girls from the club, they are all 3s and I was like *shit!*”

The two quotes above come from migrant experiences. Long-term residents may also visit new places in the suburb or city they have lived in for extended periods of time⁴². An example is the Maidstone soccer club I visited to support a State 3 game and where some other players had not been before. Migrants tend to engage in placemaking in a unique way, as they go through a ‘migrant experience’ (Marotta, 2020). Marotta defines experience as a disruption of the everyday and taken-for-granted life world. Going beyond methodological nationalism, the author argues that a disruption of feeling connected to place can happen to anyone, not just migrants and migrants moving across state borders and within cities. This makes sense in Sam’s case, as although she would not describe herself as a migrant, she still went through a ‘migrant experience’ that challenged her ideas of self on how the world around her functions.

As Hana’s quote shows, she was looking for that one connection to community that enriches her ethnic identity from Japanese to Australian. It enables her to go beyond feeling a minority and ‘belong’ to an environment in which she is a player/volunteer rather than an ethnicised and racialised body. Similar quotes and experiences can be found in literature on the (potential) role of sport as a tool for the integration of newcomers.

Conflicts in diversity and placemaking

Conflicts and misunderstandings are just as much part of a convivial intercultural society as rubbing shoulders. This section describes two conflict themes in the context of the sporting club: inclusivity and exclusivity at ‘ethnic’ clubs, and the use of language as a power tool.

Skippping the skips: Playing (or not) at an ethnic club

⁴² See Ahmed et al. (2003) for a discussion of uprooting without migration.

Although Swifts is not a typical ‘ethnic’ (read non-Anglo-Celtic) club, or a club with a specific national-ethnic orientation, the topic of playing at an ethnic club *or not* came forward in discussions multiple times. This is unsurprising as soccer in Melbourne (and Australia in general) is considered a ‘migrant’ game. Gorman (2017) explains: “At times scorned, and always distrusted, soccer in Australia has provided a unique space for almost every conceivable ethnic group, each representing a shard in a messy, incomplete mosaic known as soccer, football or ‘wogball’” (p. 6). ‘Wogball’ was played both inside and outside an organised soccer structure. Oslo Davis’ (2019) column illustrates soccer as the migrant game (see Figure 17). From 2017, Football Federation Victoria under directives from the national federation required clubs to “drop any ‘foreign’ or ethnic references in their team names and logos. Naturally, these rules ran counter to the whole point of the exercise. There is no geographical location in Melbourne that this team represents – they are an imagined, inherently political community bound by memory, song, dance, food, resistance and soccer” (Gorman, 2017, p. 4). This ban was lifted two years later, but many clubs did not revert to their original names. National-ethnic backgrounds (or foundations) of clubs are still part of public knowledge or communicated in other ways. For example, the Maidstone United Soccer Club website describes the history of the club by writing that “Lerian [Greek] migrants could have a place to play the game they loved, but also a community to be part of in a country far from home.” The Inclusion and Disability policy is also described on the website and includes a clause on the multicultural focus of the club. In other words, although names, flags or logos might have changed, the reputation and background are still there and attracts some and discourages others.

The following interview and observation data offers a few ways of approaching ethnic clubs. Daisy looks at the issue from a temporal perspective:

Daisy: In the sports around here I think there is like I mean there are some clubs that are like Italian soccer club and like across Millers Road there is the Greek soccer club and. Uhm. so I guess it is reflected a little bit in the communities and where they go and I think still around here because of

the changing population that these clubs are a lot more open to all backgrounds more so than strictly just Greeks or Maltese or Italian. I think that is really changing.

Jora: Would you be interested joining one of these Greek or the Italian soccer club?

Daisy: Uhm, I ... I wouldn't say no, I have thought about it because they are closer than the Swifts, so the thought has crossed my mind uhm... [thinking and hesitating] .

Jora: If you consider yourself as a non-Greek or non-Italian how would that [work]?

Daisy: How that would go yeah I think like that kind of mentality is a lot of an older population thing so I think that you would still find there would be older Greek people who would still go down to the Greek soccer club to follow the Greek club. However you'd find there would be a lot of mixed nationalities playing at the club now because I feel like immigration has been a lot different since when the European influx came in the 60s.

Daisy is not sure if she would fit in as a white Australian woman amongst the old Greek men. What is happening in many clubs is that with changes in the neighbourhood and migration flows, the demographics at local community clubs change too. Although Daisy hesitates as to whether the Greek club is the right place for her, the reason is not so much if she could enter that space but the age of the current members. I asked Margo the same question and she wondered "The only thing I worry about is are they nice people to play with and it's a good way to learn about other people."



Figure 17 Selection of drawings from *The illustrated city column* by Oslo Davis (2019).

During my team's trip to Castlemaine, Sam and I discussed ethnic sports clubs in a local café while waiting for our lunch to be served. Sam asked my opinion on ethnic clubs and if I think

these should be rather inclusive or exclusive. It was a discussion she had had with work colleagues, and presented me with a hypothetical issue:

If there was a soccer club around the corner of my house where mostly Italians or Greek speaking people would play, should I join there? It would be very convenient, but would I feel included and would I be able to understand if people were always talking in another language? Can they turn me down as a non-ethnic and should I be worried about that; is it about playing or about the cultural underpinnings of the club?

Sam's position in the discussion was not fixed; she was trying to look at the questions from different perspectives. In my answer I referred to previous research demonstrating the importance of safe spaces for co-ethnics to perform cultural practices and, through that, give meaning to what that culture is on a personal and community level. Some sporting environments have the potential to offer these safe spaces that migrants may not be able to find in other areas in society. However, what came through in Sam's reasoning is the question of whether she could/should or could not/should not belong in some pockets of society. For most white Australians, discrimination or social exclusion has never been an issue; most spaces are designed for and inclusive for white Australian nationals. In the citizen-migrant/newcomer dialectic, the citizen 'belongs' to the soil. The nation-state space is theirs to be in, perform and access. Thus, the question is not should everyone access all spaces at any time but, rather, how can 'exclusive' spaces be seen as inclusive for others (Hage, 2000; Koerner & Pillay, 2020).

A similarly inclusive-exclusive discussion was offered by Marg and Jim. About 20 years ago, when their youngest child was six or seven years old, they approached a soccer club and this is what happened:

Marg: We tried to join in a team in Altona and we were skips, they were like: 'no'. They really weren't welcoming.

Jora: What are skips?

- Marg: Kangaroos. They didn't say 'you are not welcome;' they just made it obvious you are not welcome and he is not going to get a game. They were talking amongst themselves and not sort of saying it again to us. Were they all Italian that group, Jim?
- Jim: I am not sure what they were – Greek?
- Marg: They were speaking in their own language and making sure that we were not understanding or that we were OK. Then he played lacrosse. Lacrosse was a really welcoming sport.

Marg explains that 'Skip' is Australian slang for white Anglo-Celtic Australians. Clearly, they had approached a club with a strict door policy. As skips, the young family was invading the Italian (or was it Greek?) club environment. I imagine a carefully crafted cultural environment has been created in an otherwise exclusive Australian society. Twenty years ago, 'wogs' was still a swear word⁴³ and the creation of ethnic (safe) spaces was one way to deal with racism in broader society. A quote from one of the interviewees from the walking group sheds light on this. Nada, who migrated from Croatia via Germany to Australia '40-something' years ago, talks about the importance of the local Croatian soccer club for her family and the Croatian community. There was a sense of pride among the members to "form a club from nothing" and it offered a place for the younger kids to connect. Nada explains she was not playing but just being part of the club to support it, "yeah because it was very, very tough to start it. We have a big soccer ground in Sunshine. All members were all migrants and we all had mortgages and the club was asking foundation money to start the ground you know? Not many people could afford that, but anyway we all helped." After the ban on ethnic signs was put on force, there were a "lot of unhappy people. Because it was something Croatian you couldn't find elsewhere."

⁴³ The meaning of the term 'wog' is complex and shifted over time in Australia. Often referring to South European post war migrants, the term has a strong association with racism and is being used by young people in their self-fashioning of a complex cultural identity (Tsolidis & Pollard, 2009).

‘Talking amongst themselves’ in a language other than English provides a segue into the following topic: language and swearing as power tools.

Language and swearing

“What do you mean?!” A player shouted from the field to the coach who was giving instructions in Italian from the sideline. Some players would respond to him in Italian or English; others would not understand his instructions. Today the Swifts State 3 played a match around the corner of my house and I came down to volunteer as linesperson. (Field notes, 13 August 2019)

Miscommunication was not uncommon in our State 4 team either, regardless of the fact that we all spoke English. We also had an Italian coach. He was a passionate and experienced soccer player and a passionate but not so experienced coach. Also, he liked to swear in Italian along the sidelines if one of our players missed a hit, failed to defend properly, or do a throw in incorrectly. If lucky, players might receive a compliment in Italian. While most players saw a mistake as an opportunity for improvement or for a good laugh after the match, our coach saw it as an opportunity to release some frustration and put his large arsenal of Italian obscenities into practice. According to some players, however, his at times obscene language was funny and his ‘cute’ accent ‘made up’ for his lack of coaching skills,.

An act of profanity has different impacts on the people surrounding the performer depending on who the words are directed at. In the case of our coach, the cursing was in fact a response to a player’s questionable performance, but it was not expressed in the face of that player. This does not, however, set at ease the feelings of the players sitting on the bench next to the coach: if you do something wrong in the eyes of the coach, he will respond by cursing in a language you don’t understand. Both cursing and a foreign language are neither constructive nor productive ways to provide feedback. Cursing on the field among players happens too. Joan

(interviewee participant recruited from outside the community sports structure) reflects on her experiences being cursed at in a language other than English.

Joan: The lack of understanding is also off-putting let alone someone might have said *fuck you* but you don't know; you don't actually know their intention. I suppose you can tell when they are aggressive to you and the words they say at you are aggressive. When you don't understand uhm it's...

Jora: Could there be a power relation going on? Something you don't have that I can use and make you feel bad without you knowing what I really mean; could that be a power thing?

Joan: Yeah, you've got something over me. It might make me rethink how I would approach you, literally, when I am playing soccer. But maybe that could also empower me a bit, you may understand English but I could do some sneaky words on you. I suppose in sport, I don't know how much I would mind. I understand the sport and know what I meant to do, I am a defender, you are an attacker, I understand my role.

Joan experienced being cursed at as part of the game, but said that it could be off-putting when you do not know the exact meaning of something. The strengths of the opponent are highlighted and enforced through language; in Joan's words, "they have something over you." In that sense, language can be used as a form of power, a way to challenge belonging.

I admit that I am also no stranger to using a language other than English on the field as a form of power. Moreover, my personal experiences framed my question to Joan. *Godver* or *tering* rank high on my swearing language list. The first word in particular can be made to sound very foreign, or non-English, by emphasising the harsh 'g' sound as it is pronounced in Dutch. Using Dutch words served various functions. It enabled me to express emotions. For me, English cursing words hold little emotional meaning. Regardless of the level of the competition, emotions seemed

ever-present among players in my team and our opponents. Using familiar Dutch words also enabled me to respond quickly. Playing the game absorbed all my attention and I was rarely able to express myself properly as I would have in different contexts and roles such as being a lecturer in the classroom, with friends at a restaurant, or at home. From this perspective I can speak back to Joan's experience of feeling personally attacked or made to feel uncomfortable by her opponent. This collection of excerpts and quotes shows the powerful dynamic of language.

In conclusion, both themes (in/exclusion at 'ethnic' clubs and language as power) that I have selected from the data collection are connected to nationalistic placemaking and place domination in relation to what 'rights' are ascribed to the ethnic Other and the Australian.

Sports clubs during COVID-19

I wrote this chapter in March 2020. The Kulin Nation follows the Gariwerd calendar with its six distinct weather periods⁴⁴. March is a transitioning period between Kooyang, season of the eels, and the Gwangel Moronn, season of the honeybees. Leaving the hottest and driest time of the year behind, the Country starts to cool down. By this time, the novel Corona Virus had reached Australia after having caused around 800,000 confirmed infections in Asia, Europe, North America and elsewhere in the world. Social (or better: physical) distancing restrictions came into place throughout Australia soon after. By the end of March 2020, most facilities in big cities such as libraries, indoor and outdoor sport centres and most workplaces were closed. People who could were working from home and soon all (inter)national flights were cancelled. On 24 March 2020, the president of the International Olympic Committee, Thomas Bach, together with the Prime Minister of Japan, Shinzo Abe, announced their decision to postpone the 2020 Games by one year. The Olympic Games had not been cancelled since WW11. On 23 July, the Tokyo 2020

⁴⁴ The six weather periods will be touched upon in chapters 5-8 and comprise Kooyang, Gwangel morron, Chunnup, Larneuk, Petyan, and Ballamber. The common saying 'Melbourne can have four seasons in one day' refers to the four European seasons. Weather cycles are an integral part of the academic concept of *rhythmanalysis*. The unpredictable weather can be better captured, of course, with the local First Nations weather calendar.

Organising Committee released a video to mark one year to go until the Opening Ceremony 2020+1.

The lockdown radically reduced or changed most people's activities, professional or otherwise, and although the restrictions were slightly different across states, the Australian federal government told its people to leave the house only for essential shopping, care, and physical activity. Understandably, the lockdown had enormous consequences for sports clubs, community centres and public parks alike. Therefore, I will finish this chapter with a brief note on how community clubs were affected by and handled the lockdown situation and its consequences.

Academics, journalist, and opinion makers from many fields, from urban studies to migration studies to sport studies took the chance to share their opinions on how society should be restructured. A growing list of newspaper and academic articles as well as opinion pieces concentrated on re-imagining society and the use of urban space for physical activity.

Two main consequences developed due to the temporary closure of all community sports clubs during the first lockdown in Melbourne. First, many clubs lost funding through membership fees, social events, food and bar sales (Jeanes et al., 2020a) and second, people were forced to find other ways to be physically active and over time may have become comfortable with these new patterns. This may drive down the community sport participation further.

Another issue identified as a consequence of lockdown is that "it actually reinforces inequality in many sections of society, and also in sports" (Spaaij in Aquina, 2020, para. 1). Sport associations will focus on their core business, that is, organising competitions, and will pay less to no attention to activities such as diversity and inclusion. While the authors describe the likely growth in individually organised sport after lockdown restrictions ease, they also note that the opposite may be true in the form of 'hunger for unifications' from which community sport can benefit. Fullagar points out that the "recovery process brings with it an opportunity to articulate the values driving sport organisations and to develop more 'joined up' thinking to bring different policy and research agendas into more meaningful dialogue." With this, the author warns against exacerbating distress and re-inscribing privilege through unconscious bias (hypermasculinity and gender stereotypes, whiteness and heteronormativity).

These articles emphasise the importance of “rebuilding organisational culture and clarifying the values” (Fullagar, 2020, p. 7). Digitally engaging members post-lockdown and post-pandemic is vital in continuing the existence of community clubs. The idea that the trend towards individual and informal physical activity is exacerbated and will fill the gaps in community sports participation is strong in all three articles, and demonstrates the intimate connection and interaction between forms of activity. People move in and out of spaces, move their bodies in different ways and are part of or produce various kinds of organisational forms, while often making use of the same place (e.g., Johnson Reserve).

At club level, reimagining what a post-pandemic sporting environment would look like was only of partial concern, with financial and practical issues top of mind for the Swifts volunteers. At the start of the 2020 and 2021 season lockdowns, Swifts players were offered a refund of their registration fees. Players were also offered the option to donate their fees to the club. During the lockdowns, online training was offered to players once a week to continue engagement between the club and its members, with detailed return-to-play plan established each time lockdown restrictions eased during 2020 and 2021.

During, as well as after, the lockdowns, Johnson Reserve was intensively used by residents. Individuals, small groups and families visiting the ground to play, run, walk and/or exercise. In the two years that I have lived in the neighbourhood, I had not seen it this busy. Residents were faced with limited options to use public (leisure) space in close proximity of their houses, and in a way having these limited options challenged or perhaps strengthened the concept of place-based belonging.

The role of physical activity during lockdown will return in the next two chapters where I describe how community centres and public parks were used and managed during that time.

Concluding remarks

This chapter described placemaking at a community sport club. Placemaking is performed in unique ways that are facilitated by the organisational characteristics of community sport. The four themes that helped to describe placemaking in this chapter are: arrival experiences, making the public home, travelling, and wider place connections. In this chapter I described the reserve as the home ground of the Swifts, the rhythms and production of the reserve during particular days and times of the week and, most importantly, through the eyes of the soccer club.

The Swifts is the antithesis of how soccer was traditionally perceived in Melbourne's inner west. First, soccer in Australia is often described as a male-dominated migrant sport, with many clubs in the inner west having ethno-cultural roots (Gorman, 2017). These roots are either 'collective knowledge', clearly visible or audible at the club, or in other cases described on the club's website. Second, Swifts is not based on ties to an overseas country; rather, it is founded on the need to create a female-only space that prioritises junior and senior women teams. It still offers (perhaps because of its lack of ethnic ties) a valuable environment to describe placemaking in relation to lived multiculturalism and diversity. Dominantly white environments, too, are places with 'commonplace diversity' (Wessendorf, 2014), and are key places in everyday negotiation of wider multiculturalism (Koerner & Pillay, 2020).

This chapter discussed various forms of diversity within Swifts, albeit its dominantly Anglo-Saxon/white demographic. In this chapter I presented and analysed migrant stories and their experiences at the club where gender is its main identifier. I noted that some members lived in various geographical areas and drove for up to 40 minutes from their homes to be part of its female-only environment. This also ties into my discussion on super-diversity and my argument that identities are much broader than racial or ethno-cultural.

The super-diverse context contributed to the production of multiplicity of space, too. The intercultural encounters discussed in this chapter demonstrate how space is shared as well as how narrow ideas of space are produced. In the case of Marg and Jim, the space was singularly imagined as an ethnic-specific space where players of another ethno-cultural background did not fit into. As a sport club, the Swifts is part of Australia's traditional sporting structure that tends to approach sporting fields as "already divided up" (Massey, 1999, p. 11). Yet, the same club also

provides a place where the potential multiplicities of the spatial are explored by its members. As the only female soccer club in the surrounding suburbs, the committee works harder to establish itself in a male dominated ‘ethnicised’ sporting environment. During 2020 and 2021 Melbourne COVID-19 lockdowns, the Swifts soccer pitch was used in dynamic ways. Public spaces became one of the few places that offered space for recreation and physical activity. The Swifts pitch was used by families, people running and exercising and people meeting up to socialise or walk their dogs.

The performance of placemaking intersects with structural issues. Belonging to place is a temporal and personal process, as much as it is a process of navigating bureaucratic channels to book soccer fields. It is a temporal process that happens over time through day-to-day practices, arriving at and being in a locality for an extended period of times. In the case of a soccer team, it also involves moving out of the area, leaving the ‘home ground’ and visiting other clubs.

Chapter 6: Placemaking at a sports-based migrant settlement

service

Introduction

To interrogate the physical activity landscape and its connection to super-diversity and how local residents can establish a connection to place, including migrant settlement services is critical. This chapter discusses settlement through sports programs for newly arrived migrants. Following Smith et al. (2019), critical questions should be asked about how migrant settlement through sport is programmed, monitored and evaluated. The translation of abstract – and politicised – settlement into hands-on programs raises the questions: Integration into what? Integration by whom? Charishma Ratnam (2019) calls for a shift from politicised discourses on refugee policy to an understanding of how refugees “make ‘home’ in multicultural Australia” (p. 1198). Moreover, Boccagni and Hondagneu-Sotelo (2021) question how space can be turned into “‘our’ place” (p. 1). In the context of this thesis, the question is: How is placemaking performed and mediated by program participants through participation in settlement through a sports service?

