Connectedness to cultural heritage among generations of Abruzzese Italians from Griffith NSW

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my grandfather, my father and the many other migrants from the Abruzzo region of Italy. The motivation for this work emanates from a strong desire to keep the memory of them alive.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

This thesis centres on the concept of connectedness to Italian cultural heritage for second and subsequent generations of descendants. The study uses semi-structured interviews with participants to investigate cultural identity for the descendants of migrants, the meaning and value attached to such identity, and how these identities, once formed, may change, be maintained and transmitted among generations. The participants who inform this study are descendants of Italian migrants from the Abruzzo region in Italy who settled and raised their families in the town of Griffith in southwest NSW.

Questions are investigated a) within the particular context of a rural community with a strong Italian presence (that is, Griffith), (b) within a particular regional group (that is, descendants of Abruzzese migrants), and (c) among different generations (that is, participants who had a parent, grandparent or a great grandparent who were of Italian origin).

This study explores six factors that work towards forming a sense of connectedness, namely: the family, cultural manifestations of Italian identity, visits to Italy, interaction with family in Italy, Italian language and dialect, and intermarriage. These factors rove the discussion with participants and were the basis of analysis.

Findings indicate that to varying degrees participants have maintained a connection to their cultural heritage. What distinguishes them is the different connotations placed on the manifestations of that connectedness.

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1.1 Introduction

At the core of the material that follows is the premise that when someone makes a

journey there is a story to tell. More precisely the story concerns the people who left

the Italian peninsula to live elsewhere in the world and it begins well before there was a

unified Italy. As will be shown Italians began arriving on the continent that is now

Australia in the 1500s and 1600s as well as on the First Fleet.

As generations pass this story of Italian immigration to Australia will become less

prominent. However, researchers and fictional writers in the field of migration alike,

are working to ensure that the past is respected and that the stories are told (Boccabella

2011:11). I believe it is important that the stories of Italian immigration to Australia be

told and recorded because they add to the body of knowledge on the development of

European history in this country, and also because they are a testimony to the lives of

those Italians who played a major part in the development of our nation.

As a field of research, migration history has been developing since around the 1980s. In

Australia, the impetus came as a result of the changing views within the community that

led to a shift in policy from an assimilation paradigm to policies and attitudes reflecting

an acceptance of cultural diversity and an embracing of multiculturalism (Cornwall

2007:1).

Two key components form the background for the dissertation that follows. Firstly, while studies on Italians in Australia more broadly are well represented in the migration studies literature, material on migrants from the Abruzzo region is absent even though they arrived in significant numbers. Secondly, the town of Griffith holds a unique place in the history of Italian migration to Australia, with 2013 marking 100 years since the arrival of the first Italians. From the time of those first three men, Italian immigration to Griffith and the surrounding villages has grown with more than 60% of the current population of the district able to claim Italian ancestry (Kelly 1988:75, Burnley 2001: 86).

Map 1: Italy with Abruzzo region shaded.　　　**Map 2:** Australia with location of Griffith shaded.

Map 1 Source: http://wikitravel.org/upload/shared/5/58/Abruzzo-Posizione.png
Map 2 Source: http://www.ga.gov.au/earth-observation/basics/gallery/australian-urban-expansion/new/griffirh.html

The motivation for the study is driven by my interest in immigration and identity studies, coupled with the need to partly fill the gap in the literature on studies relating to Abruzzese migrants. This study focuses on cultural identity for the descendants of migrants, the meaning and value attached to such identity and how these identities, once formed, may change, be maintained and transmitted among generations. The

participants who inform this study are descendants of Italian migrants from the Abruzzo region in Italy who settled and raised their families in the town of Griffith in southwest New South Wales (henceforth NSW).

The understanding of the terms first and subsequent generation used in this study are adapted from those used by researchers in the field such as Baldassar (2001) and Baldassar et al. (2012). Thus, the term first generation migrant is used to refer to those born in Italy and who migrated as adults; second generation are those with at least one parent born in Italy or who arrived in Australia before the age of twelve; with third and subsequent generations having at least one grandparent or one great grandparent born in Italy. In many instances, participants in this study had both their parents and at least one set of grandparents who were born in Abruzzo.

On a more personal level, the motivation derives from my profound affection towards the Abruzzo region, a strong attachment to the city of Griffith, and a sense of camaraderie in the shared experience of the descendants of migrants. This study provides the opportunity to allow those participating, including myself, time to reflect on how all these facets interrelate and drive (or not) feelings of connectedness to Italian cultural heritage.

1.2 Aim of the study

The aim of the study in broad terms is to investigate whether second and subsequent generations of children who grew up in Italian families maintain some degree of connectedness to their cultural heritage and, if so, how that connection is manifested.

More specifically, the study will investigate what participants know or understand about their cultural heritage. It will try to ascertain what aspects of their cultural heritage, if any, are important to them, if any of these aspects are part of their day-to-day lives, and if it is important to participants to maintain or impart onto their children what they themselves value from their cultural background. It is anticipated that participation in study will allow respondents to take time to reflect on their Italian backgrounds, something they may not have done previously.

These questions are investigated a) within the particular context of a rural community with a strong Italian presence (that is, Griffith), (b) within a particular regional group (that is, descendants of Abruzzese migrants), and (c) among different generations (that is, participants who had a parent, grandparent or a great grandparent who were of Italian origin).

While the history of Italian immigration to Australia and world-wide has been well documented (for example, Bertelli 1986, Castles et al.1998, Jupp 1998, Gabaccia 2000, Baldassar 2001, Cresciani 2003, Baldassar and Pesman 2005), the contribution and the story of those Italians who originated from the Abruzzo region of central Italy is largely missing from the literature, even though as a group they were numerically significant. Abruzzese migrants were the third biggest regional group to arrive in Griffith after those from the Veneto and Calabria regions (Cecilia 1993:63).

Studies such as the one I am embarking on are important because they add to the general discussion of how descendants of migrants position themselves within the wider

Anglo Australian community from a sociological, economic or social psychological perspective. Thus providing some insight or understanding as to their self-representation and level of connectedness to their cultural identity. However, before addressing these more specific issues, an overview of migration research with a focus on Italian immigration to Australia is required.

1.3 Italian immigration to Australia: an overview

Today there are around 65 million Italians living in Italy but it is estimated that there are around 100 million people who are descendants of Italian migrants across the world Cresciani (2003:3). Their story is not just the story of the individual; it is also the story of the land to which these individuals came to; and the land from which they originated. Australia too, is a major contributor to the discourse because arguably Australia has been a country of migrants since the first human set foot on her shores.

The material that follows provides a broad overview of migration, including brief references to the Italian diaspora worldwide. However, the focus of the chapter is Italian migration to Australia and NSW generally, with particular concentration on the town of Griffith and the associated link to Abruzzese migrants and their descendants.

Immigration is the outcome of a complex set of variables, including social, economic, political and cultural processes. Often, a combination of these variables drives people to relocate from their home country to a host country. For Italians choosing Australia as their host country, two additional and important issues impacted directly on their travel and arrival to her shores. I refer to the physical and cultural distance from the

European continent generally and Italy specifically that faced the intended migrant (Clyne 1991:4).

Many researchers, among them Pich (1975), Jupp (1998), Cresciani (1986/7 & 2003), Cornwall (2007), agree that Italian immigration to Australia separates itself from other groups such as other Europeans, South Americans and Asians, through several characteristics including: 1) the size[1] of the migrant group, 2) the long recognised contribution the group has made to Australia's post-World War II growth and development, 3) the culture of the group, including Italian language and dialects and the predominance of the Roman Catholic religion, 4) its longevity as a migrant group, 5) distance, both physical and cultural, between home and host country, and 6) the fact that Italian migration was encouraged by successive Australian governments. Of all these features, longevity, and physical and cultural distance from their homeland in particular, will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter, especially in terms of their impact on connection to cultural identity for the descendants of migrants.

Still, researchers such as Iuliano (2010) found that the study of Italian migrant identities is very complex because it must reflect the significant differences across and between Italian regions. As she says 'Italians who left their *paesi*[2] after Italy was unified as a nation, came from one country, but many Italies' (Iuliano 2010:9). The writings of other researchers (e.g. Langford-Smith and Rutherford 1966, Pich 1975, McClelland 1985, Kelly 1988, Cecilia 1993, Jupp 1998, Kabaila 2005, Cornwall 2007, Gray 2009),

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[1] Cresciani (2003:1) estimated that people of Italian heritage in Australia numbered around one million

[2] The word *paesi* in Italian refers to equally to the village, town and nation in Italian

similarly refer to what they say is the absence of an overarching cultural entity that united all members of the Italian community, and the subsequent retention of close regional ties amongst the community.

Whatever the circumstances, a key feature of migration studies is the understanding that despite all the complexities, including the more modern concepts of globalisation and transnationalism, migration does not sever the 'attachment, authenticity, or cultural distinctiveness' of the place migrants call home (Wilson 2007:147).

As will become apparent, Italian migrants to Griffith preferred to be grouped within regional cohorts keen to preserve regional identities (customs, modes of cooking, dialects, religious festivals), with a view to this cultural capital being handed down to their descendants. For example, as in many places across Australia, Italian migrants in Griffith have built both public and private spaces as a way of expressing their cultural heritage (Jordan et al. 2010:141), with regionalism often manifesting itself through clubs and associations based on localities of origin.

Image 1: Coro Club   **Image 2**: Yoogali Club

Image 1 Source: http://www.coroclub.com.au/images/banner.jpg
Image 2 Source: http://www.theyoogaliclub.com.au/

The impact of Italian arrivals on Griffith's built environment is obvious when one drives around the town, noting among other things the Coro and Yoogali Clubs, Hanwood Sports Club, Yoogali Catholic Club, the Italian Museum and Cultural Centre, or the Scalabrini retirement village (Kabaila 2005:127).

Image 3: Italian Museum and Cultural Centre   **Image 4**: Scalabrini Village Griffith

Image 3 Source: http://www.griffith.nsw.gov.au/cpthemes/default/home.asp
Image 4 Source: www.villages.com.au/nsw/griffith/scalabrini-village

These were all initiated by Italian regional groups with strong Italian patronage from their very beginnings to recent years.[3]

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[3] Today, all remain going concerns except for the Yoogali Catholic Club which closed its doors in May 2013 to reopen in November that year functioning as a disability service, supporting Griffith and surrounding districts (The Area News Griffith November 2013)

1.4 Abruzzo region as a land of emigration
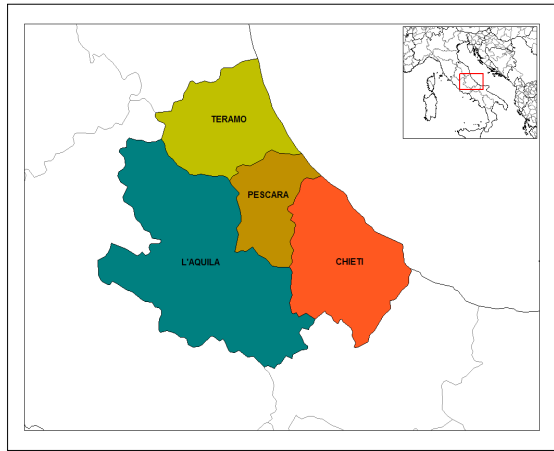
Map 3: Four provinces that form the Abruzzo region with insert locating the region within the Italian peninsula.

Source: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/fe/Abruzzo Provinces.png

The Abruzzo region is situated in the centre of the Italian peninsula, surrounded by the regions of Lazio to the west, Marche to the north, Molise to the south, and the Adriatic Sea to the east. The region has four provinces, namely: Teramo, Pescara, Chieti and L'Aquila, occupying an area of around 10,975 square kilometres or just over 3.5% of Italy (Di Gregorio 2010:2).

As with most of Italy, the Abruzzo region fell on hard times during the late 1920s and 1930s. Abruzzo saw some of the bloodiest fighting in all of Italy during the summer of 1943. The Allies (Britain, Soviet Union and USA) had progressed through the Italian peninsula liberating the south, however, the Germans had set up several command centres in central Italy known as the Gustav Line[4], and thus the Abruzzo region became

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[4] The Gustav Line was the name given to a line of German defense during World War II. German forces held the line against the invading Allies (Britain, Soviet Union and USA) from autumn 1943 until 11th – 18th May 1944, when the line was breached and the Germans retreated into northern Italy (Oxford Dictionary of US Military).

the backdrop for a prolonged battle between the Germans and the Allies.

The severe economic difficulty of this time was compounded by the devastation caused by World War II, resulting in an estimated 15% (including the descendants of migrants) of the population of the region living outside of Italy. Abruzzese emigrated in large numbers to the USA, Canada, South America and Australia (Di Gregorio 2010:6).

Further, Di Gregorio (2010) writes that estimates indicate that in the first quarter of the twentieth century, around half a million Abruzzese left their home for other countries such that in Argentina, for example, there are fourteen registered Abruzzese associations, with significant numbers also in Brazil and Venezuela. Also, he reports that the largest concentration of post-World War II Abruzzese emigrants was and remains in Toronto, Canada. The city claims to be the second largest Abruzzese city outside of Italy, with a population of around 80,000 Abruzzese out of a population of 500,000 people of Italian descent (Di Gregorio 2010: 9).

In 1945, a programme to bring migrants into Australia saw the arrival of around 33,000 Abruzzese. By 2010 there were about 170,000 Abruzzese in Australia, largely concentrated in Victoria (40%), followed by New South Wales (27%), then South Australia and Western Australia (13%) and Queensland (7%) (Di Gregorio 2010:1-12).

As noted earlier, there is a considerable body of scholarly work focussing on the Italian presence in Australia, but until recently, there has been little focus on its regional basis. However, some researchers such as Bettoni (1991), Baldassar (2001), Baldassar and

Pesman (2005), Cornwall (2007), Iuliano (2010) and Rubino (2014) do make specific reference to Italian regions in their writings.

When migrant histories and other data were able to be gathered from the primary source, the migrants personally, it tended to be gathered orally because, as observed by Cresciani (1988), the individuals themselves rarely wrote as they were in the main illiterate or semi illiterate, too tired due to the hard physical work they had to perform or, indeed, felt too alienated in their host country (Cresciani 1988: introduction). Researchers and historians, including descendants of those original migrants, such as Pascoe (1987), Tresca (2000), Thompson (2000), O'Connor (2004) and Wilson (2007) are increasingly taking the time to complete research and writing their own histories, or the stories of other migrants.

In addition to the scholarly work, there is an emerging body of fictional literature that is either set in the Abruzzo region or makes reference to the region, sometimes as a cursory comment or at other times in a more direct and in depth way. This material tends to be written by second or third generation children of Abruzzese migrants to Australia among them Harvane (1974), Hardacre & Valentini (2006) and Boccabella (2011). Their writings include descriptions of their first and other visits to Abruzzo, anecdotes of family and other people they met and the emotional impact of connecting with the region of their heritage and on reflecting past relationships with family. However, overall, material on the Abruzzese as a group and their journeys to Australia, other than that found in fictional literature, is extremely limited.

The only reference to individuals from Abruzzo that I have been able to locate comes from Tito Cecilia (1993) who writes that the first three Abruzzese were all from the province of L'Aquila but from different towns: from Ripa Fagnano Alto came Francesco Pompeani, from Pacentro came Marino Cercone, and from Sulmona came Pietro Centofanti (Cecilia 1993:63).

Map 4: Province of L'Aquila

Source: http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Provincia dell%27Aquila

1.5 Italian migration to Australia: a national perspective

The presentation that follows will draw from general references of Italian immigration to Australia, with a particular focus on the mass migration after the World War II. However, I also briefly acknowledge that there were Italians arriving in Australia in the 1500s and 1600s and on the First Fleet. Some references are made to the gold rush period of the 1850s, when Italians were settling in Australia in increasing numbers.

Some were born in Italy, while others were of Italian descent but born in localities across the world, including Switzerland, the United States, Egypt, and Latin America (Pascoe 1987:244). In fact, the history of the individuals who arrived in Australia during the first 100 years of white settlement is difficult to establish. The recording of data on Italian emigration to the Australian colonies was only in place from 1876 and then only to record the numbers of Italians leaving Italy. To be on colonial records the migrant needed to be registered in one of the larger settlements, which was not a simple task in some instances (Cresciani 1988:15), as will become clearer later in the chapter.

It is of interest to note that Bosworth (2000:447) asserts that before Italian unification, references to 'Italian' immigrants are 'somewhat imprecise'. However he concedes that the term 'Italian' is used in the literature in reference to travellers, adventurers, economic migrants, political refugees and a small number of convicts well before 1861, the date generally accepted for the unification.

Whatever terms are used, at the core of the writings on Italian migration to Australia is the recognition that for over 100 years this country offered an alternative political, social and economic model for thousands of Italian migrants.

1.5.1 The pre-World War I period

The beginning of Italian migration to Australia pre Federation is difficult to locate with any certainty from the available literature. As already mentioned above, Italian contacts with Australia can be traced to the very early 1500s and 1600s. Many researchers for example Pascoe (1988), Cresciani (2003), Church (2005), Stewart-Cristanti (2010),

have recorded that the process of European discovery and exploration of the 'Fifth

Continent', as Italian geographers termed Australia, was assisted by Italians.

Many Italian sailors and officers were on the decks of the Spanish and Portuguese ships

bound for Australia, because 'Italian mariners had good reputations that enabled them to

easily join the commercial maritime services and navies of other European countries'

(Cresciani 2003:28).

A Venetian sailed with Captain Cook in 1770 and in 1788; Giuseppe Tusa, described as

a Sicilian sailor captured by the British arrived as a deportee with Arthur Phillip (Pascoe

1988:486, Cresciani 2003:28). In 1873, two Spanish vessels arrived in Sydney led by

Alessandro Malaspina from Tuscany. Two other Italians, Brambilla and Ravenet, were

on the same voyage. Both were artists with Brambilla recording the landscape and

Ravenet painting the natives, convicts and free settlers[5] (Cresciani 1985:25-27,

2003:29).

Apart from these few examples, Italian immigration to Australia in the early part of the

nineteenth century was relatively small. Gentilli (1983) refers to early studies of

Italians in Australia as 'drop migration studies', using the term to describe migrants

moving to another country either alone or with a small number of companions. He

reports that such migratory behaviour was common during the 1800s and early 1900s

(Gentilli 1983:10).

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[5] Cresciani writes that some Italians 'even had the privilege of being transported at his Majesty's
pleasure'. He cites 7 Italian convicts who were transported to Western Australia between 1850 and 1868.
Another 4 were among the convicts that in 1814 attempted to escape from van Diemen's island and others
have been identified in NSW (Cresciani 1986:4, 2003:39).

Italian missionaries had begun arriving in Australia during the early period of British settlement. The first of these arrived in 1836 to set up a mission in Western Australia to convert the indigenous population (Cresciani 1986:4, 2003:28-32). Catholic Church records reveal that the first Italian to write a book about Australia was the Benedictine Dom Savado, who established the New Norcia mission near Perth in 1846 (Cresciani 2003:29, Stewart-Cristanti 2010:1). Cecilia (1987:98) wrote that apart from those belonging to religious orders, records show that there were 70 stonemasons from the Italian region of Lombardy who settled and worked in the Sydney suburb of Hunters Hill before the First World War.

More Italians came to Australia when gold was discovered. In Victoria, in the 1850s, the town of Daylesford's population was almost exclusively Italian. Within 10 years of the discovery of gold, Raffaello Carboni, one of the leaders of the revolt in the town of Ballarat, wrote his eyewitness account of the Eureka Stockade (O'Grady 1985, Carboni 2004). In Western Australia in the 1890s, as in Victoria, many mines had Italian names (Cresciani 1986: 5, 2003:33-34). The numbers of Italians in Western Australia increased from 36 in the 1891 census to 1,354 registered Italians in 1901 (Cresciani 1988:17). Before Federation, those Italians not searching for gold worked across the colonies in agriculture and public works projects (Jupp 1998:61, Iuliano 2010:1).

Some Italian migration to Australian colonies also occurred through risky schemes and adventures. The most infamous of these was that embarked on by the French aristocrat known as the Marquis de Rays, ending tragically with many migrants drowning after the ship was wrecked. Survivors established themselves in what became known in 1882

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as 'New Italy' at Woodburn, a village close to Lismore in NSW.   New Italy is

acknowledged by many researchers as a settlement of historical significance, because it

was the first and most successful attempt to transplant to Australia the Italian peasant

way of life, including the customs, traditions, agricultural practices and technology of

the Italian settlers (Pesman and Kevin 1998, Cresciani 1988:17-23). The New Italy

settlement remained intact until after World War I (Cresciani 2003:45). Today the area

is marked with a museum detailing the contribution to the Richmond-Tweed area by

those original Italians, their descendants and others who joined the community.

Map 5: From Italy to Australia.

Source: http://blog.arthistoryabroad.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/italy-map.jpg and
          http://www.flagsaustralia.com.au/images/Australia-States.jpg

According to Cresciani (2003:39) one indication that Australia was gaining greater

relevance to Italy during the mid-1850s was the establishment of formal diplomatic

relations between the colonies of NSW and Victoria and the Kingdom of the Two

Sicilies, the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, and the Kingdom of Sardinia. In support of this

assertion, Kelly (1988:166) writes that records indicate that 'brave and adventurous

Italians' were aided in settling in Australia by the existence of a Treaty of Commerce

and Navigation that was signed on 15th June 1883 between Great Britain and the

Kingdom of Italy, which guaranteed nationals of one country freedom of movement and

ownership of property in the other. After Italy and Great Britain had signed the treaty,

Rome took a much more active interest in Australia as a destination for Italian

emigrants (Cresciani 2003:43). However, notwithstanding the discovery of gold and

the greater interest in Australia being shown by Italy, numbers of Italians living in

Australia before the World War I were minimal.

1.5.1.1 Impact of legislation on Italian migration to Australia (1901-1945)

After Federation in 1901, legislative barriers, namely the Immigration Restriction Act of

1901 and the Pacific Islands Labourers Act of 1901, impacted on Italian migration

across Australia. These two pieces of legislation were more commonly known as the

White Australia Policy. The White Australia Policy restricted the entry of Chinese and

Kanakas, thus allowing Italian migrants to settle in Australia to replace the lost Chinese

and Kanaka labour force. The Immigration Restriction Act No.17 of 1901 also

prevented the admission in Australia of people who were illiterate and/or who with the

assistance of a *paesani[6]*, had obtained a promise of work from an Australian employer before leaving Italy. This restriction was to ensure the protection of employment for Anglo Australian workers. Given that Italians were usually unskilled and thus not indentured (that is committed to a specific employer), the restriction in the main could be circumvented (Cresciani 2003:55). As a consequence, paradoxically, this legislation both restricted but also facilitated an increase in Italian emigration to Australia.

North and South America remained the preferred destination up to the 1920s for Italian migrants (Jupp 1998:60). However, legislation, this time in the United States, namely the Emergency Quota Act of 1921 and the Immigration Restriction Act enacted by the American Government also in the early 1920s, imposed heavy restrictions on Italian immigration (Bosworth 2000:447). Thus, in effect, these two acts assisted to increase numbers of Italian migrants in Australia (Iuliano 2010:1).

Of note, restrictions were also being enforced in Australia around this time. For example, Cornwall (2007) and Pesman and Kevin (1998) refer to conditions the Queensland Government imposed on Italy, stipulating that Italian labourers bound for the cane fields had to come from regions north of the city of Livorno in Tuscany. These policies demonstrated that categories adopted to marginalise or exclude certain people were not essentially based on nationality, but rather on loose ideas about race, often grounded on degrees of physical likeness to British Australians.

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[6] The world paesani in Italian means to originate from the same village or town.

1.5.1.2 Growth in the numbers of Italians in Australia

Italians were included in the 1901 census, however Cresciani (1988) alerts readers to the fact that, despite the census showing that 5,678 Italians (by birth or holding Italian passports) were living in Australia, this figure is not necessarily accurate. Migrants were spread throughout the colony where most were employed in the goldfields, or in the woods cutting timber for the mines. As such some did not have a permanent residential address and thus were not included in the count (Cresciani 1988:59). In a later publication Cresciani (2003:49, 54) writes that at the beginning of the twentieth century there were more likely to have been 8,000 Italians living in Australia. Table 1 provides the spread of Italians living in the newly formed Federation at the time of the 1901 census.

Table 1: Italian born living in Australia at the time of the 1901 Census

STATE	MALES	FEMALES	TOTAL
NSW	1,243	334	1,577
Victoria	1,289	236	1,525
Western Australia	1,296	58	1,354
Queensland	707	137	845
South Australia	239	34	327
Tasmania	42	8	50

Source: Cresciani 1988:59

According to Gray (2009) the Italian migrants of the 1920s fell into two groups, those who had decided to settle permanently in Australia but with no specific location in mind, and those broadly categorised as 'circular' migrants. These were people who intended to stay only a few years, save their money, and return to their families in Italy financially better off than when they left. Individuals participating in circular migration

were comfortable with the concept because it represented an extension of the long established custom of leaving their homes in Italy during the winter months in search of work and returning for the summer (Gray 2009:77).

Between 1922 and 1930 the net migration of Italians to Australia was over 23,000. Two thirds settled in country areas and were generally employed in the construction, mining, agricultural industries, or on the railways. In cities they found work as painters, terrazzo workers, fishermen, carpenters, shopkeepers and labourers (Cresciani 2003:68).

During the economic depression of the 1930s, all immigration was stopped except for family reunions and for those who had access to five hundred pounds. The other time that immigration was halted, was for the duration World War II, which also saw the internment of some Italian men living in Australia (Pesman and Kevin 1998:5).

Later on, when significant numbers of specific regional groupings of Italians were established in Australia, they became part of what is now known as chain migration (Tosi 1984:51; Gentilli 1983:10). Chain migration is a migratory behaviour which involves families or individuals, who, after having established themselves in a country, town, or geographic region, sponsored the migration of members of the same family or people from the same place of origin to join them in the host country. In Australia, generally migrants tended to come together, quite isolated from the Anglo Australian community and also from Italian communities other than their own regional one (Cresciani 1988:153, Gray 2009:77).   By 1939, some Italian villages had more of their original inhabitants living in Australia than in Italy (Cresciani 1988:153, O'Connor

2004: 57). Examples from the literature highlight that chain migration in Griffith from Cavaso in the province of Treviso, in the Veneto region, and Platì in the province of Reggio Calabria, in the region of Calabria, resulted in the number of people in Griffith from these two centres being higher than the current population of Cavaso and Platì (Cornwall 2007, Pesman 1998 and Kevin 1998, Pesman 2007).

In reality, chain migration had been in place in Australia since the turn of the twentieth century and in some instances has kept functioning across generations. It continues in Australia in the form of the Family Reunion Immigration Policy (Cavallaro 2003:65). Migration from the regions of Italy already referred to above, Veneto and Calabria, was almost exclusively of this type, as it was, albeit it to lesser degree, from Sicily and the Abruzzo region (Cresciani 2001, Kelly 1988:165-6, Baldassar & Pesman 2005:33-37). It is generally accepted that chain migration brought the greatest number of Italians to Australia since the mid-nineteenth century (Pesman & Kevin 1998). As a result, at the onset of World War II, there were approximately 40,000 members of the Italian community living in Australia, of whom 34,000 were born in Italy (Cresciani 1988:169).

1.5.2 Post-World War II mass migration

Following the end of World War II, Australia did open immigration to non-English speaking migrants, however, Australia maintained a 'selective' attitude as to which European migrants were preferred, consistent with the White Australia Policy of the time. The following excerpt from Iuliano (2010:156) poignantly reports the political context:

> 'From an Australian Government's perspective, Italians were at the bottom of the hierarchy of racially acceptable European migrants admissible under the White Australia Policy. They were allowed entry and were tolerated in the interest of stimulating economic growth and, after World War II, for defence and nation building purposes'.

By 1950 Italians had become the largest non-Anglo migrant group (Cresciani 2003:125, Vasta 1985:3). They reached Australia either as sponsored migrants or through the Assisted Migration Agreement scheme. The Assisted Migration Agreement, known also as '*Accordo di emigrazione assistita*' between Italy and Australia was signed in 1951 and accounted for the period of the highest number of Italians coming to Australia. By 1961, 330,000 Italians arrived with 20,000 returning to Italy (Rosoli 1989:17). The assisted passage scheme was mainly directed at Italians from central and northern regions as a deliberate practice designed to limit Italians from southern regions (O'Connor 2004:57, 67). Between 1966 and 1975, a further 126,000 Italians arrived and 33,000 returned to Italy (Rosoli 1989:17, Ware 1981:15-17). In 1977, 1,900 Italians arrived in Australia. The next peak was 2,511 in 1981, and less than 1000 Italians arrived each year after that (Bertelli 1981:22, Cavallaro 2003:67). This virtually marked the end of mass migration from Italy to Australia.

Most researchers[7] agree that the slow and difficult development of the Italian economy together with political unrest was the main reason for Italian mass emigration after World War II. Italy had been at the centre of two devastating world wars, it had experienced widespread political turmoil with the resultant rise of fascism. The

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[7] For example Ware (1981), O'Grady (1985), Bertelli (1987), Miller (1988), Rosoli (1989), Jupp (1998), Alcorso (1992) and Cresciani (2003).

economic and political instability led to unemployment across Italy. This was compounded by the fact that most peasant farmers worked on small holdings owned by somebody other than themselves, which were becoming incapable of providing a living for extended families, whereas host countries such as Australia were characterised by economic expansion generally, with even greater strength after World War II. Whatever the specific reasons for groups or individuals migrating, there is certainly a common theme throughout the literature as to why Italians left their homeland: poverty, unemployment, and the lack of opportunity for change and prosperity. This was especially the case for Italians leaving Italy after World War II.

The tables below provide a summary of the more recent national data about Italians in Australia. They show the decline in Italian born migrants from the information provided in the 1999, 2006 and 2011 census data. Table 2 presents Italian born migrants to Australia, and Table 3 shows comparative ancestry data for that same period.

Table 2: Italian born migrants to Australia (1996-2011 Census Data)

CENSUS	NUMBERS
1996	238,246
2006	199,124
2011	185,402

Source: 1996-2011 Census

Table 3: Comparative ancestry census data (2006-2011 Census)

ANCESTRY	2006	2011
English	24.7%	25.9%
Australian	29.0%	25.4%
Irish	7.1%	7.5%
Scottish	5.9%	6.4%
Italian	3.3%	3.3%

Source: 2006-2011 Census

As the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) deepened in Europe, including in Italy, during 2007 and 2008 a new wave of young Italians set their eyes on Australia (Smith 2012:SMH). Whilst I acknowledge that the arrival of this most recent group has implications for the overall discussion of Italian immigration to Australia that conversation is outside the scope of this study.

1.6 Italian migration to New South Wales and Sydney

The first significant Italian settlements across NSW remain difficult to locate with any certainty. However, Pesman and Kevin (1998) as part of major study commissioned by the NSW Heritage Office, detail that the major centres for Italian settlement across the State are still Sydney, Newcastle, Wollongong, Queanbeyan, Lismore, and Griffith. Table 4 presents the numbers of Italian born residents in those areas at the time of the 1996 census.

Table 4: Italian born residents 1996

LOCATION	NUMBERS
Sydney	53,421
Illawarra (Wollongong)	4,995
Murrumbidgee (Griffith)	2,287
Hunter Region (Newcastle)	1,815
Richmond-Tweed (Lismore)	714

Source: Pesman and Kevin (1998:1) 1996 Census

As already mentioned above, patterns of settlement in NSW reflected one or a combination of mainly four factors, namely: occupation specific factors, as with the stonemasons of Hunters Hill and to a lesser extent Queanbeyan; risky migration experiments, as in the New Italy settlement of the north coast; chain migration, which was of particular benefit to the communities of the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area and the Illawarra districts; and a combination of family or regional group settlements, especially in the Hunter region. As an example, Pesman and Kevin (1998) refer to the Lettesi, people from the village of Lettopalena in Abruzzo. This settler group was made up of nearly 150 families, their process of immigration began in the 1920s, when a number of the Lettesi travelled from the cane fields of Proserpine in Queensland to work in the off season at the Broken Hill Proprietary (BHP) steelworks in Newcastle. Eventually, in 1947, these villagers settled permanently in Newcastle and by 1957, 92% of the Lettesi in Australia were living in the same area (Pesman and Kevin 1998:1-3).

The city of Sydney also benefited from the chain migration patterns. Pesman and Kevin (1998:18) identify records showing Stanley Street in the eastern part of the city, as having a steady build-up of businesses run by Italians from the early 1900s. The increase in businesses corresponded to increasing numbers of Italian residents throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Both numbers of migrants and businesses were revived again in the late 1930s and then after the cessation of hostilities following World War II (Pesman and Kevin 1998:18).

The 1933 census revealed 400 Italians in the suburban settlements of Leichardt and Glebe and a related group of fishermen in Balmain. At this time Italians were also scattered in small groups around the western fringe of Sydney, where they tended to own small farms or worked on farms owned by relatives or Italian friends. These western fringe settlements were mainly comprised of Italian migrants originating from Calabria. In addition, Italian settlements expanded into other suburbs of Sydney, including Eastwood, Marsfield, Mona Vale and the broader Warringah Council area, near Liverpool, and in and around the Fairfield area of Sydney (Pesman and Kevin 1998:18).

Another important example of regional concentrations through chain migration, other than the one to the Hunter district referred to above, is the town of Griffith in NSW, which is the main focus of this study and whose settlement patterns are detailed next.

Image 5: Griffith Heritage Trail Brochure.

Source: http://localhistorynews.blogspot.com.au/2012/03/griffith-italian-migration-heritage.html

1.7   The town of Griffith: patterns of settlement

The town of Griffith lies in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area (henceforth the M.I.A.)
located in southwest NSW. It consists of two main irrigation areas, namely Mirrool and
Yanco. These two main areas are approximately sixty kilometres apart and serve the
towns of Griffith and Leeton (Cornwall 2007:3).
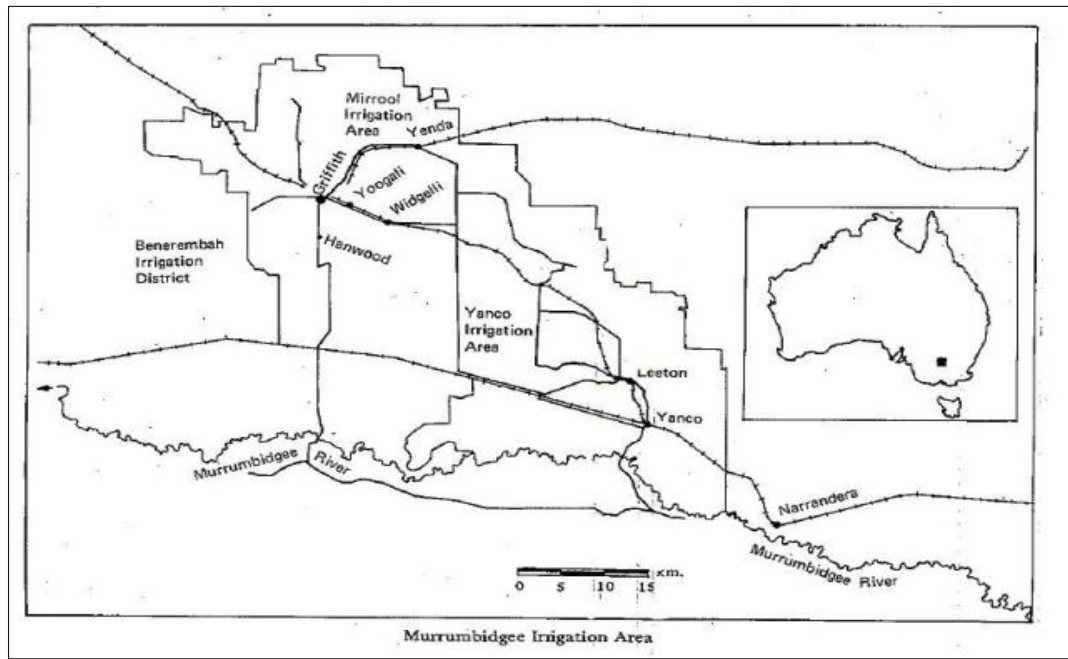
Map 6: Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area including Griffith with insert displaying national perspective

Source: Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission archives. Griffith City Library.

Griffith was built on the traditional lands of the Wiradjuri people, the largest Aboriginal
language group in NSW. The Wiradjuri were the first people to make their home in the
Mirrool area (current day Griffith and surrounding district). The Wiradjuri lived in the
area for around sixty thousand years before white settlement. Their existence was based
upon a communal society where all members worked for the common good. Men,
women and children shared the workload and they survived well until the coming of the

white settlers (Kabaila 2005:1, Gray 2009:21, 93). Anglo immigrants began arriving in

Wiradjuri country in the early nineteenth century (Kabaila 2005:11).

As noted by Kelly, a discussion of the development of the town of Griffith cannot be

separated from a discussion of the interconnections between the indigenous inhabitants,

the early white explorers, soldier settlers, migrants (in particular Italian migrants) and

the introduction of water to the area through man made irrigation (Kelly 1988:150).

1.7.1 Early white explorers

Passing very close to where Griffith is situated today, the Surveyor General John Oxley

in 1817 described the area as a 'howling wilderness'.   He was totally unimpressed with

what he saw:

> 'the soil a light red sand parched with drought, a perfect level plain overrun with
> acacia scrub…there is a uniformity of barren desolation of this country which
> wearies one more than I am able to express…I am the first white man to see it
> and I think I will be undoubtedly the last' (Kabaila 2005:41).

Twelve years later, in December 1829, Charles Sturt, on an expedition into the interior

of 'New Holland', described the same country in similar terms (Gray 2009:8).

