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FAMILY, PAESANI AND NETWORKS: POLITICS AND ECONOMY OF MONTREAL ITALIANS

by
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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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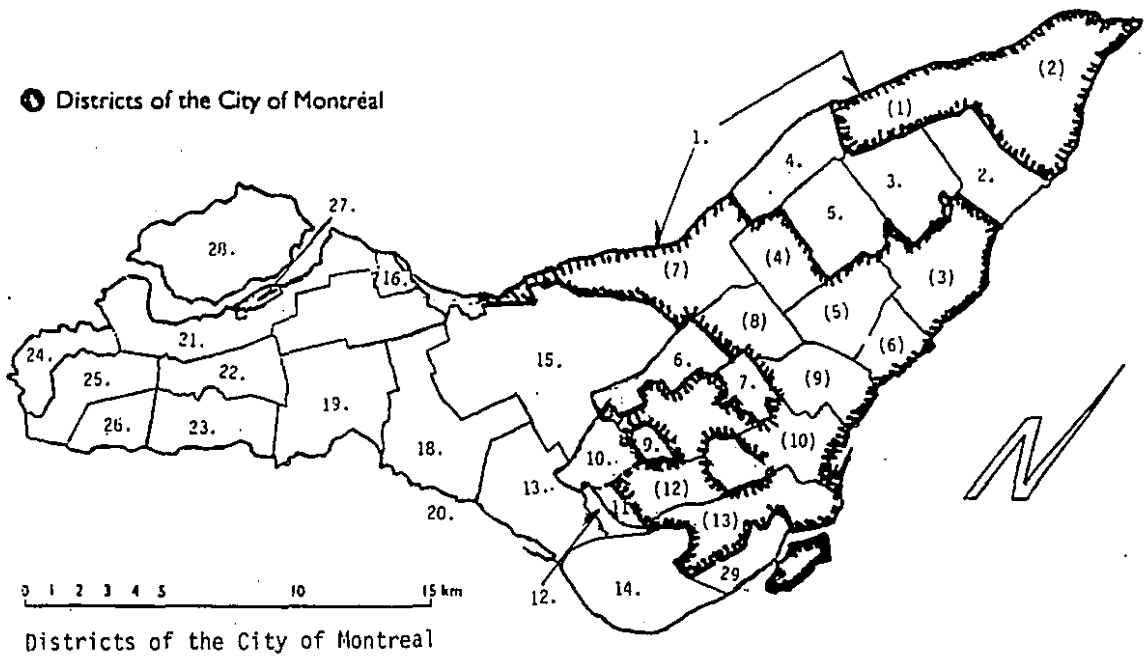
Island of Montreal and City of Montreal



Districts of the City of Montreal

(1) Rivière-des-Prairies
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(3) Mercier
(4) Saint-Michel
(5) Rosemont
(6) Sud-est
(7) Ahunstsic
(8) Villerey
(9) Plateau
(10) Centre
(11) Côte-des-Neiges
(12) Notre-Dame-de-Grâce
(13) Sud-ouest

Municipalities in the Island of Montreal

1. MONTREAL
2. MONTREAL-EST
3. ANJOU
4. MONTREAL NORD
5. SAINT-LEONARD
6. MONT-ROYAL
7. OUTREMONT
8. WESTMOUNT
9. HAMPSTEAD
10. COTE-SAINT-LUC
11. MONTREAL-OUEST
12. SAINT-PIERRE
13. LACHINE
14. LASALLE
15. SAINT-LAURENT
16. ROXBORO
17. DOLLARD-DES-ORMEAUX
18. DORVAL
19. POINTE-CLAIRE
20. ILE-DORVAL
21. PIERREFONDS
22. KIRKLAND
23. BEACONSFIELD
24. SENNEVILLE
25. SAINTE-ANNE-DE-BELLEVUE
26. BAIE-D'URFE
27. SAINT-GENEVIEVE
28. SAINTE-RAPHAEL-DE-L'ILE-BIZARD
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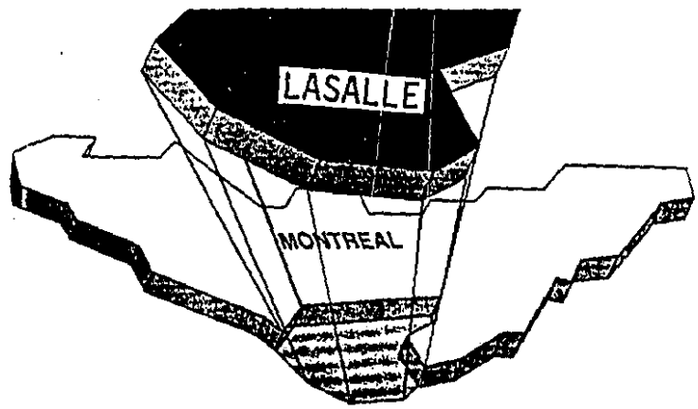

ABSTRACT

Focusing on Montreal Italian social networks, this thesis examines the ideological nature of ethnicity, and its functioning in political processes in urban Quebec. The ideological dynamics of ethnicity are revealed in the process of the creation and re-creation of belief in "Italian family", as a distinctive 'Italian' culture. This first separates Italians into different families and regional groups of paesani, but then brilliantly unites Italians into one group according to necessity. In political processes, various Italian associations and *presidents* are connected to formal politics through the mediation of Italian *political brokers*. The extensive construction of suburban residences created Italian economic elites and affected other sectors of the economy. Significantly, Italians attempt to keep business *within* Italian networks. This 'nationalistic' aspect of networks aims to maximize interests *within* the group. Such dynamic Italian politico-economic networks extend to the further level of formal politics in which federalist Liberals and separatist Parti Québécois are principal rivals.

RESUME

Mettant l'accent sur les réseaux italiens montréalais, cette thèse examine la nature idéologique de l'ethnie et son fonctionnement à l'intérieur des processus politiques dans le Québec urbain. Les dynamiques idéologiques de l'ethnie sont révélées dans le processus de création et de réapparition de la croyance de la "famille italienne" en tant que culture "italian" distinctive. Cela sépare les Italiens en différentes familles et groupes régionaux de paysans, mais ils savent s'unir à merveille dans un groupe selon la nécessité. Dans les processus politiques, divers associations italiennes et présidents sont reliés à la vrai politique par le biais de représentants politiques italiens. Les communautés italiennes banlieusardes ne se formèrent pas graduellement. On notera la tendances qu'ont les Italiens à faire des affaires entre à l'intérieur de réseaux italiens. Ces dynamiques réseaux politico-économiques italiens se rendent jusqu'au niveau de la vrai politique où le fédéraliste Parti libéral et le séparatiste Parti québécois sont ses principaux rivaux.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Ethnicity, Politics and Social Networks: Some Definitions and Theory

1.1.1. Problem Setting

Focusing on Montreal Italian social networks, this thesis examines the ideological nature of ethnicity, and its functioning in political processes in urban Quebec. Ethnic ideology and the politics of ethnicity are central to this study. This is so because, in Quebec, under francophone governance, political processes are severely conditioned by ethnicity. Quebec ethnic nationalism, prompting immigrant minorities toward their own ethnic 'nationalism', provides an environment for particularly vigorous processes of ethnic "social closure" (Parkin 1971).

With only a few exceptions (Porter 1965; Clement 1983), however, the political or politico-economic aspects of ethnicity in Canada have been relatively unexplored. In Quebec, ethnic studies tend to concentrate on language adaptations. The research I propose here examines, through networks of social action, how ethnicity is formed and reformed, and how it plays into the contemporary politics and

economy of Montreal.

1.1.2. Social Networks

Knoke, a sociologist of social networks, in his *Political Networks* postulates as the reason why few studies on political networks have yet been launched: "The hard work of developing such projects" that is required to "collect complete network information on the most important political actors in even a small city may require several months' efforts and tens of thousands of dollars" (1990: 146). He anticipates work on ethnically diverse communities as "[o]ne important extension" of such analyses: "Racially, religiously, and linguistically divided cities have seldom been the object of network analysis", and "determining how ethnic political elites forge the connections that bridge these subpopulation cleavages would be a major contribution" (ibid.: 147). My study in the following chapters attempts to contribute to this problem area. I look at micro-level networks of individual voters, the sources of influence on their decision making, the connections and disjunctions between micro-level networks and formal/informal political networks, on the one hand; and between different ethnic groups, and the cultural and social dynamics that separate and unite such discrete micro-level networks and ethnic groups on the other hand. This requires systematic documentation of the ideology of ethnic culture that creates and re-creates community leadership at different

political levels; the economic interests that favour neighbourhood concentrations and that effect changes in an ethnic group's demographic formation; the networks through which these political and economic effects are realized and the interplay between all these elements. In so doing, I illustrate how interethnic political networks are achieved, sustained, and mobilized to support or oppose the political platforms of rival parties in larger arenas. Thus, this is an anthropological study of organizational power structures in an urban setting. Rather than treating an ethnic community as a disjunctive subunit in society, by looking at both the linkages and disconnections in social networks, I demonstrate how local politics and economic interests both encourage an ideology of the ethnic unity of separate social units, and connect these units to the actors and institutions of the wider society.

Network analyses focus mainly on three aspects. First, they highlight and describe constitutive characteristics of a social network: size, density, strength and relation contents (Boissevain and Mitchell 1973; Mitchell 1969, 1979).[1]

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[1]See also Boissevain 1968, 1971, 1974; Barnes 1979; Leinhardt 1977; Leinhardt and Holland 1979; Bellemare 1974; Marsden and Campbell 1984; Ho and Kochen 1987; Blyth and Foster-Clark 1987; Doreian 1988; Fischer 1982; Whitten and Wolfe 1973; Wolfe 1970. Since the first experimental research done by Bott (1954), network analysis has been widely used in sociology, psychology, and social work/nursing. Researchers who have explored urban communities faced certain obstacles: in the urban milieu, people lack a sense of the "community".

Second, they look at the instrumental aspect of networks. The social importance of networks is their provision of support, both material and emotional (see Campbell, Marsden and Hulbert 1986). Networks not only provide instrumentally useful information (Granovetter 1973, 1982), but also provide a chance to meet an instrumentally useful person (Smelser 1963).[2] Third, by their interests in micro-level social relationships, network analyses facilitate the mapping of informal power relations, or 'patron - client' relations, that coexist with a formal power structure.[3] Accordingly, a

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This type of network research, in search of the "personal community" (Wellman 1976), attempts to model and to describe individual networks. For example, Mitchell (1969) named categories necessary for standard research: anchorage, density, reachability, range, content, directedness, durability, intensity and frequency. In his later work, Mitchell added 'emotional intensity' as the best indication of tie strength (1987: 37). On the other hand, in practice, individual relationships are "multiplex" (Boissevain 1974: 32), by which he means that "where multiplex relations exist they will be more intimate ... than single-stranded relations". Relation variables for such multiplex relations involve cash assistance, affection, miscellaneous gifts, conversation, information, joking behaviour, job assistance, personal services, greetings, and visits (ibid.: 33). Relations are also "meshing" (Barnes 1969), ever-ramifying and ever-reticulating.

[2]In this sense, both network composition and range are critical (Campbell, Marsden and Hulbert 1986). On job or status attainment, Lin, Vaughn and Ensel (1981) argue that the strength of social ties is as important as social resources. See also Granovetter (1973).

[3]The notion of informal and formal structures is frequently used especially in terms of market economy. The informal economy designates illegal market transactions that escape tax contributions, unlike the formal (legal) trades. Lomnitz argues that unequal exchange relationships lead to informal power structures (patron - client), which she contrasts to formal governmental power structures. See

who "bridges" formal and informal sectors plays a key role in a basic network function (Marsden and Lin 1982; Gould and Fernandez 1989).[4] Brokers "are fixers", and the broker "gains power from the perception among interested parties that the broker can arrange resource transactions that are not otherwise likely to take place" (Knoke 1990: 144).[5] Thus, Knoke argues for example,

> the relative inability ... of Mexican poor and minority groups to gain resources from the state might be traceable to brokers who lack liaison or cosmopolitan connections. The rigorous theoretical language now available for the analysis of brokerage relations should lead to a new empirical understanding of the phenomenon (ibid.: 146).

Such a perspective, however, presents a basic problem: in what context and how do certain brokers lack such a liaison? Under what conditions do certain people require (or desire) brokers? These questions refer to structural features of the larger society.

Lomnitz (1978, 1982, 1988).

[4]Gould and Fernandez (1989) distinguish five ideal types of brokers: liaison, representative, gatekeeper, itinerant broker and coordinator.

[5]Knoke defines:

> People who dispense resources directly are patrons, whereas brokers are specialized actors who manipulate others' resources for their own profit. Brokers operate not through domination by resource exchanges, but by influence through their key locations in communication networks (1990:142).

1.1.3. Ethnicity

Let us now turn to look at the concept of ethnicity. There are numerous responses to the question what is ethnicity or what constitutes an ethnic group. Despite all variations,[6] however, it is generally agreed that ethnicity involves a *belief* in a shared common descent.[7] Stemming from such an understanding, some call it a "labelling" (di Leonardo 1984), or a "totem" by analogy (Comaroff 1987). For example, Barth refers to the basic quality of ethnicity:

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[6]For example, a collective ethnic identity is at once a product of "self-imposed separation" from others and stigmatization by others (Gmelch 1986). Some place more emphasis on stigmatization by others (Dominguez 1986), and other writers (Geertz 1973; Isaac 1975; Stack 1986) emphasize the primordial nature of ethnic identity, into which, they argue, one is "born". Yet, there is a "continuum" between such subjective and objective affiliations (Drummond 1982). Furthermore, a group identity shifts depending on the situation (Nagel and Olzak 1982; Peace 1980; Patterson 1986; Miles 1986). Other arguments provide an insight as to how an ethnic identity shifts to a collective identity *in reaction* to a given inequality in society. A range of arguments specify the influence of individual economic interests on the formation of ethnic identity (Adam 1985; Southall 1976; Burton 1981; Schulz 1985; Cohen 1969, 1974; Haaland 1969). And if we look at economy on a wider scale, we cannot ignore the role of `internal colonialism' in stimulating ethnic identity in a world system (Rokkan and Urwin 1983; Karlovic 1982; Hechter 1975; Verdery 1979). The process of ethnic competition over limited resources provides a strong basis for a collective ethnic identity (Despres 1975; Banton 1983; Breton 1981b; Francis 1976; Hoetink 1975; Melvill 1983; Olzak and Nagel 1986; Belanger 1988), and social inequalities activate ethnic responses (see Moore 1987; Comaroff 1987; Hintzen 1985; Kelley 1988; Muga 1989; Khleif 1984; Rodrigues 1984; Thompson 1983; Aguilar 1979; Akram-Ladhi 1987; Barrera 1979; Bourgois 1988; Cox 1948; Hurst 1972; Rousseau 1978; Robinson 1986; Norton 1984; Filson 1983; van den Berghe 1977).

[7]Or, at least, this is a European understanding of the concept.

> A categorical ascription is an ethnic ascription when it classifies a person in terms of his basic, most general identity, presumably determined by his origin and background (Barth 1969).

His main argument, however, lies in the following aspect of ethnicity:

> The cultural features that signal the boundary may change, and cultural characteristics of the members may likewise be transformed, indeed, even the organizational form of the group may change. Yet, the fact of continuing dichotomization between members and outsiders allows us to specify the nature of continuity, and investigate the changing cultural form and content.[8]

It is logically impossible to apprehend the distinction between party A and party B without addressing the "cultural stuff" enclosed by their respective ethnic categories. This argument, however, does identify the central aspect of ethnicity: it is fundamentally determined by beliefs surrounding one's origin and background, not by the "cultural stuff" itself. As much empirical research has attested, an ethnic identity can persist without the existence of the common cultural traits among individuals. Or again, as Barth stressed, cultural form and content may change somewhat independent of ethnic categories.

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[8]Rousseau (1978: 63) pointed out a different and valid problem in this definition. This definition of ethnicity is not necessarily satisfactory because "it fixes the content of ethnicity absolutely. [...] ethnicity does not necessarily establish the most fundamental identity."([E]lle fixe le contenu de l'ethnicité une fois pour toutes. ... l'ethnicité n'établit pas nécessairement l'identité la plus fondamentale.)

On the other hand, for over a decade, deconstructionists have highlighted the created aspects of culture and tradition. In particular, Handler (1988) adeptly investigates political appropriation, stylization and abstraction of cultural content in the process of what he calls "cultural objectification". These aspects are important for my study, because they allow me to tackle ethnicity as both individual action and collective construct, with the intersubjective character of networks providing the mediating dimension.

