"Our dance is a celebration of the fabric of modern New Zealand":

Identity, Community, Solidarity and Citizenship at Youth Polyfests

in Aotearoa New Zealand

By

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Abstract

One feature of the growing levels of cultural diversity in Aotearoa New Zealand has been the growth of cultural festivals. These originated primarily for Pacific groups to maintain and sustain cultural performance and traditions, but increasingly such festivals reflect the growing ethnic minority groups present in most of New Zealand's large urban centres. Specific cultural festivals for school-aged young people are attended by thousands of young New Zealanders annually, yet to date have rarely been a feature of research. This study aimed to explore the role that cultural festivals may play in contributing to the identity, belonging and citizenship experiences of ethnic minority youth growing up in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The thesis draws on ethnographic data obtained at three cultural festivals (Polyfests) for school-aged young people in 2018 (ASB Auckland Polyfest, Tu Tagata, Wellington and Northern Regional Polyfest, Porirua). Employing ethnographic participant observation, coupled with approaches drawn from ethnomusicology and dance ethnography, data collection included observation of speeches, public announcements and performances, dance moves and music, as well as on-the-fly discussions with festival performers and analysis of associated media (brochures, media reports, online articles).

The festivals performances and their potential to enable spaces of possibility for identity-formation were analysed through Bhabha's (1996) notion of 'third-space'. The study drew attention to the way young performers strategically employed fusions of traditional and contemporary music and dance genres within their performances to articulate new ways of seeing themselves. These performances also served to maintain and validate ethnic and school-based identities, as well as to gain status and recognition by creating symbolic representations of the way that performers wished their cultural group to be viewed by audiences. Festival spaces also allowed cultural groups to consolidate homogenous (ethnic) solidarities as well as articulate new ways of seeing themselves as belonging through heterogenous (inter-ethnic) and school-based solidarities. The study underscores the significance of festival spaces as 'counter-spaces' in New Zealand society in which ethnic minority youth could experience (and create) identity-affirming, counter-hegemonic experiences outside of the dominant discourses frequently projected on them by White New Zealand.

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With sincerest gratitude and affection,

Milica Homolja

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Context and Aims

One in four people living in Aotearoa New Zealand were born in another country, making New Zealand the third most 'ethnically diverse' country in the OECD (OECD, 2015). Like many communities around the world, urban centres in Aotearoa New Zealand have reached new levels of diversity as a result of globalisation and the accompanying flows of migration. Vertovec (2007) calls this phenomenon super-diversity, a term coined to conceptualise a new kind of diversity; one characterised by an unprecedented complexity in the way in which variables within it interact and affect "where, how and with whom people live" (Vertovec, 2007, p. 1025). The question 'where are you from?', is an increasingly common question in Aotearoa New Zealand and the issue of belonging – of what it means to be a New Zealander – is an apparent concern both for those asking the question and those who are summoned to answer it.

Young people's experiences of growing up in superdiverse communities have received growing attention from scholars worldwide and constitute a growing corpus of research. Scholars have studied everyday civic life among ethnic minority youth, finding that governments return to assimilative practices while seeking to mitigate diversity as a result of anxieties and cultural tensions that arose following 9/11 (Harris, 2010, 2013; Harris & Roose, 2014). Other studies such as Visser (2016) and Butcher (2017), identify how changing ethnic and spatial boundaries are negotiated by youth, outlining the strategies they develop in order to adapt to cultural norms and spatial restrictions not of their making. These studies draw attention to the ethnic and spatial boundaries that are felt by youth in their everyday and schooled spaces which they as occupy as either "normative or non-normative" citizens (El-Sherif & Sinke, 2017, p. 2).

Ethnic minority youth face a number of unique challenges. As well as experiences which problematize their identities and belonging in the eyes of the dominant majority, they also inhabit spaces which have them pitched between intergenerational and transnational notions of identity. This often leads to the development of a range of identity formation strategies, including forms of hybridization in order to enable them to navigate a coexistence between their parents' traditions and those of the majority (Kavoori & Joseph, 2011). Also, due to global flows and increased global interconnectedness, these youth also find themselves

in spaces where their identities are constructed between the local and the global. Furthermore, as a result of living in superdiverse communities, young people find themselves in environments where they are consistently encountering difference, cultural, linguistic, religious or otherwise. Such experiences have led to the development of the theoretical conception of third-space (Bhabha,1996), that attempts to explain and explore the negotiation of seemingly diverging fragments of identities.

Performance emerges as a key tactic in the articulation of identities for diasporic young people worldwide (Turner, 1986). Seeing as "hybridity often connotes border-crossing, 'in between-ness', mobility, uncertainty and multiplicity" (Nilan & Feixa, 2006, p. 2), cultural performance offers a space in which youth can construct aesthetic representations of this 'in between-ness', drawing upon a variety of cultural resources that are easily accessible to youth through the internet and other media, as well as those which are inherited from parents. Further, performance has the potential to allow ethnic minority youth to inscribe themselves into the localities that they reside in, without betraying their cultural heritage.

In recent years, research has identified festivals as sites where diverse communities can articulate identities, form solidarities, and resist mainstream narratives towards their respective cultures (Bramadat, 2001; Lee, Arcodia, & Lee, 2012a, b). Due to the liminal nature of these festivals, they can often constitute spaces of highly public affirmation of these cultural identities (O'Grady, 2013a). O'Grady (2013a) suggests such sites also create a radical openness, that can enable a bridging across cultural divides and disrupt hierarchies established in day-to-day interactions. From a research standpoint, cultural festivals can stand as microcosm offering us an opportunity to observe the navigation of these cultural identities in real time as a highly elevated "display of a multiplicity of expressions of identity that are plural, hybrid and transnational, as well as indicative of new grammars of civic engagement" (O'Toole & Gale, 2010).

In Aotearoa New Zealand, prior scholarly work on Polynesian festivals (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2013; Mackley-Crump, 2013, 2015b, 2016) and South East Asian festivals (Johnson, 2007) reveal how they provide a display of material culture for public consumption, creating and affirming a sense of home and identity while also allowing a reconnection with one's roots from a diasporic position. Secondary-school youth cultural festivals form a significant part of many ethnic minority youth's school experiences. Among these are Youth Polyfests

which offer a range of performance genres from Pacific performance traditions. In more recent times, the ASB Polyfest in Auckland also includes diverse cultural groups that fall outside the Māori and Pacific Island stages, giving them the opportunity to showcase who they are and where they come from. Yet, to date, we know little about the significance of Youth Polyfests for young people themselves – especially in light of the growing numbers of ethnic minority young people in Aotearoa New Zealand.

As sites where young people from superdiverse communities come together to perform, Youth Polyfests are field sites that have the potential to offer researchers rich data regarding these young people's conceptualisations and representations of their identities. Focussing on three Youth Polyfests in Aotearoa New Zealand in 2018 ASB Polyfest (Auckland), Tu Tagata (Wellington), Northern Regional Polyfest (Porirua), this study aimed to explore the role that cultural festivals may play in contributing to the identity, belonging and citizenship experiences of ethnic minority youth growing up in Aotearoa New Zealand. Thus, my overall research question explores the role that cultural festivals play in the experiences of identity, citizenship and belonging for ethnic minority youth in Aotearoa New Zealand.

This is explored through further research questions:

RQ 1. How do ethnic minority youth navigate traditional and contemporary cultural expressions through cultural performances at Youth Polyfests in Aotearoa New Zealand?

RQ 2. What expressions of solidarity are enabled through Youth Polyfests, and how do these shape ethnic minority young people's experiences of belonging and citizenship?

In order to address these questions, I employed ethnographic methodologies. As festivals are spaces which offer a multisensory experience, it was important for me as a researcher to be present in the space in order to be able to document the other participants' experiences. As part of my ethnography, I also drew on perspectives from ethnomusicology and dance ethnography. The types of data I focussed on were public statements, speeches, movement and flow in the festival space, audience responses, selection of music, choreography and costume. I also had on-the-fly discussions with performers post-performance, and I gathered data from media releases, online articles, and video reports after the festival. This allowed me

to gain a multifaceted understanding of the festival space and the role that it played for the young people who performed there.

A key personal motivation for this study reflects my own experiences of diaspora and cultural minority status growing up in Aotearoa New Zealand. Having moved from Serbia to New Zealand at the age of 11, I experienced a tension as an adolescent between maintaining my own cultural identity and assimilating into a culture that simultaneously invited me in with open arms, while othering me in the same vein. I grew up with young people from a wide range of migrant and refugee backgrounds, as well as of Māori and Pacific origin, in the schools I attended and communities I lived in. These experiences offered me insights which into how such 'other' young people's voices were often excluded from debates and priority in mainstream cultural spaces. I think that it is important to reach an understanding of the identities, spaces and strategies for survival which emerge out of the tension that diverse youth navigate daily. Further, throughout my high school years I was also part of Poly and Kapa Haka (Māori performing arts) groups which performed at Youth Polyfests and Kapa Haka competitions in Wellington and the Hutt Valley in Aotearoa New Zealand. My experience in these types of events helped me to appreciate how significant they were for a variety of reasons, in particular due to their potential to offer opportunities for expressions of identity.

1.2 Thesis Structure

The thesis proceeds as follows:

In Chapter Two I explore theoretical approaches to cultural identity, hybridity, and solidarity in light of current global flows. I then examine prior literature about cultural performance and identity in festival spaces. Finally, I explore literature specifically related to cultural festivals in New Zealand.

In Chapter Three I discuss the methodological approaches I employed in this research, outlining the rationale for adopting such approaches. I describe my ethnographic methods with emphasis on the nature of the data gathered through short-term ethnography, and I give attention to the importance of approaches stemming from ethnomusicology and dance ethnography in studying cultural festivals. I acknowledge my own position within the research, and I present the ethnographic space. I outline my methods in detail, illustrating the ways in which I approached fieldwork in the festival spaces, data management, generation of

themes through coding, and my approach to data analysis. Finally, I cover my approaches to ensuring the research was conducted ethically.

In Chapter Four I discuss the thematic content emerging from the data collected through the lens of performing identities. I offer explorations of the ways in which young people at Polyfests articulated their identities within the space, drawing upon and fusing a variety of resources stemming both from traditional performance genres, and popular contemporary genres. I examine how popular media was woven through these performances creating new forms of representation of local identities through the mobilization of references to globally popular cultural artefacts. I also cover data which shows the ways in which popular music was used by organizers to create a sense of community among those attending and performing at Polyfests.

In Chapter Five I focus on ethnic minority youth identities through the lens of solidarities. I present data which demonstrates how the festival space has potential for the formation of both ethnically homogenous and heterogenous solidarities to form that bridge across difference. I focus also on the ways in which the school community was given importance and was reflected in the festival space. I then discuss Pākehā (New Zealand European) participation and performance at Polyfests alongside the way that it is viewed both by Pākehā, and those for whom this space is originally designated. Lastly, I present data that illustrates the Youth Polyfests' as sites of potential citizenship claiming.

Chapter Six revisits my research questions of this thesis and integrates themes which emerged relating to expressions of identities, solidarities and performance within Youth Polyfests. I introduce the notion of counter-space as festival space which allows for the affirmation of non-dominant identities and a disruption of mainstream hierarchies. I conclude the research with an evaluation of the ethnographic method and make recommendations for future studies, suggesting several possible strands on future research pertinent to these festivals.

Chapter Two: Cultural Identities, Imagined Communities and Ethnoscapes

2.1 Introduction

I begin this chapter by reviewing theoretical approaches to cultural identity in the context of globalised transnational communities. I then examine literature relating to the growing processes of globalisation and the ways in which diasporic migrant youth navigate their positions within this framework. I explore notions of hybridity and 'the third space' (Bhabha, 1996) of strategies for the navigation of the tensions present within diasporic identities, as well as highlight performative avenues through which these identities are articulated. I then explore research which reveals cultural festival spaces as sites where the ideas above intersect and interact, at the same time acting as spaces which can enable the formation of solidarities and communities, as well as offer opportunities for the resistance of hegemonies and status reversal.

2.2 Globalization and Identity

In order to adequately understand the experiences of ethnic minority and diasporic youth that this study is concerned with, it is necessary to position them within their surroundings, both spatial and temporal. An essential issue to discuss early in the description of this study is *globalization.* Although it is a term that has been used to describe an array of concepts, for the purpose of this study, I will be using this word to describe a phenomenon that has given rise to a range of complex concerns in studying global societies. Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, and Perraton (1999) conceive of globalization "as a process (or set of processes) that embodies a transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions, generating transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction, and power" (p. 7). They further characterize these processes through four lenses that identify the types of changes which occur:

> First, it involves a *stretching* of social, political, and economic activities across political
> frontiers, regions, and continents. Second, it suggests the *intensification*, or the growing
> magnitude, of interconnectedness and flows of trade, investment, finance, migration,
> culture, and so on. Third, the growing extent and intensity of global interconnectedness
> […] the *velocity* of the diffusion of ideas, goods, information, capital, and people. Fourth,

the growing *extent*, *intensity*, and *velocity* of global interactions can be associated with their deepening *impact*, such that the effects of even the most local developments may come to have enormous global consequences. In that sense, the boundaries between domestic matters and global affairs become increasingly blurred (Held et al., 1999, p. 7, italicization in original text).

The last segment of the quote identifies a complicating factor in examining global flows, particularly that of culture, as the interactions between the local and the global no longer seem definite. Although, as Giddens (2013) explains, anxieties arise concerning the totalizing potential of globalization as a threat to the local and to the particular, "globalization is becoming increasingly decentered—not under the control of any group of nations, still less of the large corporations" (p. 24). The implication here, Giddens (2013) explains, is that globalization, "as we are experiencing it, is in many respects not only new but also revolutionary" (p. 21), and it has an effect on economic, technological, political and cultural flows. The dynamics of the modern world, or "the new global cultural economy", as Appadurai (2003) views it, is "to be seen as a complex, overlapping, disjunctive order, which cannot any longer be understood in terms of existing centre-periphery models […] nor is it susceptible to simple models of push and pull […], surpluses and deficits […], or of consumers and producers" (p. 31).

An important facet of globalisation in this thesis pertains to the ways in which it impacts culture as well as the boundaries of ethnic groups. Although there is an existing understanding of culture as dynamic rather than static, this no longer fully accounts for the way in which culture and ethnicity function today. Appadurai (1996) highlights that the element *ethno* in ethnicity has become too unstable to firmly grasp, urging for a theorisation of culture and ethnicity that takes into account the fact that cultural groups are "no longer familiar anthropological objects insofar as groups are no longer tightly territorialized, spatially bounded, historically unselfconscious, or culturally homogenous" (p. 48).

Instead, Appadurai (1996) proposes a framework that explores a fundamental disjuncture between culture, politics and economy by highlighting five dimensions of global cultural flows which overlap and interact. Appadurai (1996) suggests that we shift our perspective and examine global flows in terms of "(a) *ethnoscapes,* (b) *mediascapes,* (c) *technoscapes,* (d) *financescapes,* and (e) *ideoscapes*" (p. 33) (italicization in original text). He emphasises the term *-scape* as a deliberate lexical choice, intended to reflect irregular shapes

of these landscapes, shapes that characterize international capital as deeply as they do international clothing styles. These terms with the common suffix *-scape* also "indicate that these are not objectively given relations that look the same from every angle of vision but, rather, that they are deeply perspectival constructs, inflected by the historical, linguistic, and political situatedness of different sorts of actors and sites" (Appadurai, 1996, p. 33).

Among the five *-scapes* outlined above, particularly significant to this study is the principal idea of *ethnoscapes.* This is the human landscape composed of tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest-worker, and other such groups and individuals moving though the world in which we live, simultaneously shifting the politics of nations in unprecedented ways (Appadurai, 1996, p. 33). As international movements in technology, manufacture, products, services and finance increase and shift in a multitude of ways that seemed impossible before, "moving groups can never afford to let their imaginations rest too long, even if they wish to" (Appadurai, 2003, p. 32). The neologism *ethnoscape*, purposefully imbued with ambiguities, calls for a new ethnography which considers the dilemmas of perspective, and subsequently representation in the changing reproduction of group identity, especially in diasporic contexts such as those who are the focus of this study.

2.3 Diasporic Identities

In Chapter 1, I introduced the idea that new global flows have produced a multitude of diasporas which lead to new experiences and tensions in negotiating identities. There is a question that emerges for this regarding the meaning of concepts such citizenship, state, nation, ethnicity or locality for the identities of communities worldwide when groups and lives are increasingly deterritorrialised (Appadurai, 1996, p. 52). In the absence of location and geographical proximity as a mooring for culture, Appadurai argues that imagination plays a key part in cultural reproduction, and in more ways than it did before. To begin with, there are more people in the world who can now imagine "a wider set of possible lives", which instigates movement beyond what would have been considered possible in a social life that used to be largely inertial (Appadurai, 1996, pp. 53-54). Imagination and reverie, which would have served as an escape from finite and limited options, now take on a crucial role, fabricating social lives though "images, ideas, and opportunities that come from elsewhere" (Appadurai, 1996, p. 54). Even in their 'original' homeland setting, cultural lives are projects of imagination and improvisation as much as they are enactments of pre-existing scripts and habitus. However, apart from being the driver of movement and migration not only from rural

to urban areas, but from country to country, and across continents, imagination takes on perhaps an even more crucial role in the establishment of diasporic communities and their accompanying identities. This is in line with Anderson's (2006) concept of *imagined communities* which he defines as "*imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (p. 6).

As this thesis examines the experiences of ethnic minority youth who live cultural lives that could be seen in many ways deterritorialised, it is important to take into account the implications this has for questions of cultural survival and maintenance in a context where minority cultures compete with the cultures of the majority. My understandings of identity formation are closely linked to Hall's (1994) who theorises cultural formation in diasporic contexts as equally reliant upon production as it is upon recovery. He suggests cultural identities are a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being' whereby…

> […] far from being grounded in a mere 'recovery' of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which, when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different way we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past […] [cultural identities are] points of identification, the unstable points of identification or suture, which are made, within the discourses of history and culture. Not an essence but a *positioning*. Hence, there is always a politics of identity, a politics of position, which has no absolute guarantee in an unproblematic, transcendental 'law of origin'" (Hall, 1994, p. 225).

This particular lens on cultural identity is significant to this research as it points to the complex ways in which these identities are formed in a manner that is active, instead of passive. In other words, identities are not necessarily a state of being, but can instead be seen as sets of strategies, especially in the cases of ethnic minority youth, of navigation between their respective minority cultures and the rules of the dominant culture in their new host countries.

2.4 Hybridity and Third Space

One way to understand these strategies of navigation is through the notions of hybridity and third space. As I will demonstrate in Chapters 4 and 5, one of the avenues by which some diasporic communities can be seen as representing their experiences and cultivating their

identities is through hybridising practices. In contrast to the reification of culture or the aim of maintenance of purity that can sometimes emerge as part of the anxiety of absorption into majority cultures, Hall (1994) defines the diasporic experience by "the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of 'identity' which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by *hybridity*." To Hall (1994), "diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew through transformation and difference" (p. 235). In his own words, the task of maintaining or recovering conceptions of ancestral homelands is through a return "by another route" (Hall, 1994, p. 232), which involves identity tactics that entail a reformulation of available references to tradition and authenticity, while at the same time acknowledging the local, recontextualized positionings.

One of the reasons why cultural festivals are sites of interest for my study of ethnic minority youth identities is linked precisely to the strategies that allow a navigation through cultural tensions that they experience. Like Hall, Homi Bhabha (1994, 1996) also highlights hybridity as a crucial strategy in these processes by which emergent ethnic identities are formed. The necessity for hybridity arises out of an in-betweeness, in which ethnic minorities negotiate a tension between two seemingly disparate, binary, essentialized cultural modes of functioning (Bhabha, 1994, 1996). Hybridity enables "interstitial agencies" that disrupt these binaries, actively producing a liminal space at the "cutting edge of translation and negotiation" (Bhabha, 1996, p. 58). This liminal and hybrid space, Bhabha terms the *third space* (Rutherford, 1990). Due to its indeterminate, liminal nature, third space has the potential to counter colonial hegemonies and their narratives of cultural or ethnic purity. Crucially for Bhabha, the importance this type of hybridity "is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the 'Third Space', which enables other positions to emerge" (Rutherford, 1990, p. 211). As such, this space is productive, filled with possibility, and marked by its "interruptive, interrogative, and enunciative" strategies which transgress established categorisations (Bhabha, 1996). As a liminal space, this third space evades fixity to either One or the Other, instead seeking "something else besides" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 41). Thus, it is typified as a space of inclusion, initiating "new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration and contestation" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 1).

As third space is one of agency, it is linked to Hall's (1994) idea of positioning. Among positioning strategies, Bhabha identifies performance. For Bhabha (1994),

cultural engagement among diasporic, minority communities is produced performatively, regardless of its position in relation to the majority, therefore the representation of difference must not be hastily read as the reflection of pre-given ethnic or cultural traits set in the fixed tablet of tradition. The social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective, is a complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation. (Bhabha, 1994, p. 2).

The notion of performativity here is essential as it provides an avenue for diasporic identities to mediate between two spaces out of which emerges what Bhabha (2012) describes as third-space. As I will elaborate below, due to its liminality, third space can be linked to other sites, such as cultural performance and festival spaces, where notions of tradition and history, especially in diasporic contexts, can be re-inscribed. Third space is a site which emerges out of what Bhabha denominates "hybrid agencies"

which find their voice in a dialectic that does not seek cultural supremacy or sovereignty. They deploy the partial culture from which they emerge to construct visions of community, and versions of historic memory, that give narrative form to the minority positions they occupy; the outside of the inside: the part in the whole (Bhabha, 1996, p. 58).