However, in 1913, vintner J.J McWilliam's vision for the district appeared in stark

contrast to Oxley's and Sturt's perception. McWilliam wrote that if one were to 'plant a

three-inch nail in this soil, water it…in a year you'll have a crowbar' (Gray 2009:9).

Differing opinions aside, from the beginning of human life in and around the town of Griffith and surrounding areas, it has been the physical environment that has dictated the possibilities and constraints (Kabaila 2005:1). The M.I.A. has developed into one of the most fertile areas in Australia. All that was lacking at the time of the early explorers was sufficient water (Gray 2009:9).

The initiative to take action in order to secure a consistent water supply came after a severe drought at the beginning of the twentieth century. The NSW Government began planning a massive public irrigation scheme on the Murrumbidgee River and by 1913 had released the first blocks for settlement, and thus began the M.I.A. (Hagan 2007:339).
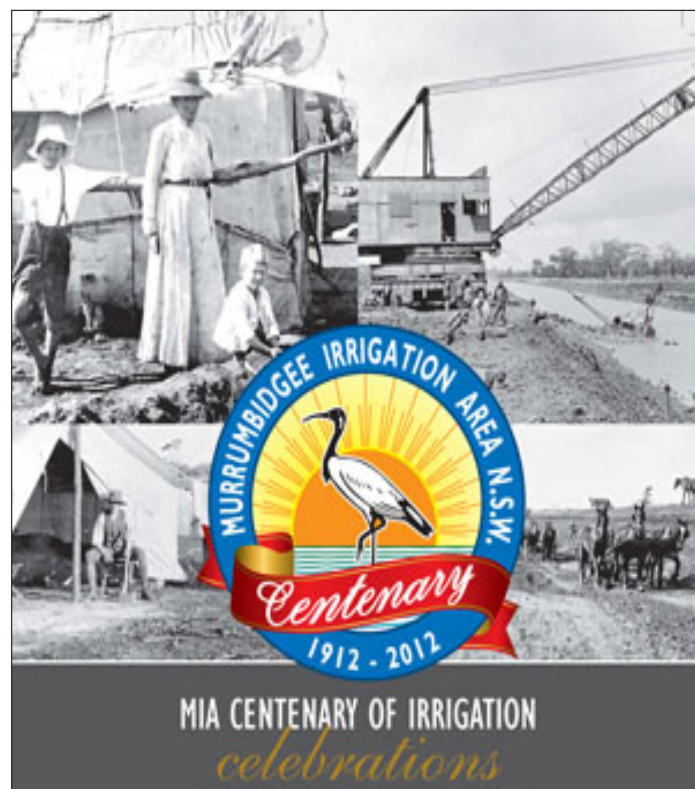
Image 6: A poster celebrating 100 years of irrigation 2012.

Source: http://environment.gov.au/resource/water-matters-issue-15

The administration of the M.I.A. was controlled by the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission, sometimes known in the literature as the Irrigation Commission (henceforth referred to as the Commission). The Commission was a very influential territorial authority, with the power to approve land grants and the supply of water and electricity (Cornwall 2007:4).

The introduction of water was the most dramatic event imaginable for the M.I.A. Irrigation not only brought farming and settlement, it also forged social, industrial and agricultural changes that made Griffith and the M.I.A. very different from other regional communities across NSW. Archival material points to a publicity campaign from the onset of the M.I.A. that featured images of lush orchards and dairy farms as well as picture book images of farmhouses. The reality, however, was far removed from the campaign. The land was cleared of trees, resulting in either a dust bowl or mud. The farms were completely undeveloped, there was no township and the farmers were not educated about or assisted to understand what crops had the potential to succeed (Kabaila 2005:52).
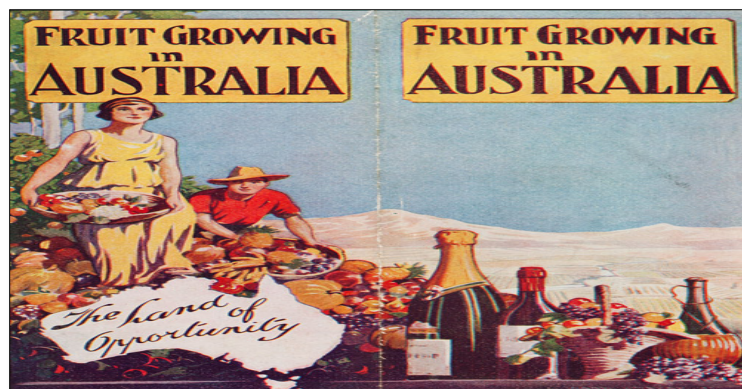
Image 7: An early advertising poster. Source: Images of the M.I.A. Source:http://www.bing.com.images/search?q=images+of+the+Murrumbidgee+Irrigation+Area %2C+poster&qu=n&form=QBIR&pq=images+of+Murrumbidgee+irrigation+area%2C+poster& sc=0-0%sp-1&sk

1.7.2 Soldier settlers

The 'Returned Soldiers Settlement Act of 1916' established returned soldiers on the land in NSW at the end of the World War I. The hope of an escalation in settlement to the M.I.A. with returned servicemen was opportune as the irrigation settlement initiative had not been expanding at the rate anticipated, due mainly to wartime enlistments (Pich 1975:20).

At the conclusion of hostilities in 1918, Australian soldiers returned home to the prospect of unemployment. By 1919, with the encouragement of government, ex-servicemen flocked to take up land grants, known and referred to above as 'blocks', in what would become Australia's largest expanse of intensive farming land. In 1923, the peak year of the soldier settler program, soldier settlers occupied 878, or almost half of the blocks available. However, the blocks were too small, the soldiers were inexperienced and sometimes debilitated by their war experience. The falling prices of the 1920s and then the Great Depression (1929-33) made it hard for them to extract a decent living from their farms (Hagan 2007:339). Therefore the soldier settler program began to fail rapidly (Pich 1975:42, Cresciani 2003:65-66). Most studies (for example Pich 1975, Kelly 1998 and Kabaila 2005), on the soldier settler program detail that in many ways the initial lack of success was not surprising, given that the settlers had to begin by preparing the land and, in the case of horticultural farming, most of this land took at least five years to become productive.

1.7.3   The physical growth of Griffith

The main street of Griffith was named Banna Avenue - Banna being an Aboriginal word for 'rain' or 'water'. The town was named after Arthur Griffith, Minister for Works in the NSW Government 1910-15, who was also appointed the first chairman of the Murrumbidgee Trust. The boundaries of the town were gazetted on 16th August 1916 and the town proclaimed a city in 1978 (Gray 2009:57).

The town of Griffith has what has been described as a decentralised pattern of settlement, meaning that the smaller horticultural farms were formed close to the town. The villages of Hanwood, Yoogali, Yenda, Bilbul, Beelbangera, Lake Wyangan, Tharbogan, and Nericon are situated between three and ten kilometres outside the town of Griffith. There is no other country town, certainly not in NSW and perhaps in Australia, with such distinct and clearly bounded satellite communities (Cornwall 2007:3).

Map 7: Griffith and surrounding villages.
Source: http://griffith.nsw.gov.au/cp content/resources/riverina map.pdf

The villages of Yoogali, Beelbangera, Bilbul, and Hanwood were built mainly by Italians and to-date remain predominantly Italian. The additional villages of Tharbogan, Lake Wyangan, and Nericon also have large numbers of Italians or descendants of Italian migrant farmers. These communities have played a pivotal role in the development of the area, the growth of the town of Griffith, and the increase in prominence of the many Italians living within them (Cornwall 2007:3, Bannister 2007:11).

For one hundred years the area in and around Griffith has been known not only amongst Italians but also across NSW by the wider Anglo Australian community as an oasis in the desert (*'un giardino nel deserto'*). Farmers of many nationalities but more particularly Italian farmers (see next section), worked the M.I.A. after the arrival of water and were responsible for the transformation of the area from a desert to a garden, and 'created the developmental history of the area' (Gray 2009:5). Further, Gray asserts that the story or history of a region is the outcome of what people do, saying:

> 'that the descendants of those migrants have maintained and augmented the area's transformation to build a rich and prosperous regional city, producing vast quantities of fruit, vegetables and cereal crops, as well as providing pastures and grazing lands for livestock' (Gray 2009:6).

In more recent years, the area has expanded into the biggest wine grape producer in Australia with Casella Wines becoming the largest single wine exporter in the nation. The founders of Casella Wines immigrated in 1957 and still today Casella remains a family business, in the hands of second and third generation family members.

1.8 Italian migration to Griffith: an overview

According to multiple researchers (Pich 1975, McClelland 1985, Kelly 1988, Hardy and Roden 1995, Piazza 2004, Kabaila 2005, Hagan 2007, Gray 2009, and Grigg 2010) Griffith has a unique place in Italian migration history to Australia, and the multicultural component and contribution of the Italian community, with particular regard to agriculture, agricultural export, and the standing of the town itself, has not been replicated anywhere across the State of NSW or nationwide.

The decades after 1919 paved the way for Italian horticultural settlement of the M.I.A. In economic terms, the arrival of and the contribution made by Italian migrants were critical to preserving the continuity of irrigation farming, as made clear by Bosi (1972)

> 'the fact that this district has a large Italian population is not merely a coincidence; their contribution has been of principal importance to the development of the area' (Bosi 1972:49).

This tenet is endorsed across the community, as Pascoe found when he wrote that 'in Griffith many Anglo Australians make the comment that the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area would not have been the success it is without the Italians' (Pascoe 1987:150). The district has grown to become one of Australia's largest and most productive agricultural areas (Hardy and Roden 1995:48, Bannister 2007:29).

For the early Italian settlers, the M.I.A. provided an opportunity of owning land and becoming economically self-sufficient. As mentioned above, for most Italian immigrants, their homeland was a place where work, when they were able to find it, was limited. When they did work, the return for their endeavours was barely able to

feed them and their families. Opportunities to save money for the future and/or to

educate their children were limited. Their eventual settlement in the town of Griffith

and the wider M.I.A. was prompted by the prospect of acquiring land in a developing

agricultural district, their confidence in themselves to be able to start with only a barren

piece of land, and their ability to work and develop it (Cornwall 2007:4). In many

instances in Italy, Italians lived as part of an extended family, a communal group

working for the benefit of the whole family. When they arrived in Griffith, these

Italians established a 'paesani' network (easily managed as an outcome of chain

migration) that operated in a similar way. Langford-Smith and Rutherford (1966) write

that the Italians in Griffith succeeded because:

> '….although there were many efficient and industrious farmers among the
> soldier settlers, taken as a group the returned men were neither conspicuous
> either for their hard work or meek submission to the poor living standards that
> were typical of the M.I.A. at the time. On the other hand, both these features
> were accepted by the Italians, for most of them came from poor peasant
> communities' (Langford-Smith and Rutherford 1966:97-98).

During the 1920s and 1930s, Italians arrived in M.I.A. in increasing numbers,

particularly from the north of Italy. Slowly, they began to assume responsibility for the

farms which were unproductive in the hands of the returned soldier settlers. Several

researchers, among them Revelant (1973), Pich (1975), Cresciani (1998 & 2001), and

Gray (2009), detail that in 1921, 33 Italian migrants lived in Griffith comprising of 16

men, 5 women, and 12 children. Numbers began to increase further after 1921, when

economic conditions and the political situation in Italy were deteriorating. At the

beginning of 1933 there were 747 Italians and by the middle of that year the Italian

population had increased to 1,899. By 1940 the M.I.A. had become the largest and

most successful agricultural community in NSW. Out of a population of 10,000 in

Griffith 3,000 were Italians who owned 232 of the 1,013 farms in the district

(Cresciani1988:93, 2001:502, Gray 2009:72).

Significantly, despite the political enthusiasm for maintaining the area, Italian

settlement was not afforded the degree of official support that soldier settlement

received, even though there were early indications that Italians appeared determined to

make the M.I.A. their permanent home (Pich 1975:43).

As a consequence of their increasing acquisition of farms previously owned by Anglo

Australians, and their obvious success as farmers, it was unsurprising that at the onset of

the World War II, Italians living in Griffith bore the brunt of much racism and hostility

coming from the Anglo Australian community. Cornwall (2005) provides an

explanation of this situation saying that:

> '…when Italy entered the war as an ally of Germany, the Griffith Italians
> noticed the changes. About one fifth of the 2,300 adult Italians in the M.I.A.,
> were required to register as enemy aliens and were issued with ID cards.
> Transfer of land was forbidden, all firearms were confiscated and the use of
> petrol and motor vehicles without the permission was prohibited. Use of the
> Italian language in public places was banned. Italians were interned, the Italo
> Australian Club was closed. Italian men returned to the gatherings on farms to
> socialise as they had done years earlier' (Cornwall 2005:41).

However, much of the anti-Italian commentary and sentiment was in fact tempered

because of the importance of the M.I.A. in terms of food production for the war effort,

given that Italians were producing some 90% of the vegetables in the Mirrool area and

labour was in short supply (Cornwall 2005:41-42).

After World War II, Italians in Griffith were increasingly from the central and southern regions of Italy (Gray 2009:19). This feature would have been of no significance to the Anglo Australian who even after hostilities of World War II had ended, Italians as a group, still presented them with many reasons to be wary. The unfamiliar language, or rather a series of even stranger sounding dialects, foreign appearance, women and children working alongside men, very basic accommodation, few material possessions and the practice of proxy marriages, identified the early Italian settler and challenged the local Anglo Australian way of life, generating, inevitably, fear and suspicion among the non-Italian population (Bannister 2007:25).

1.8.1 The Italians in Griffith: patterns of migration

Among the multiple documents recording the history of Italian immigration to the M.I.A. and to the town of Griffith, it is generally agreed that the first Italian immigrants arriving in Griffith in 1913 from the northern regions of Italy were: Samuel Paganini (Swiss Italian), Francesco Bicego, Luigi Guglielmini and Enrico Luca. Each man was a mine worker in Broken Hill when in 1913 they responded to the Government's promotion of the irrigation area. According to McClelland (1985), they were each allotted a farm. Kelly (1988) recorded that Luigi Guglielmini was granted land in 1915, 1916, and again in 1919. From the records it appears that on each occasion Guglielmini was in partnership with other Italians. Paganini was granted one allocation in 1919 on his own. Luca was also granted land on his own in 1915 (Kelly 1988:282, McClelland 1985:34; 57-71).

After the arrival of the miners, Italians followed who had previously worked on the construction of the Burrinjuck Dam and canal system supporting the supply of water to the M.I.A. (McClelland 1985:68). Some twelve months after the first four recorded Italians arrived in Griffith, six more Italians arrived and settled in the township. World War I required four of the six to return to Italy to join the Italian army, the other two remained. At the end of the war, the four who returned to Italy came back to Griffith followed by a steady flow of migration especially from the north of Italy. Increasingly during the period of 1920 and 1921, other Italians arrived in the M.I.A.

Generally, the Italian migrants arriving in the M.I.A were unskilled workers who would accept whatever work they could find, wherever it was available (Kelly 1988:173, Church 2005:8). In the beginning, the majority of the young Italian men worked in gangs digging the irrigation channels, were employed as agricultural labourers, or had acquired small farms. The larger farms in the district owned by Anglo Australians, for example the Beaumont, Spry and Barber families and Jack McWilliam's winery at Hanwood, also employed many Italian workers (Kelly 1988:174).

In the early 1930s, single men made up the vast majority of Italians in the M.I.A., but from the mid-1930s to the beginning of World War II, there was a period of consolidation, as other Italians came to Australia to join family members. This movement is indicative of the relative affluence in Australian society at that time generally and in the M.I.A. specifically. The pattern of family reunion in the M.I.A. was similar to that in Australia nationally, with female arrivals constituting 43% of

Italian migration between 1931 and 1940, compared with only 16% between 1922 and

1930 (Gray 2009:73, Cresciani 2001:502).

The pattern of reunion together with what Cresciani (2003) and Gray (2009) refer to as

'bonding through the paesani network', was also reflected in the establishment of a

Catholic church in the late 1930s by the Italian community in the village of Yoogali.

Italian migrants wanted to practice their Catholic religion and model the celebration

of mass and church community from their homeland (Gray 2009:83). The building of

the church was also an expression of the growing confidence and permanency of the

Italian community in the district. The Yoogali Catholic Church was completed in April

1940, dedicated to Our Lady of Pompeii, the patron of Italians in foreign lands. Today,

it is listed on the NSW State Heritage Register, and the NSW Office of Environment

and Heritage website shows that Our Lady of Pompeii Roman Catholic Church is

possibly the oldest church constructed by, and for the sole use, of an Italian community

which still functions today[8].

According to Bannister (2007), Catholic churches were subsequently built in Yenda,

Hanwood, Griffith and Leeton. Masses in Italian have been part of the Griffith Parish

since the arrival of a Catholic priest from Italy, Father Raffaele Beltrame, in the 1950s.

They were well patronised by the Italian community who consistently maintained the

celebration of religious festivals in the M.I.A. The Catholic Church was, and has

remained, an important religious and social centre for the Italian community in Griffith

and the nearby villages. For example, the Italian parishioners of the Sacred Heart

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[8] http://localhistorynews.blogspot.com.au/2013/03/griffith-italian-migration-heritage.html

Church Griffith formed the Griffith Italian Choir in the 1960s, which rehearsed and sang there until the mid-2000s (Bannister 2007:123).

The M.I.A continued to expand as World War II opened up new markets and changed the farmers' methods of operation across Australia as well as in Griffith. The demand for fresh produce increased dramatically. The war provided a level of financial stability and income for farmers and in the M.I.A. and helped them consolidate their presence. The end of the war heralded a new influx of Italian migrants in the 1950s and 1960s. Many of these migrants found their way to the M.I.A. to be with their 'paesani' and benefit from the support of that social network.

By 1947, the Italian population of the M.I.A. was approximately 2,000, including both Italian and Australian born descendants of Italian migrants. These Italians owned a quarter to half of the horticultural properties in the district (Bosi 1972:50). During the thirty five year period between 1921 and 1954, there were only six transfers of farms from Italian ownership compared with twenty one transfers from non-migrant ownership in the ten years between 1945 and 1954 (Langford-Smith and Rutherford 1966:98-109).

As elsewhere in Australia, after World War II it was chain migration that facilitated most of the Italians who arrived in Griffith and surrounding villages and towns, providing them with a strong support network as they settled into their new environment.

Besides chain migration, two other main factors were responsible for the gradual

increase of Italians coming to Griffith (Kelly 1988). The first was the leasehold system

(long term leasing of land) whereby an individual was not required to have a large

amount of money to buy a farm; the second factor was the Home Maintenance Area

scheme, which was based on the occupancy of a farm by one family and subsequently

offered to the friends and relatives of those already established, giving them the chance

to gain the same opportunity. Single occupancy compliance also encouraged Italian

born farmers to lease separate farms for their sons when they came of age and so spread

the network of Italian owned farms. Kelly (1988:73) contends that these two factors

directly contributed to the increase in migration to Griffith, as knowledge of the

possibilities and opportunities available reached Italy.

By the end of the 1960s, Griffith had more people of Italian birth per head of population

than any other town or city in the state of NSW (Hagan 2007:339). By the late 1980s,

Italians and their descendants owned 60% of all the farms.

Since those first Italians who arrived in 1913, Italian immigration to Griffith and the

wider M.I.A has flourished, with more than 60%, some suggesting 80%, of the current

population of Griffith able to claim Italian ancestry (Kelly 1988:75, Burnley 2001:86).

1.8.2 Adapting to a new environment

At various times in the literature, comparisons have been made with how the Wiradjuri

people, the soldier settlers, and then the Italian farmers adapted to their environment

(Kabaila 2005:1). One difference between the Wiradjuri and the soldier settlers was

that the former was a communal society working for the benefit of the group, whereas

the soldier settlers were individuals who found themselves ultimately alone (Gray

2009:93). Pointedly, Kabaila (2005) states that it was the family network that became

the key to survival in the twentieth century for Aborigines in camps and mission life.

This feature is worthy of expansion through the listing of ten distinctive characteristics

of Aboriginal family networks as cited by Kabaila. These characteristics include:

- concern for kin

- use of surnames to identify family networks

- defense of family networks

- importance of blood ties

- kin terms have wide application

- genealogical knowledge is deep

- a willingness to share the house with kin

- strong women rule their families

- senior family members run the organisation, and family networks have a home
  base (Kabaila 2005:22).

For a person of Italian descent interested in the issue of connectedness to cultural

heritage, these ten characteristics resonate because they bear a striking resemblance to

the discourse of Italian family networks. It is significant that of the three distinct groups

who have lived in the M.I.A., two succeeded in living as part of the landscape, the

Wiradjuri and the early Italian settlers. The common factor in their survival would

appear to be that the two groups who survived well, lived to a large degree by the

principles of communal societies. In other words, they willingly helped each other and

asked for help, sharing whatever they had in the knowledge that support was available

should it be required, in a mutually respectful and responsive way (Gray 2009:94).

In his work, Pich (1975:358) too makes the point that 'co-operative intra-family

linkages were the hallmark of Italian horticultural advancement in the M.I.A.' A

system devised out of necessity by the Italians themselves, it reflected a willingness to

form informal co-operative inter-family arrangements for holding land if farms could

not be purchased outright by individuals or single families. This preparedness of

Italians for co-operative ventures in landholdings stood in sharp contrast to the

individualistic basis of soldier settler and other civilian Australian farmer landholdings.

Pich found that 'intra-family co-operation' continued even after the achievement of

single family ownership. For most of the different regional groups, their initial

purchase of farms required partnerships between brothers, family friends, fellow

villagers, or town folk. However, as the Italians migrants accumulated their individual

family resources, they were able to purchase farms independently. Pich considers it

'paradoxical' that soldier settlement failed despite official encouragement and strong

financial support, while Italian settlement not only survived but grew without

comparable support and without ever being openly considered as an alternative or

viable scheme worthy of government assistance (Pich 1975:6).

Overall, it can be concluded that J.J. McWilliam's vision of the M.I.A. back in 1913

(see above) has proven to be correct. Ironically, one of the most successful enterprises

in which the Italian migrants were involved was wine grape growing and wineries.

McWilliam's wineries (and those of his descendants) have been one of the huge success

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stories of the Riverina, providing much needed work, agricultural experience and knowledge for the pioneering Italians. Today, McWilliam is one of Australia's oldest family wineries, with six generations and more than 130 years of winemaking experience. They remain among the most respected across Australia and they are affectionately remembered by Italians and their descendants in and around the towns of Griffith and Yenda. Many of the early Italian settlers learnt much while working at McWilliam's, employed as farm hands in the vineyards and/or labourers in the wineries. Three of the six main wineries of the late 1950s early1960s were owned by Italians, namely, De Bortoli, Rosetto & Calabria wines (Gray 2009:82). All three remain, with De Bortoli and Calabria wines still operating in family ownership. The M.I.A. has expanded to become the largest wine making region in NSW and one of the largest and most efficient wine producers in Australia with its yields approaching an average of 20 tonnes of grapes per hectare (Hardy and Roden 1995:48).

However, not all Italians arriving in the M.I.A. after World War II automatically aspired to become involved in agriculture or to establish a winery. People without farming experience or without an interest in farming, settled in town blocks and worked as tradesmen, shopkeepers, and in general commerce. Some were associated with the wine industry through employment in the wineries, mostly as casual workers during vintage.

Many writers (most recently Piazza 2004, Kabaila 2005, Bannister 2007, Cornwall 2007, Hagan 2007, Gray 2009, and Gribble 2011) attribute much of the strength and prosperity of the M.I.A. to the work and perseverance of the Italians who settled in the district. Bannister (2007) wrote of the M.I.A. becoming one of Australia's largest and most productive agricultural areas, producing fruit, vegetables, and more than 90% of Australia's rice.

Today Griffith and surrounds cover an area of 160,320 hectares with a population of around 25,000 including the villages of Hanwood, Yenda, Yoogali, Beelbangera, and Bilbul and Lake Wyangan. As drivers approach from either Melbourne, Adelaide or Sydney, the semi-arid land with vast paddocks of wheat and canola, pastures for grazing sheep and cattle and the patches of thinly forested national parks are replaced by lush irrigated citrus orchards, vineyards, rice and vegetable crops (Bannister 2007:29).

Map 8 Griffith southwest NSW.

Source: http://www.griffith.nsw.gov.au/cp contents/resources/riverina map.pdf

Gray (2009) makes the point that the uniqueness of the M.I.A. from its inception has been aided by many factors. These factors may also pertain to other immigrant groups to varying degrees but overwhelmingly they do apply to the Italians and are worthy of inclusion. The factors include firstly, that the area was a planned development and thus everyone in the M.I.A. had come from somewhere else, consequently, people may have been more inclined to be sympathetic toward new arrivals. Secondly, there was an immediate bonding of Italians through the 'paesani' network and chain migration, especially after World War II. Thirdly, there was a common bond through religion. Most Italians were Roman Catholics and as such most new arrivals attended church on the first Sunday after they arrived. There they would meet other members of the congregation, so making new friends and beginning a new support network (Gray 2009:83).

Today the descendants of those original migrants to Griffith are now community leaders and include names familiar to many generally but in particular to people from the State of NSW. These individuals include Frank Sartor, Lord Mayor of Sydney (1991-2003), who went on to be a minister in the NSW State Government (2003-2011). He was born and educated in Griffith. The current NSW Minister for Education and Communities, the Hon. Adrian Piccoli MP (2011-) continues to reside in Griffith with his family when he is not in Sydney on parliamentary duty. The local council has many members with Italian cultural heritage; the current Lord Mayor, Mr John Dal Broi, and the Deputy Lord Mayor, Mr Dino Zappacosta, are Italian Australians with Mr Zappacosta arriving from Abruzzo as a young boy.

1.8.3 Maintaining a connection with Italian culture in Griffith

Italian migrants and their descendants have formed organisations that would create occasions and places to develop and maintain social activities with relatives, 'paesani' or people generally who had shared interests. Griffith had a mass of people with a similar need for nostalgic references and shared memory and the ability to group with other people with common experiences, language, and cultural expectations to form their own clubs and organisations (Harney 1998:130).

As a result, there are multiple Italian clubs, associations and organisations in Griffith that promote a variety of sociocultural activities, Italian regions and their local cuisine. These voluntary associations are important, not just because they provide opportunities for social contact, but also because they are sites where migrants and their descendants can construct and navigate multiple identities (Cohen 1985:15). The largest of clubs and associations include the armed services groups *Alpini* and *Marinai D'Italia*, regional groups such as the *Veronesi, Vicentini, Figli di Grappa*, *Fogolar-Furlan*, *Calabrian, Trevisani and Abruzzese* Associations, sports and social groups such as local Bocce clubs, the Italian Sports Club and the Italian Republic Day Committee. Most of these clubs began with Italians meeting to play bocce or soccer; in the 1930s in the case of bocce; and in the early 1950s in the case of soccer.

The game of bocce in particular was an important part of the social life of Italian settlers prior to World War II. Bocce is a sport similar to bowls. The game was developed in Italy and is played across Australia, including in Griffith, by Italian migrants and their descendants.

Image 8: Press photograph of bocce at the Catholic Club, Yoogali.

Courtesy: The Area News http://www.areanews.com.au/.

A game could be set up almost anywhere needing little resources apart from space. Families frequently gathered at one or other of the Italian farms especially in the early 1930s and then after the outbreak of World War 11. The popularity of the game led to the formation of many of Griffith's now licenced clubs beginning with the Italo-Australia club well before World War 11 (Kelly 1988:222, Piazza 2005:53). Bocce remains strong in Griffith with many young people joining teams in the tradition of their forbears. The Hanwood and Yoogali clubs were inextricably linked with soccer, and both clubs still support bocce and soccer teams. Another important celebration organised by the Italian Museum and Culture Centre Committee is the annual *Festa Delle Salsicce* (Salami festival). This festival was first held in 2003 and has grown steadily, now attracting over 1000 people (Pattison 2008). It involves traditional Italian

music, dancing and an Italian style lunch cooked by local Italian women (Jordan et al. 2010:149).

All the clubs, associations and activities mentioned above are noticeable features of the sociocultural life for the Italian community in Griffith. Some are based on town or region of origin loyalties. Whatever the founding motivation, however, they all indicate the persistence of a strong connection to Italy and more broadly to Italian cultural traditions and the importance of 'paesani' and friendship networks in Griffith. These clubs, associations and the varied activities presented to the community through them, all create a sociocultural space that enables Italians and their descendants to construct a past, present and future for themselves. They are important points of reference and they are significant locators for 'paesani' and other community networks (Harney 1998:142).

1.8.4 Maintaining the Abruzzese heritage in Griffith

The concept of maintaining regional cultural heritage is exemplified well in the regrouping of the Abruzzo Club of Griffith in recent years, after a dormant period of around twenty years, by the descendants of the original Abruzzese migrants.

The Griffith Abruzzo Club was first formed in 1977. In 1993 the club morphed into the Griffith Abruzzo Association with gradually decreasing activity. In 2007, four of the original members reignited interest in the association by shifting the focus to more of a family oriented social association, working to raise funds for the community both in Griffith and in Abruzzo. Two examples of this were the support for the 2009

earthquake in L'Aquila, the capital city of one of the provinces in the region, and contributions to establish a private hospital in Griffith.

The association also works to foster the preservation and promotion of Abruzzo culture brought to Griffith by the Abruzzese in the last century. To this end the Griffith Association formed a partnership with the *Associazione Abruzzesi del* NSW in Sydney with a view of bringing together Abruzzese associations across Australia and in other countries where Abruzzese and their descendants reside. This vision was realised with the inaugural World Abruzzo Day celebrations held in Griffith on 5 August 2011. The Abruzzo Association of Griffith considers being part of national and international associations of people with Abruzzese heritage important. Such a network would allow individuals to share information and resources and make contact with Abruzzese across the nation and the world, in order to promote Abruzzese traditions including cuisine and dialects. The Association is committed to ensuring that the descendants of Abruzzese migrants living in Griffith 'understand why the values and customs that our *genitori*, *nonni* and *bisnonni* (parents, grandparents and great grandparents) held so dear, are important to understand and pass on' (Ippoliti 2011).

CHAPTER 2 **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

2.1 Introduction

In a comprehensive sense, the theoretical framework that underpins this study centres on the construction of an ethnic identity in second and subsequent generations of children with an Italian cultural heritage, and issues concerning how that heritage has been embraced (or not) by the descendants of migrants born in a host country. More specifically, the study addresses the concept of connectedness to cultural heritage for the descendants of Abruzzese Italians who grew up in the town of Griffith in New South Wales (cf. Chapter 1 section 1.2).

A study such as this one is appropriate, because its focus has had minimal attention from researchers, especially in terms of connectedness to Italian cultural heritage for descendants among generations of Abruzzese migrants (cf. Chapter 1 section 1.2). It is timely, because the profile of the Italian migrant and the Italian presence across Australia has changed considerably since the period between the world wars, and perhaps more significantly since the mass migration following World War II. Members of those migrant cohorts who may still be alive, are no longer in the workforce; and those second generation children who were born in the mid to late 1950s are also beginning to retire. As a group, second and subsequent generations of descendants are becoming more visible; have a higher level of education; and appear to be more open and willing to discuss issues relating to their own identity and heritage (O'Connor 2004:vi). Many have seized the opportunity to take up dual citizenship, being citizens of both their country of birth and the country of birth of their forebears. This was an

opportunity not afforded to their emigrant family members who, for practical and pragmatic reasons, relinquished their Italian citizenship and became Australian citizens. However, as will be discussed, for many of these migrants and their descendants, acquiring citizenship did not equate with a complete departure from their Italian cultural heritage.

For this study I have adapted the definition of both cultural heritage and cultural identity used by Gone et al. (1999) in their work on past personal narratives and the study of cultural identity. Cultural heritage then, is primarily symbolic; it is inclusive of how and what, individuals, groups or society value from the past and willingly speak about. It is how individuals and/or groups see themselves as a community today and how they may project themselves into the future. Similarly, cultural identity, they say includes 'a conscious, reflective and evaluative self-understanding affecting all facets and components of self from which individuals knowingly commit to the shared values and practices of a particular group' (Gone et al. 1999:381). Also, references to second and subsequent generation participants include all Australian born children who have one or both parent/s and/or grandparents or great grandparent/s who originated from Italy.

What follows is a review of the literature that focuses on connectedness to cultural heritage as a construct of cultural identity both in general and with specific reference to second and subsequent generations of Italian Australians. The chapter begins by providing an historical perspective in discussing the concepts of acculturation, assimilation and multiculturalism as they relate to Italian migration to Australia. An alternative perspective to acculturation and assimilation is provided, advancing the

notion of collective identities for descendants wherever they may reside. Transnationalism and its impact on cultural identity are also explored. In the second part of the chapter, the factors that define and inform connectedness to cultural heritage for the purpose of this study are discussed, as is the perception of a rediscovery of Italian cultural heritage for the descendants of migrants. For the most part the context concerns Australian rural and urban communities.

As a starting point, it is accepted that the construction of identities involves an interactive process between the past, the present and the future; they are not fixed concepts nor are they constructed in isolation. Ibrahim (1999:354) asserts that the past is 'an accumulative memory, an experience, and a conception upon which individuals interact with the world around them'. The past may also be expressed through the narratives (as will be explored further in the following chapter), that migrants may share and pass onto their children and grandchildren. The present concerns the construct of identity as it applies to present day real life in the community within which the migrants and their descendants live (Giampapa 2007:281-282, 422-423). The past and the present are included in the current discussion, with consideration of how the children of migrants who live 'in between' cultures negotiate the conflicting needs of nostalgia for the past and the need to construct modern real life identities (Wilson 2008:99). Brief mentions to implications for the future, as they relate to the concept of connectedness, are made in chapters four and five.

2.2 Historical perspectives of immigrant behaviours

Early writings about migrant behaviours focusing on European migration to the USA, usually from the sociology discipline, tended to focus on the concept of acculturation (Chiro 2008:17). Chiro (2008) detailed that these early researchers (e.g. Thomas and Znanieki 1958, Child 1970) generally assumed that to deal with bicultural pressures, migrants either had to reject the dominant culture and adhere to their ethnic culture, or otherwise assimilate into mainstream society, reject their ethnic culture (Chiro 2008:17-18) and submit to acculturation. As expounded by Phinney (1997), this view was based on a linear model or bipolar model, where two cultures were seen as occupying positions at opposite ends of a continuum, and where the more mainstream or acculturated group members were, the less they would retain their home culture, and vice versa (Phinney 1997:4). Setting aside the simplicity of such a linear model or bipolar model, this historical representation of immigrant behaviours does portray immigrants adapting to a new country in one of four ways: integration; assimilation; separation; and marginalisation (Rumbaut 1994:690). That is, migrants either integrated into their host environment by assimilating and immersing themselves into it or they separated themselves, thus becoming marginalised members of their community. However, the magnitude of migration across the world, including to Australia, following the end of hostilities in 1945, required a shift in attitudes and expectations among the host nations that would lead them to accepting more variations in life style adaption by migrants than those identified above.

2.2.1 Early studies on Italian migration to Australia

Whatever the context or the emphasis, historically, research on the formation of cultural identification has largely focused on first generation adult migrants and began in the1950s (Rumbaut 1994:752).

Certainly, post-World War II, the mass migration to Australia was a cultural and ethnic mix unimaginable before 1939. An Australian national identity, after 1945, was conditional on at least an acknowledgement of migrant identities with connections to many other countries and cultures, including Italy. Bosworth (2000) asserts that after 1945 Australia began to embrace a more American view of its place in the world than the one it had 'inherited' from Great Britain. He argues that Australia demonstrated a preparedness to source migrants from other parts of Europe as well as from Great Britain, and that for a country as racially conscious as Australia at that time, this was quite a radical shift, because 'it had been a common boast in Australia prior to 1945 that the population was 98% British, indeed, more British than was the populace of Britain itself' (Bosworth 2000:445).

Still, as detailed by Iuliano and Baldassar (2008), both in Canada and in Australia early research on Italian migration (e.g. Borrie 1954, Price 1963), was guided by theories of cultural loss and immigrant assimilation. As an example, the authors state that the most well-known writing on Italian Australians in the 1950s and 1960s was the novel *They're a Weird Mob* written by John O'Grady, pen name Nino Culotta in 1957. The book was written to interest those in Australia who were responding to an acculturation paradigm of the way migrants should settle into the country. It provided readers, including Italian

readers, who were probably responding to existing strong messages and were keen to belong and fit in, with an example of how migrants, then known as 'new Australians', might assimilate and become 'true Aussie mates' (Iuliano and Baldassar 2008:2).

Indeed, Bosworth and Bosworth (1993) had highlighted this issue some fifteen years earlier, when they wrote that the term 'new Australian', commonly used either in fiction, academic literature, or in popular discourse at that time, was very powerful and clear in its intent and purpose.

Wilton and Rizzo (1983:48) too write most ardently that the assimilationists 'who bestrode the field of immigration studies in the late 1950s' and who they say commanded the heights of scholarship far beyond their time of writing, were interested only in 'determining how quickly immigrants could discard their quaint foreign habits and acquire more solid and respectable Australian ones', as can be seen in the example below.

> 'In his 1952 study, *The Italian Fisherman of Fremantle*, Charles Gamba argues that it was only with length of time in Australia and with the birth and upbringing of an all-Australian-born second generation that the southern Italian tendency to be highly strung by racial trait could be bred out' (Wilton and Rizzo 1983:48-66).

In a similar vein, the same authors comment on how Charles Price had observed:

> 'numbers of hard-working and unhygienic peasants gradually transform themselves into well-to-do persons saving money for investment, children's education or bringing out friends from the old country, and eventually into prosperous farmers or businessmen with homes as hygienically kept and comfortably furnished as those of British-Australians about them' (Price 1963 cited in Wilton and Rizzo 1983:48-66).

