

Ethnic Diversity Down Under

Ethnic Precincts in Sydney

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Abstract

This paper explores the emergence of ethnic precincts in Sydney, Australia's largest, most culturally-diverse city. It explores the key role of ethnic entrepreneurs and government authorities in shaping the emergence and development of these precincts. The paper also explores the 'place marketing' of ethnic precincts and the way that they can link into national and international tourism as cultural diversity becomes commodified. The paper finally explores the contradictions inherent in contemporary ethnic precincts in Sydney.

Keywords: Ethnic precincts, Place marketing, Ethnic Economy, Tourism, Contradictions

Introduction

Australia is one of the most urbanised countries in the world, with 85 per cent of its people living in places with more than 1,000 inhabitants (Burney 2001). At the same time, Australia has received, in relative terms, one of the largest intakes of immigrants of any western nation with some 23 per cent of its population first-generation immigrants (OECD 2001). Immigrants in turn have reinforced the trend to the urbanisation and suburbanisation of Australian society: they are more likely to live in large cities than other Australians, with a level of urbanisation of over 90 per cent (Castles et al. 1998). Sydney, Australia's largest city with a population of just under four million (3,948,014) at the 2001 Census, one-fifth of the nation's population of 20 million, is also Australia's largest immigrant city, generally receiving over 40 per cent of Australia's annual immigrant intake. Today Sydney is home to people from over 180 nations, with 58 per cent of the population in 2001 first- or second-generation immigrants. Sydney is unmistakably a cosmopolitan city. And it has been the case since the earliest days. Indeed, Sydney's white history, which dates from first settlement in Sydney Cove in 1788, is the history of immigration (Spearitt 2000; Collins 1991).

This paper explores the ways that (changing) spatial patterns of immigrant settlement, the ethnic economy (Light and Gold 2000: 4) and ethnic entrepreneurship (Collins et al. 1995; Collins 2003) have shaped the economic, physical and social landscape of Sydney from downtown through the inner-city suburban ring to the middle and outer suburbs. It looks at the ways that these minority immigrant communities and their entrepreneurs have shaped the built environment in Sydney's suburbs. In particular it looks at the links between the (changing) settlement patterns of immigrants and the

(changing) spatial patterns of economic entrepreneurship by examining clusters of ethnic entrepreneurs in a number of key *ethnic precincts* in Sydney.

This paper is organised in the following way. Section 2 provides a brief overview of the changing settlement patterns of immigrants in Sydney. Section 3 emphasises the importance of the role of immigrant entrepreneurs in shaping Sydney's ethnic economy and investigates spatial dimensions of ethnic entrepreneurship in Sydney. Section 4 then looks at the nature of Sydney's ethnic precincts such as Chinatown, Little Italy and Cabramatta, investigating the role of clusters of immigrant entrepreneurs – particularly those in the restaurant and food business – in shaping the contemporary cosmopolitan 'feel' of these Sydney neighbourhoods. Section 5 draws the main conclusions from the paper.

Cosmopolitan Sydney

At the 2001 National Census there were nearly 2.5 million Sydney-siders born in Australia and over 180,000 UK-born. The other birthplace groups in Sydney with a population in excess of 20,000, as Table 1 shows, were China, New Zealand, Vietnam, Lebanon, Italy, Hong Kong, India, Greece, Korea, Fiji and South Africa. In addition, Sydney has another 13 birthplace groups with a population between 10,000 and 20,000 and over 100 birthplace groups with a population of less than 10,000. The 2001 Census also revealed other dimensions of cosmopolitan Sydney. Sydney's South-east Asian-born population comprises 5.6 per cent of the population and 15.6 per cent of the overseas born; over 180,000 Sydney-siders speak a Chinese language at home and 130,287 people speak Arabic at home (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2002: 20, 22, 24).



Table 1
Sydney's Population by Birthplace (2001).

Birthplace	Number
Australia	2 454 424
United Kingdom	183 991
China	82 029
New Zealand	81 963
Viet Nam	61 423
Lebanon	52 008
Italy	48 900
Hong Kong	36 039
India	34 503
Greece	33 688
Korea	26 928
Fiji	25 368
South Africa	25 190

Source: <http://www.abs.gov.au><http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.NSF/4a256353001af3ed4b2562bb00121564/780ca69788870e99ca256b230001faf9!>

Analysis of the (changing) spatial patterns of immigrant settlement in Sydney gives a clue to the spatial location of the ethnic economy in Sydney and to the changing landscape of Sydney's built environment. Most immigrant minorities – that is, those from a non-English-speaking background or NESB – live in Sydney's south-western suburbs. Moreover, all of the Local Government Areas (LGAs) with a relatively high proportion of first- and second-generation NESB immigrants are located in Sydney's south-western suburbs. In addition, even the LGAs with the highest concentration of immigrants are themselves very diverse and multicultural, with no one immigrant birthplace group dominating the population of any Sydney LGA.