In this chapter^{45 46} I present data collected during an internship⁴⁷ (May – October 2018) with the Western Bulldogs Football Club (WBFC), a professional Australian Rules football club nationally known for representing Melbourne’s western suburbs.⁴⁸ The purpose of this five-month evaluation was to develop a Program Logic Model for the Ready Settle Go (RSG) program to formally model and identify how the program contributes to the settlement of newly arrived (forced) migrants. The data collected during the internship includes ten interviews with program

⁴⁵ This chapter is based on the final internship research report (Broerse et al., 2019) which was a joint effort by Prof Ramón Spaaij, A/Prof Christopher Sonn, Dr Sarah Oxford, Michelle Hage and me. Phoebe Miller and I guided the focus group.

⁴⁶ Sections of this chapter are published in *Social Inclusion* (Broerse, 2019).

⁴⁷ The internship was a collaboration between the WBFC’s Community Foundation, Victoria University, and Australian Postgraduate Research Intern (APR.Intern)

⁴⁸ APR.Intern is a national program supported by the Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment, and connects PhD students with industry partners across all sectors and disciplines through short-term research projects. It offers students the opportunity to develop practical research skills and establish connections across sectors and offers businesses access to emerging research talent.

participants, eight interviews with teachers/coordinators, 60 hours of program delivery observations, participation in eight staff meetings and one focus group with seven staff members, as well as internal documents provided by staff members. For the purpose of this PhD thesis, I re-analysed the data with the PhD research questions in mind.

This chapter is structured as follows. I will start by sketching the background of Sport for Development (SfD) migrant settlement services and how sport and physical activity become tools for migrant integration. I then dive into one specific settlement program located in Footscray and describe the practical workings of the RSG program, part of the WBCF stream. Following this, I discuss how placemaking is performed by program participants. There are four main themes in connection to placemaking: introduction to Australian sports system, getting to know other participants, visiting places, and placemaking for the future. The final section describes conflicts that arise in the placemaking process. Before concluding the chapter, I will briefly describe how COVID-19 lockdown impacted migrant settlement programs.

The main argument developed in this chapter evolves around performances of placemaking by program participants. This is in line with previous research that highlights that, while settlement through sport may appear inclusive on the surface, participants are expected to conform to dominant (white) structures (Agergaard, 2018).

Sport settlement programs – a brief background

Australia's humanitarian program

Every year, the Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs (part of Home Affairs and previously Minister for Immigration and Border Protection) decides how many refugee and humanitarian entrants (processed offshore and onshore) Australia will take. The Home Affairs' first purpose is to "protect Australia's sovereignty, security and safety by managing its border" (Department of Home Affairs, 2018, p. 38). The second purpose is to promote responsive migration under which the portfolios of Citizenship, Migration, Visas, and Refugee and Humanitarian Assistance fall. Since 2015-2016, the number of humanitarian entrants increased from 13,750 to 18,750 in 2018-2019. In the state of Victoria, 3500 to 4000 people per

annum enter under the Humanitarian Program. The 2018 Global Trends report commissioned by the UNHCR, reported that the world's refugee population had reached 25.9 million in December 2018 with 3.5 million people seeking asylum. At the end of 2018, Turkey, Pakistan, Uganda, Sudan and Germany hosted the largest number of refugees. In the same year "Australia's official refugee population was 56,933 – 45th overall, 50th per capita and 88th relative to national Gross Domestic Product" (Refugee Council, 2020). Over the past ten years, Australia's relative intake has been higher. Between January 2007 and December 2018, Australia resettled 180,790 refugees, or 0.89% of globally recognised refugees. This ranks Australia 25th overall, 29th per capita and 54th relative to national Gross Domestic Product. Victoria typically receives 33% of the national humanitarian intake, with a growing percentage (10-15% in 2016) being settled in regional areas.

Given this, what support is offered when humanitarian entrants and other migrants finally make it to Australia? Changes in Commonwealth immigration policy directly affect shifts in settlement patterns, health and wellbeing needs, and requires a hands-on response at local, regional and state-wide levels (Department of Health and Human Services, 2016). Support is offered at various governmental levels from federal to small local organisations, and is generally divided between health and human services and settlement and advocacy services. A resource developed by the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services (2016) provides a useful overview of the complex visa category schemes, future changes in migration patterns and settlement needs. Since 2016, there has been an increased demand for: health services in early settlement with these services provided beyond the first 6 to 12 months of settlement; human services (e.g., emergency housing support, support for child, youth and family, disability support); regional services; and language services. Eligible arrivals have access to 510 hours free English lessons through the Adult Migrant English Program. The resource (although slightly outdated) also gives an idea of the numerous federal programs that aim to "build the capacity and responsiveness of the mainstream service sector through secondary consultation, professional development and strengthening referral pathways for ongoing care" (Department of Health and Human Services, 2016. p. 5). Key specialised state services include: Refugee Health Program; Immigrant and refugee health clinics; Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture; Refugee

Minor Program; and programs for homelessness and family violence. AMES is the primary service provider on behalf of the Department of Social Services tasked with delivering early practical support to humanitarian entrants during the first 12 months, including the Adult Migrant English Program. This early support is administered under the Humanitarian Settlement Service Programme; refugees residing on temporary protection visas are not eligible for these services.

Further, the 2016-17 Victorian State Budget included two main funding streams: 1) refugee health and wellbeing, and 2) funding for multicultural affairs, family violence and education. For the upcoming four years (2017-2021, the period during which this research took place), additional funding of \$10.91 million was announced to support rising Syrian and Iraqi settlement. The second funding involves a four year \$18 million injection to encourage “enhanced social participation and inclusion programs; programs to strengthen access to education, employment and encourage the use of sports, arts, culture and community to foster a sense of belonging for new arrivals ... to coordinate place based settlement” (Department of Health and Human Services, 2016, p. 6). Mentioning sports programs here is important, as it has become a formalised settlement strategy recognised at State Government level.

Settlement programs in the City of Maribyrnong

A plethora of local organisations offer migrant settlement services at different organisational levels. For example, Welcoming Cities, which is initiated by Welcoming Australia and supported by the Scanlon Foundation, supports Local Councils and community stakeholders across Australia through knowledge sharing and partnership development. The Refugee Council of Australia is the national umbrella body for refugees and people seeking asylum, with over 1000 individual members and 190 organisational members, of whom 46 are in Victoria. This list gives an impression of the large size of the industry, although it is not exhaustive because the WBCF is not a member.⁴⁹ All organisations share the aim of creating and sustaining a welcoming and

⁴⁹ While WBCF is not registered as a member of the Refugee Council of Australia, AMES is. AMES is a national settlement provider and offers English language classes among its services. AMES is a previous partner of the WBCF.

inclusive environment for newcomers, and providing organisations/individuals with the tools to help migrants settle successfully. The services are situated on two spectrums: broad-specific activities (e.g., offering multiple activities or one specific service); and target populations (e.g., multicultural ethnic/cultural specific populations, all ages, and specialising in seniors or youth). Some organisations take a step further and engage in the production of knowledge and share academically researched strategies with other services; for example, the Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) also works to inform policy and advocacy at local, state and national levels.

At the local level, the Maribyrnong City Council's commitment to supporting ethnically diverse populations is described in all policy documents (e.g., Multicultural Policy 2012-2017), particularly the Intercultural Cities Network policy described in Chapter 4 of this thesis. The Council is a Refugee Welcome Zone⁵⁰, and makes a commitment to "welcome refugees into the community, uphold their human rights, demonstrate compassion, and enhance cultural and religious diversity in the community" (Maribyrnong City Council, 2021a), while Melbourne's Living Museum of the West documents and preserves stories of previous migrants. Sport and recreation opportunities for newly arrived migrants and refugees are offered by various service providers, making it a complex policy context. Hence, responsibilities for an inclusive sport environment could lie not only with the (federally-funded) settlement services, the sports and leisure sector, community and ethno-specific organisations, but also with state and local governments (including access to grounds and facilities) (Centre for Multicultural Youth, 2009).

Migrant settlement through physical activity

Sport and physical activities have become popular in Western policy agendas as a migrant integration tool, particularly for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) migrants (Donnelley & Coakley, 2002; Spaaij, 2013a; Walseth, 2008) and forced migrants (Spaaij et al., 2019). Participation in sport and recreation may be beneficial for newly arrived communities. These benefits are diverse and may include social benefits, greater community understanding, health

⁵⁰ The Welcoming Zone was implemented through a partnership with Australia Post's Neighbourhood Welcome Service, which ceased one year after its launch due to a focus shift within Australia Post.

benefits, opportunities to build relationships, as well as provide an entry point to community sport participation (Olliff, 2008). In addition, sport participation may be beneficial for newly arrived migrants, as it can function as a supportive environment where information regarding other services and systems can be shared and where a trustful relationship with workers can be developed (Olliff, 2008).

The use of sport as a means for migrant settlement is strengthened and justified by the way sport is continuously described as being part of the Australian national identity. Rowe (2017) refers to the document *Australian Citizenship: Our Common Bond*, which contains the required study content for the Australian citizenship test, to describe the institutional value sport has in Australian culture. The section on sport and recreation, for example, states that “many Australians love sport and many have achieved impressive results at an international level,” and that “throughout history, sport has both characterised the Australian people and united us” (Commonwealth of Australia, 2014, p. 43). Rowe (2017) concludes that such a “state-initiated endorsement of sport means that there is a clear association between sport and ‘Australianness’ and a general expectation that embracing sport is part of becoming an Australian” (p. 1473).

Settlement through sport initiatives further builds on the premise that sport provides a platform for positive settlement outcomes, social inclusion, and supporting integration into Australian society (Centre for Multicultural Youth, 2010). The Refugee Council of Australia recognises the importance of sport and emphasises “the need to increase the opportunities for refugees to participate in sport” (Morgan, n.d., p. 67). Physical activity is considered to support integration and build social cohesion, with its potential recognised at a national government level (Australian Multicultural Advisory Council, 2017).

From an equity and multiculturalism perspective, however, settlement through sport poses another dilemma. Sport used as an assimilation tool often follows the construction by outsiders of separate ethnic identities according to sporting criteria (Cronin et al., 1998). Furthermore, CALD migrants pre-migratory cultural capital is not valued in “mainstream sport and physical activity settings in Western countries, resulting in barriers to and negative experiences of participation” (Smith et al., 2019, p. 864; see also Hargreaves, 1986). In this

chapter I ask how, in a context where participants are expected to conform to dominant (white) structures (Agergaard, 2018), they engage in local placemaking.

Within this broader context of migrant integration through sport, it is relevant to look at what is called Sport for Development (SfD) programs. SfD refers to the use of sporting activities to provide opportunities for personal and/or community development. Schulenkorf and Adair (2014, p. 3) describe how SfD initiatives aim “to engage people from disadvantaged communities in physical activity projects that have an overarching aim of achieving various social, cultural, physical, economic or health-related outcomes.” In other words, these sport initiatives go beyond regular sport activities and aim to improve participants’ quality of life.

A specific area within the SfD movement is migrant settlement. These services particularly focus on newly arrived migrants to provide support during their settlement journeys. These programs facilitate activities with the underlying aim to create a two-way learning space enable participants to become familiar with the ‘host’ country’s culture and simultaneously share their ‘home’ country with others. Programs are offered in many different forms, from sport-plus to plus-sport, depending on the centrality of sport in the program (Coalter, 2013). The Ready Settle Go program builds on SfD principles, to which I now turn.

Ready Settle Go: A case study

The Diversity and Social Inclusion (DSI) stream is one of the three departments operating under the Western Bulldogs Community Foundation (WBCF). Through the RSG program, the DSI stream delivers settlement services and seeks to foster belonging and the cultural literacy of newly arrived migrants in Australia. Since 2007, the program has supported over 20,000 newcomers of all ages and from 35 different countries of birth now residing in Melbourne’s West.

While the DSI stream officially operates independently from the Western Bulldogs football club, it is nonetheless closely tied to the club’s activities and values. The main focus of the stream is the CALD play activities for adults and youths. Besides the CALD play program, DSI delivers other activities such as community events, school holiday sport programs,

employment tours, and youth leadership programs. These programs target a slightly different, although sometimes overlapping, client population and are offered to meet the varying needs in the community. From March 2015 to June 2018, the DSI stream received three years' funding for the RSG program from the Department of Social Services. Upon successful external grant application, the football club supplements the grant financially while other subprograms are financed by additional grants.

The DSI stream focuses on engaging with and providing opportunities to multicultural and indigenous communities, and for people with all abilities within Melbourne's West. More specifically, the DSI programs cater for permanent residents who have arrived in the past five years as either humanitarian entrants or family member migrants.

The mission of the RSG program is to utilise the 'unifying power of recreational activities' and sport to provide settlement support for eligible clients to promote economic and personal wellbeing, independence and community connectedness. It also aims to facilitate pathways to learning English, education and employment readiness.

The DSI team

The DSI stream is comprised of four staff members of whom two are mainly concerned with the delivery of the program. One staff member is assisted by students on placement and/or adapters (trained volunteers) to deliver most programs. Students on placement mainly include SEDA students (years 11 and 12 college Sport Development students), Social Work students and Community Development students (Victoria University). The stream depends on the support of placement students, adapters and other volunteers in the delivery of the program, as they relieve pressure on the staff members who take care of running the program in general. For example, their assistance includes staying in contact with schoolteachers, taking care of consent forms and attendance list, bringing equipment, and instructing SEDA students and volunteers. Depending on the activity, at times the DSI staff facilitate the activity while at other times adapters, students or professionals (in the case of the clip making program) with specific skills run the activity.

Adapters are volunteers who have attended the adapters program. This program is designed to train volunteers in the activities and ensure all volunteers receive consistent instructions and messaging. Adapters are involved in various programs and offer assistance in their delivery. The background of adapters varies but all have in common their strong commitment to the service the DSI stream provides and/or are great supporters of the Western Bulldogs football club. Some are previous participants of the program, some are students on placements who volunteer, while others want to be involved in any way they can to help the club they support so passionately.

The employment background of staff members varies from previous experience in community services to sport coaching and management-related education. In terms of ethnic backgrounds, the DSI staff and adapters are highly diverse and most have had first-hand (forced) migration experiences themselves. Staff members also have had relatable experiences that allow them to better understand the participants' challenges. For example, many staff members arrived with few English skills and had to find ways to belong in Australia. SEDA students (and to a lesser extent other students on placement) are generally born in Australia and, as Paul (teacher, male, 50s) explains, have the "typical Australian slang."

The DSI stream (including staff, adapters and placement students) collaborates with other organisations in delivering the RSG program. Core partners include Victoria University, language schools/community centres, SEDA, community organisations, local councils and funding organisations. Each partner benefits from collaborating with DSI in its own way. Maddy, a representative of a sport body, organises activities via the RSG program to help meet the objectives of their Victorian Government program. Maddy explains: "it provides us with an avenue to connect with migrant and refugee communities, grow the game to new participants, and allows our sport to play a part in their health and well-being, settlement, social connection, and personal and professional development." A socially responsive and inclusive sport model is not only in line with the efforts and funding contributed to a sporting organisation that engages in refugee settlement, but also opens up a potential members' pool.

Leonel, a representative of Cricket Victoria, shares a similar story. Leonel works with the RSG team to supply cricket equipment for Game Day. Within Cricket Victoria, he works on the growing role of local sports clubs in welcoming newly arrived migrants. “I think sport plays a massive part in getting people involved in the community. Your local sport club is taking over [the] sort of role of providing a safe place to go to, whether it is softball, cricket, lawn ball. They provide a place for people to meet, provide an opportunity for people to socialise and build a sort of bonding spirit.” He continues: “Our sport is a game they have never played, but they are playing as a team, they are understanding skills behind it, they are encouraging each other and having fun competing.” For Leonel, it is about welcoming new people and offering a place where they can feel safe and welcome. It also offers his sports organisation the opportunity to engage with a largely untapped group of people who potentially will join a club and grow the sport. Leonel explains:

This is a big part of our growth especially over the three years and break into these communities that we don't necessarily have access to. We try to grow the sport in terms of building awareness and get the kids playing.

State and national sporting bodies face the challenge of a change in sporting engagement. Hence, they are always on the lookout for creative ways to grow their sport. Traditional sporting bodies find themselves in a competitive environment, in a race to identify and access new communities.

There are practical motivations for language schools to engage in sporting activities as well. I quote Ivan, an adult language schoolteacher, in full:

Our brief from the Department of Education is to teach English and help the students gain settlement information. As sport is part of Australian society and every time they see where Australian people do things whether they actively process it or not. They see the sort of things Australian people do. So at the very least they are getting more of an idea what this Australian place is.

Placemaking through settlement services

So how is placemaking performed by newly arrived migrants in the context of a sports-based migrant settlement service? The proceeding discussion has already shown how the sports environment is regarded as desirable to facilitate migrant settlement/integration into Australian society. The above also mapped out the highly organisational structure in which this form of physical activity takes place. As the placemaking literature points out, placemaking is influenced by many aspects. Therefore, the voices of teachers and the broader structure in which the settlement through sport is organised will be taken into account. I will describe how placemaking is performed and mediated through four different themes: introduction to Australian life and its sports culture, connection to people, connection to physical spaces, and placemaking for the future.

Introduction to Australian life: “A cuddly warm feeling”

The main aim of the Ready Settle Go program is to introduce newly arrived migrants to Australian life, to foster belonging and cultural literacy and utilise the ‘unifying power’ of recreational activities and sport to provide settlement support. In this section, I will ask what is understood by ‘belonging and cultural literacy’, and how sport and other recreational activities promote economic and personal wellbeing, independence and community connectedness.

Let’s start with a discussion of what belonging and culturally literacy is and how it can be achieved. By collecting and analysing data, program designers, deliverers and teachers have grappled to define belonging and what Australian culture means. Belonging and cultural literacy has often been described in abstract terms such as welcoming, multicultural, companionable and easy-going⁵¹. Typical Australian activities include watching and participating in sport, barbeques, and using Australian slang. In addition, English speaking and writing literacy has been key to the delivery of the Ready Settle Go program and enabled by collaboration with language schools.

⁵¹ See Plage, Willing, and Skrbiš (2016) for a discussion on how Australian civic virtues such as fairness, openness and egalitarianism have the potential to hinder cosmopolitan practices.

Primary school language teacher Petra emphasises that belonging to a place can be established through understanding what local people like and dislike: “Introducing them to that sporting culture, the sorts of sport we love in Australia and the passion the Melbourne has [for] sport.” Ivan, an adult language schoolteacher, adds, “We also hope that our students get a sort of cuddly warm feeling about Australia; that they feel at home. So the opportunity that the Bulldogs offers us is a valuable thing because it makes Australia more understandable to the students, and they are getting a positive message from the Bulldogs because beyond the sport path, there are all these young people who are happy and enthusiastic and enjoying life. I mean it is a warm nice cuddly thing.”

The meaning of migrant belonging to the foundation also depends on Government’s focus, on which the program financially depends. At the time of data collection in 2017, the priority for the ensuing three years was employment. The reasoning is that understanding the labour market and being employable makes for a good (future) citizen; hence, employment tours and job-readiness language training were incorporated into the program.

When I talked to interview participants and people engaged in the program, one thing became clear: sport is a defining aspect of ‘Australian culture’; therefore, sport is critical for a newcomer to become a successful and active citizen. Petra explains:

I doubt that a lot of kids had met Lacrosse before, whereas next term we’re doing Lacrosse so they have five sessions and might have never played it before. It is an introduction. When they do footy, it is a real introduction to Australia and Australian culture and a big part of Melbourne culture. So they get an understanding of the game. With tennis we try to do it when it is the Australian Open, so they get an understanding of tennis.

John, coordinator and teacher at an adult language school, agrees with the importance of seeing sport as an aspect of cultural literacy and adds, “Through sport you can learn about culture. Their boss was talking about footy and they had no idea. Those people they are new to Australia, you see. So it is through our own culture, the workplace talks about sport and they hear about these

things on the news.” Being culturally literate includes being able to understand conversations in the workplace and in discussions in the media.