"Cultural objectification" underscores a symbolic aspect of ethnic identity in which individual action plays a major role; first, in the sense of identifying oneself with a particular collectivity (see Waters 1990), and second, in the sense of objectifying and picking certain elements of one's "style of life" (Handler 1988; Schneider 1968) and attributing them to one's ethnic culture. Because the identity choices and actions of individuals are socially conditioned, they require us to look into particular social environments, since

> [c]oncepts ... are not part of free-floating philosophical discourse, but socially, historically and locally rooted, and must be explained in terms of these realities (Hobsbawm 1990: 9).

My study concerns not only the subjective and intersubjective processes of ethnic identity, but also the ideological significance of the maintenance of ethnic boundaries in a particular social setting. Accordingly, the following

sections of this chapter review and discuss the research setting, the historical, social and local particularities in which my research subjects find their way.

1.2. Perspectives on the problems of Quebec minorities

Immigrant history has been an area of research interest for urban historians in North America. Quebec, as an immigrant host society, is not exceptional. Various immigrant (or ethnic) populations have been historically examined (see, for example, Lefebvre and Oryschuk 1985; Li 1988; Dejean 1980). Early work on Italians in Canada focused on 'distinguished' individuals often tracing back to Columbus and Cabotto (see Duliani 1946; Mingarelli 1970; Spada 1969; Vangelisti 1956). Harney (1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978a, 1978b, 1979a, 1979b) and others (Zucchi 1988; Sturino 1985; Ramirez 1981, 1982a, 1982b, 1984; Ramirez and del Balso 1980) then explored the social aspects of Italian immigrant history. They examined the close relationship between early settlement patterns, job recruitment,[9] and the chain of migration composed of kin and friends of the same village of origin (*paesani*).[10]

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[9]The *padrone* system in which an Italian immigrant broker worked between Italian immigrants and Canadian companies represented the intense demands of immigration in Italy, and of cheap labour in Canada. See the detailed studies by Harney (1979b) and Ramirez and del Balso (1980).

[10]Such relationships between a migration and the early settlement patterns is witnessed among different immigrant populations. See Alpalhao (1978) for the Portuguese.

In sociology and anthropology, on the other hand, ethnic studies of Quebec have displayed some distinctive features. First, accompanying nationalism in Quebec, the socio-economic conditions of francophones have drawn constant research attention. Conventional studies on Quebec ethnic relations focused on the francophone - anglophone relationship. The question as to how other ethnic groups, 'non-charter' minorities, are socially and economically articulated has been neglected, with only a few exceptions. These latter tend to approach ethnicity in terms of the conditions of adaptation or assimilation of ethnic minorities (cf. Driedger 1989). This reflects the abundant research on the 'mother tongue retention rate' as a measurement of the level of adaptation to Quebec society. Language assimilation is critical in the expression of state power (Bourdieu 1977). In this context, the emphasis on 'language' in research, often supported by the government of Quebec (eg. Government of Quebec 1972; Didier 1973), should be understood as a reflection of the political struggles of francophones.[11] Under such political circumstances, many researchers subsumed ethnic minorities into francophone - anglophone power conflicts, assuming minorities' positions as

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[11]The point Bourdieu (1977) raises is that a state can exercise its power over minorities in the form of an imposition (`standardization') of an official language. Therefore, language `assimilation' may be the state's ultimate goal, yet, on the other hand, a person's language assimilation itself does not necessarily mean his/her `cultural' assimilation: language loss does not necessarily interfere with maintenance of ethnic identity.

"in between" these two poles (see Arnopoulos and Clift 1984: 143) and thereby "segregated" (Poulin and Painchaud 1988).

Such perspectives are evident when we review the social research on Italians of Quebec. Gibbard (1934) compared the assimilation of the Italians and that of Finns. Bailey (1939) noted the processes of adaptation of Italians and Ukrainians. Both studies used the process of learning either French or English as a critical measurement. Ossenberg (1964) examined the adaptation of Italians in Montreal and in Toronto by looking at the language retention rate (see also Petri 1988). Duce (1977), adapting Gordon's (1964) assimilation model, attempted to assess the Italians' integration process in Montreal, using language use as an indicating variable. Duchesne (1978) compared Italians' language choice between French and English, focusing on age difference. Poulin and Painchaud (1983) stressed Italians' shifting choice of language in terms of the situation that they were in: French at work and in public service, and Italian at home and in the neighbourhood. Therefore, Italians' strong preference for English schooling for their children is viewed as "paradoxical".

Boissevain (1971), an anthropologist, also uses a similar method and draws a comparable conclusion: the 'Italian community' places itself between the two dominant groups in

Quebec, francophone and anglophone, as a "strategy" of not aligning with either of them. The recent work by Poulin and Painchaud (1988) that uncovers the presence of community 'notables' draws a comparable conclusion: in Quebec, the ethnic ghetto will be perpetuated, because the conflicts between Quebec nationalism and anglophones create a "space" for other ethnic minorities. These two arguments are slightly different. For Boissevain, it is the Italians who voluntarily choose the position between two majorities as a "strategy", while Poulin and Painchaud argue that the Italians are left out of the political picture of Quebec, thus finding their "space". Nonetheless, both understand the 'Italian community' as an entity separate from the surrounding majorities.

Beyond language, these studies provide a glimpse of power relationships within the community. In regard to the Italians of Montreal, although they have no single leader, distinctive figures, "notables", exist (Poulin and Painchaud 1988). "Notables" took a leadership role in the Saint-Leonard crisis of 1969.[12] In the community, Castelli (1976) argues,

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[12]In 1967, St. Leonard school board trustees decided to replace bilingual education with unilingual francophone education. The resident Italians resisted and established the St. Leonard English Catholic Association of Parents; and in reaction, francophones set up the Mouvement pour l'Intégration Scolaire (MIS). "The battle was waged on several fronts at once - with the government, before the courts, in the media and even in the streets" (Linteau et al. 1991: 443). Meanwhile, in 1969, Jean-Jacques Bertrand's Union Nationale government introduced Bill 63 to promote the use of French in Quebec but left a right for parents to choose children's

"Italianity" is maintained through Italian churches, associations and such Italian media as weekly newspapers and TV and radio programs. He further claims that this "Italianity" ties community members to their traditional morals. On the other hand, families, the regions of origin, the neighbourhoods, religion, class and the different political interests segment the community (Boissevain 1971). Peressini (1983, 1984, 1990) finds regional origins especially important as people from different regions in Italy maintain different regional cultures.

In summary, previous research on Italians finds 1. the presence of a cultural boundary and its maintenance by community efforts; 2. that this bounded entity is segregated by the larger society; 3. that although the community is bounded as a whole, it is fragmented and lacks a single leadership. Such conclusions in my opinion are already preconditioned by the premises and methods of ethnic 'community' study, whether qualitative or quantitative. By assuming a bounded ethnic community, one may neglect to look into individuals' social links which cut across the ethnic boundaries. This leads to neglect of the ongoing interplay between the political, the economic and the ethnic.

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schools. See also the detailed study on the St. Leonard crisis by D'Andrea (1990).

Beyond such ethnic 'community' studies, sociologists have contributed to the understanding of stratification in Canada, as regulated by ethnic background. Based mainly on statistical data from the 1950s, John Porter's admirable work revealed that the ruling elites of Canada were almost exclusively of British origin (1965). Although critics (eg. Brym 1989) assert that Porter's argument is based on biased statistical data, Porter stimulated significant further research on Canadian ethnicity, including that of Clement. Clement (1983), using census data from the 1970s, again ascertained British dominance in the top layer of Canadian political and economic domains. Francophones were under-represented in proportion to their population, and other minorities were practically un-represented (Driedger 1989: 276).[13] The question as to how ethnic identity becomes a "drawback" or an "asset" in upward mobility, however, cannot be answered by statistical data alone (Driedger 1989: 270). We should place these factors back into context, since it is too simplistic to conclude that one factor causes another just because the two correlate statistically. The ethnography in the following chapters is, at one level, my response to this problem.

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[13]Some writers `blame' particular ethnic `culture' as functioning against upward mobility, because, for example, some cultures `discourage' children from schooling (Darrosh 1979) Such a view that looks for the causes of social mobility in ethnic identity was once prevalent. See Di Leonardo (1984) for an effective counter-argument to this.

1.3. Subject of the Study

Montreal is a heterogeneous city where people of more than seventy different ethnic backgrounds intersect. It is the economic capital of the province of Quebec and the second largest Canadian metropolis, next to Toronto. This study essentially deals with the people who came from Italy to Montreal as immigrants. They can be understood as one of those North American ethnic populations. Yet, in various significant ways, they require us to consider their distinctive characteristics. In brief, their cultural conservatism combined with an eminent presence in local politics takes the form of what one may call 'immigrant nationalism'. There are three signalling characteristics. First, contrary to everything I had read on the Italians of Montreal previous to my fieldwork, they are *not* left out of the Quebec political scene; rather, as historical events such as the St. Leonard crisis of 1969 show, they have been very much concerned with how their new lives in North America would be affected by political power. In fact, a significant number of party organizers for municipal, provincial or federal ridings are Italians. This underlines an important Italian presence in the Quebec political scene.

Second, there are at least four areas that are heavily populated by Italians in the island of Montreal. All are

found in suburbs. Together with the fact that many Italians are also home-owners, this clearly indicates that they have succeeded in accumulating substantial economic resources since they immigrated as non-skilled labourers, mostly in the 1950s and 60s. Currently, new homes are rapidly being built in the northeast part of Montreal called Rivière des Prairies, and the resident Italian population there is growing daily. Before WWII, there were only two Italian Catholic parishes in Montreal. Today, there are nine Italian parishes on the Island of Montreal, with prospects of extending their territory off the island to suburbs such as Laval.

Finally, despite active participation in politics and apparent economic advancement during the years since their immigration, I find that Italians value tradition and conservatism. Italians of differing generations, genders, ages and classes with whom I spoke insisted that they were Italians first, and Canadians second: they were maintaining Italian and/or an Italian dialect, passing it on to their children through a conscious effort; they were typically committed to one or more Italian social groups; and they were remaining among Italian friends or their extended family circle in their everyday lives. Their Italian identity is so pronounced that they rarely abandon an Italian circle to which they feel a real affiliation. In order to understand such a strong ethnic identity, we have to look at the surrounding wider society

that the Italians live in.

1.3.1. Francophones and the Quebec Political Context

The political matrix in which francophones and Italians intersect should be understood as a part of the larger conflictual relationship between francophone and anglophone in Canada, most fiercely expressed in Quebec. The historical confrontation between the French and the British led to this conventional divide between francophone and anglophone in the province. Within a broader spectrum, Italians are part of the 'anglophone', not of the francophone community.[14] The former community consists of people of British origin and various 'allophones' who frequently choose to use English as a first choice outside their mother tongues; the latter is made up of mainly Quebecers of French origin.

Quebec is the region that represents the major part of the history of the formation of Canada, involving colonization by the French and subsequent conquest of the French colony by the British in 1760. After the conquest of Montreal, this fur-trading centre of about 8,800 French colonials was controlled by British merchants. Subsequently, the population of both French and English steadily grew, but especially between 1820

[14]Although there are some Italians who are assimilated to the francophone community in Quebec, the absolute majority of Italians consider themselves and are considered by francophones as anglophones, English-speakers of Montreal.

and 1850, Montreal received a stream of immigrants from the British Isles. This created a British majority in the city, consolidating "the hegemony of English and Scottish Protestants in Montreal" (Levine 1990: 8).

After the 1860s, however, with the mass migration to the city of francophones from rural Quebec, the population of the francophones in Montreal reached over 60 percent where it remained for the next century. Until 1900, the city's population was almost exclusively composed of francophones and British. Twentieth century immigration turned Montreal into a multi-ethnic city. Yet, new immigrants tended to choose English over French language, a fact which would come to preoccupy francophone nationalists later in the 1960s.

Although francophones almost continuously comprised the city's majority, they did not necessarily hold economic power. From the 1780s through the 1960s, as Levine (1990) summarizes, it would not be too much to say that anglophones, English-speaking Quebecers (then mainly those from the British Isles) ran the city's economy, holding the best jobs and earning better incomes than francophones. English-Canadians controlled the city's major corporations. This included major economic institutions such as banks, heavy industry, and other commercial enterprises. Also, English was the language of work, and senior management positions were held mainly by

anglophones. Anglophones mainly controlled capital and francophones were mainly the working class or, in the case of the francophone elite, Church-educated practitioners of the professions.

Under such conditions, the Quebec government initiated widescale economic and educational reforms along with a series of new language policies. Francophones, through their political majority, explicitly challenged the whole structure of the economic-political formation of the province during the 1960s (the 'Quiet Revolution'). This eventually brought about the overturn of the powerful presence of English-Canadians in Montreal's economy, which had been so influential not only in the provincial political economy but also in the Canadian national economy. The transfer of ethnic power from anglophone to francophone hands accelerated the production and reproduction of francophone ethnic consciousness. It also produced a significant increase in the francophone 'middle class', designating a stratum of people who were highly educated and skilled or had professional qualifications. In the 1970s, these educated French would help to press ethnic consciousness forward and form the leadership of the Parti Québécois nationalist separatist movement, the inheritor of earlier, non-separatist nationalist movements.

Notwithstanding René Levesque's statement that "to survive and *s'epanouir* (blossom) culturally, francophone Montreal needed to represent something more than a French translation of the economically dominant English-speaking world" (Levine 1990: 46), the Quiet Revolution is often understood as a series of reforms primarily for the francophone economic establishment in the province. Two main economic strategies have been employed since the Quiet Revolution: the development of public enterprise run by francophones and support for firms controlled by francophones in the private sector (see Levine 1990). In addition, public enterprise was a central feature of Quebec economic intervention. Five state corporations were established and expanded during the Lesage administration (1960-1966). Nine more were created between 1967 and 1978.

For the public sector, since 1960 we have observed the drastic expansion of both public expenditures and the size of bureaucracy. Gow reports that public expenditures soared from 17 percent of Quebec's gross domestic product in 1961 to 30 percent in 1983 (Gow 1986). The size of the provincial bureaucracy climbed from around thirty thousand employees in 1960 to nearly a hundred thousand by 1980. In addition, thousands more were employed in local health, education, and social service "parapublic" institutions funded by the provincial government.

As Levine notes, provincial expansion in Quebec coincided with and was shaped by many of the same forces that influenced other provinces in Canada, promoting public-sector growth in all advanced capitalist societies. Yet, what characterizes Quebec in contrast to other provinces was that this "took place within a Francophone nationalist framework" (ibid.: 151). As Linteau argues, with the ideology of the Quiet Revolution, Quebec was perceived as working for the interests of French-Canadians (Linteau et al. 1991: 427).

This meant that government in Quebec became a major source of new and steady employment for Montreal francophones. According to a 1982 survey by Sales and Belanger, 88.2 percent of senior and intermediate managers in Quebec's public administration worked "almost exclusively in French," compared to only 31.6 percent in such posts in private enterprise (Sales and Belanger 1985: 217). Almost one-fifth of Montreal's employment was in the public sector in 1981. According to Levine, all of these institutions including federal, provincial or municipal offices, employed francophones "to a much greater degree than did the private sector" (Levine 1991: 152).[15]

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[15]For example, Sales and Bélanger's study shows 99.4% of directors in the public sector speak French as their mother tongue, compared to 0.4% directors who speak English as their mother tongue. In the private sector, 58.2% directors speak French as their mother tongue, compared to 35.9% who speak English as their mother tongue (1985: 149).

By 1978, Quebec-based enterprises had access to more than 160 programs of economic assistance, including low-interest loans, loan guarantees, research and development assistance, and provincial government equity and debt financing. Francophone-controlled enterprises have been the conscious beneficiaries of these programs. Among them, the *Societé de développement industriel* (SDI), the Quebec government's direct business assistance program, has been most important. The SDI, created in 1971, provides 'gap financing' - supplementing the funds private financial institutions might be willing to lend a firm - to stimulate economic development in sectors promising high productivity, export potential, and good wages. Between 1971 and 1981, the SDI extended $602 million in financing to firms in the Montreal region, which comprises approximately 60 percent of total SDI allocations (Levine 1990: 153). All of these, economic reforms were seen to be aimed at establishing

> large-scale Francophone-controlled enterprises in strategic sectors that could counteract Anglophone economic power while fostering the development of a Francophone entrepreneurial class (Levine ibid.).