This suggests that the ways in which ethnic identities emerge as an active process that is conditioned by two factors – occupying a minority position and seeing oneself as being a part of a whole. As mentioned above, Bhabha characterizes third-space as a site which opens opportunities for collaboration and community, out of which a number of identities can emerge formed along lines of solidarity. However, the way in which these affiliations are constructed can manifest in a variety of ways, as the following section will elaborate through the lens of solidarity.

2.5 Solidarities

Cultural group formation relies on solidarity – both internal and external connections and relationships which confirm and affirm identity. I was especially interested in ideas of solidarity following my own experiences in Polyfest performances where I made many new friends. Durkheim (1984) identified two interconnected ideas about solidarity – both of which operate in complex ways in the globalized world and condition groups' construction of ideas of togetherness. The first is the notion of shared common bonds – a sense of 'groupness' – in

line with Durkheim's *mechanical solidarity* – which are derived from shared experiences and homogenous characteristics. The second is that solidarities can develop that form much more strategic alliances which serve social relationships in society (*organic solidarity* in Durkheim's terms) or political differentiation or gain (Weber, 1978). Strategic solidarity therefore is a form of affiliation which is strategic or situational within which a "commonality is only negotiated through the 'contingency' of social interests and political claims" (Bhabha, 1996, p. 59). This is far less homogenous and can involve quite notable forms of difference which are overcome to establish a common purpose.

Ideas of solidarity often closely align with culture and ethnicity. Hall and du Gay (1996) describe solidarity as an integral aspect of identity which relate to a form of affiliation "on the back of some recognition of some common origin or shared characteristics with another person or group, or with an ideal, and with the natural closure of solidarity or allegiance established on this foundation" (p. 2). Ethnic solidarity is formed when participants draw on shared ethnic representation and adopt almost unconsciously common understandings and actions (Grancea, 2010). Tilly (1973) describes ethnic solidarity as dependent upon individuals' willingness to commit to other group members based solely on common membership. This importantly signals that ethnic membership may facilitate group formation, but not necessarily constitute a group (Weber, 1978). Importantly, forms of 'transethnic' solidarity also occur when common affiliations and experiences lend a collective affinity.

Alongside hybrid notions of identity, hybrid solidarities also exist within diasporic contexts. Another strand of solidarity which is present in the literature is pan-ethnic and trans-ethnic solidarity that is conditioned by shared non-indigenous and non-majority positions in diasporic contexts. Pan-Asian (Collins, 2009; Espiritu, 1992), Pan-African (Jaji, 2014), as well as Pan-Muslim (Maira, 2016), and Pan-Latin American (Marchi, 2013), Pan-Pacific (Mackley-Crump, 2015b) movements of solidarity have played a particular role in unifying younger New Zealand generations at times when their identities are homogenized and racialized by dominant, Eurocentric discourse: "the imposition of an homogenised racial identity […] imposes rethinking the topography of loyalty and identity in transnational *and* intercultural perspective' (Gilroy, 1993b, p. 16).

As a result of modern global flows and exchange, and the loosening of the nation-states or ethnic groups as the exclusive marker of identity (Delanty, 2009, p. 104), newer

forms of organic solidarity have been emerging (Rose, 1996, p. 130). These solidarities, instead of relying upon allegiances solely based on belonging to a homogenous group, are becoming increasingly rooted in more active "habits of solidarity" which bridge "across communities, away from narrowly constructed ethnic, religious or cultural identities, in pursuit of common objectives and a common future" (Stubbs, 2008, p. 26). Youth can lead such a process as they participate in "cultural bricolage", and "new solidarities" which are forged on "grounds intercultural dialogue and individual reflexivity on an *experiential* basis" (Bloul, 1999, p. 21), which is related to the way in which youth in transnational global positions construct their identities.

2.6 Transnational Global Youth and Hybridity

In the context of increasing transnational migration and formation of diasporic communities, scholars have argued that cultural identities are frequently fragmented, and hybrid in nature rather than singular. Taking into account the contemporary period of globalization and the accompanying rapid social transformation, Nilan and Feixa (2006) highlight that "in the information age, generational identities are de-localized", and there is a new emphasis on reflexivity and the "self-conscious invention and reinvention in the shaping of youth identities […]; A much wider feature of global culture now, and all youth engage in it to a greater or lesser degree" (p. 3).

Nilan & Feixa (2006) engage with the idea of 'global youth' – a term they choose to refer to the globalized way in which youth interact. However, they maintain that "as far as youth culture is concerned" they are not convinced that "the global eclipses the local" (p. 3). In other words, cultural innovation in the plural worlds which youth inhabit "can emerge with similar force from the centre *and* from the periphery" (p. 3). Employing a range of resources which are available to youth in contemporary times, youth cultural practices at the group level reflect their relationship to dominant power structures, "driven at the same time both by impulses of resistance and challenge, and impulses of conformity and legitimacy" (p. 9).

As my focus is on diasporic youth, I was interested to explore how their "transnational and international character points to new conceptions of subjectivity and identification that articulate the local and the global in novel and exciting patterns", standing as a challenge to the "logic of racial national and ethnic essentialism" (Gilroy, 1993a, p. 6). Taking Bhabha's (1996) notion of 'third space' into account, my study aimed to consider

how forms of hybrid and emerging identities could be facilitated through cultural festival performances.

Reproduction of culture in the diasporic context is never uniform or complete in that culture is not an entity merely relocated or transplanted into a new environment. Contextual intersections, of which there is a multitude, act upon culture, giving shape to emergent communities and conditioning cultural reproduction (Yancey, Ericksen, & Juliani, 1976). This can give rise to a form of "situational ethnicity" (Yancey et al., 1976, p. 399), one that is malleable and emerges in variety of ways, and that can change and morph over a range of daily interactions in different contexts. In fact, the multiple ways in which ethnicity manifests in the diaspora unsettles the idea that culture and heritage are portable. Ethnicity in the diaspora has, instead, "much more to do with the exigencies of survival and the structure of opportunity" (Yancey et al., 1976, p. 340) than any notion of shared heritage exclusively; this is why it is emergent rather than transplanted. The notion of situational ethnicity hints at the active process of the articulation of an ethnic identity which interacts with majority cultures in a way that gives rise to hybridity.

Some authors have identified a feature of this hybridity in diasporic communities as a link between longing and belonging (Chacko & Menon, 2013; Roy, 2013; Swyngedouw & Swyngedouw, 2009). Indeed, longings and belongings (Chacko & Menon, 2013), or "(be)longing" (Swyngedouw & Swyngedouw, 2009, p. 74), suggest a nostalgia for an imagined homeland, locality, or a particular past, alongside a longing for belonging to the now host community. For second generation diasporic youth, this articulation of tradition becomes important as they navigate an inherently hybrid identity, facing feelings of otherness in their countries of residence, and simultaneously "longing for the idea of a lost cultural heritage" (Chacko & Menon, 2013, p. 98). These ideas have been corroborated through research of diasporic youth, with evidence of diasporic hybridity (Brunsma & Delgado, 2008; Cuninghame, 2008; George & Rodriguez, 2009; Kavoori & Joseph, 2011; Richards, 2008; Swyngedouw & Swyngedouw, 2009), as well as transnationalism and multi-sited embeddedness (Bauman, 2016; Cuninghame, 2008; Horst, 2018; Murray, 2011; Swyngedouw & Swyngedouw, 2009).

Studies of diasporic immigrant youth and hybridity have indicated that second generation immigrant youth experience a high degree of self-consciousness in representing themselves, as "there is often a disjuncture between their levels of cultural competence and

the image of themselves that they wish to convey in their performances" of ethnic identity (Richards, 2008, p. 270). What emerges out of this anxiety is an emphasis on the construction of authenticity, which may be, in many ways exaggerated (Chacko & Menon, 2013; Murray, 2011). The preoccupation with maintaining authenticity involves employing *tactics of identity* (Kavoori & Joseph, 2011) which mobilise an arsenal saturated with symbols and references that reconfigure narratives from the past and infuse them into the present, generating a dialogue between these two entities that are envisioned as separate. Further, Murray's (2011) study of 'Greekness' in Australia illustrates an interactive process through which hyphenated identities are constructed, acknowledging Greek heritage as well as the way the Australian environment had impacted them. The study highlighted identity as a positioning where one can "do Greekness" (p. 70) through participation in cultural and religious activity, and the drawing together of symbols which can result in diasporic Australian Greeks being "more Greek than Greeks" (p. 78). This study illustrates the multiple and dynamic nature of cultural identities, highlighting, again, an active process by which these identities are constructed.

Apart from adherence to constructions of identities based strictly along ethnic lines, there is a strand of literature on diasporic identities which points to forms of identification that give importance to localities such as towns or neighbourhoods. In the case of second generation West Indian youth in Brooklyn, cultural identification interacts, and may even compete with identification along racial lines forming fusions and hybrids of identity. In similar ways to how Auckland has become a centre synonymous with the Pacific Island diaspora (Fresno-Calleja, 2016), or Matonge (Brussels) has become a synecdoche for the Congolese diaspora in Belgium (Swyngedouw & Swyngedouw, 2009), "West Indians in New York are just as attached to their identities as New Yorkers as they are to their identities as West Indians, and West Indians from Brooklyn attach even further significance to being from Brooklyn" (Richards, 2008, p. 269). Richards (2008) reports that most residents will use a "tripartite" (p. 277) framework to describe their identities, placing emphasis on Americanness, Blackness and West-Indianness, but with a sense of pride in being from Brooklyn specifically. This is of interest in my study of strongly localised and school-based Polyfests.

Despite strong affiliations with hometowns, second generation migrant youth can often display what Horst (2018) describes as multi-sited embeddedness, where belonging and

civic engagement are enacted in multiple sites. Focussing on citizenship-as-acting, rather than citizenship-as-status Horst explains that "civic engagement stems from belonging, while belonging is formed through actively engaging in the community. What is more, as the data show, many of the young Norwegian-Somalis and Somali-Americans we spoke to act *in order to* belong: their civic engagement denotes a claims-making to be included in a wider community" (p. 1343). Contrary to the assumption that sees transnationalism as a barrier to 'good local engagement and citizenship' on a national level, in the case of Norwegian-Somalis and Somali-Americans, multi sited feelings of identifications and duty are not in conflict. In other words, the Somali we, the Norwegian we, and the American we are all equally legitimate as "It cannot be 'either/or' for me. I belong to both places" (p. 1341).

As the above discussion shows, the representation of identity for diasporic communities is a complex process where the tension between loyalty to past tradition and fitting into new localities require the navigation of a third space. A very public way in which these emergent identities can be articulated is through cultural performance which I discuss in the following section.

2.7 Cultural Performance and Identity

> If a man [sic] is a sapient animal, a toolmaking animal, a self-making animal, a symbol-using animal, he is, no less, a performing animal, *Homo performans,* not in the sense, perhaps, that a circus animal may be a performing animal, but in the sense that man is a self-performing animal – his performances are, in a way, *reflexive*, in performing he reveals himself to himself. (Turner, 1986, p. 81)

I preface this section by citing Victor Turner's (1986) work, *Anthropology of Performance* with the purpose of outlining an understanding of performance as a key component of human functioning and articulation of identities. For Turner, sapience entails performance as another tool through which humans interpret as well as create human experiences, at the same time reflecting themselves and writing themselves into being.

For Turner, performances operate as rites of passage (Van Gennep, 1960) in that they engage participants in a tripartite process; they separate members of a group from their everyday context, place them into a liminal, marginal state in which the 'traditional' structures are usurped, and finally return them into the regular framework transformed in some way. Paralleling rites of passage, Turner identifies general patterns in performance as

involving a similar tripartite process, whereby the separation begins with rehearsals, workshops and entering the performance space, the liminal stage is the performance itself which often includes ludic recombination, and the reaggregation takes part during the cooling down segment, post-performance de-briefs, perhaps even applause (Turner, 1986, p. 25). By designating time and space for performance, groups enable *liminality* (Turner, 1969) through which participants, by witnessing or taking part, "become conscious […] of the nature, texture, style, and given meanings of their own lives as members of a sociocultural community" (Turner, 1986, p. 22). Indeed, Turner deems that "dominant genres of performance in societies at all levels of scale and complexity tend to be *liminal phenomena*" (Turner, 1986, p. 25) that enable a reflexive re-inscription of existing structures.

This understanding of performance as a liminal site can also link to Bhabha's notion of third space. Third space, as Bhabha posits, is a site where identities can be articulated in a way that is performative, enabling the emergence and maintenance of these identities among ethnic minority youth. This can be done through a number of performance genres, including dance, music and dramatic performance. Frith (1996), for example, credits music for constructing identity "through the direct experiences it offers of the body, time and sociability, experiences which enable us to place ourselves in imaginative cultural narratives (p. 124). In keeping with the liminality that festival space offers, and its proclivity for enabling hybridised forms of expression and third space, music does not merely reflect identities, but it produces them through aesthetic experiences "that we can only make sense of by *taking on* both a subjective and a collective identity […]. our experience of music - of music making and music listening - is best understood as an experience of this *self-in-process"* (p. 109). In this sense, performance itself can be seen as a form of third-space.

The use of music for the articulation of ethnic identities, and the use of popular culture in general is now more accessible due to globalization, and the mediascapes which accompany ethnoscapes (Appadurai, 1996). Therefore, global youth have a plethora of resources from which to construct and perform their ethnic identities. Connected to a global youth culture, these youth can be seen as inhabiting a "highly complex 'world'", which enables to "pull upon a pastiche of sources in their local creative practices" (Nilan & Feixa, 2006, p. 2). In terms of performance this can include the construction of various local ethnic identities, in a range of remixes and re-articulations (Gilroy, 1993a; Mackley-Crump, 2015a; Nilan & Feixa, 2006; Roy, 2013). Likewise, references to audio-visual material sampled from

popular films has been employed to perform ethnic identities (Cornet, 2018; David, 2014; Kavoori & Joseph, 2011; Nettleton, 2018; Robinson & Neumann, 2018). Thus, the local can be constructed through an array of references from the global, delineating yet another axis along which identities emerge and are articulated.

An example of how identity-formation is caught up in music and dance performance is that of hip-hop. Paul Gilroy suggests that "the aesthetic rules that govern it are premised on a dialect of rescuing appropriation and recombination that creates special pleasures" in which the continuing importance of performance is "emphasised by radically unfinished forms" (Gilroy, 1991, p. 130). Hip-hop, therefore, has informed "transnational and translational vernacular cultures" due to its malleability, adapting to producing a collectivity which, "at its insubordinate and carnivalesque best, has been known to project an immediacy, a rebel solidarity, and a fragile, universal humanity powerful enough to make race and ethnicity suddenly meaningless" (Gilroy, 2004, p. 249). This affirms Frith's idea that "music is the cultural form best able to cross borders – sounds carry across fences and walls and oceans, across classes, races and nations" (Frith, 1996, p. 269). Understanding the dynamism of music, dance and popular culture, I now turn to a discussion of the significance of performance at cultural festivals for ethnic minority and diasporic identity formation.

2.8 Festival Space

The framework of liminality lends itself well to the analysis of festivals (O'Grady, 2013a, 2013b) and it links with notions such as third space, which is understood as liminal as well (Bhabha, 1996). Festivals consist of an interruption, or discontinuum of the daily flows of life through their performative and ritualistic features. Namely, the liminal space of the festival in its "in betweenness" and its "event-ness" (O'Grady, 2013a, p. 134), leads to the development of a heightened state of engagement for spectators and performers alike. 'Event-ness' delineates a separation of the 'extraordinary' festival space from 'ordinary', everyday spaces through "alterations in appearance and behaviour" (O'Grady, 2013a, p. 138), which distinguish the festival space and the festival body as different from quotidian life. For example, the festival-goers themselves may choose to dress 'differently', donning costumes, painting their bodies, adorning themselves with clothing that they would not wear outside of the event space, which is yet another alteration in the articulation of identity performance in "festival mode" (O'Grady, 2013a, p. 138).

Although festival space often caters to human tendencies towards hedonism and frivolity, "through its commitment to play, participation and performance the festival might also operate as a covert space for the politics of possibility" (O'Grady, 2013a, p. 140), which is in line with the possibilities opened up in Bhabha's third space. In other words, the structures at play in the outside world are left behind upon entry into the festival space, making way for different structures to emerge, which, in turn, can promote radical openness, and the formation of community in the absence of mainstream hierarches. This makes festivals an opportune space for memorable, transformative experiences which can enable the creation and articulation of new identities. Among the aesthetic elements available at festivals, both sonic and visual components are powerful tools, laden with codes, for imagining the aesthetics of emergent ethnic identities, making them, as Bramadat (2001) posits, "sites *par excellence* in which young people can engage in creative negotiations of their identities" (p. 88). A variety of resources can be employed in (re)articulating an ethnic identity that mediates between the traditional and the contemporary, with the potential to simultaneously bridge across ethnic divides, thus festival spaces can be an avenue for the positioning found in third space.

2.10 Cultural Festivals

Several different types of cultural festivals have been identified in festival literature. Sanjek (2014) broadly proposes four types as a result of his study of events in American and British cities and towns. Drawing on an ethnographic study of Elmhurst-Corona and Queens in the USA, Sanjek (2014) proposed that public ceremonies, festivals and fairs could be grouped in the following way: *rituals of inclusion*; *rituals of ethnic celebration*; *rituals of continuity*; and *quality-of-life rituals* (p. 25).

Rituals of inclusion focussed on ethnic diversity, appealing for ethnic harmony, and deliberately focussed on plurality in terms of culture, language and religion. *Rituals of ethnic celebration* were dedicated to homogenous groups focussing on one's ethnicity, frequently with the connotations of ethnic pride, however pan-ethnic solidarity was also a feature of these festivals. *Rituals of continuity* ignored ethnicity, focussing instead on the recall of past traditions when everyone was White. *Quality-of-life rituals,* while also underplaying ethnicity, stressed community values first and foremost, focussing on community actions such as street clean-ups, art shows, park openings and other locality-based events that did not

depend upon ethnic identification (Sanjek, 2014, pp. 25-26). As I will elaborate below, pertinent to my study are two categories of public rituals – *rituals of inclusion*, and *rituals of ethnic celebration* as they most intensely intersect within the festivals I examined.

A key interest in my study is the role that cultural festivals play in shaping the identities of ethnic minority youth. In this section I turn to a body of international and local literature to explore what has previously been found regarding the abovementioned issue. Lee, Arcodia and Lee (2012b) view multicultural festivals as "public, multicultural themed celebrations at which multi-ethnic people—including both ethnic minorities and members of the dominant population—have an extraordinary as well as mutually beneficial experience" (p. 95). They identify three key features that multicultural festivals offer which are seen as beneficial in the construction of successful multiculturalism in metropolitan cities. These features include *cultural celebration, cultural identity and expression,* and *social interaction* (Lee et al., 2012b).

The element of *cultural celebration* places special emphasis on celebration. It draws attention to the celebratory mood in festival spaces which is particularly important as it involves a public display of cultural symbols, entertainment, and community participation, all of which focus both the performers' and the spectators' attention and intentions in positive ways, allowing an affirmation of culture (Lee et al., 2012b, p. 95). Bearing in mind the limits imposed by dominant societal groups on the opportunities that ethnic minorities have for public cultural expression, multicultural festivals are "the one ethnic arena in which there exists a readiness for ethnic communication and where ethnic expression is to be expected" (Lee et al., 2012b, p. 97). Therefore, the celebratory framing of these festivals is considered a key factor and motivator for raising the profile of emergent communities.

A further key component of cultural festivals that Lee et al. (2012b) deem important is *cultural identity and expression.* In the absence of spaces where minorities can "live out" (p. 97) their culture, there is a marked necessity for the allocation of space and resources for cultural expression that is not confined to the family unit and the household. As sites of expression of cultural identity, multicultural festivals also fulfil another function which is to "allow ethnic minorities to re-establish ties with their homeland and culture through shared expression and collaboration with members of the same ethnicity, central to the sustenance of each member's cultural identity" (p. 97).

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This leads to a third key feature of multicultural festivals which is *social interaction.* A key component of the festival space is to bring together groups from various backgrounds and have them share a space not only with each other but with the dominant community. It is the bridging and bonding both within and beyond a multicultural community which is a significant extension of the element of social interaction available at cultural festivals (Alferink, 2012, p. 99). This facilitates connections on micro and macro levels, allowing individuals and community groups to interact as visitors, performers and exhibitors in a way that can break down stereotypes and prejudices, and potentially promote social harmony (Lee et al., 2012b, p. 98). The combination of folk dance, ethnic music and the preparation of ethnic food are hugely important in providing opportunities for positive profiling of the minority to the general public (Lee et al., 2012b, p. 97). As Duffy (2005) confirms,

> multicultural festivals are sites for on-going dialogues and negotiations within
> communities as individuals and groups attempt to define meaningful concepts of identity
> and belonging, as well as notions of exclusion, which adequately account for complex
> sets of belonging to multiple spatial and communal sites (p. 679).