Given this, how do participants in the program experience activities? Liam (in his 20s) explains: “Western Bulldogs help very much; we learn a lot about Australian lifestyle. So yeah, they help me a lot to improve myself and to know more. I only know football and volleyball; Australian football is very different.” Participants are introduced to a variety of sports activities, depending on the term and on whether they are eligible for the program. Most participants enjoy playing the (simplified) versions of sporting activities. Ivan (adult language teacher) notes that this is not the case for all his students: “I could sense that my students weren’t that into it. In the end I said to them: ‘If you want to come, come, and if you don’t, don’t’. And at the end most of them didn’t go to sport. So we had a talk among the teachers and we understood with the school there are heaps of young students. For us, who got the grandparents and that sort of thing, it is a little list [of] what our students are into.” This quote demonstrates that sport is associated with a younger population. The limited number of English language hours that are available without cost drives students to study hard and not spend their precious hours in physical activity in which they see little value.

The Ready Settle Go program collaborates closely with language schools. Understandably, the English teachers see language-learning opportunities for their students in the sports program. Ahmed (Indian, in his 60s) shares enthusiastically: “Yes, for example I hear ‘kick’ ‘kick’, yeah I like this. Too many new words. My friends are from Somali, one speaks Afrikaans and we all have different accents, I like if we are talking English together!” Ahmed laughs. Ivan adds: “I suppose the main benefit for most for them would be learning a bit more about Australia and a bit more new English. In class we learned about shuttle, cock, which is a rooster, which is male chicken, you get a lot of language out of it.” Language teachers appreciate the opportunity to teach their students sports terminology, but also to hear other people speak in Australian slang. Patrick, an adult language teacher, points out that “I think they really wanted to hear the Australian accent and those students they came along to help; really they understand it a lot better than before

they know the real Australian accent.” Ivan, who like Patrick is not a native user of Australian English, mentions the accent too:

Our thing is teaching English and sometimes you painstakingly try to contrive how Australian people speak and you try to think of the correct words. Going to the Bulldogs is awesome, because that authentic language is there all the time. These kids are so Australian, I cannot believe it. So the teachers, what we think, we like it, because we say listen to these Aussies, yes that’s great. ‘Hear what they talk like, that’s great for our students’, so we’re saying from that point of view.

By ‘these kids’, Ivan means the sports students who are assisting the WBCF staff to co-deliver the sports activities. For Patrick’s class this is the same: “They really wanted to hear the Australian accent and those sports students came along to help, now that they have heard the real Australian accent, they understand it a lot better.”

Australian culture can mean many different things. The Western Bulldogs footy club has a long-standing tradition in Melbourne’s western suburbs. Participants were introduced to the Western Bulldogs story, its icons, its heroes, the key championships, and the status of the club within the Footscray community. In 2016, the male team won the AFL premiership for the first time since 1954. The victory was celebrated for weeks and stories of the time were still shared by staff members in mid-2020, with murals continuing to remind residents of the club’s great achievement. Two years after the event, Fiona, one of the management staff within the DSI stream, shared her memories of that time with program participants. For her, it was one of the most special times during her 15-plus years with the Bulldogs. While chatting with participants, she often shared stories about the hundreds of people waiting in line for club merchandise after the finals and the photos with players she was able to get taken. Although not a Bulldogs supporter ‘at heart’, she says that this was a very special moment for her and the community. The stories that are retold point to the importance of this cultural know-how for newcomers and their integration into Australian culture.

The primary focus of the settlement program is on cultural learning by the newcomer. Strictly speaking, this follows the outdated and criticised ideology of one-way integration; only the newcomer is expected to learn new behaviours. This also clashes with multiculturalism ideology in which expressions of cultural diversity are welcomed and encouraged. However, although it is not part of the official program structure, two-way learning does take place.

Throughout the data collection, mainly through informal chats, program facilitators ask participants to share cultural aspects of their lives. This might include their migration journey, memories from their previous homeland, or bringing national dishes to a lunch or dinner party. Participants are also invited to propose cultural activities to enhance intercultural learning and, surmounting its former Anglo-Saxon tradition, the program began to offer Bollywood dancing and bocce or bowling activities.

John and Leonel, both sport leagues representatives delivering sports sessions, reflect on their own use of language in their interviews. John refers to the sports science students: “You’ve got students who can’t communicate at all to those who can. So, and I think I’ve seen this in the presenters, they’ve begun to present with more visuals.” Leonel reflects on his own experience, and I quote him in full:

With the CALD [culturally and linguistically diverse] community, it’s given me an appreciation of how I need to simplify how I talk. Last year and this year I’ve really had to make myself clear, that my explanations need to be shorter and need to be focused on what they need to know rather than expanding it. Sometime because the English language is the difficulty and sometimes because our sport is a new sport, whatever it is, I need to simplify. And it also made me understand how privileged I am, especially a sport like ours, which is a very expensive sport we are to play. Because a lot of the students would have never seen the sport, or have access to it. Now they’ve come across, they experience something they have never done before. Very eye-opening when you think that we would take this for granted in Australia whereas for them this is an amazing experience.

Leonel talks about privilege in two ways: being privileged to be fluent in the language of the country he lives in, and privileged to play an expensive sport that is largely taken for granted in Australia. He is confronted with people who experience limitations in accessing these cultural and financial resources. This is in stark contrast with most staff members, who have either a migrant or culturally diverse background. Hamza and Amy, the two key deliverers at the time of data collection and first-generation migrants from Afghanistan and Vietnam, respectively, explain: “We know what these kids are going through, we are migrants ourselves.” In the next section, Petra shares how she encourages (inter)cultural exchanges between participants.

Social connections

A connection to place is fostered through local connections and interactions. Establishing new local social connections is particularly crucial for newly arrived migrants. Some program participants explain that they have established new contacts, who in some cases they befriend. This theme reoccurs in other placemaking chapters in this thesis.

Petra explains that on Gala Day (a final competition day when all language schools come together and mirror primary and high school physical activity curricula), she makes an effort to facilitate a cultural exchange between her own students and students from other schools with the same cultural background. “I always try to link them up. They might think ‘I’m the only Greek one’. I spend a lot of time linking up the different kids and make them chat but there is not enough time. They are nervous and shy, they don’t have enough time to break down barriers and become friends. And because it is a competition-like atmosphere, they are more reluctant to make friends because they are with their team playing against them.”

According to Patrick, although it is a competitive environment, “sport brings everyone together, much like dancing. And food.” Patrick explains his students are already part of the global soccer game: “these people who come from other countries grew up in the world of football. And if it wasn’t football it was other sport they played throughout their lives. Sport has given them a sense of confidence.” This holds true mainly for boys and men. Girls and women of refugee background often come from socio-cultural backgrounds in which physical activity is discouraged

(Ahmad et al., 2020). Patrick believes that playing soccer also offers “a chance to build teams. Teamwork is most important, not just in the classroom but outside on the pitch. Or wherever in the future.”

The RSG team offers sport-plus settlement services. Healthy living programs take place at the schools or centres and are delivered, for example, by Centrelink, Cancer Council Australia, or Diabetes Victoria. Topics generally speak directly to participants’ experiences, and they have the opportunity to ask questions. One presentation about cancer prevention encouraged both women and men to visit their doctors to request health checks. Further, the employment tours encourage participants to explore the labour market.

In a group interview with four participants of the employment tour organised two weeks’ earlier by the RSG program, Lam and her classmates share their experiences. Lam explains that she was surprised about the Bulldogs: “we all think this is the simple sport club, just focus on sport, but when we getting there we got to do very amazing social activities. We also know that they do a lot of things for the community and also helping immigrants.” Coming from Vietnam, Lam was also surprised about the casual work environment and the informal relationships among people of various ranks within the organisation. She says, “The CEO people are very close to the staff and the students like us, because we before that we think it is very difficult to reach and meet higher position people but they are very nicely to talk and say their experience.” The aim of the employment tour is to prepare newly arrived migrants for the Australian labour market and focus on hands-on skills, such as where to look for jobs and how to write a resume. Lam’s informal learning is an additional valuable experience as it provided her with an insight into what social relationships in professional working environments could look like. Lastly, Lam says, “Beside the sport in bulldogs company we also learned much more about the [Australia] culture.”

Although the general experiences of employment tour participants are positive, the experiences are very general and lack directly applicable skills. This is apparent in the interviews with participants. The interviewer was often asked questions such as if they could find work at the Western Bulldogs, where they could get required certificates, for example, to work at the childcare centre (which is part of the tour), and questions around how to apply for jobs. In

addition, participants mention that previous work and educational degrees/experiences that took place outside Australia are often not recognised.

Students participating in non-sport activities generally have better developed English skills, which further enables interactions between participants and deliverers. These staff members frequently shared their experiences as migrants, including the challenges they faced after their arrival and the challenges they are still facing. Observations in this research show that the coping strategies staff members provide are encouraging and bring a sense of relief to participants. As Patrick says, “When they go out on the pitch they have huge smiles on their faces and most of them are listening to Hamza and the team from the schools help them [get] a sense of what it is like to be part of the Australian community.”

Visiting places

Salai participates in the program and is an eager talker in the group interview with three other students. Salai has a clear idea of what the future should hold for him and the Chin community. In this section I draw on Salai’s experience of being in place and bringing his experiences to his own community.

Salai is in his mid 20s and moved from Myanmar⁵² via Malaysia to Australia. He stayed in Malaysia with his family for a few months waiting to enter Australia. In the interview Salai explained that he is impressed by the Foundation’s work and that they try hard to establish connections with community leaders: “They are actually organising these kinds of things and are really interested in finding community leaders, for example, Chin, to bring them along. Yeah to give them a sense what it is to live in Melbourne and to enter a building [like Whitten Oval, WBFC home ground].”

Salai is a future Chin community leader. “I am not a community leader here yet; I just arrived here,” he explains. “But my mind is that I like to work with my people; I feel that I am

⁵² I acknowledge the dispute over the name of this country; ‘Burma’ was changed to ‘Myanmar’ in 1989 by the military government. Salai uses both terms (‘Myanmar’ and ‘Burma’). I will use ‘Burma’ because it was most often used and in line with other publications (cf. Migrant Resource Centre, 2011).

the leader. I have started doing [things] for my people” ... At the Employment Tour, I asked the manager ‘are there any Myanmar people member here?’” Unfortunate there are no Burma people.” Salai was a bit disappointed but also sees an opportunity: “I like to help my people to interpret at the Western Bulldogs, I can bring them to a game. They will [get to] know more people.” At the side of the Chin community, Salai thinks he can inspire people too:

There are a lot of people who have been living here for many years but as they are not trained or have ties to any organisation or didn't know about the Bulldogs they have no idea. They don't know how to watch the football match or thought it would be very expensive. As we met, we are part of the Bulldogs so we can have more experience; we have a lot of opportunity.

The explanation of learning how to enter a building stuck with me and I started to reflect on my own experiences. Being new to a city, especially a big city like Melbourne, I found so many places and buildings that are unknown to a newcomer. ‘What happens in these buildings and am I able to enter these?’ I sometimes wondered. People need a legitimate reason to enter a private or semi-public space for them to feel comfortable, but also to feel accepted. My own positionality is relevant here. During the internship, I had been in Australia for ten months. This is similar in time compared to most program participants. I was living in the local area and, as a newcomer myself, I was learning about the area, its (sport) history and Australian culture. I was learning about what was important to know and how to be regarded as a ‘local’. I also was the researcher and although I emphasised my migrant background, participants saw me more as part of the Bulldogs team. Questions about the program, how they could get jobs, hint that I was seen as part of the delivery team. I was always introduced as the researcher and as ‘one of the Bulldogs team’, talked with staff members, assisted in the delivery of the program, and had a level of English language skills that participants were still developing. Each time I cycle past Whitten Oval, I realise I have a feeling of connection to that place. Although I no longer go there, I have

developed an understanding of the place that enabled a feeling of being ‘in place’ through social and material interactions, similar to Salai’s experience.

The idea of visiting different buildings and being able to enter these can be extended to the various places outside the language school where the sports activities are organised. The activities take the newly arrived migrants to places they may not have visited for any other reason and thus are unfamiliar with, such as football ovals, public green spaces, and indoor facilities. Mostly these spaces are walking distance from their language school to minimise travel time. A Gala competition day is organised at the end of each six-week term to bring all the schools together. This requires a big indoor or outdoor space located further away from most schools. Participants arrive via their own transport or in school buses. This again takes participants to places they may not be able to visit or have no reason to do so. These trips are significant in terms of exploring Melbourne’s western suburbs given the central role of sport in Australian culture, as discussed above. Sporting facilities are the built enablers within the sport infrastructure. Participants not only learn English slang, play Australian sports, and how sports is socially organised, but also what the built environment in which it takes place looks like. It may then enable participants to connect with sporting facilities in their own neighbourhoods on a practical or emotional/cognitive level.

Previous studies have demonstrated the importance of spending time outdoors in local public green spaces for resettled migrants (Byrne & Goodall, 2013; Castles & Davidson, 2000). Yet, support in accessing urban green spaces is often ignored in resettlement support (Rishbeth et al., 2019). Expectations and normative use of public space differ among ethno-cultural groups. Moreover, the authors point out that a lack of information, cultural understanding and confidence form barriers for newly arrived forced migrants. In multiple ways, then, the RSG activities prepare participants for their future in Melbourne by providing “interactions with specific local structures of opportunities including people and institutions as much as the built and natural environment” (Boccagni & Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2021, p. 1). This brings me to the fourth and final theme: placemaking for the future.

Placemaking for the future

The fourth theme addresses future placemaking. As much as participants, teachers and program deliverers are concerned with short-term familiarisation with Australian culture and establishing social/material connections, they are focused on the future. A connection to place in the case of migrant settlement services follows a dominant narrative around building a new life and creating an Australian identity, with this sport-plus model facilitating this future orientation.

Participants in the CALDplay program report that they chose to take part in the program to have fun, learn a new sport, practise English and meet new people. A few students mention that they have learnt leadership skills. Participants of non-sport programs (such as the employment tour, healthy living program, and a clip-making program) report participation reasons such as learning about the health system in Australia (including health literacy), gaining information about other available support organisations, learning about cancer prevention, and learning to navigate Centrelink (a government program that delivers a range of social payments and services). These non-sport activities result in hands-on assistance that participants can directly apply to their lives and is valuable in their settlement.

The educational and employment pathways of language students are influenced by teachers. Petra (primary school teacher) comments: “For the adults, university isn’t a pathway that is open for them because of their literacy level. It is not *gonna* get to that stage. This is sport, where we turn out to be an umpire or go to the Olympics, or become a running coach is a fantastic pathway for these people.” She values the sports activities, because for the children in her school “they might go on and play again at their next school, their mainstream school. They might join the netball team and go to the interschool games.” Most children in the school Petra teaches will convert into a mainstream school. Reaching a certain language proficiency level, however, is not the only aim of the school. As Petra explains, the children need to be made familiar with and integrated into the Australian sport system at mainstream schools to function well. However, in Petra’s example, future careers of language students may be limited to the sport sector.

Patrick shares a similar experience:

At the moment, for my class, I have two students who are really keen on joining a soccer club. They withdraw because at the moment they say, “my English is not good.” I told them: ‘Yes, at the moment, but once you're in that club you will be able to listen to the accent; you would be able to speak a lot more and get used to all the local slang and lingo that comes to playing on the team’.”

Playing at a soccer club may be fraught with initial barriers for the two students, but Patrick tries to reassure his students that these feelings of insecurity will be overcome. After a while, they will be able to understand accents and to talk. At the moment, the students feel uncertain and insecure, and as yet do not fit in.

The future orientated programs of settlement services encourage participants to think about who they want to become in their new home country. The settlement activities offer a context for transition, negotiating expectations placed upon migrants.⁵³ In this context, the process of placemaking implies *homemaking*, in which new feelings and practices of home are connected to what Boccagni and Hondagneu-Sotelo (2021) describe as the “minute *work* of adaption on the immigrant side” (p. 3, italics in original), through which migrants create social-material environments

Conflicts in diversity and placemaking

This section builds on the concept of liminal space as a space of transition and change by describing moments of conflicts that arise in migrant settlement settings. Social norms shape and (dis)enable on-the-ground placemaking, which is discussed in all data chapters in this thesis. In the context of settlement (or better, integration), the ‘host’ society’s social norms and expectations

⁵³ Migrant settlement service organisations and the migration act itself have been described as ‘liminal spaces’. Liminal space describes the temporal, geographic and psychological spaces that are neither the old nor the new world. Migrant settlement services have been described in these terms. Within the hegemonic confines of assimilation structures, liminal spaces can be seen as creative sites where a migrant can act as an agent of change (Gibb et al., 2008; McLeod, 2000).

towards behaviour in the (semi) public space are particularly important. At times, norms and expectations lead to conflicts and, as the data demonstrates, many evolve around gender.

Most activities offered are considered 'very Australian'. For some, this may result in friction and cultural conflict, with swimming a good example. Petra explains she expects people to participate because it is about "settlement into Australia, it is about what you expect in Australia." She gives an example of the protective or worried parent. "I often have parents going 'my children, we're Muslim, my girl is not going to do that [swimming]'. I get so annoyed, I say: 'You live in Australia now'. I've had families say, 'My daughter cannot play footy'." She continues: "The girls love it, they might be wearing a hijab to their ankles but still want to kick the ball. They want to go swimming. They want to do these things." She then comes back to the question and concludes, "that's the only cultural sensitivity that I'm aware of is that the Muslim girls are not able to participate sometimes."

Gender is a recurring topic in the interviews with participants. In most activities, boy and girls, men and women play together. A few classes with adult language students who have sufficient numbers play separately. As Mimi explains, she is not very comfortable playing in mixed-gender settings:

Mimi: In my country, sometimes [we play soccer] boy to boy or girl to girl. Is good.

And in this training, boy to girl, girl to boy. Some ... one day uhm he is kick to my... [points to head].

Jora: Head?

Mimi: Yes, very sick. Boys and the girls, girls good.

Jora: No mix?

Mimi: No mix.

Jora: Why? Boys play hard [referring to head kick]?

Mimi: Very hard.

Jora: Why boys girls separate?

Mimi: Because men is strong. Women is weak.

The interview with Mimi pictures men as strong and women as weak; thus, it is unsuitable for them to play soccer together. The playing styles are different; the men can be rough (and experienced) players which creates an unsafe environment for the women. Mimi's basic knowledge of English language likely forced her to put her thoughts into simple terminology, strong versus weak. Nida Ahmad et al. (2020) report (mis)understandings of the needs, barriers and strategies among Muslim women's participation in sport. Mixed gender environments may, but not always, be a barrier. Recent work in the area of cultural diversity in sport highlights the "importance of cultural awareness and the need for multicultural training initiatives to improve practice and policy" (Ahmad et al., 2020, p. 1).

In a similar vein, Patrick explained in an informal conversation at one of the sport sessions his confusion around gender categories on the consent form. Before participants take part in the sessions, they need to sign a consent form, which by most teachers is used as a class exercise to practice how formal forms need to be interpreted and filled out. One of the many social demographic questions on the form includes gender and has three options: male, female and other. Patrick explained that most of his students had migrated from Islamic countries where deviating from the male-female gender categories could be potentially life-threatening and thus not openly discussed. The participants questioned the 'other' category, and for Patrick this provided an opportunity to tap into broader social discussions around gender and sexuality in Australia.