The ethnic composition of Sydney's immigrant intake has changed over time. British and Irish – and, more recently, New Zealand-born immigrants – were always preferred, but there were never enough of them to fill immigration targets. As a consequence, in the past half a century the Australian immigration net also brought in Eastern European refugees in the late 1940s, Northern Europeans in the first half of the 1950s, Southern Europeans in the 1950s and 1960s, and, since the mid-1970s, Asian and Middle Eastern immigrants (Collins 1991; Burnley 2001). Sydney's population was comprised of, literally, hundreds of ethnic groups (Collins and Castillo 1998). This did not lead to an emergence of ethnic ghettos in Sydney. Rather a process of 'ethnic succession' then occurred in the poorer areas of the city where new immigrants gathered with newly-arrived ethnic groups replacing those ethnic groups who had been able, after time, to build up enough resources to

move out to more preferable locations and neighbourhoods (Burnley 1986).

Ethnic Entrepreneurship and the Ethnic Economy in Sydney

Ethnic or immigrant entrepreneurship is central to, but not limited by, the ethnic economy in all western countries of immigrant settlement (Light 1972; Waldinger et al. 1990; Rath ed. 2000; Kloosterman and Rath eds 2003). The link between immigrant minorities and entrepreneurship has been strong in Australia for over 100 years (Collins et al. 1995). Ethnic business has a long history in Australia. From the earliest days of the 19th Century, immigrants of non-English-speaking background moved into entrepreneurship. This is particularly true of immigrants from China (Choi 1975; Wang 1988; Yuan 1988), Greece (Price 1963), Italy (Pascoe 1988, 1990; Collins 1992) and Lebanon (McKay and Batrouney 1988). Jewish immigrants also have relatively high rates of entrepreneurship (Rutland 1988; Rubenstein 1988; Glezer 1988). By 1947, immediately before the mass Australian post-war immigration program, more than half of the immigrants born in Greece, Poland and Italy, and more than a third of those born in Germany, Malta and the former Yugoslavia, were self-employed or employers, compared to only a fifth of the Australian-born (Collins 1991: 89-90).

Today many immigrant men and women are over-represented as entrepreneurs in small business (Collins 2003; Lever Tracey et al. 1991; Roffey et al. 1996; Low 2004). Koreans have the highest rate of entrepreneurship, while Taiwanese, Greeks, Italians, Lebanese, German, Dutch and Jewish

immigrants have higher rates of entrepreneurship than the Australian-born on average. But not all immigrant groups demonstrate relatively high rates of entrepreneurship. Other groups of immigrants – those born in China, Singapore, Malaysia, Egypt, Poland, Ukraine and the former Yugoslavia – have similar rates of entrepreneurship to the Australian average. Moreover, immigrants from Japan, India, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Indonesia and Turkey have lower than average rates of entrepreneurship. Immigrant groups from English-speaking western countries, such as those born in the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Canada and the US, also have rates of entrepreneurship very similar to the Australian-born. Ethnicity over-rides gender in this respect: males and females from the same country have similar rates of entrepreneurship. Clearly, the relationship between immigration, ethnicity and entrepreneurship is complex. This section explores this relationship particularly in relation to its spatial dimension in cities.

One explanation for the high rates of immigrant entrepreneurship in western cities is linked to spatial patterns of immigrant settlement. The literature on ethnic or immigrant entrepreneurship in cities has identified two main arguments about the relationship between space, place and entrepreneurship. One argument links the emergence of ethnic entrepreneurs to areas in the city of high ethnic concentration, *ethnic enclaves*, that provide opportunities for ethnic business to serve the needs of compatriots, the ethno-specific market. Miami is the classic example in the literature of how a large size immigrant community (Cuban) provided a good base for numerous businesses to flourish (Wilson and Martin 1982). Spatial demographic concentration of immigrants enhances the opportunities for the development of ethnic entrepreneurship through the provision of networks, a consumer base, and the supply of workers and finances. This facilitates mobilisation of ethnic resources, indicated as cultural endowments, acculturation lags, reactive solidarities, sojourning orientation and all other aspects of ethnicity influencing behaviour (Light and Rosenstein 1995: 24; Waldinger et al. 1990: 36; Collins et al. 1995: 31). But, in places with a large density and number of ethnic entrepreneurs, they do acquire a major role in the local economy and could contribute significantly to revival of the local economy (Portes and Bach 1985; OECD 2001: 97; Waldinger et al. 1990: 113).