2.11 Spaces for Identity, Solidarity and Resistance

Sanjek's (2014) categories of public rituals – *rituals of inclusion*, and *rituals of ethnic celebration* – are particularly useful here as they most intensely intersect within the festivals I examined. In the examination of multicultural festivals, these two strands of rituals are present in the same space, where there is a recognition and a celebration of ethnic diversity. However, each performance group, or section of the festival can be dedicated to one particular ethnic group – in that sense, the ritual of inclusion depends upon smaller, embedded rituals of ethnic celebration. This can happen in the form of a variety of designated ethnically themed stalls, as seen at the Folklorama festival in Canada (Bramadat, 2001), or small, specialised villages built within a single festival space as seen at the Pasifika festival in Auckland (Mackley-Crump, 2015b). In any case, these festivals' function is two-fold: they allow for ethnic groups to represent themselves, but they also allow these groups to interact and share amongst each other, opening up a space where third-space can be articulated. Sanjek's study provides a useful framework for analysis of festivals in metropolitan areas around the globe, especially those that are in relatively comparable, settler colonial countries

such as Canada (Bramadat, 2001), Australia (Duffy, 2002, 2005) or New Zealand (Johnson, 2007; Mackley-Crump, 2015b).

One further role of cultural festivals spaces is their potential to enable citizenship making, legitimizing and celebrating groups treated in other occasions as peripheral (Akoth, 2017; Alcedo, 2014; Alferink, 2012; Cánepa, 2010; Carnegie & Smith, 2006; Duffy, 2002, 2005; Klöß, 2011; Leal, 2016; Marchi, 2013; Noble, 2010; Ohri, 2016). An example of this is the Obama K'Ogelo cultural festival in Kenya, in which the politically marginalized Luo community utilized cultural festivals "to position themselves and make claims from the state as citizens of Kenya" (Akoth, 2017, p. 196). In a country where ethno-favouritism is displayed through corrupt practices and where there is a tendency for patronage to be offered only to the current leader's home region or ethnic community, Akoth argues that the Luo communities write their own citizenship into being as they choose what to perform, and how to perform it in the spaces they are fighting to occupy. Apart from their mobilization of culture in the fight to claim legitimacy, they also draw on international events to add to the positive profiling of the Luo community, openly identifying Barack Obama as a Luo. By employing "narratives of the past to remake contemporary citizenship, and to make claims of belonging [showing that it is] 'worthy' to be a Luo" (Akoth, 2017, p. 200), this community utilized the space of cultural festival in "a grounded process and a concrete practice of claiming citizenship rights" (Akoth, 2017, p. 206).

The concept of festival space as an environment which reconfigures or fuses imaginings of the "local" and the "non-local" shows that festival performance can both challenge and destabilize accepted ideas about group identity and belonging (Duffy, 2005, p. 680). Duffy provides an account in which the performances' connections to "elsewhere" do not necessarily conflict with notions of a cohesive "local" community. In fact, the way in which musical performances creates connections to "elsewhere" enables migrant communities to engage in a process of "remaking or rearticulating the self in [...] different contexts" (Duffy, 2005, p. 683). This allows participants to "find ourselves again" (Duffy, 2002, p. 106) empowering them "to attach and reattach themselves to a sense of place and to make claims of belonging" (Duffy, 2000, p. 63). Further, performances at multicultural festivals, especially those which focus on emergent communities, enable an enactment of a *displacement* (that of the self as away from home) and an *emplacement* (an imagining of the self in a new location) – simultaneous axes along which multicultural citizenships are

characterized (Cánepa, 2010, pp. 142, 143). Bearing this in mind, presence in the festival space, and performance at these festivals not only announces a presence but weaves this presence into the fabric of the locality, at the same time claiming legitimacy (see Chapter 5).

Deterritorialized identities carry with them deterritorialized and recontextualized practices. Thus, festivals can be transplanted and accumulate a new set of meanings as they become established in diasporic contexts (Carnegie & Smith, 2006; Johnson, 2007; Marchi, 2013). Carnegie and Smith (2006) give the example of the Mela festival in Edinburgh. In its home context in India, a mela served as a meeting space in which to celebrate ethnic community and folk cultures. Once transplanted into Scotland it becomes a "showcase for global and hybridised cultural forms referred to Indianness" (Carnegie & Smith, 2006, p. 256). Further, it is no longer just the communities entertaining and performing to themselves, it is their ethnicity which is transformed into a showcase to non-Indian participants and tourist audiences, symbolizing "all that is 'colourful' about diaspora" (Carnegie & Smith, 2006, p. 256), and therefore worthy of belonging within majority spaces.

To sum up, Bhabha's concept of third space provides a framework to explore the hybrid identities of diasporic youth, as well as their performances. In this final section I turn to the possibilities of cultural festivals which enable "other positions to emerge" (Rutherford, 1990, p. 211) through the liminality of the festival performance which allows a re-inscription of societal structures (Turner, 1986). Multicultural festivals can allow a "status reversal" (Bramadat, 2001) in the liminal performance space, where minority identities are elevated into positions of status that are otherwise not available to them in mainstream contexts. Furthermore, these liminal, performative instances provide temporary utopian spaces which allow for the imagination of alternative possibilities, alternative hierarchies and alternative frameworks (O'Grady, 2013a). Apart from the actual liminality of the space in which these spectacles take place, this feature is promoted through "sensory codes" (Turner, 1986, p. 23) established within the space, elaborating a grammar and a vocabulary designated for the performance space, allowing each participant to connect to the experience within what could be considered a *counter-space*.

Counter-space literature has primarily been developed in schools – and describes a physical site in which Black and ethnic minority students feel that their experiences and racial identity can be affirmed and validated in shared proximity and with similar life experiences (Carter, 2007; Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000; Solórzano & Villalpando, 1998). In learning

environments where Black students are the demographic minority, these spaces counter the hegemony of racist and other oppressive ideologies and practices of the institution and its members. Cultural performance spaces can therefore provide a counterspace of shared solidarity through performance, but also through a shared affiliation with oppressed 'Others'. Furthermore, festivals "provide opportunities for various cultural groups to support one another and share in their struggle as a minority group in a mainstream culture" (Lee et al., 2012b, p. 97), and build solidarities through the effort of preparing a performance (Bramadat, 2001). Mackley-Crump (2015b) identified this as a point of "interdiasporic contact" where attendees and performers "may share a sense of solidarity or understanding with another group with whom they occupy a diasporic, non-majority, nonindigenous position" (Mackley-Crump, 2015b, p. 147).

Drawing together the ideas of counter-space and solidarity, Kurasawa (2004) suggests that

> politico-aesthetic carnivals are designed to interrupt everyday life's regimentation and disciplining of bodies and minds, and to pull ordinary citizens out of their lifeworlds and temporarily experience for themselves some of the characteristics of [a] kind of egalitarian and pluralist social order […]. The acts of sharing these sorts of ludic public spaces and moments with others, of discussing matters of common concern with them, or yet again of being in a crowd that marches through the streets of a city, can cultivate transnational relations of solidarity. (p. 251)

In sum, research from around the world confirms that cultural festivals play a significant role in the lives of diasporic groups in minority positions. The festival space, and cultural performance at festivals can promote the formation of solidarities, enable inscriptions of citizenship, challenge present hegemonies, as well as enable an articulation of identities. For global youth in particular, this is important as they navigate their identities in ways that are performative as well as tightly embedded with music, dance and other performance genres. Festival spaces can allow ethnic minority youth to engage with others who are in similar positions, to see and be seen by others, as well as contest stereotypes. The following section further explores these ideas, contextualising this thesis within literature on cultural festivals that is local to Aotearoa New Zealand.

2.12 Cultural Festivals in Aotearoa New Zealand

While there is a multitude of cultural festivals across New Zealand, they have not received significant attention in research. There are some notable exceptions to this including the works of Mackley-Crump (2013, 2015b, 2016), Johnson (2007), and Fairbairn-Dunlop (2013). Mackley-Crump's (2015b) work, *The Pacific festivals of Aotearoa New Zealand: Negotiating Place and Identity in a New Homeland* engages in an extensive study of the festivalization of Polynesian culture, and how this has shaped performance, place, community and identity. As Pacific peoples seek and find new identities in Aotearoa New Zealand, festivals have emerged as a key site for such identity work. Mackley-Crump (2015b) posits that the new generations of Pacific peoples born or raised in Aotearoa had come of age and were asserting themselves through new urban Pasifika identities as cultural festivals provide an openness "created around the types of performance and music that can be performed and considered representative of Pacific peoples and cultures" (p. 185), rather than fixing this entirely in traditional cultural expressions. The festivals responded to the changing needs of the Pacific communities by becoming an annual space to celebrate, (re)affirm, and assert the growth and evolution of Pacific peoples and cultures in the New Zealand public sphere.

Mackley-Crump's ethnomusicological approach in examining Polynesian festivals in Aotearoa New Zealand has also identified the significance of both music and dance in this identity construction. Music, according to Mackley-Crump (2015b), "creates the sonic landscape of Pacific festivity, an aural and visual accompaniment to the food, art and crafts, and community collectivity of the multisensory experience" (p. 119). In the ethnomusicological context, festival space is credited with offering visibility to

> Pacific musicians who were likewise gaining prominence and national profiles in unprecedented numbers. The festival space also became a forum for disseminating information about social services, beginning to address the issues that had for so long impacted the communities in a disparate nature. Empowered by the success of Pasifika and the growing visibility and influence of Pacific arts, cultures, and peoples, the number of festivals also began to grow. (Mackley-Crump, 2015b, pp. 82-83)

This consideration is important, since festivals are highly visible and public spaces, and they open a discussion about what constitutes Pacific music and culture in the 21st century, music which is linked to the Pacific youth that produces and consumes it. At the same time, these

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festivals legitimize these cultural representations through huge engagement shown by the Pacific communities in Aotearoa New Zealand. Therefore, an ethnomusicological discussion aids in showing the way in which members of the Pacific diaspora "edgewalk, between the cultures of island homelands, community elders, migrants and ancestors, and the Western culture-dominated New Zealand society" (Mackley-Crump, 2015b, p. 119).

As discussed earlier, cultural festivals also act as sites of social interaction (Lee et al., 2012b) and solidarity formation within and between cultural groups. This has been confirmed by Mackley-Crump (2015b) who found that festivals act as space where new generations and migrant elders can come together, combining with other Pacific peoples, interacting with a variety of types of migrants, highlighting strong and enduring "connections between homelands and diasporic nodes, which remain largely undiminished" (p. 145). These solidarities also often encompass tangata whenua (people of the land; Māori) as part of the Pacific, in "focusing on the interactions and interrelationships between Pacific communities, acknowledging "Māori as importantly distinctive and indigenous, but nonetheless historically and culturally related" (p. 145).

One other account of a New Zealand festival that builds on this idea of openness and illustrates how cultural traditions can be re-invented for the purpose of the performance of an ethnic identity is Johnson's (2007) research on Diwali in Wellington. Drawing on ethnography research, Johnson (2007) argues that while Diwali is primarily a religious celebration of the Hindu New Year (other religious groups also celebrate this), composed of rituals performed in the home or in temples, in Aotearoa Diwali is celebrated in much the same way as the Edinburgh Mela (Carnegie & Smith, 2006); it displays

> …a plethora of music and dance styles (traditional and modern), which are performed for insiders and outsiders alike; and they exhibit cultures, music and identities to an audience that celebrates not only the festival but what it means to be a contemporary (Indian/South Asian) New Zealander. (Johnson, 2007, p. 73)

In other words, Diwali, transplanted into New Zealand, shifts from being a religious event, instead becoming a celebration which "espouses secular consumption" (Johnson, 2007, p. 76). Johnson's research also highlights the transformative power of cultural expression.

This prior research provides a rich vein of ideas in this field to support my study, although none of the cited literature so far has focused on youth-specific festivals. There has

been surprisingly little written about cultural festivals of school-aged young people specifically, with a few exceptions. For example, research conducted in New Zealand high schools has shown how participation in cultural performance through Kapa Haka and Poly Clubs enhances schooling success (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2013; Rubie-Davies, 2011).

Bearing in mind the discussion above, it is my aim to add to this body of research, focussing on festival sites (Polyfests) and a demographic group (youth) which has not been previously studied in this light, despite the popularity of these festivals among high-school aged children. I aim to draw together the literature discussed above to investigate the following questions:

What role do cultural festivals play in the experiences of identity, citizenship and belonging for ethnic minority youth in Aotearoa New Zealand?

RQ1. How do ethnic minority youth navigate traditional and contemporary cultural expressions through cultural performances at Youth Polyfests in Aotearoa New Zealand?

RQ2. What expressions of solidarity are enabled through Youth Polyfests, and how do these shape ethnic minority young people's experiences of belonging and citizenship?

In Chapter 3, I will describe the methodological approaches I undertook to investigate the questions above.

Chapter Three: Ethnography in the Festival Space

3.1 Introduction

The central focus of this research is on the role that cultural festivals play in Aotearoa New Zealand for ethnic minority youth in the expression of cultural identity, formation of community and citizenship-making. As these elements are negotiated and interactional, and thus not readily quantifiable, I adopted qualitative methodologies with the aim of describing the ways in which these themes manifest in festival spaces. In this chapter I outline the primarily ethnographic approaches I used for this study, which offered insights into the dynamics, expressions and meanings at play at cultural festivals in a way that would not be possible through mere surveys and structured interviews. As festival experiences show high levels of embodiment (O'Grady, 2013a, 2013b), and a sense of "eventness" (O'Grady, 2013a) I needed to be present and experience events and meanings in ways that "approximate members' experiences" (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011, p. 3). This meant that my primary mode of data collection was conducted at the three youth Polyfests I attended.

In this chapter I also outline the ways in which I drew on approaches stemming from ethnomusicology and dance ethnography to collect data at festivals. I then contextualize the ethnographic spaces I worked in, describing each of the festivals I attended, and my reasons for choosing them as sites of research. I then describe my methods of data collection and explain how I analysed the data obtained. Finally, I detail ethical considerations regarding this study.

3.2 Ethnographic Methodologies

Broadly speaking, ethnography refers to two different but connected processes in the production of knowledge about "groups of people as they go about their everyday lives" (Emerson et al., 2011, p. 1). First, ethnography refers to a set of methodological approaches that apply to fieldwork and data collection which involve participating in the daily events of the field sites, with the formation of relationships with the people within it. Second, ethnography is also what social scientists denominate the systematic recording, and the subsequent written product of such studies. Ethnography, therefore, is comprised of two interacting activities: "first-hand participation in some initially unfamiliar social world and

the production of written accounts of that world that draw upon such participation" (Emerson et al., 2011, p. 1).

Geertz (1973), one of the seminal proponents of ethnography, described the practice as more than the methods which constitute it. The techniques are comprised of

establishing rapport, selecting informants, transcribing texts, taking genealogies, mapping fields, keeping a diary, and so on. But it is not these things, techniques and received procedures, that define the enterprise. What defines it is the kind of intellectual effort it is: an elaborate venture in […] "thick description" (p. 6).

Thick description, as Geertz outlines, is the effort to capture in fine detail events and gestures drawn from contexts that come to be understood through dedicated participant observation that enables the ethnographer to acquire insight into the implicit codes, meanings and structures governing these events.

Informed by these ideas, I view ethnographic fieldwork as an appropriate and insightful approach for my study, one that provides opportunities for the rich representation of festival spaces. Following Frost's (2016) assertion that festivals have their own ecologies which are better analysed using ethnographic methodology, I adopt an ethnographic approach which requires me to be present in the space. Unlike structured interviews and surveys taken out of action and space, I chose to be present in the spaces which I sought to investigate, and to engage in participant observation. This involves the ethnographer engaging with their participants through two lenses: one which requires participation and immersion in the action of the field, and another which maintains a level of detachment in order to maintain objectivity in the analysis of the unfolding action. Physical presence in the space is a requirement as the ethnographer "seeks a deeper *immersion* in other's worlds in order to grasp what they experience as meaningful and important", subjecting themselves, their body, their personality, and their social situation "to the set of contingencies that play upon a set of individuals" (Emerson et al., 2011, p. 3). In my fieldwork, I adopted flexibility in researcher identity, as appropriate for the variety of types of events that I attended, positioning myself on the observer-participant spectrum as context demanded, negotiating "ethics as contingent, dynamic, temporal, occasioned and situated" (Calvey, 2008, p. 912), seeking to "get closer" to the lives of others (Emerson et al., 2011, p. 3).

However, instead of the long-term engagement with a field site that traditional ethnography utilizes, the nature of short-term festivals meant that I was required to employ a slightly different, short term ethnography (Pink & Morgan, 2013). This entails the employment of ethnography that "use[d] more interventional as well as observational methods to create contexts through which to delve into questions that will reveal what matters to those people in the context of what the researcher is seeking to find out" (Pink & Morgan, 2013, p. 352). The nature of knowledge produced from such ethnographies is also qualitatively different to that of long term ethnography, as the data and "their development is rapid, and intense, and will grow in different ways as encountered by different people, arguments and ways of knowing long beyond the life of the fieldwork itself" (Pink & Morgan, 2013, p. 354). Extended, traditional ethnographic methodologies could not be applied in this situation as the temporal framing of the festivals also framed the methodological approaches to researching these spaces. However, a further strategy I used to compensate for these short time frames of fieldwork was the employment of media and video data published following the festivals. This compensated and supported my ethnographic work.

I also draw on perspectives from ethnomusicology and dance ethnography which enabled me to make connections between performances and themes within the festival space through explorations of musical genres, dance moves, as well as costume. Such approaches have similarly been used in previous research on cultural festivals, such as Jaimangal-Jones (2014) festival and event research, and Mackley-Crump's (2015) ethnomusicological work on Polynesian Festivals. Ethnomusicological and dance ethnography perspectives pay attention to performance components in these festival spaces, in order to explore deeper meanings (Alcedo, 2014; David, 2014; Johnson, 2007). Both ethnomusicological approaches and dance ethnography take into account the embodied and multisensory nature of the festival experience (David, 2014; Jaimangal-Jones, 2014; Mackley-Crump, 2015b; O'Grady, 2013b), and these became a focus of my study which I elaborate later in in the section on data gathering.

One of the key purposes of ethnomusicology is to investigate "relations between music and society, to consider the complex networks of interdependence existing in any social entity between, on one hand, the context and circumstances of a musical act – collective or individual – and, on the other, the nature and modalities of the act itself"

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(Aubert, 2007, p. 1). As such, music can be closely linked to experiences and performances of identity. Likewise, it is important to acknowledge that the ethnographic field in ethnomusicology is a space "filled with insiders who share views about music, musical practices, and a host of other things. It is the place where we outsiders must go to encounter these insiders and their culture and explain to other outsiders the relationship between music and culture" (Rice & Rice, 2017, p. 68). Along similar lines, Buckland (1999) describes movements (creative bodily movements) as "cultural artefacts, which, in their specific combinations and uses, belong to a specific culture or specific subculture and can be activated for specific purposes" (Buckland, 1999, p. 15). Observations of such aspects of festival performance become important in my study.

Observations of movement and flow were also important in my study. Thus, the ethnographer's presence is required in the spaces where music and movement take place, yet this is quite a subjective space – open to multiple interpretations. David and Dankworth (2014) highlight the possibility of a range of understandings of dance through varying degrees of the ethnographer's embodiment and participation within the field. Recognising the "ethnographic self" (David & Dankworth, 2014, p. 7) is a resource in the production of ethnographic knowledge. In my study, the multicultural festival space represented a range of performance traditions all carrying their own conventions. I therefore cannot claim to capture absolutely every meaning of every musical gesture, nor do I attempt to identify each movement and its accompanying meanings. Instead, what I focused on were patterns of forms of fusion that I could identify based on my own previous knowledge of music, as well as my own previous experiences at Polyfests. In the following section I will explain the process in greater detail.

3.3 Reflexivity

A crucial factor to consider is my own position and interest in this research. As I stated in Chapter 1, I grew up in New Zealand as a first-generation immigrant from Serbia. While I identify as Serbian mostly for convenience, my ethnic background is Serbian, Bunjevac, Hungarian and Montenegrin. As such, even in my early childhood I was exposed to cultural, linguistic and religious tensions and negotiations. I entered Aotearoa as I was approaching adolescence, and that period of growing up was marked by a multitude of cultural tensions, both internal, and interactional. In an absence of a large Balkan youth community in Upper

Hutt and Lower Hutt, where I grew up, I found belonging with other Others. The two groups who welcomed me were Kapa Haka and Poly Clubs. These informed my knowledge of the performance traditions often presented by such groups and have also offered me experiences of Youth Polyfests and Kapa Haka competitions. While these experiences were six years ago now, the embodied knowledge, the meanings I attach to being included in those spaces as a student, the significance of performing, as well as the processes of rehearsal and selection of pieces, are all factors which shape and influence this research.

My presence in the three festivals was primarily as an audience member with very little direct interaction with performers. The exception was the ASB Polyfest Diversity Stage, especially at the ASB Polyfest, where I had sought permission from both the festival director and the stage co-ordinators to conduct research. This permission was granted under the condition that I become visible as part of the Victoria University of Wellington team, which was hosting the Diversity Stage in 2018. Thus, my presence in this space was marked out and made official by the T-Shirt I was wearing to signify belonging to the team. This facilitated many conversations on the fly which may not have happened otherwise, as many performers would approach me with general inquiries about the university. However, also I acknowledge that being visible as part of the Victoria University of Wellington team at the Diversity Stage could have acted as a barrier for being approached by young people as it also entailed looking official and appearing to have 'adult' authority in the space. Further, although the way that I am raced varies from situation to situation, at Polyfests I was a particularly pale White face in a Brown space, so it is important to acknowledge that in many ways I did not fit in visually. This afforded me the treatment a newcomer would receive which benefitted me hugely as many young people I chatted with would be detailed in explaining the inner workings of their performances or the festival itself.