For decades, program participant Amar used to coach various sports teams. In the north of India, from where Ahmad migrated, he explained, men and women do not play any sports together. He noted that women hardly played at all. He observed female coaches (deliverers of the program) at CALDplay, which challenged his gendered sporting socialisation. Amar explains: "Nowadays is everybody is the same but when I'm playing with women I'm a little bit control if I fully play any injury can happen you know. Men, then no problem, we can play freely minded you know." He then reflects on the changes he has gone through over the past months:

Right now my brain is you know in India, that mind I'm using here. There, I feel like women, I don't want to play too rough you know. Then I played for three times here in Australia and my mind will change, it will become an Australian mind then play freely with women.

In the quote above, Amar ties together the themes discussed in this chapter. Amar is already part of the 'global soccer game' Richard alluded to earlier, and applies his soccer skills in his new country. Amar also demonstrates how he encounters expectations and ideals around gender that are different from how "his previous mind" was. Marotta (2020) describes this as the migrant experience that is highlighted through disruption. Hence, Amar is developing an "Australian mind," a new way of looking at the world within the liminal space (cf. Gibb et al., 2008) that RSG programs offer.

Settlement programs during COVID-19

I wrote this chapter in April and May 2020 when the Gwanga Moronn season was in full swing; the honeybee season which brings warm days yet cooler mornings. With the onset of COVID-19, English language schools temporarily stopped classes or offered remote learning, and the Ready Settle Go program could not offer on-site sports programs. Some of their programs shifted to an online platform. The Refugee Week 2020 program was also carried out online to stay connected with the community.

The Centre for Multicultural Youth (2020) highlighted how young people of refugee and migrant background were particularly negatively affected by COVID-19 lockdowns. While migrant settlement programs made an effort during the lockdowns to continue to engage with migrant community, they were the hardest hit by job losses and changes in housing and education. The migrant community also faced additional barriers to mental health treatment and heightened forms of racism (Centre for Multicultural Youth, 2020).

Concluding remarks

In this chapter I described how newly arrived migrants engage in placemaking within the structures of a migrant settlement program. Focussing on the sport-plus RSG program, placemaking was described through four themes: introduction to Australian culture, social connections, visiting places, and placemaking for the future. As well as looking at sports clubs, community centres, and the use of public parks for physical activity, this chapter discussed placemaking through integration and from the perspective of program participants (cf. Ratnam, 2019). The interview data shows positive experiences and the meaningful space that the RSG program offers through which participants can create place both locally and nationally. Moreover, the research is in line with previous findings that highlight the importance of connecting newly arrived migrants to social, institutional and material environment (Boccagni & Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2021). For migrants, homemaking practices form the cornerstone of placemaking.

Sport is not only considered essential to Australian identity, but also a site for active citizenship (Spaaij, 2013b) and a breeding ground for future national representatives (McDonald, 2016). Sport for Development initiatives are currently a product of and reinforce a neoliberal agenda in which ethnic minorities are othered from the mainstream and need to be governed and made to “reach the inside” of society (Ekholm & Dahlstedt, 2017, p. 232; see also McDonald et al., 2019). The neoliberal foundation of migrant settlement programs are further highlighted by their dependence on external funding. Over the past decade, migrant integration (or settlement) has become an extremely competitive environment. The RSG program, too, has to engage in fierce competitive tendering processes. The uncertain short-term and long-term future of such settlement programs puts pressure on employees, stakeholders, and eventually will impact the program participants. Both Spaaij (2013) and McDonald (2016) demonstrate how these sports sites are products of neoliberal governing characterised by limited state involvement, individualism, and the promotion of market solutions (Walsh, 2014; see also Boese et al., 2020 for a broader settlement service context).

Linking this back to Massey’s (2005) concept of multiplicity of space, the settlement service has shown both the potential and limitation of multiple understandings of space of. On a civic level, newly arrived migrants bring with them sporting and placemaking experiences that

are different from the local ideals. By this, the dominant understanding of place is challenged, as the interview quotes from participants and facilitators show.

However, multiple understandings of space are restricted as participants are offered a highly scripted way of belonging and defining Australian culture in the context of placemaking by newly arrived migrants. The confines in which placemaking can occur is less within the hands of newcomers and more so in the hands of the program developers and deliverers who themselves navigate state and federal settlement guidelines. Gibb et al. (2008) point out that “there are powerful social and structural forces at work on immigrant identity” (p. 13) that settlement organisations contribute to and are constrained by. That is, problematic structures exist that reinscribe hegemonic discourses of settlement. Although physical activity offered by migrant settlement services may look inclusive, participants are expected to conform to dominant (white) structures (Agergaard, 2018). Moreover, Sarah Oxford (2018) describes Sport for Development (SfD) as a site subjected to, and actively contributing to, maintaining unequal power relations of colonial (read: racial) power dimensions. This chapter has illustrated both the hegemonic intersecting discourses of multiculturalism, placemaking, and physical activity as well as participants’ agency.

Chapter 7: Placemaking at a community centre

Introduction

This chapter explores yet another context in which physical activity is organised: neighbourhood community centres. Different from the other contexts of physical activity described in this thesis, community centres are directly coordinated and funded by Governments and thus are implicated in (local) urban diversity policies. In the context of diversifying neighborhoods and the increasingly localised focus on diversity policy implementation (Forbes-Mewett et al., 2021; Walsh, 2014), community centres facilitate intercultural interactions, enhance social cohesion, and foster belonging to a diverse geographical area (Hoekstra & Pinkster, 2019; Williamson, 2015; Phillips et al., 2014).

This chapter is organised as follows. First, I offer a brief background on the function of community centres⁵⁴ in general and describe Maribyrnong's eight community centres. I then introduce the walking group organised by one of the community centres that forms the case study of this chapter to describe three themes of placemaking. Placemaking by the walkers is performed through walking routes and routines, connecting with nature, and sharing space. A walking group not only offers a way to describe the central role of community centres in the implementation of urban diversity policies, but also a way to describe local placemaking through the physical activity of walking.

Community centres and diversity – a brief background

The origins of community centres

Community centres have a strong focus on serving a local population. The function of these centres is to offer a range of social leisure activities as well as short courses, such as how to use

⁵⁴ Various terms are used to refer to the same type of organisation, including community centre, neighbourhood centre, and neighbourhood organisation. Here I refer to neighbourhood community centres that serve the local super-diverse population, opposed to community centres that cater for a specific sub-population, for example, centres of faith.

mobile phones and computers, and first level English language classes. In this sense, community centres are described as significant sites for formal and informal education for (adult) learners (e.g., Ollis et al., 2017), and for the promotion of health and wellbeing (Wilson & Cordier, 2013). As a civic institution, the centres also articulate what localised belonging means, as well as what it means to belong to Australian society. In particular, this may be the case for newly arrived migrants and ‘citizens-in-becoming’ (Williamson, 2015).

Community centres are at the receiving end of what Amin (2005) calls the ‘localisation of the social’⁵⁵. More specifically, the centres have become cornerstones in the implementation of urban policies on social cohesion and initiatives to stimulate intercultural engagement (Phillips et al., 2014). As a democratic space, community centres have long been associated with their “traditional function of mediating the relationship between the state and civil society” (Williamson, 2015, p. 185). The centres operate in a field of competing place imaginaries, bringing together policy priorities, residents’ needs, and their lived experiences (Hoekstra & Pinkster, 2019). Navigating these at times competing imaginaries, “complex ‘faultlines’ that emerge in diverse neighbourhoods in contestation over micro-publics” (p. 16) may result in new dynamics of exclusion and constrain residents’ sense of belonging.

Relevant to this chapter are the simultaneous visions on promotion (and education) on health through various activities including physical activity and the implementation of diversity policy, especially in light of the City of Maribyrnong’s Intercultural City Network membership.

Community centres in the City of Maribyrnong

At the time of writing, the City of Maribyrnong hosted eight community spaces. In the case of the City of Maribyrnong, the four community centres (Maidstone, Maribyrnong, Yarraville and the Braybrook Community Hub) are owned and operated by the Council. Additionally, there are three neighbourhood houses (Footscray, Braybrook-Maidstone and West-Footscray). The houses are

⁵⁵ At face value, a localised approach to targeting issues does not seem particularly problematic, Amin (2005) argues. It does, however, “promises a democracy of misplaced assumptions and expectations, one that will fail to both tackle the root causes of spatial inequality and deliver the expected returns” (p. 618).

not-for-profit community organisations, with all money raised going directly into programs for the community. The houses tend to have multiple funding resources. For example, Footscray Neighbourhood House is supported by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Adult Community and Further Education Board, the Department of Human Services, State Government Higher Education and Skills Group, and the City of Maribyrnong. There is one Men's Shed that operates from the Braybrook Community Hub.

The Men's Shed operates three hours per week on a Friday and offers a social environment for 'blokes' to work on their own project; they can contribute to community activities, and develop skills, or they can come in for "a cup of coffee and a chat" (Maribyrnong City Council, 2020c). All other houses and centres offer similar services, ranging from a library to computer and language skills to social activities, and cultural groups are able to book rooms and meet in a private setting. Physical activity classes include yoga and tai chi, with walking groups popular. The centres and houses (sometimes in collaboration) organise yearly events. Well-known festivals are the West-Footscray Neighbourhood House that organises the West Footscray Festival of Colours, and the Maidstone Community Centre, known for its Multicultural Festival and hosting the Let's Get Active Together Festival 2019 in collaboration with the Ethiopian community.

The physical activities are of specific interest for this project. Classes such as yoga and tai chi taught by certified teachers are offered for free or a low price of \$5 per class (classes at commercial venues costs up to \$25 per class in the same geographic area) and most take place during the day with some at night, but not later than 7pm. Apart from the libraries, the centres and houses are closed at the weekend. Clearly, the operational time frame filters out large sections of the population, with visitors tending to be flexible workers, pensioners, stay-at-home parents, and higher education students. The free or low-cost activities make it a socio-economically inclusive space. The activities (physical and other activities) attract residents from many cultural and ethnic diverse backgrounds.

Centres aim to adapt to changing populations, which can put centre managers in difficult positions navigating different needs. In my conversation with Maria (a community centre

manager), she shared how she tried to facilitate for mothers who accompanied their children to home-school class. The home-schooling coincided with a gentle yoga class, and Maria approached the mothers and invited them to join. They were hesitant and, being Muslim, preferred not to join a mixed-sex yoga class. Maria then approached the yoga teacher and male and female participants, some who have been attending long term, to discuss the option to make the class a female-only space. Although the idea was not welcomed by all yoga practitioners, particularly males and heterosexual couples, the centre made it a women's-only class. After multiple efforts to engage the Muslim women in the class, however, Maria decided she could not force the situation and accepted their position, with the women's-only class remaining. As described by Hoekstra and Pinkster (2019) in a similar Dutch context, governing institutions share informal politics of place through their own vision of needs.

Many more fieldwork excerpts could be presented about how centres engage with a super-diverse local community. Most of my data collection time with the community centre was with a particular walking group, to which I will now turn. The walking activity offers a way to discuss the role of community centres in performances of placemaking at the centre as well as in the neighbourhood.

Walking group: A case study

This chapter presents data collected with a walking group. The Maribyrnong walking group was first created in 2016 by Teresa who used to work at the centre, and is still walking with the group. Together with a friend, she sent emails to members of the community centre and printed brochures to distribute in the neighbourhood. Since then, the group has had a stable core of approximately eight walkers with other walkers joining or quitting now and then. Most women joined the group via a friend. Adelaide, for example, joined after hearing about the group at the line dancing activity at the community centre. The group has seen a few men over the years, "but they don't come anymore," Teresa explains. Adelaide adds there is an age issue too: "We had a younger guy that came, but we are a bit too old for him." Most of the walkers are in their 60s and 70s, some have (great) grand-children and all are retired apart from a few working at a second-hand shop

nearby. In terms of diversity, there is little variation in gender and age. Some women had worked as teachers and in other jobs at the community centre. Most were housewives and had minimal paid labour engagements. Most women had migration backgrounds, mainly from other parts of Australia and Europe. There was little racial diversity at the time of research; most people were white and of non-Indigenous Australian or European descent.

The data presented in the following sections was collected during six months of participatory fieldwork and two group interviews with a total of seven walkers. Two group interviews (with three and four walkers, respectively) were organised after participatory research, one in December 2019 and one in January 2020. The first group decided to adopt pseudonyms, while the other group preferred to use their own names.

In answer to the question of why the women join the walking group every Wednesday, they responded:

- Teresa: It motivates you. The rest of the day you feel better. That is the best thing. You have to walk, you must do exercise.
- Kathy: And you are breathing in air.
- Adelaide: It's exercise.

Arguably, the walking group is much more than a form of physical activity. Walkers advise each other on health and family matters, offer shopping tips and share recipes. At times, walkers may have lunch as a group or meet individually; go to the movies or organise Christmas celebrations. These walkers find support in various forms; in fact, studies report that the combination of health goals and a socially supportive walking environment offers a sustained walking routine (Smith et al., 2017; Duvall & De Young, 2013).

Placemaking through walking

How then is placemaking performed by the walkers? In line with the other data chapters, the focus here is not on how the built environment influences a person's decision to walk (the dominant

focus in urban and transport policy), but on the practical knowledge and everyday embodied habits of using space (cf. Middleton, 2011). I will describe the performances through the following themes: walking routes routines, connection with nature, and sharing space.

Walking routes and routines

Every Wednesday morning, 9am sharp, the group leaves the Maribyrnong Community Centre for a 45-60 minute walk in the neighbourhood. Most walkers arrive a few minutes before 9am, park their cars (some are able to walk to the centre), and leave their bags in the centre's office or in each other's cars. The group starts off together and splits about ten minutes later at the Maribyrnong River, turning left for the long route and right for the short route. The latter group has a slower pace but arrives back at the centre first. They then prepare tea and coffee and sets out the snacks walkers bring every week. On most days, I joined the group turning left. Both routes take the walkers partly along the Maribyrnong River and partly through a neighbourhood with a few parks, mostly town houses, and a few apartment buildings. The dominant house type is the stand-alone house surrounded by private gardens, mostly well maintained. When not maintained 'properly', the walkers would talk about it and comment how they would maintain, for example, the bird of paradise plant, or how they would prune the roses. Adelaide and Teresa mostly take the long route and explain:

Adelaide: With the longer walk, we come up where the busy roundabout is, so we have to be careful with the traffic, even though we are on the sidewalk; I have seen cars coming up on the sidewalk. They don't judge it properly. And then you get down by the restaurant and now it is not necessarily busy, but there will be people with kids who are riding their bikes or whatever.

Teresa: Be careful.

Adelaide: You just have to be aware. And then you cross the bridge and of course that is on the main road so there is an issue with double and single file.

Adelaide's mental map of the walk hints at key sections along the route. In some sections pedestrians road share the road with cars, trucks, cyclists and the normal hustle and bustle of morning traffic in a big city. In other sections, the built environment is designed more for pedestrians. The walkers encouraged each other not to walk alone. When only a few walkers turn up and an individual who normally does the long or short route is on her own, another walker joins her and adjusts her speed. In terms of diversity, Adelaide notes that "a lot of Vietnamese and Chinese [are] living in this area," and "when you go for a walk along the river, there is a good [ethnic/racial] mixture." She also points out that this diversity is reflected in the centre's classes.

What happens when routines are disrupted or plans change? Although the women are seasoned walkers and generally do not fear rain, wind or cold (if health allows), walking is sometimes unpleasant, with Melbourne's unpredictable weather forcing them at times to stay inside or cut short their walk. Another reason the walk may be cancelled is if only one, two or three women attend. If walkers are unable to come, they let each other know. This points to the importance of the social aspect of walking, the strong sense of community, and responsibility of the walkers towards each other. I received a cancellation message twice in six months.

Besides the social aspects, there are the material or architectural factors that force walkers to alter their routes. The Afton Street Footbridge impacts the route in a positive way and enables the group's current route. The Riverside Park footbridge makes it possible to do a 3.8km loop to Maribyrnong Road Bridge. Following the river south from this road bridge to Pipemakers Park foot ridge offers another 2km loop. The Maribyrnong Road Bridge is an unpleasantly busy and noisy road for pedestrians, particularly after their walking a tranquil, riverside path designed for them. The bridge, of course, is designed for cars, but can be avoided at one side of the river by using a bridge underpass.

As Seamon (1980) writes, "Place is experienced without deliberate and self-conscious reflection yet is full of significances; people know the place and its people and are known and accepted there" (p. 59). Reflecting on my own experiences as a researcher, self-consciousness was a defining feeling in the first few days as I was not yet part of the social setting. It was mainly

elderly women, or at least women of a similar age walking together, and women with buggies, two population categories I did not belong to as a child-free woman in her 20s. But similar to Dirk van Eck's experience, over time new people can become part of the routines (van Eck & Pijpers, 2017). After a few weeks, I started to exchange smiles and nods with other regular walkers from outside our own group and to understand the Wednesday morning temporal and spatialised rhythms.

Another example of socialisation is the experience of an Italian woman, Gianna, living in Melbourne with her son. Her adult son had found work in Melbourne and migrated four years earlier. When her husband (the son's father) passed away, the woman decided to migrate to Australia. In the beginning she had minimal conversational English skills and did not know many people. However, she became very active in the Maribyrnong Community Centre activities, taking up walking, knitting and indoor bowls. She joined the walking group a few weeks after I started fieldwork. As it happened, we lived close to each other, and another walker asked me if I could pick her up and bring her to the centre. I communicated with her son and agreed to come to their place. The first time I picked her up, she served me coffee and Italian biscuits. The son acted as an interpreter until we parted. The woman and I exchanged a few words and I tried hard to think of some Italian words I had picked up during summer holidays. After a few weeks, I realised SBS hosts Italian radio during the time we were in the car. She was pleasantly surprised to hear the news in Italian and hear Italian songs.

Socialising new people into existing routines, sociologically speaking, is essential to maintain routines, and, geographically speaking, to align socio-spatial rhythms. In the beginning, Maria was shown the standard routes and walkers introduced her to the aesthetics of the surroundings, including native plants, and the river water that rose higher than its edges and caused flooding in various areas. She also was finding her position on the path, learning to talk and walk straight at the same time. She learned not to stop too long to look at objects along the path, and to move her body to give room for approaching pedestrians/runners/cyclers. The temporal continuity of routines results in reoccurring interactions among people whose routines

cross paths, with the socialisation of newcomers to the space reinforcing and potentially adapting rhythms.

Connection with nature

As part of 2020 International Women's Week, six walkers were invited to take photos on their phones of their walking group experiences. Curator Hannah Veljanovska guided the women involved in iPhoneography, edited the photos, and prepared them for exhibition at the Maribyrnong Community Centre. The *In my generation* exhibition was opened by the City Mayor at the time, Sarah Carter, who was joined by other Council members, the walkers, their family and friends. The exhibit represented the walkers' "stories and experiences while reflecting on the changes they have seen in their generation" (*In my generation* exhibition, 2020).

To celebrate National Neighbourhood House Week, in mid-2020 the *In My Generation* exhibition was presented again at the same community centre as part of the broader Walk Talk and Photography Program. This program was also delivered by the Maribyrnong Community Centre and received funding from Australian Multicultural Community Services through the Moving for Life – The Way I Like it program (part of Sports Australia – Better Aging Grant Program). The aim of the Walk and Talk program "was to provide opportunities for older adults to improve fitness through walking around their local area, finding new walking buddies and taking photographs" (Maribyrnong Community Centre, 2021).

Figure 18 shows three of the roughly 30 images from the exhibition. The main themes in the images were nature, the diversity of women, their strength, and human connections. The images communicated their personal connection with the material surroundings and the social aspects of the walking group. The exhibition was an example of how the strengths and knowledge within the community are drawn on to create something they do not usually do. After learning about iPhoneography, the women were able to proudly invite their families and friends who, along with other visitors, viewed their work at the exhibition. Through the learning, taking pride in their accomplishments (during my fieldwork, I often received questions on various iPhone functions), and bringing people together in one room, a connection to place was established and strengthened.