The dramatic shift in the political economy driven by a 'francophone nationalist framework' was thus an attempt to replace dominant anglophone economic power. This could mean, at the same time, excluding and discouraging other ethnic groups' entry into the ruling class of the Quebec political economy. This, at least, was the situation as perceived by Italian business holders during my field research.

The majority of Italians immigrated to Montreal during the period of ethnic power overthrow of the 1950s and 1960s. The francophone presence constituted a challenge to Italian national consciousness from their arrival to the present. My study of Italians in Montreal reveals the complex relationship between shifting ethnic consciousness, its mobilization and its effect. The Italians of Montreal faced psychological, economic and social crises in the context of class competition dramatically textured by francophone ethnic consciousness. The "Québécois" have strived to prove their political leadership in every segment of social life. Under such political dominance, Italians, with their substantial ethnic population, strive to maximize their position in the local political economy. The issue challenges our conventional acceptance of immigrants and their descendants as meek followers of the system to which they are 'transplanted'. Italians of Montreal attempt to insert themselves into the formal politico-economic system most prominently through the exercise of a collective consciousness. The discourse of tradition and culture sharpens its edge in the course of Italians asserting local power and stability in the face of francophone dominance. This goes against not only 'assimilation', but also 'maintenance' perspectives, since Italians are not simply 'maintaining' features of their historical origins, but rather constantly creating and forming a collective consciousness of 'We, Italians', 'We, Italian

immigrants' and 'We, Italians of Montreal'; in so doing, they both exclude others from politico-economic networks, and include them, according to their ethnic interest.

1.4. Methodology

Network analyses demonstrate their effectiveness in urban settings of complex societies, by allowing us to survey human relationships that cut through and across classes and other social groupings. Therefore, I have made extensive use of techniques employed in network analyses. I have emphasized daily interactions and routinized communication networks. And I have devoted attention to differences in lifestyles among different generations, ages, and genders.

In the first stage of my field research, I attempted to define general contours of ethnic identity through a broad range of contacts with a number of Italians who reside in Montreal. Personal networks facilitated the initiation of several of my first contacts: I was introduced or referred to friends' friends and family relations. I visited their homes, offices and work sites. I also frequented seniors' associations, business people's gatherings, and other venues such as neighbourhood Italian cafés and barber shops, in order to connect with as many people as possible.

I taped most of the formal interviews that took place on our first encounters. Recording our conversations was awkward for both parties, yet those dozens of conversations taped during the first year of my field research turned out to be a priceless asset for conducting the second phase of my field research; by listening to these tapes repeatedly during my fieldwork, I became more aware of, for example, what questions people avoided answering and what subjects they responded to eloquently.

Furthermore, differing concepts of community suggested themselves at the earliest stage of my field research, through observing the subtle yet significant difference between 'being in the community' and 'being outside of it'. By communities with the small letter 'c', I mean the general conglomerations of individual personal networks existing within the neighbourhood, family and among *paesani*[16]. These personal networks broadly overlap with the geographical district. On the other hand, by the Italian Community with the capital letter 'C', I mean the communication networks centred around the *Congresso Nazionale*, *Fondazione*, and/or CIBPA (Canadian-Italian Business People's Association) where the manifestation of the "Italian Community" is made to represent the Italian population in Montreal. The Italian Community is made up

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[16]"Paesani" means friends who are from the same village (or region) of origin.

mainly of individuals with economic and political resources who are geographically dispersed. As actors in the Community live in their own personal communities, the boundary between the two concepts, communities and Community, is in essence a fuzzy one. Actors through their networks continually bridge discrete institutional domains.

Since the two levels of the Italian communities (community with a small 'c' and a capital 'C') interrelate and influence each other in an intriguing way, I had to travel around the island of Montreal quite extensively during my field research. It was far from the common anthropological setting of self-contained rural villages where everybody knows one another. Di Leonardo (1984) describes the similar difficulties she encountered in the urban setting of her anthropological research in California, in which she chose to focus on family networks. Still, my field experience was not entirely similar to hers. There are Italian neighbourhoods in Montreal where people tend to know everyone, contrary to the situation in California described by Di Leonardo (1984), where the Italian-Americans were much more dispersed.

I was able to speak Italian, which helped me immensely to initiate informal conversation and new contacts with Italians on first encounter. Yet, I soon found that the dialects that most of the elderly speak were very difficult for me. I

initiated an Italian-Japanese language exchange with an informant who was living with his immediate family, including his parents, wife and son, in the residence that his father built. The language exchange at my informant's house lasted about half a year until he started to work regularly at his father's construction business. Although my presence probably interfered with the spontaneity of family activity to some extent, it was only a matter of time before they behaved more casually, providing me with valuable insights into the focal points of interactions between the differing generations in a family household.

I finally moved to one of the areas of Italian concentration that I call an *Italian community* where I have lived for over a year. There are several suburban Italian communities in Montreal, conditioned by their social as well as economic strategies (I will discuss this in detail in chapter 7). I chose the LaSalle community as my fieldwork site for the following reasons: first, it represents the 'typical' residential outgrowth of the oldest Italian immigrant community in Montreal. This is significant since such community outgrowths best reveal the intersections of individual interests, concomitant social networks, the process of economic accumulation among Italian entrepreneurs who brought them there, and so forth. Secondly, the LaSalle Italian community was formed early relative to others in

Montreal. Therefore, the sense of 'community' is already well established, unlike the one currently undergoing formation in the Rivière des Prairies area. This allows for the observation of a community life which is relatively more stable. Thirdly, the LaSalle Italian community, seen as the centre of southern Montreal by the entire Italian community, has an approachable community size, extending at most over three local political districts. This was extremely important since my research concerned complex industrialized urban relations, where inestimable numbers of individual interests intersect. The relatively small size made it possible for me to understand the basic economic and political competition and cooperation taking place among local entrepreneurs, politicians, families and *paesani*.

Before, during and after my field research, I maintained intense, close, and personal friendship with a group of Italian women. In fostering our friendship and trust, I avoided intrusive inquiry but welcomed their spontaneity. I concentrated on experiencing the course of our lives together. I tried to deepen the social and emotional links and trust between us. It is these efforts in understanding their pain and joys, the emotion that I witnessed and experienced, and the struggles that we got through that gave me special insight into the lives of other less familiar informants during the research. Such human contacts are concealed beneath the main

focus of my research, yet these strong relationships which developed over five years have been indispensable for the conclusions I draw from the thesis.

CHAPTER 2

WE ITALIANS: FAMILY, ETHNIC IDENTITY AND CULTURE

Q. **What is being 'Italian' all about? What makes you Italian, do you think?**
A. Family. Traditionally we are very close to each other in the family. This is something French or English people don't have. Family is so important, I can't imagine life without it. Without family, what's left in your life? Many people don't understand that. We see each other so often during the week, and they (French or English people) don't understand why.
Q. **So, that's about it?**
A. Yes, and ... food, maybe (Silvio, architect, 52)

> I realized a couple years ago that I would do anything to make it more evident that I am Italian, O.K.? So I would go around with a purse for example, which is a very, very Italian way of doing things. I would buy an Italian car, O.K.? I smoke Italian cigarettes, O.K.? I don't know [why]... because there is an attachment to it, and something that I want to show that is mine, belongs to me... I'm not so different that you wouldn't think that I am Italian, or I have to tell you that I am Italian (Vince, city councillor, 44).

This chapter initiates the investigation of the ethnic identity (or identities) prominent among Italians of Montreal. I look primarily at the Italian culture that they believe in, identify with and reproduce. Since it is family relationships that the Italians of Montreal define as the main feature of their culture, I focus on the ways that Italians think of these relations as marking them off from others. When they summarize their culture, they call it "family", as if this word magically explains everything - at least something very important in their lives, as is usually true (see Johnson

1985).

The emphasis on the family is strong among the young generation of Italians of Montreal. They share the fact that they have immigrant parents from Italy, and that they are raised in the "Italian way". After almost three years of fieldwork experience, I can see why: their parents are physically, socially and linguistically different from what one may expect in stereotypical North Americans. Most often, they do not have more than six years of formal education, have worked as non-skilled or semi-skilled labourers for many years, and now are retired. The more the Italians of the second generation get their education in Montreal and the more they recognize the intelligence, the courage and the hard work of their parents, the more they perceive a gap between what their parents deserved and what they could actually afford to do in their lives. It is powerful proof of the 'fact' that their parents 'sacrificed' everything for their children, as parents repeatedly tell them. In essence, the Italian parents' very existence in Quebec reifies their acts of "family devotion".[1]

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[1]Dunk (1988) touches on the appreciation of physical work as 'real' labour among the working class. Since the physical labour and long hours of work that many non-skilled and semi-skilled labourers experienced were necessary conditions for immigration, hard work, mental crisis (missing their home country), and culture shock are the price that their parents paid 'all-for-family'. Younger generations appreciate it as a 'courageous choice', noting it as an expensive 'sacrifice' made for them that they now have to return to their parents.

On top of this, they speak an Italian dialect at home, eat Italian meals, observe how their parents interact with their Italian neighbours, keep in touch with *paesani*, and commit to church activities. Women make pasta and pasta sauce, while men make wine at home together. For them, life revolves around family; it is a daily fact, and that is 'Italian culture'.

The sense of identity involves, of course, a constant contrast to 'others', while sharing activities and understanding with fellow Italians (cf. Barth 1969). Many stay within their own Italian circle, surrounding themselves with families and Italian friends. But they are conscious of such a family-centred life-style. Most often, they fulfill such an 'Italian' family-centred way of life with full awareness.

In fact, in various studies, familism has always been treated as a central feature of the Italian culture. The primary and obligatory commitment to one's own family has been called "amoral familism" (Banfield 1958).[2] In Montreal, it is

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[2]Banfield finds the reasons in "amoral familism" for "the entire absence of civic improvement associations, organized charities, and leading citizens who take initiative in public service" in a village in Potenza, southern Italy. It is because "no one will further the interest of the group or community except as it is to his private advantage to do so." Hence, "amoral familism means "[m]aximize the material, short-run advantage of the nucleaar family; assume that all others will do likewise". He further specifies that "one who follows the rule is without morality only in relation to persons outside the family - in relation to family members, he applies

patriarchy that is not only opposed to but valued against what the Italians of Montreal observe and imagine as the 'North American' lifestyle. For Italians of Montreal, 'family' involves at least two aspects: 1) acceptance of the patriarchal authority structure in family; and 2) 'closeness' among members of immediate and extended families. For Italians, the 'North Americans' do not respect patriarchal authority enough, and have lost closeness among themselves. As the emphasis on family (as an important feature of Italian culture) is based on a negation of the practice of others (others' family relationships), this dichotomy suggests Italians' moral self-evaluation: opposition between the Italian family and those of others indicates an opposition between values Italians consider good and bad. Italian culture is better because they keep close family relationship; Italian culture is better because they respect manners and rules which come with traditional family relationships; unlike other North Americans, who they are assumed disrespect these traditions.

This cultural conservatism, characterized by an ethnocentric mood, entails at least four significant and coherent aspects of their life view. First, traditional Italian familism is expressed in the form of resistance to the erosion of collective identity. In practice, a vertical power

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standards of right and wrong".

relationship, including sexism, characterized by patriarchy, is positively exercised by family members through different generations, ages and genders.

Secondly, the extended family relations and networks enhance regional alignments outside kinship relationships. Family and regionalism (*campanilismo*) are conceptually separate, the former as a kinship relationship, the latter as a territorial group. Yet, they are closely connected because families, especially from rural villages, are at once kin and territorial groups. Paesani (co-villagers) relationships have been a useful resource at the time of immigration and subsequent job recruitment (cf. Harney 1976), and are kept intact through various rituals which are held among kindred members. Thus, the paesani relationship is an important extension of the family network. The stress on Italian familism and its maintenance, therefore, accompanies the special development and preservation of paesani relationships and regional/village 'traditions' so that both families and paesani resonate with each other. Of course, the relationship between families in the same village is not necessarily a friendly one; it could be a competitive rivalry, and thus hostile. In Montreal, as reflected in the immigration process, next to the family members, paesani are the people who are to be contacted in important matters. This regional factor is discussed in detail in chapter 4.

Thirdly, in the socialization aspect, Italian children tend to (and are encouraged) to stick to the Italian circle, both in their private (family, association, church) and public (school, neighbourhood) lives. Italian children are expected to be a future pool of cultural gate-keepers, a pool which has proved valuable (and necessary) for capturing benefits in Montreal socio-political life, where ethnicity is keenly felt and vertically ordered. In their public lives, they tend to grow up in situations in which Italian children are numerically dominant at school. They acknowledge each other's similarity - in other words, they already manifest 'Italian familism' - and choose to stick together among Italian friends. This collective trans-generational identity will be addressed throughout this thesis, in relation to economic, political, social and historical situations, actions and reactions.

Finally, cultural conservatism has shown an effect on gender relationships among Italians. Since the family unit creates tight circuits of communication which are beneficial for the economic and political lives of Italians, its internal erosion is unacceptable. A group of women attempted to challenge patriarchal gender relationships, and organized an Italian women's centre. The conflict between the Italian Community and the centre ended in the Community's victory. As part of the evolution of the Italian women's centre, adolescent

Italian feminists, in search of an 'Italian way' of feminism, collided with and then became a part of the supporters of traditional familism. This is focused on in the next chapter.

Thus, the issue of the family/ethnic identity touches on various subjects which are in reality inseparable. I deal with these subjects systematically in subsequent chapters. In this initial chapter, I explain that the family is the key element of Italians' everyday life. I focus on the patriarchal relationship, most characteristically in the form of *debts* and *authority*, as evident between the generations of parents and children.

Various materials are combined. Ethnographic notes are analyzed with various interviews and other informal conversations that I had. Mainly, I combine a narrative of Italian family life in which three generations are living together[3] with the relationship that Paola has with her family.[4] What I observed are fragmented pieces. I am also aware that my presence sometimes affected the family's interactions. Yet, as time passed, I realized that they felt more relaxed and free to be casual in my presence. This experience exposed me to a dimension of Italian family

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[3]I visited Tony's family, about once a week, as a volunteer Japanese language tutor.

[4]I have known her for more than five years as a close friend.

relationships which seemed consistent with most of the stories I gathered on other occasions from other Italians.

2.1. Paternal Authority and Gendered Discipline in Family Life[5]

I visited Tony's family one Thursday afternoon in summer.[6] His residence is located in Pointe Claire, the English 'middle- class' suburb in Montreal. Tony, thirty-three years old, drives a small Toyota, his wife, Lina, thirty-two years old, an old Ford, and his father, a van. When I first visited him, I saw only his car parked in front of the garage, brightly reflecting the summer sun. I press the door bell, and a well-trimmed and casually dressed Tony (in slightly washed-out designer cotton shirt) opens the door. He is smiling. His four-year old son, Francesco, is standing beside him holding Tony's hand. I go inside, look at the immaculate wooden floor, and take off my shoes. Passing through the kitchen (with a white marble floor just like the stairs to the second floor), I am led to the dining room table, and sit while Tony prepared espresso coffee. I can see a beautiful garden through the glass door. The bright dining room is furnished with a large, fine china cabinet, inside of which I see many kinds of white confectionaries and porcelain statues standing together, all from someone's wedding ceremonies. We chat over coffee waiting for his mother who is supposed to come home soon from work (she has been working for a catering factory for the airlines since she came to Montreal).

Tony was born in Montreal, and is an only son. His parents were originally from southern Italy (an area called Potenza), and they came to Montreal as immigrants when they were in their early 20s. They did not come together. His mother, Rosa, came to Montreal first, following her sister (Rosa calls her "adventurous") who ventured to immigrate from Italy to Montreal all by herself. Tony's father, Sergio, already knew her and wanted to marry her, and had no choice but to come to Montreal. In Italy, Rosa was working for a candy factory;

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[5]All the personal names appearing throughout the thesis are pseudonyms unless otherwise indicated.