Likewise, Baldassar (1999:2) complemented this position by writing that most early studies of ethnic groups in Australia, including Italian migrants, focused on the belief that second and subsequent generations would become 'increasingly assimilated into Australian society', concluding that these studies were driven by an interest in the related questions of how ethnic the groups were, and as a consequence how long would the ethnic community to which they belonged survive.

However, by the mid-1970s, across the world, including in Australia, the assimilationist framework was being replaced by studies (for example, Cronin 1970, Huber 1977, Thompson 1980) that were driven by questions of multiculturalism, diverse cultural identities, cultural maintenance and cultural continuity and transmission (Iuliano and Baldassar 2008:3). Correspondingly, Loretta Baldassar (2001) had introduced the concept of 'italianità' in her writing, pressing the point that the willingness for descendants to now embrace their Italian cultural heritage may, to some extent at least, be attributed to that shift in community attitudes. She argues that older descendants, whose parents migrated between the wars, were subject to policies that were in place up to the mid-1970s; policies that were based on a white Australia proassimilation paradigm, which essentially meant that many of these Italian migrants and their descendants suppressed their Italian identity and made conscious and deliberate decisions to look and behave more like Anglo Australians. Ultimately, these policies were superseded to reflect a more inclusive view that valued and embraced differences (Collins 1988:231) ensuring that from this time, the acknowledgment of multiculturalism, at least politically, provided an opportunity for the expression of migrant identities, including an Italian cultural identity. Certainly, the strength in

numbers, the length of migration history, the visible success of Italians, and the taking on of 'all things Italian' by the wider Australian community, has facilitated and encouraged pride and acknowledgement of Italian cultural heritage for children of Italian migrants (Cresciani 2003).

Concurrent with the policy shift and perhaps not unrelated, it was also around the mid-1970s that second and subsequent generations of Italian Australians were becoming more visible and active in social, professional and political positions which reflected those of their Anglo Australian counterparts.

Ten years on in the 1980s, interest in Italian migration studies intensified within universities across Australia. Pesman (2000) identifies three main factors that contributed to this. These factors align very closely to the discussion above and include: i) the promotion of multiculturalism and community language teaching by Australian Governments; ii) the growing focus in universities on popularity of Italian culture and Italian history; and iii) the maturating and self-assertion of the Italian Australian community themselves. In relation to this last point, the author draws attention to the fact that the majority of scholars working in the broader area of Italian migration studies in Australia, in recent times, have indeed been second and third generation Italian Australians (Pesman 2000:270).

Overall however, the combination of all these factors has resulted in the opportunity for descendants of Italian migrants to begin a discussion, that in turn may have led to an increase in impetus to pursue a connection to their cultural heritage if they so choose.

At the very least descendants of Italian migrants have benefited from alternative

paradigms to assimilation and acculturation that are discussed below.

2.2.2 An alternative to assimilation and acculturation

As another option to the earlier linear concepts of assimilation and acculturation,

Phinney (1990) proposed his model of cultural identity, one that positioned

acculturation as a two-dimensional process, in which both the relationship with the

home culture and the relationship with the new culture were to be considered. Within

this view the migrant could either have a strong or weak identification with both home

or host cultures. Phinney argues that in such cases, strong ethnic identity did not imply

a weak relationship or low involvement with the dominant culture. He asserts that

strong identification with both groups was indicative of strong integration and

participation in two cultures (Phinney 1990:501). Similarly, Chavez (1992) writing of

his work with Mexicans living in the USA, speaks of their ability to maintain strong

links with their home country, confirming that this did not impede their immersion in

the wider American community (Chavez 1992:56). This identified a shift both in

academic and social discourse that reflected the notion of collective identities.

2.2.3 The advancement of collective identities

Brockmeier and Carbaugh (2001) contend that not many questions in western literature

and thought have a longer, deeper, and livelier intellectual history than how we give

meaning to our lives, and how in doing so, we construct ourselves in time, as personal

and cultural beings (Brockmeier and Carbaugh 2001:1). Within this research literature,

the concepts of identity, ethnicity, culture and shared cultural values regularly intersect

and overlap. Fundamentally, the key outcome of multiculturalism is the understanding

that individuals may have more than one identity they wish to relate to, and that an

individual's identity is not static, but a fluid and evolving concept. Manifestly,

individual identification or belonging to a particular culture is generally conceptualised

through the shared meanings and shared values individual members have. Many

researchers write of the development of group or collective values and their relationship

to identity. For example, in his work, Chiro (2008:19) makes reference to how a

collective identity develops when group members are aware that they share similar

attitudes towards certain group values. Similarly, Smolicz (2001) refers to core values

as forming the most fundamental composition of a group's culture. Further, cultural

identity, he says:

> '…is a phenomenon which is experienced by members of the cultural group
> when its members who willingly accept that their attitudes, thoughts and
> feelings are shared, acknowledge the phenomenon and that they are a reflection
> of the cultural identity to which they ascribe' (Smolicz 2001:77).

Correspondingly, research relating to the intergenerational transmission and

maintenance of Italian cultural values among descendants of Italian migrants, position

the importance of cultural values within the framework of the identity, ethnicity and

cultural terms which are meaningful to the group concerned (Clyne1991:93).

As already mentioned above, cultural identity is as Gone et al. (1999) explains:

> '…a conscious, reflexive, and evaluative self-understanding, pertaining to the
> facet of the self, which knowingly commits itself to the shared values, and
> practices of a particular cultural group' (Gone et al. 1999:381).

A vital component to the self-understanding process, is an appreciation of the role of the personal narrative in the construction, representation and expression of cultural identity. I will discuss this point further in Chapter 3.

2.2.4 Loss of culture among descendants of Italians in Australia

Research on migrant history may have begun in the 1950s, however, concentration on the related area of identity amongst descendants of migrants as a field of research, has only been developing since around the 1980s. According to many researchers, among them, Glenn and Costanzo (2006), Cornwall (2007), Iuliano and Baldassar (2008), in Australia the stimulus for such research came only after the changes in government policies, already referred to above, had become embedded into the Australian mindset, such that the mainstream community actively revealed theses changing views in observable behaviour changes thus signalling an embracing of cultural diversity and multiculturalism amongst the general populace.

Even immersed within this context of acceptance of multiculturalism, Baldassar (1992) maintains that within mainstream Australia, cultural transmission, including Italian culture, was often being portrayed as being weak or lost amongst Australia's diverse migrant population, to be replaced by the dominant Anglo Australian culture. She asserts that although this assumption was often criticised as being too simplistic a notion, it nonetheless remained the dominant view for many years. For example, together with other scholars, Bertelli (1986) was maintaining that the descendants of early Italian migrants were, for the most part, assimilated into Australian society to such an extent that only a few were active participants in the Italian community and showed

any interest in their Italian cultural heritage (Bertelli 1986, 1987:32, Cresciani 1985:27-91, 1986:2). Jupp (1998:67) went so far as to declare that grandchildren were sometimes 'unrecognisable' to their parents and grandparents, inferring that soon the only signifier of cultural heritage for coming generations would be their name.

Significantly, Baldassar points out, however, that this prediction of the loss of cultural heritage in second and subsequent generations of the children of migrants was not based on empirical evidence, but in fact derived largely from theories of ethnicity and the ethnic group models used to represent them. In support of this view, Bottomley (1991) argues that a consequence of theorising about second and subsequent generation identities without empirical evidence has the tendency to assume, rather than investigate, ideas and values designated in cultural terms, such as 'Italian' (Bottomley 1991:102).

In accord with her presentiment, Baldassar was part of pool of academics who added to that research specifically relating to the lives of second-generation Italian migrants in Australia, thus not only increasing the amount of publications but also elevating the 'sophistication' of the material (Baldassar 1999:2, 3).

2.2.5 Second and subsequent generations

Ruscito (2010) in her research of an Italian migrant community in Canada wrote that even with the increased interest by researchers from the varied fields of Psychology, Sociology and Anthropology, focussing on the children of migrants, second and subsequent generations, several questions about immigration adaptation remained

unanswered. Of particular relevance to this study for example, she highlighted the

following questions as important and needing to be studied: how did these children

view their parents' country of origin, and how did they construct their own identity

amidst family from one culture and peers from another? (Ruscito 2010:1).

Accepting the proposition that the majority of migrants and their children can more

easily have several identities that link them to more than one culture simultaneously,

Vertovec (1999), Falicov (2005), and Ramji (2006) all acknowledged that:

> 'Today's children of immigrants have greater interest in and they knowledge
> their parents' countries. They have begun to feel pride in their ethnicities and
> even defend against discrimination by getting more involved with their cultures,
> rather than denying them or wanting them to pass. They seem to underline
> rather than erase the hyphen in Greek-American or Cuban-American' (Falicov
> 2005:5).

Unmistakably, the children of immigrants will have different attitudes towards their

descendants' home country and to their own place of birth than their parents and

grandparents may have had. As alluded to above, Giampapa (2007:280) acknowledges

that within a postmodernist framework, discussions of cultural identities do recognise

that the concept is fluid and that formation of identities does not occur in isolation. To

this end and drawing on her work with Italian migrants and their descendants, she says,

transnational traffic and interactions 'reshape spaces and blur boundaries of what

constitutes italianità, who has the right to claim it, and who has the right to shape it'.

Further, she argues that it is this very notion of transnational traffic and interactions that

also enables Italians to 'self-identify, self-position and connect transnationally wherever

people of Italian heritage may live across the world, contending that the study of

identities has been recast to include citizenship, immigration, globalisation, mobility

and cosmopolitanism, as new ways of examining identities and to understand the children of migrants as global citizens, because cultural identity is socially constructed and includes 'one's social relationship with the world' (Giampapa 2007:281, 308, 422-423). Correspondingly, from studies in the USA, researchers such as di Leonardo (1984) and Widdicombe (1998) highlighted that rather than assuming a homogeneity across generations of Italian migrants, researchers were beginning to 'assume ethnic variety' and interconnections to 'social arrangements and practices', in an attempt to understand the different perceptions and behaviours in relation to culture (di Leonardo 1984:11, Widdicombe 1998:200).

In the Australian context, Bertelli (1985: 5) described intergenerational difference as the major challenge to the Italian community living in Australia. He wrote that a core characteristic of the Italian Australian community in the 1980s was the emergence of strong second and third generations of Italian Australians, saying that 'the future of the community, in fact, lies in their hands and their challenges are many and complex'. He recognised that maintaining and fostering an Italian culture in modern Australia was at a critical stage due to the ageing and inevitable passing of the first generation of Italian migrants (Bertelli 1985:70).

Also within the Australian context Iuliano and Baldassar (2008) and Lambert (2008) advocate similar views. Lambert (2008:37) in particular, identifies that there is general agreement across disciplines that the concept of identity, including ethnic identity, is developed and constructed through social interaction. Therefore, identity is multidimensional and continually changing, depending in particular on the social

interactions and encounters experienced over a lifetime. Thus the descendants of Italian

migrants will also have 'multifaceted, fluid and continually evolving' identities that

reflect the social interactions, and encounters they have experienced.

As an interesting aside, Rando (2004) and Hagan (2007) identify themes and patterns of

cultural connectedness which are emerging and being expressed through popular

literature and films created by Italian migrants and their descendants. In these works,

the writers accept some components of their cultural heritage as being inevitable and

welcome them, some are rejected in their entirety, while others are recognised as a

hybrid merger of the values and customs from the home country with those of the host

country (Rando 2004:84, Hagan 2007:425). I have included several examples

throughout the chapter from the Australia context to show the more common themes

that pervade fictional writings and that point in varying degrees not only to an increase

in interest and acceptance of cultural heritage but also to a realignment of individual

connectedness cultural heritage. Wilson (2008) suggests that the role of the 'hyphenate'

writer has changed across generations from that of 'raconteur' of migrant history that

may be more 'nostalgia than an analysis', to that of a 'cultural mediator' and 'cultural

examiner' (Wilson 2008:98). Seemingly in support of this position, the examples below

appear to underline a need in the writers to seek and find refuge and comfort in

nostalgia and to create or maintain a romantic version of the Italy they or their

parents/grandparents left behind. The two excerpts below from Italian Australia writers

predominately of the fictional genre.

The words from the first writer, Zoe Boccabella (2011) will resonate with many descendants of immigrants. She writes:

> 'In my heart a powerful tug of war wages between Italy, my ancestors, my Italian blood and Australia, where I was born, where I have lived my entire life, my family has lived for more than a century, to where I am intrinsically connected' (Boccabella 2011:337).

Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli (1999) too describes familiar themes that permeate hers and other fictional writings by authors of Italian heritage. At the beginning of her book entitled *Tapestry* she writes:

> 'I was born and raised in Adelaide, Australia; but the Maria that was to be, had already come into existence in the villages of the Campagna region in Italy. Their names were as familiar to me as the names in my own street' (Pallotta-Chiarolli 1999:2).

The thoughts from Pallotta-Chiarolli (1999) offer an appropriate introduction to discussion in the next section on what the descendants learn from their parents/grandparents.

2.2.6 What do the descendants of migrants learn from their parents/grandparents?

Obviously, all children of migrants are influenced, albeit in different ways, by what they learn from their parents and/or grandparents. For most new arrivals, the country that first generation migrant's call 'home' is a bittersweet place that they knew but left behind, a place that held their friends, their family, and their memories. For other migrants 'home' may also have been a place that did not offer them much of a future and their views and recollections may not be as positive, although feelings of nostalgia may still be powerful and remain with them (Moran-Taylor and Menijavar 2005). Likewise, as Akhtar (1999:1) finds, some migrants will have romanticised

interpretations of their home country and perhaps cling to memories of houses, cafés and landscapes, while others still, 'conceive of the homeland as not merely a physical place for return visits, but as a concept and desire that can be returned to through imagination' (Espiritu and Tran 2008:4).

To explain the point further, Ruscito (2010:2) in her study cites sociologists who have documented the descriptions of both immigrants and their children's romantic views of the home country. For example, Evergeti's (2006) study of Greek women showed how Greece was described as a place where people would play and dance under the moon and all the grandmothers would be telling stories. Similarly, in their study, Stone et al. (2005) reported that second generation Greek immigrants conveyed images of their parents' country, to the point where they recounted that 'the colours in Greece were more vivid and more pronounced', that 'the smells speak to a Greek's brain and that the sun was always out', explaining that people had to be there to experience these factors. Viruell-Fuentes (2006) too, wrote of first and second-generation migrant women who cried when they expressed a longing for Mexico, a place and culture they said made them feel whole. These powerful feelings of nostalgia may also lead migrants to have 'if only' and 'someday' fantasies of returning, retiring or being buried in their homeland (Akhtar 1999:123).

Overall, therefore, the descendants of migrants will be exposed to memories, be they good, bad, pleasant or unpleasant, that stay with them as they grow up forming preconceived notions of what the old country was like (Akhtar 1999, Falicov 2005). Clearly, these memories in whichever form, stories, photographs, travel trunks used

when emigrating, linen and even utensils brought from the home country, will all formulate at the very least, expectations or perceptions in second and subsequent generations.

In the Australian context, for second and third generations' descendants of Italian immigrants, the point of comparison and point of reference during their childhood is not Italy, the past, it is Australia, the present. Yet, as submitted by Wilson (2008), because the role played by collective memory is to transmit both the historical facts that led to the migration and a cultural heritage, these children are inclined to recount what at times may be real, or at times what they imagined a past community to be, applying all the symbolism they have acquired through the influence of families and through their stories, sociocultural activities and family celebrations, including those of an imagined homeland of their parents and grandparents (Wilson 2008:102).

As is understood (cf. Chapter 1), the majority of Italians migrated to Australia before 1961. They were therefore not part of Italy's transformation from a predominately agricultural society into the advanced industrial economy of the 1970s and beyond. This socioeconomic timeframe is significant, because as highlighted by Cresciani (1986), pre-1961 migrants remember a very different Italy and in some instances that memory is permanently fixed on the time they left the country (Cresciani 1986:13). Undoubtedly then, the information transmitted to children and grandchildren will reflect specific memories and timeframes, especially in instances when the family member had not returned to Italy since their emigration.

Similarly to the fictional writers referred to above, other descendants are sharing these experiences through their writings. For example, the first time John Palmieri went to visit the Abruzzese town of Lettopalena in 1989 he penned that he felt 'an eerie sense of having been there before' (De Lore 200:6,7). Though born and raised in Newcastle, he had grown up with the folklore of the little mountain village about 200 kilometres from Rome that evidently had impacted on him to the point that on his first visit he felt he had 'been there before'. In the same way, the paired notions of 'returning home' or 'feeling at home' described by some of the participants in this study when talking about their first visit to Italy will be addressed in more detail in the of analysis of participant responses (cf. Chapter 4).

Today migrants and their descendants are members of distinct groups within a multicultural Australia. Academic discourses of migration, identity and belonging are interwoven with the ways migrants and their descendants negotiate their own construct of who they are and where they belong. This process is facilitated through the advances in information and communication technology, globalisation and transnationalism, each of which contributes to current migration and identity research discourse (Castles 2000:10). With the benefit of time and the encouragement of successful Italian migrant experiences, Italian Australian communities across Australia are able to embrace the notion that in the end negotiating identities is not simply about who individuals are, but also about who they can become as Italian Australians.

Whatever messages or perceptions children glean from their forebears, undoubtedly, for them and their migrant family members, their identity will not always be synonymous with the place of their birth (Iuliano 2010:9). A reading of just a sample of the plethora of migrant narratives available reveals that many migrants maintain the cultural identity of the home country, even in cases of the majority of time being spent in the host country. Not surprisingly in a more contemporary view, a variety of responses are given, from the predictable family driven ones to more emotive and eclectic responses on the formation of cultural identity among migrants and their descendants (Portes and Rumbaut 1990).

Today the innovations in communication technology have meant that migration and identity discourse for migrants across the world must be framed with the concept of transnationalism as a component of that discourse.

2.3 Transnationalism as a component of migration and identity discourse

Transnationalism is a necessary factor in migration discourse and is now commonplace in the literature of migration (Glick Schiller 2004, Vertovec 2004). Within this transnational perspective, Italian emigration to Australia is also seen as a major part of Italian history, in that the story of modern Italy must be understood and narrated as the history of the Italian people, both within and outside the Italian peninsula. It encompasses the history of the emigrants and the contributions that they made to their new home and to the Italy they left behind (Pesman 2000:274).

The concept of transnationalism is variously defined, but for this study I have adapted the definition from Stone et al., to be the ties that link people across national borders and allow people to feel loyalty to more than one country or culture even though they live primarily in a host country (Stone et al. 2005:10). Writing from an Australia perspective, Holton (1998) suggests that transnationalism in fact began with white colonisation since 'for over two hundred years all aspects of Australian life have been profoundly influenced by transnational forces operating across its borders' (Holton 1998:198).

Since the 1990s, within the broader concept of transnationalism, more attention is given to the social relations of transnational migrants, rather than simply to the economic factors of their migration. This new attention to the ways in which the social fields of migrants incorporates two nations - the 'home' and 'host' nations - is most commonly discussed in terms of migrant and second generation commitments to ethnic and national identities. Rather than possessing a singular national or ethnic identity, migrants are increasingly acknowledged as having 'dual' or 'hybrid' identities (Mandel 1990, Baldassar 2001:6). Glick Schiller et al. (1995) contend that migrants today are all transmigrants because they are able to be embedded in their host country but maintain multiple linkages to their home country (Glick Schiller et al. 1995:48). This proposition can also be applied to migrants and descendants of migrants of long standing because the ease of availability of communication technologies emboldens and enables all who are willing to reconnect with home towns regardless of length of absence.

Research on the Italian diaspora highlights the importance of transnational networks created and maintained by Italian migrants, and the way in which these networks have shaped and influenced migration pathways within families (Glenn and Costanzo 2006:253). Within recent studies of Italian migration there is an increasing emphasis on a transnational outlook (for example, Bryceson and Vuorela 2002, Carniel 2007,Wessendorf 2007), a perspective which explores the continued links between the country of residence and country of origin, which ensures that the process of migration becomes embedded into subsequent generations (Iuliano and Baldassar 2008:6).

Baldassar et al. (2007) adopt the terms 'transnational families' or 'transnational interaction' to refer to migrants and their families still living in their home country or elsewhere, engaging in conversations and interactions. The idea of the transnational family is intended to capture the growing awareness that family members could retain their sense of collectivism and kinship in spite of being spread across multiple nations. Thus, much like ethnic, national and diaspora identities and relationships, family identities and kin relations can be maintained across time and distance, and are not determined by particular localities or national borders (Baldassar et al. 2007:5).

For Mecca and Iozzi (2000) the story of the Italian presence in Australia can only be that of Italy as a transnational society, of *paesi* as transnational communities that embrace *paesani* in Italy and *paesani* across the world wherever they may have settled, of Italy as a nation without borders. Therefore, the story of Italian migration to Australia is very much part of Australian history, and the heritage of Italian migrants is

now, because of the longevity and extent of Italian migration, also the heritage of all Australians (Mecca and Iozzi 2000:79).

The discussion of Italy as a transnational society and recognition of Italy as an amalgam of transregional societies has led to the growth of transregional groupings within Italian communities, such as *I Veneti nel mondo*[1], Calabrians from Griffith, or the Abruzzese in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area (Pesman 2000:276). As mentioned elsewhere (cf. Chapter 1), these transnational associations have since the 1950s worked to preserve kin, town, provincial and regional based connections, maintaining links across generations for the migrants and their children to the Italy of their youth. More recently, with the use of technologies, easily adopted by a more educated and more affluent membership, these associations have also facilitated links and connections between Italians of similar provincial and regional origins across Australia and the world, connecting the once active but isolated Italian diasporas worldwide (Baldassar et al. 2012:32).

Obviously, for early Italian migrants to Australia, communication between the home and host country was hindered due to distance, time taken for letters, the cost of telephone calls when they were possible, and difficulty in writing letters due to high levels of illiteracy among the Italians, both at home and in Australia. All these factors contributed to feelings of loss and separation for Italians living in Australia. However, according to Baldassar et al. (2012) Italian migrants have in fact been 'members of transnational households' spanning many decades and across most parts of the world,

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[1] People from the Italian region of Veneto in the world

maintaining links with Italy, at times infrequent or tenuous, but nonetheless retaining

connections especially with their hometown or region. Further, the authors propose that

perhaps it was this very feature that mitigated the impact of distance and absence, more

than otherwise may have been the case (Baldassar et al. 2012:32).

2.4 Intergenerational cultural transmission and continuity

As already mentioned elsewhere, the biggest non Anglo Celtic migrant group to settle in

Australia has been the Italians (see Chapter 1). Even with the numerical strength,

longevity and resonance of the collective, 'no serious historian can ever think that an

Italian community is a fully united and homogenous grouping whose members will be

defined by their national identity alone' (Bosworth 2000:447, 449). This comment from

Bosworth aside, like many other researchers, he does concede that a possible outcome

of post-World War II migration may have been the evolution of a more united group of

Italian Australian migrants, albeit very slowly. Thus, gradually, a more overarching

Italian identity in Australia has become more noticeable, at least to the wider Anglo

Australian community. This perception of a more all-encompassing identity may

facilitate intergenerational cultural transmission and continuity but is it a reality within

the Australian context?

Indubitably, intergenerational transmission is the key feature in considerations of

cultural continuity (Nauck 2001:159). It is a developing area of study that is creating

much interest especially among descendants of migrants. Perhaps the most difficult

facet of a discussion of culture generally or cultural transmission as it relates to

manifestations of identity, is reaching consensus as to the meaning of culture. In the

material that follows, the different emphasise of researchers provides a sense of the key features of their research while highlighting their differences. For example, Sowell (1981:287-288) writes that culture is a focus for loyalty and emotion for migrants, whereas Eisenstadt (1992:64, 83) concludes that culture in fact provides an important symbolic dimension for identity both for the migrant and the host community. However for Novak (1996: 426), culture is more a state of mind and a way of life. Likewise, to Lalich (2003:8) culture is indeed the outward representation of a particular ethnic group that has been formed outside the home country that he says migrants always attempt to maintain.

Of course, in its broadest sense culture can be the embodiment of all components referred to above, but each component will have a different prominence for individuals. For example, for some descendants of migrants it may not be the deep emotion and loyalty exhibited by their elders, but simply the joy derived from cuisine, music song or dance. However, Carniel (2007) warns that to talk of food as an identifier of culture is open to criticism and he encourages a deeper analysis of the popular commentary that examines food, food practices and their intersection with culture and interpersonal relationships, concluding that it is these interconnecting concepts that in fact speak powerfully of cultural identity resolving that 'in literature, food is transformed into a metaphor for culture, community and identity' (Carniel 2007:94). He adds that what foods are eaten and when, who prepares them and how, and the memories and associations attached to various dishes and meals, reveal very important insight into social relationships, traditions, personal histories and regional differences (Carniel 2007: 95). Therefore within this context, food is not simply the joy derived from

cuisine but indeed a potent tool through which to display cultural association and identity.

For the purpose of this study, I draw on the writings of Geertz (1973:372) and Gone et al. (1999: 373) and define culture as the overall totality of public, patterned and historically reproduced practices and transmitted behaviours that are available for the Italian Australian community to take meaning from. The entirety of the behaviour patterns can be seen, written, heard or manufactured, and include philosophy, the arts, construction of beliefs and all other products of human work and thought. Further, I acknowledge that culture is fluid, and constantly changing, being reproduced and replicated with modifications as subsequent generations adapt to new environments and circumstances.

O'Connor and Comin (1993) are among the many focussing on Italian migrants, who identify that the transmission and maintenance of Italian culture has been noted across Australia, with many observing and expressing openly the perception that the strength of the Italian community lies in its ability to have transferred their cultural values and traditions to second and subsequent generations (O'Connor and Comin 1993:10-11). This has allowed as Wilson (2007:159) observes some Italian Australians to transition from 'being Italian' to 'feeling Italian'. This point is clarified further later in this section.

Certainly within the modern multicultural Australian community ample opportunities present themselves (for example, at school, within community groups, and at festivals), to affirm one's cultural heritage. Consequently within many communities there are increasing patterns of behaviour, both formal and informal, that allow descendants to express celebrations and membership of a collective identity. These patterns are viewed both by first generation migrants and their descendants, as valuable features of cultural maintenance and transmission in the Italian Australian context (Glenn and Costanzo 2006:255). However, while these opportunities are very important, to merely acknowledge in this instance Italian cultural heritage, does not imply a connection to being Italian. It is important to maintain an active connection with the values and culture that make an individual feel and perhaps even think Italian. The stress lies on the word <u>active.</u> The emphasis on the interactive relationship is a very deliberate and considered point, it invokes both cognition and affect as determinates of self-identification (Finizio and Di Pietro 1986:113) and it is the focus of the fieldwork that forms part of this study. The words below from the then Italian Ambassador to Australia, Giovanni Castellaneta (2000), go some way to explaining this premise:

> 'The understanding of self and of identity involves embracing a more inclusive concept of connectedness and Italianness and includes an understanding that goes beyond nationality and highlights the importance of blood and cultural ties. It is not just a passport that identifies an Italian but how an individual feels about being Italian that makes them Italian' (Castellaneta 2000:xxiv).

By collecting the personal narratives of the descendants of migrants from the Abruzzo region of Italy who travelled to Australia and ultimately settled in Griffith, the current project attempts to identify those factors that inform the concept of connectedness and link the participant group to the original migrants and wider Italy.

2.5 Connectedness to cultural heritage as applied in the study

In my consideration of the concept of connectedness to cultural heritage, I have been both encouraged and challenged. Encouraged because research in the area is developing but challenged by the spread of the parameters within which researchers are working. Clearly, connectedness has different meanings and applications for different people and situations (Chiro 2008:20). For example van Baren et al. (2004) in their focus on the understanding, characteristics and measurement of the concept of connectedness between people, refer to a sense of connectedness as a temporary state of mind coming from an interpersonal exchange, therefore, for them the timeframe is limited to when the interaction took place (van Baren et al. 2004 cited in Castro and Gonzales 2008:1).

On the other hand, Mashek et al. (2007) concentrated on communities as opposed to the individual. They defined community connectedness as an immersion of self into the community, thus providing a sense of belonging and identity (Mashek et al 2007:257-275). Add to this, as I have already established elsewhere, in the twenty first century, for many reasons including political initiatives, technology and increased availability of resources, an individual does not have to identify as belonging or being connected to one culture or ethnic group to the exclusion of a second or even a third culture.

Also, as highlighted earlier, powerful depictions of connectedness to heritage are being expressed in the fictional work of Italian Australian writers. I provide two examples below. In the first, the extract is taken from the fictional representation of Italian life in the book entitled *Looking for Alibrandi:*

> 'Well, I'm not sure whether anyone in this country will ever understand multiculturalism and that saddens me because it's as much a part of Australian life as football and meat-pies. But the important thing is that I know where my place is in life. [….] If someone comes up and asks me what nationality I am, I'll look at them and say that I'm an Australian with Italian blood flowing rapidly through my veins. I'll say that with pride, because it's pride that I feel' (Marchetta 1992:7, 40).

The second example is in a quite different context but similarly referencing the sum of the writer's experiences whilst acknowledging her forbears, Pallotta-Chiarolli says in the introduction to her book *Tapestry*:

> '…whatever I experienced was not without connection to the experiences of my significant others' (Pallotta-Chiarolli 1999:i).

Whichever perspective encapsulates your thinking on this issue, there is no doubt, that for most migrants, the process of connectedness to their culture of origin is complex, multifaceted and not mutually exclusive. As it is used in this study, my focus is on the connection an individual has with their familial community as a whole. Further, as identified earlier, I see connectedness to a community as fluid and ever evolving, with different emphasis for different situations and circumstances across generations. I have identified multiple factors from the prevailing literature on connectedness that work towards a definition and a clearer understanding of connectedness to cultural heritage for descendants of migrants. Thus, in the context of this project, six factors inform and drive the study.

These factors include:

- The family

- Cultural manifestations of Italian identity

- Visits to Italy

- Interactions with family in Italy

- Italian language and dialect

- Intermarriage

Each of these factors is discussed in more detail below.

2.5.1 The family

Whatever focus particular researchers place on cultural identity, they all acknowledge that Italian immigrants brought with them from their homeland a strongly family centred culture where family and family welfare took precedence over the individual, and loyalty to family superseded all other allegiances, including individual ambition. Krause (1991:4) points to the very definition of the word family, saying that it had a distinct meaning for many Italian migrants referring to an extended network of relatives, with family responsibility extending to nieces and nephews, aunts and uncles, even great-aunts and great-uncles, their children and grandchildren.

Literature on cultural transmission also shows that family relationships, including relationships with parents and extended family, represent the direct link through social interactions with the homeland. Anderson (1983) was one of the early researchers to acknowledge that the key link of cultural transmission is 'kinship' (Anderson

1983:143). In the same way, Tosi and Borland (2008) also reflect what is most prominent in the literature, that is, the experiences and practices of social and diaspora connectedness to cultural heritage suggest that the strongest bonds are those of kin and they are established through personal relationships (Tosi and Borland 2008:22). Burnley (2001) espouses the view that the Italian Australian narratives often portray strong cultural maintenance and identity into third generations; and as with many before him, Burney ascribes this to strong family relationships between first and third generation family members (Burney 2001:139). Fishman (1991) too writes of the 'centrality of the family' in building and transmitting cultural identity across generations. He views the family as being at the core of the processes that build intimacy and affection, facilitating this intergenerational transmission of cultural identity (Fishman 1991:413-414). Likewise, Smolicz et al. (2001) spoke of the potency of relationships within family as a way to remain connected to cultural heritage, but they said that they are best understood when studied within the context of wider social structures.

Like Fishman (1991), Smolicz et al. (2001) similarly found that for most Italians the extended family played a significant role in how they present themselves as a group to the wider society. Though the authors agree that the family represents a primary focus to be found in all cultures, they emphasise that different groups vary in the way they organise and represent family relations. They specify that for the Italian community, families and the personal value systems constructed within them are the key to the intergenerational transmission of cultural identity. Further, in their research Smolicz et al. (2001:19) found that the 'great majority of respondents of Italian background

recounted at length their very high degree of attachment to their collectivist family bonds'; and that the collectivist family for respondents with Italian heritage, appeared to play a core value role to Italian identity in Australia. Within the identified extended family framework, Smolicz et al. (2001) stated that some family members may not have been personally known to all others, especially in a context where family members may reside in various parts of the world. Still, these unknown relatives were considered members of the extended family and even though they may be unacquainted, they become active members when they have the occasion to meet at family reunions, family celebrations and visits to the homeland. Significantly, Smolicz et al. (2001:3, 21,154-157,162-168) find that for Italian Australians, the family is the most powerful core value that transcends all others in the maintenance of Italian cultural identity in Australia.

Wilson (2008) too writes that Italian Australian narratives often depict cultural maintenance and negotiation into the third generation; and that this can largely be attributed to strong relationships between members of the first and third generations. Typically, she says, the place where ethnicity flourishes is in the family, where it is nourished and sustained (Wilson 2008:103). Baldassar (1992) in her study of Italian Australian youth in Perth, Western Australia, found that the most important of all networks for them was the family where they were brought up and where traditional values were taught. Of particular note, Baldassar stated the most interesting conclusion from her study of second generation Australians with Italian heritage living in Perth, is that the young people define themselves differently to the perceived identity patterns of their Australian peers (Baldassar 1992:219).

Through this study I will attempt to clarify the significance of the role of the family in maintaining a level of connectedness to cultural heritage for the participant group who grew up in Italian families in the rural town of Griffith.

2.5.2 Cultural manifestations of Italian identity

Apart from the difficulty in defining culture, as discussed in an earlier section, many researchers also have differing views as to whether culture is a familial or adaptive concept and what function cultural manifestations of Italian identity may have in identifying or maintaining a connectedness to heritage. For example, as part of her research on Italians in California, di Leonardo (1984) refutes the family model theory of ethnicity as being dependent on family culture. Depending on a family model, culture, di Leonardo argues, is a static and unchanging concept, and the transmission of culture to subsequent generations is proposed in terms of normative behaviour rather than cognitive resources that descendants strategically choose and alter over time (di Leonardo 1984:23).

For Baldassar (1999) it is the interchanging of the concepts of culture with ethnicity that is problematic because it ignores the differences that exist within such groupings. She asserts that what is reflected with some certainty in the research of the last twenty or so years demonstrates that ethnic groups constantly recreate themselves and that ethnicity is a continuous, fluid, reinvention in response to changes in people's lives, in the host and home countries. Thus for her, culture is expressed in ways that reflect a more eclectic accumulation of experiences (Baldassar 1999: 2, 3). Jupp (2000:263) when

speaking or ethnicity, similarly argues that it was not based on blood alone, but on culture and identification.

On the other hand, Barbaro (2000) reminds readers that Australian born children of Italian migrants would have formed an Italian identity within their family home well before they interacted with Australian culture, or became aware of the main culture outside their home. In most instances the first five years at home have defined the Australian born children of migrants within an Italian cultural context. For example, their first experience of music and food would have been Italian, their first card games Italian and their first nursery rhymes and simple prayers have been in Italian. Thus they developed an Italian identity parallel to that of their parents well before they encountered the Australian culture (Barbaro 2000:591). As well, Migliorino (2000) highlights the less tangible aspects of culture, arguing that the apparent development of an Italian Australian cultural identity does not just rest on external elements as identifiers of group membership. He argues that there is a clear sense of a deeper and more personally meaningful set of cultural values, such as strength of family, morality and heritage, which make the Italian Australian cultural paradigm a positive and desirable one. He concludes that it is these deeper and less obvious issues, which reinforce identity and provide the parameters around which behaviour is defined and expectations created (Migliorino 2000:426).

From a pragmatic perspective, the concentration of migrant groups' in particular regional or suburban locations for mutual support is as understandable as it is practical. This practice facilitates a smoother transition into new communities for the newly

arrived. Equally, the maintenance of for example cultural festivals including religious *feste* allows the migrant to ease into their new environment, while maintaining some of the processes that provided comfort and a link to their homeland. These popular manifestations play a fundamentally important and therapeutic role in attenuating psychological suffering and trauma that may have been associated with migration (De Martino 1995). The rituals and cultural activities that have been and continue to be held by Italians and their descendants in Australian suburbs and towns address the cultural separation caused by migration, which directly impacts on the very identity of the migrant. The celebrations reaffirm but also reconnect people with a previous life and as such play an important role for the migrants and their extended families (Papalia 2008).

In the Australian context, Italy and all things Italian certainly appear to have a particular resonance among the wider Australian population. Italy is able to boast a strong cultural identity and it is for this reason, despite the attention in the past on assimilation and integration, that Italian culture not only survives but also thrives in Australia (Pascoe 1987). As the researcher with a shared background with participants in this study, I am particularly interested to explore the impact, if indeed there is any; that cultural manifestations of Italian identity have to levels of connectedness to Italian cultural heritage for the participant group.

2.5.3 Visits to Italy

Fundamentally, the predominant view in the literature on visits, both first and return visits, to the home country for migrants and their descendants is that they play a pivot role in initiating or maintaining a connectedness to cultural heritage.

Return visits to Italy for most Italian migrants, but in particular for post-World War II migrants, began in the mid to late 1960s, except in cases of family emergencies, with enough time having passed for the migrants to have established themselves in housing, work and family. The late 1960s and early 1970s were also a more prosperous time economically in Australia as a whole. Correspondingly, travel became more affordable, thus allowing more people the opportunity to travel.

Diaspora literature analyses different experiences of visits to the home country for migrants. Much of the discussion centres on the experience of return visits for migrants and first visits 'home' for the children of migrants, and how this affected the relationship to connectedness to their cultural heritage. Within this context, Cohen (1997) argues that those who write about diaspora commonly agree that homeland plays a central role in diaspora consciousness. For example, second generation Mexican women interviewed as part of a study conducted by Viruell-Fuentes (2006) expressed feelings of wholeness, belonging and of being home when they returned to Mexico. Having visited their parents' country, the authors say, second generation migrants are able to experience people 'like them', with whom they can identify. Christou (2006) reported that by going back they are able to experience the 'authentic' culture they had only heard of from others. Castro & Gonzales (2008b) also found that for immigrants, staying in touch with home communities and frequently returning to their hometowns, was of paramount importance to maintaining connectedness to both the home country and the people.