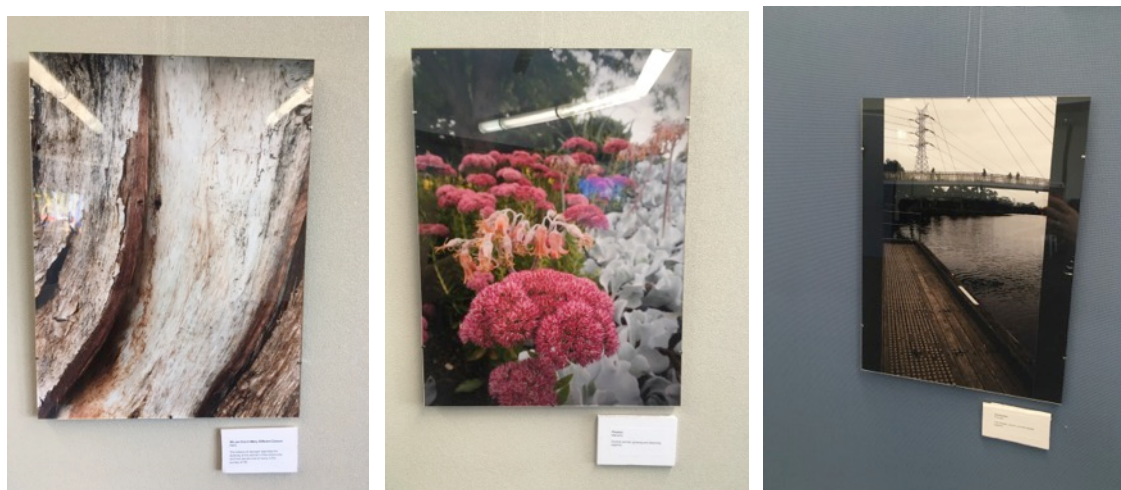


Figure 18 Selection of pictures *In My Generation* exhibition, International Women's Day 2020. Captions: first picture: 'We are one in many different colours. The colours of the [tree] bark resemble the diversity of the women in the community and how we are one of many in the journey of life' Second picture: "Flowers. Diverse women growing and blooming together" Third picture: "Connection. Like bridges, women connect people together" Photos of the pictures taken by Jora.

The Afton Street Footbridge was photographed by a few walkers, implicating its centrality in the walking experience. The bridge offers the only nearby place to cross the river and is the turnaround point for the long route.

Adelaide: That bridge has been literally the bridging between the two various suburbs and the fact that you can walk around the river has changed the aspect of the population. You got all the new houses that were built further down and all reasons the area has opened up.

Jora: How did it change the population?

Adelaide: Younger people moving in, people going from older houses to newer houses so old demographics has changed. More cars too.

At the walks, women would often talk with each other or to me and point out features of the neighbourhood and plants. They would share tips on how to prepare olives and how to propagate cuttings they picked for me. I shared many walks with Nella, a chatty woman living locally, who shared stories of her childhood in Sicily and her migration to Melbourne. Her childhood was characterised by working in factories, learning the English language and living a sober life. She picked cuttings for me from peoples' gardens along the route and advised me on the health benefits of the herbs we came across. During lemon season, she would not miss a chance to pick a ripe lemon, "and not let them go to waste on the tree." Lemon and olive trees, but especially the palm trees along the Maribyrnong River, reminded Nella of her childhood country. In a sense, these childhood memories are remade and given additional meaning. Understanding these "experiences, meanings, feelings, identities and connections" is a way to "make urban green spaces vital spaces" (de Kley et al., 2020, 2016). This is in line with Byrne and Goodall's (2013) description of the use of an urban nature park by Arab and Vietnamese migrants in Sydney. In their study, they describe how migrants' memories are triggered and how expectations of nature are applied to the new homeland context.

Sam, an Australian-born woman introduced in Chapter 5, describes one of the parks she visits with her family:

One is Cruickshank Park; you can walk all the way through the park, there are really nice walking trails. Couple of bridges, you can do several loops. I like it because it is very native Australian bush. There is heaps of eucalyptus trees, you know scrub everywhere; the creek runs all the way through the park.

Living in a "poor quality natural environment" as she describes her neighbourhood, Sam finds that Cruickshank Park offers a much-needed escape. Particularly interesting is her reference to the "very native Australian bush" that makes her like the park. The native eucalyptus trees and scrubs provide a way for Sam to connect with the land and nature. Studies in the history of horticulture that intersect with race and ethnicity are relevant here, as they can tell us "about both

the Australian landscape and ideas about national character and identity” (Holmes, 2011; p. 121). Mirmohamadi (2003) observes that “relationships between settler, migrant and indigenous Australians have often been explored, and played out, in horticultural terms” (p. 91). The appreciation of native plants correlates with political waves. During early colonisation, native plants were seen as weeds and related to the outback, which served to strengthen the divide between ‘civilised’ cities and ‘uncivilised’ remote areas. Post-war immigration brought edible plants such as garlic to Anglo-Saxon Australians, with migrant gardens popping up in the suburban landscape making these gardens signposts for cultural, social and class identities (Cerwonka, 1998).

Academic literature highlights that it is not only Indigenous people who were displaced in the process of colonisation, but also plants and animals. The ‘authentic’ Australian nature was perceived as those organisms that were here before European arrival in 1788 (Head & Muir, 2006). The authors explain: “Settler Australians’ sense of their own belonging is thus intertwined in ambiguous and contradictory ways with a variety of attitudes and practices to the sorts of places and animals that belong” (p. 509).

Through nature, connections with faraway places are re-imagined which contribute to a distinct spatial identity. The ethno-cultural aspect drives placemaking by a specific population group: elderly women. For the walkers whom I joined on a weekly basis, the act of walking has become a way to connect with nature, as well as relive memories and retell pre-migration stories. Such routines establish a connection to place that is structured and can lead to everyday embodied habits of using space (Middleton, 2011).

Sharing space

How is public space shared when on the move? Contradictory to a pick-up soccer game, a walking group moves through the urban environment, and during their physical activity they constantly negotiate interactions with other people and non-human objects. Moreover, rhythms, routes and routines contribute to group-making performances that establish boundaries between walking groups.

There are many walking groups in the area. Some are organised among friends or family members, others through neighbourhood centres, with The Heart Foundation of Australia actively promoting and facilitating people to initiate a walking group. The group conversation with the three women in the first interview illustrates group boundary-making between their own group and a group that is organised outside the community centre.

Adelaide: The Ascot Vale walking group walks in the morning 9:30am and then they do a long river walk, but they stop and have a coffee.

Teresa: We didn't like that.

Adelaide: I do it basically for exercise and socialise after.

All: Yes

Adelaide: And they are too slow.

Kathy: Are they?

Teresa: They are very slow; we want to walk that's it. Either you walk or socialise.

Both walking groups have in common aspects of physical activity and the benefits of getting their heart rate up. They also share a strong social aspect, and the popular walking area along the river. Speed remains an issue, despite the fact that the walking group that is the focus of this research facilitates slower and faster phased subgroups. Moreover, the moment and location of coffee consumption is essential. Whereas the Ascot Vale group stops at a café to chat, have a coffee and then continue, the Maribyrnong walkers do not stop, and only when they return to the community centre do they share hot drinks and homemade snacks and chat (or continue chatting). The excerpt also shows how Adelaide and Teresa socialise Kathy into the rules of the walking group: walk, then socialise. Kathy has been walking for almost a year but was unaware of the Ascot Vale group and the social politics behind it. Through talking and sharing past experiences, group identity is strengthened and rules are reinforced. Speed, rhythm and routines are ways to define the

characteristics of your group opposed to other groups. This counter-identification is central in group making.

Different rhythms need to be negotiated on the spot or on the pedestrian path. Walkers have different speeds; as well, the path is used by cyclists, runners, people walking their dogs, and parents/caretakers with pushers. As described by Abulhawa (2015), moments of negotiation, “reveal much about perceived social status and how people choose to exert this status and control in public space” (p. 33).

The idea of healthy and active citizenship can be understood in a socio-spatial context (e.g., Cheshire & Woods, 2009). Interestingly, Cook et al. (2017) describe spatial negotiation of the pedestrian path as a performance of everyday citizenship. The authors describe citizenship as a flexible practice for individuals and groups to partake fully in society, and argue that citizenship “establishes the social order of everyday life, entwining legal statuses with mundane doings” (p. 158). They also observe how encounters between runners and pedestrians are negotiated. Spatial encounters are central and critical in geography, and “Encounters are not simply micro-sociologies of face-to-face contact but acts of citizenship relating to the capacity of groups/individuals of difference to live together harmoniously” (p. 162). In this vein, I discussed in the previous theme how Gianna, as a newcomer, was socialised to spatial encounters.

Community centres during COVID-19

July 2020. In the wake of a daily global infection rate of 200,000 new cases and total infections over 1,000,000, a second lockdown was introduced in 36 western Melbourne suburbs, including where this research took place. Gyms and sports clubs that had reopened four weeks’ earlier in response to what turned out to be a temporary lifting of restrictions were now forced to close their doors again. Over 300,000 residents living in these 36 suburbs depended on public parks again. One week later, all Melbourne residents (five million) were in stage 3 lockdown and living with cold weather. Chin up, season of the cockatoos, morning frost, bleak mist and freezing wind.

Community centres were closed for over five months. Despite this, the centres continued to serve the community in various ways and, as it happened, some centres acted as temporary

COVID-19 testing locations. The small, carpeted room I used to visit for yoga classes with its view over a football oval and off-leash dog walking park now functioned in this way. The centres also tried to stay connected with the community through newsletters and remote classes.



Figure 19 Left: Screenshot of Footscray River Action Group Facebook post (April 15, 2020).

The email newsletters offered words of encouragement, suggestions to keep adults and children healthy and entertained, and updates on online classes including meditation, yoga and gentle workouts. The August Maribyrnong Community Centre (2020, p. 2) newsletter reads:

Exercise is a good way to unwind and ease any tensions you are feeling. If you'd prefer to stay indoors, but find yourself struggling for exercise, we have a number of online exercise programs available for you to join.

The hard lockdown in Melbourne meant that all sporting facilities, non-essential work and places of study were closed. However, walking tracks, pedestrian paths and parks were busier than ever (Figure 19).

Concluding remarks

This chapter presented and analysed ethnographic data on placemaking through walking. The walking group that was my focus is organised by and uses community centre facilities. Community centres offer free or low-cost activities, including yoga, tai chi and walking and, over time, have become cornerstones in the implementation of diversity policies (Williamson, 2015; Hoekstra & Pinkster, 2019; Phillips et al., 2014). In the context of super-diverse neighbourhoods, community centres are often seen as offering space for intercultural encounters through which local community identities can be fostered and explored, opening up space for the creation of multiple place stories (Massey, 1999). As a result, in line with Hoekstra and Pinkster (2019) this chapter argues that these centres form an important element in urban policies on community identity and social cohesion. Centres aim to offer a welcoming space for a diverse group of people who may not find other suitable places to be physically active, such as sports clubs or commercial gyms.

In comparison with the previous two data chapters, the potentials of thinking through multiple understandings and histories of place, are contextually different for the community centres. While the community centres are institutionally embedded in the local council

bureaucracy, they have more agency over the local activities that are organised for and by the residents. Sports clubs and settlement services are much tied into and depended on larger organisational structures that guide the local placemaking opportunities. This chapter has shown the potential of the creation of intercultural spaces and strong agency on the side of residents in the creation of those spaces. This supports what Amin and Thrift refer to the distribution of knowledge around networks, as an ecology of mind, rather than being held in one place (Amin & Thrift, 2002). Multiplicity also comes forward in the discussion of connection with nature. Cities are often imagined as political and economic entities that do not “provide assurance of wellbeing within cities” (Amin & Thrift, 2016, p. 12; Amin & Thrift, 2002). The connection the walkers establish with nature and bring memories to life presents the multi-layeredness of cities and the individual agency that challenges the sole political and economic interpretation of the urban landscape.

The women I followed for over six months performed placemaking through the following themes: walking routines, connection with nature, and sharing space. Memories are a way to give meaning to a new home country by fusing contemporary experiences with memories of other geographical places. These acts of placemaking are facilitated by the community centre and point to the importance of creating intercultural spaces, spaces for learning (healthy living), and spaces for free/low-cost physical activities that are not offered elsewhere in the City.

This thesis interrogates the various ways placemaking is performed through physical activities and demonstrates how community centres can offer a unique way for people to come together and engage in these activities. This chapter has shown that through placemaking, walkers familiarise themselves with a physical and social environment and create a connection to place via physical activity. Chapter 8 will continue the theme of the use of outdoor public space through so-called ‘pick-up’ games.

Chapter 8: Placemaking in public parks

Introduction

Physical activities take place outside (almost) everywhere you look, and in this chapter I focus on the use of parks for such activities. Parks are used by families, individuals and groups, participants engage in small and large pop-up games, cyclists and runners compete for road space, while free runners use street furniture and other objects in the most creative ways. The overarching research questions in this chapter are: How are public spaces used for physical activity? How do local council govern such spaces?

The data in this chapter comes from participatory research and interviews, and focusses on a male Bangladeshi/multicultural soccer team in Footscray, and (Croatian) bocce players throughout the City. The soccer team hosts players from various migrant backgrounds, ages and playing levels. The team's use of the park space is like that of a sports club in that they take part in competitions, are formally registered, and pay the Council to use the ground during on- and off-seasons. Their games resemble pick-up play as the team depends on the grounds used by established clubs that play all year round. I have chosen to include the soccer team in this chapter for its informal and self-organised type of play, in comparison with a club like the Maribyrnong Swifts Football Club in West Footscray.

This chapter is structured as follows. I provide a brief discussion on self-organised physical activity and describe how informal physical activity is organised in City of Maribyrnong. I then present ethnographic data around placemaking in two contexts: a soccer team and a bocce game. Central themes in both contexts are the sharing of public space and connection with the human and physical environment to give meaning to ethno-cultural diversity and, in some cases, to give meaning to migrancy being. As in previous chapters, I will describe the role of parks during the COVID-19 pandemic before concluding. The conclusion points at the strong connection with place, physical activity, and the fusion of an ethnic identity within a super-diverse environment. At a policy level, it also highlights a lack of recognition in policy documents of the

importance of self-organised and informal play and use of grounds for physical activity (apart from walking and cycling), given that management of sporting grounds is premised on sport in its traditional club-based form.

Self-organised physical activity – a brief background

Finding a terminology

Chapter five discussed placemaking practices in the traditional sporting environment of sport clubs. Institutional and organisational practices include training times and policies ranging from promoting inclusion to protecting and safeguarding children. The traditional sporting pavilion and field or home ground further formalise the sport club. It is materially embedded in a locality; it is unmovable. In an environment that is so rigid at multiple levels, participants play soccer, basketball, football, bocce, and many other forms of sport. This chapter focuses on two physical activities: soccer and bocce. While the bodily movements, rules of the games and positions on the field are similar to community club sports described in Chapter 5, it is the organisational *form* that foregrounds the difference in this chapter.

‘Doing sport differently’ (VicHealth, 2019) has garnered policy, sports industry and academic interest. Yet lack of consensus remains on how to refer to alternative forms of physical activity. The use of the term ‘alternative’, however, is anachronistic as these forms of physical activity are becoming mainstream. The most common umbrella term to refer to participation in physical activity outside the traditional club-based model is ‘informal sport’, which is oxymoronic as informal groups are highly organised. ‘Social sport’ refers to social recreational activities that emphasise fun and a social environment and are less structured in terms of rules and competition, but are still highly organised in terms of mode of delivery. Social sport can be “designed and delivered by an organisation (state sporting association), sport club, local council or other individuals and groups” (VicHealth, 2019, p. 2). The use of the term ‘pick-up games’ has grown within academia over the past years, but is not a new term and surfaced in publications over 25 years ago (e.g., Jimerson, 1996). More recently, Stanley Thangaraj (2015) describes pick-up basketball practices among Asian Americans, as do Aquino et al. (2020) in the Singapore context.

Borges et al. (2016) refer to individualised ‘light’ ways of enacting sports and physical activity such as running, while Jeroen Scheerder and Maarten van Bottenburg (2010) describe ‘light sport participants’ and ‘light sport facilities’.

Australian sport participation trends have shifted in recent years from organised club-based participation towards informal or in other ways organised forms of participation (O’Connor & Penney, 2021). Currently, across 12 major sports in Australia, 63% of children and 37% of adults participate in sports in clubs or associations (Eime et al., 2020). The authors contend that community clubs are no longer the main setting for sport participation, and new strategies for more attractive forms of participation need to be considered. The largest shift in participation is among young adults for whom informal physical activity has become an aspect of their lifestyle (Gilchrist & Wheaton, 2017; see also Willing et al., 2018, on aging and older people’s involvement in skateboarding).

Changing participation patterns in sport are in response to societal demands for increased freedom, social connection, and greater autonomy and fluidity of societal structures (Atkinson, 2010). Importantly, forms of organised physical activity that happen outside traditional club-based organisations are seen to support participation among diverse communities (Elling & Knoppers, 2005; Lake, 2013).

Informal sport in the City of Maribyrnong

In Chapter 4, I referred to the Council’s Public Space Strategy document to define public open and green spaces. This adds to the importance of finding a cogent term for ‘alternative’ forms of physical activity. Council’s (2014) definition distinguishes between space used for “unstructured recreation needs” and space used for “structured (organised) sport and recreation needs” (p. 4). While the former refers to participation in activities that are initiated by individuals, the latter refers to activities that are “organised by a club, association, school or community group and participation is by becoming a member of the club or on a fee-paying basis” (p. 4). No monetary obligation is applied to unstructured recreation and highlights the individualistic nature of these activities. For the purpose of this chapter, I will broaden the definition of an unstructured form of

recreation from one that is individual-based to one that is group-based and includes pick-up style forms of physical activity. Moreover, this chapter will demonstrate that, in reality, the two council categories blur.

Placemaking by a Bangladeshi/multicultural soccer team

Halfway through my fieldwork, I was told by a friend and colleague about her Bangladeshi-Australian friend and the soccer team he manages and coaches every Saturday afternoon. She connected us and Mamun invited me to one of their training sessions. The competition season had just ended with a slight drop in participation as a result. The first time we met we had a brief chat about my research interests and his soccer experiences and he shared the team's playing history with me. I left before training started, but with Mamun's invitation to bring my boots to join their training next time.

I participated in their training six times and interviewed four players in three interviews: two Bangladeshi-Australian players, Gatik and Aarul, who came to Australia as international students about 15 years ago, Samir, who resettled from The Democratic Republic of Congo four years ago, and Enrique, who moved from Venezuela to Melbourne two years ago. Informal conversations with the coach and team manager Mamun and other players informed the interview topics and were opportunities to socialise before and during training. In the following sections I focus on these players' use of space and their experiences playing in the team.

Finding a home ground

Footscray Park, Saturday 4pm: On late Saturday afternoons, a particular section of the Footscray Park is the stage for a very structured temporal flow. Whereas the rest of the park includes walking paths, an off-lease dog field, tennis court, and is the site of various leisure activities that are performed by different people every week, the Bangladeshi/multicultural soccer team has a strict choreography. Before the soccer team's arrival, a cricket club occupies the field with a rugby team on the connecting field. A Vietnamese soccer team then enters the field on the edge of the cricket field. The Bangladeshi/multicultural soccer team enters the field after the cricket match

and rugby game have finished. This rotation makes the space available for different placemaking performances to take place. From 4pm-6pm the space is occupied by migrant bodies and voices, performing the 'migrant game' in an ethno-culturally specific place.

The soccer group started playing in Footscray Park in 2006, not as a club, "but more like a community group," Gatik explains. On average there are over 30 players from different countries, ages and life stages. Fourteen years ago most players used to be students and now have paid jobs and families. Aarul explains:

We have played here since we lived in Footscray area before we married, before children, when I was single. And then everyone left Maribyrnong for the surrounding areas, but this is still a convenient place for us to play. Cause people come from all sides of the City. So it is still more like a home ground.