[6]I came to know Tony purely by chance. He answered the phone when I called Cetta, his aunt, at home for the first time. I phoned her to ask if I could come visit and interview her; she was my acquaintance's friend's mother. Tony was there on Tuesday afternoon because he was visiting Cetta.

meanwhile, Sergio was a third generation of an established builder family. Rosa recalls: "Volevo migliorare la mia vita, ma non per Sergio (I wanted to better my life, but not for Sergio)". Tony quickly continues: "My father didn't want to come, you see, so he wasn't happy in Montreal for quite a while". On his arrival, he immediately started to set up his business as a builder in Montreal. Tony goes on: "Now he's O.K., I mean, quite happy, because he has a whole family here now. So, when I got married to Lina, at the wedding ceremony, we put aunt Carmelina in the seat of honour. You usually don't do this kind of thing, but we did it, because all of this, all of the people there, everything was possible because of her, it started all from her, you know." After his university education in history, Tony has been basically helping at his father's business. Through that experience, he realizes it will be to his advantage to have a degree in urban planning. So, now he is taking courses at university to obtain a degree in that field. Since he helps his father on an irregular basis, and his mother and his wife are both working outside the home, most of the time he is at home with his son, Francesco.

On many occasions, Tony openly articulated his admiration for the strength he sees in his father. On the day I met him, Tony showed me the furniture, fireplace, bedrooms, Francesco's toy cradle, and the bar counter downstairs, all of which are handmade by his father. He pointed out all the sophisticated details with enthusiasm. Tony's favourite tale is an episode which shows how strong a character his father is:

> My father was driving his van, and somehow the police confused it with the criminal's that they were after. The police started chasing after him, and my father noticed it. He parked his car, and saw in the mirror that the police had also stopped their car; they quickly got out, and pointed their guns at his car! (To move on to the description of the next moment, Tony usually stands up and imitates what his father did.) My father opened the door, slowly got out of the van, threw a cigarette butt on the ground, turned his head to face the police and yelled: "What the hell is going on!" The police officers were so shocked that they looked at each other (Tony never forgets to insult them, saying "like idiots"), they realized their mistake, all embarrassed. (At this moment, Tony repeats the gesture and angry voice

of his father, again and again.)

These details can only add to the basic respect that the position of father already carries. In Tony's case, the economic success of his father, merged with his strong character and manual skills, further justifies the father's authority. This is most evident in the form of his disposal towards the family members.

When Tony refers to his childhood, he expresses how much his father gave to him: gifts, affection, and "freedom". He was allowed to do anything, he was allowed to get anything he desired unless his father disallowed it. Tony expresses what he really wanted to do: "I really wanted to instruct piloting. I had wanted to be a pilot since I was three years old. Three years old." He already learnt how to pilot by taking many hours of expensive lessons, supported by his father. His spirit heightens when he explains how he feels about piloting:

> You are surrounded by just blue sky, nothing else. It's actually very stressful. Constantly, you have to calculate the angle, speed, height, everything quickly right there in the sky; it's like life and death, all side by side. But it's so beautiful in the sky alone...

But he quietens down again when he explains why he is taking courses in urban planning and gave up on becoming a pilot - or an instructor of piloting: "I admit, it is very dangerous. So, my father said "no" (to becoming a professional pilot). When my father says "no", it means 'no'. Absolutely, 'no'. He doesn't say "no" often, in fact, he gave me anything I wanted. But, if he says "no", it means 'no'".

When I look at how Tony treats Francesco, his son, it reminds me of Tony's description of his own father. Francesco can do almost anything, if he asks. Many gifts are given to Francesco according to Francesco's interests. If Francesco wants to play with a toy car, dozens of extremely sophisticated miniature cars are provided for him. If Francesco wants to 'experiment', all the necessary equipment

is provided: the plentiful colouring materials, soap, earth, cups, straws, and so on. Although Tony does not like that Francesco watches three episodes of *Sesame Street* every afternoon, he accepts it since Francesco likes the program. Tony's authority to accept implies the other side of the coin: the authority to disallow.

One Sunday afternoon, Lina, Tony's wife and I are in the kitchen. She is making pizza crust, while we chat. Francesco comes in, and starts to touch the dough Lina is making. In a sharp tone, Lina chides Francesco, "Don't play with the food!" Nonetheless, Francesco refuses to stop. Lina yells at him each time, until Lina and I go to the dining room to have coffee together. Tony comes in to join us, and so does Francesco. Lina and Tony are telling me how they met each other (Lina was a friend of Tony's cousin). We three are absorbed in our conversation. Francesco starts to make noise to attract attention. Bothered by that, Tony gently tells him not to. The third time, Tony glares at him and quietly says: "I say don't do it, Francesco. We are talking." It is enough. Francesco starts to sob, and does not bother us again.

A second example, of a family with a similar occupational background but with less economic resources, also reveals the father's authority in two ways -- allowance and disallowance:

Vittorio was born in Montreal a couple of years after his father Antonio started his construction business. Antonio came to Montreal with nothing in his pockets in 1954. In poverty, he had no chance to receive any formal education whatsoever in Calabria, in southern Italy. In Montreal, he started off as a day-labourer at construction sites. He saved every penny to start his own entrepreneurship in this line of business, simply because it was the only skill he knew. After five years of labouring and saving, he could afford to work for himself. A couple of years before that, he met Anna in Montreal, and married her. They started to live in a poor Italian area called Goose Village where they had only one bedroom and a kitchen. When Vittorio was born and was small, he had to sleep on the kitchen floor. They recall that Antonio and Anna could not afford to give Vittorio a single gift. When Vittorio turned twelve years old, he was taken to

the construction site where his father worked during every summer school break. He had to work with all the adults. The payment for the work was, the father stressed, the fact that he was supported at home, and that he was learning how to build a house from scratch. Vittorio remembers that his friends at school were playing ball games in the open space adjacent to the construction site where Vittorio was working with his father and the other adults. During the construction, father did not allow him a single day off. It was understood as discipline: no gifts and hard work. Also, it delivered the message that it was exactly what his father lived through and how he still lived, all for the family. Education was always encouraged and he finished his bachelor's degree in Italian, Spanish and French, languages that he wanted to study. But Vittorio chose to stay in his father's business, and now at the age of thirty he is the chief manager of the family construction business.

The combination of indulgence and absolute, indisputable disallowance illustrates the power the father possesses over the family members. As Tony often emphasized, his father allowed him to do 'almost anything'. Yet, the seemingly plentiful 'freedom' contrasts sharply to definite limits. These limits indicate that the freedom Tony describes is not freedom, but merely granted, controlled and allowed conduct. The father is authorized to decide what his sons can do and cannot do. The control over daughters tends to be expressed more in sexual terms rather than in terms of discipline. Women are, after all, guardians of the family's reputation (cf. Lerner 1986).

> The way the Italian parents raise their sons and daughters is from extreme to extreme: all kinds of restrictions on daughters and absolute freedom to sons. (Cilda, 32, family from Sicily)

> I can't come home at 12 o'clock at night, but my brother can come home any time he wants, 2 o'clock or 3 o'clock, anytime. Then, I get mad and say "Why?" (Maria, 17, high school student)

> I saw someone in the street today, wearing the most hilarious T-shirt I've ever seen. It said, 'I survived an Italian father'. I should get that, too (giggle). (Paola, 34)

The control that the father exercises over daughters tends to be both qualitatively and quantitatively different from that over sons. Many daughters admit it: "things which pass for boys do not pass for girls." The following is an account that represents an aspect of a daughter's experience with her father.

Paola is a second generation Italian woman, 34 years old. I met her through an Italian friend of mine in 1987. Her family is originally from Sicily, and came to Montreal in the late 50s. When she was born, the family lived in the area densely populated by Italians in St. Michel. Then the family purchased a house and moved to St. Leonard, a suburban Italian district. She was the first-born child in the family. Later she told me that her parents only recently revealed that there was a baby boy who unfortunately died a year before she was born. She has a sister six years younger who last year got married to another second generation Italian from Abruzzo and moved to another suburb of the Italian district in Montreal. Since finishing her high school education, she has been working downtown as a secretary: the job that she got through her uncle.

> It was abuse. My father abused me by terrifying me. I couldn't go out, I couldn't stay late at school, I couldn't do anything. I wasn't allowed to do anything. And I became so shy. Do you know why? For example, when I was little, he always said to me very seriously: Paola, never talk to any boy at school. I'll punish you if you ever do, and I'm always watching you from somewhere behind you. I mean, it really terrified me. I was little, so I believed it. I was so scared to talk to a boy and I was always scared my father was watching me, all the time.... I think it was a punishment, because I was born a girl instead of a boy. They were so unhappy when I was born as a girl. You know, for Italians, the first baby should be a boy. ... And my mother never took my side in any situation, never came to me to console me or anything. She just stayed behind my father. For that, I will never ever forgive her.

Paola describes herself in childhood as totally powerless and submissive. Seeing that all the other kids at school could stay late for various activities, Paola felt isolated and segregated. She could not even complain because she was so scared of her father. Now, as an adult, she is critical of what she experienced, particularly the relationship with her father and mother. Feeling a strong need to gain her own independence, she purchased a condominium to move out from the family and live by herself, although moving out other than for marriage is against Italian custom. It was the fulfillment of a longstanding desire. When I first met her, two years before her purchase, she already had a strong desire to move out but she was having difficulty doing it: her parents would not accept it. She describes it as if it were a funeral when she brought her parents and her aunt (her mother's older sister) to the place she planned to buy (although secretly she had already bought it by then). Her parents were not pleased with her decision at all, yet obviously, they could not stop her from doing what she wanted any more.

Many deny at first that their parents differentiated daughters from sons in raising them. In Paola's case, she relates her parents' severity to the fact that she was not born a boy. Paola thinks that after the death of the first baby son, her parents were devastated by the birth of a girl. They were severe with her because they could not easily accept the fact

and remained angry. Paola understands her father's severity as a form of punishment.

In a household in which male and female siblings interact in an everyday context, unmarried daughters recognize that their parents have different attitudes towards male and female children and express those attitudes with different levels of subtlety.

Tina is a second generation Italian who has a bachelor's degree in social work. She has younger twin brothers. Although she does not feel that her parents differentiated her from her male siblings in raising them, she has always perceived that her parents have a much greater preoccupation with her brothers' success and with the outcome of their education. Her parents were willing to support her education, yet they showed at once a different level of expectation between her and her male siblings. For example, only she had to do dishes or other housework before she could start to read a book for school, while her brothers could study any time without any obligation to do anything. "Instead, mother served them!" When Tina complained, her parents replied: "They will become providers of families. You will be provided for by a husband."

With generally higher education than their parents, second generation women think that they will have different experiences from the ones their mothers had as housekeepers. Still, they strike some kind of compromise in taking on some of these responsibilities. Women or girls are considered as "bad" if they neglect the housework. Women, in other words, have to be *aware* that they are responsible for the housework or risk being criticized. They will be judged as inefficient and thus 'bad' wives by their future mothers-in-law.

Italians I spoke with very often emphasized the importance of paying respect to the elderly: "We are not supposed to answer back to parents - actually, to any elderly people." In the context of family life, children are not supposed to "answer back" to their parents, although many admit with a smile that it happens. It can happen very often with the mother: "I can say anything to my mother." This contrasts with the relationship with the father.

> With my father, it does happen, but much less. Or, let me put it this way: you are allowed to say more with my mother [Tina].

The authority the father holds and the mother's submissive position in relation to him are well recognized by second generation Italians. The exercise of authority by the father is very often supported by the mother, typically with silence. This is what Paola experienced. As a rule, a wife does not answer back to her husband. In this way, the mother reinforces the father's authority. On the other hand, the accent laid on male children encourages their economic success and, as the other side of the coin, discourage females' social advancement, delivering the message of their priority in household maintenance and future dependence on males.

2.2. Family Unity and Affines

When Italians confront difficulties in life, brothers and sisters try to help each other. Paola is an excellent example

of this. Her difficulty has been to deal with her feeling of powerlessness and helplessness in constantly facing the extreme intervention of her father. The situation of her younger sister was much different. She managed to lie, which Paola could not do, being too afraid. Paola always supported her sister. Also, the sister knew that Paola would take her side. For example, when she wanted to stay late at school, Paola would support her: "What's wrong with staying at school? Let her stay, let her stay." By contrast, when Paola needed to ask some advice, she did not have anybody to consult with since, she explains, "I was the eldest among all my cousins".

As to male siblings, I have also observed the strong sense of bonding. Helping each other through difficulties is only one instance. For example, Marco went to French elementary school and subsequently to French high school. At school, he was often the target of physical and mental aggression from school mates, "just because I was the only Italian at school". He recalls: "So, my [older] brother always tried to be with me to protect me. With him, they didn't come and beat me up, because he's older, you know." Or, when Roberto started to organize a youth division of his parents' Italian association, his younger brother was the first to help him out. When Antonio launched his first publication, his younger brother called people to tell them about it and organized a big party for him. Paolo, whose parents came from Naples, is a

successful entrepreneur, working together with his father in the construction business. He is looking forward to the moment that he can work with and "teach" business secrets to his brother, who is ten years younger and now attending college.

The sibling tie is seen as everlasting, cooperative and protective. Yet, as soon as the element of the outsider (in-laws) comes in, such a picture can reveal some ambivalence (or room for ambivalence). This ambivalence relates to the fact that the family business tends to be inherited by the male "blood" line: female siblings marry out[7]. The level of the sense of 'wife as outsider' varies from family to family, yet, it can be blatant, lasting throughout the marriage. Different regional origins, each accompanied by its own regional "tradition" and customs can further distance and justify such affinal relationships. The following is an aspect seen in Tony's family.

In Tony's family, in which three generations live together, there is enough reason for Lina to feel like moving out and living only with her immediate family. Living with Tony's parents means that Lina loses her sense of autonomy. Lina is from a different region from the one Tony's parents originally came from. Lina is the one who has to suppress her culture, her way of living, and her customs, in order to show respect to Tony's family. The next account best illustrates the sense of 'outsider' of the position of the wife expressed in terms of regional culture.

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[7]I witnessed one exception to this in which a daughter inherited her father's business. In this case, though, she was the only child in the family.

One afternoon, Lina and I are downstairs (at the *cantina*) to pick up some dried hot peppers for our lunch. Choosing the peppers, she comments: "Look at the way these peppers are hung. Tony's mother cut the roots. I don't cut the roots when I hang them. Where my parents came from, people say that roots can provide moisture and nourishment even when they are pulled out from the ground. With roots, they keep better, that's what people believe. Of course, I don't know if it's really true or not, scientifically, but I was taught that way. But Tony's mother, you know, she cut all the roots the day after I hung them. Their regional culture doesn't believe this kind of stuff. Once she said they look dirty, and cut off the roots. Well, I don't mind, it's just a difference in custom."

In the case of an interethnic marriage, the label of the spouse as an outsider is often openly verbalized on an everyday basis:

> My mother never referred to her (his wife is a francophone Quebecoise) as 'tu', always 'vous' or 'lei'. Just recently, my wife returned to using her maiden name. I suggested it to her. Name is important, you know, it's an identity. She has been using *my* surname more than twenty years, and I say, "Look, maybe it's time to use *your own* name." And she changed it. (Silvestro, the university rector, third generation)

2.3. Family Ties: After all, We are Family

"It's nice to get together." That is what most of the Italians I have met say. Uncles, aunts and cousins all get together at the grand-parents' every week-end, and visit each other during the week. They visit the mother's and father's sides equally.

> I call my mother almost every day. I call my brothers once or twice in a week. And I call my children all the time. I call my daughter at least once every day. Wake up in the morning... She likes that. Every week, we have Sunday lunch. Every week, we get together. Now less [number of people] because my father died, my mother's old, but there used to be 25 people at the table.

> [Silvio, 52, architect]
>
> Every weekend, we get together at our grandparents' in St. Michel. About thirty people come. I like that. [secretary, 33]

The concept of "family" is almost synonymous with "closeness". In fact, for many, family activities have priority in their everyday life, at least so they claim. In practice, they visit parents, relatives, grandparents and receive visits from them during the week and on weekends, in addition to frequent phone calls to each other during the week.

It was hard for me to see Paola downtown on the weekend, since she visits her relatives or grandparents in the suburbs. She had to decline our friend Aida's brunch invitation saying "My cousin will visit on Saturday." Another time she turned us down saying "I said I will visit my uncle already." On one Sunday, Aida suddenly said she could not help me move to another apartment. She said, "I'm so sorry, I can't do it today because I have to help my mother fix the ceiling." Thus, the prevalent reasoning for not doing certain things very often has something to do with family commitments. Reasons given may or may not be true, but family reasons are perceived as reasonable and understandable, hence justified.

Although the concept of "family ties" is consciously accepted and actualized, it can contradict North Americans' general concept of "independence".