The problem with the ethnic enclave model in the Sydney case is that patterns of immigrant settlement are very different from Miami. Jupp, McRobbie and York. (1991) have argued that areas of ethnic concentration in Australia could not be regarded as ghettos, since there were no areas of a dominant single minority group, nor were there areas of marked social disadvantage or absence of

employment opportunities and social services. Burnley (2001) has analysed patterns of ethnic segregation in Sydney using Census data. He found that although there are strong residential concentrations of certain groups (Vietnamese, Lebanese, Chinese and Greeks), very few groups could be regarded as segregated from the rest of the population.

The other argument links the success of ethnic entrepreneurs to their ability to transcend the enclave to reach out to the 'mainstream' market. In this view, immigrant entrepreneurs could be regarded as middlemen minorities (Bonacich and Modell 1980), whose main economic base is not the co-ethnic market but the broader market opportunities outside the enclave. Waldinger (1986: 21) argued that for most ethnic businesses, 'success' requires transcending the bounds of the ethnic enclave. Waldinger et al. (1990) argue that if immigrant businesses do not expand beyond the 'ethnic niche', their potential for growth is sharply circumscribed. This is partly because, over time, increased competition for a limited niche market leads to a proliferation of smaller business units and a high failure rate. The 'ethnic niche' is seen as an initial point of entry for many ethnic small businesses. However, for longer run business success, the ethnic product must become popular to a larger, non-ethnic market or diversification of business interests must occur. Trevor Jones and his colleagues (Jones et al. 2000) in the UK have referred to this as 'breaking out'.

These two trends appear to be alternatives, with the international research offering examples of both the closed and open market strategies among different groups of ethnic entrepreneurs. However, the experience of Chinese, Italian and Greek entrepreneurs in Sydney suggests that entrepreneurs from the same ethnic group can adopt both the *ethnic market* and *mainstream market*. Moreover, the large diversity of Australia's post-war immigration intake has given cities like Sydney not an ethnic enclave with one ethnic group dominating the population but, rather, multi-ethnic or multicultural local areas.

Chinese, Italian and Greek entrepreneurs were in some ways the vanguard of encroaching immigrant diversity in Australian suburbs and regional and rural areas. The Greek milk bar (precursors to the cafe), Italian fruit and vegetable shop (greengrocers) and Chinese restaurant were in most Australian country towns and city suburbs. By 1981, Italians ran one-third of the fruit and vegetable shops in Australia, while Greeks owned one-third of the cafes and take-away food shops (Collins 1989; Castles et al. 1991). Some Greek and Italian entrepreneurs located in the ethnic niche of Leichhardt's *Little Italy* and (for Greeks in the 1950s to 1980s) Marrickville (Collins and Castillo 1998: 21-24) while many others, the majority, established in

suburbs and towns with little or no Italian or Greek immigrants.

Similarly we can trace the 'breaking out' from *Chinatown* of Chinese restaurants in Sydney in post-war decades by mapping the spread of Chinese restaurants on the *Sydney Yellow Pages* – the business phone listings – for the years 1969-70, 1976-77, 1980, 1984, 1990, 1995 and 2001. The totals of Chinese restaurants for Sydney for each year group are, respectively: 171; 112; 470; 550; 607; 612 and 558. The number of Chinese restaurants in Sydney jumped dramatically between the period 1976 and 1980: the White Australia policy was formally abolished in 1972 and large numbers of ethnic Chinese did not begin to arrive in Sydney until after 1976. The number of Chinese restaurants rose until the 1990s, when it plateaued out before declining slightly. This can be explained by two factors. Firstly, the Chinese immigration intake was largely comprised of professionals and highly skilled workers in the 1990s. Many of these moved to North Shore Sydney locations and found good wage-labour jobs in the corporate sector of the city. Secondly, there was a change in culinary taste. In the 1980s there was a boom in Vietnamese food, while in the 1990s Thai food was the number one choice in Asian cuisine. Many Chinese restaurants simply changed their names to reflect this change in consumer taste. For example, Bankstown had four Chinese restaurants in 1969 and nine in 1990, but only seven in 2001. More generic 'Asian' food restaurants and take-away shops were listed in the 1990s.