Players for example have moved east to Toorak and Coburg or to other western suburbs such as Sunshine or Werribee. Some players drive for 50 minutes to get here. Aarul adds: "This is still the centre geographically and also for them they still feel like it is their field." The team has considered other fields to play at but these were either not available or were not easily accessible for all players. Accessibility for all the players and the strong sense of community is the reason for most players to join. Aarul explains that back in 2006, "we were [international] students and were alone. When you come from the same country, you are similar trying to play together." He continues, "it helps you to remove a lot of anxiety or depression we go through throughout the week. And on Sunday you feel refreshed." The Bangladeshi focus remains strong and the club plays a role in the reproduction of non-Australian ethno-cultural traditions. Gatik explains:

When the times comes when they are growing and that they are all taken a bit of space they are natural concern that there might lose touch of the community and the cultures. And doing through this club, keeping them engaged it is learning, keeping them with us and also through this there are lots of things they can learn, sportsmanship and leadership

and you know. Being together how to interact in a larger context. Those are the things of course. Yes language cause most of our kids have born here; they make sure naturally they are learning Australian and the culture, but if you seen other communities what the heck is that culture, they lose touch. Having a club or something like that it would keep them in their original as well-being Australian.

Some players bring their children to training and social gatherings are organised outside the sports context, including a yearly barbecue with the families. The idea of giving meaning to an overseas culture both on an individual and collective level has been widely described in the literature (e.g., McSweeney & Nakamura, 2020; Broerse & Spaaij, 2019; Joseph, 2014).

Depending on the state of and repairs to the field, the team uses appropriate parts of the oval. The cricket pitch (the central strip of the field) is not appropriated for soccer games and the team plays either left or right of the pitch. At times, sections of the field are fenced off for one or two weeks to encourage grass growth or for other grass improvements. Players always respect this and try not to step on these sections. At one training session, a repairman came over after the cricket game. He drove a big 4x4 ute on the field right up to the patch to be repaired. The team was playing very near to the patch; the repairman looked at the team and made eye contact with the players. Two players greeted him, apparently seeking approval for their presence.

Aarul and Gatik explain that the team has a strong place attachment to Footscray Park. The two men finished university and grew into adulthood with their lives changing over the years, but the home ground stayed. Through participation in sport, the players actively perform placemaking both locally and nationwide as migrants. As these players illustrate, the team offers a safe place for young migrants to share settlement stories and now offers a place for their children to absorb Bangladeshi culture. This place, then, is not easily replaced. Over the years, however, the team tried to find a different home ground that is closer to where players had moved. I quote in full the interview excerpt with Gatik:

- Gatik: We have been playing for a long time and we have had a number of times found that other tournaments were happening and thought of moving to other places. We have tried a few fields, in Sunshine, what is that, Rosemond Road?
- Jora: Maidstone?
- Gatik: Yes, Maidstone, those areas. And also Werribee and all that. But those grounds weren't that welcoming. The first weren't that good.
- Jora: How not welcoming?
- Gatik: For example, it is already somebody's, it is played by somebody. Someone has an ownership.
- Jora: Like a club?
- Gatik: A club yes
- Aarul: Here we know most of the time it is free. Once we registered the club we know we were playing. We don't have to register every week.
- Jora: Have you ever been told not to use the ground?
- Gatik: Oh yes
- Aarul: Yes

The difficulty for newcomers or teams who are not settled as compared to the traditional sports clubs with their pavilions and long local history has been addressed in the literature. For example, in the Southern US context, Lise Nelson (2017) describes Latino labour migrants being systematically denied access to well-maintained, often-empty soccer pitches. She concludes that sport spaces “represent a set of spatial practices that spoke directly to the profound tensions between economic recruitment and social-civic exclusion faced by low-wage, racialised, and ‘illegal’ workers” (p. 127). These spatialised practices have a direct impact on the way public spaces are shared.

Sharing space

The case of the Bangladeshi/multicultural soccer team illustrates the blurry lines between established clubs and pick-up games. Although the team has been registered as a sports club with the Council since 2015 and pays for its ground use, it continues to be vulnerable because of its pick-up status. Given this, how do players share space and what challenges do they face?

In Chapter 5, I described the meaning of home ground in terms of accessibility and in the formation of emotional connection to space. In the current Australian sports system, however, the traditional sports club continues to be a form that defines how space is managed and divided. Gatik notes: “When there are tournaments going from the university or other groups, of course, we have to respect that, because they actually maintain that and we do care when there are barriers in place or that they are preparing the grounds.” Gatik’s quote explains that the team has incorporated the ‘visitor’ position too.

A valuable addition here is David Nyuon Vincent’s story (Vincent & Nader, 2012). David was born in what is now known as South Sudan, fled the war at a young age and spent 17 years in various refugee camps. When he was 26, David resettled in Melbourne and became a prominent (South) Sudanese community worker and peace advocate. In his book *The boy who wouldn’t die*, he describes his experiences from asylum seeker to refugee to being resettled in Australia, as well as his settlement experiences. Throughout his story, soccer is a reoccurring topic. His soccer skills provided him with celebrity status in refugee camps and enabled him to attend international competitions and escape the camps for short periods of time. In Melbourne, he helped to set up an all-Sudanese refugee soccer team, The Western Tigers, in the Brimbank soccer league. The soccer team offers a place for Sudanese boys and men to come together and to share migrant stories and settlement experiences. David also provides insights into the practicalities involved in the organisation of a soccer team and navigating the space. After playing a few years informally and having to find suitable and available ground, David and the team’s manager Michael sought to join a local soccer league. However, “In order to register to be part of a competition, we needed a club and a ground and money and uniforms” (p. 205).

Furthermore:

One Saturday night, we were confronted with another good reason to have our own pitch. While we were training on a ground that wasn't ours, a white man came across the pitch with some of his mates. As we played, the ball nearly hit him. It was an accident. He then stood drinking in the middle of the pitch with his friends while we tried to play. I went up to him and said: 'Mate, can you see we're playing?' 'Why are you playing?' he said. 'Why don't you go back to where you came from?' (p. 205).

David continues to explain that the white man left but soon returned with a big black dog that "looked like it had been trained to hate people." The men got into a fight and David writes: "I felt bad about getting into a fight. We never played on that pitch again" (p. 205). Informal groups do make use of other clubs' home grounds and, as discussed in Chapter 6, home grounds are considered to be owned by a particular club that grants exclusive access. For certain individuals, this situation precipitates racism.

Sharing space also involves intercultural interactions with other sports groups. When I ask Gatik and Aarul whether interactions take place, they answer:

Gatik: At times there was a Nepalese group, they were similar to us a community kind of thing. There are a number of African communities here, some from Somalia, there is also couple Vietnamese.

Aarul: They always do a funny game they don't play soccer! A kind of fool's game! [Laughter]

Jora: Like piggy in the middle?

Aarul: Yes. I feel sorry for the one in the middle.

Gatik: We played games together [with the Vietnamese team]. They that are there regularly and sometimes we are bored with our games and held a tournament and approach them and they approached us as well.

Gatik also observes that some community groups are more closed and not interested in playing a game together, and “they hold gatherings together.” His team would interact with the Vietnamese-Australian team, however, who play “a funny game.” The six times I attended training, the eight to 10 male players would stand in a circle with one player in the middle, trying to intercept the ball. I would watch them play from a distance while waiting for the Bangladeshi/multicultural team players to arrive. The Vietnamese would have many laughs and be vocal in their communication. Based on vocal pitches and body language, I assume they talked about instructions, swore at missed balls and gave compliments. Vocally, they would compensate for the little space they took up; they only used a few square meters of a big cricket field (see figure 3). By calling the Vietnamese’s activity a “fool’s game,” Aarul ascribes normative behaviour towards playing soccer and use of space.

Sharing space is not only organised along ethnic and racial lines, but gender performances are important to note here as well. Arriving at Footscray Park early one day, I noticed I was the only woman present and wrote the following in my fieldwork notes:

I took a seat on the fence at the sideline of the field where the cars are parked. A small group of presumably Black Somali men were training in a confined area where normally the Vietnamese are. The Vietnamese group is not here today. I was the only woman at the field after some female cricket supporters had left. I also was the only Caucasian female at the field. The people playing tennis at the court behind me were all male too, including Caucasian whites and other racial appearances (Fieldwork notes, November 16, 2019).

On other days during the data collection period, I saw mostly men engaging in physical activity with a few exceptions: a woman practicing yoga, some women running by themselves, walking dogs, and supporting cricket games. In the previous chapter I described a women’s rugby team having to use the off-lease dog field adjacent to the rugby and cricket field instead of the club’s

ground. Why, then, do so few women use public space for gatherings or individual sport? What is clear is the gendered spatialisation of sport at Footscray Park.

This is in line with research on legitimate use and coding of space. Williamson (2015) invites us to analyse such situations as the informal community ‘policing’ of park space. Greg Noble and Scott Poynting (2010) call such “racialising acts of everyday incivility” a “pedagogy of unbelonging” (p. 495) that functions to both limit the citizen-rights of the targeted to be in a given place and to regulate national belonging.

Teams who do not have a home ground but want to join the competition are in a vulnerable situation. The team decided to register as a club with the Council in 2006 to be able to book the grounds, and in a way played the bureaucratic game. Towards the end of the interview, Aarul and Gatik explain that their future goal for the team is to build a stadium or clubhouse. They hope to continue growing the club and host more male and also female (youth) teams. This is the reverse paradox of an informal group wishing to remain out of governmental sight to prevent becoming part of a structure they oppose.

Negotiating diversity

Over time, players from other corners of the world have joined the Bangladesh/multicultural team. “For example, in our team there are a number guys from India, African countries, couple of Aussie blokes, Vietnamese and Brazilians too,” comments Gatik, to which Aarul adds, “we try to play with everyone, why not? Our club is not based on totally just [Bangladeshi people] we can play we just more like whoever is comfortable to play.” People join the team in various ways, but mostly through word-of-mouth.

Enrique moved from Venezuela to Australia two years ago; his story stands out and is worth sharing here. In the interview I asked him how he started playing with the team. Enrique explains that he joined only a few weeks after the season had ended, and lives locally. One Saturday afternoon he went for a walk, passed Footscray Park and saw the team getting ready to train. Enrique, an experienced soccer player, approached the team after having approached a few

other pick-up soccer groups who were not welcoming, and had a chat with a man introducing himself as Mamun.

Enrique: When I saw Mamun's team, that was my last try, 'OK let me try again, they look different' I said to myself.

Jora: Could you describe what you saw? How did they look different?

Enrique: Yeah I mean uhm... Like I don't know. I felt that I could have a conversation because when I tried with the other guys they didn't even want to speak in English with me. The Vietnamese, they don't let you play. Sudanese as well I think; they don't let you play. They were like 'No this is our team'. They speak their language, I don't know which language. But when I came here and said hello to Mamun and the rest of the people came and said 'Of course my friend,' and we started playing and I like it.

We can unpack Enrique's quote on multiple levels: his strategy approaching a group playing pick-up soccer, overcoming perceived rejection, and over time developing a way to read the sporting space in racial/ethnic ways. For now I will focus on the latter two. Coming from Venezuela, an individual approaching a group of players they do not know is more common. Soccer clubs may be organised along ethnic lines in Venezuela, but 'street soccer' as Enrique calls it, is much more inclusive. It took multiple tries for Enrique to find a place where he felt accepted. Despite being turned down multiple times, he persisted, hoping to find a group of people that would allow him to play the sport he loves so much.

Samir moved to Australia with his family from The Democratic Republic of Congo three years ago. At the time of the research, he had joined the team a year before via a colleague. His two younger brothers play on the team as well. The three brothers are all in high school, with Samir completing his final exams and orienting to a university course. Samir, Enrique and I share a similar experience: not understanding Bangla spoken at the trainings. Samir illustrates this:

I don't understand what is going on but I think soccer has its own ways of speaking and the rules are all the same, so whenever they are speaking in their own language, I get a sense what they are talking about because I know the rules.

This is in line with previous research describing sport as having its own 'language' and thereby having the ability to break down barriers that would make interactions difficult in any other situation (e.g., as described in Olliff, 2008). Religion plays a role as well in Samir's feeling of belonging, that is, the dominantly Muslim orientation of the Bangladeshi players

The way we do religion and belief is the same, it is really good yeah. It is one of the processes that people get closer, 'cause we get to stand together five times a day. Seeing the same person five times each day grows you closer to those people. We can pray anywhere, we can pray there even there. And knowing these people pray the same way as I do, it makes me comfortable and it gives us things to talk about when we are all together.

Samir concludes "This place means a lot, because I feel, these are the people for me. And we have a lot in common; there are so many people like me in the country and that makes me feel welcome."

Different sporting knowledges come together in the public space as well. Both Samir and Enrique played soccer in their countries of birth. They described the playing style as street soccer, which is less organised compared to the way they play with this team. As Enrique's quote above shows, in Venezuela it is much more common to form teams on-the-go based on who turns up. Matches are organised as they go, often a referee is absent, and the winning team stays on and continues playing against the next team. Teams may consist of a core group of residents from a particular neighbourhood block, but its form is fluent and leaves room for flexibility. In their new

country, both Enrique and Samir faced the challenge of overcoming different playing styles and needed to adapt to fit in.

Placemaking through bocce

It is not only younger generations who venture out to public spaces to make use of green areas in creative ways. Throughout the City of Maribyrnong, bocce is widely played by elderly residents and is mentioned by a few interview participants.

Bocce is a ball game similar to bowls and is played on a shorter and narrower green lawn. It is also referred to as bocce ball, bocci or boccie. The game originated in Italy and is played by mostly Italian migrants in Europe, Australia, North-America and South America. In Australia, and Melbourne specifically, the game continues to be strongly associated with Italian migrants (e.g., Croy & Glober, 2009); however, it is also widely played by Croatian migrants. Bocce can be played on many different surfaces: on grass, gravel, sidewalks, patios, or pavements as long as they are flat, and preferably in a place where there is room for a small group to gather.

I will share a few encounters I had with bocce players in a park near my house as well as interview excerpts from research participants who were not engaged in bocce themselves but talked about the groups in socio-spatial terms. In this section, I will describe placemaking at bocce places through three themes: arriving and playing, spatiality of bocce players, and leaving marks.

Arriving and playing

In October 2018, a few months before I had planned to officially start data collection, I noticed a group of elderly people gathering at a regular basis in a park near my house. One year later I approached the group, all elderly, who gather in the park on late afternoons throughout the week. Their game site is bordered by three roads used mainly by local traffic. The positionality of the park makes it a central crossing in the local neighbourhood. The park is approximately 75 meters long and 50 meters wide, visible from all three roads, and more often used as a thoroughway than for leisure (Figure 2). There are three basic benches at the south end of the park, a fountain at the north end, a few rocks, and modern style benches and a table offering a separate leisure space. A

pedestrian path crosses the park. The park is often quiet (although the grass has heavy use traces), with benches rarely in use when I pass by at various times of the day. During COVID-19 lockdowns, the park was used more often by children and young families and other people meeting in a socially-distanced manner. During the late afternoon, however, the park becomes a lively social gathering space.

The bocce group members generally arrive at the park late afternoon, which coincides with my after-work walk. A few members arrive by car, open their trunks and pull out camping chairs. The group meets at the south part of the park and occupies the spaces that separate the three benches. For an hour or two, the park turns into a Croatian bocce space.

One afternoon I approached the group for a chat and to introduce myself and the research project. The group was moving in my direction, picking up balls. They were quiet for a moment and I said, “Hello, how are you?” They responded. A group of six or seven people walked up and looked interested in me. Some more people were sitting on the benches at the back. One man wearing a Bulldogs hat greeted me and smiled. I said, “I like your hat,” and he responded, “I like your curly hair.”

I explained I was from Victoria University and writing about the neighbourhood. There was a bit of confusion until another member arrived, clearly younger than the rest. She introduced herself as Marion and asked a few questions. We stood there and had a chat while the others one by one walked away and talked among themselves.

One of the first questions she asked me was my nationality. I said I was from the Netherlands. Marion responded that these people are all from Croatia. She wanted to know more about the research and I explained that I was writing about the City’s physical activity facilities, and how the parks are used and by whom. Then I linked it to the bocce game. She seemed to understand this, and said: “We are here almost every night. It was a very cold winter but now it’s getting warmer.”

We talked about living in Australia and its many cultures and migrants. She then said: “Australians don’t have culture. There were Aboriginals, that is the culture.” It was interesting to hear Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Australians compared in this way. When Croats migrated

to Australia in large numbers after WWII they were called ‘wogs’; their culture was not accepted, but apparently there was also nothing to replace it with. Marion explains that in her opinion Anglo-Celtic Australia could not offer anything in cultural terms.

She invited me to come back next time and let me know which days she would be here. “It would be easier if I am here because not everyone speaks English,” she explained. I was fortunate that she had been there and spoke English. If I had tried to communicate with some of the players the chat might have been very different; I wonder if we could have made it work. I visited the group one more time and asked Marion for an interview to talk about the use of public space and the meaning of this park for her community. She responded that they would really appreciate a public toilet, a BBQ and a bin in the park. I got the impression she preferred not to talk about my predefined research topic. The other times we saw each other, we waved.

Marion’s interpretation of the nature of my research triggered her concerns over the lack of facilities. The turn of the conversation surprised me because it was the first time I had heard about the lack of facilities and demonstrated a different reading of space from mine. Her interpretation is, however, valuable because it demonstrates what public space means to people and the challenges they face. The availability of facilities and accessibility has been described by other authors. Glen Croy and Petra Glover (2009) provide an extensive resource titled, “Barriers and incentives to urban park use: Melbourne-based second generation Australians who generally speak a language other than English at home.” The focus population overlaps with the bocce players. While Croy and Glover’s research describe bocce in the context of first generation Italian migrants, they do provide valuable insights.

Barriers to participation in leisure activities in urban parks range from intrapersonal, interpersonal (accessibility dependence on others), and structural (time and weather conditions). Social interaction was a common element for ethnic group leisure activities. Croy and Glover (2009) embed their research in two bodies of literature: 1) the increased need for and use of urban green spaces for recreation and leisure; and 2) the importance of ethnic-specific leisure spaces. The leisure activities taken up by the Croatian-Australian players may act as a way to connect them with their cultural roots (Stodolska, 2000). Among the interviewees there were cultural

implications for perceptions and use of urban parks of leisure. Access to parks becomes more difficult when people grow older if they do not have a car or are unable to drive. As Croy & Glover (2009) point out, public transport is often inadequate due to indirect links between homes and parks. The authors offers recommendations that are in line with the comments Marion made, and range from the need for all-weather spaces, more adult social activities in parks, increased information about parks and available activities/facilities, play equipment, rubbish bins, cafes in parks, and cleaner parks (2009: vi).

Spatiality of bocce players

Spatiality and temporality have been addressed in the previous section. Interviews with research participants who do not play bocce show that they are aware of the spaces in which these players gather. Let us start with Liam's interview and how he mentally maps the neighbourhood: "The Italian group use the space next to YMCA in Essex Street." He then continues to talk about the Croatian bocce group:

Near the park at my daughters in Maidstone there is a little bocce thing and if you go past at night I say: 'Look at that that is great'. What I find the European people, or the Mediterranean, they are more social like they are out there on night. They are talking and laughing where we go home into our house. My mother always found it very hard that people continue work and just close the door. Whereas in Europe, South America or Egypt you go home from work, clean, and go out again.