As an audience member, I was deeply moved by performances I saw at all the stages in 2018, as they reminded me of my own experiences. These included pre-performance tensions, the hours put into rehearsals, the repetition and perfecting of moves, as well as the camaraderie that we formed as we prepared together for the festivals. As an ethnographer, I found it difficult to reduce what I was seeing on stage to jottings and words – words, no matter how descriptive, cannot possibly explain or approximate the feeling, the mood, the embodied nature of being in the space, either as a performer or as a spectator, although audio and visual recordings go some steps further. My own experiences deeply shaped the ways

that I have recorded, analysed and interpreted the data I collected through this fieldwork, and also helped me to see some of the limitations in capturing the performativity of these events as well as fully conveying the sensory experiences of being in these spaces. Thus, I acknowledge that the data gathered at these field sites is framed by my own subjectivity, and is, as such, incomplete and accented by my own experiences.

3.4 Ethnographic Spaces

As my primary focus was on community, identity and citizenship-making among ethnic minority youth through performance at cultural festivals, my research required attendance at events where this could potentially be observed. My focus was on high-school aged youth (14-18-year-olds), therefore I selected events which were targeted at these specific groups in superdiverse communities in Auckland and Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand, in 2018. As part of this research, I selected three primary field sites, ASB Polyfest (Auckland, 14/03/2018-17/03/2018), Tu Tagata (Wellington, 27/07/2018), and Northern Regional Polyfest (Porirua, 03/07/2018). This was based on my availability and access to these events, but also on the fact that those are some of the few cultural festivals that focus on school-aged ethnic minority youth.

3.4.1 *ASB Polyfest 2018*

The ASB Polyfest in Auckland is a youth cultural performance festival targeted at high-school students in the region. It takes place in the Manukau Sports Bowl, which is a recreation centre that houses several sports fields, a pavilion and a velodrome. During the festival period, the space is converted into festival grounds with six stages; the Māori Stage, Samoan Stage, Tongan Stage, Cook Islands Stage, Niuean Stage, and the most recently opened Diversity Stage. The event spans four days in March, and brings in around 100,000 visitors each year, either as performers, accompaniment and support, or as spectators ("World's Largest Polynesian Festival Underway in Auckland," 2018). In spite of its humble beginnings at Hillary College, Otara in 1976, where it was organized as a way for youth to show their pride in their cultural heritage ("Festival Background,"), this festival has grown to be the largest Polynesian festival, not only in New Zealand, but in the world, with over 250 groups, 69 schools and approximately 12,150 performers attending in 2018 ("He Mihi," 2018, p. 3).

Figure 3.1 Diversity Stage at ASB Polyfest

As my focus is on youth from superdiverse communities, I was interested to see how this superdiversity manifested in the festival space. Thus, I chose the Diversity Stage (see Fig 3.1) as it was the newest, and most culturally heterogeneous stage at the ASB Polyfest. Whereas the other stages represented performance traditions from single ethnic groups, in 2018 the Diversity Stage featured 84 groups from an array of performance traditions from within the Pacific as well as further afield (e.g. India, Ethiopia, Mexico). This festival was the only one I observed that was overtly competitive with competitors judged and awarded prizes. Schools competed against each other which greatly increased the school-based competitive fervour. Each stage had its own rules and regulations for performance, often with a set of dance traditions pre-prescribed. For example, at the Māori stage the performers needed to demonstrate Whakaeke (entrance choral piece), Mōteatea (chanted song-poetry), Poi (swinging teathered weights) /Mau Rākau (choreography including weaponry), Waiata-ā-ringa (arm/hand-action song), Haka/Haka Taparahi (challenge) and Whakawātea (closing

song), in that order ("Māori Stage Rules," 2018). However, due to the vast range of cultural performance traditions seen at the Diversity stage, the regulations had to be loosened in order to accommodate this diverse expression. This also meant that it was "far less strict" (Field Notes [fn]. ASBPDS, Sarah Woods, Diversity Stage Coordinator, 14/03/2018). I attended this festival over the span of three days (14th -16th March, 2018), out of the four days when the Diversity Stage was open. As mentioned above, permission was granted to conduct research here from the festival director, as well as from the stage director

3.4.2 *Tu Tagata 2018*

The Tu Tagata festival is central Wellington's, smaller-scale Polyfest which occurs on a single evening and has taken place in Wellington annually for forty years. In 2018, the event took place inside Wellington's Michael Fowler centre which is a concert hall that frequently hosts symphonic orchestras and similar musical acts. By virtue of the spatial constraints, this was a seated event. The event hosted groups from eight schools around the region, all of whom presented performances that included a blend of Polynesian traditions, rather than a single tradition, which are commonly prepared for months leading up to the event (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2013). Due to demographic factors of the region, the Polyfest groups in the participating schools did not have enough performers to specialise in a particular performance tradition of a single ethnic group (e.g. Kūki Airani (Cook Islander) or Niuean), so performances characteristically combined a number of Pacific traditions (TT, 27/07/2018). Also, there was no element of competition, apart from one award which is allocated pre-performance to the school group which demonstrated the most outstanding level of teamwork. This festival provided an opportunity to examine the way in which these performers constructed identity, community and citizenship in Wellington in contrast to Auckland, and on a much smaller scale. Tu Tagata was also the shortest of the three festivals, lasting approximately three hours. I was in this space as an audience member, like everyone else present in the audience space.

3.4.3 *Northern Regional Polyfest 2018*

Northern Regional Polyfest is a festival held annually in Porirua, featuring performances from schools around the Porirua Basin, north of Wellington. This festival is also a single day event, and in 2018 it took place inside the Te Rauparaha sports arena in Porirua. In 2018, the arena was converted into a concert hall, with the stage set up on one, long side of the building with seating areas surrounding it. Although only seven schools participated, the event was

larger than Tu Tagata, both in the number of performances and in audience size, and it had specialized performances and specialised segments of the night dedicated to particular traditions. The following cultural traditions were presented in separate sections; Kapa Haka (Māori), Tokelau, Tuvalu, Sāmoa, Tonga, and Cook Islands. Due to the different demographic composition of the Porirua region, the festival was able to offer more specialised performances, although students often helped other groups to build numbers. For example, the Aotea College Tokelauan group describes their performance as a show of strength in togetherness (fn, NRP, Aotea Tokelau Group, 03/08/2018). Unlike ASB Polyfest, this event was not a competition. Once again, I chose this site as a point of contrast to the other two ethnographic sites, with the aim to generate a richer picture of the way in which ethnic minority youth from a range of backgrounds and in a range of urban contexts engage with ideas of identity, belonging and citizenship through performance. The three festivals I attended gave me large amounts of data which allowed me to compare and contrast, as well as to triangulate and corroborate assumptions about themes within the data itself.

3.5 Data Gathering

> Whereas people generally perceive a small amount of information regarding a situation, related to their purpose for being there, the participant observer must absorb as broad a range of information as possible, aiming to reveal the tactic elements of the situation by looking at the sights, sounds, atmosphere, proxemics, people's reactions to certain events and behaviour and so on […]. Nothing can be classed as trivial to the ethnographic researcher, which differentiates them from the ordinary participant whose presence is motivated by some purpose or goal, on which they selectively assimilate information. Everything must be considered in the process of participant observation; to enable the most accurate understanding of the situations encountered. (Jaimangal-Jones, 2014, p. 42)

The quote above describes the complex task a participant observer must perform in order to get closer to the action of a festival event, so that she can understand it and report on it at a later stage. As part of my participant observations at the sites I researched in 2018, I utilized a number of strategies in order to reach a better understanding of Polyfest dynamics, norms and etiquette. Some of the initial observations I made were to do with the event venues themselves, drawing maps of the layout of the stage spaces in order to create a better understanding of the flow of people in the space and how that impacted upon the interactions within the space. Observations to do with spatial and temporal conditions and limitations

allowed me to draw comparisons across the three festivals in terms of audience participation and engagement. An example of this is the comparison between audience seating arrangements at the ASB Polyfest Diversity Stage and Tu Tagata. At the Diversity stage, there was no formal seating arrangement and audiences could move freely in the space in front of the stage. They could dance along to the performances and people could interact with each other which meant that there was far greater mingling than at Tu Tagata, where there was formal, allocated seating, and the audience was forward facing and still for the duration of the show. This allowed me to compare the degree of spontaneity and audience response in interaction that each arrangement provided.

I also paid close attention to proxemics and to audience reactions to the performances on stage. At two of the events, ASB Polyfest and Northern Regional Polyfest, students in the audience space wore school uniforms which allowed me to observe how particular school groups were reacting to particular events. I could also observe audience responses to performance groups, and the support and cheering based on school affiliation. I was also able to note performance elements which were appealing to large numbers regardless of school or ethnic group. In terms of participating as an audience member, I monitored my own responses to performances, and used my knowledge of performance as well as musical references to uncover what made performances relatable and appealing, especially to young audiences.

In terms of ethnomusicological perspectives and dance ethnographic methodologies, I paid close attention to the ways in which performances were choreographed. One of the things that became salient through this type of observation, were themes such as fusion (of traditional and contemporary pop performance styles), which I observed particularly through the use of elements of popular culture. For example, this allowed me to observe at the Diversity Stage in 2018 the repetitive use of Daddy Yankee's *Despacito* (Rodríguez et al., 2017), across several performances, that occurred over a couple of days. Similarly, I noted dance moves that I had seen recently in dance challenge videos online and the ways in which they were used in transitions between two traditional performance segments, particularly at the Northern Regional Polyfest. I was also able to observe things that have remained the same from when I myself participated in Polyfests, particularly at the Northern Regional Polyfest and Tu Tagata. I found that some of the same pieces I performed as a student were still featuring in performances at Polyfests in 2018. I collected this type of data through jotting of

changes in music, paying attention to changes in metre, and beat patterns. I noted down lyrics, focusing closely on instances of deliberate code switching and modification of lyrics. I also made note of remixes. In terms of observing dance, I would in some instances describe the movement on stage, or describe the composition of the actual dance group, at times using words, but also sketching out choreographic formations.

Another important feature of these performances were the pre-performance speeches which each group would present at each of the Polyfests. As they were public statements, I would use a voice recorder to record these speeches. These provided framing for the performances and offer explicit insights into how the performers themselves conceived of their own performances, as well as details of how they went about choreographing them. This allowed me to observe and compare their statements with their own performances and observe the extent of their creative agency in the construction of a performance. Through these statements I was also able to observe what these young people thought about having dance groups composed of students from a variety of backgrounds and how they wished to present this diversity within the groups through performance on stage.

At the Diversity Stage, alongside these types of observations, I also took opportunities to have discussions with performers on the fly, either prior or post-performance. This was the only festival where this was possible. Opportunities often arose to do this after having seen a groups' performance as I then had enough information from which to conduct constructive chats to performers in the audience space as well as in the lunch queues. I approached youth that were resting after performances, introducing myself as a researcher at the Diversity Stage (since this was the only space where this was possible), and ask about what it felt like to perform on stage, as well as what it meant for them in terms of how they felt they were represented, and what they found most appealing about being at the Diversity Stage. This generated a range of responses, from joking ones to highly critical ones about the organization of the event itself. Also, these on-the-fly discussions revealed contexts beyond the festivals themselves, as these young people would often offer information about the difficulties they encountered in putting performances together. This frequently included information about the kinds of help or resources that their schools provided (or did not) in support of their performances.

Another one of my methods of data collection at the Diversity Stage, was photography. My co-researcher, Bronwyn Wood, had obtained media passes for us for this

event under our status as Victoria University of Wellington stage sponsors. Using this method often revealed visual elements of the performances, with a specific focus on costume. Thus, it was important to record this as it illustrated visually the aesthetic of fusion in ways that verbal expression may fail to do. In combination with the recordings of the pre-performance speeches and my fieldnotes, this formed a mixed approach in collecting data which allowed me to triangulate and corroborate assumptions. As neither one of those methodologies can possibly capture the entirety of the festival experience, my use of this form of a "mixed approach [to] ethnographic research provided benefits from the merits associated with such methods, whilst minimising the impact of their associated weaknesses" (Jaimangal-Jones, 2014, p. 41).

Finally, I accessed public discourse surrounding these events as well. Within the festival space, I recorded official speeches, jotted notes about the statements that the MC's made throughout the events. I made note of public announcements, as well as the officials and celebrities that were present at each of the events, and the functions that they served in those spaces. I also made notes and did further research on the festivals' external stakeholders, as well as those which were advertising within the space. All of this enriched my understanding of the festivals' framing. I was also able to access multimedia online. After the festivals I accessed many television broadcasts which offered further data from the festivals, including access to public interviews with performers. These enriched the data that I collected in the spaces themselves by supplementing visual audio-visual material where it was impossible or impractical for me to take photographs. Furthermore, many of the performances, especially at Tu Tagata had been recorded in full, therefore I was able to access them online, and revisit in detail each segment of the performances, from movement, song selection, band composition and costume, to audience responses.

3.6 Data Analysis

The lengthiest task of all in producing an ethnographic account is the process of data analysis. For me this began with the management of raw data which seemed to be endless and overwhelming. I began with a large amount of raw, impressionistic fieldnotes, quotes, audio recordings, photographs and online videoclips which needed to be written up and analysed. As my raw fieldnotes served as a mnemonic from which to continue writing, after time spent in the field, I sat with these jottings and typed them up, filling as much detail as I could remember about each day, engaging in a "process of recalling in order to write […] actively

re-picturing and reconstructing these witnessed events in order to get them down on a page" (Emerson et al., 2011, p. 51). I began with describing what the spaces felt like, how big the crowds were, who was there, and how crowds were moving in general. I described the layout of the space which I would sketch out on site. I made notes of the lighting in the space and how that seemed to affect the action in the space.

Following these descriptions, I then proceeded to describe, group by group, each of the performances that I observed, in order of appearance on stage. I thought it important to maintain this initially in my notes, as there could have been instances where neighbouring performances could be conditioning each other, therefore I initially preserved the actual performance order. I wrote up my fieldnotes for each of the festivals as a single document in Word, apart from the field notes from the Diversity stage, where each day was written up as a separate event. This allowed me to compare the fieldnotes from three days of research spent at the ASB Polyfest. Once this was completed, I transcribed the audio recordings of the pre-performance speeches, as well as the statements made by MCs, and then I integrated those transcriptions with the written up fieldnotes, inserting each recording next to the fieldnotes concerning the group that featured in the recording. In this way, I had a clear overview of what performers were saying about their performances, and then I had descriptions of what these performances looked like to follow. I also looked, once again, at the media releases about each of these festivals, and transcribed them separately, and I derived further notes from the photographs I took at the events.

My interaction with data on paper began first with a re-reading and "re-experiencing" of the field (Emerson et al., 2011). All my data lay before me and I read it afresh, firstly trying to remember why I found certain things important to note down and others less so. With the entire dataset in front of me I began with *open coding* which was a long and iterative process in which I did fine grain categorization of the data, line-by-line, "entertain[ing] all analytical possibilities" (Emerson et al., 2011, p. 175). At this stage I wrote comments, and code memos (brief definitions of potential themes or ideas) in the margins next to each line, avoiding any fixed theme in an attempt to capture as many ideas and themes as I possibly could, knowing that I may need to discard them. In line with methodologies in *grounded theory,* open coding allowed the themes to emerge from the "ground up", opening up possible avenues of enquiry rather than trying to make the data fit into any preconceived analytical categories (Emerson et al., 2011, p. 175). I analysed the obtained data taking a

"general inductive approach" (Thomas, 2006, p. 238). Once the different data were collated into coherent documents, it was coded for salient themes, patterns and categories, allowing "themes inherent in raw data" (Thomas, 2006, p. 238) to emerge and drive the development of my findings, with my research questions in mind throughout the process. This type of analysis, in fact, allowed for themes which I had not considered previously to emerge through the data in a way that was significant enough to form an entire chapter of this thesis. It is also important to acknowledge that I went into the research with some themes already in mind. Although grounded theory was a component of how I approached this research, the process of generating the data, and then analysing it, was more interactive. It was, however, through open coding that patterns began to emerge, and I was able to see through constant reiterations and re-framings, which themes merited further exploration.

Once I identified what seemed to be the most salient themes, I continued with *focussed coding*, which entailed employing themes derived from the data to analyse the dataset as a whole. In this stage of coding I applied some themes highlighted by my research questions and generated codes with which to revisit the data, this time drawing links between instances in the data that seemed to be disparate or unrelated (Emerson et al., 2011, p. 191). Using highlighters as representations of codes, I highlighted the data correspondingly to the codes I selected, which allowed an easy, clear, visual display of the distribution of themes and the ways in which they are thematically connected. Even more importantly, themes were not mutually exclusive, but instead overlapped in a multitude of ways, showing various intersections and interconnectedness. Some of the initial codes that I used, later transformed into, or collapsed into different themes. For example, I had initially had code memos for "school community" and "interethnic support", "community" all of which through repeated coding and arrival of new data transformed into codes that formed Chapter 5 of my findings, which focused more on agency and intent than mere community. The theme of solidarity emerged through the data, and I was then able to re-code the entire data set, finding a plethora of instances where this was happening, in a multitude of different ways (see Chapter 5).

Once this data was analysed through the coding process and I had a clearer picture of the data in front of me, I began to write up my interpretations of the themes I had encountered in the data which were to become the written product of the research I had conducted, including detailed and multifaceted representation of each category, taking into account a variety of possible cultural expressions.

3.7 Ethics

My research is part of a larger Marsden research study with the Principal Investigator Bronwyn Wood which was granted ethical approval by the Human Ethics Committee at Victoria University of Wellington on 24 August, 2017 [HEC25149]. A request was made, and permission granted on 13 March 2018 for minor amendments to this original application which included the addition of my study to the ethics application. This was all approved by the Human Ethics Committee and the same HEC number was given to the research [HEC 25149], (see Appendix 1). My attendance at these festivals was in consultation with the Festival Directors of the ASB Polyfest and Tu Tagata to ensure they know about the research and what it involves, however, at Tu Tagata and Northern Regional Polyfest, I was there as an audience member and I did not intervene in the proceedings of the event by, for example, talking to people or taking photographs.

The research did not recruit participants as such. Instead, conversations with performers, which only happened at APB Polyfest, took place at opportune moments and performers could choose not to respond. All discussions were anonymous apart from school affiliation which was made apparent through uniform or by the fact that I had observed the performer on stage with a school group. To avoid identification in small communities, I also scanned participants' quotes for potentially sensitive content, in the case of which any links to location, external persons and ethnicity was excluded from the text, even at the risk of generalization. If deemed too sensitive or revelatory, the quote was excluded from the text altogether. Seeing as my encounters with participants at festivals were brief, there were no instances of anybody offering any deeply personal or incriminating details. I made my identity as a researcher explicit to each participant I spoke to at ASB Polyfest, and this was also facilitated by the Victoria University team uniform for the event. I always offered an explanation of the research that I was undertaking, which has, at times, opened up an opportunity for the questioning and critique of the topic. In the following chapter, I will present the findings that emerged through the methodology outlined above.

Chapter Four: Performance, identity and community

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I direct my focus on research question RQ1 by looking at the way in which ethnic minority youth navigate traditional and contemporary cultural expressions through performance at Youth Polyfests. As discussed earlier, festivals are arguably events in which aspects of identity are highly observable due to the heightened way in which it is performed. Festivals are sites which offer an extraordinary mood, or "eventness" as that can provide an atmosphere where people can perform, improvise and play, encounter others and share in an environment which fosters radical openness (O'Grady, 2013a, 2013b; O'Grady & Kill, 2013). Therefore, as Bramadat (2001) posits, cultural festivals are sites where young people can creatively engage with negotiations of their identities (p. 88), mediating between traditional and contemporary expressions as they employ a variety of resources in (re)articulating an ethnic identity that at times sets authenticity aside. Furthermore, as sites of "radical openness" (O'Grady, 2013a, p. 135), cultural festival spaces serve to encourage sentiments of community, allowing a bridging across differences as they are both *rituals of ethnic assertion* and *rituals of inclusion* (Sanjek, 2014).

4.2 Youth Polyfests 2018

As discussed in Chapter 3, the ethnographic fieldwork I conducted in 2018 took place at three youth Polyfests in Aotearoa New Zealand. These events were dedicated to cultural celebration and maintenance. While all three Polyfests displayed some evidence of fusion with contemporary popular music and other mass media, the Diversity Stage at ASB Polyfest appeared to enable a greater degree of freedom for contemporary forms of expression than the other stages at the event.

A significant characteristic of the Diversity Stage was the freedom of choice of music, dance and expression it enabled. According to the MC of the Diversity Stage himself, "if you want a little extra something that the other stages aren't offering, come down to the Diversity Stage!" (fieldnotes [from here on fn.] ASB Polyfest Diversity Stage, 15/03/2018). The "extra something" may refer to the slightly different framing of the performances there. As stated earlier, the Diversity Stage features performances from a range of ethnic performance groups (unlike the remainder of the stages which cater to single ethnic groups), thus the rules have to

allow for a marking against standards that can readily be applied to a range of various performance traditions ("Diversity Stage Specific Rules ", 2018). The merit of the performances was judged along parameters such as teamwork, fun, and general entertainment value. The time slots allocated to each performance were also shorter by more than a half from those at other stages, and there were fewer judges evaluating the performances. In addition, only a few performance groups had live accompaniment on stage, which meant that the music for the performance pieces had to be selected and played through the sound system. As such, performers' freedom in music selection resulted in the inclusion of popular and contemporary tracks. Further, it allowed performers to sample music and dance from a variety of sources, allowing fusion and remixing to create connections to tradition, but also to new global trends.