The other interesting feature of this data is the spatial location of these Chinese restaurants in Sydney. In the 1950s and 1960s, most of these restaurants were located in the city or inner-city precinct. But in the past three decades they have spread out to all of Sydney's municipal areas. In 1971 there were Chinese restaurants in just over 100 Sydney suburbs. Given the success of the White Australia policy, this reflects Chinese immigration linked to the turn of the century. By 2001, only 34 of Sydney's 256 suburbs did not have a Chinese restaurant. Some suburbs that had no Chinese restaurants in 1976 had a large number by 2001. These suburbs include Auburn (five in 2001), Cabramatta (eight in 2001), Castle Hill (six), Eastwood (five) and St Mary's (seven). Other suburbs that had at least one Chinese restaurant in 1971 had a large number by 2001. Included here are the Northern suburbs of Chatswood (two in 1971, 10 in 2001) and Crows Nest (two and 10). Kensington, where the University of New South Wales is situated, increased its number of Chinese restaurants from one in 1971 to six in 2001. Parramatta, in Sydney's west, had three Chinese restaurants in 1971 and 12 by 2001.

In other words, the geography of Chinese restaurants in Sydney is shaped by a number of

factors. They include the changing size and character of Chinese immigration, including their class background and human capital. Changing settlement patterns of ethnic Chinese in Sydney also shapes this, as does settlement patterns in Sydney in general. Critical here is the spread of the Sydney population to the western fringes of the city, and a growth of population in the Western suburbs where new market niches have been generated. Moreover, the opportunity for Chinese immigrants to enter primary labour market jobs in Sydney plays a role, reducing the attractiveness to high-paid Chinese professionals of starting up a restaurant. Fickle changes in consumer food taste also play a role. Chinese food was perhaps the first 'ethnic' food that most Anglo-Celtic Sydney-siders tasted. These days the hotter, chilli based Thai restaurants are more popular as Sydney-siders become more adventurous in their international travel and their food preferences.

The other important argument in the ethnic entrepreneurship literature relates to how (changing) patterns of immigrant settlement in cities lead to changing opportunities for ethnic entrepreneurs. Opportunities are created for new immigrants to enter into business ownership as the ethnic composition of an area in Sydney changes. Aldrich and Reiss (1976) refer to this process as ecological succession (whereby immigrant groups move into areas as the non-immigrants move out to newer, better domains). The experience of Korean shopkeepers in black neighbourhoods in large cities such as Chicago and Los Angeles in the United States are also examples (Yoon 1995; Ong, Park and Tong 1994). This process is very evident in Australian capital cities such as Sydney and Melbourne. As the Australian-born working class moved from the traditional inner-city suburbs to middle-ring and outer suburbs, newly-arrived ethnic groups moved in. In Sydney inner-city areas have been transformed from slums into gentrified, cosmopolitan and popular suburbs (Burnley 1986). Opportunities in new businesses and abandoned old businesses – such as the corner shops – emerged for the immigrants (Castles et al. 1991). The corner grocery shop was an institution in the suburbs of Australian cities until the mid-1960s when supermarkets and regional shopping complexes began to dominate. As the corner shops were abandoned, Greeks, Italians and Lebanese moved into this vacated niche in retailing. Other new niches occur in the non-ethnic market that can be quickly responded to by immigrant businesses. In Sydney, Vietnamese immigrants moved into 'hot bread' shops to fill the gap in the market created by the long-held tradition whereby the large bread companies provided no fresh bread on Sundays. Similarly, Italians in Australia moved into liquor shops as legislation removed the domination of beer and alcohol sales by hotels in the 1970s (Collins

1992). As families began to spend more income on meals outside the home, ethnic restaurants became part of the mainstream market tastes. The growth of outdoor dining in Sydney's restaurants and cafes – a feature of the city only in the past few decades – is also a reminder of the important role that regulation plays in shaping ethnic entrepreneurship (Kloosterman and Rath 2001) since changing State legislation was required for this to happen.

It is clear, then, that ethnic entrepreneurs play a significant role in the small business sector of the Sydney economy in general and the food sector in particular, underlying the cultural significance of eating ethnic food (Warde 1997; Warde and Martens 2000). This section has explored some of the spatial aspects of the ethnic economy of Sydney, and investigated how Chinese, Italian and Greek entrepreneurs exploited entrepreneurial niches in the mainstream rather than ethnic market. But at the same time they also clustered with co-ethnic entrepreneurs in downtown and suburban areas that have become *ethnic precincts*, examined in the next section.