In Liam's experience, the Croatian bocce players use space differently for leisure purposes and at different times than other Australians. Liam migrated with his parents from Ireland when he was ten years old and remembers his mother being affected by the closed-door culture she encountered in Australia. His excerpt hints of differences in norms, habits and conventions about space and temporality. This is what Barbara Adam (1995, p. 66) describes as the 'when, how often, how long, in what order and at what speed' that are governed by norms and habits and embedded in

forms of social knowing to regulate social life and space. Adam also draws attention to how they are governed by ‘norms, habits and conventions’ about temporality (p. 66), a host of implicit, embedded and embodied forms of social knowing that regulate social life and space.

Margo has had a similar experience with bocce players near her house:

My neighbour plays the bocce down at Hanson Reserve with this big group of Croatian men. He would be 80 or something; he is pretty old. He walks really slowly and they just, you know, it’s very European, they would just hang around together down at the oval and play bocce and just talk rubbish I guess.

According to Margo, these Europeans “just hang around together down at the oval.” It may not only be the ethnic appearance of Croatian people playing bocce that makes them stand out for Liam and Margo. In general, public places in Melbourne are devoid of groups of elderly people. Often, they walk or cycle alone, are in small groups, or accompany young children to an outdoor play space. So when elderly people “hang around” and “talk rubbish” it is notable; a rare scene in public parks that often only cater for the needs of children, adolescents and young adults. Children’s playgrounds, skateboard tracks, off-road bike paths and soccer pitches dominate public parks. Street furniture that may encourage elderly people to venture out is limited to benches for a rest and outdoors fitness equipment that is used by individuals across a range of ages.

Jessica Volkanovski and Nancy Marshall (2015) draw attention to the benefits of designing and installing playgrounds that are purpose-built for people 65+ years. These playgrounds would “focus on coordination, motor skills, and memory functions and accommodate various physical abilities and preferred sociabilities” (p. 1). Seniors’ playgrounds and age-friendly public spaces in general are critical for healthy 21st century cities that see their population ageing. Previous studies have shown that parks and other green spaces in urban environments are highly valued by older people aged 55 to 75 years (Marshall & Corkery, 2011). Thus, a key aspect of urban infrastructure and planning for an ageing population is to meet the essential needs of mobility and social connection for active healthy ageing (O’Brien, 2014).

In the following interview excerpt, Liam and I continue to talk about spatialised appropriate behaviour, this time on the bowling lawn. Liam took part in the Council-organised Spring into Summer series. This yearly program runs for six weeks and, in 2019, sport service providers offered their activities for free. These ranged from marital arts schools to yoga studios to golf clubs, gyms and lawn ball clubs. Residents were able to try as many activities as they wished with the aim to promote long-term physically active behaviour. As part of this research, I participated in the 2019 series and visited a golf club, martial arts studio and a local gym I normally would not have visited. Through the program, I was able to extend my knowledge on the available physical activity spaces in the neighbourhood. Liam and I met at the golf club, which occupies a good one-sixth of the total Maidstone land area. Despite the huge lot of land it occupies, the golf club is used by only a small proportion of Maidstone residents. In fact, most local residents were unaware that the club existed until they had signed up for its free lessons. Most people, including me, were surprised to find this huge slab of green lush land in the middle of a densely populated urban area. The growing need for green urban areas is in stark contrast with the exclusive character of the golf club with its high boundary walls, grand entry gates and manicured lawns. Liam participated in a few more Spring into Summer activities, including lawn bowls. He shared his experiences with me:

Liam: People had their children and they were running up and down and you don't run on the green you know? You just know you don't. But these children were different ... they were people of mainly different ethnic groups Viet ... Vietnamese. And that is fine, we've got a lot of Vietnamese in Footscray. It used to be Italian, Greek and Polish. There were no staff members there to organise, to stop and to tell 'you do this and this is how you do it.'

Jora: You felt these rules should be in place or when you come into a certain space, this club, there are rules?

Liam: Yes, because you're in that area that is made for lawn balls. It is a proper lawn; there is a code of conduct. And it is only polite to follow them. It is good manners

I suppose. Whereas when you are in a park, ahhh it doesn't matter. Parks are for running around.

Jora: These lawn ball clubs are interesting as I envision them as very white spaces?

Liam: Yeah.

Jora: And then migrants coming in or other racial profiles coming in and using this space and learning the sport or physical activity. What do you think about this?

Liam: I have always seen lawn balls as very Aussie. You know I have never seen uhm... well a person from an Asian country playing golf, ever. When I drive past they always seem to be typical Anglo-Saxon, right now they could be from Europe somewhere. It is very Aussie; you've got the bar on this end, your lawn balls out there. You have a beer afterwards with your mates and some of the people are overweight, so are the men. It is not a very active sport. It is not a very active sport but it is about the precision, like golf.

The Vietnamese people in Liam's lawn bowl class were not aware of the behavioural rules applicable to the particular space they were in. As Liam observes, children running around is only appropriate in parks, not on carefully maintained lawns. Likely unaware of the behavioural expectations, the Vietnamese participants entered a white space. In space, drinking beer, meeting your mates (no young children), and non-active (almost sedentary) behaviour is the norm. This compliments the discussion on spatiality of physical activity in relation to ethnicity. For Liam, the Vietnamese participants did not stand out only because they were not obeying the code of conduct, but also because of their racial appearance. In Liam's terms, it is a very Aussie and Anglo-Saxon environment. The excerpt demonstrates how Australianness is reduced to white, Anglo-Saxon identity.

Given this, how can racial and ethnic spatiality be understood? Ethno-cultural groups using public space are (often) highly visible for two reasons. First, simply because public spaces are used by various people for various purposes, there is the convivial 'rubbing of shoulders' (Harris, 2014). The built environment navigates and thereby governs users to and through specific

paths, squares and fields with congregating and high visibility in some spaces as a result. Second, they are visible because of their racial appearance and out-of-placeness in a nation where whiteness is the norm (cf. Hage, 2000; Koerner, 2020). In interviews for this thesis, the visibility of ethnic/racial groups was discussed with interviewees who described their neighbourhood in terms of diversity and physical activity.

Leaving marks

Without a club house, without a council gardener who can come over to take care of the sports home ground and a guaranteed place for your group/team to arrive at, what kind of traces are left in the informal scene? This was not a question I had in mind before data collection; rather, it emerged during fieldwork. Over the course of my fieldwork I came to appreciate fieldwork sites when they were devoid of people. As a sociologist, this feeling of appreciation initially made me feel uneasy, but I then understood that to read the space in this way is to pay attention to the material environment.

People gather in collectives, cultural expressions take place, connections are made with that ground and, on their departure, these people leave the space open for new collectives and connections. But in the vacated space they also leave their marks.



Figure 20 Local park before and after the first COVID-19 lockdown. Left: usage marks during daily use before lockdown. Right: Grass returns when bocce players abstain (and rain came). Source: pictures taken by Jora on November 22, 2019 and May 1, 2020, respectively.

Figure 20 shows two pictures that capture the park where bocce players gather. The picture on the left shows the affected grass and the two sides that the players use. The picture on the right was taken six months later during the COVID-19 lockdown. Public gatherings larger than two people (and during strict lockdown, one household) were prohibited and bocce games were stymied. The grass, however, had a chance to regrow after some ‘rest’ time and rain.

The importance of the bocce group gathering around the corner of my house is demonstrated during the COVID-19 lockdown. During the two months of Stage 4 lockdown (the toughest lockdown Australia has seen), strict rules applied to people gathering in private and public. Stage 4 lockdown rules included a ban on any visitors coming into your home (except caregivers) and gatherings of no more than two people in public, unless from the same household. Benches were taped off and all public facilities such as water fountains) were closed or locked. I continued my walks around the neighbourhood for some exercise; the lockdown progressed, the

weather warmed, and people struggled to maintain the tough restrictions. At one point during lockdown, I noticed some of the bocce players returning to the park at the same time as before lockdown. I sensed they were being careful, with two small groups at each side of the park. They wore facemasks and tried to keep their distance. I did not see them play bocce or bring their own chairs. Elderly people were hit hard, physically, socially, and mentally during the lockdown. The restrictions had impacted this group who routinely met on multiple afternoons per week. Regardless of the risk of being fined for gathering in 'large' groups (five to ten people), the players clearly needed to spend time together.

The placemaking practices through bocce not only affect connection to place as a social-material arrangement in the shaping of textures of diversity for its players, but also for other residents (Kuruoğlu & Woodward, 2021). This section has demonstrated that residents are aware of various groups making space. As this chapter has shown, it may happen in public space that is generally accessible to other users and exposes groups and their (cultural) practices. Being aware of other 'groups' contributes to group making and in- and out-group identification.

Public parks during COVID-19

I wrote this chapter during the COVID-19 pandemic (August 2020) when parks and open green spaces were still being used for many forms of physical activity. In the Kulin weather calendar, August is usually the wettest time of the year, while the Larneuk season (late July to late August) sees dramatic weather changes. At this point, the Victorian Government made a politically and, in terms of public health, 'dramatic' decision: Greater Melbourne entered a six-week Stage 4 lockdown. The decision was made following a rising number of community infections (400-700 new cases daily) and COVID-19-related deaths (5-10 daily). The Stage 4 lockdown included a curfew, with citizens requiring a government permit to leave the house from 8pm to 5am. Other restrictions including physical activity restricted to one hour per day (not enforced), shopping for essentials by only one member of each household, and closing non-essential shops. Australia continued its fight against the spread of the virus, and news and talk shows were dominated by all things COVID-19.

The physical activities I describe in this chapter (soccer and bocce) necessarily depend on the physical co-being of players. As all physical activities were restricted to two people at a time, the Bangladeshi-multicultural team was forced to stop. All active movements were performed by individuals or in pairs. Basketball and tennis courts were closed, with Pender and Earl's (2020) Sydney study finding that closing basketball courts left pick-up games players feeling disconnected from their community

The Victorian Government mandated that people could travel no more than 5km from their home, with most people staying in or in close proximity to their neighbourhood. In terms of physical activity, this meant that in general they were restricted to local walking paths and parks or walking around the block. Soon, inequalities in accessibility of green spaces became clear, as 340,000 Melbourne residents have little or no parkland within a 5 km. radius of their home (Lakhani et al., 2020).

Whereas public spaces had more often than not been used as transit spaces and packed with cars or, like Johnson Reserve, acted as an arrival destination and designated space for a certain activity, parks and other spaces suddenly became scenes for the creative use of space. As well as creative ways of exercising, for example, benches were used for push-ups, families were now able to use the club's cricket pitch and parking lots functioned as tennis courts. The not-for-profit organisation Victoria Walks received more complaints than ever before (ABC, 2020) that roads and paths were too crowded for a comfortable walk that was also COVID-19-safe.

Urban planners wrote opinion pieces laying out how the urban environment could be restructured as a result of these changes, and how the city could be returned to people and other animals. However, as Poppy Johnston (2020) questions: "Pedestrians and cyclists are taking back the street space, but can they keep it?"

Concluding remarks

In this chapter, physical activity and multiculturalism are performed in ways that are different from the ways in which community centres or structured sports clubs operate. While diverse interactions are regulated to some extent by government, urban planners and social interaction rules, the use of open space is subject to free negotiation. This supports Williamson's (2015) work on the hidden multiculturalism in parks that "might, if sufficiently scaled up, inform and foster urban spaces of more inclusive civility" (p. 259).

Through interactions a sense of place is created; the ethnic and the material are intertwined. They are separate entities but symbiotically bestow meaning. This is even more apparent in physical activities or leisure activities that require the movement and use of the body. The soccer and bocce groups could be described as examples of socio-material environment created to lay claim over space, for the groups to make themselves at home and thereby create *place* (Boccagni & Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2021). Culture and sporting activity are embodied and expressed in a specific locality, with the ethnic and the material inseparable. This takes place in the context of soccer as an ethnic game (Danforth, 2011; Gorman, 2017). The performance is carried out in relation to and in interaction with other humans in a locality that is made into a (safe) space, a space that hosts human as well as non-human. In a sense, the players are creating their own story of place that is layered in years of history, adding to the multiplicity of place interpretations. It is in this complex coming together that local and national belonging is created. As Wood and Waite (2011) explain, "belonging is a dynamic emotional attachment that relates people to the material and social worlds that they inhabit and experience. It is about feeling 'at home' and 'secure' but it is equally about being recognized and understood" (p. 201).

The use of public space is also contested. The Bangladeshi/multicultural soccer team experienced practices of exclusion in their search for a home ground, as most soccer pitches have 'owners' or are 'occupied' by sports clubs. Williamson (2015) invites us to interpret such situations as a tension over limited spatial resource or as a territorial dispute. To what extent, then, as Harris (2014) asks, "are groups recognised, and is their right to occupy local public space recognised, with all groups viewed as equally 'entitled combatants'?"

Definitions of pick-up games and informal use of public space are not clearly embedded in Council policies. An important preoccupation in this chapter is the vulnerable position of pick-up games and groups. While they follow official Council guidelines and book and pay for the use of ‘their home ground’, they are still vulnerable in that they do not have a clubhouse and are unable to use the ground during formal competitions and other events.

Regardless of these changing physical activity trends, Australian government spending continues to invest in structured sport (Jeanes et al., 2019), and policymakers have yet to consider how they can support informal participation (Sterchele & Ferrero-Camoletto, 2017). Jeanes et al.’s (2019b) research calls for the use of a collaborative network approach to bring together currently disconnected organisations to manage and grow informal sport. The authors argue that this approach would “utilise the resources and skills of community agencies and would involve more extensive collaboration with informal groups” (p. 92). Importantly, and in line with Belinda Wheaton and Alister O’Loughlin (2017), the authors emphasise the necessity of going beyond the need to regulate and formalise informal sports. In a pedagogical sense, O’Connor and Penney (2020) recognise the learning process involved in familiarising with a new environment, with participants needing “knowledge, skills and understandings that are associated with ‘reading environments’ in terms of their capacity to sustain safe and enjoyable participation” (p. 19).

As this chapter demonstrates, facility needs and the use of public space for physical activity in a super-diverse urban environment differ greatly. It is in this informal sporting space that the dominant story of place is challenged; it is where new forms of physical activity and use of place and home are created. The interactions and materialization of space is where new migrant groups and forms of physical activity contribute to the understanding of the super-diverse city. Croy and Glover (2009) emphasise the importance of inclusive provision of parks and recreation services as a public good. The authors conclude that:

If the programs, facilities and services offered do not meet the needs of the public and specific identifiable groups, this would indicate the requirement for improvements to the provision and management of these sites ... to prevent the potential marginalisation of

these groups using the programs, services and facilities provided by natural and protected area agencies. (p. 1)

*Tinderbeek tillutkerrin – All done (with) play*⁵⁶

⁵⁶ ‘Tinderbeek tillutkerrin’ means all done (with) play in an unidentified Indigenous language spoken in Victoria as presented in *Yulunga Traditional Indigenous Games* (Australian Sports Commission, 2008, p. 254).

Chapter 9: Discussion and conclusion

Introduction

The field notes excerpt presented at the start of Chapter 1 describes various physical activities in the City of Maribyrnong. This description of the physical activity space is filtered and presented through my positionality to offer a snapshot of people's diversity and the use of public space and forms of physical activity in the neighbourhood. Within this space, particular places are actively created and made meaningful through a process of placemaking.

The subsequent theoretical framework, methodology, and five data chapters deconstruct the concepts of multiculturalism and placemaking, single out the different physical activity spaces, and describe how these spaces became place, or alternatively engage in place(un)making. In this concluding chapter, I reconstruct these concepts and spaces and return to the main research question in this dissertation: how is placemaking performed in relation to multiculturalism through physical activity?

By looking at four distinct physical activity spaces in the City of Maribyrnong, I shed light on how local placemaking is performed differently and in unique ways. Placemaking is conceptualised using Lefebvre's (1991) spatial triad. Applying the spatial triad to multiculturalism results in three questions: How is multiculturalism (or diversity) observed in the City? How is the City represented in terms of multiculturalism (in the physical activity space)? How is multiculturalism lived on the ground, in the context of physical activity? Ultimately, these questions result in the sub-question: How do physical activity spaces offer a vehicle for spatial connection in and to a super-diverse neighbourhood?

The four main sites that form the ethnographic backbone of this research are a women's soccer club, a sport-based migrant settlement service, a community neighbourhood centre, and public parks used for pick-up games (with a focus on soccer and bocce). In all sites, people engage in multiculturalism in unique ways. While diversity is seen as 'commonplace' (cf. Wessendorf, 2014) at the soccer club, members experience the consequences of local gentrification and ponder

how to continue to engage with its diverse membership base. Participants of the migrant settlement service are introduced into Australian society in which sport is positioned as a central pastime, with placemaking by newly arrived migrants a carefully choreographed endeavour to help them understand what it means to belong to Melbourne's west. Homemaking is central in this context of placemaking, as migrants engage with a socio-material environment to lay claim to public space (Boccagni & Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2021). Community neighbourhood centres are directly coordinated and funded by Governments and thus are implicated in the delivery of local urban diversity policies. Similar to sports clubs (in Amin's (2005, p. 612) terms, "the localisation of the social", community centres have increasingly taken up the role of facilitating intercultural interactions, enhancing social cohesion, and fostering belonging (Hoekstra & Pinkster, 2019; Phillips et al., 2014). Through the placemaking stories of an elderly female walking group, I show that the central role of community centres is not only to facilitate intercultural interactions, but also to offer culturally safe and diverse physical activities. In line with a growing trend toward pick-up games as part of the individualising and casualising of physical activity, Chapter 8 demonstrates how participants in pick-up soccer and bocce games perform placemaking in a super-diverse urban environment, again, in unique ways. While navigating urban resources and at times bureaucracy to secure public space, participants lay claim to and appropriate urban spaces (cf. Aquino et al., 2020).

All four sites offer distinct ways of and challenges in placemaking while navigating the limits and potential of public urban space. While the sites are geographically distinct localities within the City of Maribyrnong, they are relationally constituted (Massey, 2005)⁵⁷. In this sense, places are not bounded areas (with the exception of a political understanding of place), but open networks constructed through interaction rather than in counterposition to other places (Massey, 1994). Space is also described as porous, in that "people have multiple identities and they are becoming ever more mobile, spawning communities of relational connectivity that transcend territorial boundaries" (Morgan, 2007, p. 1248; see also Li, 2020). In the context of this thesis,

⁵⁷ There is no one publication that does justice to Massey's work on the relational approach, with much of her life's work dedicated to the development of the concept (e.g., Meegan, 2017).

relationality encourages us to think how the four sites are constructed through interaction and how the multiple *places* together create the physical activity *space*. The sport-based migrant settlement service is designed to introduce participants to Australian culture and to prepare them for wider participation in sport, for example, at sports clubs. Settlement programs in other Western countries follow a similar integration structure, introducing newly arrived migrants to the formal sport club structure and encouraging their participation to foster long term settlement (Stura, 2019; Whitley et al., 2016).

Relationality also encourages us to move beyond local production of place and unravel global interrelatedness. For Massey (1994), places can be understood as intersecting social relations. She writes that places are “nets of which have over time been constructed, laid down, interacted with one another, decayed and renewed. Some of these relations will be, as it were, contained within the place; others will stretch beyond it” (p. 120). Here, Massey (1994) refers to a global sense of space in which the global is part of the formation of the local. Such a transnational understanding of placemaking shines through in this current research, particularly in the community centre’s walking group, the pick-up soccer and bocce games. The women’s soccer club is implicated in global gender formation and hegemonic understandings of women-in-sport that had relegated women’s soccer to the role of side-product to men’s soccer. Finally, of course, multiculturalism with its roots in the nation state should be understood as a global movement of constantly changing patterns of diversity and, paradoxically, the strengthening of national borders. Multiculturalism has been described as a product of global structures that find affect in lived and everyday experiences of multiculturalism (Duyvendak, 2011; Wise & Velayutham, 2009), as well as a product of neoliberalism and coloniality (Koerner & Pillay, 2020; Mignolo & Walsh, 2018).