> Independence is to express oneself, freely. To express oneself, you have to turn your back, sometimes... it's like moving out of the city, for instance, moving to another city means that you will see your parents less and less, or you will no longer be part of the family in the same intimate way. Even if you have the character to do it, you know your mother is not going to be happy, so if you don't want to hurt her, then, don't do it.
>
> It is one thing to move out from the parents' house for a job, to another city. But it is completely another story to move out and live in the same city. They [the parents] just don't accept that.

It is perceived as unusual for children to move away from their family, no matter how old they are, without such rational reasons as marriage, a college education in another town, or employment somewhere else. Even these 'legitimate' reasons are sometimes not good enough. People, especially relatives, gossip.

When second generation Italians say, "I'm very close to my family", their notion of "closeness" requires further consideration. In Tony's case, as described above, he visits his aunts and uncles quite often during the week. When they are together, they seem relaxed and friendly to each other, yet when his relatives are not there, Tony's family often makes critical comments: "Why does Anna (Tony's cousin) wear such heavy make-up all the time? It's ugly." His mother replies, "She does! All the time. I don't think it's beautiful, either." Or,

> Something bothers me, you know, Michiko. When I was at my cousin's wedding, I was so tired, and asked Antonietta (Tony's cousin) to get me a glass of water. A glass of water, you know? She didn't do it. There's no sense of

honour.

And yet, as Tony always repeats, "Our family is very close to each other. We see each other very often." The following ethnographic example best illustrates the friendship and distance among relatives, relatives that Italians call "family".

Tony sometimes takes his son and me to visit his relatives. One afternoon, we visit his aunt Carmelina who lives in the north end of Montreal. Aunt Carmelina and her husband, Pasquale, already retired from the shoe industry, have lived in a duplex for more than fifteen years, since they moved from their apartment in the area now called Petite Italie. They have a daughter, Antonietta, a university student studying marketing. Carmelina, as mentioned before, is an older sister of Tony's mother. When we arrive, Carmelina and Antonietta come to the door smiling. Tony and his son Francesco quickly start to speak in (dialect) Italian to Carmelina and Pasquale, who come up from the basement. The daughter also speaks the same accented Italian, but when she and Tony are alone, they speak exclusively English. We sit down in the dining room and chat over espresso coffee. Since I speak 'standard' Italian, as happens in many other cases, they praise my Italian saying, "You speak Italian much better than us. We speak dialect but not Italian well." After a while, Pasquale suggests that I taste their homemade wine. Like Tony's house, their basement has a finished bar counter as well as a work area. At Tony's, it is mainly for the father's furniture and wine making. At Carmelina's, it is for wine making. Six or seven huge wine containers are lined up inside. Sitting down at the large thick wooden table, we enjoy late afternoon wine. Tony starts to make a comment about the wine, comparing it to the "excellent wine" Lina's father makes. Time quickly passes. Almost four hours have passed since we arrived when Tony and I decide to leave. Carmelina, Pasquale and Antonietta come outside and wave till Tony's car turn to the left. "What friendly people they are!" I say to Tony in the car. Tony responds: "They are jealous." "Jealous? About what?", I am puzzled by his dry response. "They are jealous of my family's wealth. (pause) They think I'm married and still living with my parents, like, I'm taking advantage of the wealth, but we are happy in the way we live. My father gave me anything I wanted but allowing me to become a pilot. So, I follow him."

Parenti, relatives, are a group of people who call each other "very close", yet there is a certain distance between them. They can be the first gossipers about members of each other's immediate families. For example, when I was with Aida in a bar, we ran into her cousin. Later on she was worried about the people we were with:

> My cousin saw us with those people. She is very critical, and she asked me, "Where did you get these people?" I was embarrassed! I told them that evening, "You are drunk, and you embarrassed me in front of my family!" [Aida]

Still, as one informant put it, "We are good rivals, but ... we are all family, anyway. We don't bite each other, you know what I mean?" Family cooperation is clearly expressed in economic terms. The basic link expressed in economic terms binds the basic family unit, the immediate family. The relatives such as uncles, aunts and their immediate family members are understood as extensions of one's immediate family: "My uncle is my father's brother. They are brothers! (with a look saying 'what do you expect?'), so we are close."

2.4. Family Relationship and Obligation

> Your parents care for you. Lots of care. Lots and lots of presents and care for you. In danger, they shelter you and so... maybe (it is) too much, and so....that's what makes the sense of bond of owing and... the guilt. It is a very important factor, you know, because whatever you do against us, brings guilt. You owe to your family. For me, to the father, I have very much a sense of owing to my family. We have the sense of owing to them, (it is) so strong that it is impossible to let go. And children carry all their lives the guilt of owing that can't be returned. It is very strong. And

this is Italian culture.

Ties within the family are consciously exercised among Italians of Montreal. Family ties are idealized and emphasized as their valued core culture 'unlike others who do not have the same values'. Parents prefer keeping children at home together until they get married, which is a sign of real adulthood. If parents and children are not living together, they phone each other every day, often several times. Father, mother, sisters, and brothers call each other in the office, at home, anywhere that they can be reached. I observed this during my fieldwork. At first, I thought it might be a conscious effort to act out intense relationships as if otherwise they would fall apart. Yet, soon I started to recognize the frequent contacts as part of their "style of life" (Schneider 1968). Calling, asking questions, or visiting shows that they care for the other person. It is hardly an intervention or intrusion as long as certain limits are observed.

The relationship is translated into economic (exchange) terms from which one cannot escape. What parents give their children in time and care is unlimited. As Sahlins (1965) analyzed it, it is a one-way flow from parents to their children, but children must pay back throughout their lives. Who brought you into the world and who brings you up is subtly intertwined with economic obligations. The emphasis on how

much the parents devoted to the family is expressed 'in order that you remember it and pay it back.' The second generation Italians of Montreal are strongly tied to what their parents impart to them. For example, to return to Paola, she admits that now she rejects her parents, especially her father, and does not want to be influenced by them. Yet she describes the way she relates to them:

> I'm a person who wants to keep on good terms with people. I want to keep a good relationship with my family, too. I don't want to fight or upset my family. They are my family, anyway. How can I lose them? It's not wise to cut the relationship with them. Like now (since my condominium building caught on fire), where could I go if I had a fight with my parents?

The psychological distance Paola depicts in her relationships with her parents, with her younger sister who is married to another Montreal-Italian (to her parents' satisfaction), with all her cousins who are younger than her and mostly male, with uncles, aunts, and so on, goes peculiarly hand in hand with her belief in a "close relationship" with her family. She feels they are the people one can count on in time of need. The definition of a family relation switches back and forth between the emotional, the cultural and the economic.

The concept of close relationships in a family is diffused and idealized. It is idealized since it is expressed as a fundamental element of Italian culture by which Italians claim to identify themselves. It is a conscious acceptance of the family as something special. There is a large family get-

together at one of the grandparents' residences each weekend, either on Saturday or on Sunday. In most cases, these families (including uncles, aunts, first cousins, grandparents) are from the same village or region of Italy, so it *is* a regional gathering and a family gathering at once. The regional ties and identity that the first generation strongly feels and maintains are stressed through those family gatherings, since the whole family and descendants are from the same area, and speak the same dialect.

> Regional relationship? Oh, it will last. It's our family. We enjoy that.

2.5. Conclusion: Family and Italian Ethnic Identity

> With Italians, you don't have to explain much. Culture is the same (Lina, nurse, 27).

In this chapter, I have emphasized the family as it symbolizes and defines Italian culture, marking off from others. Italians are both aware and proud of the self-perception that their style of living in Montreal is not similar to others. It differs from others in the sense, as I described above, of an exceptional emphasis on family-centred life, which Italians view as extremely valuable. Their sense of this 'shared' value constitutes the key element of their group consciousness.

The assertion of a strikingly strong identity as Italians, should be understood in a subjective context.[8] Since Individual Italians are constantly exposed to differences, 'culture' and 'identity' are never taken for granted. Furthermore, as we have seen with traditional paternalism, contradictions, expressed in terms of independence and gender equality, start to develop within the ethnic kinship system. So Italian identity must continually be reproduced. Family ties are constantly reaffirmed in the rhetoric of economic exchange in which children forever owe unpayable debts to their parents. The intense unity within the extended family is acted out through frequent visits and phone calls during the week and weekend gatherings. The extended family is made up of immediate families loosely or tightly connected to each other; and each immediate family is careful not to become the target of gossip. All these family interactions plus other elements such as regional identity, shared history, and a variety of economic, political and social relationships are conceived of in terms of "Italian family" and "our culture".

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[8]Gmelch (1986), for example, describes how both the self-imposed separation of Gypsies from others (subjective) and the stigmatization of Gypsies by others (objective), work together to form the collective identity of the Gypsies. Drummond (1982) also notes the "continuum" of ethnic identity between subjective and objective. Dominguez (1986) and Tentchoff (1980) have both observed that the stigma attached to Cajuns by others influences the persistence of their ethnic identity, emphasizing an objective aspect. My argument here is different from what Geertz (1973), Isaac (1975) and Stack (1986) maintain. They discuss the primordial nature of ethnic identity in which an individual grows up to think of himself or herself as "born into" an ethnic group.

The beliefs in family and Italian ethnic identity are in this sense intertwined.

Among second and subsequent generations, the sense of being Italian continues to be marked. Di Leonardo, observing the Californian Italians, argues that the "work process influences the ethnic and kinship components of networks, and through them, ethnic identity" (Di Leonardo 1984: 156). She suggests that people create and negotiate their ethnic identities "responding to their individual and collective economic positions." In Montreal, where the majority of the first generation immigrant Italians fall into the working class, and ethnicity is always *the* political discourse, Italian ethnic identity is sharply defined in everyday life. For second or third generation Italians, their Italian identity involves conscious choice: "I realized that I'm Italian"; "I always thought I was a Canadian, but one time I realized that I'm of Italian origin".

> Frank Campi (a local political figure), like myself, is a Quebecer, let's face it. He's born here. But one thing we will never, ever, ever say is that we are not Italians. I cannot deny the fact that my parents are from there, although I was born here and am very happy to be a Canadian or Quebecer, but I'm an Italian-Canadian, or Canadian-Italian, if you like it. [Italian councillor, B.A., 38]

> Independently, by themselves (referring to his two children born in Montreal), they learned the Italian language. They are fascinated by their origin, and they studied the language when they went to Italy. And they feel very, very much Italian. They chose to be Italian. [architect, 56]

The powerful sense of ethnic consciousness, and the willful choice to be an Italian, is vigorously expressed by second generation Italians of Montreal, who usually call themselves "Italian" rather than "Canadian".

At the same time, there exist different levels of commitment to and expression of this ethnic identity. The variable history of immigration, the existence of different generations, different attitudes toward the so-called Italian Community, and origins in various regions of Italy remind us that unique individuals embrace distinct variants of ethnic identity with different levels of commitment (see di Leonard 1986; Handler 1988). I have been concentrating on the more manifest shared features of Italian identity and culture among second generation Italians in Montreal. The strong sense of being Italian entails strong solidarity among Italians. Their strong ethnic identity and familism can be explained by historical, social, economic and political factors, which will be discussed in later chapters. But first, we must look at a case of women's challenge to patriarchy as a sign of the potential erosion of traditional familism and examine the failure of this challenge. This case will illustrate the profound link between ethnic identity and familism, a theme that recurs throughout the thesis.

CHAPTER 3

Class, Ethnicity and Gender Relationships

> I don't want to get married just because he's an Italian, you know? There are a lot of people who get married just because he's Italian or she's Italian. That's why there are so many Italian couples who get divorced later on. [Marisa 26]

The following section depicts the complexity of the changing relationship between genders among second generation Italians, especially from women's perspectives. In the previous chapter, I concluded that Italians of Montreal try to maintain family relationships regardless of various social differences. It is, however, in gender relationships that the myth of 'family' as Italian culture, the myth that every Italian shares the same values, is most vulnerable to erosion.

As different individuals have different views on how gender relations should be, it is not my aim to generalize about "Italian women" here. Differing individual experiences fail to conform neatly to the common statistical categories such as age, generation, education and occupation, and prevent us from committing to any general statement.

Women grow up (as gendered subjects) with variable socialization at home and variable outside influences. The internalization of these experiences influences their gendered

identity. Yet, through my field research, I perceive patterns that allow (especially second generation or first generation women who grew up in Montreal) to be roughly divided into two groups. One is working-class women who hold occupational positions or are housekeepers who tend to maintain traditional familism, commit themselves to their extended family relationships and accept the traditional woman's domain (home) and role (housekeeping). The other group consists of women who are interested in career advancement, believe in gender equality and require of their husbands a similar commitment to the household chores. These women are more and more marginalized in the Italian Community (or feel that they do not fit into the Community). This is essentially a contrast between working-class women and professionals (or managerials). Yet, no matter what the class or occupational background, family ties and intense personal communication networks composed of family and *paesani* entail certain expectations for a woman's conduct. These gendered codes of conduct often conflict with those of "North America" which are supposed to be more gender-equal. The choices women make between these alternatives is often concordant with their educational and career (class) positions.

To illustrate the diversity of Italian women of Montreal, I present the experiences of four women: Aida, Paola, Marisa and Maria, each representing aspects of other Italian women's

experience. Then, I describe the rise and fall of the feminist Italian women's group, *Centro Donne, Montreal*. In the context of the changing mood of feminism in general, the Centre's history represents the contradiction that women encountered and tried to resolve. The Italian Community plays a role of a symbolic and "real" enemy. The Centre eventually undergoes a stunning shift in stance: from leftist fighter for women's liberation to conservative vanguard of traditional familism.

Aida was a founding member of the Centro Donne. The reasons for her commitment to the Centre and for her leaving it are woven into the ethnography of the Centro Donne and into Aida's own story. Paola, a secretary, has never been in touch with the Centro Donne. I present her here as one example of the contemporary Italian woman who prefers to stay in the 'traditional culture' and yet breaks some rules of traditional conduct. She does not know about the Centre. Neither Aida nor Paola, both in their early thirties, have married. Marisa is of mixed descent, having an Italian father and a German mother. In her we can closely observe how she 'objectifies' the Italian culture that she feels she "grew up" within but does not "belong to". She is married to an engineer who is of British background. Maria, a school teacher, on the other hand, got married to an Italian engineer, and is raising two children. She is an example of the category of Italian women

with higher education and jobs outside the home, who also maintain the household as housewives. Marisa and Maria do not know about the Centre.

In conclusion, although I observe two currents among Italian women, it is critical to note that 1. the two are connected by a wide range of ambiguous levels of gender identities; and 2. these women all negotiate and make compromises in fitting their self-definitions to their family lives. On the other hand, their families accept actual changes in gender definition *on the basis* that those changes are harmonious with their family values. The combination of the four women's stories and the rise and fall of the Italian feminist centre represents ambivalence, firm belief, compromise, challenge and the mixture of all these in the confrontation of gender identities with Italian tradition/familism.

3.1. Stories of Four Women

<Paola>

Paola is thirty-three years old and was born in 1960 in Montreal. Her parents immigrated from Sicily. She grew up in the St. Michel area which was already largely populated by Italian working-class families. After high school education, she started to work as a secretary. Since then, she has not changed her job, nor stopped working, nor gone back to school to further her education. She grew up with a Sicilian dialect

at home and spoke English at school; she speaks neither standard Italian nor French well. She usually wears a long skirt and rarely puts on a tank-top in summer. If she does, she covers it with a shawl. She wears make-up, including bright red lipstick.

At the age of twenty-one, she met a second generation Italian man from Sicily through her family's friends. They almost got married: her parents ordered a white wedding dress; discussion between the two families about the date and the place of the marriage was under way. One night, however, Paola decided to cancel the wedding. Some of her friends informed her that the man that she was about to get married to was involved in criminal activities.[1] The whole situation was upsetting for her: expectations of marriage and becoming a housewife suddenly fell apart. She felt strong resentment towards her parents: besides having controlled her life, they in fact also *knew* about her fiancé's family's criminal reputation yet still encouraged the marriage. She reflects today on the fact that the failure of her marriage plan caused her to "wake up". She resolved not to be controlled by her parents and to start her own life. The independence became a necessity. She moved out

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[1]"Drug dealer family", she said. By that, she implied that they are part of the `Mafia' in Montreal. She did not want to make any further comment. The existence of Italian as well as Jewish and French mafia is reported in the news media. A journalist recently undertook extensive research on the recent history of mafia families in Montreal. See Edwards (1990).

of her parents' home. Instead of renting an apartment, she purchased a condo, because she thought that in the long run, it would save money instead of wasting it on rent. Also, for this reason, she persuaded her parents to accept her purchase. Since then, she visits her family home in the suburbs every weekend, Saturday or Sunday, spending a whole day with her immediate and extended family who also visit.