In the Australian context, seminal work on visits home was done by Baldassar (2001). She finds that visits to the country of origin are vital to establishing, maintaining and reinvigorating family relationships and connectedness to heritage and the related areas of identity and place of belonging for migrants. Focussing on descendants of migrants, Baldassar (2001), herself an Australian academic of Italian descent, highlighted the unexpected emotional reaction associated with such events, for her when she wrote that with each visit, she felt 'very comfortable and connected' with being in Italy and being Italian, concluding that while visiting Italy is not the only way second generation migrants become conscious of their italianità, it did appear to be a sure way. Personally, I found it very reassuring when reading the following recount from Baldassar from her first visit 'home':

> '…it is difficult to explain the outpouring of emotion that characterised my 'return'. It certainly had nothing to do with reason, yet it wasn't irrational. Perhaps, that is what Walker Connors means by the 'rational core of nationalism', it's a feeling of belonging, beyond reason' (Baldassar 2001:2).

Also, in the same study, Baldassar (2001:286-287, 291) writes that second and subsequent generations speak of return visits in terms that reflect the 'anthropological notions of pilgrimage and communitas', elaborating that 'it is the communal sense of belonging encapsulated in these concepts, which helps to make sense of return visits'. She concludes that the visit home can be a significant 'rite of passage' for second and subsequent generations. Furthermore, she notes that some of the Australian born participants she interviewed, spoke of 'returning' to Italy on their first visit, adding that parents she interviewed for her study admitted that their children became more Italian after having visited Italy. Overall findings in the literature on visits home support the proposition that when the second generation has had a taste of their parents' home

country, it is often very difficult for them to ignore it. Others still, for example Giampapa (2007:308), support idea that the trip to Italy and the associated transnational experience is a powerful metaphor for identity. Nevertheless, O'Connor (1994) suggests that visits to Italy can be both affirming and contradictory, in that second generation Australian Italians may not know exactly where they belong, as evidenced by the following words from one of the participants in his study:

> 'I don't know where to belong. I really love Italy and feel like an Italian. But I think that if I did pack my bags and go there, I would spend my time saying how much I loved it here. I am caught between two worlds, I've got one foot in one and one foot in the other' (O'Connor 1994:276).

In support of the notion of being tugged by both home and host countries, Colin (2000: 230-248), working with Caribbean migrants, reported on a phrase regularly used by participants in his study, 'my body in Miami, my soul in Haiti'. Likewise, Vedder and Virta (2005:317-337) say that often when members of the second generation visit or move to their parents' home country, they experience identity confusion and adaptation problems.

Notwithstanding a few exceptions, overwhelmingly respondents in research studies on visits home, even when it is a first visit for the children of immigrants, report positive and emotionally charged experiences. Zoe Boccabella (2011), again a fictional writer with Italian ancestry, writes that in her naivety she thought her first trip to Italy may have been her only visit, but she explained she travelled to Italy many times, covering most of the peninsula in her travels. The sentiments she records in the following sentences are at the heart of the issue of the intersection of visits home and connectedness and cultural heritage:

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'I hope future descendants will have the freedom to be proud of their heritage from an early age and do not spend decades surrendering part of themselves as I did. Forsaking migrant heritage because of racism or other pressures means denying the existence of people who worked hard and made sacrifices. There is an honour in remembering' (Boccabella 2011:364).

The importance of the visits to Italy, both first and subsequent, for the participant group will be discussed at length as part of their interviews.

2.5.4 Interactions with family in Italy

Broadly speaking, the literature focusing on transnational connectedness (e.g. Wellman and Gulia 1999, Rheingold 2000, Baldassar 2007, Tosi and Borland 2008, Castro and Gonzales 2008) supports the premise that interactions with family in the home country by migrants and their descendants is an important factor which contributes to the maintenance of a connection to cultural heritage. Such interaction is also enhanced if it is complemented by visits home.

For migrants who arrived in Australia between the world wars, regular communication with the family in Italy was of course difficult to maintain. In more recent years, however, communication technologies in all forms have enabled people to do what di Leonardo (1984:443) has termed 'kinwork', that is, 'the conception, maintenance and ritual celebration of cross-household kin ties'. This is achieved through, among other things, visits with family in Italy as part of family holidays and in response to specific celebrations or milestones, sending letters, gifts and cards overseas, exchanging telephone calls, and the general keeping and sharing family albums with family in Australia.

Clearly availability and improvements in travel together with the quantum leap in communication technology has important implications for maintaining connectedness to cultural heritage across generations. Within two generations, families have gone from waiting several months to receive news via letters and travel between home and host countries from one side of the world to another, to technological advances that enable people to communicate instantly, relatively easily and cheaply, and be able to arrive anywhere from point of departure to point of arrival within twenty four hours (Baldassar et al. 2007:108).

The need for migrants and their children to be aware of what is happening in their home communities and to remain connected is shaped by their past experiences in the home country, traditions, strength of relationships with family and friends, frequent contact with them and significant others, and the occurrence of unexpected events. It is precisely because of the need to stay in touch, that migrants seek ways to maintain strong connections with their home communities, in what Castro and Gonzales (2008:3, 62) refer to as community connectedness.

In Australia, over the past thirty years or so, ethnic media has also been an important resource in supporting linguistic and cultural maintenance and diaspora connectedness for migrant communities (Tosi and Borland 2008:3-9). In addition, today, as never before, Italian migrants and their children can interact with their homeland in every sphere of their lives including through magazines and other printed material, with subscriptions being facilitated online thus arriving speedily from various regions Italy, together with hometown websites and the internet also keeping people connected on a

daily basis. Many have the opportunity to follow Italian football, the latest RAI TV

variety shows, Italian designer fashion trends, and maintain an interest in the abundance

of food and other products accessible through various sources. Indeed, Harney (2002)

describes this access to various modes of media as probably the most democratic,

accessible and affordable form of consumer connection people make to their home

country.

As with the visit to the home country, interactions with family in Italy are also an

important component of maintaining connectedness to heritage and indicators of that

interaction will also be discussed with the participants informing this study.

2.5.5 Italian language and dialect

Of all the aspects of life affected by migration, language is a critical one (Rubino

1993:1). What is not clear is the level of importance that speaking or even

understanding the native language, in the context of this study, standard Italian or a

dialect, has to the thoughts and processes of connectedness to cultural heritage for

second and subsequent generation descendants of migrants. Before addressing the

factors specific to language and dialect in the Italian community in Australia, a more

general discussion on the synergy between language and identity is warranted.

Many researchers, including Fishman (1991), Clyne (1994), Smolicz (2001) and Fellin

(2007), support the notion that language is an important component of identity, making

the point that individuals cannot understand and share their heritage if they cannot

express themselves linguistically. As part of the broad spectrum underpinning a

discussion of core values, one of which may be language, these researchers, particularly Smolicz have assumed that each cultural group has specific values which were central to its survival and to its identity, concluding that individuals who rejected these core values are at risk of being excluded from their cultural group. While collectively there is general agreement with the issues identified above, researchers do differ with regard to the fluidity of the concept of ethnic identity and association.

To expand this point, Clyne (1987, 1991) raises concerns about the use of language in core value theory questioning, if in fact preservation of language was that important to maintaining cultural identity within migrant communities. Specifically, Clyne (1987, 1991) highlighted several difficulties related to the core value theory, suggesting that the group definition, multiple group membership and group rivalries, were all problematic when included as part of a discussion on cultural identity. His focus was more on the factors that influence language maintenance, including the degree of distance from the mainstream culture, the significance of language in the ethnic cultural value system, and the degree of endogamy (more detail in following section), rather than how important specific factors were perceived in terms of their connectedness to cultural heritage for group members. Of more relevance in the context this study, is that Clyne (1987, 1991) identifies language maintenance as having greater significance to some cultures than others. For example, he asserts that Greeks maintain the Greek language because to not speak Greek is seen as losing their identity as Greeks; he also categorises German as a language centred culture. On the other hand, he argues that Dutch is maintained least because the language is not perceived as an 'ethnic core value' to that group. He contends that countries that have a dominant language, tend to

be very strong in their assertion that language is the sole marker of cultural identity. He agrees that dialects and languages are 'intricately associated with family cohesion' but concludes that they do not in themselves represent a core value (Clyne 1991:93,245). Fellin (2007:443) finds that for the majority of Americans who identified as having Italian heritage in the US Census of 2000, language did not seem to represent an essential component of being Italian. The concluding comments above from Clyne together with those from Fellin are consistent with earlier discussions touching on the national homogeneity of the Italians migrants as opposed to the strength of the regional allegiances and thus the importance placed on regional languages or dialect. This latter point is discussed in more detail later in this section.

Supporting the idea that the currency of language has different worth to different groups, Smolicz and Secombe (1985), again working with Greek Australians, report that memoir comments from their respondents show that in many first and second generation families, speaking Greek was generally taken for granted as a more intimate means of communication, highlighting the mutually supportive relationship between family life and language. In subsequent studies, Smolicz (2001 et al.) find that there is evidence that the loss of language may contribute to the breakdown of traditional Greek family patterns, highlighting respondent references to the importance of other factors such as the Greek Orthodox Church and Greek ethnic schools, which they say serve to enhance and extend both Greek language and family life. Their conclusion with respondents from Greek backgrounds was that they rate highest the value of speaking Greek, which they in turn link to the maintenance of close family ties (Smolicz et al. 2001:23,161).

On the other hand, in reporting on research on Italian Australians, Smolicz et al. (2001) referred to those families where parents spoke a dialect but wanted their children to learn the standard form of their home language as having more a symbolic attachment to their national identity in terms of language acquisition rather than language loss. Significantly, they find that even in circumstances where the descendants of migrants had acquired standard Italian at school or university, they did not consider the language to be of central importance to their Italian cultural identity, whereas family cohesion was more important than language as an Italian core value (Smolicz et al. 2001:153-163).

Several other studies (among them Clyne 1991, Fishman 1991 and Thompson 2000) maintain the view that the importance of specific cultural values, i.e. language, lies in the terms in which they are meaningful to the group concerned, concluding that for Italian Australians generally, language may be a key factor, but it is not in and of itself vital to the intergeneration transmission of cultural identity (Clyne 1991:93, Fishman 1991:4,413, Thompson 2000:411). Interestingly, Lee (2002) adds to the point made by Smolicz et al. (2001), that when one or more markers of identity are lost, group members tend to emphasise remaining manifestations of cultural identity that they value, for example highlighting the strength or importance of the role of the family (Lee 2002:120).

In summary, the prevailing understanding from the literature is that for the Italian community, language is a marker but not the most important marker of identity. For example, Italian Australians place only moderate value on literacy skills in Italian,

achieving cultural goals by relying instead on families and other social structures in ways that reflected their cultural heritage as well as their Australian way of life (Smolicz et al. 2001:164,170).

Further, language use for Italian migrants involves social elements and interactions with other Italians as well as interactions with the wider Anglo Australian community. Thus the Italian Australian will choose when it is important or significant to speak Italian socially or within the family context but his identity as an Italian is not reflected in his choice. I have included a more in depth discussion on the Australian context in the next section.

2.5.5.1 Italian dialects in the Australian context

Italy has been a multilingual country in that various languages, usually referred to as dialects, have always functioned within the Italian peninsula (Rubino 2014:26). Consequently Italians in Australia are not merely bilingual in Italian and English. They also speak numerous dialects that are impacted by the time of migration; region of origin; education and the socioeconomic status of the migrant (Bettoni and Gibbons 1988:171). Dialects are distinct and separate languages in their own right, as opposed to variants of standard Italian and they are the languages that most Italians have spoken for centuries (Bettoni 1991:18, Rubino 2014:27). Italian migrants have long been recognised as the largest non-English speaking group in Australia (Cresciani 2003:1) and thus Italian, including dialects, have been the most spoken home language other than English in Australia for many years (Rubino 2014:50). Even so, the overall number of Italian born speakers has been decreasing due mainly to: i) the drop in the

number of Italian migrants; ii) the fact that pre-World War II migrants are no longer alive, and; iii) the inevitability that those who were part of the post war influx too are slowly passing. The outcome of these factors is that in the 2011 census, Italy born Australians no longer represented the largest non-English speaking group as in past census data. However, a large percentage of Italian speakers are Australian born thus demonstrating a relatively good degree of language maintenance in Australia (Rubino 2014:53).

For the most part, Italians arriving in Australia brought with them a strong sense of regional identity and possessed a passionate sense of patriotism for their *paesi* rather than for the nation-state of their birth. Their respective dialects therefore become a form of communication that is unique and operates within the family and 'paesani' community context. The regional dialect gives the user a sense of belonging, an identity and a link to a past. Its linguistic feature provides insight into geographical location on the map, identifying not only the region of origin but at times it may also distinguish between towns and villages from which individuals have come as well.

Generally, as already mentioned above, choice of language use for migrants and their children is closely related to context. First generation migrants choose to speak either their dialect, usually with family or friends from the same region, or Italian. Second and subsequent generations usually speak English, but they will revert to the heritage language if they are able to speak it at times when they feel confident in doing so, such as family functions and reunions, Italian celebrations or in Italian shops or restaurants (Rubino 2014:57).

Researchers (among them Tresca 2000 and Rubino 2014), generally accept that second generation Italian children learned to speak their parents' regional dialect first before they learned to speak English in Australia. Thus their parents' dialect is their first language in a chronological sense and some may continue to speak the dialect into adulthood usually with extended family members (Rubino 2014:53). However as they begin to socialise outside the home and enrol in school, English becomes the dominant language (Bettoni 1991:264).

Italian migrants to Griffith closely reflect the outcomes of research in the field of language shift or language loss across generations for migrant families (Fishman 1964, Smolicz 1986, Clyne 1987, 1991, Alba and Nee 2003, Fellin 2007 and Rubino 2014) in that, having had very little formal education in Italy, they arrived as monolingual speakers of their respective dialects. This also applies, for the most part, to the Abruzzese Italians at the centre of this study. My observations of the town Griffith having grown up there are in agreement with Bettoni's (1991:18) assertion that dialect is mainly a language used by older migrants and that as the older migrants die dialect will not be in regular use in the town.

2.5.5.2 Loss of Italian language in the Australian context

In spite of the size and long history of Italian migration to Australia, the predictable outcome of the dominance of English is the loss of Italian and the many regional dialects through a rapid shift to English. This applies similarly to the urban and rural context across Australia essentially because, as already mentioned above, very few, if any Italians arriving in Australia up to the early 1970s spoke standard Italian (Bettoni

and Gibbons 1988:15). Also, as noted above, in the literature on migrant languages, it is quite common to separate the first three generations to demonstrate the downward trajectory of the loss of language. The first generation (Italian born) becomes bilingual in adulthood but remain dominant in Italian or dialect, the second and third generation are bilingual in early childhood but dominant in English, with the second usually retaining some aspects of their parents' dialect but the third generally losing all connections to the language of their heritage (Bettoni 1986:61). Overall, there are three main reasons that are provided to explain the shift to English in Australia. Namely: i) children of migrants may learn Italian or their dialect but it is 'under the dominance of English'; ii) the education system in Australia is essentially monolingual. Therefore when children are given the opportunity to learn a language, other than as an elective subject in the later years of secondary school, it is usually a community language, an add on to the mainstream curriculum, and thus not seen as a necessary or worthy, and iii) there is no incentive for children to learn their heritage language because they use it only in the home (Bettoni 1991:266).

Further to this, many migrants who knew very little standard Italian, spoke only their dialect that may not have been understood by other Italians. The proliferation of these difficult to understand dialects, especially if they emanated from distant regions or towns, rendered them at times 'mutually unintelligible' to the migrant cohort as whole. Also, regional dialects tended to be negatively perceived because they implied basic assumptions about socioeconomic status and education levels. This applied even when Italian migrants had a strong community base such as in the rural milieu of Griffith or perhaps the urban context of Leichardt, where they were subject to linguistic pressures

of school, media, peers, and society at large (Smolicz et al. 2001: 152). Therefore, dialects too worked to advance the loss of Italian languages through the shift to English (Bettoni 1991:18). Thus, there is a wide-ranging, practical and plausible context for loss of Italian language including dialects, ensuring their inevitable demise (Bettoni and Gibbons 1988:15).

The final point is that it is clear that the maintenance and transmission of a language within any migrant group does not occur automatically. Plainly it requires deliberate planning and action by extended families and communities. It cannot rely just on a nostalgic need to maintain language and a connection to ethnicity. Also decisions made within families or communities to take action to maintain language, are in response to the sociopolitical situation and needs of the family at a given time (Lambert 2008:1). At times in Australia and elsewhere what favoured the loss of language for first and second generation Italian migrants was that Italian was seen as an 'impediment to social advancement' and that bilingualism was 'problematic' (Fellin 2007:457).

Undoubtedly motivations for families to maintain, or not, their original language including dialects vary across families. In those families where connectedness to the country of birth of parents and grandparents is strong, parents may desire that their children become bilingual, not only for ease of communication between family members both in the country of birth and Australia, but also to maintain and preserve the cultural identity. In families where the language or the dialect is no longer used, but where there is a strong connection to cultural heritage, there may be the motivation to gain native language skills through school or university education (Lambert 2008:1,7).

Overall, in the Australian context there appears to be a large chasm between the rhetoric of a desire to maintain Italian language and the reality of the effort required. The rapid shift to English at the expense of Italian would suggest that the effort required to move from dialects with the mixtures of Italian, to standard Italian has been too great, compared with the ease of effort needed and the utility of English (Bettoni and Gibbons 1991:32).

In any case, Rubino (2014:101) suggests that in the general process of the shift to English amongst Italian Australian families, Italian is more likely to survive than the family dialect. This, she argues, is mainly due to the 'higher prestige and visibility' of standard Italian, the presence of the language in schools and the institutional support it receives.

2.5.6 Intermarriage

Intermarriage is an important variable when considered within the context of connectedness to cultural heritage and identity for migrants and their descendants. For this study intermarriage is defined as a marriage between a man and a woman whose background transcends differences in race, religion, birthplace and ethnicity and where these factors would ordinarily impact on the family (Penny and Khoo 1996:2). As already mentioned in other sections, simply the numbers of people with Italian heritage in Australian spanning many years, will inevitably have led many to marry within a large and culturally diverse pool.

In this study, the question of interest is not the choice of partner, that is, Italian or otherwise, but

more what bearing that choice of marriage partner has had on connectedness to Italian cultural heritage for these individuals and their subsequent families.

Paganini and Morgan (1990) identify many scholars who readily reported that intermarriage can reduce a migrant family's ability to pass on their culture to their children. They added that when intermarriage for second and subsequent generations of European migrants in the U.S.A. increased, this resulted in more migrants and their descendants becoming integrated into mainstream American society and thus decreasing their connectedness to their heritage (Paganini and Morgan 1990). This view was also at the core of Price's (1982) work. He writes that as a result of intermarriage, cultural heritage was at risk of being lost or forgotten, because second and subsequent generations would not or could not transmit their heritage. Price studied mixed marriage statistics as an indicator of the maintenance of ethnic groupings and culture, and used data from his studies to argue ethnic community viability. His research indicates that the percentage of Italians marrying Italians for the years 1947-1978 was just fewer than 50% for first generation Italian migrants. Also he writes that 23 % of second generation Italian Australian men and 50.1% of second generation women married first and second generation Italians at that time, and this percentage was likely to keep decreasing. Price concluded that 'most immigrant groups are breaking up quite rapidly' (1982:4) and that in the case of second generations, 'while sometimes being quite proud or intrigued at their ethnic origins, they will be identified with the mass of the population as Australian' (Price 1982:4-5). Significantly, ten years on Price (1993) finds that during 1987-1990, second generation brides of Italian origin continued to marry within their own ethnic community.

In a general sense, for the Australian context, Pascoe (1987) addresses many of the commonly held assumptions about Italian migrant marriages in Australia in the first half of the twentieth century. He also provides some reasons as to why rates of intermarriage were higher for women. The reasons include the idea that marriage amongst Italians in the early years of migration would have been low because there were many Italian men but fewer Italian women, thus those who wanted to marry and did not have fiancées in Italy, would have had to marry outside their cultural group; seeking brides from the homeland would have been costly, both in terms of money and time; and in the case of women, 79% did married Italian men, however, most of those would have been betrothed and probably married by proxy before the woman left Italy (Pascoe 1987:87).

As part of their work on intermarriage among Italian migrants, multiple researchers, among them Borrie (1954) and Pascoe (1987) have consistently acknowledged that early data are somewhat unreliable but both agree that before World War II, the rate of endogamy amongst Italian migrants was around 33% in the years 1908-1922 and that in 1933 four fifths of all Italian born husbands in Australia had Italian born wives (Pascoe 1987:182,183). Post-World War II mass migration to Australia included singles and married couples, some with families. According to Price's (1963), it was not unusual for single Italian migrants to seek marriage partners from within their migrant community. Thus the 1950s and 1960s also saw a proliferation of the 'proxy bride' phenomenon. Also it was quite common for second generation Italian Australians, whose parents settled in Australia between the wars, to marry Italian migrants arriving in Australia in the 1950s and 1960s. This interaction and intermarriage between 'old'

settlers and 'new' migrants renewed and strengthened the Italian Australian community (Price 1963:45). Table 5 below details rates of in-marriage among Italians in Australia between 1908 and 1982 as researched by Pascoe (1987), indicating consistently higher rates amongst women.

Table 5: Rates of in-marriage among Italians in Australia (1908-1982) by gender and volume of marriage

YEARS	TOTAL NUMBER MARRYING	ANNUAL AVERAGE	MALE RATE OF ENDOGAMY	FEMALE RATE OF ENDOGAMY
1908-1922	1,287	86	32.9%	79.1%
1923-1940	6,662	370	49.1%	89.0%
1945-1950	4,718	786	49.4%	80.1%
1951-1955	11,089	2,218	64.2%	88.4%
1956-1964	50,788	5,643	70.3%	91.8%
1965-1973	52,135	5,793	58.5%	82.7%
1974-1979	23,286	3,881	36.3%	64.1%
1980-1982	8,169	2,723	24.2%	42.3%

Source: Pascoe (1987:246)

A series of studies in the 1990s focusing on second and subsequent generations in the Italian Australian community suggest that high rates of marriage between Australian born people of Italian heritage have been maintained. One such study, a comprehensive investigation of the historical and contemporary patterns of intermarriage in Australia conducted by Penny and Khoo (1996), draws on a range of statistical data as well as findings from previous research on intermarriage, most of which have been mentioned above, to examine trends and patterns across Australia. Specifically the study looked at

the number, proportion and characteristics of intermarried couples in Australia from the 1991 Census and intermarriage from the 1920s to 1992. The latter information was collated from a review of the intermarriage rates by birthplace, based on marriage registration data (Penny and Khoo 1996:30).

In terms of intermarriage between Australian born and people born in Italy, the study included three perspectives. Firstly, a study of the literature on Italian cultural practices relating to marriage, family traditions, gender roles and child rearing practices. Secondly, Italian immigration history and pattern of integration was studied. Thirdly, the analysis of case study information derived from interviewing couples and their families on their experiences concerning a wide range of questions pertaining to intercultural issues. The interviews were conducted within the context and understanding that Italy born people are an older population, given that 90% arrived by 1971 with most having arrived between 1947-1966, and their children all having grown up in the Australian environment. The authors concluded that Italians do not have a high proportion who intermarry, saying that in 1996, only about 17% of all those born in Italy who did marry, 'married out' and many married Australian born descendants of Italian migrants. As the community grew, especially after the mass migration of the 1950s, as was found by other researchers mentioned above, the rate of intermarriage fell, because Italian migrants were marrying the children of Italians who had arrived earlier. Penny and Khoo (1996: 11, 97) concluded that migrants born in Italy remain the third largest number of intermarried individuals by birthplace in Australia.

Similarly, Cresciani (2003) found that second generation Italians did not tend to marry people of another ethnic background. He said that in 1991, still 50% of women and 47% of men married other second generation Italians. In that same year, 58% of Italian born people married Australian born partners mostly of Italian descent, indicating that most second generation Italians had both parents who were born in Italy but only a third of the next generation will have both parents of Italian background (Cresciani 2003:143). Baldassar et al. (2012) report on rates of marriage extending their findings to include rates up to and including the late 1990s, confirming a relatively high rate of 'in-marriage' in second generation Italian Australians for the period 1987-1992. This was still around 50% of all second generation brides and grooms of Italian heritage married within the Italian community. This figure dropped to 40% during 1996-98 (Baldassar et al. 2012:29).

Inevitably, as shown by Baldassar (1999:2), Australian born descendants marry individuals from a wider sphere, including people they were meeting through secondary and tertiary education and the workforce, opportunities that their parents and grandparents were not exposed to, and consequently, these marriages were increasingly with people outside their ethnic group.

Of note, however, Penny and Khoo (1996) report from the analysis of their case study respondents that

> '…there is no doubt that the admixture of Italian and Australian in the family has been a rich one, and because family is central to Italian perceptions of identity, each person, in all generations had perceived the combination to be an important aspect of his or her identity' (Penny and Khoo 1996:118).

In general then, the literature suggests that prior to the mass migration of the 1950s, Italian migrants had high rates of marriage outside their ethnic group. Primarily this was due to the relatively low numbers of migrants from the Italian peninsula in Australia at that time. After World War II this changed because migration increased and chain migration meant the influx of many men from the home regions or towns of the already established Italian migrants. For descendants of migrants born post-World War II and beyond, staying longer in education and the resultant increased employment opportunities, led to increased interaction outside the Italian community, consequently many met and married partners from the wider Anglo Australian community.

Overall, the Italian community has maintained relatively high rates of marriage between second generation descendants of Italian migrants. Intermarriage rates begin to increase with third and subsequent generation of descendants, due mainly to greater integration into the community through increased education and employment.

2.5.6.1 Marriage patterns of Italians in Griffith

Predictably, the outcome of chain migration to Griffith from 1948 to 1954 is reflected in the patterns of Italian marriages in Griffith evident from data collated by Price (1963), as shown in Table 6. The statistics demonstrate that the chain migration patterns did not reduce the proportion of intermarriages with Anglo Australians but did reduce the proportion of intermarriages with Italians from other regions. Specifically, what can be seen is that marriage between couples of the same region rose and 'the lines between the regional groups at Griffith, which had become somewhat blurred during the static period of the war, became more distinct' (Price 1963:45). These proportions were also

affected because chain migration would have brought many married couples to settle in Griffith.

Table 6: Marriage patterns of Italians in Griffith (1920 -1954)

| | ETHNIC ORIGIN OF SPOUSE (%) | | | | | | | |
| | IN REGION | | OUTSIDE REGION | | ANGLO AUSTRALIANS | | TOTAL MARRIAGES | |
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
N. Italy:	%	%	%	%	%	%		
Piedmont	29.2	61.6	70.8	33.3	-	5.6	24	18
Lombardy	62.5	62.8	37.5	37.5	-	-	8	8
Friuli	73.9	76.7	21.8	23.3	4.3	-	46	30
Veneto	89.9	87.0	4.9	11.7	5.2	1.3	669	468
S. Italy:								
Sicily/Catania	58.6	76.2	27.6	23.8	13.8	-	29	21
Abruzzo	80.8	94.5	11.5	5.5	7.7	-	78	55
Calabria	87.2	85.5	3.2	14.5	9.6	-	185	172

Source: Price (1963:40, 42)

Pascoe (1987:247) confirms that in Griffith the intermarriage rates 'have been exceptionally high'. His figures record that of the 574 weddings among Italians between 1950 and 1960, 31 involved Italian brides and 65 grooms marrying into the wider Australian community. His findings support the high rate of 'in region' marriages with 134 Calabrese marrying Calabrese and 294 Veneti marrying Veneti.

In summary, even with the unreliability of early figures, some general concluding statements relating to marriage patterns in Griffith can be made. Firstly, intermarriage rates between Italians and the wider Anglo Australian community prior to World War II was high primarily because there were more Italian men than Italian women in Australia at that time. For the men seeking brides from Italy was not a serious option due to the high cost both in money and time. After World War II marriage rates between Italian migrants and the children of Italians was higher due to the mass migration of the 1950s.

Australian born children of these post-World War II marriages maintained relatively

high rates of marriage with other Italians until the third and subsequent generation.

From then onwards intermarriage increases as a result of increasing interactions with

the wider Australian community through education and expanded employment options.

In my study I explore the impact participants feel their choice of partner has had on

their level of connectedness to their cultural heritage.

Image 9: Photos of Italian couples of the 1940s and 1950s

Source: www.henryroth.com.au/1940s

2.6 Concluding comments

The preceding sections have focused on the theoretical framework guiding this study.

More specifically, I have focused on the six factors identified in the prevailing literature

that worked to define and provide an understanding of the notion of connectedness to

cultural heritage. These factors inform my study and they are: the family; cultural

manifestations of Italian identity; visits to Italy; interactions with family in Italy; Italian

language and dialect; and intermarriage. Additionally, these factors will guide and

drive the semi-structured interviews conducted with participants in the attempt to

discover how important they are considered by respondents as identifiers or

manifestations of connectedness to their Italian cultural heritage.

CHAPTER 3   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research design and provides the methodological context for the study. Choice of research tools is explained and a detailed discussion is provided on the key issues of the recruitment process, the participants themselves and the role of the researcher. The chapter concludes with an explanation of the criteria for analysis.

3.2 General approach

As explained earlier, the project centres on the descendants of Italians who emigrated from the Abruzzo region in Italy and settled in the town of Griffith in New South Wales. The focus of the study is the level of connectedness to Italian cultural heritage among generations. Participants are the children, grandchildren and great grandchildren of Abruzzese migrants who were born and grew up in Griffith. The range of respondents extends from the oldest respondents who are second generation Italian Australians born to the migrants of the 1920s and 1930s, through to the grandchildren and great grandchildren of the post-World War II migrants, the youngest of whom was born in 1995.

The understanding of the terms first and subsequent generation used in this study are adapted from those used by researchers in the field such as Baldassar (2001) and Baldassar et al. (2012).

Thus, the term first generation migrant is used to refer to those born in Italy and who migrated as adults; second generation are those with at least one parent born in Italy or who arrived in Australia before the age of twelve; with third and subsequent generations having at least one grandparent or one great grandparent born in Italy. In many instances, participants in this study had both their parents and at least one set of grandparents who were born in Abruzzo.

As will be shown in the analysis, this study closely follows what Lambert (2008) refers to as a humanistic sociological approach, in that it assumes that cultural and social phenomena can only be fully understood if they are studied from the view point of the participants. Accordingly, this research requires participants to reflect on personal experiences whilst growing up in a particular culture, geographic area and time in history. Such qualitative research makes the use of semi-structured interviews between the participant and the researcher (Lambert 2008:57).

The procedural context that provides momentum for this study is derived from De Fina's (2003) work on immigrant discourse where she argues that small scale qualitative studies based on discourse and narrative, such as this one, are insightful, because they highlight and aid the understanding of 'representations of the self'.

The terms narratives and semi-structured interviews as used in this study follow what are generally agreed definitions from qualitative research literature. Specifically, the term semi-structured interview is in line with the definition by Kvale (1996:6,11) of an interview as an event 'whose purpose it is to obtain descriptions of the life world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomenon… the subject material is not objective data, but meaningful relations to be interpreted'. In this way, semi-structured interviews are used to gather personal narratives, to recount events in sequential order, in particular, memories of growing up in an Italian family in Griffith, to provide an understanding into the reflective and evaluative self-understanding of cultural identity, which in this study is used to refer to a self-identified sense of belonging to a specific group. The interview is the context from which the narrative evolves, and the phenomenon being described by the respondents is their level of connectedness to their Italian cultural heritage.

The personal narrative component of the discourse is the key factor in the discussion between myself as the researcher and the participant as the respondent. Through this dialogue, I hope to gain a deeper understanding of whether being connected to cultural heritage is important or even at least relevant to second and subsequent generations of Australian born children with Italian cultural heritage; and to demonstrate how, when a sense of connectedness is acknowledged by participants, it may be manifested. According to Linde (1993:3) personal narratives also allow individuals to declare membership to particular groups and provide the opportunity to prosecute a case for maintaining and

sustaining membership to those groups. Brockmeier and Carbaugh (2001) too argue that a focus on personal narratives, such as is used here, is indeed appropriate for the exploration of biographical memory in order to better understand the formation of individual identity from the perspective of cultural heritage. It is from this biographical standpoint, they say, that an individual's identity is formed and developed and that individuals consider their actions, reflecting, thinking and determining their place in the world (Brockmeier and Carbaugh 2001:2, 25).

While I considered other forms of data gathering processes, a semi- structured interview rather than a questionnaire or a fixed set of questions was thought to be a more powerful tool because it facilitated open ended responses that provided me the flexibility to explore the themes central to this study. This method also allowed me to pursue other issues, related to the themes or otherwise, raised during the course of the interview. Serious attention was given to the use of focus groups as the fieldwork tool, because they too can provide data quickly and can be more time and cost effective than one-to-one interviews. However in this instance the advantage of a freer conversation far outweighed deliberations of time and cost.

Throughout the interview process, I encouraged participants to recount what they knew, remembered or surmised of their family's migrant history. Participants were supported with the use of a sequence of discussion themes to be covered during the conversation interaction that were developed as a guide to allow for points of comparison and analysis

(Codò 2008:165). At times, the conversation was encouraged by the use of prompts or a specific question. For example, I may have referred to a particular context or provided the respondent with additional information as an aid for clarification or as an explanation. Explicit questions were not formulated or standardised, rather questions were generally used as part of the conversation to explain or expand a response if I thought they were necessary.

As mentioned above, this study relies on subjective processes in that participation requires a level of personal reflection, drawing on memories and perceptions of the participant's life with a particular reference to their childhood. Clearly these type of narratives are an important way in which individuals communicate their sense of self and negotiate it with others.

According to Chiro (2008), cultural adaptation and identification is complex and multifaceted, even more so among the descendants of migrants growing up within immigrant families in a culturally plural society (cf. chapter 2 for more detail). The differences in individual identification are the result of subjective interpretation through which individuals rationalise their life choices as a consequence of life experiences. However, the personal narrative of the past is the most powerful tool to gather information; it provides an analysis of self-evaluation and self-understanding of cultural identity from the perspective of the informant (Chiro 2008:27).

The interactive and reflective processes described above are generally considered insightful and efficient tools (for example Kvale 1966:11, Bakhtin 1981:37, Smolicz 1979, Smolicz et al. 2001, De Fina 2003:3, Bryan 2013:4, Codò 2008:161), because they allow the researcher to gather a lot of information in a relatively little time, thus facilitating representations of the individual participant that may be exposed during the interview. The approach also emphasises the constructive nature of the knowledge created through the interaction of the partners. In this instance this is further enhanced because both participants in the conversation, the respondent and the researcher, share a similar background. This element is discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Specifically, throughout the interview I explored with participants those aspects that had been identified earlier as factors that inform connectedness to Italian cultural heritage (cf. Chapter 2). As specified above, the concept of connectedness as used in this study is inclusive of physical, emotional or intellectual connections or perceptions with the country, region or town of birth of familial ancestors. Succinctly, these factors include: the family; cultural manifestations of Italian identity; visits to Italy; interactions with family in Italy; Italian language and dialect; and intermarriage. Therefore, as part of their reflective and evaluative self-understanding of cultural identity process, participants were encouraged to consider their level of connectedness to their Italian heritage within the assistive framework provided by the six factors above. The discussion was generated in two parts. In the first part it centred on the fundamental questions of how participants perceive their Italian forebears negotiated cultural boundaries in order to cope with the challenges of migration,

settlement and identity in the Italian Australian context generally, but more particularly in the town of Griffith. In the second part of the interview, participants were asked to talk more specifically about themselves and to think about their connection to their Italian cultural heritage in relation to the six factors.

3.3 The interview process

Given that all participants completed their schooling in Griffith, except two participants who completed their last years of high school in boarding schools in Sydney, all were dominant in English, and thus all the interviews were in English. All participants consented to the interview being recorded on a portable device. To begin the conversation I explained their inclusion in the targeted cohort by asking them to identify their family member/s who had migrated from the Abruzzo region in Italy. In this way I set the scene for the interview. I then quickly shifted the focus onto the respondent, by asking them to talk a little about themselves. For example, I asked them to talk about where and when they were born; where they grew up; and their earliest memories, including starting school.

After this brief introduction participants were asked to reflect on their understanding and knowledge of their family's migration story. The discussion revolved around the following themes:

- why their family member/s had left Italy

- why they chose to come Australia and eventually to settle in Griffith

- what the participant knew or thought life may have been like for their relative when they first arrived in Australia and/or in their early years in Griffith

- their family's level of interaction with other Italians and/or Anglo Australians in the wider community.

As part of the discussion in the second part of the interview, participants were asked to reflect and comment more about their connection to their Italian cultural heritage, specifically on such elements as:

- their experience of growing up as part of an Italian family in Griffith and their family's friends and socialisation whilst they were growing up

- their first and subsequent visits to Italy

- their level of interaction with family members in Italy

- a particular moment or event when they may have felt proud to be Italian or to have an Italian cultural heritage or to be of Italian background.