While this was heightened at ASB Polyfest, there were also examples of contemporary expressions of music and dance at the other two Polyfests I observed. At the Northern Regional Polyfest in 2018 where performance groups displayed the cultural traditions of one Pacific nation, links to popular music and mass media often appeared in performances, however, they bookended traditional elements, rather than being embedded, or forming the base of a performance. Tu Tagata was similar to the ASB Polyfest Diversity Stage in that single performances had to cater to multiple Pacific groups, which by default required a negotiation and fusion of different elements. At Tu Tagata, however, each performance group had live accompaniment, which changed the way in which fusion of musical material occurred as I will explain below.

4.3 Expression of Identity

The Diversity Stage in 2018 appeared to be recognized as a site to freely express ethnic identities by performers. This theme is highlighted by one Japanese performer from Avondale College:

> R: when you're outside Polyfest, are there other opportunities to celebrate your culture, apart from it?

> S: Ummm, that's really hard to explain. I guess not really.

> R: Not so much?

> S: Not really the Japanese, cause we're very scattered.

R: Yeah

S: …and because we're living here, and with most of the people are on the North Shore or Central

R: Yeah yeah, so a small group there, but at least Polyfest brings you together really well

S: Yeah, and also Avondale's a really big school, so I guess that's why some people come, I mean there's like 40 or something of us. (int. ASBPDS, Avondale College Japanese Performance, 16/03/2018)

The quote above seems to suggest that there are two important aspects that motivated these young people to attend Polyfest. The first of these was a chance to get together to affirm a Japanese ethnic identity amongst each other. The second is an opportunity to be seen as Japanese, but also to represent their school. The festival space seems to be given importance by those who do not readily get to express their identities freely in mainstream, dominant-culture spaces, or everyday life in general.

Apart from being a space for free expression, the Diversity Stage was also seen as a site where cultural sharing occurred, and where people enjoyed seeing others be themselves. One performer from the One Tree Hill College Hawaiian Group stated that she felt represented by Polyfest as she is

"Māori, Tongan, Zimbabwean, Portuguese and umm, it's like nice just seeing, like you know, we don't see much Korean groups up there, was nice seeing Korean groups and then Tongan, just how people express their passion for their culture. I think it's really cool" (int. ASBPDS, One Tree Hill Hawaiian Group Performer, 15/03/2018).

The aesthetics of the festival space, in particular at the Diversity Stage, the notion of 'cool' seemed to unsettle the requirement for tradition. The motivation to perform at Polyfests was steeped in the search for fun, as well as ethnic identity, which is what the Diversity Stage allowed. As one performer from the One Tree Hill College Spanish group explained, "I'm Tongan so it doesn't represent me, but I have a lot of fun, and the movements are bigger than in Tongan dance where you have to be tense and precise" (fn. ASBPDS, One Tree Hill College, 15/03/2018). In other words, the expression of an ethnic identity was not necessarily the sole motivating factor for participating in a performance group, or for attending the festival in the first place, as Mackley-Crump (2015b) has also found in his research.

4.4 Performing Ethnic Identities at Cultural Festivals

The articulation of diasporic identities can involve both the re-inscription of traditional identities, as well as the affiliation with contemporary and novel identities. (Fresno-Calleja, 2016; Gilroy, 1993a; Johnson, 2013; Johnson, 2007; Kavoori & Joseph, 2011; Mackley-Crump, 2015a, 2015b; Nurse, 1999; Richards, 2008; Roy, 2013). While the aforementioned longing for a past (Chacko & Menon, 2013) may drive performers to focus heavily on preserving tradition, another strand previously identified in research seeks for global identification and legitimization, shared and common media references, "condensed into the same gestures, the same ecstatic moment" (Gilroy, 1993a, p. 8). At the three Polyfests I observed, traditional expressions of ethnic identity were articulated through and alongside a fusion with popular global culture, and global youth culture in particular. In this section, I examine how this fusion was constructed in the performance space through the use of popular music and media as signifiers in conjunction with traditional elements. Through the examples I present below, I suggest that diasporic youth are skilfully crafting a fusion of cultural performance as a hybridising strategy which enables an articulation of the third-space (Bhabha, 1996) that these young people occupy.

4.5 Popular Music at Polyfests

One strong feature across all the Polyfests was the use of modern/popular music. First, it formed an integral part of the festival soundscape. Contemporary tracks were played as the audiences made their way into their seats or in the intervals between performances. This contributed to the soundscape which created both the local feel contributing to the overall festival mood, but it also positioned the festival space within the global. Second, it also formed a part of many of the performances seen at the youth Polyfests, reflecting Gilroy's assertion that "because music is the least representational of forms, it encloses within itself a struggle against representation […] It is endowed with the power to change both time and space, setting them in new relationships and summoning up feelings that political discourse merely describes"(1993a, p. 9).

As a way to create an atmosphere in the stage environment before and after performances, contemporary popular music was played. This occurred at all festivals but was especially pronounced at the Diversity Stage. An example of this was Bruno Mars' frequently played latest album *24K Magic* (Hernández, 2016), as well as Cardi B's *Bodak Yellow*

(Almanzar, Kapri, Raphael, Thorpe, & White, 2017). The track that the two collaborated on – *Finesse* (Hernández et al., 2018) were remarkably popular. This music was played at many instances throughout the day, frequently in brief moments between performances. In fact, prior to the karakia (Māori prayer) which opened the Diversity Stage for the day of performances, the Victoria University of Wellington team would engage the performers already present in the space early in the morning in a series of warm-ups, or "hype-ups". As everyone was getting ready for opening in the Grand Stand of the velodrome, Bruno Mars' songs would boom though the sound systems, with crowds of young performers gathering to participate in the dances that one of the VUW team members was leading (fn.ASBPDS, 15/03/2018).

This music appeared to create a sense of community, by offering a shared experience of listening to and sharing an appreciation for this fragment of identifiable popular music. Performers were putting costume on, arranging their hair or having their faces painted, however music in the airwaves made people suspend action for a moment in order to applaud the DJ's selection and have a dance to tunes such as those from Bruno Mars' *24K Magic* (fn. ASBPDS. 15/03/2018). Performers would then return to their preparations with what appeared to be a collevtive, shared pulse. Furthermore, the inclusion of Bruno Mars' and Cardi B's music in the festival space inspired numerous dance encounters, where dancers from one side of the Grand Stand would shift to another side to see how others were dancing to the tracks playing. In fact much of the action within the space would take on a dance-like quality (fn. ASBPDS, 15/03/2018). There was something about Bruno Mars' music which had a uniting force, and this was reflected in the roaring of the crowd at the Diversity stage whenever one of the MCs would announce, what later became a sort of a mantra for the duration of the event - "we're gonna blast that Bruno" (fn. ASBPDS, 15/03/2018). In many ways this primed the event with positivity and 'cool', and it became a reference point which could be invoked at later moment, awakening the crowds when their attention and engagement would begin to fade, simply due to the duration of the event and the heat that is prevalent during that time of the year.

A further way that popular music was employed was on the stage in the performances themselves. Whilst there was a general understanding that the performances celebrated traditional dance, popular music was integrated on multiple occasions on the Diversity Stage. One of the most prominent interventions of popular music in the space was the inclusion of

reggaeton. This reflected reggaeton's growing global popularity associated with a recent push to popularity through artists such as Justin Bieber. An example of this was the track *Despacito* by Puerto Rican Luis Fonsi featuring Daddy Yankee and Justin Bieber (2017), which had made its way into a variety of dance scenes in 2018. At the ASB Polyfest this was prominent among Indian dance groups, many of whom included this Latin American genre in their performances. For example, both the James Cook High Indian group and the Otahuhu Indian Fusion Group used *Despacito* (2017) as a backing track for segments of their performances (fn. ASBPDC, 14/03/2018).

Similarly, at Tu Tagata, the strategic uses of hooks from popular tunes as well as the translation, fusion and rearrangement of those tracks, was a common feature of performances. As mentioned previously, Tu Tagata encouraged live accompaniment on stage with a band playing on stage and performance groups singing. This enabled performances such as the one from Wellington East Girls college, to weave mass media influences through traditional performance genres. The group began their performance with a karanga (Māori welcome call), which was followed by a rendition of Lorde's *Royals* (Yelich-O'Connor & Little, 2013) re-written in Samoan, arranged into a choral piece and backed by the band on stage using Polynesian instruments, as well as keyboards and guitars. During one of their transitions from performance piece to performance piece, they performed a brief flourish, imitating the high-pitched electronic melody from DJ Snake and Little Jon's currently popular track *Turn Down For What* (Grigahcine & Smith, 2012). This was backed by the band who replicated the beat from the song as well. Their Taualuga (Samoan performance tradition), was backed by singers performing the widely popular traditional song *'Ie lavalava* (this song featured three other groups' performances at Northern Regional Polyfest). However, the students broke the traditional beat of the song, maintained the melody, but by clapping and banging introduced a new beat akin to the one that features in Queen's *We Will Rock You* (stomp-stomp-clap) (May, 1977), as they made their way into formation for the next segment of the song. (fn. Tu Tagata, 27/07/2018).

At the 2018 Diversity Stage the performance which was perhaps the most emblematic of the themes of fusion between tradition and popular music was that of the James Cook High School Indian performance group. This group employed multiple strands of fusion and remix in order to construct a diasporic identity, one that is plural, and global, yet tied to Aotearoa. This was a purposeful construction, as shown in their pre-performance speech:

We all are individuals from different cultures; Indian, Fijian, Samoan and Cook Islands, and different religions like Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism and Islam. We have used our cultures' strengths to make a diverse team that shows our talents. Followed by the Dhol, the Indian drum, our first dance is a Fijian dance which is called Pate Pate by Te Vaka. The next performed is a Samoan dance called Afio Ane Loa by Vanzy. Following the Samoan dance will be the Cook Island dance called [unintelligible]. Lastly, we are going to end the performance with a cover of Despacito by Justin Beiber and Daddy Yankee. Our dance is a celebration of the fabric of modern New Zealand." (fn. ASBPDS, 14/03/2018)

The fusion described above is even more complicated on further inspection as the pieces selected by the performers for this performance are already fusions and collaborations. Vanzy (2014) is a New Zealand born Samoan artist who represents a New Zealand specific Polynesian identity, as well as Te Vaka (1999) who identify their sound as "South Pacific Fusion" created in New Zealand ("Te Vaka,"). Furthermore, the inclusion of the popular tune *Despacito* was not a mere citation, it was included in the performance but as a Bhangra remix, which constructs both Indianness as well as a globally and locally situated identity through the use of references from local and global popular music.

In a similar fashion the Otahuhu College Indian Group created a dialogue about diaspora by employing Panjabi MC's hit's, *Mundian to bach ke* (Beware of the Boys) (Rai, Janjua, Larson, & Philips, 1997), arguably the most well-known Bhangra tune in the world. It in itself is a product of a diasporic youth experience and has become one of the icons for Indian music among youth (Roy, 2013). Produced by Panjabi MC in Birmingham, UK, this Bhangra tune starts off as a traditional Bhangra. Beginning with a tumbi fiddle playing the hook, accompanied by the dhol drum, the singer begins the first verse in Punjabi, taking it to the chorus where it is melded together with the baseline and beat from Busta Rhymes' *Fire it Up* (Green & Smith, 1997), (that was, in turn, taken from the theme tune of the television series *Knight Rider* (Larson, 1982)). This popular tune off Panjabi MC's album, *Legalized* (Rai et al., 1997), later remixed with Jay-Z (Rai, Janjua, Larson, Philips, & Z, 2002), was used by four Indian performances I observed at the Diversity Stage in 2018. According to Gilroy (1993a) this type of remixing, especially its relation to hip-hop and youth culture,

…remains important not least because it has endowed youth cultures all over the world with a radical ethical backbone drawn from the black underground. Its politics is fostered by the fact that it routinely escapes the fixity and finality of the commodity by being

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launched into the world in radically unfinished forms that demand supplementary

creative input from other unknown users 'further on up the road' (Gilroy, 1993a, p. 9)

In sum, the musical forms expressed in the shape of sampling, fusion and remix of popular music, appropriate and re-appropriate unfinished fragments in a way that creates a dialogue between each of the constituents, provides an insight into the negotiation of traditional and contemporary worlds of minority and diasporic youth.

4.6 Popular Dance Moves

Another visible way in which popular culture was present at the 2018 Polyfests was through dance moves which have been popularized through vines and online video dance challenges. In a similar way to the music sampling described above, these brief moves function as a common reference point from which everyone can construct their own version. These moves were particularly adaptable to a variety of scenarios, including in the construction of ethnic, local and global identities, as well as served to create wide audience recognition and appeal, thus enhancing the status of a performance.

Whether by remix or through fusion, a large number of groups presented performances that included elements of popular culture which in the recent past have become popular trends online. Moves such as the *Twerk* (Bounce, New Orleans, USA), or the *Wine* (Dancehall, Jamaica), made famous by pop artists or through YouTube dance videos, also appeared in performances across the three festivals I observed. For example, the Waitakere Indian group mentioned above included both moves in a segment of their performance during which the music was layered with hip-hop beats, which transitioned seamlessly into Punjabi Bhangra (fn. ASBPDS, 14/03/2018). Likewise, some performers from the Porirua College Tongan group, as well as the Aotea College Tokelauan group at the Northern Regional Polyfest included the *Twerk* during their exits from the stage during which they broke out into modern dances (fn. Northern Regional Polyfest 03/08/2018). Along similar lines, the Porirua College Tongan group had performers flourish into the *Whip and Nae Nae* (Hip-hop, Atlanta, USA), as made popular by Silentó´s 2015 track *Watch Me (Whip/Nae Nae)* (Hawk & Mingo, 2015). K-Pop also featured in the exit sections, in the form of the *Gangnam Style Horse*; a dance move featuring in PSY's hugely popular track, *Gangnam Style* (Jae-sang & Gun-hyung, 2012). This move also featured in Tawa College's Tongan performance, as well

as in Bishop Viard Colleges Cook Island group's performance (fn. Northern Regional Polyfest 03/08/2018).

Other hip-hop moves made particularly famous by their presence in online dance challenges and vine also featured as performers exited at the 2018 Northern Regional Polyfest. *The Shoot*, which was nominated for the Nickleodeon Kids' Choice Award for Favourite Dance Trend in 2018, featured in four performances and across different performance traditions (Tawa Tongan, Porirua College Cook Islands, Mana Samoan, Aotea Tokelauan). *The Shmoney*, popularized through vines of Bobby Shmurda's single *Hot N*gga* (Brooklyn, USA) (Pollard & Tucker, 2014) featured in two performances, by the Porirua College Samoan group, and the Mana College Samoan group. Aotea College Tokelau's performance also included moves which became popular through vine, and then made their way into the widely popular video game *Fortnite* (Sugg, 2017), such as *Orange Justice* and *Hit the Folks*. The Mana College Samoan group also employed new trends in dance, with the inclusion of El Chombo's reggaeton track, *Dame tu cosita* (Donalds & Ranks, 2018) that became popular through the #DameTuCositaChallenge. The original video includes an animated alien dancing over a reggaeton beat, which the performers who are called out online are then intended to replicate. Likewise, Mana College's Samoan group had this piece play through the sound system as they exited the stage, replicating the dance that the alien from the video does (fn. Northern Regional Polyfest 03/08/2018).

Although it constructs a fusion between traditional elements and modern popular culture, the incorporation of these dance moves is also a device for humour. These moves, especially those that stem from hip-hop, often feature in vines sarcastically constructing a 'tough person' (badass, gangsta) persona for the subject of the vine video. Their employment amidst traditional performance elements might have signified a purposeful departure from what is proper, creating a sense of resistance or rebellion. However, the humorous component of the majority of these moves' trajectory through popular vine, suggests that perhaps these divergences are self-reflecting, and self-mocking, in a way that is recognisable and endearing to youth audiences. This appeared to create a sense of community through popular references, bridging across a sea of cultural performance genres which may not be familiar to the whole audience equally, however it did seem to enhance the appeal of the performance with (fn. Northern Regional Polyfest 03/08/2018) young audience members, and gained greater applause.

4.7 Film

The final mass media component I observed which young people included in their performances at 2018 Polyfests was popular film. Film frames audio-visual material around an extended narrative, and performers drew on segments of story, dance, music, or symbols to construct their performances. The most common genre of film referenced and borrowed from at the Polyfests were musicals. Incorporating song, dance and narrative, this genre provided quick sensory references to the experience and the stories of these films. (Re)producing these on stage became a way to align with the youths' own life narratives and experiences, and highlighted aspects they found to be meaningful, as well as enabling wide audience recognition which could enhance the status of a performance.

4.7.1 *Black Panther*

Upon entering the performance spaces, I never expected film to play such an important role in the creation of performance pieces, nor did I expect it to be so highly referenced in the festival space outside of performances. Films which were referenced tended to be very recently released (2017-18). Very notably, the Marvel film *Black Panther* (Coogler, 2018), released in New Zealand no more than a month prior to the ASB festival itself, was cited both by those performing on the Diversity Stage, those in the audiences, and by other attendees present in the greater festival space outside the Diversity Stage. Based on the Marvel comic of the same name, this film provided an Afrofuturistic imagined homeland Wakanda for those who bear an affiliation to the African continent and its various diasporas across the globe (Cornet, 2018; Ndaita, 2018; Robinson & Neumann, 2018). Accompanied by a co-released album of the same name (Lamar & Göransson, 2018), this film provides an imaginative account of what an African country could look like in the 21st century had it not been colonized and depleted of its natural resources. A prominent salute which is repeated throughout the film is "Wakanda forever"; a salute of loyalty to a utopian motherland. "Wakanda forever" has become a popular hashtag on the internet, and many YouTube #WakandaDanceChallenge(s) have been shared by dance groups around the globe. In line with Gilroy's (1993a) positioning of Black Atlantic culture as a counterculture of the world, particularly pertinent to youth countercultures, *Black Panther* and its accompanying soundtrack have made their way into the musical and linguistic repertoires of youth around

the globe (Saunders, 2019), which was reflected at Polyfest through frequent, vocal referencing of the film.

For some performers, Wakanda became synonymous with Africa itself. In a post-performance interview with one of the MC on the Diversity Stage, a young performer from the Waitakere African Fusion group stated that the nerves related to performing made him wish to go home, however he "decided to stay, to help the team out, after all this dedication… and to represent Africa, WAKANDA!" (fn. ASBPDS, 13/03/2018). Wakanda was also referenced by the MCs, who would use the reference when introducing African performance groups. There were also moments where "Wakanda forever!" would be shouted as part of cheering for a performance group. This happened frequently during performances that were not from the African continent. For example, during the Kelston Girls College Fijian group's performance, I heard this being shouted at the stage multiple times from somewhere in the audience. Furthermore, I would hear it shouted moving through the Polyfest space away from the Diversity Stage as well, even among parking wardens. The FreshTV coverage of the event itself also included a reference to Wakanda in the signoff. Bringing the report of the event to a close, the presenter sums up his Polyfest experience in 2018, highlighting humorous, yet prominent features of ASB Polyfest:

> Thank you Polyfest for my yearly dose of raw fish, Kathmandu jackets, Asian hats, and pineapple ice cream all over my shoes. Wakanda, forever! ("Keeping It Fresh - Polyfest," 2018)

As we can see from the statement above, in 2018, Wakanda and Black Panther became part of the fabric of the festival, a nod to a long-awaited film steeped in positive representation of Africa (Nettleton, 2018), which resonated across the world, and signified a unity through allegiance to a shared, less normative state or imagined community.

4.7.2 *Animated Film*

Two other animated films were highly referenced at the 2018 Polyfests. The Wellington Girls College [WGC] performance group at the Tu Tagata Polyfest used the dance and the music from the animated film *Lilo & Stitch* (Sanders & DeBlois, 2002). The film, set in Kaua'i, Hawai'i, opens with the main heroine of the film, Lilo, arriving late to a hula rehearsal. The music and the movement from this sequence featured in the Hawaiian portion of WGC's performance. As all the groups at Tu Tagata have their own live accompaniment, the

performers sang the song themselves with acoustic guitar and percussion in the background (fn. Tu Tagata 27/07/2018). Here we saw dance representations from mass media, film in particular, enter the performance space as a representation of Hawaiian culture. The audience received this performance very warmly, as it did every other element of popular culture reference that was present on that stage.