<Aida>

Aida is in her late thirties. She was born in Campobasso, Molise in Italy. She came to Montreal when she was seven years old in 1964. The family found an apartment in the area now called 'Petite Italie' in the Jean-Talon area. The family lived there until they later purchased a duplex in Villeray (a little north of Petite Italie). She grew up in a family in which the father worked for a company as a manual labourer and the mother worked in a textile factory after their immigration; Aida witnessed hard work and money saving in her family; she saw immigrants 'exploited' because they did not speak the language and because they were mostly ignorant of the laws which could have protected them.

When she went to university, Aida took a double major in European history and political science. She wanted to learn about the country she and her family came from and about politics and poverty. She wanted to fight against the general

exploitation of the poor by the rich. She began volunteer work at the women's centre. There, to her surprise, she encountered many women in poverty who had difficulty in escaping from violent spouses. She realized that she needed to have a good knowledge of the law in order to help them practically. She considered becoming a lawyer, in particular a family lawyer, who would help people rather than working simply for the money. To be a lawyer is highly regarded in 'Italian culture'. In those days, the Italian Community work was important for Aida. She joined and was active in the immigrant aid association (FILEF) and became vice-president. Also, during this time in her university education, she met other Italian women who were conscious of the problems of immigrant women, and started to work on the formation of the Italian women's centre, with the ideal of a centre that 'understands Italian women's needs'. Her relationship with the Community, however, became highly ambivalent. She says, "Eventually, I was deeply hurt". She felt that the more she showed her commitment to the Community, the more they rejected her.

> There was an international conference on Italian immigrant women in Rome in 1983. I was vice-president of FILEF. I wrote a paper, was scheduled to deliver it at the panel, and just before the trip, they (FILEF president and other Community members) cancelled! They told me that I was not to give my paper, and I was not listed in the delegation.

Her paper took a critical look at the common practice of 'black-hand' (illegal hiring and accompanying cheap labour)

and immigrant working women's sufferings in their new country, rather than telling rosy success stories. After this, Aida left the association in disappointment. During her university years, she went to Italy for the first time since she had immigrated to Montreal. It was a special trip because she went abroad by herself for the first time. This trip to Italy made a dramatic impression, which remains with her today. After her bachelor's degree, she went to law school in Montreal. Then, within a year, she quit the school. She "could not stand their elitist attitudes", which she describes as "Anglo-oriented racism (by Anglos against 'others')". She went back to her volunteer work at the women's centre. There, again, she faced problems that she could have helped them with if she had had some legal knowledge. She made a firm decision to go back to law school, but this time to a francophone university in Montreal. She finished her studies and succeeded in the bar exam. When the time came for her to find work in a law firm, she chose to open her own business, because she felt it was necessary to keep independence so that she could select the clients she wanted to work for. I first met her in 1987; she had practised family law for five years. When she started to work as a lawyer, she moved from her family home to the upstairs of the family's residence. She rented from her family who were the owners of the building, paying two hundred dollars a month, approximately one-third of the usual rent. She stayed there until July 1993. She then

moved to the house she purchased downtown, five minutes' walk (on the same street) from her best friend Lina, who also immigrated from Italy with her family when she was small. Lina had also purchased a house and moved out, leaving her family home shortly before Aida. Both Aida and Lina rent the first floor of the buildings in which they live. Aida wanted to move out from the upstairs dwelling of her parents because she felt it was too close. Besides that, she wanted a change in her life and felt a compelling need for complete independence from her family: she felt she needed to break her emotional dependency on them. Because of the proximity (upstairs to downstairs), she used to be at her parents' almost every day, having supper with them during the week, lunch together on the weekends. The physical and emotional link was in conflict with her wish for privacy. Her parents reluctantly agreed to her decision to move out, respecting the act as her investment in real estate.

<Marisa>

Marisa was born in Montreal, the third child in her family. She grew up with two brothers and one sister and experienced the 'machismo' and male chauvinism of her brothers. She went to university and studied Spanish, German and Italian. In the meantime, she started to work in a department store as a salesperson. She continued to work there and was offered a full-time position when she was about to graduate. She took

it, and was soon promoted to supervisor of the section. Today, after ten years' experience, she has been promoted to manager of the whole department store. She got married to John, an engineer of British origin a few years ago. Although she keeps an Italian identity, her circle of close friends (composed of two francophones and one anglophone) shows that she is open to people who are not of Italian origin. She considers her relationship with her husband to be non-sexist: neither of them accept a sexual division of labour in the household; they both appreciate each other's economic independence. She jokes and laughs about her family get-togethers: "It is so Italian (giggles), you can't believe it, it's so Italian!" What she calls "very Italian" is made up of many elements: speaking Italian, yells, screams, emotions, women busy cooking and the authoritarian father's attitudes. She says the distance she feels toward such "Italian culture" comes from the fact that her mother is from Germany. Although she was brought up in what she calls the "Italian way", she always recognized it as such and she does not belong to it entirely. She feels that "the macho attitudes of Italian males are ridiculous". In association with female friends of different "cultural backgrounds", she approaches "Italian culture" as exemplified exclusively by her male family members.

<Maria>

Maria is in her mid-forties, born in 1947. She came to Montreal when she had turned two years old. She grew up in St. Michel and later on the family purchased a house in St. Leonard. Through her adolescence, she was always encouraged by her father to have an education in order to get a decent job. To go to university was thus very important for her family. She majored in French literature in university, and became a high school teacher, teaching the French language. At the age of twenty-seven, she got married to an Italian who was her cousin's friend. She is satisfied with being a school teacher, since she can go home at three o'clock, to her housework. Both her parents and her parents-in-law help baby-sitting their grandchildren. Yet, Maria has been in charge of the discipline of her children, and her parents and her parents-in-law respect that. Maria and her husband have some disagreements on child-rearing, which sometimes lead to fierce arguments. The arguments could be concerned with the time their children should go to bed; or the length of time the children can watch T.V. Serious problems occur when they think of their children's future. Her husband maintains that their sons (one is seven years old, the other, four years old) "have to" become lawyers or medical doctors. Maria thinks that it is their sons' decision and parents should not interfere. Maria thinks that, overall, her sons listen to her well, but she feels that sometimes she has to raise her voice

many times and still her sons treat her like "it's only mom"; meanwhile, if it is her husband, once is enough. She thinks that her sons are more afraid of her husband. Her husband "can" help do some of the housework (for example, washing dishes) yet she does most of the work at home, and she does not have much of a problem with that, since she feels that she has the time to do it. She considers her family to be most important, and the whole immediate family visits parents (both hers and her husband's) every weekend. She maintains a close friendship with her younger sister and younger brother, and her husband's older sister. The children of these siblings fall in a similar age range and they get along well. It is important to Maria to solidify the family ties even further, and she kept the godparentship of her children exclusively among such extended family (including the affinal family) members. Her siblings have done the same, and she feels more "secure" that way. It is also important that her sons can communicate with their grandparents in their dialects.

These four women illustrate the diversity of Italian women's experiences. Because Italian women grow up with dual points of reference - a female identity within the family (and the Italian communities), and the more liberated attitudes found outside - their choices are conscious ones, although being in accordance with the family and the community is easier since it avoids possible conflicts. Their socio-economic status and

ethnic identity add to the complexity of their experiences.

In Maria's case, maintaining a career does not interfere with her female role in the family. She enjoys one of the benefits of fulfilling a traditional female role: both her parents and her parents-in-law take care of her children as traditional grand-parents do. On the other hand, for Marisa, who has no children, the traditional sexual division of labour does not make sense. Both she and her husband work outside, and both should do their fair share in housekeeping. Furthermore, she does not feel that she belongs to the 'Italian Community'. In the cases of two unmarried women, Aida and Paola, both have decided to move out of their parents' homes where they grew up and were traditionally supposed to stay until their marriage. It is a traditional rule among Montreal Italians that unmarried children, regardless of their age, stay at home with their parents. On the other hand, it is extremely difficult for the young generation of Italians to bring their girlfriends or boyfriends to their homes where they share the same living space with their parents. It is in many cases impossible because they are not allowed to have sexual relationships prior to their marriage. It is thus disrespectful to bring home their sexual partners in the presence of their parents. When Aida and Paola tried to persuade their reluctant parents, they both stressed the fact that they were purchasing home as an investment; besides, it

would be preparation for a future family home.

Today, the strength of traditional gender relations in Italian communities should be understood in relation to the strong emphasis on familism in defining ethnic identity. As seen in the previous chapter, since family values and Italian ethnic identity are used almost synonymously, the more keenly individuals feel their Italian identity, the more they tend to lean on patriarchal conservatism. Although differing concepts and attitudes toward gender relationships exist in relation to class, occupation, and personal background, still the power of ethnic and cultural identification masks self-definitional divisions among women. The following case study of the rise and failure of the feminist Italian women's centre best illustrates the dysfunctional compromises involved in the confrontation of Italian women's new identity with the ethnic framework of 'Italian tradition'. The failure of Centro Donne, in a sense, also reflected the general mood of conservatism predominant in the North America of the 1980s. It nevertheless eloquently represents the complex relationship between class, ethnic identity and the shifting nature of gender relationships.

3.2. Italian Feminism in the 1970s

3.2.1. Centro Donne

Aida Mastroanni

SOUS TOUTES RESERVES 8 Mar. 1991

CONSEIL D'ADMINISTRATION
DU CENTRO DONNE MONTREAL

Mes Dames,

C'est avec regret que le 12 février 1991, j'ai donné ma demission du Conseil d'administration du Centro Donne parce que vous ne voulez pas addresser la question de la violence conjugale.

...

Comment continuer sur un C.A. qui a PEUR de comment elles vont être perçues par la communauté italienne et que cela soit plus important que d'aider les femmes en besoin?

Quand nous avions fondé le Centro - Donne c'était avec des objectifs bien précis. Que c'est il passé pendant toutes ces années?

Centro - Donne est devenu un club social ...

...

Centro-Donne n'a pas d'autonomie. Centro - Donne n'a pas de poids politique au sein de notre communauté. ... Deux des personnes sur le C.A. travaillent à la Casa d'Italia. Où est l'autonomie du Centro - Donne? Centro - Donne a été récupéré.

...

Et vous, mes chères amies, vous êtes manipulées, vous faites ce qu'il faut faire NE PAS DERANGER le status quo.

Je vous incite a déranger parce que c'est comme ça que les choses changent pour celles qui sont toujours silencieuses. [the letter of resignation from Aida to Centro Donne]

During the 1970s, Montreal experienced the culmination of feminism and of a general leftist mood[2]. In these political currents, a group of Italian women decided to set up a social service centre for women in the Italian community[3]. What made

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[2] Radical feminism first emerged in the United States (with the political movements for the civil rights and against the Vietnam war) and influenced Quebec feminist sentiment. See Micheline Dumont, Michèle Jean, Marie Lavigne and Jennifer Stoddart, *Quebec Women: A History* (1987), especially Chapter 15.

[3] The founding members were basically composed of women who immigrated to Montreal when they were children and grew up in Montreal. Today's Centre's administrators are mostly

the centre they planned very unique was that it was not just a gathering place but a centre with a clear feminist stance. Despite the chronic financial difficulty that other Montreal shelters also experienced, they managed to survive as a centre. Although it still exists, the centre today represents a significantly different institution from the original. The dramatic shift of the centre documented below best illustrates the Italian Community's firm ideas on gender relationships in contrast to the changing ideas of many Italian women today.

My account combines information from various sources. These include the centre's newsletter, *Bollettino* (Bulletin)[4], interviews with past and present members, clients and founders as well as my frequent observations in the past few years at the centre. First, I will discuss the process of its foundation. Then, I will present the confrontation between the Italian Community and the Centre, which are well documented in the Bollettino and recalled by the centre's workers. Third, I will look into the nature of the observed shift in the Centre's stance occurring around the mid-1980s. The letter shown above was written by Aida, one of the founders and member of the board of administration of the Centre. Aida lef the Centre in despair when it turned down

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second generation women who were born and grew up in Montreal.

[4] This is a newsletter published by the Centre on a monthly or bimonthly basis.

her proposal for a conference regarding conjugal violence in the Italian communities. It was a challenge to break the 'silence' and to focus on the dark side of the Italian family.

3.2.1.1. The Beginning

Centro Donne - Women's Centre was founded by a group of Italian women in July 1978. The idea to found a social centre for Italian women was born at a seniors' meeting comprised exclusively of Italian men in St. Michel. It was September 1977. Young university-educated Italian women who grew up in Montreal decided to take the initiative to create an organization for women since they felt the lack of such a service for Italian women. The founding members had been inspired by leftist and women's liberation movements that started in 1960s. They focused on the following two problems: the Italian cultural tradition and work exploitation by the surrounding society. On the labour market, immigrant women were exploited as cheap labour, and at home, women's work never decreased. Immigrant women's life was filled with labour, either in the factory or at home. Thus, Italian women were isolated and cut off from the larger society. In many cases, they were cut off from any social links beyond their families.[5]

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[5]Centro Donne founders also located a problem relating to younger generation Italian women in adjusting to traditional gendered discipline at home: the so-called generation-gap. This, however, became a more and more marginal issue as the Centre lacked the attention and the participation of younger

Centre personnel focused on serving as active consultants. They offered the legal advice of a volunteer Italian lawyer; a psychologist and social workers tried to help with family problems including children's drug use, the burden of baby-sitting grandchildren and so on. Secondly, the Centre attempted to act as a friendship facilitator for 'isolated' Italian women. They set up a programme called 'Café rincontre' in which women would have an occasion to meet other women. To encourage integration into wider society (thus to combat isolation), the Centre offered free language courses in both French and English.

Furthermore, the Centre began distributing a newsletter to participants. Their motivation in the early years is echoed in the interview record of a worker at the Centre taken in 1980. They adopted a strongly accusatory tone when speaking about traditional "Italian culture", which was blamed for the immigrant women's problems.

> This has really kept women in their traditional place, and this is the particular condition that they live which is so different from the Quebecois woman. [...] the specific problems of Italian women are caused by the community she lives in. It is very closed and forces the Italian woman to live in a closed environment. [interview record in Atri, 1980: 73]

Thus, "the emancipation of Italian immigrant women" was their

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Italian women.

central focus.[6] From the outset, the Centre challenged and threatened the Italian Community, not only in direct attacks, but indirectly through their criticism of the traditional Italian family style. The following interview taken in those years vividly captures the reaction from the Community:

> The fact that we (the Centre) exist bothers them (the Italian Community, i.e., male participants), even if we don't do anything. Yet, we are very low-keyed. We don't take strong stands on anything or hand out press releases and that type of thing. Just our presence nonetheless, the fact that a women's centre exists dealing with women's issues, bothers them because we are disturbing the status quo within the community. [...] We are often asked to participate in committees and activities, everyone wants us although nobody likes us. Thus there is this double message. [Atri, 1980: 75]

The newsletter documents the militant views of Centre personnel, directed especially toward the Italian Community media. They targeted various Italian newspapers (*Corriere Italiano, Cittadino Canadese*) and radio and T.V. programmes. They published poems about feminism. The following are some examples:

> "The girls of Montreal", says Ernesto Crescitelli, "are cold like a ship. At least the ship chooses (to navigate) in spring ... they behave in a reserved way like soldiers... preparing a big offensive ... if they speak, they are not saying anything... they don't have a sense of humour either" [...] This article ... appeared in Sept. 12 of the Cittadino. (*Bollettino* 1984)

> <Differently - Abled Women, Our Places>
>
> Sisters, our brains are questioned in positions of administration.

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[6]This is manifest recurrently in the early issues of *Bollettino* (the newsletter). Also, the objectives of the Centre are declared in regulations formulated in 1983.