Consistent with comments by both Kvale (1996:311) and Lambert (2008:58), each interview situation varied with the researcher at times effectively having to 'think on her feet' to be instrumental in eliciting information to be used in the analysis. Some participants spontaneously volunteered information, while at other times I needed to educe more information with the use of verbal prompts, such as questions or the dropping of a particular word, a date, or a phrase. For the older participants, their accrued life experience appeared to give them the confidence to articulate their story more freely. Codò (2008:160) notes that it is important for researchers to have a sound knowledge and understanding of the context they intend to investigate. This point was particularly pertinent when it came to interviewing the younger participants whose limited experience, at times lack of confidence and shyness, may have impacted on their ability to recount family as well as personal narratives. In these instances I was able to relax the respondent; sometimes with an anecdote of a familiar experience or perhaps with a more general comment of growing up in Griffith. This, together with the fact that I was able to draw on my own background and thus relate to the participants own experiences, was instrumental in enabling me to elicit more detail and clarity in responses.

As previously said, a key feature of the interviews was discussions that involved the childhood experiences, memories and recollections of growing up in Griffith. As a result, participation in the study provided respondents with an opportunity for both a cognitive and an emotional experience, whilst they reflected on relationships with the family, the broader

'paesani' network and the conduits these factors provide to feelings or perceptions of connectedness to Italian cultural heritage.

It was anticipated that the interview discussion would be an enriching experience for the interviewee, in that they would obtain new insights into their life situation (Kvale 1996:30-31). Through the interview some participants may have begun to reflect upon areas to which they had not given serious consideration in the past in response to the need to obtain open nuanced descriptions of different aspects of that past and their current connection to it. Indeed I encouraged detailed descriptions of specific situations to bring forth sequences of events that may have been formative and significant components of growing up in an Abruzzese household in the town of Griffith.

Whilst it is reasonable to assume that participants who are drawn from a group with common experiences will provide similarly themed responses, memory of specific situations within different periods of childhood and different contexts provide variations for analysis and discussion (Linde 1993:2). Also, as Krause (1991) observes, memory depends on perception, therefore whatever position an individual takes will affect how they see and interpret the world and how they remember it when required.   As an example of this predisposition, in an intergenerational study of American women Krause (1991:vii) demonstrated that even within the same family, different generations offer different versions of a shared history. It was anticipated that a similar corollary would come from this study.

Undoubtedly, allowing individuals to tell stories from their life experiences will provide

them with an opportunity to create some coherence from the sum of such experiences. It

may even lead some participants to conclusions they were not expecting, that are very

different from other similarly grouped participants, or it may have even rekindled an

awareness that has been dormant for some time.

Whatever the outcome, analysis and conclusions from this study will be derived from the

data and focus in particular on how the participants related or reacted to the factors

informing connectedness to cultural heritage that were put to them during the interview

discussion.

3.4 Choice and recruitment of participants

At the core of this study is the shared background of the participants, as they had to be

descendants of Abruzzese migrants. As already stated, the researcher is part of the targeted

ethnic group; both my maternal grandfather and my father migrated from the Abruzzo

region in 1925 and 1952 respectively; both settled down and raised their families in

Griffith.

As already specified, the association with Griffith and the Abruzzo region of Italy were also

the primary motivating factors in the choice of participants for the study. Participants may

reside in Griffith or elsewhere at the time of the interview. The critical factor, however,

was not their actual place of residence at the time they were interviewed, but the fact that

their parent/s, grandparent/s or great grandparent/s settled in the town of Griffith and that the participants themselves grew up in the town. As a general premise, it is reasonable to accede that each generation does not exist independently of experiences, stories, values and attitudes of the generation that preceded it. Therefore I considered it was important to direct the research questions across different generations.

In line with these requirements, initial contact was made with those identified through my knowledge of the Abruzzese network either by a circular letter or an email (see Appendix 1), providing information about the project and inviting potential respondents to participate. The contact information stressed that participation was voluntary. Identified participants were asked to contact me by telephone, by email or by post, if they wished to participate No potential participant was contacted after the initial invitation to participate and the information had been provided. The circular letter included the project title: 'Connectedness to cultural heritage among Abruzzese Italians in Griffith NSW', and a brief explanation of the project. It also provided a definition of connectedness as 'the sense of connection individuals may have physically, emotionally or intellectually with Italy, Abruzzo, or the town of origin of their parents, grandparents and/or great grandparents'.

Twenty eight letters or emails were sent to potential participants. Generally, those contacted responded in the affirmative and enthusiastically. Two people raised some questions as to the perceived personal nature of the discussion and wanted more information. After that additional information was provided both of them agreed to

participate in the study. Two others declined to participate at the first point of contact and a further two did not respond to the letter.

3.5 Pilot interviews

Prior to embarking on the fieldwork two pilot interviews were conducted. This pilot stage provided information that drove changes for the subsequent interviews. Several improvements were made upon completion of the pilot interviews. For example, on the theme of pride, when the participant indicated that they were proud to be Italian, I needed to deconstruct that response to specify what that meant: was it Italy centred or Abruzzo centred pride? Did it reflect a pride in Italian culture or Italian people or both? Thus in subsequent interviews I sought to clarify the question and asked the participant to elaborate through specific examples what being proud to be Italian meant to them, and then I explored if that pride was general or specific to the Abruzzo region. There was also a need to focus interviewee's responses on the issues of connection to language. As an example, when participants reported that they spoke 'Italian' at home while growing up, I needed to know whether the respondents were referring to standard Italian or to an Abruzzese dialect.

An additional outcome of the pilot interviews was the decision to elicit the demographic data incidentally or at the end of the discussion rather than in the beginning, as was done for the pilot interviews. Indeed, beginning the interview by eliciting demographic data provoked an expectation of a question-answer scenario and appeared not to be conducive to, nor encourage a discussion. If the required demographic data was not gained in the

early stages or during the interview, the participant was asked specific questions at the end, thus facilitating a freer and more extensive discussion with the participant. After the pilot interviews, I began the ensuing interviews by encouraging the informants to develop a personal narrative starting with their earliest memories of growing up as a child in an Italian family, prompting and probing where appropriate for more detail in their descriptions or accounts (Codò 2008:160).

The pilot interviews affirmed what was generally anticipated. Firstly, once the introductory discussion had begun the participants became more relaxed; and secondly, it was more constructive to open the discussion with a broad introductory question that encouraged a free flowing discussion.

3.6 The role of the researcher

The identity of the researcher was an element that did require extra consideration in this study given that I am from Griffith and of Abruzzese descent, and thus part of the targeted group. Typically a researcher has a key role in any interpersonal discourse with the participant. However this was amplified in the current study because the content was very personal and a key feature of the research. It required open discussions that often involved disclosure of family relations, friendships and their dynamics, and family resources. As part of the discussion, I was also required to deconstruct the themes and subtexts encountered as part of the narrative focussing on growing up in an Italian household within a broader Anglo Australian community.

Given that participants acknowledged me as a member of the Abruzzese community and part of the 'paesani' network, this dynamic indeed may have presented some practical advantages by providing a platform for an interpersonal perspective. Trust and mutual respect existing between the participant and myself because of our shared experiences may have arguably enhanced the effectiveness of discourse (Lambert 2008:57, 81).

Several other researchers (for example Kvale 1966, Smolicz 1979, Smolicz 2001 et al., Bryan 2013, Codò 2008) also note that it is reasonable to expect that within the context of an interview, the discourse between people of similar background would be familiar, personal, respectful, reflective, cognitive of past and present variables (such as relationships within family, education, socioeconomic circumstances or language), and that it would probably traverse the effects of their cultural awareness and communication across a broad time span.

If nothing else, because I shared a common background with the participants, the conversation for both of us was comfortable, often nostalgic and mostly flowed naturally and unprompted. This point was particularly pertinent when the interviews was with members of the middle cohort (see below), as these participants were closer in age to me and therefore we shared a number of experiences (for example in some instances we attended the same school and sometimes played in the same sporting teams). Likewise, the interview experience was mutually gratifying because it was an opportunity to have a discussion focussing on events or relaying stories that either had not been shared previously

or had remained dormant for many years. The resultant conversation was at times humorous, at other times sad, but always comfortable and warmly emotional.

As mentioned above, participants were enthusiastic about being interviewed with several asking at the point of confirming the interview time, how they could prepare for the interview. During the interview most participants, in particular the middle age group, appeared content, relaxed and generally pleased with the process. On the other hand, the oldest participants were somehow bemused as to the interest being shown by me in their story. Most of the youngest participants showed some signs of nervousness at first not so much because of the interview process as such, but because they felt they would not have much to say. Overall, however, participants appeared to enjoy the process and freely shared their memories, thoughts and experiences. This is confirmed by the fact that at the completion of the interview all participants declared they would be available for further information if required.

Throughout the interview I took no specific position on the issue of connectedness to cultural heritage; this impartiality was clarified prior to commencing each interview and at every appropriate opportunity during the interview. Equally, I needed to be cognisant of assumed prior knowledge on the part of the participants given the shared context. There was a concern that an outcome of assumed prior knowledge may have been that information remained unsaid, in that the participant may have assumed that they did not need to make a particular point or clarify or expand on a comment, because it was

'understood' or taken as 'given' on my part. Therefore, prompts and clarification questions were used when points required expansion or when there were indicators that prior knowledge may have been assumed or taken as understood and not included as part of the personal narrative.

Another concern was the possibility that participants may give responses that they felt would in some way be more in line with what I wanted to hear or I required. Related to this point was the possibility that the participant wished to project a preconceived image of themselves or their families, or that perhaps they felt some constraint by the interview situation itself with a person that they knew as an acquaintance (Codò 2008:162). In the same way, during the interview I was also mindful of some of the affective variables such as emotion, mood and ambiance.

However, as the interviews proceeded, it became clear that these concerns were unwarranted. All participants appeared to be at ease, spoke willingly and spontaneously and seemingly free of any expectation, indicating that they enjoyed the experience of the interview to the point that some even verbalised disappointment at the conclusion. On several occasions the discussion continued informally over a cup of coffee for some time after the audio recording device was switched off.

3.7 The participants

Twenty four people were interviewed in various locations including Griffith between April 2012 and October 2013. Interviews took place in the home of the participants or in a mutually agreed location convenient to both parties. The participants were aged between eighteen and eighty years at the time of interview and included eight males and sixteen female participants.

As a group the participants were relatively homogenous in terms of background; they were generally known to each other or were familiar to each other as part of the wider Abruzzese community. Some participants were members of the same extended family group. All participants were born in Australia except one who arrived in Griffith as a four year old child from a medium size town in Abruzzo. Table 7 provides an overview of the profile of the participant.

Table 7: Participant profile

PARTICIPANT	GENDER	AGE	EDUCATION	CURRENT RESIDENCE	EMPLOYMENT/ INDUSTRY
P 1	M	80	Year 8	Sydney	Hospitality
P 2	F	78	Year 8	Griffith	Domestic
P 3	F	78	Year 8	Griffith	Domestic
P 4	M	76	Year 8	Sydney	Transport
P 5	F	66	Year 9	Griffith	Administration
P 6	F	59	Postgraduate	Canberra	Public Service
P 7	M	57	Year 10	Lismore	Retail
P 8	M	57	Year 10	Brisbane	Security
P 9	M	56	Year 11	Leeton	Administration
P 10	F	54	Graduate	Canberra	Public Service
P 11	F	53	HSC	Central Coast NSW	Home Duties
P 12	F	50	Year 10	Central Coast NSW	Retail
P 13	F	46	Year 10	Sydney	Administration
P 14	F	44	Graduate	East Maitland	Teacher
P 15	M	43	Graduate	Canberra	IT
P 16	F	42	Year 11	Griffith	Home Duties
P 17	M	41	Year 10	Melbourne	Finance
P 18	F	39	Postgraduate	Albury	Teacher
P 19	F	35	Graduate	Dubbo	Teacher
P 20	F	30	Graduate	Canberra	Teacher
P 21	F	27	Year 11	Griffith	Trades
P 22	F	23	Postgraduate	Sydney	Administration
P 23	M	21	Degree, 2nd Year	Canberra University	Student
P 24	F	18	Higher School Certificate	Griffith	Student

As already referred above, all participants grew up and were educated in the town of Griffith and consequently were dominant in English. Some older respondents did not speak English at the time of enrolment in school while others did. Many participants reported that they spoke with ease one of the many Abruzzese dialects. A few, especially among the younger ones, indicated they understood some 'Italian' but preferred not to speak it, suggesting that their lack of usage has made them 'forget most of the words'. As already mentioned, in most instances when the participant was referring to speaking 'Italian' they were meaning they spoke an Abruzzese dialect. This was clarified at an appropriate point for each interview. Several in the participant group had formal instruction in the Italian language at primary and high school, with at least four participants having studied the Italian language at university, both in Australia and in Italy. Two of these participants were language teachers with the Italian language being one of their teaching subjects. This issue of language versus dialect usage among the participants will be discussed further in the following chapter.

Many participants resided in regional New South Wales at the time of the interview whilst others lived in capital cities and regional towns in Victoria, Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory. Some have maintained their ancestral connection to agriculture and remain farming in Griffith and/or augment farming with associated agribusinesses. Those who did reside in capital cities were engaged across a wide spectrum of careers in: retail, banking, teaching, and in the public service.

The education backgrounds varied considerably. Some of the older participants completed the minimum formal schooling requirements necessary at the time of their school attendance, while others completed the Leaving Certificate as prescribed by schools in NSW of the late 1930s and early to mid-1940s. Most of the participants in the middle cohort had completed high school to Year 10, with many having completed the NSW Higher School Certificate (HSC). Some in this group completed tertiary studies, including postgraduate degrees. Overall this middle group was better educated and better resourced than their older counterparts. They were confident, articulate individuals, many were established in their professions or who had recently retired from their careers. For the most part they were able to allocate the time and were enthusiastic about participating in the project. Unsurprisingly, the youngest participants had achieved higher educational outcomes as a group and were at the beginning of their chosen careers. Thus, while they themselves may not have been too well-resourced, they grew up in families that for the most part were. The differences among participants is explored further in the next chapter.

As mentioned above, from initial contact with those identified, interested participants were invited to respond to the researcher by telephone, by email or by post. The largest number who did so were the middle cohort because demographically they were from the largest group of potential participants. The pool of older participants willing or able to participate in the study was smaller given their age. Equally the collective of younger participants was smaller given that many descendants now in their middle age had left Griffith in the mid to late 1970s in pursuit of education and employment opportunities, therefore their children

did not meet the second criterion for this study, that of having grown up in Griffith. This

explains the numerical imbalance in the three cohorts of participants, as grouped by

generation (see Chapter 4)

The interview discussion varied in length, with most being completed within one hour and

some extending well into the second hour. Soon after the interviews were completed I

listened to recordings several times and then I transcribed them for the analysis.

3.8 Criteria for analysis

In the broadest sense, analysis of interviews will include both subjective and objective

variables. De la Mora (1983:3,4) adds that most analysis of migration discourse instead

focuses more on objective variables such as employment, education and income, thus

diminishing the understanding of the subjective factors that impact on the migrant and their

descendants.

The key feature for analysis in this study are the subjective personal reflections, memories

and perceptions of the participant's life with a particular reference to their childhood,

specifically as they relate to the six factors referred to earlier that inform the concept of

connectedness. Thus participant comments are pivotal to understanding their perceptions

of connectedness to cultural heritage. The subjective component is complemented by

consideration of the objective factors, including age, education, choices made by

participants in terms of language use, the sociopolitical and sociocultural context of the time, employment and family financial circumstances.

In any case, what is of fundamental importance is that the combination of objective and subjective factors used in the analysis emanate from participant responses and add value to the discussion's central premise. That is, on ascertaining if second and subsequent generations of descendants of Abruzzese migrants, from eighteen to eighty years of age across at least four generations, who grew up within Italian families in Griffith, maintain some degree of connectedness to their Italian and/or Abruzzese cultural heritage, and on how that connectedness is manifested.

To begin the analysis process, at the completion of the interview, in some instances on the same day, in others the next day, but always soon after, I listened to the recording. I then listened several more times over a two or three day period to familiarise myself with the material. Each interview was then methodically transcribed; and each transcription was checked at least twice by listening to the recording while following the transcript, adding or correcting as required. When I was satisfied that the transcript was correct, I then read each one in turn several times, this time in order to assure myself (again) of the contents and to begin to identify the themes that may have been developing across participant responses. The content was then summarised under the heading of each of the six factors that informed connectedness to cultural heritage. From these summaries, themes and subtext began to emerge to form the beginning of the analysis.

CHAPTER 4   **ANALYSIS**

4.1 Introduction

The data for this study come from the twenty four semi-structured interviews that I

gathered (cf. Chapter 3). The analysis that follows is drawn from participant responses.

The content is framed using the factors that inform the concept of connectedness that

guided the interview discourse (cf. Chapters 2 and 3). Such factors are: the family;

cultural manifestations of Italian identity; visits to Italy; interactions with family in

Italy; Italian language and dialect and intermarriage. In the discussion below these

factors are presented according to the importance ascribed to them by the participants as

a group. Whatever the circumstances, one factor provided unequivocal accord. The

family was identified and nominated by all participants as a major contributor to the

strength of their level of connectedness to their Italian cultural heritage. Other variables

that emerged as important during the interview include gender, age, generation,

education, the sociopolitical context of the time and the choices made by participants in

terms of words used in responses.

In the analysis I have also considered participant comments on the communication

technologies used to initiate or maintain connections with the home country and

interactions with the Abruzzese 'paesani' community network within Australia and

elsewhere. In addition, I consider references to culturally specific behaviours and

activities, such as the gregarious nature of Italians, the loyalty of family and friends,

naming practices for children and Italian citizenship, as they similarly add value to the

analysis. As a group, these elements were all considered significant because they featured regularly in participant responses.

The analysis is presented within a narrative framework (Urquhart 2013:4-5) and participants have been congregated into three clusters according to age and generation. The first cluster has five participants, four of whom are children of migrants who arrived in Australia in the mid-1920s. Many potential participants in this older cohort are quite elderly and frail, therefore individuals well enough and available to be interviewed were few (cf. Chapter 3). The fifth participant in the first cluster arrived in Griffith in the early-1950s as a four year old child, thus distinguishing herself in some ways from the others in the group. Still, I have included her in Cluster One because as with the others, both of her parents were born in Italy; her father was one of the first arrivals to Griffith from Abruzzo after World War II and well before the arrival of the parents of participants in the middle group. She was attending school during the post war mass migration influx and as such her experiences are more closely aligned to those of the older group. These features were significant enough for her to be included in the oldest group and they create an appropriate conduit from the first to the middle group.

The middle participant group, Cluster Two, has the largest numbers. This reflects the fact that demographically, this corpus presented a larger number of potential participants compared with the previous group (cf. Chapter 3). All fourteen interviewed were born in Australia and are children of post-World War II migrants and/or grandchildren of those who arrived earlier. Many in this middle group left Griffith in early adulthood in pursuit of tertiary education and/or employment opportunities. None

of those who left returned to Griffith, all beginning careers in teaching, the public service or information technology. Others secured employment in retail and banking and all reside with their own families in various capital cities and regional centres across Australia. Therefore, while being descendants of Abruzzese migrants, their children did not grow up in Griffith, and thus did not meet the second criterion for participation in the study. This feature impacted directly on potential participant numbers for the youngest group, as mentioned earlier (Chapter 3).

Cluster Three includes five participants, who are grandchildren and great grandchildren of migrants from Abruzzo to Griffith. All respondents were born and grew up in Griffith with two completing senior high school in boarding schools in Sydney, returning home during term break and at the end of each school year.

The analysis will proceed in descending order, beginning with responses from the oldest participants in the first cluster through to comments from the youngest participants in the third cluster.

As explained earlier, to varying degrees all participants were able to give an account of what they believed or understood to be the motivation for their parents or grandparents to migrate to Australia. A common thread permeated the discourse of all participants with replies focussing on family poverty, lack of opportunity in their respective home towns and villages in Italy, particularly after World War II (di Gregorio 2010:1-12), and the desire for a better life, not only for themselves, but also for the children they hoped to raise in Australia[1].

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[1] Only one respondent strayed from this theme. She suggested that her maternal grandfather had in fact discouraged his daughter, the participant's mother, from leaving Italy to join her husband and son in Australia because the family had enough resources to sustain her remaining family comfortably.

4.2 The family

As part of the interview, participants were not asked specific questions about the role of family in their life. This was purposely done as it was anticipated that direct questioning on the family would in all probability result in predictable responses centring on the perception or indeed general acceptance of the closeness of Italian families. Instead, to begin the interview, participants were asked to talk about themselves, focusing on growing up in Griffith as part of an Italian family and about their school years. A significant component of this first part of the interview touched on the respondent's level of understanding and knowledge of their family's migration story. The respondents pondered the reasons why their family member/s left the Abruzzo region of Italy, why they chose Australia and Griffith more specifically, and what life may have been like for their relatives when they arrived in Australia and/or Griffith. The participants were also asked to reflect and talk about family friends in order to understand the family's social networks whilst they were growing up.

To an extent, the comments with regards to the family remain similar across the three clusters, in that they all stress the importance that family played in their lives. However the analysis will show that what distinguishes the three groups is the *intensity* with which participants talk about their family relationships. By intensity I refer to the choice and potency of the language and of specific words used, and more importantly the emotion expressed by participants when describing family dynamics.

4.2.1 The oldest participants

The first cluster consists of the older participants ranging in age from sixty six to eighty years (Table 8). In sociocultural terms all participants in Cluster One belong to the second generation because their parents were born in Italy whereas they were either born in Australia or arrived from Italy at a very young age. The four older members were born in Griffith in the early to mid-1930s. They were all children of parents who had arrived in Australia from 1925 to 1930. The fifth member was born in Italy in 1947 and arrived in Australia at four years of age in 1951, accompanied by her mother and one brother, to join her father and an older brother who had been in Australia for three years. Her parents were among the few who had been married in Italy and thus her home provided a point of reference for other Abruzzese migrants living and/or arriving in the town.

Table 8: Participants in Cluster One

PARTICIPANT	GENDER	AGE
P1	M	80
P2	F	78
P3	F	78
P4	M	76
P5	F	66

All participants in this cluster fulfilled minimum schooling requirements for the time, leaving school at the equivalent of around Years 8 or 9. All five respondents were children of farmers and as such were required to work on the farm before and after school and on school holidays. By the time participants had enrolled to attend school their parents had begun to assume responsibility for the farms which were unproductive in the hands of the returned soldier settlers (cf. Chapter 1). Therefore, for each of these

participants, their schooling was regularly interrupted, with long absences, especially during harvest time.

At that time in Griffith the Italian farmers were generally horticultural farmers. The onset of harvest was very busy because there was a limited amount of time within which the ripe fruit (for example peaches, apricots and prunes) had to be removed from the trees. Fruit then had to be packed and distributed to the markets in Sydney or Melbourne. Some fruit (for example apricots and prunes) was pitted and dried before being dispatched. All work was done by hand either because the machinery was not available or, in instances where it may have been, because Italian farmers were not in the financial position to acquire the machinery for many years. Thus for most families school was not their first priority and the children of Italian farmers were needed to help harvest, as demonstrated through the following comment:

> P3 (F78) '….the girls even helped in the farm because there was no money to pay labourers. Our parents were migrants, they did not have any money….if there was work on the farm you never employed anybody… the children all used to work'.

One respondent recounted the story of one of her sisters remaining in the house to tend to making the meals and bringing drinking water for the remainder of the family working on the farm. One of her roles was to be on the lookout for the 'school inspector' or 'truant officers' who would randomly call at the farm to check why the children were not at school. When the visitor was spotted the sister would alert her parents and her siblings would hide from sight while their parents spoke to the official. The youngest member of Cluster One also spoke of the need to work on the farm and

recounted how she left school before the School Leaving Certificate because her mother became ill and needed help. Thus she was required to help her as well as assist on the farm.

The oldest four members of the group all attended school during World War II and conveyed stories of parents helping to dig trenches at the school, of participating in practice responses to air raid sirens, and especially of the racism that they experienced, not only during war time but throughout their childhood. The war time school experience impacted on participant perceptions and feelings of growing up within Italian families in Griffith in a way that was not experienced by the participants in either of the other two clusters. The following comments from the more senior of the respondents go directly to this point.

> P1 (M80) '… I went to school in 1937 in an old Bedford bus that used to pick us up in the morning driven by a German bloke. Then war started. I remember dad told me the war had started and he warned me that there might be questions from the other kids because Italy had joined the war with Germany; and there were questions. It was a bit hard from there for a while… it was very bad actually because three quarters of the people my age had parents who had volunteered for the army. There was a time when I was scared to go to school…during the war if I had a chance of changing my name I probably would have…'

> P4 (M76) '…one memorable time I remember our school at [*], I cannot remember the year. I could not have been long started and I may even not have started at the time, but the war was getting bad and they had dug trenches around our school and around the paddock. The school was in one section and then there was a paddock and from what I can remember it was about a four-acre paddock. Dad was one of the volunteers who were there. I have to say there was not a lot of Italians there [at the school as volunteers] digging the trenches during the war - there were a couple of northern blokes… but not many'.

The youngest participant in Cluster One P5 (F66) on the other hand began attending school almost twenty years later, in the mid-1950s. Still, as with her older counterparts,

she also spoke about experiencing racism at school, especially in her mid to late primary years, when more Italian children began to enrol in school during the mass migration period of the 1950s.

The comments from P5 (F66) are set in a different time from those above in that the focus had shifted from the war years to the chain migration period of the early-1950s. In recounting her experiences, her words are just as powerful in denouncing the racism she had to endure at school.

> P5 (F66) '…the worst time for me was in fourth, fifth and six class, we had a teacher…and this man for some reason or other did not like Italians. From then on life was difficult at school…we used to hide in the oleanders at lunch time because he would pick on us…he would make us sweep, pick up papers…he would make us work, do what the people who were being punished would have to do, but we did nothing wrong. He would constantly pick on us as a group'.

In response to questions about their growing up in Griffith within an Italian family and their childhood more broadly, participants in Cluster One spoke with tempered emotions when discussing relationships with parents and grandparents and extended family. For example, they used impassive terms such as 'siblings', whereas participants in the other clusters spoke of their immediate family using more endearing terms like 'brothers' and 'sisters'.

When narrating their circumstances the oldest participants were nondescript in their discussion using pragmatic and practical terms to describe what 'had to be done' not only in their own family but across the wider extended family community. In a matter-of-fact way, they reported that 'you just grew up', each making the point that there were

no alternatives apart from the family. The following examples were typical of

responses from Cluster One.

> P1 (M80) '…we all grew up as one big family with siblings and cousins…every Sunday we were together…dad decided to have a 'bocce' space made and that was the entertainment of the day… no Australians just the family'.

> P2 (F78) '…you just grew up... we stayed at home and got together with our cousins… that was our Sundays when we were growing up'.

For these participants, their focus and that of their family was on their need to survive in

the best possible way within the wider Anglo Australian community, on 'getting on'

with making a living and on taking care of the practical challenges of life at that time.

The strength of their relationships lay in working together for the benefit of the group

and the survival of their farms or any other employment they may have secured. What

they remembered about growing up in an Italian family in Griffith consistently reflected

'getting on' with life and what needed to be done in a realistic and no-nonsense way.

For example, they noted specific aspects of their childhood, such as travelling to school

with a horse and sulky, sharing one bike among many to ride sections of the road to

school, or working on family farms and the chores that had to be completed before and

after school and on non-school days. Responses such as the following were typical

from this cluster and affirm the nexus of family and the need to survive in the best

possible way for this group.

> P3 (F78) '...we spent all our free time with either his [husband's] side of the family or mine. Family was the centre of our life. We were either working for ourselves, working to give our [extended] family members a hand or spending our free time with our [own] family'.

> P4 (M76) '…later on I went to school… I worked, when you grow up on a farm you have to work nearly from the day you were born. It has not done me any harm'.

Responses and discussion around the family's social networks were also comparable. The following response from P3 (F78) to a question on who she mixed with socially as she was growing up was more wide-ranging than others in her group, but still upholds the synergy between the role of the family and the focus on the need to survive as a group:

> P3 (F78) '…the aunties, we would all get together…the uncles and aunts, when it was crop time we needed to pick apricots and dry the apricots, they used to come over to the shed and help us pit all these ripe apricots to dry them and that's it. If they had work to do we would exchange, we would go and help them'.

Apart from the need to work cooperatively for the benefit of the family (cf. Langford-Smith and Rutherford 1966, Pich 1975, see Chapter 1), themes and patterns developed in the responses from the participants in Cluster One may also be attributed to what De Fina (2003:136) refers to as the 'speaking space'. This is the space taken in talking about 'how it was', with references made about the family being presented as 'anonymous speech' in that they cannot be attributed to anyone in particular. For example, members of this group often quipped about 'you just grew up, you just got on with it', where the pronoun 'you' becomes a generic reference, or 'that was the way it was…that's it'. Sometimes such comments were accompanied by a shrug of the shoulders and at other times with a wry smile. Responses were rarely embellished and activities spoken about without any sense of enthusiasm, emotion or nostalgia.

As adults, all participants in Cluster One married either Italian migrants or second generation Italians, three of whom were from Abruzzo. Two members in this first cluster continued with farming, at least for part of their lives. Others worked as unskilled labourers in various positions. All except two men reside in Griffith.

All respondents in Cluster One have maintained their close association with their Italian relatives and their extended networks in Griffith. Those who reside in Sydney have family in Griffith and travel there regularly for family festivities and celebrations. They indicated that for as long as they are able to and family members remain in Griffith they will maintain regular contact. The fondness with which they hold Griffith and their ongoing attachment to the town is easily detected in the following excerpt.

> P1 (M80) '…I would have gone back to live in Griffith but my wife did not want to leave the children and grandchildren. I like going back because I have four sisters and their families in Griffith and I have lots of friends there. I know all the *paesani* and I have all the people I went to school with. Still now I think I would like to return to Griffith but I should have done it years ago. I go back to Griffith as often as I can. If I know someone is going from Sydney to Griffith I will hitch a ride with them'.

The level of this participant's attachment to Griffith motivates him to even check the weather there every day and comment on it:

> P4 (M76) '…I have a definite association with Griffith. Each night I look at the weather on the television news. They might not show Griffith but they show Wagga and I will say oh they are having good weather there too....when my sisters pass on I may change but now I have a strong association'.

4.2.2 The middle participants

Cluster Two includes all fourteen participants in the middle group, aged between thirty five and fifty nine (Table 9).

Table 9: Participants in Cluster Two

PARTICIPANT	GENDER	AGE
P6	F	59
P7	M	57
P8	M	57
P9	M	56
P10	F	54
P11	F	53
P12	F	50
P13	F	46
P14	F	44
P15	M	43
P16	F	42
P17	M	41
P18	F	39
P19	F	35

These participants were all born in Griffith, and all have at least one parent, and in most cases both a parent and a grandparent - who were born in Abruzzo. Therefore all fourteen participants are second and third generation Italian Australians.

Apart from age, several other factors separate this group from their older counterparts in Cluster One. Participants in the middle group are better educated as they remained in school longer, five of them attained the NSW School Certificate (Year 10), three the Higher School Certificate level (Year 12) and nine hold either graduate or post graduate tertiary degrees. As a consequence of completing their education many participants in Cluster Two gained employment as public servants across the three tiers of government, as teachers and in information technology (IT). This, in turn, required them to move from Griffith, therefore twelve of the fourteen participants no longer live there. They

relocated to capital cities across Australia including Canberra, Brisbane and Melbourne as well as other regional cities and towns such as Lismore, Albury and Dubbo. Of the two participants who remained in the M.I.A., one has maintained their link to farming (see Participant Profile in Chapter 3 for more details).

As already mentioned above, all participants in this middle group had at least one parent - and for several both parents - who were post-World War II migrants, therefore working to sustain the family was also a priority for them as it was for the oldest participant group. All spoke of their parents working hard and the family not having the resources to participate in any activities or hobbies outside the home. However, when discussing aspects of life involving the family, participants in this group provided responses that were noticeably different to those of their more senior counterparts.

A first feature to notice is that as a group, these respondents were much more enthusiastic and effusive than the older cohort in the manner in which they spoke about parents and grandparents and their extended family. For example, during the interview respondents were passionate, animated and candid in narrating their story. They added much more detail and used more sentimental and emotive language to describe their relationships with the family, as shown in the excerpts below. All recount joyful and carefree memories, while highlighting the importance of the extended family in providing a safe environment in which to grow up.

> P6 (F59) '…family - we mixed with family from my mother's side and also from my father's side… I have wonderful - very happy memories of mixing with a very extended family'.

> P7 (M57) '…life in those days was good. In fact it was very very good especially family connections. They were excellent'.

P10 (F54) '….family gathering is something I remember…places like weddings there were a lot of laps that were safe; safe people around me because everybody recognises you as somebody's child and part of their group. That is the beauty of a big Italian family...if you were thirsty or hungry you pretty much tapped any old aunty and she picked you up and gave you something to eat or drink… we can rely on and call each other when in need. I have more than a 100 people I can trust'.

Apart from the choice of words used by these respondents, their behaviour and demeanour generally was in sharp contrast to the seemingly moderated style of their elders. Most respondents were visibly excited about the prospect of their interview, and as already mentioned above (see Chapter 3), many of them asked me how they could prepare for it. Overall the interviews with the participants in this group were longer, most being over the hour and several extended well into the second. Respondents not only provided much more detail in their interview, they also appeared to be more involved in the process. This shows greater sensitivity and attentiveness on their part to the Italian migration narrative, particularly as it applies to Griffith and their families' role in that narrative. These noticeable differences in the tone and the choice of words used by these participants and the emotion expended as compared to the older group need to be considered in the context of the sociopolitical realities of the time. This element is given more consideration later in the chapter, but at this point, suffice to say that most in the first group were growing up when Australia was at war with Italy. In contrast, even though the participants in the middle group also spoke of forms of racism in their early years at school, of a sufficient level that they remembered it and wanted to speak of it, it seemed clear that the racism they suffered was less pronounced than for their parents and grandparents (cf. Chapter 1; Cornwall 2007). For example, the following comments make reference to racism but suggest that while the remarks and behaviours are remembered, they were not that damaging. The first three excerpts, all

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from male respondents, focus on school and their late teenage years, with the first of these suggesting that there was some degree of interaction with Anglo Australians. The fourth comment, from a female respondent, is more all-encompassing. She details that even after forty years of living in the same street, her family's Anglo Australian neighbours chose not to interact, include or welcome her family in any way. Although she describes her hurt and resentment, she graciously declares 'I am over it now'.

> P7 (M57) '…as I got older and I went to school I got to know lots of Australian friends but there was still a lot of racism against Italians but not all Australians were like that'.

> P8 (M57) '... growing up and going to school like earlier....we did get teased, we were called wogs, we did bear the brunt of a bit of bullying and our lunches were not the vegemite sandwiches and so that was not such a pleasant thing growing up but we got by'.

> P9 (M56) '… but it did not matter what you did really. Back in those days there was a fair amount of bigotry and all that and we used to cop it a fair bit because we used to walk to school and I don't think there was much time for us wogs at one time. We used to cop it a fair bit but hey it makes you stronger'.

> P13 (F46) '…the Australians were not accepting of us, by no means. I was even a bit resentful. We were almost the only Italians in our street. No one made any effort whatsoever to welcome mum and dad into the community. I always remember that. It was not until mum and dad had been living there for 20, 30, 40 years that the neighbours were willing to talk to them and accepting of them. It is these little things I remember. It was very significant to me at the time. Like my Anglo friend who lived across the road… her parents made no effort whatsoever to meet mum and dad despite their daughter and I spending all this time together. I always felt like we were outsiders. We were never really included in anything anyway because we were Italian, just wogs to them. I so remember that - it is something that will never leave me. We were just wogs to them [the Anglo Australians]. I am over it now'.

As a consequence of their experience at school and elsewhere whilst growing up, the oldest participants were more likely to seek to assimilate into the dominant Anglo Australian community (see Chapter 1, Clyne 1991, Chiro 2008, Phinney 1990) either in behaviour or in the language spoken. They simply wanted to blend into the community

and not draw attention to the fact that they had Italian parents. In this way, they would minimise risking community harmony or even social and economic opportunities, then or later in life. Anglicising or changing first names and an insistence on speaking English rather than standard Italian or the family dialect, both of which are considered later in this chapter, are examples of how for some of the oldest participants, these behaviours continued into adulthood and within their own families. This behaviour also applied to some participants in the middle group but not to the same degree found in Cluster One.

This issue is exemplified in the following excerpt where after realising she was different, P6 wanted to be more like her Anglo Australian friends. Likewise, in the other example, P10 describes separating herself from her peers at lunch, preferring to eat on her own rather than drawing attention to her food.

> P6 (F59) '…I started to realise that somehow I was different. It was quite important to me in a negative way. I was quite embarrassed about the fact that I was different. I remember as I was growing up, going through insisting on wanting to be like everybody else; insisting on getting white sliced bread for sandwiches; having Devon sandwiches all my school life because somehow those made me like an Australian. I think really that continued pretty well through high school. In high school I did have a good friend who was Italian herself but the majority of my friends tended to be not Italians'.

> P10 (F54) '...I do remember I would have done anything for peanut butter and sliced bread but I had smelly Parmesan cheese. No margarine, you can image what that smelt like when I opened my lunch box at lunchtime, so I would often eat my lunch by myself because people would say - 'what the hell is that stinky lunch'? I had bread that mum had cut by hand. French bread as it was called then, that she had cut with the knife so the slices were thick and the sweaty hot cheese after a 40 degree Griffith summer was pretty awful'.

As mentioned above, the majority of the middle group no longer reside in Griffith, however all maintain a strong association with the town due to their commitment to the

family, as in the case of the oldest group. However, even in highlighting the strength of

their association with the town, the middle group distinguishes itself from first group for

the enthusiasm and passion that characterise their responses. Take, for example, the

sentiment and emotion assigned to the descriptions of their attachment to the town of

Griffith. Several in the middle group similarly asserted 'I love Griffith - it is in my

heart' and 'I get a good feeling about driving to Griffith'. The following comments

provide a good summary of this point.