One other animated film, *Coco* (Unkrich, 2017), was used by the Otahuhu College Spanish group at the ASB Polyfest Diversity Stage. Their performance was based entirely on the US Chicano (Mexican-American) production, *Coco,* based on the Mexican celebration of the Day of the Dead. The dances and the songs used in the background were all based on the animated film, which was also reflected in the choice of costume – the performers had sugar-skull masks on, replicating the characters in the film (fn. ASBPDS 13/03/2018). Curiously, this group won the award for representation of the European Continent, and the assumption was that they were referring to peninsular Spanish there. The "Spanish" performance here was constructed through an American fictionalization of a Mexican tradition that was then transposed into live performance at the Diversity Stage in the form of the dance I observed. Here, the representation of 'tradition' as such was not necessarily a priority - the emphasis, again, was on fun, which was then confirmed by a brief conversation I had with one performer from this group:

> M: How does Polyfest represent you? How does your performance represent you?
>
> S1: "I'm from Uruguay so it doesn't represent all of my culture. Maybe like a general Latin American, but this was Mexican, and it was based on a cartoon that I haven't even seen, but it's fun and I had a mask on which makes it less nerve-wracking. (int. ASBPDS, 13/03/2018)

The above statement illustrates how representation of ethnicity is not necessarily a requirement for performers to participate. Instead there is a focus on fun, on being in the space, and sometimes participating for the sake of participating, with some wry acknowledgement that this was not necessarily an authentic ethnic performance. In many ways, the wide appeal generated by association with global popular culture had eclipsed the need for authenticity.

4.7.3 *Musicals*

Reflecting an important component of the motivation for participating in Polyfests in the first place, several musicals were referenced in the three performance spaces. In line with the discussion above, the importance and meaning of the festival for many ethnic minority youth was in how it allowed them to express themselves and be themselves unapologetically. In line with this, both of the following musicals which were referenced at Polyfests in 2018 had self-discovery and self- affirmation at the centre of their narratives. Specifically, the songs selected from each of the musicals, *Camp Rock* (Diamond, 2008) and *The Greatest Showman* (Gracey, 2017) had the same name: *This Is Me* (Pasek & Paul, 2017; Watts & Dodd, 2008). These songs featured at the Northern Regional Polyfest and at Tu Tagata in 2018 different ways. Tawa College's Samoan Group's performance at the Northern Regional Polyfest in Porirua featured the song from *The Greatest Showman* which was re-written into Samoan and arranged for a choir (fn. Northern Regional Polyfest, 03/08/2018). Also, on two occasions at Tu Tagata, the hook from this song also appeared, in the performance by Wellington College, as well as a hook mashed into the song from *Camp Rock* in the performance of Rongotai College (fn. Tu Tagata, 27/07/2018). The audience reactions to all these references showed that these songs and these narratives strongly resonated with the majority of spectators and further amplifying the recognition that the performances received.

4.7.4 *Bollywood*

In a similar way Bollywood featured frequently in performances as a cinematic, musical and dance genre the ASB Polyfest Diversity Stage, which had a very large number (16, including Fiji-Indo-Chinese fusions) of Indian group performances. As it is rich in musical and dance numbers, the genre is also fertile ground to draw from both as an art form due to its widespread popularity and association with contemporary pop culture. At the Diversity Stage in 2018, a significant number of both Indian and Fiji Indian groups explicitly stated that their performances included an element of Bollywood, whether through dance or selection of music, or more commonly paired with more 'traditional' performance elements. Other groups did not explicitly cite Bollywood, however, through observation of the selection of the music for their performance pieces, I noticed many groups using music from Bollywood films to represent regions in performance (fn. ASBPDS, 2018).

There was some tension, however, in the use of Bollywood, as the ASB Polyfest organisers encouraged 'traditional' art forms. Bollywood as a musical and dance form

seemed to be as much a part of the construction of Indian "tradition" (Kavoori & Joseph, 2011) at the ASB Polyfest as any other traditional regional dances such as Garba (Gujarat), Ghoomar (Rajasthan), or Bhangra (Punjab). According to one of the teachers accompanying an Indian performance group "they weren't meant to do Bollywood, but I couldn't stop them. It's part of their culture. They just love it" (fn. ASBPDS, 13/03/2018). The most prominent evidence of this was the representation of Rajasthan through the dance Ghoomar at the Diversity Stage. In fact, when Indian performance groups stated in their pre-performance speeches that they were including the regional dance Ghoomar, each time this entailed the use of choreography and music from the hugely popular, and controversial, recently released, epic period film *Padmaavat* (Bhansali, 2018c). The film, based on an epic poem, included a depiction of the Rajput queen Rani Padmavati (portrayed by Deepika Padukone) dancing Ghoomar, to the song of the same name (Bhansali, 2018b). The sequence formed part of a music video clip which was released on YouTube (Bhansali, 2018a), and it quickly became part of the performance repertoire of many school dance groups in India, despite the controversy this film sparred for not misrepresenting 'tradition' ("Education Officer Bans Ghoomar in Schools Collector Revokes Order," 2018) In spite of this, "Ghoomar" as seen in *Padmaavat* became part of the construction of tradition at the Diversity Stage, although it is a contested Bollywood reconstruction:

> **GSP:**. We created our piece using *a mix of traditional Indian dances*, which shows the range of cultures present in Indian and New Zealand societies. We're doing three folk dances: *Rajasthani – the Ghoomar, the Rajasthani folk dance*, Bhangra – the Punjabi folk dance, and Garba – the Gujarati folk dance, and two semi-classical dances. We hope you enjoy it! (fn. ASBPDS, Mt Albert Grammar School, Indian Group, 16/03/2018, my italicization in text)

The quote above reflects a general approach to the representation of traditional Ghoomar at the Diversity Stage where it seemed that diasporic youth were accessing "tradition" through mass media. The Waitakere College Indian group was a prime example of this, choosing to present a performance that was layered over hip-hop, and reggaeton beats fusing with Bollywood and Bhangra, and including twerk and wine as part of their movement. This group described their performance as Bollywood inspired, with a theme of "traditions shifting across time reflected in dance styles" (fn. ASBPDS, Waitakere College Indian Group, 14/03/2018).

As Kavoori and Joseph (2011) have aptly noted, ethnic minority youth in diasporic positions employ a variety of tactics of identity in order to navigate the hybrid, third spaces which they occupy. Among these tactics of identity, a fusion of traditional elements with contemporary ones through performance was most apparent in my study. As Johnson's (2007) research in New Zealand has shown previously, cultural festivals were sites where traditions were transformed and reconfigured as part of a recontextualization into the localities that they inhabit. This recontextualization and transformation of tradition was observable at the three Polyfests through the young performers' use of popular cultural references such as popular music, popular dance moves, film and musicals. There is some evidence from the data described here which suggests that ethnic minority youth's performances of identity were modifying and re-purposing elements from popular culture (music in particular) in order to construct an ethnic identity that did not simply require the reification of tradition but had a much more playful approach to cultural representation. Although still maintaining ties to tradition, the youth employed references to popular culture, and contributed to the festival space which enabled self-affirmation, and affirmation of ethnic identity was possible through fusion with contemporary popular global culture, while at the same time creating community. In the following chapter, I explore this aspect of community building and solidarity in the festival space.

Chapter Five: Solidarity formation and cultural festivals

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I address research question RQ2 concerning the expressions of ethnic and trans-ethnic solidarities at Youth Polyfests, and the way these shape young peoples' experiences of belonging and citizenship. As discussed in Chapter 2, cultural festivals play a role in the "mobilization of group identities" (Appadurai, 1996), becoming, arguably, increasingly important to minority groups, particularly in superdiverse populations. Mackley-Crump's (2015b) research has revealed how cultural festivals provide opportunities for forms of group and interethnic solidarities which stem from togetherness in the affirmation of a shared non-majority, non-indigenous position (Mackley-Crump, 2015b). While this chapter focuses on positive expression of solidarities, I am also aware that cultural festivals can be sites of exclusion as well. Nevertheless, youth cultural festivals I observed in New Zealand in 2018 appeared to demonstrate a potential to enable the creation and reinforcement of different ethnic and trans-ethnic types of solidarities.

In broad terms, these types of solidarities can be classified, albeit loosely, into two distinct categories which overlap and interact: namely homogenous and heterogenous solidarity. The first of these two categories I term *homogenous solidarity*. Akin to Durkheim's (1984) notion of mechanical solidarity, this type of solidarity is formed based on an affirmation of group homogeneity in terms of ethnicity, as well as other forms of belonging and identification which I will further elaborate below. The second form of solidarity will be denominated as *heterogeneous solidarity*. The term 'heterogeneous' is used here as a way of referring to solidarity that does not necessarily rely upon ethnic homogeneity, but instead, cuts across ethnic differences, allowing for other forms of identification that may or may not make ethnicity salient. In some cases, these solidarities can be strategic.

In the following section I will examine how the two forms of solidarity were enacted in multiple ways to affirm both ethnic and transethnic solidarities, as well as to maintain and create ethnic and transethnic identities. Within the category of homogenous solidarity, I noted

two other patterns; one which shows an affirmation of ethnic group unity, and another which emphasizes the need for the maintenance of cultural traditions. Further within this category an additional pattern was observed which was based on affiliations with the school community. Likewise, in the category of heterogeneous solidarities I identified several subfields from the data. The first of these are affirmations of shared positions of being Other in White New Zealand, and the second is the maintenance and creating of shared, pan-ethnic culture(s). Across both homogenous and heterogenous forms of solidarity, I note how these festivals could become sites of resistance and the claiming of rights through forms of solidarity enabled in these spaces. As I will elaborate later, these themes contribute to my conceptualization of festivals as a kind of counter-space imbued with third space characteristics that allows these types of solidarities to be inscribed and performed.

5.2 Homogenous Solidarities

5.2.1 *Affirmation of Ethnic Group*

One of the key elements that festivals offer is high visibility for a group of performers that share an ethnic identity. This makes performances at multicultural festivals opportune avenues for positive representation by allowing groups to distinguish themselves and have their ethnic identities celebrated (Bramadat, 2001; Sanjek, 2014). My data confirmed the importance of the representation of one's ethnic group as reason for participating in the cultural spectacle. There was a sense that being in the space was valued by some performers as a site of cultural affirmation. For example, the Waitakere College Filipino group described it as the "the best thing to happen to our culture" (Field notes; ASB Polyfest Diversity Stage [ASBPDS]; Waitakere College Filipino Group, 14/03/2018) (See Fig 5.1) Another solo performer made a strong statement about representing and asserting his Sikh Indian culture and musical traditions, by drumming alone on stage. He also explained that he took up playing the dhol drum by himself and that "it means a lot to be able to do this", as a representative of his culture (fn. ASBPDS; James Cook High, Solo Indian Music Performance, 14/03/2018) (see Fig 5.4). Although often anchoring their presence to New Zealand, performers would also at times explicitly refer their performances back to the traditions and history in their ancestral homelands and use these to convey ethnic unity. Even more prominent in the observations in the field were narratives and displays of this unity.

Figure 5.1 Waitakere College Filipino Group

Moreover, this unity was often posited as a requirement for survival, not only in the face of national disasters in homelands, but also in the face of the struggles with recognition while living in New Zealand. One of the most illustrative examples of this is the pre-performance speech given by a representative from the Manurewa High School Kiribati performance group (see fig 5.2), who made a strong statement about their unity and presence in New Zealand:

> This isn't just a milestone. This item holds far more importance than that. That's because our dance is in commemoration of the Butiraoi shipwreck that happened on January 18th, 2018, this year. We lost 73 people, with only seven survivors. It was a great loss for our nation, and it impacted us greatly. In our dance, we will be performing the [dance name] which is a traditional dance to let enemies know that we are here. We have interpreted it into a way to let others know, that we as a country are here, together as one. We will then continue onto the [dance name], a traditional war dance which demonstrates how powerful we are. Our final piece will be the kabuti which will showcase what we have to

offer to the community. We will proudly represent Kiribati. We are here. We are one. We are Kiribati. (fn: ASBPDS, 15/03/2018)

Linking back to the pre-performance speech from the Kiribati group above, several themes are present in the pre-performance speech. First, having a presence at the ASB Polyfest was seen as an achievement and a milestone for the Kiribati group who otherwise may not get the same kind of recognition as ethnic groups who have their own stages at the ASB Polyfest. The expression of the need to distinguish oneself from the rest, such as the statement from the Kiribati group which was made to assert their presence and unity.

Other groups also referenced moments of struggle and the ways in which these were overcome through group unity. For example, Filipino performance groups in particular, which strongly presented homogenous ethnic solidarity, would refer to "optimism in the time of economic hardship in the Philippines" (fn.; St Dominic's College Filipino Group 15/03/18) or "commemorating the devastating earthquake in the 1990" (fn.; Waitakere College Filipino Group, 14/03/2018). They would also use these opportunities to send a message of unity in the face of these struggles, emphasizing that "we are all hearts, and we all beat together" (fn. Waitakere College Filipino Group, 14/03/2018), "we go through pain together, and we heal

Figure 5.2 Manurewa High School Kiribati Group

together [...] as we raise awareness" (fn. St Dominic's College Filipino Group 15/03/18. Such types of narratives, of struggle and healing, served to create a shared narrative by many groups that was rendered both through the performance (creating it together) and through a shared affiliation to past or contemporary events and ideas.

Some groups in at the Diversity Stage indicated that having a presence in the festival space was linked to cultural vitality. For some ethnic groups, 2018 would have been the first year that their school has a corresponding ethnic performance group, and this is felt as a positive move towards becoming established as an ethnic group. One young performer from the One Tree Hill College Hawaiian Group that I interviewed felt that it was important to be able to represent her culture which she did not have the opportunity to highlight before:

> I feel really um, really, like, good being part of this group because, um, it's the first time I've been able to express my Hawaiian stuff, I've always done Cook Island or Māori, but it's aaah, it feels really good. (fn. ASBPDS, 15/03/18)

Statements such as the ones above reveals a desire among performers to work toward ensuring that those who "don't have as strong a culture as the Polynesians" (ASBPDS; Waitakere College Filipino Group stage interview, 14/03/2018) are still able to stand out and announce their presence as well, in what is a Pacific-led event.

5.2.2 *Maintenance of cultural traditions*

A further form of homogenous ethnic solidarity observed at youth cultural festivals I attended in 2018 was closely linked to cultural maintenance. In line with Johnson's (2007), observations of Diwali in New Zealand, young people at Polyfests valued opportunities festivals provided to maintain their ethnic cultural traditions in their diasporic positions in New Zealand. The importance of this aspect was emphasised at each of the three festivals through speeches made by officials, those made by the youth themselves, and through interviews. There was a narrative present which established a common understanding of the difficulties in maintaining 'home' culture and tradition in New Zealand. For example, in referencing their culture, students articulated a sense of a pressing need to "protect its future" (fn. NRP. Bishop Viard College Cook Islands; 03/08/2018) and show that it is "very much alive" (fn. NRP. Porirua College Cook Islands; 03/08/2018). Performances enabled a solidarity to be manifested in the efforts to preserve culture through performances which required a "weaving together, coming together as one, showing how powerful our ancestors

are" (fn. ASBPDS, Auckland Grammar Fijian, 14/03/2018). Such references to ancestors and ancestral homelands were frequent and there was a connectedness to ancestral roots which was accessible to youth through performance:

> We invite you to delight in the culture of the diverse island of Hawai'i... Let us take you on a journey through the knowledge of our history. Our dance is our language, paying homage to our ancestral land". (fn. ASBPDS, One Tree Hill Hawaiian (14/03/2018)

One other way groups would display homogenous ethnic solidarity was to re-enact traditional aspects of life through performance. For example, traditional agricultural methods, hunting, fighting, even religious worship were enacted and dramatized. One case which stood out was that of the Porirua College Samoan group I observed at the Northern Regional Polyfest. In line with sentiments expressed by many other observed performance groups who outwardly gave importance to the maintenance of cultural traditions, the Porirua College Samoan Group's pre-performance statement also included the narrative of unity based on nation-state affiliations for the purpose of showing cultural vitality and legitimacy:

> Talofa lava, we are the Porirua College Samoan Polyfest group. Tonight, we will showcase our Samoan culture, and our way of life. It is very much alive and rich in tradition and flavour. We are proud to represent our island nation, and we hope you enjoy our performance tonight. This could not have been possible if it weren't for the support of our teachers, and the hard work of our leaders, but, most importantly, the students. Malo, fa'afetai lava! (fn. NRP, PCSG, 03/08/2018)

While their statement echoed those that others made at youth Polyfests in 2018, the performance they presented itself was representative of the staging of culture at a cultural festival. As a way of presenting and maintaining tradition, they went beyond mere dancing, taking out a moment separate from the dance to perform an abbreviated version of the 'ava ceremony (kava drinking ceremony). This included he presence of the tanoa (large wooden bowl in which the drink is prepared), the ipu tau'ava (wooden cup with which to distribute the drink) as well as the fau (kava strainer). What was enacted on stage was the production of the kava drink as well as the honouring of guests through the distribution of the drink, thus extending the sharing of cultural performance to that of cultural traditions. Unlike the brief mimicking of drinking out of golden chalices presented at the end of Avondale College's Chinese Group's performance at the ASBPDS (16/03/2018), the ceremony presented by the group at the Northern Regional Polyfest included actual liquids and materials used for the

ceremony, and emblematic actions such as the straining, mixing and tossing the strainer over the right shoulder, causing the drink to splatter across the stage. This gave the enactment on stage a tangibility, allowing the audience for a brief moment to imagine that the stage could be a fale (meeting house). These types of powerful images contributed to the sense that the performing groups were unified bearers of cultural traditions which were still alive in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Of the Polyfests I attended in 2018, the Northern Regional Polyfest appeared to have the most formalized expression of school solidarity, possibly due to a shared proximate geographical community exclusively from the Porirua basin. Apart from general applause and shouts, the way that school solidarity was shown was through haka tautoko (haka done to honour and support the previous performance). After each performance, regardless of the ethnic group performing, a group of students from the school that had just performed would descend from the stalls and move into formations in front of the stage to perform a haka tautoko to honour a performance well done in a highly visible way. This contributed to the feeling within the NRP space, that school groups maintained a collectivity and a solidarity for each other based on school belonging. Bishop Viard College stood out in the space in particular, as, unlike the other schools present on the day, they had their own school haka which was performed after every Bishop Viard College performance. The haka itself emphasized the school's values and locality, providing framing reference points as the parameters along which to construct solidarity:

He kura motuhake,

He kura Kātorika,

No te riu o Porirua,

Upoko-o-te-Ika e!

(It is a unique/independent school,

It is a Catholic school,

From the Porirua basin,

Wellington region!) (fn. NRP, 03/03/2018)

As the above lyrics illustrate, at the Northern Regional Polyfest, solidarity can be constructed and displayed at cultural festivals along lines that are not necessarily based on ethnicity. As I observed at the Northern Regional Polyfest, school and locality can also act as a basis for the construction of solidarity. In moments when school solidarity becomes salient, other forms of ethnic solidarity occupied a slightly less active position, and students unified together in what was often an unstated competition at the Northern Regional Polyfest and Tu Tagata – only ASB Polyfest awarded formal prizes.

5.3 Heterogenous solidarities

5.3.1 *Affirmation of Shared Otherness*

As a counterpoint to homogenous solidarities described above, another strand of solidarities from the three Polyfests was heterogeneous solidarities or solidarities which cut across differences with the potential to create new collectivities among youth, akin to what Sanjek (2014) calls rituals of inclusion. This shared otherness, or shared co-minority status was explicitly referenced by MC's both at Tu Tagata 2018, and at the ASB Polyfest Diversity Stage 2018. Referred to as "brownness" by MC's, there was a recognition of a racial factor in the othering experienced by ethnic minority youth in New Zealand. At Tu Tagata, there was a counter-stigma narrative present in Hon. Aupito William Sio's address to the audience when he asserted "the four B's; Brown, Bilingual, Brainy and Beautiful" (fn. TT, 27/07/2018) as a way to celebrate and build up the young performers. A similar sentiment was expressed at the ASBPDS 2018 where the MC, addressing the audience, acknowledged the minority position of Brown youth and elevated them, while at the same time acknowledging those who are seen as showing interest and solidarity by engaging with a 'Brown' event:

> "It's beautiful to be Brown, I love being Brown. If you're not Brown, you have a Brown heart" (fn. ASBPDS, MC, 16/03/2018).

Despite this common status, it was evident that even within the space dedicated to the Other (Other to White New Zealand), such as ASB Polyfest, there were those in the position of other Others. In the words of one of the MC'S, "it is a privilege to have all these ethnicities here. It's great to have a Diversity Stage [as] all the other cultures have their own stages" (14/03/2018). This appeared to be felt by some young performers who understood that "Diversity has to cover all the other cultures, they don't have their own stages" (in. One Tree

Hill Hawaiian performer, 15/03/2018). While a shared transethnic Otherness was appreciated by many, one group stated that "there are definitely favourites, and we weren't favourites, we're over at the Diversity Stage that's just a mix-up of minorities" (fn. One Tree Hill Spanish Group performer: 15/03/2018).

Bearing this in mind, I still observed many instances of affirming togetherness in being Other and helping each other out in the face of that. At the ASB Polyfest Diversity Stage this was mostly observable through discourse presented in pre-performance speeches. Even when the dances presented on stage reflected a single cultural tradition, there would be messages of "love and unity [...] [that impart] the message that we can thread the fibre of humanity against all odds [...] in the process of having greater control over our wellbeing" (fn. ASBPDS, Avondale Fijian, 16/03/2018). To a significant number of groups it was important to acknowledge that the crew was made up of members from different backgrounds, that it was the performance that brought them together, building "something more than just a group" (fn. ASBPDS, Papatoetoe Fijian Group, 15/03/2018).The stated diversity of ethnic groups was valued and was named to illustrate this transethnic collaboration:

> We are the Hawaiian group from Papatoe High School, and today we will be performing
> two hula dances for you, at different speeds. This shows the diversity in the entire
> performance because we have a mix of cultures presenting this dance. They vary from
> Fijian, Vietnamese, Cambodian, to Tongan, Samoan and Māori. (fn. ASBPDS,
> Papatoetoe Hawaiian Group, 16/03/2018)

This transethnic expression was particularly notable in the smaller ethnic groups, like Hawaiian, which required input from external members in order to produce an impactful performance.