Ethnic Precincts in Sydney

Ethnic precincts are one of the most significant visual and neighbourhood manifestations of the impact of the ethnic economy and ethnic diversity on Sydney's landscape. There are many ethnic precincts in Sydney today. Like so many western cities with a minority immigrant history (Zhou 1992; Lin 1998; Fong 1994; Anderson 1991), Sydney has a prominent and long-established *Chinatown* in the downtown area, though most of Sydney's ethnic precincts are located in south-western Sydney. Sydney's ethnic precincts include *Little Italy* (Leichhardt), *Little Korea* (Campsie), Petersham (Portuguese) and Marrickville (once Greek, now Vietnamese) in Sydney's inner-south-western suburban ring. In the middle-south-western suburban ring, ethnic precincts include Auburn (Arabic quarter), Lakemba and Punchbowl ('Middle Eastern') and Bankstown ('Asian' and 'Middle Eastern'). Cabramatta, in the Fairfield municipality, is further out still and has become an *Asiatown* (Collins and Castillo 1998). One exception is the North Shore Chinese precinct of Chatswood, the centre of professional and well-educated middle-class Chinese immigrants. In addition, the Bondi Beach area in the Eastern suburbs has a prominent Jewish history and presence. Some of these areas, like many other suburbs across the breadth of Sydney, are multicultural places, at least in terms of restaurants. Some take the title *precincts*, others quarters, while others get no nomenclature at all. For the sake of brevity, only the ethnic precincts of Chinatown, Little Italy and Cabramatta will be explored in any detail.

Chinatown

The history of Chinese settlement in Sydney dates back over 150 years. A brief history of Australian immigration reveals that racist responses to Chinese immigrants constrained the opportunity structures for Chinese immigrants in Sydney at the end of the 19th Century (Markus 1994; Collins 2002; Collins and Henry 1994). The 1901 White Australia policy institutionalised and legalised anti-Chinese attitudes and practices. Those who stayed found it hard to get jobs as wage-labourers (Choi 1975). Many moved into entrepreneurship, particularly the market gardens, food and furniture niche markets. This move – a classical case of *blocked mobility* theory (Collins 2002) – was critical not only to the survival of the families of Chinese entrepreneurs themselves, but also to the economic survival of those Chinese who remained.

Responding to community prejudice and drawing on the attraction of co-ethnic provision of goods, services, language and company, the concentrated settlement patterns of Chinese immigrants and entrepreneurs reflected the blocked residential and labour market mobility the Chinese faced. Sydney's early Chinese settlement was in the 1860s around George Street, close to the wharves (Anderson 1990). Later the Haymarket area became the focus of a mainly male Chinese group. Chinese enterprises have always been central to Chinatowns the world over. Major Chinese businesses were grocery stores, market gardening, furniture and cabinet making, and import/export. In the 1890s Sydney's Chinatown moved to the Gipps Ward west of the central business district. By 1901, there were 799 Chinese shopkeepers and grocers in New South Wales (NSW). Half of these were in the Sydney area, many as greengrocers: one-third of the Chinese in NSW worked in market gardens (Choi 1975: 29). Market gardens became the base for later expansion into independent employment in fruit and vegetable distribution, in grocer shops and cafes, as general dealers, hawkers and importers (Choi 1975: 33). Other Chinese moved into the laundry business or opened small furniture shops. Chinese furniture factory ownership reached a peak in 1912 when Chinese owned 168 factories (31% of the total number) and employed 818 workers (28% of the furniture trades work force) (Yuan 1988: 305).

In the 1940s Chinatown moved to Campbell and Dixon Streets in the city, where it is still located today (Collins and Castillo 1998: 278-89; Fitzgerald, 1997). Immediately after the Second World War, Chinese immigrants continued their earlier presence in the vegetable and fruit retailing business. However, as new immigrants, particularly Italians, also moved into this area of business (Collins et al. 1995), the Chinese responded with flexibility. Many turned their business activities to running cafes and restaurants all over the metropolitan and rural areas across the nation. By the mid-1980s, Chinese cafes

or restaurants were a feature of the Australian suburban and country town landscape. According to Chin (1988), there were 700 cafes operated by Chinese in NSW, with 300 in Sydney at that time, most of them employing Chinese labour. Today Chinatown is a very vibrant and lively precinct. The 'authenticity' of Chinatown is seen in the fact that many of Sydney's permanent and temporary Chinese immigrant population use Chinatown regularly not only to shop and eat, but also to access medical, dental and legal services.