> P8 (M57) '…I come back as often as I can, but at least several times a year. I try hard to come back for all family celebrations. I have my parents here, one brother and his family here, many friends and a large extended family, all of whom I want to maintain contact with. Strangely, after all this time I still call Griffith home. I also believe that it is the closest I can get to my Italian cultural heritage'.

> P7 (M57) '…I love Griffith - it is in my heart. Of course it has changed - the town has probably changed but the culture is pretty much still the same. If I was not so far away I would make more trips. I have a good family; I have four sisters there, I have a nephew there, I have friends there and that has a lot to do with it. I get a good feeling about driving to Griffith. Just recently I went to Griffith with my new partner and I could say this is where I went to school; this is what we did here; I used to live there; I grew up there. I had a happy life there. I cannot find too many negatives about Griffith. I have had a good life in Griffith, good family and good friends'.

As has been explained, the attachment to the town of Griffith is partly due to having

grown up there. However it is also due to the strong affiliation participants have with

their parents, siblings and their extended family still living in the town, and many

participants indicate that their bond will continue even after their parents are no longer

alive. This confirms therefore, the importance of the extended family for them, which is

enhanced through their attachment to the town. For many respondents, as in the

comment above, not only is the town still 'home' even though they left Griffith many

years, and in most instances many decades ago, there is also the insistence of the word

'home' when discussing their childhood. Both these aspects clearly convey a strong

sense of belonging to Griffith and demonstrate the synergy between family, community

and town for all participants in the second cluster as in the excerpt below:

> P13 (F46) '…I only go to Griffith because mum and my sister and her children
> are in Griffith… I like going home... I still call it home, it feels good going
> home. I enjoy going home, going back to Griffith and bumping into people I
> once worked with'.

The attachment to the family and to Griffith as the place that is identified with the

family is found also in the interviews of the youngest participants, as will be

demonstrated in the section that follows.

4.2.3   The youngest participants

The five youngest respondents, those in Cluster Three, are aged between eighteen and

thirty years (Table 10). All are grandchildren and great grandchildren of migrants and

have at least one set of grandparents or great grandparents from the Abruzzo region. As

such they are third and fourth generation descendants of Abruzzese migrants. All were

born in Griffith and grew up there. Two of them had left at the end of Year Nine to

complete the remainder of their schooling in private boarding schools in Sydney where

they lived during school terms.

Table 10: Participants in Cluster Three

PARTICIPANT	GENDER	AGE
P20	F	30
P21	F	27
P22	F	23
P23	M	21
P24	F	18

Compared with participants in Clusters One and Two, most participants in this group are reaching higher levels of education. Two are pursing postgraduate studies, one is in their final year at university and another one has just started it. The remaining member of the cluster is working in Griffith after leaving school in Year 11 to begin an apprenticeship.

As a group, those in Cluster Three demonstrated a comparable level of enthusiasm and passion throughout the interviews as participants in Cluster Two. What differentiates the groups is that the youngest ones presented themselves more confidently when reflecting and discussing their heritage, framed their responses explicitly within a maintenance and transmission of cultural heritage perspective, appeared more cognisant of their place in the generational time line, and made specific reference to actions they took to acknowledge the importance of and maintain their migrant heritage.

The disparity between the first two and the third clusters is by any measure vast.   In the first instance, the members of the youngest group have never witnessed first-hand the harsh reality of migrant life. On the contrary, they have grown up enjoying the accrued affluence of three and sometimes four generations that preceded them. All sets of their parents, with two exceptions, were born in Australia, eight of those in Griffith. Of the other two, one was born in a regional city elsewhere in New South Wales and the other in the United Kingdom. Whilst the parents of this group all worked, there was no suggestion from participants that it was at the expense of their family life or their education.

The reality is that education was the priority for this group as they were growing up in Griffith. This was quite the opposite predicament for each of the participants in the oldest group whose schooling was regularly interrupted with work and education was definitely not a priority, as discussed above. Furthermore, the parents of the oldest participants were all recently arrived migrants; they had minimum schooling and thus were barely literate in Italian; with none having a command of English. This actuality was not conducive to the provision of an environment where education and extra curricula activities flourished. While parents of the oldest and even the middle participants may have had an appreciation of the importance of education, they did not have the resources or the skills to inspire and encourage learning, in all its forms, as was the case with the youngest group. Certainly more opportunities were available for participants in the second group with most completing secondary education and some achieving tertiary degrees.

Still, working hard and the family not having the resources to participate in any activities or hobbies outside the home was a significant factor of growing up for the middle group.

In direct contrast with the experiences of the oldest participants discussed above, participants in the youngest group grew up with parents and grandparents who had the time and the resources that allowed them to have a strong and positive influence in their lives including in their growth, development and education. Therefore references to missed opportunities as a result of limits in family finances or time were not germane to the discussion amongst this group.

Another point that characterises this group is their acknowledgement of the apparent importance of the past and of maintaining some continuity to that migrant heritage alerted to earlier. For example one participant in Cluster Three spoke of recording stories from grandparents for school projects while another said she wrote a journal with her grandparents to pass onto her children. This level of appreciation, together with descriptions of deliberate actions taken to work towards the maintenance and transmission of cultural heritage was not demonstrated by either Cluster One or Cluster Two participants. This may be attributed to the fact that on the whole, participants in Cluster Three have had a much more comfortable childhood than the other participants. This allowed them to focus on their education, friends and the pursuit of extra curricula activities both within and outside of school, including choosing to learn more about their grandparents' migrant story and their early years in Griffith. The context of this upbringing is melded with the combined support, encouragement and greater resources

of both parents and grandparents, none of which were part of the childhood of those in Cluster One and few in Cluster Two.

Significantly as well, several participants in Clusters Two and Three were overcome by emotion during the interview to the point that discussion had to be suspended so as to allow the participant time to compose themselves enough to continue. There was no evidence of this level of emotional involvement in the oldest participant group.

Apart from emphasising the importance of role of the family in general, members of the youngest group also credit relationship with grandparents as a major contributor to the strength of their connectedness to their Italian cultural heritage. The following examples provide a glimpse of the warmth and depth of emotion expressed by this group when discussing their grandparents. In the first excerpts, participants refer to extensive amount of time they spent with their grandparents. More importantly however, in all three examples, respondents affirm that the time spent with their *'nonni'* (grandparents) was central to them forming connectedness to cultural heritage and identity. Time with *'nonni'*, they say, allowed them to share stories and 'gain some insight' into Italy, thereby preparing them for subsequent visits to Italy and meeting family there. It also enabled the younger people to learn and participate in some of the traditional activities their grandparents still enjoy, such as crushing grapes for wine and making salami. Of most significance was that time with grandparents built relationships that ensured participants in Cluster Three became more aware of the grandparents' migrant story and thus better prepared 'to pass on their story', as expressed so eloquently in the last example.

P23 (M21) '…I love my relationship with nonna and nonno. When I go home I pretty much see them every day…I try and keep in as much contact as I can... I feel connected to being Italian. That connection comes from the fact that I have a very close family and that I have spent a lot of time with *nonna* and *nonno*. *nonna* and *nonno* have told me stories.... that have given me some insight into Italy and prepared me for Italy and for family a lot. I feel the connection in the things we do. When I was younger I helped *nonno* crush up the grapes to make wine. I put the gum boots on to crush up the grapes. He showed how to do it and I will never forget little things like that. I will never forget helping *nonno* make wine and making salami'.

P22 (F23) '...a lot of time with *nonna* and *nonno*…a fair bit of family time…There is a strong relationship between the level of connectedness I feel and close family relationships, yes definitely. Definitely part of it is being in Griffith but it is also closeness to our family'.

P21 (F27) '…I have a connection with my Italian cultural heritage and it comes out in family…I am very close to my grandparents. I do not want my grandparents to be forgotten. I will pass on their story… it is our history… I have a close relationships with all of my grandparents and as generations pass it is easy for them to be forgotten and I do not want that to happen. I have a stronger connection to the Abruzzo because of the stories and connections that my Abruzzese grandparents had [to Abruzzo]'.

The most poignant comment came from P20, who when referring to her grandfather declared:

P20 (F30) '…My *nonno* was my most favourite person in the whole world'.

Significantly, this participant became very emotional at this point and the interview was suspended in order for her to regain her composure.

When considering the additional time, resources and opportunities that parents, grandparents and great grandparents were able to dedicate to the youngest family members, it may not be surprising that in response to a question asking participants to talk about growing up in Griffith, each reflected on how 'normal' or mainstream growing up there was for them. The following extracts demonstrate this feeling, while highlighting the participants' pride in being of Italian origin. These words also show that the youngest participants considered themselves to be 'part of the in crowd' while they were growing up.

> P21 (F27) **'…**I did not feel different. In fact I did not even know that there was a difference. It was just normal'.

> P23 (M21) '...It is not just being an Australian and growing up in Griffith. The Italian side of it as well... There has never been a time in my life when I have not been proud to be Italian. I think growing up in Griffith helps with that as well. Because you grow up with a lot of Italians and you fit in very well.... I think in Griffith the Australians feel like the odd ones out'.

> P24 (F18) '…Growing in Griffith in an Italian family was normal... It was more you were in a bit more if you were Italian. Yes, you were part of the in crowd'.

When compared to the circumstances of the oldest participants, these combined feelings of the youngest cluster indicate that conditions for descendants of the Abruzzese migrants in Griffith have been completely reversed, to the point where for these young respondents 'mainstream' in Griffith means being Italian. For example, the school experiences described by the youngest participant P23 imply that for her, the Anglo Australians are now the marginalised.

As with the participants in the previous two clusters, the strong association with the town of Griffith is maintained in the youngest group as well, albeit it may be because of an appreciation of the more cosmopolitan lifestyle that modern Griffith has to offer. This is evident from the comments below.

> P22 (F23) '... my association with Griffith now is that I go back for holidays. Before starting work I went back all holidays, long weekends, now it is mainly Christmas, Easter, long weekends when I can and family celebrations. I definitely want to maintain my contact with Griffith. I really like that I have a place that is outside of Sydney to go to and I like Griffith. I love that I have a lot of family in Griffith, friends, so I love to go back for that reason. I love the town; I love that there a few nice restaurants and a few nice shops and I definitely would not want to stop going there. I would not like to lose ties with Griffith'.

Participants in Cluster Three are emboldened to make these types of assertions because the strong and positive influence of family is complemented by the fact that today, the wealth and prosperity in the town of Griffith lies primarily in the hands of the Italians (Bosi 1972, Hardy and Roden 1995, Bannister 2007; cf. Chapter 1). Italians are both respected and well represented in the town across the professions, business and in local government (cf. Chapter 1). This explains the confidence in themselves as descendants of Italian migrants displayed by these youngest participants who benefit from the material wealth and perceived influence of Italian families in the community. This enables them to be more responsive in expressing overt representations of their Italian cultural heritage, including taking steps to record and pass on their family's migration narrative. In an overarching sense, participant responses reveal that there is trajectory of increasing keenness and enthusiasm for more open portrayals of a connectedness to Italian cultural heritage across the generations.

4.2.4 Negotiating between Italian and Anglo Australian cultures

Participants, in particular those in Cluster Two, spoke at length of the need to negotiate between Italian and Anglo Australian cultures, suggesting it was a significant feature of their childhood. Apart from varying levels of racism in relation to growing up in Griffith - an issue that was discussed in particular by participants in both Cluster One and Cluster Two - participants also spoke of the fear and uncertainty they felt when they began traversing between Italian and Anglo Australian households, given their limited exposure to, and knowledge of the behaviour and expectations within Anglo Australian families.

As was shown above, the oldest and middle participants spoke about their lives revolving mainly around their Italian or Abruzzese network. General responses from the oldest group indicated little, if any, engagement with Anglo Australians, living essentially a separated life, without any interaction or friendships with Anglo Australians, both in the past and now. These comments reflect commonly accepted findings of migrant behaviour in Australia in the first half of the twentieth century, where generally they tended to cluster together, quite isolated from the Anglo Australian community and also from Italian communities other than their own regional group (Cresciani 1988:153, Gray 2009:77). The outcome appears the same for participants remaining in Griffith and for those who now live in Sydney. In the following example, after talking about his childhood in Griffith, the respondent adds an anecdote describing a present day occurrence whilst living in a predominately Anglo district in suburban Sydney.

P4 (M76) '…No....no Australian friends [as I was growing up]. We had lots of Australian neighbours and all I can say is that when they drove past they made sure they did not even look our way... no Australians to really talk to....Still today we have a gathering once a year with people from the bowling and gardening club - we get quite a crowd 30 or 40 people. You do not get invited back. Australians do not do that. I have lots of friends at the club but they are more acquaintances than friends. The Australian culture is different to the Italian culture'.

Opportunities for interactions with Anglo Australians began to increase as a consequence of those born later in the 1950s staying longer at school, by participating more in activities in the community, including sport, and through the expansion of employment opportunities outside the family farm or small business. As these opportunities developed, many participants in the middle group were required to move from the known behaviours they understood and were comfortable with within their Italian households, into the unknown surroundings of Anglo Australian households of their friends and neighbours. Several participants spoke of the difficulties that they had to face when attempting to traverse the two cultures. The examples below describe some of these experiences beginning with early school attendance. Two recount childhood experiences, while the last three describe interacting more broadly with Anglo Australians as adults today. The last comment is of particular interest because the respondent has been living away from Griffith for more years than he lived there and he is married to an Anglo Australian woman; yet his words disclose that for him, negotiating between the two cultures has had a major impact and remains a significant issue.

P6 (F59) '…I certainly felt for a lot of my life as I was growing up that I did not quite belong. I was different even though there were all these other Italians around me - not in [my] family – [the] family was quite comfortable but in school and other social occasions I did not feel comfortable. I did not know what I was to do - I did not feel I knew how I was meant to behave'.

P13 (F46), '…I hated going to school…I never wanted to go to school… I have always put that down to the fact that it was such a different environment to my home Italian environment. Being babysat by *zia*[2] and the relatives it meant you were still in that Italian environment. This is the only thing I can connect it to. Everything was familiar - the food, the language, everyone's got your habits, everyone does things the same way - that is how you were brought up. Then all of a sudden at school you've got this myriad of other customs and habits to get used to…I did not like that environment I felt like a fish out of water. I felt like I never belonged so I did not like going to school at all'.

P10 (F54) '....what I remember is there being two parts to my life… the behaviours that went with being Italian and the way I engaged with people at home with family were quite different to how I would engage with people who were not Italian....I can remember when I was about 10, I went to visit my [Australian] friend for lunch and I was going to stay but...they had to ring...mum to come and get me because I was so home sick. The formality of their existence I found absolutely fearful. I did not know how to behave. I went home and there was no sleepover'.

P18 (F35) '…we are different culturally to Anglo people… [Now] when I am with my Anglo friends... and when I am with Italians I behave accordingly. When I am with an Italian group in Griffith I modify my behaviour….I will modify my behaviours for where I am... it's a stress for me when worlds collide...yeah that is when it is a stress for me because it is two different situations'.

P15 (M43) '…I accept that there were many before that may have had it even harder than me. I sound Australian but I look different. I look Italian...I am second generation.... growing up I felt that difference...you are not a Jones and you are not a Smith. Is there stereotyping? Absolutely - It exists today. I get it in the work place every week. That stereotyping still exists today. Is there a racial element? Absolutely! When I am with my closest Italian friends in Griffith, the guys I grew up with, we catch up whenever we can. When you are around those sorts of Italians friends you feel more comfortable. I have lots of Anglo associates, more associates than close friends, at work and wherever else but clearly I feel more comfortable with my Italian friends'.

There was nothing in the responses of the youngest participants that would suggest any difficulty with interacting between households or cultures. On the contrary, their responses to questions about growing up in Italian families in Griffith, emphasised how 'normal' it was and how being Italian actually helped you 'fit in'. The youngest

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[2] Italian word meaning aunt or aunty

participants are living within an environment where the boundaries that have segregated the two cultures in the past have been dissolved, and they are now inviting their Anglo Australian friends to sample *nonna's* bounty from her kitchen or in *nonno's* veggie garden, as expressed below.

> P23 (M21) **'…**I loved it because all my other mates were Australian and you would tell them stories about what happens when you go to *nonna's*, the food she will cook and things like that. They would not believe it until they came to see it. I would tell them about the veggie garden and things like that that *nonno* had. I loved it - I loved that side [the Italian side] of it'.

Analysis of the responses from participants across all four generations who participated in this study point to a one directional path with regard to relationships and interaction with Anglo Australians. This position has gone from a time where Italian and Anglo Australians were completely ignoring each other, as was the experience disclosed by participant in the first cluster, to one of total inclusion. With increasing opportunities for interaction came the fear of the unknown, with middle group participants needing to negotiate between the two cultures. However, today the Italians are fully integrated within the town of Griffith and the surrounding rural districts of the wider M.I.A., where both cultures live together with difference being embraced and shared rather than used as tools to maintain separation. Just as Giampapa (2007) found that for Italian Canadian young people, in being and becoming Italian Canadian and their perceptions of italianità, were defined by a combination of personal experiences, family histories, social positions and economic power, together with individual life choices, similarly this has also been reflected in Australia. Clearly, it is much easier to assert your cultural differences from a position of economic independence and strength.

4.2.5 Concluding comments

The comments and the excerpts in the preceding section on the family highlight the various influences that impacted on the lives of participants amid the three groups, as they were growing up in Griffith, including the different sociocultural contexts. Nonetheless, whatever the circumstances, the family was identified and presented by all participants as fundamental to the strength of their level of connectedness to their Italian cultural heritage.

The potency of the role of the family in the life of the participants is indisputable. Another point to note is that, while important, the differences across generations need to be understood within the milieu of access to learning opportunities, experiences whilst at school, and the overall social standing of Italian families at a particular point in their total hundred year history in Griffith and specifically of the eighty years of the participating Abruzzese families residing in the town.

This assessment is consistent with what is most prominent in the literature, that is, that the life experiences and practices of descendants of Italian migrants and their connectedness to cultural heritage suggest that the strongest bonds are those of family and established relationships with significant members of the extended family (Smolicz et al. 2001:162-168).

4.3 Abruzzese/paesani and Italian community network

As already mentioned, Italian immigration was encouraged by successive Australian governments, but most migrants paid their own fare and were expected to be self-

sufficient once in Australia. They were not offered accommodation or any other form of assistance when they arrived, but most immediately began saving to pay back debt incurred to get to Australia and then to raise funds to bring out family members to join them (Penny and Khoo 1996:97). These factors may help account for the development of a close sense of community, especially in the early years of migration (for more detail see Chapter 1).

Also, a significant feature of Italian communities generally is their propensity to extend family membership to 'paesani' networks, by giving status such as *compari* (godparent) to an individual who was not related by blood but could be trusted and treated as family (Harney 1998:129), as highlighted in the following excerpt:

> P19 (F39) '…always lots of people, cousins, family and anybody who was not really related was a cousin anyway, *comare/compare* as [sister] says.... *comare* are relations by choice - not by blood'.

This facet was evident throughout the interviews within the context of the responses centring on the role of the family, where references were made by all participants to 'paesani', 'paesani network', and the wider 'Abruzzese' or 'Italian community'. The terms were used regularly and interchangeably applied and, in spite of some similarities across the three groups, they appeared to accentuate seemingly different actualities for participants in each cluster.

For the oldest participants, the term 'Abruzzese' was an important identifier of kinship, while for those in the middle group both the terms 'Abruzzese' and 'paesani' represented an extension of 'family'. The youngest participants did not use the terms 'Abruzzese' or 'paesani' but they did make references to their extended family being

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part of the wider Italian community network. In spite of these terminological

differences, it is clear that 'Abruzzese', 'paesani' and the wider Italian community

networks were important to all participants, and the individuals referred to through these

terms were considered a sort of an extended family. This is indicated by the multiple

references during the interviews and by the focus on the obvious pleasure gained as part

of interaction with 'paesani'. Several examples have been included later in this section;

they serve to highlight the important role played by the regular visit paid to other

Italians of Abruzzese origin, namely, going to each other's homes usually on a Friday

and Saturday evening or on a Sunday afternoon. This was not only an opportunity for

social exchange but also an important event during participants' childhood and a

memory that they clearly treasure.

Amongst Italian migrants, the Abruzzese are numerically the third largest regional

group in Griffith after those from the Veneto and Calabria regions (cf. Chapter 1).

When the oldest participants' spoke of the Italian community, they tended to mean

people from the Abruzzo region of Italy, even though when they were growing up there

were relatively few Abruzzese families living in Griffith. However during the war years

the Italians, from all regions did unite as a group, as is affirmed in the following

excerpt.

> P1 (M80) '...during the war Italians stuck more together as a group - rather than
> in regions. In them days they had different customs but in the war years they
> were definitely close to one another'.

Numbers of Abruzzese began to increase in Griffith during the chain migration period

after World War II. Extended family membership, especially for the oldest participants,

included migrants from other regions, in particular from Veneto and Calabria simply

because greater numbers of people from these regions were living in the town (cf. Chapter 1) and interregional marriages were more common. The point is highlighted in the comment that follows.

> P1 (M80) '...we used to stick together more or less - because [near us] we had more southerners, most of the time I was with southerners more than northerners. But because mum's sisters married men from the Veneto we had no trouble mixing with them'.

The sentiment was repeated during an interview in the comment below, where the participant makes a clear distinction between the willingness of the Abruzzese to mix with Italians from other regions and the different attitudes of Italians from the southern and northern regions.

> P4 (M76) '...dad being from almost the centre of Italy got on well with those from the south and those from the north, whereas some southerners only stuck with southerners and some northerners only stuck with northerners. We probably knew more southerners than northerners but we got on very well with northerners. Dad got on extremely well with all of them'.

Regardless of the fact that Italians from other regions were included in extended family relationships, for many participants their affiliation tended to remain with the region of Abruzzo. Further, the related concept of regional kinship appeared to be more important to them than a more national perspective.

As an interesting aside, the excerpt highlights a point several other participants made during the interview, namely, that the central location of their region enables Abruzzese to traverse comfortably and befriend people from the northern and from the southern

regions of Italy with equal ease[3]. Indeed from my own memories of growing up in

Griffith I can recall that the Abruzzese were quick to point out that because they were

from what they referred to as the 'centre' of Italy, they were able to get on with all

Italians, be they from the north or the south. Often they would also add that *'forte e*

gentile' (strong and kind) is the motto of Abruzzo, and that it was these very qualities in

the people that enabled the Abruzzese to get on well with people from all regions[4].

The explanation forwarded by the oldest participants to account for their allegiance to

Abruzzo rather than to more regions equally, in situations of parents from different

regions, or to Italy overall, has a patriarchal base. They explained that because the

'head' of the family, their father, was Abruzzese, all of them, including their mother

who was not from that region, spoke an Abruzzese dialect and associated primarily with

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[3] The point was also professed by Fattore (1984) in an interview with Pino Bosi when he said '*noi*

Abruzzesi…siamo del centro…Perciò amici con tutti' [we Abruzzese…we are from the centre…thus

friends with all] (Bosi 1984:47).

[4] This viewpoint was confirmed when I came across an explanation for the origin of the motto found on

the Vastospa website explaining:

> 'When the Italian diplomat and journalist Primo Levi visited Abruzzo he described it as *forte e*
>
> *gentile* (strong and kind) which, he said, best synthesized the beauty of the region and the
>
> character of its people. The quote *forte e gentile* has since become the motto of the region and its
>
> inhabitants' (www.vastospa.it)

Boccabella (2011) too, writes:

> 'In Italy, the Italians of other regions have a phrase to describe the people of the Abruzzo: *forte e*
>
> *gentile* - strong and kind. Traits said to be born of lives spent in tranquil villages that habitually
>
> rumble with earthquakes. It creates character that is exceptionally strong, but not hard or
>
> indifferent'. (Boccabella 2011: 362)

Abruzzese 'paesani', sometimes at the expense of their non Abruzzese relatives. This

clarification applied to those in the second cluster as well, in instances where an

Australian born mother married an Abruzzese post-World War II migrant. The

following extracts provide examples of this strong family allegiance to Abruzzo, from

the oldest and the middle groups. The last example also makes reference to a north-

south divide remembered by the participant as she was growing up. Whilst other

participants also spoke of this 'divide', the reference tended to be part of a general

comment on who the family mixed with, highlighting that they spent their time mainly

with Abruzzese, rather than an indication of ill feelings on regional grounds.

> P2 (F78) '... mum being Calabrese... dad being Abruzzese - we connected more
> with the Abruzzese than Calabrese. With Calabrese it was only with mum's
> mother but otherwise it was with the Abruzzese....we think of ourselves as
> Abruzzese'.

> P5 (F66) '... I feel my connection is more to being Abruzzese than to being
> Italian, yes more so Abruzzese. There was a definite divide between the north
> and the south in everything we did'.

> P6 (F59) '...There were other Italians who were friends of the family but they
> tended to be other Abruzzese *paesani*. We knew [most] other Abruzzese families
> - all through the Abruzzese community and that community was very strong in
> Griffith.   There was quite a lot of rivalry. I remember a strong north-south
> divide as I was growing up even though we had several uncles who were
> northerners...My parents had some association with them, but again, it was
> mainly through family'.

The allegiance to Abruzzo was maintained amongst the youngest participants as well,

with two of the five highlighting this point in the course of their interviews. A third

member, the youngest in the group, when talking about her heritage said that she was

proud to be 'Italian generally', but added that 'now that I am getting older I am feeling

more proud to be Abruzzese'. Interestingly, each of the five said they were actively

pursuing gaining dual Italian/Australian citizenship so they could work and live in Italy

for extended periods of time and 'not feel like a visitor'. When I asked them where exactly they would go in Europe given that the Italian passport gave them access to multiple countries and cultures, they confirmed that they were interested in being in Italy specifically, and hopefully in Abruzzo, to be close to family.

Apart from references to regional allegiance, participants also regularly and interchangeably referred to 'paesani', 'paesani network', and the wider 'Abruzzese community' to represent this more expansive group as belonging, to an extent, to their 'family'. This was especially the case when the participant had few family members in Griffith. The following comments by participants from the first two groups, are examples of this point. The first excerpt is from a participant in Cluster One whose only family in Griffith, apart from her own immediate family, was an aunt. In the second example, from the middle group, the participant's father had no family other than *'nipoti'* (nieces and nephews) and 'paesani' when he arrived in Griffith. During their interviews, both P5 and P15 consistently stressed the strong association between 'paesani' and their family, to the point where the terms seemingly morphed to have the same meaning for them, as exemplified below.

> P5 (F66) '…At home, in our house it was mainly Abruzzese visitors and friends who came over. I did not have grandparents in Australia. I had two brothers and one sister and a large extended *paesani* network'.

> P15 (M43) ...he [dad] had *paesani* that were already out in Griffith...no direct family other than *nipoti* and *paesani*…family friends were other Abruzzese families and individuals - that close family network - *paesani* calling in regularly and then of course the bigger events like weddings, christenings, holy communions, confirmations and birthday parties and whatever else'.

In the second example, like many other participants, the respondent refers to the type of functions (weddings, christenings, holy communions, confirmations and birthday

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parties) that were important and regular occurrences in the Italian community. These events were important - and still are - because they represented moments where the extended family came together with the 'paesani' thus reinforcing the bonds between family and the wider community.

In addition to these more public events, several participants in the middle group also made reference to the unplanned or 'impromptu' home visits by the wider 'paesani' network, in the same way as relatives did. Family homes were open to the 'paesani' in the same way as to family members, as is detailed in the following example.

> P9 (M56) '...generally, we did not visit any Australians - it was always *paesani*... with us if we were visiting it would have been always *paesani* or family. Never had friends as such outside... but I would have to admit it was a pretty big *paesani* and family group - it was huge. Visiting us was the same - *paesani* or direct family'.

Participants saw these visits as being an important component of growing up as Italians in Griffith, and considered them a 'typical' Italian practice (see below). For them, these visits were a pleasurable activity and were fondly remembered as a feature of their childhood. It is interesting to note that several participants recounted that these unplanned visits offered them opportunities that aided their understanding of their parents' migration narrative. This point was particularly important for the first respondent quoted below, whose 'wonderful' memories gave her much joy, allowing her to bond with the people visited but, more importantly, to learn about her family migration history. Others suggested instead that through these visits they learnt to understand some Italian. The examples that follow illustrate these points.

> P15 (M43) '…one of the things that is a typically Italian migrant thing is impromptu visits to people's places and they impromptu visit you and that was

one of the things that was very typical of what we did - even now … in Griffith it is pretty much as it has always been - *paesani* calling in regularly'.

P14 (F44) '…visiting people was one of my favourite things - and that's what we did a lot of. On Friday and Saturday night we would go and visit someone - we did that and I loved it. We would be there till one or two o'clock in the morning and all they did was sit around a table and talk. It was wonderful - that was one of my strong memories growing up….it was through those conversations that I found out about where mum and dad were from and some of their experiences and I guess it helped me form ideas'.

P17 (M41) '...we visited other Italian families during the week (evenings) and on weekends and it was an occasion. We went to a farm or to a house...they were all Italian families, all Abruzzese families'.

As demonstrated by these excerpts, for most participants the boundaries that separated family, 'paesani' and Italians of different regional origin were quite fuzzy. The importance of 'paesani' and of regional and Italian association for Italian migrants was discussed above (cf. Chapter 1). As an example, Gray (2009) explains the immediate bonding of Italians through the 'paesani' network, especially after World War II through religion, saying that most Italians were Roman Catholics and as such most new arrivals attended church on the first Sunday after they arrived. There they would meet other members of the congregation, thus making new friends or reconnecting with other 'paesani' they may not have seen since Italy (Gray 2009:83). Further, Harney (1998) makes the point that the extension of the initial networks through religion, were formed through organisations and associations that would create occasions and places to develop and maintain social activities with family, 'paesani' or people generally who had shared interests.

Clearly, Griffith had a mass of people with a similar need for nostalgic references, shared memory and the opportunity to group with other people with common

experiences, language, and cultural expectations, to form their own clubs and organisations, including the habit of the regular visits to each other's homes (Harney 1998:130).

Thus, these reciprocal visits to family homes, interaction though the church, clubs, other associations, and the varied activities presented to the community through them, all signify a sociocultural space that enabled Italians and their descendants to maintain a connection to their past life, while constructing a present and a future for themselves. They were important points of reference and to-date they remain significant locators for 'paesani' and other community networks (Harney 1998:142).

When recounting these visits, participants noted that they did not recall this type of interaction with Anglo Australians, commenting that this practice emphasised the separation between the two sections of the Griffith community.

As mentioned above, the youngest participants did not use the terms 'Abruzzese' or 'paesani' when referring to the extended family or the community. Nonetheless, being part of the Italian community network appeared to be of significance also to them. For example, in the following extract the respondent talks of her brother's birthday and makes reference to a 'family' gathering where many present were not in fact family.

> P22 (F23) '…My brother's 21 in September was a good example of a large
> family gathering where everyone was invited and came, a lot of whom are
> Italian not just family'.

In another example below, the respondent is highlighting the interconnecting themes of growing up as part of an Italian family in the town of Griffith, the strength of his

relationship with his grandparents, and his placement within the wider Italian

community:

> P23 (M21) '…I do believe that my connection to being Italian is due to growing up in the town of Griffith with all the Italians living there. If I grew up somewhere else I do not think my connection to being Italian would be so strong. I think it has a lot to do with the town and the number of Italians there and the closeness I feel for my family especially *nonno* and *nonna*'.

4.3.1 Concluding comments

As discussed above, being part of the Italian network was important to all participants in the three different groups, and they all highlight it as a fundamental component of their growing up in Griffith. What distinguishes the groups was the different connotations placed by the respondents on the terms 'Abruzzese', 'paesani' and the wider Italian community.

I have shown how for the older participants in Clusters One and Two, identifying themselves as Abruzzese was very important. In the oldest group this was significant even when there were multiple instances where some acquired family members who were not Abruzzese but of other regional origin. For the middle group, identifying themselves as Abruzzese appeared to have been strengthened by in-marriage, given that many second generation descendants married Abruzzese who arrived during the chain migration period of the early-1950s. These participants spoke with fondness about the important social contacts their families maintained within their network of Abruzzese friends, for example through visits in homes, picnics and through the regularly occurring weddings, christenings and other celebrations, where the Italians socialised.

To an extent, this affiliation with Abruzzo was also maintained but weakened amongst the youngest participants. Whilst none in the youngest group spoke of 'impromptu visits by paesani' they all spoke of spending a lot of time visiting people especially aunts, uncles and grandparents and the importance of being part of the Italian community in general.

4.4 Cultural manifestations of Italian identity

In this section I discuss aspects of Italian culture that emerged from the interviews as particularly important for the participants, often in connection with the family and the Italian community networks. These will include notions of nationality, identity and to some degree ideas of nationalism, which I will show, are particular manifestations of, in this instance, Italian culture (Anderson 1983:13).

In the second part of the interview, participants were encouraged to discuss their thoughts and beliefs as to what it meant for them to be connected to their Italian cultural heritage in more specific terms. As was demonstrated in the section on the family, participant responses also expose a pattern of increasing overt representations of connectedness to Italian cultural heritage among generations.

As will be discussed, some of the oldest participants were inclined to acknowledge the fact that their parents were Italian, but they themselves tended to moderate their 'Italianness'. On the other hand, the middle group were much more expressive in their acceptance and representations of what being Italian meant to them. The third group, Cluster Three, were the most vociferous in claiming their personal identification as being Italian and their connectedness to their Italian cultural heritage.

Some features that emerged as being of most significance to respondents across the generations were: (i) the pride they felt in being Italian or in having parents who were Italian; (ii) identifying themselves as Italian; (iii) the importance of culturally specific traditions and activities for themselves and their families; and (iv) the hope that the traditions and activities described would be maintained.

Notably, all participants spoke with sincerity about their appreciation of and pride in the broader aspects of Italian culture, however perceptions of national identity differed both within and between clusters, as discussed below.

4.4.1 Pride and national identity for the oldest participants

In response to questions relating to pride and national identity and how that may have translated to connectedness to Italian cultural heritage, differences emerged within the oldest participant group, however all respondents declared themselves to be proud of their Italian cultural heritage with most referring to themselves as 'Italian'.

The three female respondents were more decisive in their discussion, each describing herself as either Italian or Australian Italian. They also affirmed their allegiance to their Abruzzese heritage. This applied both as they were growing up and to the present day. Instead, both the male participants distinguished clearly between feeling pride in their heritage and identifying as Italian. Both men indicated that they considered themselves Australians, with the older of the two recounting that he was proud that his parents were Italian, but that he 'never connected the two countries'. They both indicated that they were proud of their heritage, for example, the younger of the two recounted his trip to the National Art Gallery in Canberra to view art from the Renaissance period in Italy.

A point to note is that the older of the two men appeared to have been the most affected by the fallout of growing up in an Italian family during the war, telling me that 'it was very hard...there was a time when I was scared to go to school... during the war if I had a chance of changing my name I probably would have'.

With regard to the women, the excerpts that follow demonstrate that although they each expressed pride in being Italian in general terms, they identified as Abruzzese specifically. They also highlight that even though they were born in Griffith and lived there for close to eight decades, their interaction with Anglo Australians is still minimal, thus providing an indication as to how apart Italians generally and the mainstream Anglo Australian community must have been. On the whole respondents recounted that for them Anglo Australians were for most part acquaintances both in the past and now, as expressed below.

> 'P2 (F78) '…we connected more with the Abruzzese …our closest friends are Italians. Australians are only acquaintances, even now. Yes, when I am in the street and see an Australian friend I say hello but I do not have a close friend who is Australian. I have one Australian woman that I worked with that I can call a friend really but one and I was born here and am 78 years old, only one person. For me when we were growing up, Italians, I do not know if we were not liked, I suppose we were liked, but to the Australians we were somebody else. We were not Australians, the name will tell us that' (said sarcastically with a laugh)'.

> P3 (F78) '…I would describe myself as an Australian Italian. My parents were Italian migrants, I married a post-World War II migrant. My whole life I have lived as an Italian living in Australia. Even now I do not have any real good Australian friends. My friends are my family, other Abruzzese *paesani* and other Italians. I do not dislike Australians but they are not part of my inner family. My Italian heritage is important to me. It is who I am. In my younger days it was important to me too because that is what I was surrounded by and now I realise what I took for granted is still important and maybe more important'.

On the contrary, the two male participants did not see themselves as Italians or even Australian Italians but tended to show stronger allegiance to Australia.

> P1 (M80) '…I never thought about being Italian. It did not worry me to be Italian. My parents were the thing. I would never say that I was Italian. I was proud to have my parents as Italian. I was happy, but I never connected the two countries. I never had that connection'.

In response to a question on whether he considered himself to be Italian, initially the other male responded negatively, then he clarified this saying that he is fundamentally proud of his Italian background but his allegiance is with Australia, including his loyalty to Australia in sporting events. An excerpt of his recount follows.

> P4 (M76) '...I still like my heritage but if Italy is playing Australia in anything I would rather see Australia win than Italy. I can remember years ago I was probably 15 or 16 mum used to say to me you are Italian - she drummed it into me. Dad actually went crook on her. He said he is not Italian he was born here. This is his language, he is Australian, but mum used to say to me, you are Italian. I certainly would not deny my heritage anywhere I went. I am proud of that but I am Australian not Italian'.

His more broad appreciation of his Italian background is affirmed in the next excerpt below. In the last sentence, which was part of a discussion towards the end of the interview, he celebrates his Italian identity through his appreciation of Italian culture. Later he acknowledges that he does have a connection to being Italian, and thinks of himself as an 'Abruzzese', even though only his father was from Abruzzo and he married the daughter of two Calabrian migrants. This response is similar to those from the women cited above and reflects the sentiments expressed in the previous discussion on Abruzzese and Italian community networks. They all point to regional identity and allegiance to Abruzzo as being of more significance to the oldest respondents than identifying as an Italian.