5.3.2 *Maintenance/Creation of Pan-Ethnic Culture*

Another prominent theme in the sphere of heterogeneous solidarities was pan-ethnic solidarity. In particular I observed this in reference to Pacific, Indian and African pan-ethnicities. This type of solidarity does not necessarily fit neatly into either the homogenous or heterogeneous category of solidarity as it caters for the necessity of representing all of the diverse constituents of a pan-ethnic culture, while at the same time ensuring that these are presented as fragments of a whole, collective narrative. Nevertheless, I have aligned it with heterogeneous solidarity as it still requires an acknowledgement and representation of solidarities transformed across internal differences. This type of solidarity is exemplified by

the structure of all three Polyfests I attended, which are established pan-ethnic, Polynesian festivals.

Throughout my observations of the three festivals, it was apparent that demographic factors play a role in the creation of a dance group. For example, At Tu Tagata there were no single-ethnicity performance groups as there simply were not enough people to carry out a specialized, mono-ethnic performance within these largely inner-city Wellington schools. Unlike at the Northern Regional Polyfest and ASB Polyfest, which are located in areas that have a sizeable population that allows ethnically homogenous performance groups, at Tu Tagata, Polynesian (and other Pālagi (White European) joiners) students from schools in the Wellington region came together in groups and produced performances that reflected the multi-ethnic compositions of their crew. For example, song lyrics such as "we are Polynesia, Pasifika" (fn. Tu Tagata, Wellington Girl's East College, 27/07/2018) were prominent throughout the performance, acknowledging the multitude of Pacific cultures. Likewise, a 'missing member' of Polynesia did not go unnoticed: "No Niue this year, I'm very disappointed. Next year, ā, please!" (fn. MC at NRP, 03/08/2018). At Tu Tagata and Northern Regional Polyfest in particular, pan-Pacific representations of performances seemed to be expected, which enabled non-homogenous groups to still function as a pan-ethnic whole, whereby "half the group you see here are Tokelau, and the other half are not. We are a mixed group, but we are all a [...] family based on love for the Tokelau dance, and family based on Pasifika values" (fn, NRP, Aotea Tokelau Group, 03/08/2018).

Pan-ethnicity at the ASB Polyfest Diversity Stage worked in a slightly different way, and it exposed the demographic factors that impacted how performances were displayed and where pan-ethnicity occurred. For example, of the six performances from the African continent, only one group was designated an African country (Mt Roskill: Ethiopian, 14/03/2018). The rest of the five groups were named "African performances". For example, the Kelston African group acknowledged this Pan-African approach, "offering moves from Nigeria, Ghana, Congo and South Africa [wanting] to show the strength of solidarity" (fn, ASBPDS, Kelston African Group, 15/03/2018). All but the Mt Roskill Ethiopian group, represented a coming together of difference showing that "we are diverse" (fn. ASBPDS Botany Downs African Group, 14/03/2018), but that they are here "to represent Africa" (fn. Waitakere African Fusion Group Leader, post-performance interview, 14/03/2018).

In a slightly different way, I observed a pan-Indian ethnicity representation at the Diversity Stage which accounted for a whole subcontinent's worth of cultures, that may have been previously homogenized. Here, in order to represent 'true' India, it was important to include its diversity:

> with different musical styles, ethnicities and colours. Our dance opens with the lotus formation from the spiritual influence of the goddess Lakshmi. And then we move out to explore the different parts of Indian culture. Each segment of our performance has music and dance based on a certain Indian culture, including Maharashtrian, Punjabi, and Gujarati, as well as the modern Indian disco culture. And the contrast between this and more traditional heritage. We aim to celebrate each of these in their own right, but our main aim is to show the way that all the different styles interweave and thread with one another, to form the rich and totally diverse culture of India. This is why our final dance ends in the starting position and unifies it all to celebrate India and what makes it unique. (fn. ASBPDS, Rutherford High Indian Group,15/03/2018)

Figure 5.3 One Tree Hill Fiji Indo-Chinese Group

Perhaps one of the most symbolic performances of pan-ethnic solidarity at ASBPDS was the One Tree Hill Fiji Indo-Chinese performance group. This group explicitly performed a unity between the three major ethnic constituencies in Fiji in a way that other Fijian performance groups symbolically hinted at through their pre-performance speeches. This group wrote a Pan-Fijian identity and solidarity into being by presenting an imagined possibility of how this might manifest aesthetically. Visually the group functioned as a colour coded, back and gold unit. However, three different styles of costume were present on stage; gold and black sarees, indigenous Fijian costumes, and Chinese dress, all with the same colour scheme (see Fig 5.3). Also, they crossed boundaries in terms of performance, choosing not to section performance into separate sets for each performance tradition, instead having three different types of dance on stage simultaneously, while at the same time mixing music in a way that enabled each of the dance types to continue, regardless of the origins of the music. Their performance seemed to have accomplished what their pre-performance statement advertised:

> We will bring to you a Fiji Indo-Chinese fusion dance, reflecting three of the diverse cultures: Indian, Chinese and Fijian, weaving together the diverseness of cultural awareness. The culture of Fiji is a tapestry of indigenous Fijian, Indian, European, Chinese and other nationalities. In this dance we will also honour our passed Indian ancestors, and Chinese ancestors, who brought their culture to Fiji in hopes to create a bright future. Not just their families, but also Indigenous Fijians, together, hand in hand to prosper in the land known as Fiji, in the hopes of not losing their culture, but binding together the essence of being from Fiji. We present to you our fusion. (fn. ASBPDS, One Tree Hill Fiji Indo-Chinese, 15/03/2018)

The above case was a strong example of what I hypothesise the third space of festival spaces allow, which is to maintain, but also reimagine identities, affiliations, and solidarities through performance.

5.4 School solidarity

In addition to the strands of solidarity illustrated above, I also observed a form of solidarity that did not rely upon ethnicity as a binding factor. Alongside ties through cultural homogeneity, another form of solidarity emerged among school groups in a form of solidarity that is likely to be unique to school-based cultural festivals. In this form of solidarity, performers affiliated with the same school would support each other and show solidarity

throughout the events, regardless of the ethnic group that was performing. In these moments, school affiliation appeared to be at least as important as ethnic identification. This was observable through a variety of explicit and implicit signals, and it manifested in ways that varied across the three different youth Polyfests. At Tu Tagata (27/07/2018), for example, performance groups and repertoires were performed by multi-ethnic youth, therefore the most salient unit that groups would centre around would be the school, (except for smaller schools or very small ethnic groups who formed different types of strategic groups in order to have enough numbers for a performance). In a few cases this was observed through the choices in costume colour which would often reflect the school's uniform, or even through the modifications of song lyrics to include references to one's school. School pride was, in fact referred to frequently, especially at Tu Tagata and Northern Regional Polyfest, where MCs would do roll calls asking each school group to make as much noise as they can, making sure that each school's presence was affirmed in the space. In fact, the MC at Tu Tagata by accident omitted to mention St Catherine's College during roll call, and later humbly apologised for the blunder, which illustrates the importance of acknowledging each of the schools that were present in the space.

Observations from ASB Polyfest also included frequent instances of school solidarity. Even though school groups dressed in cultural costume for performances, they all had to wear school uniform for the remainder of the day. This meant that by monitoring movement of uniformed groups and responses in the audience space, I was able to discern the levels of support that performances received and who that support came from. In general, groups from the same school would move to the front of the audience space to see their friends perform. One of the patterns of support revealed school solidarity through targeted cheering that referred directly to the school. Arguably, one of the most 'vocal' schools at the Diversity Stage in 2018 was Avondale College who had entered seventeen groups that year (the most of any school). These groups would cheer each other on, regardless of the ethnic group performing. There was a sense that the performers were not there just to perform their own pieces but were eager to see their friends from other performance groups be represented. No matter the ethnic group performing on stage, I would hear "SHOT AVONDALE, GO AVONDALE". This is not to say that other school groups were any less passionate about school solidarity. In an interview with a Fijian performance group from Otahuhu College, some of the students maintained that it "feels good representing our school, aye", and that they would definitely perform again with the Fijian group "but from OTAHUHU

COLLEEEEGE!" (int. ASBPDS; 2 young performers from OC Fijian Group, 14/03/2018). The following day at the Diversity Stage, I had a similar sentiment expressed to me by a group of four performers from the Papatoetoe High School, who lamented missed opportunities to watch their school friends perform, wishing that the organizers would "at least bring the stages closer together so we can support out friends at other stages. We want to be together" (fn. ASBPDS, Papatoetoe High School Fijian Group, 15/03/2018).

Another feature of school-based solidarity was Pākehā (Pālagi) participation in ethnic minority cultural performance groups. This participation it seems, was enabled by a sense of school unity and belonging facilitated by the school space. However, it also formed part of an effort towards inclusion that was valued as positive and important both by performers themselves and external commentators. For some Pākehā performers, being involved in a "really inclusive" performance group reflects their experiences of living in diverse communities; "I'm so grateful I grew up in a multicultural society, in fact, I don't know any different, as it's all I know" (int. ASBPDS; Pākehā performer, St Dominic's College Japanese group, 13/03/2018). Another Pākehā performer from St Dominic's College Japanese group stated that the motivation for participating in the group was "to learn to be open to the world" (fn. ASBPDS; St Dominic's College Japanese group, 13/03/2018). Nevertheless, White presence at the Polyfests observed in 2018 was still commented on by MC's and media. As Polyfests are predominantly Brown events, participation from Pākehā is seen as novelty and of interest, as it provides an indication of the possible crossing of ethnic boundaries. Furthermore, there was a sense that White presence here is seen as potentially legitimizing the space and lifting the profile of the event in the mainstream according to some media. For example, media coverage by the television programme Tagata Pasifika, focussed precisely on this type of participation at Tu Tagata 2018:

> Voice over: Past all the Polynesian humour in a room full of brown faces, is Jos Devereux [Pālagi], living proof that Tu Tagata is for everyone.
>
> Jos Devereux (Wellington College): Well me and my mate were like, we saw the Poly group and we were like oh like this is mean, you know, maybe we should do it, and we asked Palea um if it would be alright, you know, cause we're… you know… didn't know if it was gonna be alright and he said yeah, sure, come along and we just came along, and it's been one of the coolest things I've done at high school, ae.
>
> PRESENTER: How would you rate the experience?

Jos Devereux (Wellington College): 10 out of 10, I've just enjoyed every single moment of it, ae.

Voice over: So, if you're sitting at home thinking about if Tu Tagata is for you… it is.

Charlie Taanoa (St Bernards College): Aw just tell them to join, don't be afraid. Even if you're afakasi or not even Pacific Islander, just do it, and you'll be proud of it. ("Tagata Pasifika: Tu Tagata Polyfest 2018," 2018)

As discussed above, several strands of solidarity were observed at Youth Polyfests in 2018. These consisted of solidarities constructed upon common membership to a homogenous group as well as solidarities that transcended ethnic boundaries, creating new units. Furthermore, the element of school spirit was also present in the data which reflected the nature of Youth Polyfests as school-based events, and this highlighted the importance of school communities in the lives of these youth. Within both strands of solidarities, a desire for cultural maintenance was a significant component as well.

5.5 Claiming Rights and Resistance

In this section I wish to examine how cultural festivals could act as sites of resistance and citizenship. This builds upon this chapter by considering how forms of solidarity can also contribute to establishing affinity, rights and recognition. As Bramadat (2001) argues, ethnic cultural spectacles allow ethnic minority individuals and groups to select and curate how they are presented, thereby resisting negative perceptions in the mainstream. Also, as Akoth (2017) explains, cultural festivals can be sites where communities can assert forms of national sovereignty, contest exclusionary narratives and allow rights-claims. At ASBPDS, I observed examples of these countering narratives, as well as strong political claims. One such narrative which I have already cited above, was the Manurewa College Kiribati Performance group which laid claim to home in New Zealand, "letting you know […] [that] we are here". Similarly, cultural maintenance was posited by the Aorere College Indian group at ASB Polyfest as a way of resisting erasure and consumption by the mainstream culture, seeking assurance…

in the tradition that we're not willing to let go of. Fuse them together and this is what we have to show you about our identity and cultural diversity. Tradition will always overpower Western influences. Now sit back, relax and enjoy our performance. Dhanyawad!" (fn. ASBPDS, 15/03/2018)

The quote above illustrates an explicit critique of Western dominance. In the context of New Zealand, this group was not only asserting their presence within Aotearoa but were also resisting an entire system of cultural oppression and Western hegemony.

Language maintenance and expression was also present in the festival spaces I observed and can be seen as a form of resistance and assertion of rights. Performers at times addressed their audiences in their native tongue in a way that may not be acceptable outside the festival space. Some performance groups delivered their pre-performance speeches entirely in their native tongues without translation. This act holds discursive power, as the performers themselves hold the floor and become the linguistic gatekeepers, choosing who gets to understand what. At the same time opting for signifiers of locality with New Zealand vernacular interjections such as "I CAN'T HEEEEAR YOUUUSE" (fn. Aorere College Indian group, ASBPRD, 15/03/2018), in a way that anchored performances to local vernacular cultures, securing warm responses from the audiences, and legitimizing their presence in the festival space, in the region, and within Aotearoa.

Figure 5.4 James Cook High School Solo Dhol Drummer

There were also moments in which some performers took the opportunity to make legitimizing statements about their culture and their identity. In the case of the solo dhol drummer at ASB Polyfest (see Fig. 5.4) I mentioned earlier, he appeared to be motivated to not only represent and maintain culture, but to provide a counter-statement to negative

attitudes toward his ethnic group, "because people discriminate and stuff lately, and this [drumming] shows that we're not what you think we are. We are actually pretty advanced." (fn. ASBPDS, James Cook High, solo dhol) 15/03/2018). This statement has an even stronger impact considering that the young performer took the initiative to learn to play the instrument and brought this performance to the stage on his own.

Aside from this, there were also two performances that explicitly addressed colonialism in their home countries. St Cuthbert's Vietnamese performance group sought to distinguish an aspect of Vietnamese culture from Chinese rule and influence, letting the audience know that the upcoming dance would be "a remarkable recognition of the country's performing arts" (fn. ASBPDS, St Cuthbert's Vietnamese 16/03/2018), however the focus was on making sure that the spectators knew that "what distinguishes múa hoa đăng from its Chinese roots, is the integration of Vietnam's own traditions and cultures" into the art form (fn. ASBPDS, St Cuthbert's Vietnamese (16/03/2018). This statement asserts in a quietly political way the difference between Vietnamese and the more dominant Chinese presence in their country. Such assertions further establish an ethnic identity that counters oppressive narratives.

In summary, there are grounds in the data to be able to argue that festival spaces allow the inscription or uptake for certain types of solidarity. Among those are homogenous and heterogeneous solidarities which branch out into further subfields that interact and overlap, especially in the case of pan-ethnic identity, where there are nested constituencies and units. Finally, festival space offers an opportunity for the expression of counternarratives and critique. The data outlined above corresponds to Sanjek's (2014) notions of rituals of ethnic assertion and rituals of inclusion, showing ways in which these two types of rituals can intersect within Youth Polyfests in Aotearoa. Further, my study also confirmed the value of cultural festivals for cultural maintenance, social interaction and solidarity (Lee et al., 2012b). In the following section I will offer a discussion integrating findings presented in Chapters 4 and 5, considering them through the lenses established in Chapter 2.

Chapter Six: Polyfest Identities and Solidarities

6.1 Introduction

My primary focus in this study was to explore the role that cultural festivals may play in experiences of identity, citizenship and belonging of ethnic minority youth in Aoteaora New Zealand. Drawing on ethnographic data from three school-aged youth Polyfests in 2018, this led me to two dimensions of identity-formation which I outlined in Chapters 4 and 5. The first of these focused on the ways in which ethnic minority youth navigated articulations of identities through traditional and contemporary cultural expressions at Youth Polyfests (Chapter 4). The second focused on the expressions of ethnic and trans-ethnic solidarities enabled through Youth Polyfests, and the ways in which these shaped experiences of belonging and citizenship (Chapter 5). In this chapter, I draw together themes arising from my study to advance understandings of how festival space can be seen to be a 'third space' (Bhabha, 1996) of emergent identity-formation for diasporic youth. I also propose that cultural festivals play a role in shaping both traditional (ethnic) solidarities and enabling the creation of new (inter-ethnic and pan-ethnic) solidarities to emerge. As such, I discuss how festival provide a 'counterspace' in society of new possibilities (O'Grady, 2013a) where ethnic minority students can be affirmed, recognized and celebrated. I conclude by reflecting on some of the limitations of this study alongside some suggestions for future strands of research related to Youth Polyfests in New Zealand.

6.2 Emerging Identities at Youth Polyfests

As mentioned above, one of the key questions that drove this research concerned the articulation of identities. Prior to carrying out fieldwork at Youth Polyfests I understood these sites as spaces where identities could be articulated in a number of ways. This was informed primarily by Mackley-Crump's (2015b) work on Pacific festivals in New Zealand which connected festival performances to participants' sense of place and identity. In Chapter 3, I discussed theories that were relevant to the formation of identities among transnational and diasporic youth. I raised Bhabha's (1996) notion of 'third-space' as a lens that was useful to describe identity as space that resides between a diasporic young person's parent's cultures and that of the dominant host society's culture. Further, in terms of the articulation of such third space identities, a tension existed between traditional and the contemporary expressions

of culture. Drawing on Hall (1994), I also proposed a dynamic concept of culture in which cultural identities in the diaspora should not be seen as an essentialist position or static identity, but instead as a strategic positioning. In other words, identities are formed in active, rather than passive ways, which often involves strategies, or tactics of identity (Kavoori & Joseph, 2011). My intention in this study was to explore how cultural festival performances could serve as a platform for the articulation of identities

The data I introduced in Chapter 4 suggested a number of themes which support such identity theories. One of the most important themes in my study was that of fusion and hybridity, and that of strategies that performers used to bridge the local and the global, the traditional and the contemporary. Performers in the three festival spaces I observed seemed to articulate their ethnic identities by drawing upon both traditional cultural expressions as well as global contemporary ones as they created their performances. Furthermore, such fusions served as a reminder that the global and the local are closely linked. The music, dance moves, arrangements and lyrics used by the young performers in many cases drew strategically from global mass media and through popular online music and dance trends, fusing these with traditional expressions of culture. The references used by these youth in their performances were purposefully chosen to create an aesthetic which reflected and inscribed the reality of their lived experiences of cultural identity and ethnicity. These identities were neither completely in the worlds of their parents, nor completely in the worlds of the new host country, but instead, in a third space.

The range of fusions that I observed at Youth Polyfests in 2018 reflected these young people's lives outside of the festival space. Their performances revealed the significance of their consumption of popular global culture, how this shaped their identities, and how they chose to present themselves through their performances. My observations of the elements of popular culture that these young people used showed strong links to the global trends that they were part of. For example, I noted the wide use of the poplar reggaeton hit *Despacito* (Rodríguez et al., 2017) in many Indian performance groups' repertoires which I suggest served to articulate an Indian identity on stage which could be enhanced through alliance with this global hit. Similarly, the use Panjabi MC's track, *Mundian To Bach Ke* (Rai et al., 1997) by four Indian performances at the Diversity Stage had a similar effect. The appeal of these widely recognizable references, even at the risk of repetition, was to provide a unique take on them; more precisely, these youth were remixing elements of their cultural worlds in ways

that reflected their own experiences of occupying multiple worlds and diverse cultures, and at the same time sought recognition and support from audiences.

Further, young performers were not only remixing these elements of popular culture, but in even more complex ways, were remixing already fused and remixed pieces. This mechanism was most evident at the James Cook High School's Indian Group's performance at the Diversity Stage in 2018, where the youth chose to reflect the ethnic diversity of the performance group itself (composed of performers of Samoan, Cook Island, Indian and Fijian descent) by choosing pieces of popular culture pertinent to each culture represented. Ethnic representation here relied almost exclusively upon references to popular, contemporary genres, eclipsing the need for 'tradition' in the articulation of an ethnic identity. These young people instead opted to perform already hybrid products of the diasporic experience in the third space, simultaneously also using these references to create local celebrations of "the fabric of modern New Zealand" (fn. ASBPDS, 14/03/2018), thereby constructing local emergent identities through global references.

My focus on the utilization of global and contemporary culture is not to suggest that that notions of tradition were unimportant to these youth. These cultural performances could still be recognized as 'traditional' by cultural peers. Tradition remained a concern for youth as they grappled with notions of a history and a past that they were geographically removed from. However, the way in which these youth accessed tradition at times was also through popular media. In Chapter 4, there was an example of this which entailed a direct reference to a particular choreographed segment of a hugely popular Bollywood blockbuster *Padmaavat* (Bhansali, 2018c). The choreography of the Ghoomar dance which features in this film is contemporary, produced specifically for the film, however, for the Mount Albert Grammar School Indian Group at the Diversity Stage, this piece became the reference from which they constructed tradition in the New Zealand context. Such articulations of identity reflected the ways in which cultural practices in new, diasporic contexts became re-purposed in a way that removed them from their initial surroundings.