The development of Sydney's Chinatown has been shaped by local government authorities, an example of the way that regimes of regulation shape ethnic entrepreneurial outcomes in different countries in different ways (Kloosterman and Rath 2001). The redevelopment of Dixon Street began in 1972 by introducing portico, lanterns and trash bins with 'traditional' Chinese symbols in order to make the area more 'Chinese' (Anderson 1990: 150). According to Anderson, this redevelopment of Sydney's Chinatown was driven by the fact that Sydney planners were envious of San Francisco developments and thought their Chinatown shabby by comparison. In the 1980s, changes included developing Dixon Street as a pedestrian thoroughfare, the erection of Chinese dragons at the Paddy's Market end and the planting of Chinese trees along the streetscape. It was linked to the new Darling Harbour development via the Chinese Gardens (Fitzgerald 1997). Hong Kong Chinese capital financed much of this development.

However, according to Anderson (1990: 150), Sydney's Chinatown has been revitalised in ways that reflect white Australia's image of *Chineseness*: "Making the area more 'Chinese', seemed to make the area appear more consistent with the architectural motifs and symbols of ancient China." This is an argument made about Chinatowns in other places, such as New York, according to Lin (1998: 173) who put it thus: "In the process of retrofitting Chinatown for popular consumption, these outsiders deliberately manipulated reality to suit the imaginary expectations of Western observers." A related point is the way in which, during this process of 'developing' Chinatown, the Chinese were seen as an homogenous 'Other', rather than a community, like any other, divided along regional, class and commercial lines. There are more than one hundred ethnic Chinese community organisations in Sydney. Different plans to redevelop Sydney's Chinatown have led to internal struggles within the Chinese community over the right to gain representation on the relevant development and planning committees (Anderson 1990).

Little Italy (Leichhardt, inner-western suburbs)

Italian immigration history in Sydney has been strongly linked to entrepreneurship and to the inner-western suburb of Leichhardt (Price 1963; Pascoe 1988, 1990; Collins 1992) – Sydney's *Little Italy*. Leichhardt has been the original home of Sydney's Italian immigrant community since the end of the 19th Century. In 1885, fishmonger Angelo Pomabello and the Bongiorno Brothers were among the first Italians to settle in Leichhardt. They opened a fruit shop on Parramatta Road. But it was not until the 1920s that a *Little Italy* began taking shape in the Leichhardt community. The move of Italians to Leichhardt was linked to religion, with Capuchin priests posted there. Italian immigrants would go to them looking for help to deal with that 'impenetrable' official letter, to get a job or just to find a place to live. Slowly they began staying around, replenished by the chain migration of brothers, cousins, wives, children and parents in the following decades.

Before the First World War, Italians clustered in the Leichhardt streets between Balmain Road and Hill Street. By 1933, around 400 Italians were living in Leichhardt, the major Italian enclave in Sydney. By 1947, over half of Italian-born men in the Australian labour force had been entrepreneurs, that is, either employers or self-employed (Collins 1991; Collins et al. 1995). The growth of the Italian community expanded dramatically in the following years and was reinforced with a massive wave of immigrants moving into the area in the late 1950s and early 1960s. For the post-war Italian immigrants, Leichhardt offered cheap housing, proximity to employers of unskilled labour, Italian shops and other businesses. Religion and commerce were at the centre of this flourishing community. The Saint Fiacre Church and parish, still run by the Italian-speaking Capuchin Fathers, became the hub of Italian life in the area. As early as 1962 there were already four Italian cafes in Leichhardt and soon they were joined by other businesses such as fruit vendors, real estate agents, grocers, restaurants, hairdressers, bookmakers, butchers, pharmacies, shops, bakeries, jewellers, music shops and night-clubs. Between 1954 and 1961 the number of Italians living in Leichhardt increased from 1,493 to 4,566.

This residential concentration began to be reflected in the business composition of the area. By 1958, the presence of Italian entrepreneurs in Leichhardt was becoming further entrenched. Italian entrepreneurs established businesses including "travel agencies, imported wine shops, women's fashion shops, radio stores, and a second phase of comparison goods stores following earlier more basic convenience stores – delicatessen, fruiterer, pastry shops, and seafood stores" (Burnley 2001: 161). By 1976 there

were 175 Italian businesses in Leichhardt, including fruiterers, greengrocers, cafes, restaurants, pastry shops, furniture shops, real estate agents and mixed businesses. They served Italians and other local customers (Burnley 1988: 628). In recent decades Leichhardt has undergone significant changes. Many Italian families have moved to other middle-ring suburbs such as Drummoyne, Ashfield, Haberfield, Concord and Burwood, or to outer-ring suburbs in the Fairfield area. By 2001 there were only 2,000 people out of a Leichhardt population of 60,000 who were born in Italy and two-thirds of those living in the municipality were born in Australia, many to immigrant parents. Indeed, more New Zealand-born live in Leichhardt today than do Italian-born.