> P4 (M76) '…I am even proud to go back to the Roman Empire. I am very proud - a little time ago we went to Canberra to see the Renaissance [art at the National Gallery]. I am very proud because I can say yeah that's one of us'.....'I definitely have a connection to being Italian. I like to say I am Abruzzese. Like most Italians I stick to the region. It is in the middle, yes Italian, but I would say definitely I think of myself as an Abruzzese'.

4.4.2 Pride and national identity for the middle participants

Compared with the previous group, responses from the middle group were more decisive in reflecting pride in being Italian and their regional focus was not as compelling as it was for some of the older participants. Still, many also described their resistance to overt displays of Italian behaviour and association with other people of Italian background in their younger years. For example, several said that 'they were desperate for white sliced bread' or that they 'would have killed for a vegemite or devon sandwich', as somehow these things made you more Australian. This is consistent to what Vasta (1992:155) wrote about many second generation Italian Australians, who grew up experiencing 'cultural ambivalence' and thus conflict during the uncertainties of adolescence. Still, it is particularly telling that all participants were born in Australia but few used the term Australian to identify themselves.

Nonetheless, for several participants 'there is nothing wrong with being different'. According to them, this was reinforced when 'things that were culturally a part of your growing up were then becoming more acceptable', such as, for example, Italian food generally and the proliferation of Italian restaurants.

As mentioned above, some participants in the middle group expressed a more national perspective than a regional one. However when describing their allegiance both to Italy and to being Italian, many used emotive phrases such as 'it is in my heart - I feel passionate'. The following declarations were typical of the responses in the middle

group, in that they embrace a national perspective whilst still acknowledging a strong

loyalty to the Abruzzo region.

> P8 (M57) '…Yes definitely. Italian generally - even though I am proud of being Abruzzese and tell people I am from that region. I know it is a very pretty region, which I am very happy about - everyone talks about Tuscany but Abruzzo is very similar'.

> P9 (M57) '…I feel very proud to be Italian - God yes. It is in my heart - I feel passionate, I feel proud, I feel strong because it is in my heart. I was born in Griffith and I have probably had an Australian way of life since I left Griffith but in my heart I am Italian'.

> P11 (F53) '…I always feel very proud to be Italian…if someone says to me, you were born in Australia I say yeah but I am an Italian'.

> P14 (F44) '…So many times I have felt proud of being Italian… I feel pride in being Italian generally and being Abruzzese specifically. Usually when asked I would say I am Italian knowing that the next question is usually where in Italy are you from'.

The pride felt by the middle group is normally closely connected with the pride they had

for their parents and what they achieved in one generation. The following examples

personify this most eloquently. The participants were asked to describe a time when

they felt proud to be Italian and if they could explain how pride in their Italian heritage

is manifested.   Responses highlight the interaction between family and culture through

the continued references to family.

> P8 (M57) '...the biggest pride I have is in dad and what he has instilled in us is that nothing is more important than family....my pride in my Italian heritage is in the pride I have in him and in what he has done'.

> P15 (M43) '...I am proud of what my parents have done...I am proud of what they have endured'.

> P17 (M41) '...I am proud of our family achievement ...Love of mum and dad...it rubs off in that manner'.

As with the older participants, reference to sporting events was frequently provided as an explanatory addendum by many male participants in the middle group, to demonstrate their national allegiance, first to Australia and then to Italy, marking a difference with the older participants who had allegiance only to Australia.

> P8 (M57) '…When I look at the World Cup I look to see how the Italians go. I am an Australian and I want to see Australians do well but once Australia bows out or if they are not in the competition or in the game I go for the Italians. When I look at tennis, for example when Sam Stosur was beaten in the French Open, well at least it was to an Italian. You know what I mean - that sort of thing. So I am patriotic in that sense'.

Interestingly, several in the middle group described sitting with their families as children watching Italy win the final of the Football World Cup in 1982, as one of the proudest and most emotional times of their childhood. The two extracts that follow are powerful representations of both this pride and emotion.

> P15 (M43) '...I am proud to be an Italian. One example was waking up in 1982 when I was 12 years old in the middle of the night with dad screaming when Italy won the World Cup soccer competition. That was pure Italian! Watching that World Cup with dad, that was amazing'.

> P14 (F44) '...the World Cup in 1982 I remember, the one *we* won, I did not remember watching the game but I remember being woken by *zio's* screams of excitement and joy at winning the World Cup. It was just wonderful. We all got the framed poster [of the Italian National Football team], I've still got it'.

4.4.3 Pride and national identity for the youngest participants

Differently to the previous participants, the youngest participants, made the most impassioned claims to an Italian identity. This marked a difference with the oldest participants who either denied or diluted any suggestion that they were Italian, and with participants in the middle group who made more voluble claims to an Italian identity, particularly in adulthood. This group too, as with their elders before them, 'really lived

quite a segregated life in a lot of ways [and] did not have any dealings with the non-Italians' (P6 F59).

The youngest participants, on the other hand, were very enthusiastic when reflecting on and discussing pride and national identity. For example, when asked about how he felt about being Italian, P23 responded:

> P23 (M21) **'…**I am very proud to be Italian - very proud. I love that side of things…the Italian side, I love it. There has never been a time in my life when I have not been proud to be Italian. There has never been a time that I did not feel good about being Italian'.

The extract below confirms the differences among the generations described above. The respondent, a third/fourth generation descendant (her great grandfather migrated from Abruzzo in the 1920s and her grandfather in 1952), reflects upon her generation's freedom to express pride, excitement and personal identification in all things Italian and to be part of that cultural group most eloquently.

> P20 (F30) '**…**so much of what I am is because I am an Italian woman…the first thing I say when I am describing myself…I say I am Italian. I identify as Italian and I feel a connection to Italy. Even though I am fourth generation. I feel Italian in my heart. If I say I am Italian, my friends interpret that as Italian Australian. I can choose to say I am Italian. If my n*onno's* generation said they were Italian that meant they were not Australian and therefore an enemy of the country because of the war. They could not choose to say they were Italian. It is now cool to be Italian... it is in our blood, it is in our heart'.

4.4.4 Concluding comments

Participant responses across the three groups suggest that identifying as Italian was quite strong; only two of the oldest respondents described themselves as Australians; whereas most participants identify as Italian with a strong regional association to

Abruzzo. This is particularly telling given all participants were born in Australia.

However the apparent differences may not be surprising if readers agree with Barbaro's

(2000) assertion that Australian born children of Italian parents would have formed an

Italian identity within their family home well before they interacted with Anglo

Australian culture, or indeed became aware of a dominant culture outside their home

(cf. Chapter 2) (Barbaro 2000:591). Equally for Wilson (2008) there are situations

through 'generational transitions' when Italian Australians have moved from 'being'

Italian to 'feeling' Italian, pointing to ethnicity as being more symbolic (Wilson:

2008:106). This adds support to the notion that difference then may not be in identity as

such, but in the choices people make when presenting themselves in different situations

and times, meaning that ethnicity is in fact a generational construct and many

descendants may indeed have multiple ethnic identities (Baldassar 1992:219).

Likewise, progressively throughout the generations there was an increasing allegiance

to Italy, however, the loyalty to Abruzzo was maintained across all participants. As has

been shown in the previous section, the youngest group, Cluster Three, remain strident

in their pride and in claiming an Italian national identity.

Overall, in this study the majority of respondents either identified as Italian or described

themselves as feeling Italian, even though they lived their entire life in Australia.

4.5 References to culturally specific activities

Throughout the interview culturally specific behaviour and/or activities emerged as particularly significant to the participants, adding value to the discussion on how connectedness to Italian cultural heritage manifested itself in their lives. I will show that all groups mentioned these specific activities and events as manifestations and signifiers of their Italian cultural identity.

As shown above, participants regularly made reference to family gatherings (e.g. weddings, christenings, holy communions, confirmations and birthday parties) and other activities (for example making salami, pasta and pasta sauce) that collectively may be termed culturally specific behaviours and activities. Such specific behaviour and/or activities were an important feature of their personal narrative and were used by them to differentiate themselves from Anglo Australians. Participants presented these events and pastimes as 'the things we did', with some adding that not only was there an 'Italian way to do things' but also an 'Italian way of thinking'.

As disclosed in the section on the family, participants were not asked explicit questions about culturally specific practices. Again, this was purposely done as it was anticipated that direct questioning on specific events or functions would probably result in a predictable response centring on the perception or general acceptance that such activities were common or important amongst the Italian families living in Griffith.

Among the oldest participants, few comments emerged that pointed to culturally specific activities. As for other topics, comments were general and expressed in moderate and tempered terms. Apart from mentioning the family building a bocce court, there was no other reference to culturally specific activities from respondents in Cluster One. Likewise, the references to family celebrations and festivities were scarce. For example, one participant referred to 'Christmas day with *nonna* at Yenda' and others talked about 'cousins and siblings' being together on Sundays.

> P3 (F78) '…the only thing I remember other than work is visiting or having visitors on a Sunday. The men would be playing bocce and the women would be preparing food chatting among themselves'.

On the other hand, participants in Cluster Two displayed much gusto when describing family rituals and expressed their appreciation of culturally specific behaviour and/or activities. They were often highly involved when discussing such activities from their childhood, also displaying warmth and humour.

Commonly, responses brought a similar perspective, revealing that identity and connectedness to cultural heritage for participants in the middle group was closely linked with maintaining particular culturally specific practices. They regularly referred to events and functions as being very happy activities and separated these behaviours from those exhibited by Anglo Australians. These references were normally used to explain an event or activity that was the 'Italian way' of doing things. Mention was also made to the sense of ceremony or special occasion attached to certain activities within

Italian culture. Many spoke of the wonderful memories they had of participating in

activities such as making salami and tomato sauce used to accompany pasta dishes.

Likewise, participants also talked at length about family festivities and outings.

> P9 (M56) '....doing the things like making salami, sauce, all that sort of stuff.
> …there is different family dynamic in Italians than Australians - and you notice
> it… I mean we just have a different way of doing things - we are more overt
> with it… it was a really good part of growing up - you know getting together
> with family and all that - weddings, family celebration of all types - get
> togethers - food is a bit part of it, family is a big part'.

Activities and traditions relating to the preparation and consumption of food did feature

prominently in respondent comments, especially from participants in the second and

third cluster. For them, these activities appear to similarly reflect what Carniel (2007)

reported when talking about food being transformed into a metaphor for culture,

community and identity. Likewise, this actual food itself or the related activity may not

have been the most important issue.   It may be that 'what foods are eaten and when,

who prepares them and how, and the memories and associations attached to various

dishes and meals, reveal social relationships, traditions, personal histories and regional

differences' (Carniel 2007:94) that are of much more importance. Thus, food and other

culturally specific activities become powerful tools for cultural association and identity

(Carniel 2007:95).

The importance of these behaviour and/or activities for the middle group is demonstrated also through the following points. Firstly, most respondents are still very closely involved in this type of activities; secondly, many of them said that they will be very disappointed if the time comes when they are no longer able to participate; and thirdly, there was great sorry expressed in instances when a particular practice had ceased, for whatever reason. These factors indicate that the traditions and practices talked about, have had a very big impact on the lives of participants.

Participants are still very attached to them and such practices represent much more than familiar methods to prepare and enjoy food. Several participants also expressed their hope that such traditions will be maintained for future generations, as is evidenced by the comments that follow.

> P6 (M59) '…we still go [to Griffith] to do salami.   I hold some hope that we will do the pasta sauce again. I can do all those things but it is becoming practically difficult as the years go on but I would still like to do all those traditional things'.
>
> P17 (M41) '…I would be very disappointed if I was not part of annual salami traditions'.

The youngest participants were also cognizant of the importance of culturally specific events and traditions, as they were growing up and now as young adults. They openly expressed their enthusiasm for maintaining and continuing such practices. As a group, they too seemed much attached to those activities relating to the preparation or consumption of food they learnt from their grandparents and parents, and that they shared with their families.

P21 (F27) '….my Italian cultural heritage… comes out in food and cooking. The things we do, we always make the sauce and the salami. I occasionally make my own pasta as well. I have learnt a lot of my cooking techniques from *nonna'*.

P23 (M21) '…We still eat Italian food, we make salami every year.... I want to go to Italy for family, cuisine - both eating and cooking'.

Overall, on the basis of participant responses it is clear that traditional activities were an important part of their life as children. Throughout the interview the impact of their participation in such activities emerged as significant, because either the memory has remained or the involvement has continued. For example, participation in bocce games must have been lively social occasions as they were remembered and discussed during interviews by the oldest participants.

In addition to the memory, the impact has remained also because bocce is a growing participative sport[5] amongst descendants of those pioneering migrants some eighty years ago. The middle group's memories focused more on family celebrations like weddings and christenings, and traditions such as making salami and pasta sauces. Finally, the youngest group described their attachment as being more to the traditional activities they shared with their '*nonni'*, especially as they related to preparation and consumption of food. For them the outcome of the activity was important, but time

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[5] *Olives to eucalypts* (2004) was a program presented to regional networks of ABC radio. It was made up of five 30 minute episodes (Monday to Friday) focusing on Italian migrants and their descendants. Those interviewed were asked to talk about their experiences from the time they arrived in Griffith to the present day, highlighting some of the most significant changes for them. The discussions include aspects of their working and social life covering a span, in most cases of over fifty years. Sound recording (2004) Publisher: ABC Rural Radio, Ultimo, NSW

spent sharing these activities with their family and learning the traditions appeared more important.

Whatever the cultural activity or tradition, what emerges from the interviews is that the impact stayed with all respondents across the three clusters, with all participants conveying a desire to continue these traditions and expressing great disappointment at the thought of not having the opportunity to participate in them, or - worse still - such traditions and festivities being lost altogether. Furthermore, as shown above, these practices were also an important marker of Italian identity and a way of distinguishing themselves from Anglo Australians.

Image 10: A village in Abruzzo   **Image11:** Wine grape harvesting in Griffith
Source image 10:http://dn.c.photoshelter.com/img-get/10000qM2X8KbZCnE/s/750/abruzzo022.ipg
Source image 11:http://farm3staticflickr.com/2653/3817005994 7f47786bb8.ipg

4.6 Visits to Italy

Of all the issues discussed, the question of visits to Italy was the one that provoked the most emotion, not in an animated overt way but more in an introspective way. Participants were first asked if they had been to Italy and then to recall and discuss what they remembered of their first and subsequent visits. All participants who had been to Italy spoke similarly of feeling comfortable there and of experiencing a sense of belonging. They talked of feeling like 'being at home' and like they were 'coming home'. Interestingly, as will be shown, this applied even to those individuals who had not yet travelled to Italy, but projected how they might feel if they went there.

Of the five members of the oldest group, three had visited Italy. Their first trip was with their Italian migrant spouse, the primary purpose being to meet family. They each spoke of being made to feel comfortable and welcome, adding that they were happy to have visited Italy and to have had the opportunity to meet their Italian in-laws. The following comments were typical of those in Cluster One and reflect the warmth each of the respondents reported they received from their relatives when they were in Italy.

> P1 (M80) '…I have been to Italy once…. I went to see where my dad came from. I met lots of relatives, third generation, they treated me as part of the family. I was very comfortable about being in Italy…I could have stayed there for years. Italians I met made me feel at home and they made me feel good. I felt like I was born there'.

> P2 (F78) '…I felt comfortable. I loved Italy. I loved the place where my husband came from. I met his mother…and two sisters…we connected very well. I have been three times. My father was from the same town in Abruzzo as my husband'.

Comments about visiting Italy from several of the respondents in the middle group also displayed warmth and positive reactions towards both Italy itself and to meeting relatives. Further, for these participants, the visit seemed to be thought of more as some kind of rite of passage or pilgrimage (cf. Baldassar 2001 cf. Chapter 2) in that it either involved a transition from feeling awkward as an Australian to feeling good about being Italian, or alternatively as a 'coming home'. Several participants also described their first trip to Italy as an affirmation that at last 'being Italian was OK' or that 'it was OK to be different', as illustrated in a comment from P14 who said 'so many times I have felt proud of being Italian but when I was in Italy it solidified... it felt like I was at home - it really did'.

The responses below provide a broad overview and clarify the perceptions and feelings described by the participants in the middle group, both male and female, recounting their first visit to Italy.

> P15 (M43) '…it was like you had gone home…I felt very comfortable there. In a way it is like you have gone home. One of the things I distinctly remember, when you have a surname like mine and you have gone through school with teachers calling you all sorts of surnames because they cannot pronounce your name, to go back to somewhere like mum and dad's home town and straight away they get it. It was no hassle. That in itself jeez for someone like me you notice it… no, sorry can you repeat that, how do you spell that'.

> P13 (F46) …'it was that trip that made me feel proud to be Italian - proud of my heritage….that reconnection makes you feel proud…. of who and what you are'.

> P10 (F54) '…everyone just looked so familiar and the mannerisms and behaviours and the way people stand is just the essence of who I am - that is the real sense of coming home'.

Of the remaining participants, those in the youngest group, three had been to Italy on one occasion, accompanied in each instance by their parents. The youngest of these respondents were aged ten and twelve when they visited and both said that while they were made to feel welcome they felt 'a bit isolated because they could not speak the language'. They both indicated that they would go to Italy again as young adults, adding that they were hopeful they would go for an extended period to work, study or both. The third participant, P21, was the oldest of the three in the group who had visited Italy. She elaborated on why it was important for her to go to Italy.

> P21 (F27) '…I have been to Italy once - I was 22 - it was always something that I wanted to do and I always wanted to go with *nonna* and *nonno*… I was comfortable [when in Italy] - I was a bit nervous at first but I was very comfortable. I loved it. The visit to *nonna* and *nonno's* hometown was beautiful - because I saw the places they talked about - especially where *nonno* grew up - they had always talked about the chapel that was next door and how beautiful this chapel was - and how all significant events in the family happened in this chapel. Family marriages were in this chapel so that was very special to see because it was something that they had always talked about and it was beautiful - it was really beautiful'.

Those participants across the three groups who had not yet visited Italy said that they had spent considerable time thinking about and planning their first visit. I asked them to try and project how they think they would feel when they went to Italy. I have included two responses, one from a male from the middle group and the second from a younger female participant in Cluster Three.

> P7 (M57) '…I would feel nervous in the sense that I am going in blind folded but I once I am there I reckon the hairs in my back will start sticking up'.

> P20 (F30) '...I say I want to go back and I have never been. To go back implies it is my home …I have never been to Italy. I think I will be very comfortable because I think I will be with my people'.

In summary, for most participants a visit to Italy was a factor of pivotal importance in maintaining connectedness to their cultural heritage. All participants who had been spoke similarly of feeling comfortable during their stay in Italy; of experiencing a sense of belonging; of feeling like 'being at home'; or of feeling like they were 'coming home'. Interestingly, this applied even to those individuals who had not yet travelled to Italy, projecting how they might feel if they went to Italy. Importantly, the trip to Italy was also the opportunity to initiate and maintain interactions with family members living there, as discussed below.

4.7 Interaction with family in Italy

While interaction with family in Griffith was identified by participants as being extremely important, interaction with family in Italy was limited. Participants were asked to talk about their family in Italy and those members they were closest to, and how often they saw and/or made contact with them.

The key factor that separated interaction with family in Australia and interaction with family in Italy was the visit, either the visit to Italy by the descendant of the migrant or a visit to Australia by a member of the migrant's extended Italian family. It was the visit that enabled family members to meet each other and to form relationships, thus providing the impetus for ongoing transnational interaction.

Several of the older women spoke of the difficulty their husbands had in maintaining contact with Italy in the early years of their marriage, around the early to mid-1960s, as relayed in the following example.

> P3 (F78) '…when my husband came to Australia he always kept in contact with his family. He could not write very easily but on a Sunday, especially in the winter when the work on the farm was a bit quieter, he would sit for hours and try to write a letter, which did not come easy to him. Telephones were out of the question, firstly we did not get one here in Griffith that you could make international truck calls till fairly late, and secondly the calls were expensive. They were also very scratchy, you could not hear very well....it was only letters in those day...in the 1960s if you needed to get a message to them [family in Italy] quickly it was a telegram'.

Similar references were made by some in the middle group who also spoke of the difficulty their parents had in writing letters because they were 'basically illiterate'.

This situation changed only after family homes had access to less expensive international telephone calls in the mid-1980s. Across all age groups, by far the most used medium spoken about for maintaining contact with Italy was still the telephone. References from participants to emailing, Facebook or other social media tools were minimal and not considered significant in terms of initiating or maintaining contact.

However, even with regular telephone contact, participant responses indicated that initiating and maintaining interaction with family in Italy was much easier after they had met their family through the visit, either the visit to Italy or the visit to Australia. Though, many of the participants who had travelled to Italy disclosed that between visits they did not maintain any contact. The comment below typifies the point.

> P18 (F35) '….while I say yeah we are really close… at the same time I probably have not spoken to them forever, I don't email, Skype, I get the random phone call at Christmas or Easter if I am at home in Griffith when the phone call happens I participate but that isn't because I have lost ties'.

For some, the lack of ongoing contact had no impact on the likelihood of subsequent visits to Italy or their ability to 'pick up when they had left off' from the last visit. For others, instead, there was only one visit and no further contact, confirming the importance of regular ongoing contact in maintaining the strength of the personal relationships developed during visits to Italy or the reciprocal visit to Australia by Italian family members. For example, the oldest participant in the study described his only visit to Italy that took place in 1984 in some detail. Although he has had no further contact with any relative since then, he did indicate that his wife has maintained contact with her cousin who is living in her ancestral home. On the other hand, both women in the oldest group had maintained contact by telephone, on at least a monthly basis, with their in-laws in Italy throughout their almost sixty years of marriage respectively. In a few instances older family members in Italy have passed away, still, both women continue to be in contact with their nieces and nephews. Each had been to Italy on at least three occasions and each reported that they hoped to go again. This enthusiasm is displayed in the examples below, where the women speak of their interactions and of their keenness to return to Italy.

P2 (F78) '…we telephone very often. I'd say probably on a monthly basis we ring each other up…yes [to return] probably not on any tour but I would be interested in going to Abruzzo'

P3 (F78) '…my husband and I only went there once in 1968. He then got sick and we could not travel anymore. When he passed away I went back three times with my daughter. My parents-in-laws have passed away and I have two remaining sisters-in-laws but many many nieces and nephews and now children of nieces and nephews. I keep in regular contact with all my family in Italy and I will continue to go back for as long as I can'.

Participants in the middle group were the most regular travellers, reflecting their comfortable economic circumstances and the fact that many had retired from full time work, with several having been to Italy at least five or six times. Some of those who had retired indicated that they try to go to Italy at least biannually. Yet, few participants in the middle group, even amongst the many who travel regularly between Italy and Australia, keep in contact with family there. However, all said they were comfortable 'picking up' where they left off from their last visit to Italy. In the second example below, it is of interest to note the use of the word 'tight'; it denotes a closeness that is there, beyond distance. This respondent also described many visits to Australia from her aunt in Italy, highlighting the interconnection between the visit and the strength of relationships.

P14 (F44) '…Even though I have not had regular contact I would feel comfortable picking up where I left off'.

P19 (F35) '…When I am in Italy - it is very tight, very familiar, it's like you have never left and when they have come here it is the same thing - it also very tight…when we are together it is really good'.

No respondents in the youngest group initiated regular contact with family in Italy. However, all indicated that if they were at their parents' or grandparents' home and there was a telephone conversation with family in Italy, they would participate. In summary, across all participants, communication technologies have not impacted greatly on transnational communication. Respondents nominate the telephone as the preferred tool in facilitating communication with family in Italy. This finding is consistent with what Tosi and Borland (2008) conclude from their study where none of the participants preferred online connectedness to more personal communication. Their participants, irrespective of age and experience in the home country and in Australia, placed the highest value on direct person-to-person contact either face-to-face or by telephone (Tosi and Borland 2008:23). Similarly in this study, participants in the middle group as well; have not embraced the use of Skype or other forms of social media to communicate with family in Italy. The question as to why this may be the case was not pursued with participants. What is known is that when participants spoke to family in Italy they spoke using an Abruzzese dialect; the language with which they are most comfortable with.

4.8 Italian language and dialect

During the interview discussion participants were asked what language was used in the family home while they were growing up, what language they themselves used when speaking with grandparents and the extended family, and if that differed to the language used with siblings and peers. The intention was to explore whether the use of either dialect or Italian was a factor that contributed to the formation of their identity or to connectedness to their Italian cultural heritage.

From the participants' responses it appears that overwhelmingly the language spoken by them when talking with peers and siblings was English, thus confirming the generally widespread patterns in language shift among descendants of Italian migrants nationally (cf. Chapter 2). In this section I discuss the rapid shift from an Abruzzese dialect to English, the role of dialects both now and in the past for participants, and the overall absence of the Italian language in the lives of participants today.

4.8.1 The oldest participants

All participants in the oldest group indicated that while they were growing up, at home they spoke an Abruzzese dialect. The only exception to this was when friends or extended family members were visiting who spoke a different regional dialect. These people tended to be regular visitors and in some instances were in-laws and part of the extended family. When detailing these circumstances, participants said that the Abruzzese family members had been able to learn the other dialect. The 'other' dialect referred to mostly was Calabrian, due to the high numbers of Calabrians living in the

town; and the fact that several family members had married Calabrian women. However, regardless of which dialect, it was always a dialect, rather than standard Italian, because for most family members, as was often said by respondents during the interview, 'it was the only Italian they knew'.

As part of the discussion on language spoken while they were growing, participants gave varied reasons as to why they thought it was a dialect. The most common sentiment was that because work and social circles for their parents involved other Italians, the need or will to speak English was absent. They suggested that family members, especially mothers, learned just enough English to manage their basic needs. Exceptions to this general principle only occurred if or when they gained employment outside their family or 'paesani' run agricultural or other business enterprises. Even in those instances, however, chances were high that their parents would be working alongside other Italians, perhaps not from their own regional group, but certainly other Italians. The only other change to this pattern of behaviour occurred later on the occasion of the children marrying people from a non-Italian background.

During the 1940s and beyond, the children increasingly spoke to each other in English because they were attending school and were being taught in English. During the interviews several of the older participants commented that as more Italian migrants began to arrive, English also represented a common language given that the families

were from various regions and provinces, speaking multiple dialects, which were difficult to understand.

> P1 (M80) '…once we were out of the house we spoke English. We spoke English because everyone spoke dialects and English was really the only way to communicate with one another'.

Within their own families some participants chose to maintain the family dialect, while others chose to speak English. Those choosing to speak English did so in order to facilitate their communication within the wider Anglo Australian community, as described in the excerpt below.

> P1 (M80) '…. with my own family we spoke English a lot at home so that my wife would learn English'.

Also, as will be shown later, not all family members owned or worked on farms and therefore needed a working knowledge of English to secure and maintain employment within the wider community.

An Abruzzese dialect is still used today by the older participants to communicate with some of their peers. For example, two of the four oldest participants who have remained in Griffith speak an Abruzzese dialect as part of their day-to-day activities when communicating with similar aged family members and 'paesani'.

On the other hand, to communicate with the immediate family and in particular with younger people, English is normally the language of choice. Today only the oldest participants speak an Abruzzese dialect to the few older Abruzzese migrants who remain living in Griffith. Likewise the two male respondents who reside in separate suburbs of Sydney rarely use the dialect when speaking with old relatives or 'paesani' from Griffith, or for example on the telephone. Generally all participants in Cluster One speak to their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren in English, thus demonstrating an almost complete shift from dialect to English for this older cohort. Further, it was difficult for this group to distinguish between Italian and dialect, as dialect was the only Italian language variety to which they were exposed.

4.8.2 The middle participants

Most participants in this group stated that while growing up they spoke Italian at home. However, I specifically sought clarification each time and discovered that they normally used the term 'Italian' when they were instead referring to an Abruzzese dialect. The distinction between the two was acknowledged by P13, given that her parents were from two different regions. She recounted that:

> P13 (F46) '…at home we spoke Italian - my mother and grandmother spoke the Abruzzese dialect and my father spoke standard Italian because he came from [*] a region of northern Italy and the [*] dialect was very difficult to understand for non-northerners. I always thought we spoke standard Italian but now I realise that I spoke and the family spoke mainly Abruzzese at home'.

Several participants in the middle group spoke of their family making a decision very early in their parent's marriage to only speak English. This was made to aid the acquisition of English for their migrant parent in the hope that it would help them to gain and maintain employment in the wider Anglo community, as is explained in the example below.

> P9 (M56) '…my father insisted on English because he worked [in the community] and mum encouraged it too. Dad had his brother out here [in Griffith] and dad was a lot more fluent than his brother was [in English] and that showed because they [his brother and his family] spoke Italian at home whereas we spoke English. My dad did very well with English but he kept his language and his culture. English was what he needed to work among Anglo Australians'.

The comments above refer specifically the need for English in order to secure employment in the wider Anglo Australian community. However, according to several researchers, Lambert (2008) among them, migrants may have taken deliberate action to speak English more frequently, in response to the sociopolitical situation and the needs of the family at a given time (Lambert 2008:1).

In cases where the decision to only speak English was made, some participants spoke of regretting that their family took that decision, because as a consequence nowadays they spoke very little Italian and lacked the confidence to speak anything other than English. On the other hand, many other participants in the middle group were able to speak an Abruzzese dialect. As they reported, this was the outcome of a deliberate family decision made in the late 1950s and early 1960s to ensure that the children were able to communicate with parents and relatives in the family dialect.

P6 (F59) '...I was not speaking English with mum until after I went to school. Until I went to school I spoke only Italian to mum, to dad, to everyone. That, mum tells me, was a very conscious decision on her part because she wanted me to be able to speak to dad and she said you will learn English when you go to school'.

P10 (F54) '...we spoke English during the day but when my father was in the house we only spoke Italian and in fact my father would only respond to me if I spoke to him in Italian. When I say Italian I mean the Abruzzese dialect - the only Italian he knew'.

Some participants showed genuine regret at their inability to speak an Abruzzese dialect or standard Italian. Many had attempted to or had completed Italian language courses, while others indicated they would like to in the future. Still, Italian is not spoken by any participant in the middle group as part of everyday usage today, even though several participants in the middle group were proficient in both the spoken and written form as they had studied it at universities both in Australia and in Italy. Also, interestingly, none of the middle group has passed on Italian, or their family dialect, to their own children. No respondent provided a reason as to why this was the case, however several did say that their children were now asking them to speak to their grandchildren in Italian.

4.8.3 The youngest participants

The youngest participants all reported that they have always communicated with the family and the wider Abruzzese community in English only, although they understood what their grandparents were saying to them when they spoke to them in Italian, and that they had 'a bit' of understanding of general conversations as is detailed below.

P24 (F18) **'…**we always spoke in English to *nonna* and *nonno* - they responded in English but they would sometimes speak Italian. We spoke to mum and dad in English'.

P23 (M21) **'…**no Italian - at home we always spoke English'.

All of the youngest group said that they had been exposed to Italian as a subject at school, and one had included Italian as part of her university degree.

An interesting explanation was volunteered by one of the participants as to why her family did not speak Italian. The comments reflect an understanding that there have been circumstances in Australia's migrant history when speaking an immigrant language or a language other than English was discouraged and perceived not to be in the best interest of the individual. More importantly it also reflects the negative attitudes some individuals held towards dialect. This suggestion that speaking Italian was not in the best interest of the immigrant is consistent with Lambert's position (2008) reported above. Also the comment is consistent with Bettoni's (1991) assertion that dialect is mainly the language used by old people (Bettoni 1991:18), in this instance P20's grandparents.

Certainly, in her comment below, P20 displayed a clarity of insight for someone who

has not experienced first or even second hand life as a migrant.

> P20 (F30) '…I have never spoken Italian at home with mum and dad. My mum,
> and this is my theory, went to school right in the middle of Australia's
> assimilation stuff… mum went to school without a word of English. She had to
> learn English when she went to Kindergarten and therefore kind of suffered. She
> not only felt like an outcast then but she also felt the effects of attitudes towards
> her dialect. My mum thought that she did not speak proper Italian and so she did
> not want to speak Italian at home. I think she has changed her mind now - but
> she did not want us to learn incorrect Italian'.

The comments on the negative perception of dialects is consistent to what Fellin (2007)

found in a study from the United States when she concluded that what characterised the

loss of language for first and second generation Italian American participants' was that

Italian, more specifically dialect, was an 'impediment to social advancement' and that

bilingualism was 'problematic' (Fellin 2007:457). In the Australian context, Bettoni

and Gibbons (1988) report that it is inevitable that when English is dominant, the use of

regional dialects is extinguished through a rapid shift to English (Bettoni and Gibbons

1988:15).

Overall however, comment from the youngest participants reflect that in the home there

is little need for second and subsequent generations of descendants to learn or to express

themselves in Italian because English was the dominant language for them and in most

cases for their parents as well. Thus if they were uncertain or found it difficult to speak

in Italian or dialect children spoke English (Bettoni 1991:264).

4.8.4 Concluding comments

As shown above, the families of the participants in this study experienced a rapid shift from dialect to English. The shift began with the oldest participants, those born in the 1930s, and the sharp trajectory towards English was never modified with the generations that followed.

In the first instance all participants went to school in Griffith; some arrived at school with no English but many, having followed older siblings to school, were already speaking English (cf. Bettoni). Through schooling English represented the common language for all children of migrants of different regional backgrounds and speaking multiple dialects (for example Venetian or Calabrian), often unintelligible to each other. Then, migrants arriving during the 1950s who sought employment outside of the family farm or other Italian businesses needed to be able to speak English. Thus many families made deliberate decisions to only speak English, with the result that their children became proficient only in English and at the most developed an understanding of an Abruzzese dialect.

As earlier mentioned (cf. Chapter 2) Rubino (2014) suggests that in the general process of the shift to English amongst Italian Australian families generally, Italian is more likely to survive than the family dialect (Rubino 2014:276). However in Griffith it would appear that neither the dialect nor Italian has be maintained beyond the second generation. Today dialect has a limited role; it is used mainly by the oldest cohort when

speaking with older migrants and 'paesani' still living in Griffith. Some, second generation participants did indicate that they use a regional dialect, while others declared they hoped it would be maintained because of their attachment not only to the Abruzzo region but also to their familial dialect, indicating that for some participants, dialect maintains an important place in family and 'paesani' identity through the strength of family and 'paesani' relationship.

Italian is principally absent in the day-to-day lives of all participants, even though it has been learnt as a second language by some of them as adults; and in the case of two participants, it forms part of their professional repertoire, as language teachers.

4.9 Naming practices

The issue of anglicising names, pronunciation of surnames, and the broader topic of choice of names given to children of second and later generations of descendants warrants inclusion in this analysis, because participants spent considerable time in clarifying choices and naming decisions made by their parents and by themselves.

Choice of names, both given and family names, are carefully considered and generally accepted as markers of identity. They are used not only to establish membership of an ethnic group but also to maintain continuity to heritage (Finizio and Di Pietro 1986: 114). Additionally, the naming decisions are significant because they add another distinguishing feature between the participants groups.

Each of the five respondents in Cluster One indicated that they had deliberately anglicised their first names as young children going to school, and that those versions of their name have remained in use today whether the participant is interacting with Italians or Anglo Australians. Furthermore, all participants in Cluster One reported that still today they introduce themselves to new people using anglicised names, and that siblings and extended family members more often than not used the anglicised name when referring to each other.

According to them, the anglicised names were necessary when they were at school and/or when they began to work. Over the years they became embedded into common use, such that they rarely reverted to the Italian pronunciation or version of their name. This applied to personal and business paperwork as well, with several respondents explaining that in recent years the issue had indeed caused them some administrative difficulties when their different personal papers had a varied versions of their name, reflecting the common usage and spelling at a given time.

The situation was not as categorical for participants in the middle group, although many also described complex and intriguing naming practice trails. According to many of them, the personal experience of their parents at school or at work had motivated that generation to give their children abridged versions of their chosen Italian names or to adopt names that were easily pronounced both in Italian and in English, such as Margaret, Diana and Katia, because they had both Italian and English equivalents; or names with an Italian origin or association but easy to pronounce, for instance Frank, Ann and Domenic. In other instances Anglo Australian names were chosen, for

example Karen or Lucy. What is more, some participants spoke of having their name anglicised by others, for example teachers and friends, and accepting it then because it seemed convenient or simpler. However, later as adults they have reverted to their Italian name and introduce themselves in 'the Italian way'.

Finizio and Di Pietro (1986) say that individuals who return to heritage pronunciation of their given or family name, usually are third generation descendants of Italian migrants and have no difficulty interacting into the dominate Anglo society. That is, they have become 'legitimate' members of wider Anglo community and are free to look back at their family histories and to 'rediscover and reappraise' those components of their Italian cultural heritage that were subdued in previous generations (Finizio and Di Pietro 1986:126). The author's assertion does reflect the actions of the participants in this study.

Interestingly, participants recounted that it was when they were needing to access their birth certificates, for example when applying for a drivers licence or a passport, that they discovered the 'strange' spelling of their names, or that the name that had been registered on the birth certificate was a completely different name to the one that was in regular usage. Many recounted this experience, and other more general anecdotes on this topic. Some have been included in the examples below.

> P6 (F59) '…my dad wanted to call me [female derivative of grandfather's name]. My mum said no because that name will make it difficult for her when she goes to school.... people will not be able to say that name - which was interesting because she obviously had a carryover from her own experiences. The church documents show me as [Italian version] and government documents show me as [anglicised version]'.

P13 (F46) '.... nobody made an effort to call me my correct name. My name was anglicised... I called myself the anglicised name as well but now I call myself the Italian way but not then'.

P19 (F39) **'...**I go by my Italian name not my anglicised name. On the birth certificate I have my anglicised name.... all through high school my friends have called me by my anglicised name but when I started filling out my paperwork it was with the Italian version of name'.