Further strategies of fusion and hybridization were also present in these spaces, such as translations, re-writings and rearrangements. At the Northern Regional Polyfest and at Tu Tagata, there was a larger focus on group performance of their own music on stage rather than relying on a backing track. This enabled an array of choral arrangements which were sung by the dancers themselves. These choral arrangements often included pieces of popular

Western music which at times were domesticated through translation into the groups' respective languages. Again, effects of global mass media became apparent in performances with performers actively engaged with elements of these media to create appeal, status and recognition. In the case of Tawa College Samoan Group's performance, the song *This Is Me* (Pasek & Paul, 2017)*,* from the film *The Greatest Showman* (Gracey, 2017), was re-written into Samoan. In the context of the festival space, this created a dialogue between the popular melody and the language that this song was now sung in. By re-writing the lyrics, this globally known melody became Samoan in Aotearoa, which showed in a very eloquent way how the local context conditions the reception and understanding of the global for ethnic minority youth. The young people performing at these festivals were not only sampling references from these popular genres but are instead doing so in a way that shows a degree of reflexivity and positioning (Hall, 1994). This was also found in Johnson's (2007) study of Diwali performances in Wellington in which "identity is shaped and constructed in this site as a direct result of performance; performers showcase locally produced acts" (p. 89), though which they straddled local and transnational notions of culture and ethnic identity.

This was also very evident in the young people's employment of popular dance moves. At Northern Regional Polyfest and Tu Tagata festivals many of the performances included dance moves which were popular online at the time. These easily-identifiable moves to youth were woven in-between larger sets of traditional movement. They were also used during the transition from a traditional block of performance to the following one. The way in which this was done created a traditional/contemporary fragmentation of the performance sets which appeared to achieve significant audience responses and applause. The use of such music and dance moves which had featured in internet vine, also brought humor to the stages at the Polyfests in 2018. They reflected the increasingly globally-connected cultural lives that these young people live, and they also lightened up otherwise very serious performances, which always garnered warm applause from audiences.

My research also highlighted the importance of hip-hop occupied in the festival spaces in 2018. As I noted in Chapter 4, hip-hop was not only a popular expression in the Polyfests, but also served as a mechanism for the remixing of culture. Hip-hop provided an array of ready-made vocabulary and popular references for youth to include in these performances, there was also evidence that these youth were adopting hip-hop as a modus operandi for constructing a performance. They did this by removing fragments of culture

from their original settings and weaving them together in novel ways sampling from a range of sources in order to construct local identities by ways of translation, mash-up, and fragmentation, while still making sure that each reference remains recognizable in spite of its reformulation. The data from my study affirms Gilroy's view of hip-hop (1993a) which has a tendency to

> …borrow and steal from everywhere, to cannibalise the everyday and to make redemptive art out of the refuse of reality. That modernist process of montage-mixing, creating pleasures from these acts of piracy. It built an (anti-)aesthetic around the practice of mutation and recombination. Its pleasures increased in proportion to the distance that had formerly separated the bits and pieces that were now dislocated into new meanings. Distance itself was subdued by this creative process. (Gilroy, 1993a, pp. 9-10)

My research confirmed the practice of 'montage-mixing' which enabled a link to be made between the aesthetics of hip-hop and the aesthetics of diasporic identities as well as the significance of 'distance' and 'de-mooring'. The distance play that is present in hip-hop which de-contextualizes, re-purposes and re-contextualizes traditional elements in novel and attractive ways, was particularly useful for the articulation of identities of ethnic minority youth in diasporic positions in Aotearoa. It allowed for fragments of their identities, geographical distance from places of origin, even intergenerational distance to be bridged through remix. In other words, the experience of navigating the third-space can aptly be illustrated through hip-hop which has the power to draw together disparate fragments of identity that stand in tension – tradition and popular culture, the local and the global, the general and the particular, the present and the past. Hip-hop allowed contradictions to exist without problematizing them, which is what ethnic minority youth who navigated spaces that are laden with contradictions were required in do order to articulate and perform their identities.

6.3 Community and Solidarities at Youth Polyfests

My second sub-question was concerned with the formation of solidarities and sentiments of belonging and citizenship in festival spaces. Mackley-Crump's (2015b) study of Pacific festivals in New Zealand demonstrated that festivals can be important sites for community building as well as for reinforcing sentiments of solidarity within and between cultural groups who occupy similar, non-dominant, non-indigenous positions in Aotearoa. Likewise, a

number of other authors (Bramadat, 2001; Lee, Arcodia, & Lee, 2012b; Sanjek, 2014) point to the potential for festival spaces to increase bonds within communities by bringing them together and allowing them to interact in these spaces. In Chapter 5, I focused on the ways in which notions of identity interacted with notions of community and solidarity. As I discussed, there were many forms of solidarities present in the festival space.

In Chapter 5 I identified two main forms of solidarity, homogenous and heterogenous, both of which could also be divided into further, smaller categories. By homogenous solidarities I referred to solidarities based on a shared, singular ethnic group. In line with Sanjek's (2014) notion of 'rituals of ethnic celebration', there were performances at the Polyfests which demonstrated ethnic unity and the maintenance of cultural traditions to affirm homogenous cultural groups. Performing at the Polyfests, particularly on the Diversity Stage, also appeared to be a way to gain recognition as an emergent community in New Zealand. For example, much was made by the MCs and the audience of groups performing for the first time – such as the Tibetan and Indo-Papuan groups at the Diversity Stage. Homogenous ethnic solidarities were articulated explicitly through the narratives that groups would provide about their performances, often opting for a reference to ancestral homelands and ancestral roots (such as the Avondale College Filipino Group), or through a shared common struggle or tragic event which would serve as an anchor to shared historical memories (such as the Manurewa High School Kiribati performance).

Solidarity in these festival spaces did not, however, only depend upon homogenous ethnic affiliation. Instead, reflecting of the superdiverse environments that these youth live in, transethnic solidarities were also enacted in a multitude of ways. Sanjek's (2014) 'rituals of inclusion', where the recognition of togetherness in diversity takes precedence, were also present among the expressions of solidarity in the Polyfests I attended. I referred to this as heterogenous expressions of solidarity in Chapter 5. Racial aspects of shared affinities were highlighted through statements of collective 'brownness'. However, even if one was not necessarily brown, by virtue of being in the festival spaces, they were included in 'brownness', which appeared to be a recognition of participation in the festival space as an expression of solidarity in itself, whereby even "if you're not Brown, you have a Brown heart" (fn. ASBPDS, MC, 16/03/2018). In particular, Pākehā participation in these performances was perceived by performers I talked to as positive boundary crossing that

signified progress in terms of acceptance of the cultures represented at these Polyfests, as well as a way to legitimize the festivals and performances.

Even more importantly, festival performance allowed cultural groups to articulate new ways of seeing themselves as belonging together. This was particularly true of pan-ethnic performances where, due to demographic factors, there was a lack of opportunity for specialised, ethnically homogenous performances. In the absence of large enough numbers, groups opted for pan-ethnic representations, which would cover a wide range of performance traditions that also crossed ethnic boundaries but were presented as a unified group (such as 'African', Indian and some 'Pacific' fusion performances). Further still, this could manifest as a re-inscription of ethnic identity, as in the case of the One Tree Hill Fiji Indo-Chinese performance group at the Diversity stage. This group employed cultural fusion and hybridizing performance strategies through choreography, musical selection and costume to create a (pan) 'Fijian' identity. The festival space enabled a reconfiguration of what, in their homeland would be separate, and at times even clashing traditions. However, in the context of Aotearoa, this relationship is re-inscribed as a pan-Fijian identity made possible by the festival space.

Another important form of solidarity illustrated in my study was solidarity among performers and audience members from the same school. This was a particular feature of the three Polyfests and one previously not noted in much festival research. School solidarity in the festival spaces revealed another important way in which these ethnic minority youth positioned their identities. It did not exclusively revolve around considerations of ethnicity, but was equally tied to the locality, to the neighbourhood and to the school which these youth came from. Performances from young people at these three school-aged Polyfests served to not only represent their ethnic groups, but to demonstrate pride in representing their respective schools and therefore communities. This is similar to Richards' (2008) findings where second-generation West Indians in Brooklyn constructed their identities around their relationships with the respective ancestral nations, as well as the neighbourhood that they resided in. The school-based solidarities I observed highlight the important role that schools play in providing for identity-formation opportunities through these festivals for ethnic-minority youth, but also to enrich diverse school-based identities.

6.5 Festival space as Counter-space

The discussion in the previous section about the identity-formation of diasporic youth points to the significance of cultural festivals as spaces of possibility (O'Grady, 2013a). In keeping with Bhabha's notion of (1996) third space and its accompanying ideas of liminality, festivals, as liminal spaces are separated from usual social activities and hierarchies, allow for creative articulations of identity. Although such identities are temporarily heightened and at the level of a spectacle during cultural festivals, many ethnic minority youth performing at Polyfests demonstrated a range of possible tactics of identity in their navigation of third space.

For many ethnic minority young people, Polyfest spaces appeared to act as a counterspace (Carter, 2007) in society. Carter (2007) defines counter-space as a space in which those of the demographic minority could counter hegemonic racism and other oppressive ideologies through a space of shared solidarity with oppressed 'Others'. Festivals appeared to provide such as space where ethnic minority youth could have identity affirming experiences, away from dominant discourses that are projected onto many of them by White New Zealand. The counter-hegemonic nature of Polyfests also played a role for ethnic minority youth to resist negative narratives about themselves. The liminal nature of these festivals, as well as the liminal nature of performance, promoted an alternative economy of status (Bramadat, 2001), or a status reversal in which young performers could occupy positions of authority, howbeit temporarily, over the narratives of their own identities for the duration of the event. In theoretical terms, the liminal nature of third space has found expression in other liminal sites that this thesis has discussed. The liminal nature of third space identities implies navigation between a past and a present, which finds articulation through performance, that in-turn provides an aesthetic of third space through its negotiation between traditional and contemporary performance genres. An ideal counter-space for these kinds of negotiations are cultural festivals which are also liminal, imbued with their own ethics and aesthetics that contribute to a sense of empowerment in reconciling host cultures with homeland cultures.

As mentioned previously, the Polyfests were demarcated as Brown spaces and as such were already in a position of resistance to the dominant, Pākehā culture. This counterspace provides a degree of safety within which youth can creatively negotiate and articulate their

identities. However, it is also a space within which ethnic minority youth could make claims for rights, and articulate notions of citizenship. The ethnic minority young people at Youth Polyfests not only articulated a sense of place (see Mackley-Crump, 2015b) but also made political claims for their inclusion in the national narrative. Quotes such as "we are here" (Manurewa Kiribati group, fn. ASBPDS, 15/03/2018) uttered within the festival space not only emphasized a presence in the performance space, but also within New Zealand society, demanding recognition for the particular ethnic group(s) represented on stage.

As well as claim-making for rights and citizenship, festivals also served as counter-spaces in the way they were used to elevate status and affirmation by the audience (Lee et al., 2012a, b). This was achieved in many ways through the use of elements of popular culture which formed part of the soundscape at these festivals as part of the performances or as atmospheric backing track (see Chapter 4). The inclusion of globally popular elements of sense of community either by inspiring audiences to join in the performance, to groove in the audience space, or most importantly to applaud. This is a fragment of positive attention and affirmation that many of the groups sought. Reference to popular songs, musicals and film also enabled greater recognition, attention and love. The strategic choice of songs and dances also at times enhanced the narrative of belonging. For example, many of the references used by youth to construct their performances were closely related to narratives where the protagonist is in some way an outsider struggling to fit in, later realising that it is perfectly acceptable to be yourself. Hence references to songs such as *This Is Me* from *Camp Rock* and *The Greatest Showman* (Pasek & Paul, 2017; Watts & Dodd, 2008)*,* or Lorde's *Royals* (Yelich-O'Connor & Little, 2013) reinforced a collective affinity that those participating in these festival spaces could share and connect to through their experiences of part of a demographic minority. Ultimately these narratives reinforced the acknowledgement, performance and affirmation of these youths' emergent identities.

Analyzing all of these experiences through Bhabha's (1996) notion of third space made me realise that I was viewing third space in three different ways (see Figure 6.1). Third space was a liminal and hybrid space that firstly, could be seen through the ethnic minority young people's navigation of *identity* – and in particular how they operated in a space in between their pasts (linked to other countries or their parent's countries and cultures) and the identities they formed through living in New Zealand. The second way third space was

experiences, was through *performances* themselves – in which young people displayed a version of hybridity in the 'third space' they created through performance of traditional and contemporary music and dance and the use of historically 'authentic' performance alongside global and popular culture. Finally, the *festival* itself was a form of third space in the way it operated as a liminal space between the home culture of diasporic youth and the host culture in New Zealand. Forms of ethnic and inter-ethnic solidarities served to reinforce these experiences of third space as well.
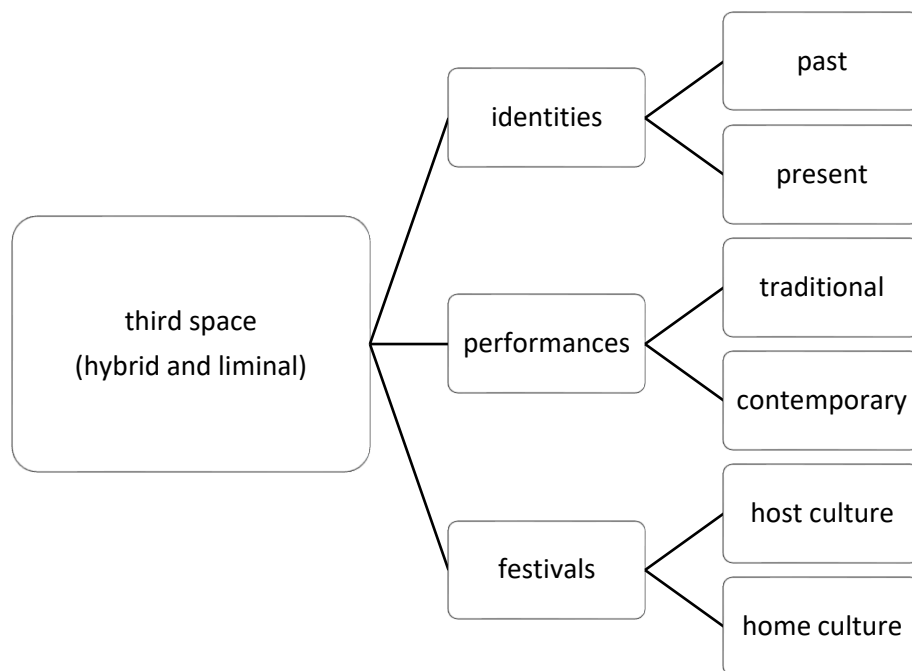

Figure 6.1 Understandings of Third Space in Festival spaces

Third space therefore is a particularly useful analytical tool for the exploration of ethnic minority and diasporic youth and cultural performance as it helps to see not only the indeterminate and liminal nature of this space – but also its possibility and potential for resistance through countering hegemonic narratives and reimagining identities.

In sum, my study contributes to the body of literature on cultural festivals which shows the significance of such spaces for identity-formation and citizenship claim-making (Bramadat, 2001; Lee et al., 2012b). Such sites deserve greater recognition by governments concerned with inter-ethnic harmony with in their increasingly diverse communities to consider how the content and format of these festivals could be optimized for the both performers and attendees in diverse communities (Bramadat, 2001). This research affirms

cultural festivals as sites for the inscription and re-inscription of emergent youth identities, as sites of community and citizenship building, as well as counter spaces. More importantly this research contributes to understandings of festivals in New Zealand, building on Mackley-Crump's (2015b) research on Pacific Festivals in Aotearoa New Zealand, and Johnson's (2007) work on Diwali in Wellington. In addition, my study's focus on school-aged youth has underscored the significance of such festivals for youth whose very stage of life captures aspects of identity-formation. The festivals studied in this thesis also highlight the unique youthful mood and an internal vocabulary of play that is different that of adult-oriented cultural festivals.

6.7 Research limitations

In Chapter 3, I outlined the methodologies and approaches I used to answer my research questions. As previously discussed, I employed ethnography as my guiding methodology in collecting data as it was an appropriate way to be present in the festival spaces, to record and note many of their important features, as well as to compare them across the three Polyfests. This approach did have its limitations.

One of these was the lack of time spent in the field. Due to the short-term nature of these festivals (the longest of them spanning four days only), and the time constraints imposed by the nature of a master's thesis project, there was no opportunity to be deeply embedded within the festival itself, nor to build relationships which are key to ethnography (Emerson et al., 2011) This is in contrast to traditional understandings of ethnography which require the researcher to be embedded within the field site over a significant period of time (Emerson et al., 2011) Instead, my research was comprised of intense, targeted, and quick observations at the three festival sites. This meant that while I was focussing on a range of units of observation, there may have been a multitude of other elements that remained unobserved, or unknown due to lack of deep connection with the people in that space. Furthermore, while this research was a snapshot of Youth Polyfests in New Zealand, it did not reveal any longitudinal data, as can be seen in Mackley-Crump (2015b), who outlines a detailed history of Pacific festivals in Aotearoa alongside analyses of contemporary data.

One further limitation was the lack of formal or sustained contact with young performers – for example, following them from the start of their practices through to their performance on stage (see Fairbairn-Dunlop (2013) for one such example of this approach).

The nature of my ethics agreement (see Appendix 1) meant that I could talk to 'performers with their consent 'on the fly' but it would have also been good to formally conduct interviews to probe their experiences more deeply. One school I requested to do this with never got back to me, so this opportunity was never realised. This means that the nature of the data in this thesis is not generalisable, but instead presents several themes which are worthy of further research.

6.8 Recommendations from study and for future research

Given some of the limitations of my own study, I have some recommendations for future research in this area. I recommend further exploration of the use of popular culture in the youth's performances, with particular attention paid to film as well as popular songs (including ones that are translated into other languages). More accurate understandings of the nature of the use of native tongue in these spaces, and the strategies in translation will allow a more detailed discussions about language maintenance through performance. It would also enable a greater sense of the extent of cultural change and notions of 'authenticity' in a performance by tracking this more carefully (Mackley-Crump, 2013, 2015b, 2016).

Another avenue for research could include the selection of one single performance group, and follow that group from the first auditions, through rehearsals, to the performance and then the post-festival reflections. It would be interesting to observe more closely the decision-making behind the selection of music and dance moves and also to track the impact of the performance experience in a more sustained way. It would also be important to study the philosophy underlying the planning of Polyfests and interview judges at Polyfest who have a final say in determining what a legitimately 'good' performance is. It would be important to find out how they conceptualize the groups' performances, and whether they feel comfortable judging performances they may not be familiar with.

Further, another lens could be applied to festival spaces in Aotearoa New Zealand that has to do with notions of solidarity. For a more decolonized approach in understanding identities that emerge in particular at Polyfests, it could be useful to examine them through Māori cultural perspectives of kotahitanga (unity; togetherness), whanaungatanga (kinship making) and manaakitanga (hospitality; kindness; generosity; support), all of which are ways to interpret solidarity, formation of kinship ties, reciprocity and support. These ways of viewing new formations of identities decentre the individual and they decentre strategy –

giving primacy instead to collectivist obligations (Ritchie, 1993, pp. 85-87). From this perspective, the negotiation of difference and identity could generate distinctly different interpretations.

6.9 Conclusion

To conclude, Youth Polyfests in Aotearoa New Zealand play a significant role in the lives of ethnic minority youth in Aotearoa New Zealand. In the absence of many other mainstream opportunities for ethnic minority youth to express and affirm their identities, Youth Polyfests act as a counter-space in which these young people can gather together and feel like they belong. Further, the mood of open possibility afforded by the festival space offered an opportunity for young people to creatively engage with notions of their identity, putting forward performances that reflected the hybrid third space they occupy though a fusion of traditional performance genres with elements from popular culture. In this way they were drawing together the local and the global in the articulation of their ethnic identities, reflecting their multiple worlds. Alongside this, the counter-space provided by the Youth Polyfest allowed for a number of solidarities to be formed. The range of solidarities observed in the Polyfest space also revealed a multiplicity of interconnection and relationship enabled by the festival and performance space and also the intense school rivalries. Finally, in light of current flows of migration, and increasing diversification of urban communities in Aotearoa New Zealand, there will be an increasing need for avenues for negotiating the identities that emerge in this process. Thus, it appears that festivals such as Youth Polyfests will remain important spaces in our increasingly diverse society, and merit further attention in research.

Appendices

Appendix One: Ethics Approval

TE WHARE WĀNANGA O TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI

VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

Phone   0-4-463 6028
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MEMORANDUM

TO	Bronwyn Wood
FROM	Dr Judith Loveridge, Convenor, Human Ethics Committee

DATE	13 March 2018
PAGES	1

SUBJECT	**Ethics Approval** **Number:** 25149 **Title:** Citizenship in Aotearoa New Zealand: Young people, belonging and changing times

Thank you for your application to amend your ethics approval, which has now been considered by the Convenor of the Human Ethics Committee. This application included the addition of a Masters student, Milica Homoja, to the project.

Your amendment has been approved from the above date and your approval is valid until the end date of your original. If your data collection is not completed by this date you should apply to the Human Ethics Committee for an extension.

Best wishes with the research.

Kind regards,

Judith Loveridge

Convenor, Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee

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