> In this patriarchal system, social beauties have leeway to gaining power.
> ...
> There is a politic in the air.
> It devalues our brains
> And gives our bodies strange stare.
> Now, hold it sisters; we're sane.
> ...
> Differently-abled sisters what can we say about friends and lovers.
> The mystique of us in role of wives
> Leads even men with disabilities to prefer the others.
> For love and affection we no longer strive.
> ...
> When the physical world is made for you and me
> Within the women's movement we'll gain access.
> Patriarchal-male-politics will change you'll see
> Our place within the disabled person's and women's movement will be reassessed. [Maria Barile] (*Bollettino* 1985)

> [T]he ideas transferred by the Catholic Church go against the demand of women's rights (*Bollettino* 1984)

Centro Donne emerged as defiant of Italian culture, and of the Italian Community at large, by attacking what the Community values and represents. In many cases, it took the form of criticism against paternalism, the traditional Italian family style. Such critical voices came from a minority.

3.2.1.2. Struggles for Maintenance of the Centre

Publication of *Bollettino* was abruptly stopped for about a year between Oct. 1985 and Jan. 1987. Internal conflicts caused the sudden interruption. In addition to their chronic problem with the budget, there was a severe divide among the members: leftist feminists and non-sympathizers of feminism. In need of volunteers, the group of women who initiated the opening of the Centre invited some Italian women who were what

early members recall as "not necessarily feminists". They welcomed their help in hopes that they could still draw general attention among Italians and create more participants for their activities. The fundamental disagreements as to how to define women led ultimately to serious division among the workers. The conflict eventually ended in the loss of feminist members. When finally the editor of the *Bollettino* left, the Centre failed for the next year to find a new editor. When the newsletter was started again in 1987 with a new editor, it signalled a clear change at the Centre. Anna, the first editor for the Centre, was appalled when she learned that two Italian women who were full-time workers at *Casa d'Italia*, the spokesman-institution of the Italian Community, began also to work for the Centre:

> Casa is the one we were fighting against. Casa is the one who didn't want us to exist. And why are those women from there involved in the Centro Donne?

Such words as 'emancipation' completely disappeared from the new *Bollettino*. Instead, it began to exhibit a new feature: an emphasis on the family.

3.2.1.3. From Feminism to Vanguard of Italian Familism

> **What makes the difference between Centro Donne today and other existing Italian Associations?**
>
> What distinguishes Centro Donne from other general social service organizations is that this is an Italian place, a home for Italians, using their own language, and understanding their culture. The problems Italian women find have many causes: women don't stand up for themselves. Either husbands' problems or sons' problems. That is why the Centre

should address both women and men, young and old.

> Centro Donne should be more "family" oriented, as a family centre, and should even change its name. Instead of Centro Donne, it should be something like Centro Famiglia. ...because 'family' is the most important thing for Italians. [Tina, former director, 35, current board member, B.A.][7]

The acceptance of the Italian tradition and the Italian family includes the woman's traditional position in the family and in the community. As if to respond to this, today's *Bollettino* focuses on health and nutrition for the family. The poems they publish express love toward parents. The 1988 May/June issue, for example, is highly explicit about the idealized family. The page titled "Culture without Fear" is dedicated to the mother (following Mother's Day). The poem in that issue is "La Famiglia" and glorifies the family as "the essential nest", "the one rose which has stem of love", and "the true, secure affection". The epitomizing example is found in the 1991 March issue. This has a special title (which appears annually): "Celebrate con noi la giornata internazionale della donna (Celebrate with us international

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[7]. Tina is the one who fought efficiently against the financial problems of the Centre for two and a half years as the director, and succeeded in raising the funds from $23,000 a year to $90,000. Tina made a series of practical changes that were crucial to the Centre's survival. The strategy she took was, first of all, to make Centro Donne as visible as possible as a social organization. Without recognition, you cannot get any funding, any participants, or any support. So, promoting the Centre was her first priority. Secondly, she realized the importance of the physical look of the locality and the quality of the social workers as professionals: the place should have a professional look, it should be serious and pleasant at the same time. For that, spending money to find other funding was necessary.

women's day)". The cover story read:

> The silence and the invisible sacrifice of millions of housewives have made possible the success of our immigrants in all the world, (and) to those (immigrants) the feminine presence has guaranteed familial tranquility and stability, and it is the guardian of cultural patrimony.[8] (Bollettino 1991)

Health and the family are the matters of concern for women; the article elevates the sacrifices Italian women make for the stability of the family, to which Italian families owe their success. The next article in the same issue, another article from *Vita Sana* (Healthy Living), looks at child rearing; it is followed by an article on child-psychology.[9]

In this context, in 1990, Aida, one of the board members and founders of the Centre, proposed a conference on family violence (husbands' violence against wives). As a family lawyer in Montreal, highly conscious of current circumstances, Aida wanted to focus general attention on the issue. First of all, through gossip, people in the communities (including board members of the Centre) were "aware" that there was a problem of conjugal violence. Aida thought it necessary to open it up to public debate.

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[8]Original text in Italian.

[9]The same issue discusses `drinking alcohol' and `constipation' as frequent problems of old age, and includes detailed nutritional information for preventing these problems.

One night, a board of administration meeting was held, which included Aida, to discuss her proposal. During the discussion, all the women gathered there agreed that conjugal violence did exist and was kept silent within the Italian communities. At the end of the meeting, however, nobody but Aida voted for the proposal for a conference, an open discussion. Aida could not believe what she was witnessing. For Aida, it was incomprehensible and unacceptable that they should say; "We don't have time to do this". She took their rejection of her proposal personally, and she decided to leave the Centre once again, this time with a furious letter of resignation above cited.

Because Aida had been away from the Centre after its beginning, she was unaware that a complete shift had taken place at the Centre. She was also unaware of the fact that, except for her, the board members were either housewives (all married to Italians) or office workers - the working-class. When Aida heard unanimous silence rejecting the plan, she suspected that they did not want to publicly admit the problems in the communities.

It is indeed true that many Italians tend to be secretive, especially about family matters. Yet, what was at stake here was that support for Aida from these women would have brought them into direct conflict with their traditional gender

relations at home. They could not take an initiative to raise the issue: it would have been a challenge to male power, and thus to their husbands.

> [Italian] women have such burdens of preoccupation for their husbands. Many women who come to visit Centro Donne don't reveal it to their husbands. For some women, it is a matter of concern whether their husbands know about it or not. It is because..., Centro Donne, because of its name, is very often perceived as a hard-core feminist centre, and it is a negative image. So, many husbands become highly sceptical about the centre, worried about it as some kind of hatred promotion against men. They simply wonder, "What is Centro Donne?" [former director at the Centre]

3.3. Ethnicity, Gender Relationships and Class

Through my field research, I observed that the class factor divides young Italian women into two broad currents: working-class women who tend to be loyal to Italian familism on the one hand, and professional or managerial women, who tend to advocate gender equality and ask for a fair share of household work. The erosion of tradition is not well accepted yet. The family oriented lifestyle is actually passed on to the subsequent generation. Despite this, some Italian women (of manifestly professional background) are changing. Actual changes among those women are, however, peculiarly negotiated within the family's resistance to change. As both Paola and Aida left home, starting their own independent lives in Montreal, it created conflict but was accepted as the North American way. Yet, Paola, a secretary, maintains that it is

important to be 'traditional' and 'conservative' in gender relationships, meaning fulfilling the woman's role at home. Marisa, a department store manager, "could not stand" her brothers' male chauvinist attitudes. Aida, who proposed open discussion on family violence, is single and a professional (with her own business). Many professional Italian women I spoke with confessed the difficulty of finding the ideal spouse who understands both gender equality "and Italian". They then show an interest in men of other cultural backgrounds, as with Marisa who eventually married John, a man of British origin.

Yet, there is a wide range of middle ground between the two broad patterns. Maria, as a high school teacher, works with relative autonomy in her job, and agrees to play a woman's role at home. When Aida and Paola revealed their strong interest in moving out of their family homes, both their parents tried their best to discourage them, since the notion of children leaving the family home before marriage goes against the Italian family style. On the other hand, this sign of change was accepted by the parents on the basis that their daughter's purchase of a house or condominium was a form of real estate investment, and was for their future family. Thus, it would not be acceptable if they moved out and rented an apartment, since renting a room is a waste. Identification with family is often expressed in a material form. Or, a

material interest takes the form of an investment for and by family. In this way, the actual erosion of tradition is rationalized in terms of values in the traditional culture that individuals are compelled to respect.

CHAPTER 4

ITALIAN CULTURE AND THE IDEOLOGY OF REGIONAL IDENTITY

> I don't know what association is all about but I know it is important, because it is our culture. (elementary 1)

4.1. Introduction

I miei genitori pensano molto all'Italia, hanno molta nostalgia dei loro genitori, dei parenti, degli amici e certe volte anche della loro antica casa. Ogni tanto li sento discutere che vorrebbero ritornare. Tuttavia pensano che non si potranno abituare alla vita che ora c'è in Italia; ormai sono troppo forti legami con questa terra.

My parents think much about Italy, they have much nostalgia for their parents, for their friends and some for their old house as well. Sometimes I hear them discussing that they wish to go back. However, they think that they would not be accustomed to the life in Italy any more; they are already tied too strongly to this land.

Gli Italiani hanno portato con loro tante tradizioni dalle loro regioni d'Italia. [...] Gli Italiani hanno creato delle associazioni per conservare le loro tradizioni e cultura per poter tramandarle ai loro figli. Per conoscere meglio questa penisola chiamata Italia di qui mi parlano spesso i miei genitori. Sarei tanto curioso di vedere il luogo dove essi sono nati, la casa [sic] dove sono vissuti e dove io sarei vissuto se non fossero emigrati. (junior 1)

Italians have brought many traditions from their region of Italy with them [...] Italians have created associations to conserve their traditions and culture in order to be able to transfer them to their children. To know better this peninsula called Italy of which my parents speak often. I feel very curious to see the place where they were born, the house where they grew up and where I would have grown up if they had not immigrated. (junior high 1)

Perché mi piace andare in vacanza in Italia, perché i miei genitori mi hanno parlato molto del paese dove sono nati. (elementary 4)

(The reason) I like to go to Italy for vacation is that my parents talked to me about the village where they were born. (elementary 4)

From one angle, ethnic associations may indicate the development of social services within an ethnic group. Some

sociologists have measured the level of self-sufficiency of an ethnic community with the concept of what Breton calls "institutional completeness". Besides the aspect of mutual aid, however, Italian associations in Montreal require a closer investigation. Italian associations, estimated to number more than five hundred in Montreal, underscore the local politics and economy of Italians of Montreal: these associations as social groups channel and articulate Italians into formal and informal politico-economic systems in Quebec. Among various types of Italian associations that have been formed since the time of their immigration, the associations based on the region or village of origin have special implications in Italian communities. This is the type of association that Italians call '*associazione*' for short. This chapter describes the formative process, basic structures and activities of 'associazione'. This is to focus on one of the most important functions that this type of association serves: as an ideological vehicle that powerfully supports the discourse of 'distinctive Italian culture'.

Regional/village associations generate broad yet tight and effective social networks among Italians. As such they represent, reflect and resharpen the sense of Italian "culture" and identity. Not only do they socialize the memory of the immigration process (chain migration from villages), they also establish new social experiences through communal

leisure activities.[1] A remarkable number of associations in Montreal promote unique forms of ethnic Italian community life. The discourse of 'distinctive regional culture' is constantly contested, objectified, and highlighted through local customs, cuisines and dialects that distinguish each regional group from their fellow Italians of different regional origins. These associations thus represent regional 'traditional cultures'.

The regional ethnic discourse is further materialized in the form of exchange, especially at rites of passage, in which paesani mutually reinforce each other's involvement in networks through obligatory invitations. This calls for another distinctive aspect of regional affiliations, namely the intense economic interests involved in the business of celebrating rites of passage.[2] Regional/village associations, furthermore, are the major institutions in the Italian community through which an ambitious individual can establish his or her "name" (Poulin and Painchaud 1988). My fieldwork reveals yet another feature: the unique political function served beyond the ethnic boundary: the representatives of associations (*presidenti*) can act as

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[1]See James Fentress (1992) on social memory.

[2]Some of the community members are skeptical of some village/regional associations, viewing them as a means to make profit. According to such criticism, organizers of an association, selling expensive tickets, keep the profit from dinner parties for themselves.

mediators between members (*paesani*) and both Italian and non-Italian political figures in formal sectors. I will deal in detail with this unique function in the political economy in the subsequent chapters.

My ethnographic notes indicate that 1. paesani (or regional/village) associations are exclusive social groupings that are formed with a specific (yet unstated) aim to institutionalize and structure friendship; 2. as such, they often stress religious affiliation through ritualizing their relationship in the form of village (of origin) saint worship; 3. active recruitment of participants to such a relationship calls for incessant efforts in the creation of new friendships to build a larger, "stronger" association.[3] 4. Finally, socializing in seniors' association parallels that of regional associations in some respect.[4]

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[3]In addition to encouraging reluctant paesani to participate, recruitment includes succeeding generations who qualify by birth to be involved in the existent paesani relationship. Also, spouses of different village origin often affiliate with associations as family members of qualified members.

[4]I do not wish to overemphasize a hierarchical Community structure divided and united by village and regional origins. As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, for example, not all village/regional associations are affiliated to the CNIC at the Casa. Not all district Italian seniors' associations are affiliated to the CRIC. Also, not all Italians of younger and older generations are involved in associations. For example, Aida, who appeared in Chapter 2, hardly participates in her regional association activities, and talks as if she has nothing to do with these kinds of associations. Yet, she knows paesani who are relatively close to her parents. Despite there being many Italians who do not associate with

4.1.1. Background: from aid societies to cultural institutions

Around the turn of the century, the first wave of Italian immigrants to Montreal created immigrant organizations, with the object of providing general aid to newly arrived Italians in a foreign setting. These were Società Nazionale (1875), the Immigrant Aid Society (1902), the Orders of Sons of Italy (1919), and the Order of Italian-Canadians (1940). Today only the Sons of Italy remains.

This contrasts to today's active and thriving Italian associations, organized after WWII by the second wave of Italian immigrants.[5] The associations after WWII focused

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institutionalized friendship circles apart from their own, I want to show that they are still directly or indirectly informed by and connected to the Italian social networks that are part of the Italian Community networks. To explicate this point, I have highlighted the people who are directly involved in institutional activities, only because I believe such direct involvement can reveal more overtly the social, cultural, economic and political aspects of informal social networks. Therefore, it is far from my purpose to paint a homogenous picture of the Italian Community in which everyone gets involved in association activities and has the same level of belief in ethnic identity. Despite the variations of people's involvement and belief, however, I observe among Italians in Montreal a certain underlying understanding of their `culture'.

[5]Dealing with such numerous (approximately five hundred) and varied associations, both Boissevain (1971) and Poulin and Painchaud (1988) classified Italian ethnic associations into the following four categories: 1. assistance; 2. cultural; 3. recreational; and 4 regional. Such classification, however, does not make much sense since the key elements which create the divisions are cross-cutting. For example, the main activities of regional/village groups are recreational, with their platform to conserve distinctive regional `culture'. A

more on specific interests among Italians instead of general aid. In other words, Italians who shared special interests formed associations to serve these interests. The interests include business (CIBPA, the Canadian-Italian Business People's Association,[6] in 1949) and employment (ACLI - section Montreal, l'Associazione Cristina dei Lavolatori Italiana, in 1957). ANFE (l'Associazione Nazionale Famiglie Emigranti, 1946), which is a general consulting service for Italian immigrants in general, was also formed in this period; it still exists, but by 1973, the activities of this organization consisted of parties and balls (Poulin and Painchaud 1988: 124). *La Casa d'Italia* (The House of Italy), built around this period, was meant to be a symbolic and physical centre for the Italian Community, in which the major Italian organizations could locate.[7] These associations are

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`folkloric' organization or theatre group (using the regional dialect) is essentially an extension of the parent-regional association: they represent their `traditional culture'; it is often an effort to educate and draw the attention of the young generation.

[6]The original name was Canadian-Italian Businessman's Association until they changed it to this gender-neutral name in the 1980s.

[7]The following are organizations that hold their offices there: the Italian-Canadian National Congress, the Italian Cultural Centre which has a public library, and the Fondazione. *La Casa d'Italia* (the House of Italy), a two-storey brick building, built as a symbol of the Italian presence in Montreal, is thus not really a place where Italians hang around to socialize. Whenever I visit, I have the impression that the building is rather empty: in an empty hall, the bronze statue of Christopher Columbus (made by local Italian sculptor Di Palma) is sitting on the stage; upstairs, an empty room, another empty room, and yet another empty room.

not only active today, but also, especially CIBPA, play a significant role in the Community. In 1990, CIBPA expanded by creating a youth division called Young-CIBPA. The aim of Italian associations became more focused in the mid-1960s. This is the period when the majority of today's Italian associations were formed with differing aims and plans for future expansion.