In the following I outline the academic contributions of this thesis, offer ways to rethink physical activity space in the context of multiculturalism, provide a final comment on complicity, and conclude with suggested future research directions.

Academic contributions

This thesis bridges three bodies of literature to analyse data and formulate arguments. The data chapters have described the ethnographic data through the combined lenses of three main disciplinary pillars. In turn, the arguments speak back to the three bodies of literature and thereby aim to contribute to the development of a theoretical understanding of how the placemaking/urban diversity/physical activity nexus enhances academic understanding in each field. After bridging the pillars, I now take the opportunity to separately discuss the contributions to each pillars, to make it relevant for academic colleagues in each discipline.

Speaking to placemaking

Placemaking has been conceptualised in this thesis using Lefebvre's (1991) spatial triad and additional concepts developed over the past three decades that include 'making place' (Foster & Paterson Kinniburgh, 2020) 'place(un)making' (Kalven in Hes et al., 2020), and the 'vertical dimension' (Gieseking, 2016). As such, this thesis adds to our understanding of the concept of placemaking by applying this concept to everyday multiculturalism in physical activity spaces.

Everyday multiculturalism gives depth to the spatial triad. The third dimension in the spatial triad, in particular, is about lived experiences: nothing is planned; realities are rather the product of everyday messiness. As Lefebvre (1991) observes, "Representational space is alive: it speaks" (p. 42), while Gieseking (2016) contends that people enact their agency and continually reproduce social territories as they navigate their everyday lives. The concept of everyday multiculturalism prioritises the mundane, everyday modes of living, and the pedestrian level (Friedmann, 2010) interactions that give meaning to diversity and locality.

Ethnographic research on physical activity does exactly this: it provides a pedestrian level experience and offers the opportunity to define place "from the inside out" (Friedmann, 2010, p. 152). In its essence, physical activity is about pedestrian level occupation of the public space. Hence, space is both the facilitator of embodied activities and the creator of the active performance of physical activity. I demonstrate in this thesis the importance of physical activities and the countless ways of placemaking that space offers in representation (management of physical activity spaces, their use for intercultural exchanges, and definition of what such spaces

should look like), and in representational space (lived experiences of diversity, and experiences of what such spaces feel like to those included and those excluded).

The findings of this thesis show that a process of placemaking never stops regardless of one's cultural or migration background. Placemaking is ever-evolving as needs and desires change, as people move, age, and establish new social relations. The walking group offers an eloquent example. The women who organise and take part in this group have lived in multiple countries and states over their lives, moved to bigger and then smaller houses to meet their family needs, become widows, mothers, grandmothers, retirees or volunteers. Their international or interstate migration trajectories influenced their placemaking needs and desires as much as other positionalities have. Hence, given that places can be understood as intersecting social relations, these places necessarily change when social relations change, that is, when the demographics of its residents change.

This illustrates that placemaking in connection to multiculturalism is not solely an issue of non-whites, non-migrants, or the 'settled' population. Multiculturalism is a 'whiteness topic' as much as it is one of cultural diversity. Multiculturalism ideals guide placemaking, which is an inherently political endeavour.

Speaking to urban diversity

Through its research into everyday multiculturalism, this thesis contributes to the urban diversity literature by demonstrating the importance of physical cultural diversity (e.g. Nakamura & Donnelly, 2017) in creating urban diversity. The many forms of physical activity in public space are a reflection of urban diversity but, more importantly, contribute to defining 'the urban'. Physical activity should be understood as an urban lifestyle or urban culture that leaves a footprint in the city (Liggett, 2003; Amin & Thrift, 2002; Appadurai, 1996), and in this thesis I describe physical activity as a way to establish spatial connection, a way to connect and to make place. To illustrate this, Aarul's (player in the multicultural/Bangladeshi team) quote stands out: [Footscray Park] "is still the centre geographically and also for them they still feel like it is their field." As well, Maria's (walking group member) experiences of the lemon and olive trees that bring back

childhood memories growing up in Italy are examples of how physical activity performances are the footprints of a diverse city.

The study of everyday multiculturalism in public space does not ignore conflict and power (Clayton, 2009; Valentine, 2008). In the context of racism, Essed (1991) writes that when “racist notions and actions infiltrate the everyday life and become part of the reproduction of the system, the system reproduces everyday racism” (p. 9). In this sense, the everyday is more than a temporal site for lived experiences; rather, it is a site for the development of knowledge required to navigate and ‘cope with’ the everyday as well as a reinforcement of macro structures. It is in physical activity spaces that everyday experiences of diversity as well as everyday racism (i.e., the coming together of its macro and micro dimensions) shape understandings of who is in and out of place; indeed, they shape placemaking.

This thesis speaks to urban diversity or everyday multiculturalism by applying a critical approach to the everyday, and highlighting ethnic and racial conflict in the physical activity context by situating those in historical and power mechanisms or in macro dimensions. Power mechanisms discussed in this thesis include multiculturalism as a form of postcolonisation and a hierarchical structure of cultures, but also hegemonic (masculine and traditionally organised) sporting structures (Agergaard, 2018). While the physical activity space can be inclusive, provide a safe haven (Spaaij & Broerse, 2019; Baker-Lewton et al., 2016) or be a site for negotiating ethno-cultural citizenship (Aquino, 2015; Thangaraj, 2015), it can also highlight conflict. In this thesis, the latter is discussed in relation to negotiation over space in which racial groups and non-traditional forms of physical activity are fused.

Speaking to physical activity

By applying the two bodies of literature on placemaking and urban diversity, this thesis contributes to further understanding of the role of physical activity in urban life. Through participating in the physical activity space, places are rendered meaningful. Given this, how can we understand physical activity better by applying placemaking and everyday multiculturalism?

Migration through sport, migrant settlement through sport as well as ethnic/racial conflict in sport have received significant attention. Physical activity spaces, in particular (voluntary) sports clubs, have also received notable academic and policy attention as policymakers grapple with questions around ethnic identity, community building and the role of sport clubs in fostering an ethnic identity at personal and community levels. This thesis contributes to this field by going beyond these more established threads in the literature. I demonstrate in this thesis that physical activity is an integral element of urban super-diversity. It is a space for both intercultural and co-ethnic (as well as other diversities and intersecting diversities) mingling and meeting, offering spaces where everyday multiculturalism finds its foothold.

Lefebvre's (1991) spatial triad alerts us to the multilayeredness of placemaking. The observable flows through the city, the presented and the lived are in constant interaction. Applied to the physical activity context, it becomes clear that attachment to place at group and individual level is governed and influenced by broader factors. How public spaces are designed, maintained and managed for physical activity allow for some activities to take place, that is, for some forms of lived placemaking to take place, while other activities are disallowed (cf. Nelson, 2017). Importantly, placemaking can be a negative experience as well. When access to physical activity spaces is denied, when places cannot/will not be shared, or when voices are not heard, the process of placemaking is distributed (Kalven in Hes et al., 2020; Friedmann, 2010).

Moreover, I show in this thesis that the physical activity space is subject to diversity policies. Not only is it part of a national framework, Australian identity and integration tests, but also one of the spaces where the City of Maribyrnong implements its diversity policy. The community centres, sports clubs and intercultural feasts at sports games are viewed as localities that are subject to interculturalism policy. Policies influence lived experiences of multiculturalism. In other words, the physical activity localities do not just come into being through active performance of those activities; they are influenced by broader policies.

Physical activity and sport more specifically is gaining attention from outside sports sociology/geography (e.g., Aquino et al., 2020; Nelson, 2017). In this thesis, I show the relevance of physical activity spaces in relation to academic concepts concerned with everyday living with

super-diversity. This research contributes to describing physical activity not just as a means or medium to achieve other goals, but also as an active contributor to urban lifestyle and the experience of sport in and of itself.

While this section focussed on the academic contributions, the next section discusses how multiple trajectories can be imagined ‘on the ground’ in physical activity spaces. So, how can inclusive urban landscapes be created?

Re-imagining space: Multiple space trajectories in the context of physical activity and multiculturalism

In this section I advance this discussion by proposing future directions for the organisation of public space for physical activity. The City of Maribyrnong is a member of the Intercultural Cities Network, with its members reviewing urban policies and practices through an inclusive and intercultural lens. The Network also encourage more mixing and interaction between diverse groups in public spaces. At the ‘representation of space’ level, a clear policy framework is provided in this thesis as well as philosophy on how the Council wishes to present and organise the City. Chapter 7 discusses how an intercultural lens can focus on how Council implements its local level policy in the context of community centres. However, interculturalism is also applied in the sports context by aiming to enhance intercultural interaction, for instance, at AFL matches where the focus is on the professional sports spectators more than on community participation (both organised and pick-up sports). This section will tap into this field of opportunities and proposes a re-imaging of the physical activity space to facilitate meaningful placemaking through intercultural (as well as co-ethnic) meeting places.

The concept of multiplicity introduced in Chapter 1 captures the breadth of the argument. The concept of multiplicity refers to the act of going beyond a singular narrative of what space could mean and what it could be used for (Massey, 1999, 2005). In the context of physical activity, this means the sharing of public spaces rather than approaching sport spaces as “already divided up” (p. 6). Pierce (2019) adds that Massey’s plurality is that “what space *is* includes all the things that it has ever been and all the things it could be in the future” (p. 7, *italics in original*). Applied

to this thesis, it is the use of place and placemaking, multiculturalism, and physical activity in relation to a voice to the city that require re-imagining.

Informal physical activity is a growing (although not novel) form of physical activity, and in this thesis is included in the form of pick-up games. Previous research reports that informal physical activity is particularly important for newly arrived and diverse communities (Lake, 2013; Elling & Knoppers, 2005). This thesis is in line with previous research highlighting tensions and challenges in supporting informal sports activities that limit the potential of informal sport (Jeanes et al., 2019b). Tensions include disputes over ‘illegally’ using grounds, and managing expectations across informal and mainstream sporting discourses that hinder the flourishing of informal participation (Jeanes et al., 2019)⁵⁸.

In a practical sense, how do we re-imagine space and stimulate successful placemaking in urban landscapes? In their work on placemaking for inclusive planning, Duconseille & Saner (2020) ask, “how people with different backgrounds can harness their sociocultural and political assets such that cities can benefit from their presence and stimulate inclusive successful placemaking in urban landscapes” (p. 140). This is also referred to as *placemaking as movement*. Thus, community groups outside and in collaboration with academia use placemaking as a movement, as a hands-on approach to create tangible change. It is understood as a way to improve neighbourhoods, cities or regions and “inspires people to collectively reimagine and reinvent public spaces as the heart of every community” (Project for Public Spaces, 2018, para. 1). Placemaking as a process and philosophy can “break down these silos by showing planners, designers, and engineers the broad value of moving beyond the narrow focus of their own professions, disciplines, agendas” (Project for Public Spaces, 2018: para. 6). This could, for example, require a culture change within sporting organisations and local government in how they “perceive and understand sport and, specifically, what forms for sport participation they consider worthwhile and valuable” (Jeanes et al., 2019, p. 93).

⁵⁸ The recently launched African and Pasifika Youth Sports Program has started to fulfil this need and offered \$300,000 in grants to informal sports teams with African and Pasifika members (Victoria State Government, 2021, April 23).

Placemaking as a community-based practice goes beyond promoting better urban design and by facilitating creative patterns of use⁵⁹. A local example of such an organisation in Melbourne is Place Agency, which supports industry, students, communities and governments to develop better cities through placemaking capacity building and co-design. This organisation adds to the above description of placemaking by including the ability to promote people's health, happiness and well-being.

Re-imagining space, physical activities in its many forms, and placemaking as a movement brings me to a final note on complicity and further directions for research.

Complicity in placemaking, urban diversity and physical activity

Following Spivak's (1999) postcolonial work, a re-occurring theme in this thesis is complicity. Spivak asks theorists to acknowledge their complicity by critically reading academic work and "position themselves with respect to canonical European philosophical figures" (Spivak in David & Walsh, 2020, p. 3). In this concluding chapter, I ask myself again: Did a complicity approach contribute to the academic placemaking/urban diversity/physical activity nexus? While complicity speaks to both academic contributions and re-imagining place on the ground, complicity also works at the positionality level of the researcher as much as at the theoretical level.

By adopting a complicity approach in Chapter 3, I was able to discuss my positionality in depth. It served as a way of acknowledging that I am part of and educated in an academic Western world system. Moreover, growing up in the Netherlands where racial categorisation and white superiority are ingrained in the consciousness of the nation (Wekker, 2016b) further informs my positionality. Describing my own positionality was particularly important in relation to the

⁵⁹ While placemaking as a movement and scholarly discipline developed in Western universities and cities, the shaping and making of places is very much present in the design and planning of places in Eastern societies (Hes, Mateo-Babiano et al., 2020). One example is Chen Tong's (2013) study on square dancing in the streets of Xuanhua, China. With an aging society and rapid urbanisation, the lack of age-appropriate urban public spaces threatens daily physical activity. The author analyses square dancing as a unique spatial and temporal cultural practice and describes its popularity among elderly practitioners and the importance of creating appropriate street spaces for group square dancing.

ethnographic methods I employed in this research. I was actively taking part in placemaking and everyday multiculturalism dynamics. By “looking into the mirror” (Land, 2015, p. 163), I became part of the everyday multiculturalism in a critical manner in the broader context of a postcolonising country (Moreton-Robinson, 2003).

In Chapter 2, the complicity layer resulted in my critically reading academic canonical texts on placemaking and multiculturalism. I conceptualised placemaking using the spatial triad and, in addition, highlighted the racialised and gendered nature of placemaking as well as attempted to convey an Indigenous understanding of placemaking. Understandings of placemaking in Australia are predominantly from the settler colonial and migratory perspectives. Indigenous placemaking not only offers a different perspective to canonical thinking, but also challenges the assumption that Australia is postcolonial; rather, it “continues to unsettle non-Indigenous belonging based on illegal dispossession” (Moreton-Robinson, 2003, p. 31).

This brings me back to the point on re-imagining space, which is compatible with a decolonial perspective. Re-imagining space involves an understanding of place that it cannot be owned (as in the Westernised capitalist tradition), and that many people can belong to the same Country (Foster & Patterson Kinniburgh, 2020). Moreover, the authors suggest moving away from placemaking and instead use “making place” (p. 64) to highlight “spatial (hi)stories to reclaim the sites they have always occupied, and ... for the very occupants and stories that are ordinarily overlooked in urban and spatial design practice” (p. 64). Complicity in this instance gives spatial and temporal relevance to the local situation.

By reading the literature critically and engaging with additional resources, I found that complicity became part of my data presentation and discussion as well. So, in which histories and broader structures are organised sport, migrant settlement programs, community centres, and governing of public spaces embedded? I took complicity beyond questioning academic knowledge. Chapters 5-8 were written throughout 2020, with the COVID-19 sections at the end of each chapter providing a precis of the limitations on physical activity. Seasonal changes are part of rhythmanalysis (as defined by Lefebvre, 1991) and its import is particularly relevant in

Chapter 4 as it influences the use of public space for physical activity. Instead of referencing the European four seasons, I chose to use the Kulin nation Gariwerd weather calendar.

Overall, my complicity was embedded in all aspects of the thesis. For ‘re-imagining’ to work, a coherent approach is required that rethinks use of space and placemaking, multiculturalism and physical activity in settler countries. These aspects, in addition to further suggestions, will form future research directions.

Future research directions

Based on this thesis, I propose three directions for future study: postcolonialism in diversity studies (in particular multiculturalism); strengthening an embodied understanding of diversity; and notions of citizenship through physical activity.

First, the literature would benefit from a greater engagement with post- and decolonial approaches to multiculturalism. The engagement with postcolonial critique of multiculturalism in the Australian context is not straightforward (e.g., Idriss, 2021). This thesis, and in particular this concluding chapter, has identified some avenues to rethink multiculturalism in line with decoloniality through the concept of complicity. Complicity has been a useful concept to challenge the idea that decolonialism is only relevant to Indigenous studies. Part of a future research agenda would involve breaking down or connecting diversity studies and Indigenous studies and strive to embed postcolonial approaches in research that did not define ‘Indigenous’ as just another ethnicity. Mignolo and Walsh’s (2018) book on interculturalism and Butler and Ben’s (2020) and Koerner and Pillay’s (2020) publications on everyday multiculturalism are relevant recent contributions to this field that embed multiculturalism in historical and power mechanism (Clayton, 2009; Valentine, 2008; Essed, 1991).

A second theme for future research that emerged from this thesis but goes beyond its scope is the study of embodied research in the context of diversity and physical activity. More broadly, in humanistic urban studies, the body “is an important site of research in itself, not least given the growing obsessions with physical appearance, body shape and fashion, which have all been important sectors in the contemporary western economy” (Latham, 2009, p. 11). In diversity

studies and, more specifically, where the settings for those studies are super-diverse neighbourhoods, the body is carrier and communicator of diversity, some visible (e.g., racial, abled/disabled bodies) and others invisible (e.g., level of education, income level, knowledge systems). Thangaraj (2015), and Aquino (2015), for example, describe how particular forms of sport offer a corporeal expression of ethnic/racial identity. In physical activity studies, the body is the performer, the tool for an activity. And as an inherently physical engagement, it offers a suitable tool to explore how bodies move through and overcome obstacles in space. Thus, bodies externally or internally create super-diversity, and emphasise and regulate this super-diversity through policy and social structures.

A third proposed direction for future research that was also beyond the scope of this thesis, although touched upon in Chapter 6, is the notion of citizenship in urban multicultural and physical activity. In Australia's national sport culture and system, sport in demographically diverse urbanities has previously been described as being able to promote or obstruct social inclusion and cultural citizenship (Rowe, 2017). Kymlicka (2010) describes sport as a tool for citizenisation or citizen-building when defined in inclusive and transformative ways. In their Canadian study, Nakamura and Donnelly (2017) build on this notion and claim that "diverse forms of physical culture being practiced are evidence of citizenisation because ethnic groups are contributing to the fabric of Canadian society" (p. 116). In the UK context, Ratna (2020) connects citizenship to race, urban multicultural and belonging, and describes "'hierarchical assemblages of citizenship and belonging" (p. 159). This exemplifies what cultural citizenship and a spatial analysis of "who belongs, who does not and who can never belong" (p. 175) might look like. This notion of citizenship can be developed in different geographical contexts in relation to placemaking as well as homemaking.

Finally, as Western societies continue to gravitate towards informal/self-organised forms of physical activity, it is imperative to track developments in the intersecting fields of physical activity, urban diversity and placemaking. So, which spaces need to be un- or re-made, how will public funding be distributed to other-organised forms of physical activity and, above all, how will 'rights to the city' be distributed?

Concluding statement

This thesis argues for the value of ethnography to study everyday and local performances of placemaking in a vastly changing and diverse urbanity. It demonstrates the relevance of analysing micro-spaces and everyday routinised use of public space within the context of physical activity from a “multi-scalar view” (Williamson, 2015, p. 283) to highlight the multiple layers of influence on people’s placemaking ability. It explores how a connection to place is fostered through moving bodies, be it with others or individually. Fostering a connection to place, as a migrant or Australian born⁶⁰, is subject to but also challenges hegemonic ways of organising physical activity and the use of public space. Geographies of physical activity are (super)diverse in their expression and part of an Australian multicultural ideal, both as lived reality and part of ‘represented space’, to reference Lefebvre (1991) once more. Valuing the everyday conditions of co-ethnic coming together, intercultural mingling or temporal sharing of public space for physical activity in diverse forms through multiple trajectories (cf. Massey, 2005) can foster democratic modes of living together and planning (Fincher & Iveson, 2008) for difference in a constantly changing urban environment.

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⁶⁰ Anderson (2000) reminds us of the fine lines between settler, migrant and indigenous people within the context of Australia.

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