Several participants, also spoke of the anglicised pronunciation of their surnames. Similar to the women who reverted to their Italian names, three males from the middle cluster commented that in more recent years they were making an effort to have their surname pronounced correctly, adding that this was a change from their behaviour as younger men, when they either did not care about the pronunciation of their name or they had anglicised the pronunciation themselves.

In the youngest group, participants did not discuss anglicised names or surnames, except in the case of P20. She spent considerable time describing her determination to have her Italian surname pronounced correctly.

P20 (F30) '...I am the only member of my family to pronounce my name the Italian way....when I left home, whenever I introduced myself I did it in the Italian way'.

This insistence on correct pronunciation of either given or family names is central in demonstrating individual determination to retain ethnic identity and thus fulfilling an internal need to remain connected with the home country, a significant family member or both (Finizio and Di Pietro 1986:121).

As an interesting aside, during his interview, one member of the third cluster disclosed that 'I was named after *zio*[6] [in Italy] and I need to go and visit him before he passes [away]'. The respondent has never met his relative but was very excited at the prospect of visiting Italy and meeting his namesake. This comment, and several other similar recounts, confirm that the name given to a child is a matter of much deliberation; of considerable importance, and what the practice indicates is the parent's hope that in bestowing the name of an admired or elder family member, that individual is remembered and respected consistent with the findings of Finizio and Di Pietro (1986) mentioned above. It is also another indicator of an action that continues to be used to strengthen the bonds of family and furthers a connection to Italian cultural heritage.

On the whole, while participants in the first cluster did not raise consideration of names given to children, the parents in both the second and third clusters discussed this issue at length. All participants who said they had given their children Italian names were asked to clarify their choice. The participant below provided a lengthy explanation during the interview, some of which is highlighted below. For her, it was very important to give her children Italian names that acknowledged their heritage. As an interesting aside, she draws attention to the fact that while the names she chose for her two daughters may not have been too difficult for those outside the family to pronounce, her son's name remains challenging for most because it is an Italian name that is not commonly used in Australia, even today.

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[6] Italian term for uncle

P10 (F54) '…my three children have distinctly Italian names. We gave the children their father's [surname] name which is very Italian. I wanted them to understand their heritage...I think it is very important because knowing where you come from gives you a good sense of your future. Interestingly Australia could deal with our daughter's names although they mispronounced the second daughter's name. People are still quite challenged by our son's name... I thought Australians were ready for his name but they were not'[7].

I was particularly interested when the choice to give an Italian name occurred within families with both Italian and Anglo Australian parents, as in the example below, where the participant had married and Anglo Australian.

P15 (M43) '…we gave our children anglicised names that have a link with Italy and it was not so much my choice as it was my wife's. …there was the intent…there is linkage to their Italian cultural heritage and that was deliberate'.

Differently, P21 and her husband, both grandchildren of Italian migrants, chose a name that they thought was more 'suited' to their family, saying:

P21 (F27) 'I gave my daughter an Italian name. I loved the name and I definitely think European names are more suited to us rather than Australian names'.

Overall, it appears that participants in the second and third cluster had a clear understanding of the context for choice of their given names. Indirectly this applied to those in Cluster One as well because they were able to clarify the modifications they had made to their given names. Participants in Clusters Two and Three gave clear accounts as to the choices they made for their own children.

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[7] As an aside P10 told the researcher that her daughter who had married an Anglo Australian man had given their two children Italian names.

In conclusion, while the oldest participants all anglicised their names, some participants in the middle group have reverted to Italian names in instances where their name had been anglicised; others in the second and third clusters are insisting on Italian pronunciation of surnames; and many have selected Italian names for their children. Several participants from Cluster Two also reported that their grandchildren have been given Italian names. Collectively, these behaviours indicate that naming has been and remains important for participants across the three clusters. For those in the oldest group, their names drew attention to their Italian heritage at a time when assimilation into the Anglo community was of upmost importance to them. In response they anglicised their names, thereby to an extent rejecting their Italian origin. Participants in the middle cluster who in their younger years behaved similarly at first, then claimed back their Italian identity by either reverting to Italian name usage or insisting that their surname be pronounced properly, or both. Still, others in the middle and youngest group made deliberate decisions to give their own children Italian names, because they thought that 'knowing where you had come from' was important and 'gave you a good sense of your future'.

4.10 Intermarriage

The final factor that informed the concept of connectedness and guided the interview discourse with participants was the ethnic background of partners. Participants were asked to consider whether their choice of spouse or partner had impacted in any way on their connectedness to their Italian cultural heritage.

Marriage rates were quite high amongst participants with over seventy percent having married at least once. Of those, almost forty two percent had married a person of Italian descent (see Table 12).

Table 11: Marriage profile of participants

ITALIAN OR ITALIAN BACKGROUND PARTNER	ANGLO AUSTRALIAN PARTNER	NEVER MARRIED
10 (41.6%)	7 (29.1 %)	7 (29.1 %)

This feature of my participants is consistent with the high rates of endogamy that have characterised Italian migration to Australia up to the 1970s (cf. Chapter 2). Specifically for this study, as will be shown, the majority of participants indicated that their choice of marriage partner had impacted on connectedness but in very different ways.

4.10.1 The oldest participants

The older participants, married in the early-1950s. Each married either an Italian migrant or the child of an Italian immigrant. Table 12 presents the regional origin of the partners of the oldest five respondents.

Table 12: Marriage profile of the oldest participants

PARTICIPANT	REGION OF ORIGIN OF PARTNER
P1 (M80)	Abruzzo
P2 (F78)	Abruzzo
P3 (F78)	Abruzzo
P4 (M76)	Calabrian (second generation)
P5 (F66)	Veneto

This in line with marriage patterns reported in literature and in census data on post-World War II migrant marriages (see Price 1982, 1993, Pascoe 1987 and Cresciani 2003 in Chapter 2). Specifically, the first three participants married post-World War 11 migrants from the Abruzzo region; two are from the same village, while the third married a man from a nearby larger town. The fourth respondent married the daughter of migrants from Calabria, with the remaining respondent marrying a migrant from the Veneto region in the north of Italy. In each instance the term 'Italian' was used by participants when referring to their spouse. Those who remained living in Griffith described their lives as being embedded within the Abruzzese and wider Italian community of the town.

Therefore, the fact that they were married to Italian migrants impacted greatly, ensuring that they maintained a connectedness not only to their Italian heritage but also more specifically the Abruzzese community.

4.10.2 The middle participants

As already discussed above, the middle group were interacting on a much broader scale with the Anglo Australian community through staying on in education and through employment. This increased interaction led to an increase in marriages with Anglo Australian partners. Table 13 presents the origin of partners for the respondents in the middle group. This pattern is in line with the findings of Baldassar (1999) about the origin of partners among second and subsequent generations of Italians (cf. Chapter 2). As she reports, descendants would marry individuals from a wider sphere including people they met through secondary and tertiary education and the workforce. Thus exogamy among the Italians increased as a result of social opportunities that their parents and grandparents did not have (Baldassar 1999: 2).

Table 13: Marriage profile of middle participants

PARTICIPANT	ITALIAN BACKGROUND PARTNER	ANGLO AUSTRALIAN PARTNER
P6 (F59)		Anglo Australian
P7 (M57)		Anglo Australian
P8 (M57)		Anglo Australian
P9 (M56)	Sicilian	
P10 (F54)	Calabrian father	Anglo Australian mother
P11(F53)		Anglo Australian
P12 (F50)		Anglo Australian
P13 (F46)		Anglo Australian
P14 (F44)	Veneto	
P15 (M43)		Anglo Australian
P16 (F42)	Never married	
P17 (M41)	Abruzzese	
P18 (F39)	Never married	
P19 (F35)	Never married	

Of the four participants who had married children of migrants, one was Abruzzese. In her interview this participant used the term Abruzzese rather than Italian in the first instance to describe her husband, thus distinguishing him from others in her friendship network who were all Italian as well but mainly from other regions. She believed her choice of husband had contributed to maintaining her connectedness to Italians more broadly.

> P16 (F42) '...I married an Abruzzese[8]- it was just the way that happened. I did not deliberately set out for it to be that way. However because he is Italian we do have a lot to do with Italians - our family and social network is Italian - I suppose if I had married an Australian it would not have been like that. So yes, it has impacted on my being Italian…our friends are mainly Italian. My husband does have one or two friends who are not Italian but they have Italian wives'.

Another member of the second cluster married the daughter of Sicilian migrants. He explained that he was very confident that his choice of partner had enhanced his connection to being Italian through increased opportunities to speak Italian and to interact with more Italians through his acquired extended family. As an interesting aside, he told me that he was not confident speaking Italian when he was growing up because his parents chose to speak English only in their home, but now he was speaking much more 'Italian'. By this he meant more Abruzzese although he had learnt and was speaking a Sicilian dialect as well.

> P9 (M56) '…my marrying an Italian, my wife is the daughter of Sicilian migrants, definitely enhanced my connection to being Italian because they spoke a lot of Sicilian in her family even though her dad could speak good English. They mainly spoke Sicilian at home. It was another learning curve for me. I had to learn another dialect. Being married definitely enhanced my Italianness if I can say that. It made it better in fact. I reconnected again with people in Griffith. It made it better for me I think. It was good. I am actually trilingual'.

Conversely, according to another participant who had also married the son of Italian migrants, this time from a region in the north of Italy, her choice of husband had not strengthened her connection to Italian cultural heritage. In this case, the fact that her husband's parents did not have any extended family in Griffith, may be the reason why 'he did not have a strong sense of connectedness to family or heritage'. On the other hand, she claimed a strong connection not only to family but also to her Italian cultural

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[8] Abruzzese in this instance refers to the Australian born son of migrants from Abruzzo.

heritage, which she puts down directly to the strong bonds with her own immediate and

extended family in Griffith, rather than not to her marriage.

> P14 (F44) '…my husband is Australian born of northern Italian migrant parents. He also grew up in Griffith but did not grow up with family around him. His parents have no relatives in Australia. So does not actively seek connection with relatives. I am bit slack too I do not do it either but he would be less likely to do that-so I would not say marrying my husband has strengthened my connection to my Italian cultural heritage … I definitely have a connection to my Italian cultural heritage'.

Several other women in the middle group suggested that their choice of husband did

strengthen their ties to their cultural heritage because through their marriage, the

differences between cultures became more salient. Therefore this prompted them to

uphold those characteristics of Italian culture they valued most, as explained by P10 in

the example below.

> P10 (F54) '…I married a man who had an Italian father and an Australian mother and for all intents and purposes grew up more Anglo than Italian. In some ways my marriage has strengthened my Italianness because it made me think about it more because you only really think about your culture when you are challenged or when you see something different. So I think it strengthens it in a way because I think of the value of family, the respect of family, the respect of certain traditions. The traditions are those eating traditions, cooking traditions, how to behave at certain occasions. All of those kind of things I really value and I think my children still value'.

> P6 (F59) '…I was very fortunate I guess because my husband has always been very open to the Italian culture… he was very open to learning new things and he was very respectful from when we first started going out which was when we were 17. In a lot of ways he reinforced that difference…it pulled out differences and highlighted the differences that were part of my life…I do not think it diminished my Italianness - I don't think I made any deliberate or obvious modifications'.

Similarly, as mention earlier (see chapter 2 for more details) Penny and Khoo (1996) in their study of marriages between one partner of Italian heritage and one of Anglo Australian heritage found that such unions had enriched their respective families and enhanced their individual identity.

However, some participants in Cluster Two who married Anglo Australians also commented with some sense of regret, that whilst they did not believe their choice of marriage partner affected their own level of connectedness to cultural heritage, they felt it had impacted on their children. Specifically, they were concerned that the diminished opportunities for their children to interact with Italians affected their ability to learn to speak the Italian language or a dialect and their appreciation of some aspects of the Italian culture, for example the 'paesani' network. Some of these sentiments are contained in the excerpts below.

> P8 (M57) **'…**I married an Australian - that impacted on my children. If I had married an Italian there might have been another Italian family and more Italian speaking'.

> P6 (F59) '...sometimes I think it is a shame that our children do not have that same family and *paesani* network because we do not have that extended family'.

> P15 (M43) '…I do not think my marriage to an Australian has diminished my Italianness but it does affect my children....I do not speak to my children in the Abruzzo dialect the way my parents did with me...I have made sure they are going to a Catholic primary school and they are learning Italian at school... they have *nonna* once in a while – there will be a dilution of it absolutely...I am sorry that my kids will not get to experience the impromptu visits and the smaller community that was Griffith. That is another example of diluting too'.

Overall, participants in the middle group varied in their perception of the impact that choice of marriage partner had on connectedness to cultural heritage for them. Responses covered the broadest gamut of possibilities including from no impact at all, to an increase in connectedness through the influence of an acquired Italian family, or

because their partner highlighted the differences between cultures, thus elevating what they valued most about being Italian. No respondents said that their marriage had diminished connectedness to their Italian heritage but several said it did affect their children due to limited exposure to Italian culture.

4.10.3 The youngest participants

The only married participant in the youngest group recounted that while she did not set out deliberately to marry an 'Italian', it was not a surprise that she did because 'I wanted to marry someone who had the same moral values and had a similar upbringing to me so that we could pass those values onto our children'. Specifically, in response to the question on choice of marriage partner she recounted the following:

> P21 (F27) '…I guess that would be Italian - most Italians were brought up in that particular way but I did not necessarily set out to do that - to say I have to marry an Italian. My in-laws are Calabrese. Marrying an Italian Australian has in one sense made us closer to our Italian heritage because (my husband's) *nonno* does keep in regular contact with lots of family in Italy...In that sense we are closer to our heritage because there is a connection on his side'.

4.10.4 Concluding comments

Second and third generation married participants in this study reflected high rates of endogamy. Specifically seventeen from twenty four participants married partners with Italian heritage and of those five had an Abruzzese background. The majority of participants indicated that their choice of partner had impacted on connectedness but in very different ways. Married participants did not believe that their choice of marriage partner had diminished their connectedness to Italian heritage. Contrarily, it seems that it enhanced connection by highlighting what they valued most from the Italian culture.

CHAPTER 5   **DISCUSSION, FINAL CONSIDERATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

5.1 Introduction

This study has explored the construction of ethnic identity in second and subsequent generations of descendants of immigrants. It has looked at the question of connectedness to cultural heritage, delving into issues that drive connectedness and into cultural manifestations of heritage and identity. More specifically, the aim of the study was to investigate whether second and subsequent generations of children who grew up in Italian families appear to have maintained some degree of connectedness to their cultural heritage and, if so, how that connection is demonstrated. Participants in this study are drawn from different generations of descendants of Abruzzese migrants who were born and grew up in the town of Griffith.

In this chapter I summarise and discuss the main findings of the study in relation to the research questions nominated above, using the parameters identified from the literature and applied to my study. Final considerations are provided in terms of the strength or otherwise of connectedness to cultural heritage and the indicators of Italian cultural identity acknowledged by respondents. Within the context of the limitations presented in this study, some valuable insights can be gained. At the end of the chapter some implications for further research are also presented.

The research questions nominated above have been investigated a) within the particular background of a rural community with a strong Italian presence (that is, Griffith), (b) within a particular regional group (that is, descendants of Abruzzese migrants), and (c)

among different generations (that is, participants who had a parent, grandparent or a great grandparent who were of Italian origin). Overall twenty four participants of different ages, gender, and generations were interviewed in Griffith, Sydney and other regional towns and cities where they lived. Participants were grouped into three clusters according to age and generation. Those in Cluster One were all, with one exception, children of migrants who arrived in Australia in the mid-1920s. The middle participant group, Cluster Two, were all children of post-World War II migrants and/or grandchildren of those who arrived earlier. Cluster Three participants were all grandchildren and great grandchildren of migrants from Abruzzo to Griffith. All respondents of the third Cluster were born and grew up in Griffith.

My initial interest and motivation in the study was encouraged by several factors. Among them, the large number of Italian migrants who settled in Australia; the length of time they have been living in this country, with the earliest arguably arriving as part of the First Fleet; and the impact that Italians and their descendants continue to have on the wider Anglo Australian community. My momentum also came from several other features, including my shared history with participants as an Australian with Abruzzese heritage that spans over eighty years, and my attachment to both the town of Griffith as the place of my birth and with the Abruzzo region as the place of birth of my father and my maternal grandfather.

Overall the analysis of the interview data revealed that all participants have maintained a degree of connectedness to their Italian cultural heritage. This is expressed primarily through the family, the wider 'paesani' network, and a value of, and appreciation for,

manifestations of culturally specific activities and family celebrations. While there are some details that distinguish the three clusters, there are more common elements and similarities across the participant cohort as a whole. Even so, whatever variances there are among the generations of descendants, the data show that these differences need to be considered within the background of the historical, sociopolitical and emotional perspectives embedded in specific time frames that have impacted on connectedness to Italian cultural heritage for each participant. By this I mean that differences across the generations could be explained when the responses were deconstructed and considered within (i) the context of the decade (i.e. 1960s, 1970s etc.) involved, (ii) the specific changes within families especially in terms of education, financial and other resources, and (iii) the general standing of Italians within the wider Anglo Australian community in Griffith. The data also shows that whenever participants had interacted with family in Italy, even minimally, that contact complemented and enhanced their level of connectedness to heritage through the opportunity to initiate and develop relationships predominantly driven by family.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the theoretical context for the study was derived from the literature on connectedness to cultural heritage. Within that framework, six factors informed and drove the study, namely, the family, cultural manifestations of Italian identity, visits to Italy, interactions with family in Italy, Italian language and dialect, and intermarriage. The broader findings related to each of these factors are considered below.

5.2 Connectedness to Italian cultural heritage

For all participants across the three clusters, the strongest contributor to connectedness to Italian heritage was the family, more specifically the close relationship that they have developed and still maintain with a wide range of family members. Unequivocally, for all participants, as pertinently expressed by di Leonardo (1984:96) 'the family is *sopratutto'*. This is also consistent with what is most prominent in the literature, that is, that the life experiences and practices of descendants of Italian migrants suggest that the strongest bonds are those of family and established relationships with significant members of the extended family (e.g. Smolicz et al. 2001:162-168).

To be sure, all participants spoke also of the importance of the broader Italian community in their lives, both as they were growing up and now. They all highlighted it as a fundamental component of their growing up in Griffith, making ongoing reference to the fact that for them the notion of extended family included individuals who were not related by blood but who were trusted and treated as family (cf. Harney 1998:129). Participants also stressed that the importance of the extended family and the wider 'paesani' network was a feature that separated them from their Anglo Australian counterparts. For example, many anecdotes were shared of close friendships with cousins that were never quite understood by Anglo Australians especially when, as teenagers, groups of cousin and other 'paesani' socialised together outside the home environment. As well as emphasising the important of role of the family generally, members of the youngest group also credited relationships with grandparents as a major contributor to the strength of their connection to being Italian. Time spent with their *'nonni'*, they said, was central to forming connectedness to cultural heritage and

identity. Additionally, the youngest participants were very enthusiastic when discussing how proud they were to identify as Italian.

The overall responses from participants on the role of the family and the importance of the wider 'paesani' network reflect the general position of researchers in the field of cultural identity, for example Anderson (1983), Fishman (1991), Burnley (2001), Smolicz et al. (2001) and Borland (2008), who all wrote of the centrality of family and extended family networks for migrants in general. Equally, researchers agree that Italian immigrants brought with them from their homeland a strongly family centred culture where family and family welfare took precedence over the individual, and loyalty to family superseded all other allegiances.

As with the role of the family, cultural manifestations of Italian identity were nominated as important by all participants, as was the appreciation that it was these behaviours and activities that facilitated their connectedness to their Italian heritage. Participants regularly made reference to family gatherings (e.g. weddings, christenings, holy communions, confirmations and birthday parties) and other activities (e.g. making salami, pasta and pasta sauce, biscuits and wine) that collectively I termed culturally specific behaviours and activities. Such activities and behaviours were an important part of their life as children. They were also important markers of their Italian identity and another important way of distinguishing themselves from Anglo Australians. Participants presented these events and pastimes as 'the things we did', noting that not only was there an 'Italian way to do things' but also an 'Italian way of thinking'. Whatever the activity or tradition, what emerged was the strength of their impact on

respondents across the three clusters, with all participants conveying a desire to continue these traditions. The region of Abruzzo also remained a point of reference for many participants, especially the oldest ones, with many expressing their desire to preserve and maintain many of what they saw as specific Abruzzese traditions and customs and fearing that they could disappear. Significantly, to those participants who had experienced some degree of dislocation, either on a personal level or in terms of their opportunities to participate in culturally specific traditions, or indeed, to those who were anticipating changes in the future, the activities appeared even more meaningful. Therefore such participants displayed an even more acute awareness of the need to preserve and pass on to their children features of their childhood that they valued (Glenn & Costanzo 2006:253; Murace 2006:268). These findings are supported by multiple researchers, among them Bosi (1972), Bertelli (1985), Jupp (2000) and Chiro (2008), who endorse the view that a connection to cultural heritage among Italian Australians is closely linked to maintaining culturally specific behaviour and activities.

Notably, to a degree these findings are not in line with the claims of several other researchers, Cresciani (1985 and 1986) and Bertelli (1986 and 1987) among them, who suggested that the descendants of early Italian migrants were for the most part assimilated into Australia society to such an extent that only a few were active participants in the Italian community and showed little if any interest in their Italian cultural heritage (Bertelli 1986, 1987:32, Cresciani 1985: 27-91 1986:2).

According to Jupp (2000), the main reason for wanting to preserve ancestral cultures is often simple nostalgia and while this is seen as relatively harmless and very human, it cannot last and will not survive beyond that immigrant generation (Jupp 2000:265). On the contrary, it appears that my findings are more closely aligned with researchers who have embraced the notion of ethnicity not as an either/or process, but as a fluid and evolving concept. Rather than feeling confused or torn between two cultures participants in this study adapted values and behaviours from their heritage that were important to them and suited their way of life (Ortiz 1996:108). When one factor may have been lost, for example language, other manifestations of Italian cultural identity combined or were elevated to maintain connectedness (cf. Lee 1990:120).

The impact of the town of Griffith remains an important dynamic. Several researchers (for example Pich 1975, McClelland 1985, Kelly 1988, Hardy 1995, Piazza 2004, Kabaila 2005, Hagan 2007, Gray 2009 & Grigg 2010, see Chapter 1 for details) have maintained that Griffith has a unique place in Italian migration history to Australia and that the standing of the town has not been replicated anywhere across the State of NSW or nationally (cf. Chapter 1). In terms of this study, several other features specific to Griffith need to be considered.

Unquestionably, Griffith is a rural town within a regional area that has been highly influenced by Italians. Chain and family reunion migration patterns, dating from the early twentieth century, have ensured the existence of a viable Italian community resulting in over 60%, some suggesting 80%, of the current population of Griffith able to claim Italian ancestry (Kelly 1988:75, Burnley 2001:86). Abruzzese migrants were

the third biggest regional group to arrive in Griffith after those from the Veneto and Calabria regions (Cecilia 1993:63). The large membership of these regional groups has meant people have been able to maintain their regional and 'paesani' networks relatively easily. This is evidenced by Cornwall (2007:74), who reported that while the participants in her research on the history of the Italian community in Griffith 'fiercely' asserted their allegiance to the town, they also continued to define their identity by reference to their town, province or region of origin in Italy. This regional identification was also apparent in my study especially with participants from the first two clusters. Even though the youngest participants spoke more of an overarching connection to Italy as a whole, still they all expressed a desire to live and work in Italy for an extended period of time with their preferred place being the Abruzzo region, where they could be close to family.

The town of Griffith has sustained a consistent population of around 25,000 people, making it big enough to maintain some distance but small enough to allow people to interact within their own family and 'paesani' and at the same time be familiar with other family or regional networks in the town, even if they were not part of inner friendship circles of these broad communities. In terms of their own family a regional town of the size of Griffith enabled Abruzzese and Italian people to visit and share experiences in each other's homes with relative ease. For example, when discussing the impromptu visits during their interviews, many participants specifically mentioned that such visits would not have been possible in a larger urban environment. Similarly, descendants who remained in Griffith maintained their links to farming, hence ensuring that as group, Italians were in regular contact across various locations in farm related or

business activities. Also the success of farming enterprises and other agribusinesses in which the Italians are involved ensure that the community has the resources, time and impetus to pursue celebrations of their Italian identity. Generally, regional towns, even those the size of Griffith, have reduced competitive interest in terms of organised activities or events. Thus when a *festa* or family celebration is organised, most of the 'paesani' network are likely to participate. Collectively all these factors facilitated the creation of the close-knit Italian and Abruzzese community that is Griffith.

Besides the family, the 'paesani' community and the various manifestations of Italian identity, the visit to Italy was highlighted by my participants as a significant contributor to connectedness to Italian heritage. In fact, of all factors discussed with participants, it was the visit to Italy or the anticipation of a visit there that generated the strongest emotive reaction during the interview. All participants who had been in Abruzzo and/or Italy spoke similarly of feeling comfortable during their stay; of experiencing a sense of belonging; of feeling like 'being at home'; or of feeling like they were 'coming home'. This applied even to those individuals who had not yet travelled to Italy, projecting how they might feel if they went to Italy. Likewise, the visit to Italy was fundamentally important in enabling participants to acknowledge their Italian heritage and it was an affirmation that it was acceptable to be Italian and in that sense different in the wider Anglo Australian context. The visit to Italy was also the pivotal factor in initiating, reinvigorating or maintaining interaction with family there (Rado 1976, Baldassar 2001).

Another factor discussed with participants was the role played by the Italian language and dialect. For the participants in this study the Italian language was principally absent in their day-to-day lives, even though it had been learnt as a second language by some of them as adults. All participants in this study experienced a rapid shift from Abruzzese dialect to English. The shift began with the oldest participants, those born in the 1930s, and the sharp trajectory towards English was never modified with the generations that followed.

Many participants indicated that in the home there was little need for them to learn or express themselves in Italian, because English was the dominant language for them and in many cases for their parents as well. Thus, given that many, especially second but almost all the third and subsequent generations, were uncertain or found it difficult to speak Italian or a dialect, English was the simplest option for them (Bettoni 1991:264). Similarly, Bettoni and Gibbons (1988) also spoke of the inevitable loss of Italian and likewise of the demise of regional dialects when English is dominant (Bettoni and Gibbons 1988:15). This outcome was in some sense predictable given the negative perception of dialects by dialect speakers themselves (Bettoni and Gibbons 1988, Fellin 2007:457), as reported by some of the youngest participants.

On a more personal level, the loss of language across the participants was perhaps the most significant for me. I grew up in a family where an Abruzzese dialect was always spoken at home. In my grandparents' home in Griffith it was a slightly different dialect because my father and grandfather originated from different towns in Abruzzo, but it was a dialect none the less. I feel a sense of loss that third and subsequent generations

are not speaking Italian or a dialect. Clearly, there are several factors that can account

for the rapid shift to English for the participant cohort including i) the lack of need or

incentive to learn or speak Italian or the family dialect; ii) the fact that several families

chose to speak only English within their households in order to assist their post-World

War II family members acquire English; iii) the negative connotation attached to dialect

within some families; and iv) the fact that within the rural environment of Griffith, in

the public domains (for example at the shops or when conducting business transactions),

the language was English, as reported by participants. The only exception to this was if

the business or service was owned by Italians. In that situation older Italians may have

chosen to speak their dialect but only if the proprietor was from the same region or

town. Thus there was no need to speak Italian or a dialect and even fewer opportunities

to learn the standard language.

In some way I consider the loss of the familial dialect amongst younger descendants

particularly disappointing because it marks the end of a level of camaraderie and

closeness amongst descendants that will not be reinstated even with the acquisition of

standard Italian. For example, participants from the middle group regularly referred to

the use of dialect as a way of highlighting a closer relationship or membership of a

specific group or when wanting to purposefully separate themselves when interacting

within a wider Italian or Anglo Australian group.

However, my personal feelings aside, it was the case that even for this middle group the

reality was that very few used Italian or a dialect as part of their day-to-day activities.

English was the only language for participants in the third group, meaning a loss often

of both dialect and Italian in the space of three generations, as anticipated by some scholars (e.g. Fishman 1991). Therefore my study confirms that for Italian Australians language as such is not necessarily a defining element of cultural identity, nor is it considered an essential component of maintaining a connectedness to heritage (cf. Smolicz et al. 2001).

The final factor used to explore the level of connectedness to cultural heritage for this study was intermarriage. Second and third generation married participants reflected high rates of endogamy within the Italian Australian community. The majority of these participants indicated that their choice of partner had impacted on connectedness but in very different ways. Participants married with non-Italian partners did not believe that their choice of marriage partner had diminished their connectedness to Italian heritage. Contrarily, it seems that it enhanced connection by highlighting what they valued most of the Italian culture and wanted to treasure. Notably, some respondents who had married outside the Italian community felt this affected their children because of reduced interaction with Italian people and limited opportunities for exposure to cultural manifestations of their Italian heritage.

Overall, it can be concluded that the participating cohort, as a group, have a core of shared values, beliefs, and practices that have been transmitted from great grandparents, grandparents and parents. For them, connectedness to Italian cultural heritage manifests itself through their willingness and enthusiasm for remaining actively connected physically, intellectually, emotionally and culturally with Abruzzese and other Italian

family members, friends and colleagues in Griffith, and to a lesser extent but important none the less, with family in Italy.

As discussed elsewhere (cf. Chapter 2), early research on migration looked at individual choices and the degree of ethnic identification from either of two perspectives: assimilation or acculturation. The assimilationist perspective argue that over time individuals or ethnic groups would be absorbed into the dominant society (for example Constantinou and Harvey 1985: 236). In the broadest sense, the findings of my study are more closely aligned with Wilson (2008) in that they suggest there has been a transition from an 'inherited' identity to an 'acquired' one, which works to mitigate against loss of whatever components of culture. For example, even when language was lost, through a process of adjustment and recreation participants actively sought a new configuration which evolved from the valued aspects of both their Italian heritage and the wider Anglo Australian culture (Wilson 2008:108 &109). In my study participants presented multiple examples of taking from their 'inherited' identity those elements that were most remembered and valued by them, to construct their own identity which was purposeful for them but which openly acknowledges and appreciates the impact of their Italian forbears. Also participants were able to provide examples where their identity not so much changed but took on a different focus, thus confirming that an individual's identity is not static but fluid and evolving.

Thus, ethnic identity is not just about blood, place of birth, heritage, association or self-identification. It is all these elements, plus a willingness to not only accept cultural values but to actively embrace them as well. Identity is personal and thus each

individual will identify differently, rendering it important to consider plural rather than singular identities as more appropriate in the Italian Australian context. For example, in my study the descriptor chosen by participants when referring to themselves changed and included Italian, Australian, or at times Italian Australian. In other instances the inclination was to use the regional identifier Abruzzese Australian (cf. Musico 2000:179). Patently, descendants of migrants will construct their cultural identity through 'intra' and 'interethnic' contact. These constructs will include all aspects of a person's social and cultural life, encased to form what Smolicz et al. (2001:155) referred to as the personal cultural systems which individuals build for themselves, by integrating their own particular experiences and characteristics with the group values with which they come into contact throughout their life. Hence, intergenerational cultural transmission and continuity reflects all these combined experiences, characteristics, individual and group values that impact on the various aspects of our lives. Those of us claiming Italian heritage or indeed identifying as being Italian can do so freely regardless of where we were born or where we reside at any point throughout our life. Of much more importance is the acknowledgment and acceptance that our life is embedded historically, ethnically, culturally and emotionally with being Italian.

In summary, for the participants in my study, descriptors of Italian cultural influences, other than Italian language and dialect, which connected them to their Italian cultural heritage were intrinsic to their lives. Components which were consistently referenced by participants encompassed the strength of family relationships and of the 'paesani' network, and the impact of child rearing expectations and behaviours; culturally specific activities and behaviours, which always involved family; and visits to Italy, which were

also driven by family. Participants spoke in unison of the significance of these factors, important enough that they were referenced regularly, with all participants indicating that they served to unify their immediate and extended families and to maintain a connectedness to their cultural identity, including membership to the wider Abruzzese community in the town of Griffith and beyond. Thus they emphasised that being part of the community, maintaining networks and connection to cultural heritage even when language is lost, is part of being an Australian with Italian heritage.

In conclusion, connectedness as a concept has been very appealing to investigate. Deconstructing and explaining what connectedness means for individuals and their relationship to connectedness remains inherently complex. Further and more robust research would assist clarity.

The Griffith element has been amply discussed in this study, however, descendants of Abruzzese Italians can be found across Australia in capital cities and other regional towns. Therefore, it would be of value to develop the initial insights yielded by this study in order to extend our understanding of how descendants engage and take an active role remaining connected to their cultural heritage in other areas where Abruzzese migrants settled in large number, for example in Fremantle (Western Australia) or in Melbourne, and compare those environments to the rural setting with a large Italian population and influence that has been investigated here.

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MAPS:

Map 1. Italy with Abruzzo region shaded. Retrieved from:
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Map 2. Australia with location of Griffith shaded. Retrieved from:
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Map 3. Four provinces that form the Abruzzo Region with insert locating the region within the peninsula. Retrieved from:
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Map 5. From Italy to Australia. Retrieved from:
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Map 6. Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area including Griffith with insert displaying national perspective. Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission archives (1916-1949), Griffith City Library.

Map 7. Griffith and surrounding villages. (2013) Retrieved from:
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IMAGES:

Image 1. The Coro Club. Retrieved from: http://www.coroclub.com.au/images/banner.jpg Accessed 21st March 2012

Image 2. Yoogali Club Retrieved from: http://www.theyoogaliclub.com.au/ Accessed 21st March 2012

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Image 5. Griffith Heritage Trail brochure. Retrieved from:
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Image 8. Press photography of bocce at the Catholic Club, Yoogali (1960-63). Courtesy:
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Image 10. A village in Abruzzo. Retrieved from: http://cdn.c.photoshelter.com/img-
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Image 11. Wine grape harvesting in Griffith. Retrieved from:
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APPENDIX 1   Circular letter/email

Project Title: Connectedness to cultural heritage among generations of Abruzzese Italians in Griffith New South Wales.

Dear

I am conducting a study on connectedness to cultural heritage among different generations.

The project centres on descendants Italians who emigrated from the Abruzzo region in Italy

and settled in Griffith.

The study will gather family stories to provide an understanding into how people

participating think and feel about their cultural identity and heritage. By connectedness, I

mean the sense of connection you may have physically, emotionally or intellectually with

Italy, Abruzzo, or the town of origin of your parents or grandparents.

Participation in this project is completely voluntary. It will involve an interview with me of

approximately one and a half hours, which will be audio recorded. You may stop the

interview at any time if you do not wish (for whatever reason) to continue, the audio

recording will be erased and the information provided will not be included in the story.

If you are interested in participating or finding out more about the project, please contact

me either by telephone (02 99381567 or 0412006176), by email

raffaella.rapone@uni.sydney.edu.au or by post at PO Box 395 Manly NSW 1655

Thank you

Raffaella Lina Rapone

APPENDIX 2   Pilot interview guide

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed.

I am talking with you because you have a family member who migrated from the Abruzzo region in Italy. For you it was....

Demographic data:

To begin the interview can I ask you about

D.O.B., where you live, your schooling/education, your occupation, and your current association with Griffith

Knowledge, understandings and perceptions of family immigration history

Can you tell me what you know, you understand or your perceptions of your family immigration history?

- what grandparents/parents told you about why they left Italy and their early years in Griffith

- their talk at home

- growing up Italian in Griffith

- what stories you remember your parents/grandparents telling you

- your friends and who the family mixed with

Connectedness to Italian cultural heritage

Can you tell me about growing up in Griffith?

- language/s you spoke where and when

- your friends (e.g. who they were, nationality)

- groups you belonged to

- hobbies you may have participated in

Have you been to Italy?

If so, tell me what you remember of your first visit.

Describe your family here and in Italy including who you are closest to and how often you

see them.

Do you feel your spouse/partner has had an impact on your connectedness to your cultural heritage

If so, how?

Can you remember an occasion from your childhood when you felt proud to be Italian?

APPENDIX 3   **Revised interview guide**

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed. I am talking with you because you have a family

member who migrated from the Abruzzo region in Italy. For you it means I am referring

to...

To begin the interview I just want you to talk a little about yourself

Tell me a bit about your earliest memories – for example where and when you were born,

your first home....

Knowledge, understandings and perceptions of family immigration history

I now want to explore with you what know, or what you remember or what you might have

imagined, about your (parent/grand parent or great grandparent's) migration story.

Can you talk to me about?

- what [family member] told you about why they left Italy

- what stories you remember your [family member] telling you about Italy or Australia

- their first years in Griffith

- their talk at home i.e. what did they speak at home

- what living in Italian family in Griffith was like for them

- did [your family member] ever go back to visit Italy? What did they say about that and
  any subsequent visit?

I now want to talk about what it was like for you growing up in Griffith

- what do you remember about growing up in an Italian family in Griffith

- what was the talk in your home i.e. what did you speak at home

- who did your family mixed with

- tell me about your friends, who they were, nationality etc.

- did you participate in any group or hobbies outside the home

Visit to Italy

- Have you been to Italy

- If so, did your parents or grandparents prepare you for that visit? Tell me what you remember of your first visit.

- What about subsequent visits – anything change or different

Interaction with Family in Italy

- Would you tell me about your family in Italy - who are you are closest to and how often you see them

- Do you stay in touch with your family – by what means and how often

I now want to go the issue of connectedness to Italian cultural heritage

- Can you remember an occasion from your childhood when you felt proud to be Italian

- Can you tell if you feel you have a connection to being Italian

- If you do feel you have a connection to being Italian do you feel you are more Italian or Abruzzese

Intermarriage

- Do you feel your spouse/partner has had an impact on your connectedness to your cultural heritage and if so, how?

Demographic data:

I need to collect some demographic type details please

D.O.B

Where do you live now?

Schooling/education

Your occupation and can you tell me about association with Griffith now

Thank you