But despite the population loss, Little Italy is more vibrant and more 'Italian' than ever; there are some things that never change. Leichhardt, especially along Norton Street, with its outdoor cafes, restaurants and delicatessens, reminiscent of Roman street scenes, has maintained its definite Italian feel. The young guys stroll or drive the street. Older people are also on their *passagianata*, taking a gelato with them. The rise or fall of the *Azzuri* is celebrated with noise and emotion along Norton Street. Today, Italian-born entrepreneurs have, if anything, expanded in Leichhardt as new cafes and restaurants spring up along the strip. It is these entrepreneurs, not the Italian population of Leichhardt, who define the contemporary Italian feel of Leichhardt's streets, although the fact that a large number of Italian customers along Norton Street – many coming from other suburbs – are Italian does give it an air of authenticity. Burnley (2001: 171) lists 325 Italian-owned businesses in Leichhardt and neighbouring Five Dock. One hundred and ninety were involved in general retail (including 33 restaurants, 18 cafes, 13 butchers and 11 pasticceria), 58 were light industrials (including terrazzo tiles and pasta food manufacture) and 72 were professionals (doctors, accountants, dentists, optometrists, solicitors and para-medicals). This highlights the importance of ethnic entrepreneurs in the professional and service area, adding to the culinary reasons that Italians would visit Leichhardt, though for non-Italians the food, the coffee and the ambiance of Little Italy are most critical.

The Leichhardt Municipal Council has supported the development of Little Italy along Norton Street. It has undertaken street beautification programs and sponsor the annual Norton Street Festival. Held in March or April each year, Norton Street is closed and lavishly decorated in the Italian colours of green, red and white. In place of cars, food and market stalls, art exhibitions and other entertainments attracted over 100,000 people in 1997, highlighting the popularity of this event (Collins and Castillo 1998: 169). A recent development, the Italian Forum near the Parramatta Road end of Norton Street and financed by Italian

immigrant millionaire Franco Belgiorno-Nettis, reproduces an Italian village piazza atmosphere with five-storey apartment blocks overlooking an internal square that is ringed by two levels of restaurants with tables and chairs sprawling outwards to the middle of the square.

Asian Town (Cabramatta, outer-western suburbs)

Cabramatta is a suburban 'Asia town' in Sydney's Western suburbs, or an *ethnoburb*, to use Li's (1998: 504) term to discuss suburbs of multi-ethnic immigrant settlement in the USA. In the 1980s, Cabramatta had been dubbed 'Vietnamatta' by the media, highlighting the strong Vietnamese presence in the suburb (Collins 1991: 66-69). Along John Street, which runs along the western side of Cabramatta Railway Station, a vibrant ethnic precinct has emerged with over 820 ethnic businesses and institutions. Ian Burnley (2001: 252) gives a vivid description of the range of ethnic businesses featuring a wide range of goods and services, including professional services in Cabramatta in 1988:

... bakeries, butcheries (at least 20), cake shops, children's clothiers, confectioneries, arts and crafts, dress materials and fabrics, bridal wear shops, adult clothing retailers and manufactures, electrical goods suppliers, fish markets (6), general food stores, take-away foods (10 shops), fruit shops (12), many groceries, hair and beauty salons (10), herbalists (15), jewellers, laundries, newspaper proprietors, newspaper publishers, delicatessens and food importers and manufacturers. There were 30 medical practitioners, 15 dentists, several physiotherapists, over 20 accountants, several land agents, and more recently the growth of travel agencies as it became possible for Vietnamese and Chinese to revisit South-east Asia.

The owners of these businesses were Vietnamese – particularly ethnic Chinese Vietnamese – other Chinese, Laotians, Cambodians and residual Italians, Croatians and Serbs.

As in the case of Chinatown, there has been an attempt by local and state policy makers to redevelop the Cabramatta shopping precinct to attract more customers and visitors from outside the area. In the early 1980s, the Cabramatta Chamber of Commerce – which at that time had no Vietnamese entrepreneurs on it – received a grant of \$20,000 from the Fairfield City Council to develop a plaza area along John Street. In the late 1980s, another campaign, 'The Start-Up for Cabramatta Campaign' was initiated, with a brief to "change unfavourable images, to promote the acceptance of the Indo-Chinese community and foster multicultural activities such as the Fan Festival, the Dragon Boat Race, an International Cabaret and 'good eating'" (Burnley 2001: 248). The unfavourable image included Cabramatta's growing reputation as an

unsafe area – in 1988-89 there were 15 murders in the area – and as one of Sydney's heroin centres (Burnley 2001: 248).

The NSW State Government responded by increasing policing in the area, including a doubling of the number of police in Cabramatta Police Station and the introduction of a 16-person foot-patrol of police along John Street and the railway station areas. But they also responded to local government authorities' initiatives to develop the area's tourist potential. The state government also amended Section 89B of the *Factories, Shops and Industries Act 1962* to allow areas in Sydney to be classified as 'holiday resorts' and thus able to open for trading on Sundays and public holidays. The Premier of NSW, Nick Greiner, opening the new Pailau Chinese Gateway in Cabramatta's Freedom Plaza in February 1991, stated that "Cabramatta, with its distinctive Asian culture had become a popular destination for visitors from outside the area" (quoted in Burnley 2001: 250). There were nine bronze and stone sculptures in Freedom Plaza, including two guarding lion sculptures that were sponsored by Mr Greiner and then Australian Prime Minister, Bob Hawke.

Increasingly the tourism experience is linked to the cultural economy (Selwyn ed. 1996; Urry 2002) and to images of and experience of place (Suvantola 2002). 'Place marketing' can be linked to cultural or ethnic diversity to promote ethnic or multi-ethnic precincts. The Fairfield City Council has continued in its endeavours to promote the tourist potential of Cabramatta by further developing and promoting the 'Oriental' or Asian nature of the shopping precinct. A glossy brochure targeting visitors to the city and inviting tourists to visit Cabramatta has been launched. The 2002 brochure claims that: "Cabramatta is a day trip to Asia... Here, an hour from the centre of Sydney, is an explosion of Asian colour – a bustling marketplace offering all the ingredients for a banquet for the senses." Local expert guides accompany visitors on a walk through Cabramatta, helping build an appreciation for the various types of Asian products sold there. More recently the Fairfield City Council launched a CD-guided driving tour of the ethnic sites and features of Cabramatta. The results are impressive if we are to believe the Council. More than 350,000 visitors from Australia and overseas visit Cabramatta every year, spending more than 83 million Euros in local shops and services. Representatives from the local government even claim that for every 17 international visitors one extra job is created, making tourism a major employer.¹ Given Cabramatta's problems with crime and unemployment (Collins 2000) the local and state

authorities see this as a way of promoting the region and creating new jobs.

Reflecting on Sydney's Ethnic Precincts

The history of Sydney's ethnic precincts reveals the important role of ethnic entrepreneurs in their emergence and growth and, in turn, the important role that ethnic precincts play in the ethnic economy of Sydney. In particular, ethnic precincts have a large concentration of co-ethnic restaurants – highlighting the important role of ethnic food and eating in creating an ethnic space for tourists and locals in the city (Warde 1997; Warde and Martens 2000) – as well as a services sector that caters predominantly to the co-ethnic community. These ethnic precincts are not linked to ethnic ghettos. The older ethnic precincts of Chinatown and Little Italy represent historical, rather than contemporary, immigrant settlement patterns while newer ethnic precincts, such as Cabramatta, reflect the multicultural nature of contemporary immigrant settlement in Sydney. Another feature that emerges is the important role of the institutional embeddedness (Kloosterman and Rath 2001) of Sydney's ethnic precincts: it takes considerable and sustained conscious promotion at a local or provincial government level for a specific ethnic precinct to emerge out of Sydney's multitude of culturally diverse neighbourhoods.

Ethnic entrepreneurs and the ethnic economy are thus a defining aspect of Sydney as a cosmopolitan, global city. This paper has attempted to address some aspect of this, particularly as they relate to place. Ethnic entrepreneurs in either precinct clusters or those who 'break out' play an important economic function in creating jobs and providing goods and services. And they also play a symbolic role, particularly those in restaurants and the food industry, giving ethnic precincts and most of Sydney's suburbs a cosmopolitan smell and taste. However, ethnic economies or ethnic precincts are often contradictory spaces. Chinatowns have always been associated with vice and crime. Cabramatta fights its split personality as heroin capital and Asia capital of Sydney, while a moral panic about ethnic crime in Sydney over the past five years, particularly Lebanese and Middle Eastern crime, and Asian crime (Collins et al. 2000) has sent contradictory messages about the attractiveness of Sydney's ethnic places and spaces. Contradictions also emerge from local authorities imposing one ethnic character to a very multicultural neighbourhood and from the promotion of imagery in ethnic precincts that draws on homogenous and static stereotypes of very diverse ethnic communities.

¹ See <http://www.reba.com.au/media/cabra%20tourism.htm>.

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