Among them are the type of regional/village associations that started to appear in the mid-1960s. They are exclusively made of, by and for the *paesani*, people of the same village of origin in Italy. They are bound and connected by the belief in shared regional culture. It is difficult to estimate and trace how many of such associations exist and/or are active, because of their spontaneous and informal nature. Presumably there are at least eighty-six of these associations today in Montreal, since this is the number given by the CNIC, *Congresso Nazionale dei Italo-Canadesi* (National Congress of Italian-Canadians) as their registered member associations.

In the large office of the Italian Cultural Centre, Mr. Pontillo, an elder immigrant, may be found typing the next issue of the Italian newsletter of the Casa, *Communità*. The office of the Fondazione is the only place I find to be lively; there is always a group of men chatting with the administrators. A couple of evenings during the week, the open rooms of the house are used for adult education, either Italian for the public (many francophones are taking courses), or English or French courses for Italians. The large empty hall in the basement is rented out to groups of people, including non-Italians, for various activities (mainly, rehearsals of folk or theatre performances).

The inception of the organization called CNIC originates directly from FAIQ, *Federazione delle Associazione Italiane in Quebec* (Federation of Italian Associations in Quebec), which was formed in 1972 in order to create a single overarching Italian organization that unites these independent, flourishing regional/village associations in Montreal. Two years after its formation, keeping the same structure and composition, it was renamed CNIC.[8] Given that CNIC is what Italians call 'the association of associations', this organization began to portray itself as the voice of the Italian Community.[9]

During the 1970s, other major Italian organizations with their special interests began to operate: *Fondazione* (Foundation, 1975) offers the community affairs fund, derived from donations by members and non-members; PICAI, *il Patronato Italo-Canadese di Assistenza agli Immigranti* (the Patronage Assistance of Italian-Canadians for Immigrants) organizes Italian Saturday school providing Italian language courses for children between 6 and 18 years of age[10]; FILEF, (la

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[8]The first president of the Congress, Mr. Rizzutto, today a senator, was elected.

[9]Every September, the Congresso elects its assembly members. The participants in the election are presidents of regional/village associations.

[10]An annual average of 3,500-3,600 students are enrolled at 31 schools. The essays cited at the beginning of this chapter appeared in the PICAI's annual pamphlet. Between 1977 and 1978, the government of Quebec also started to provide

Federazione Italiana Lavoratori e Famiglia) provides consulting services to immigrant workers informing them of their legal rights.[11] INCA (l'Istituto Nazionale Confederale d'Assistenza) focuses on legal information including pensions, work-related accidents, unemployment insurance, and tenants' problems.

Associations for senior citizens developed in the 1970s. These extremely numerous associations may appear marginal, yet their social function is not negligible[12]. Leaders of these social groups (called *presidenti*), like regional/village associations, can act as political mediators between members and politicians. These associations, numbering more than three hundred in all Montreal, are organized by residential districts. Most members are over sixty years old, first generation, and now retired. *Consiglio Regionale degli Anziani Italo-Canadesi* (CRIC, Conseil régional des personnes âgées italo-canadiennes) represents all these seniors' associations. There are still other seniors' associations which are not affiliated to the CRIC. The membership of each of these seniors' associations can range from fifty to three hundred. They focus exclusively on leisure activities, and

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foreign language courses for children: PELO (Programme d'enseignement des langues d'origine).

[11]The consultation includes insurance for injuries caused during work.

[12]I will discuss the further social implications later.

attempt to cultivate friendly contacts between members.

4.2. Regional Associations as Social Groups

4.2.1. Italian Identity and Creation of Friendship

[Case 1] Sal, and his paesani association: one village association of Campobasso

In 1966, a monk came to visit the paesani from Italy to Montreal to collect donations for the village church and to create an orphanage in Italy. The monk's parents had already immigrated to Montreal. When he arrived, five well-known paesani of Montreal gathered to receive him. At their suggestion, in order to collect money, he organized a banquet for the paesani in Montreal: selling tickets can make substantial profit. It was successful. About five hundred paesani gathered together at this banquet. At the end of the evening, this monk suggested to the participants that they form a village-association. The paesani agreed. Thus, Sal's village association started. The major activities include banquet evenings, annual trips and sports events. Doing things together keeps up the friendly ties among paesani. In 1978, they started to organize an annual village saint procession. In Italy, this particular village's annual saint procession is so large-scale that it is televised every year. In order to create the same procession, they changed the date from the end of July to the end of August: they must wait to receive original wheat with which they make ritual ornaments. Early every August, women paesani get together and knit the wheat for the procession. Today, his regional association consists of about three hundred and fifty members, which is considered to be a mid-sized association. The first Italian provincial cabinet minister, John Ciaccia is also from this village. As John Ciaccia admits, he was never associated with his *paesani*. One paesano confirmed this: "He got to his position through a different career course". Only since he became the Quebec Minister of Indian Affairs, according to paesani, did he realize the importance of his paesani:

> We had a big party for him when he was appointed Minister, even though he never responded to any invitation even when he was a Federal Minister of Indian Affairs (sic). You see, we support him anyway. If anything happens, we are the first ones to support him, you know? We are paesani. He can't deny where he is from. We are proud of him as the same paesani. And now I don't know what

> happened but he seems to appreciate us, and he has shown up at the Saint procession every year since then. He marches down the street at least for the first ten or fifteen minutes with us, and leaves. He gives a donation to our association when we ask, regularly. He sends us two or three hundred dollars.

Sal Falcone was once president of this association. He was born in that village and immigrated to Montreal with his parents when he was five years old. Sal's father was a brick-layer in the village and came to Montreal in 1950. He worked as a labourer in a factory for a year, then he started his own business as an independent brick-layer. By word of mouth, he soon received sub-contracts and his business started to thrive. Sal, after getting his bachelor's degree in civil engineering, started his own business - a construction company. He went to English school as did the majority of Italian children of his age. Although his parents preferred to send him to French school, which was just two blocks away from their residence, they were rejected. Now it has been almost forty years, but still he feels angry when he recalls the moment. The principal called him and his parents to his office, telling them that the school could not accept him because he was not francophone. He 'had to' go to the English school nine blocks away. The rejection based on their ethnic origin has remained a strong memory in his and his parents' minds. Once in English speaking-schools, Sal remembers, he never felt he was of Italian origin. But when he reached the age of seventeen or eighteen, this changed. He started to hang around with his older cousins. He noticed that he could not speak 'proper' Italian, nor a dialect, unlike his cousins. He felt that he should not throw away his ethnic origin. He started to learn Italian and started to form Italian youth groups to hang around with every Sunday afternoon. He 'came to' feel that to be Italian is important, instead of 'simply' being a Canadian. Soon, he actively participated in his own *paesani* association. Through his active commitment, he was asked to become president of the association. Later, he bought an Italian restaurant at *Casa d'Italia*. Up to the present, he has been active in *Casa*'s activities. In November, 1993, Al, the *Casa*'s first president passed away. As Sal had been a constant helper and witness at *Casa*, he was asked at the emergency meeting to take over the presidency temporarily.[13]

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[13]Al had been the president of the Casa for more than four decades until his recent death. Sal feels he is responsible for having kept the Casa the way it is: some have suggested moving the Casa from where it is now to St. Leonard, north of Montreal. There are more Italians in St. Leonard

"They are making their association, why don't we do the same?" I heard this statement many times when Italians talked about the motivation for forming their associations.[14] One informant described it as "almost like a class reunion". The difference is, however, that paesani include people who have never before met.

As witnessed in the immigrant history, networks of one's family and paesani were essential to new settlement and job attainment. Campani and others attribute the thriving of associations to this immigration background:

> Our central premise is that the success of the family's migration goals are supported by the village networks. These have been adapted to correspond with the living conditions brought about by immigration. It is this situation which leads to the creation of specific, regionally based associations [Campani, et al. 1987: 185].

Paesani relationships indeed helped the immigration process, especially the introduction to job opportunities and places of

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than in the district surrounding the Casa. Yet, "this is the place where we started. We shouldn't move just because those rich (Italians) don't want to drive down." Sal's sentiment is shared among the Italians who are still living around that area. This is but a sign of the current trend in the Italian Community. Many of the Italians who have more economic resources now live in St. Leonard. The office of the CIBPA had already moved from the original location to the present office in St. Leonard. The centre of the Italian Community, physically and symbolically, is shifting toward St. Leonard.

[14]Regional associations usually do not have regular loci for meetings. As one of the exceptions, the regional group of Veneto has a building called Casa di Veneto. `Associations' thus literally refer to the people (more precisely, families) who associate, and not to a place one visits.

first residence upon arrival (Harney 1978). Inquiry into the contemporary functions of Italian associations, many of which are rather recent products, however, leads me to investigate complex social networks. It is one thing to identify lifestyle and establish self-definition according to different villages of origin. It is another to institutionalize regional kin and friendship networks with a regulated administrative structure having a president, vice-president and councillors. Furthermore, the general trend is to an increase rather than a decrease in the scale of membership, involving both old and young generations.[15] Keeping village/regional identity is an important basis for the formation of a group. Yet, in Sal's case, he started to affiliate with his regional association based on his new-found self-identity as an Italian. Regional identification was one dimension of his Italian identity. The association is thus an expression, simultaneously, of regional and more inclusive

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[15]Campani and others report that "the phenomenon of regional associations is fairly recent" in France, especially considering that Italian immigration dates back to 1830 (Campani et al. 1987: 82). According to the number given by Campani, Catani and Palidda, more than eighty per cent of these associations have been formed since 1970. Among them, more than thirty-five per cent were created in the last few years. In Montreal, for many of the young generation, regional origin does not pose a separate ethnic dimension among fellow Italian friends, although some do value it and `come back' to support regional activities and social links as I describe in this chapter. Others are, in many cases, vital forces in Italian associations that go beyond regional origins. Both contemporary experiences are emphasizing Italian origin. This contrasts to Whyte's work in 1955 that flatly denies "the ties of loyalty to *paesani*" as "not-binding the sons as they do the father" (see Whyte 1955).

Italian identity and boundary-fixing.

4.2.2. Ritualization and Unification of Friendships

[Case 2] Saint procession of Avellinesi

"It is a devotion. It is a devotion to San Gerardo. He will help your thesis, too." Domenica, walking beside me, gave me a piece of bread. It was a sunny summer Sunday. The heat and humidity reflected off the asphalt made me feel as if the procession would go on forever. It was almost painful. Summer is a season for saint processions organized by paesani Italians in Montreal. The Avellinesi, the association I was in touch with, have their saint procession the first Sunday of August.

It starts with mass at ten o'clock in the morning in the church *Madre dei Cristiani*, the Italian parish in LaSalle. Avellinesi all over Montreal come to participate in the day-long procession combined with a picnic and games in the park. At the end of the mass, Mr. Sano, the president of the association, goes to the front beside the priest and makes a speech, thanking them for their participation. This year, as with last year, the church was full of paesani. Most of them looked aged over forty. Among them, I saw a few young women and children. Outside of the church, the amateur marching band, in their blue military-style uniforms, were waiting to play. Several men attached the association flags around their chests. Dozens of other people, among them several teenagers, were standing and chatting, waiting for the mass to end. At eleven, the mass ended. People slowly poured outside mingling with the people already there; inside the church, four men carefully started to move the statue of San Gerardo outside (the statue is always settled in front in the church, and decorated with fresh flowers). At the front door, two men were busy giving a piece of bread to each person coming out. Mr. Sano, walking in the mass of people outside, picked up the loudspeaker and started to call a participant from CNIC: "Angelo Giuliano, per favore! Angelo Giuliano!" (Angelo Giuliano, please! Angelo Giuliano!) Outside the church the crowd of paesani was even more numerous than those who were coming out, waving to each other and chatting. The priest came out, and stood by himself in the middle of the crowd, noise, laughter and yells. He noticed me and smiled as if we were accomplices in all of this. Finally things seemed to be ready, and Sano took the loudspeaker again: "Avanti, per favore, avanti! Camminate, cammina-a-te!" (Go forward, please, forward! Walk, Wa-l-k!) "Musica, comminciate la musica, per favore!!" (Music, please start the music!!) Thus, the procession started. It was twenty minutes before

twelve. The men with the flags on their chests started to move slowly, people followed (chatting), the cart of the statue of San Gerardo (children sitting around it) was pushed by four men, the amateur band started to play marching songs with trumpets and cymbals, and the crowd followed (chatting). The procession moved along streets where white brick duplexes and triplexes stood like long walls. Italian flags hung from the balconies here and there, waving in the occasional breeze.

The procession moved towards its destination, Lefebvre Park. Between different marches played by the band, they turned on the tape-recorder and played the old popular Italian songs. It was almost one o'clock when we arrived at the park. Sixty picnic tables and the stage for a pop-music band were already arranged in the field. About ten Italians (in their late teens) were already there waiting for the procession to arrive. Among them, Sylvie, Sano's daughter, was sitting on a picnic table, chatting with her younger cousin, Maria. The four paesani men and Sano soon settled near the statue of San Gerardo in the front corner. The statue shone in the sun. Paesani soon pinned down and attached the donated money at the bottom of the statue. The priest, without saying goodbye to anyone, walked back to the church by himself. Nobody talked to him, either. Crossing the field, he noticed me again and smiled. Once the statue was firmly situated, Sano took a microphone and again thanked the people, in their dialect, for their participation in the day's event, but this time he closed his speech more emotionally:

"Viva, Italia! Viva, Italia! Viva, Italia!"

The crowd chanted after him, "Viva, Italia, viva, Italia, viva, Italia!" During the incessant applause, Sano shouted into the microphone once more: "Let's enjoy the day! Buon Appetito!!" The picnic started. Everybody was at the tables, having lunch with family members. The marching band went forward and played a march, then, *O Canada* (some people clapped), and closed with a fascist march. The professional band on the stage took its turn, playing a series of old Italian songs.

The whole day's event thus involved a series of secular activities, including the popular-music band (with electric guitars and drums), a picnic and games. The boundary between the sacred and the profane was blurred. The event was extraordinary. In their everyday life in Montreal, these

paesani do not share the same neighbourhood or the same parish church. They are no longer paesani in the literal sense. Yet the procession, almost because of this contradiction, could serve as a powerful symbol to focus the social ties recreated in Montreal. The central theme 'saint worship' is made to serve the more prosaic theme of 'socializing and unifying paesani'. With his active leadership in the whole event, Sano, the president of the association, impressed upon everyone that this was an association activity. For example, although the procession started with the priest saying a formal church mass, when the mass was about to close, Sano took the microphone at the altar (beside the priest), and thanked the people in the church for their participation. When the procession reached its destination, Lefebvre Park, the priest who had accompanied them all the way walked back to the church by himself, and no one seemed to mark his departure. In the meantime, Sano was yelling 'viva Italia' while people shouted with him.

The saint processions are initiated, organized and run by the associations. "He (Sano) started this procession" (according to an Avellinese woman) and not the Italian parish church. Italian parish churches are willing to support these activities, since they are the way many (especially first generation) Italians relate to the Catholic faith. The vitality in their saint belief can generate active commitments

to parish church affiliation. For those who organize regional/village associations, the vitality of ritual associated with saints can reflect the strength of their village identity, hence their active participation in association activities. By acting out their 'tradition', they confirm their being Italian. Paesani relationships are reaffirmed through the common benefit bestowed by the protector-saint of their village of origin.[16]

4.2.3. Realizing friendship: association activities

[Case 3] Nino, Vittorio and their village association from Caserta.

When I first met Nino, at the outset of my fieldwork, he was a college student, studying nursing. He now works at a hospital as a nurse. Vittorio, his younger brother, studies mechanical engineering at college. Both were born in Montreal. Because of their commitment in the last few years, both were elected association administrators. Nino declined the vice-presidency because of his full-time job, while Vittorio agreed to act as secretary.

I joined one Sunday picnic with Nino's association. I took the chartered bus together with the *paesani*. We gathered at the neighbourhood Italian church in the north-east end of Montreal at seven o'clock in the morning. This was a one-day trip to a lake in Ontario (Park Carillon). The chartered bus was full of participants. Among them, I found a Sicilian family sitting quietly. Although they were not paesani, they caught the information on an Italian programme on the radio and decided to join in. "We are all Italians anyway. It's nicer to go out and have fun with people than staying at home on Sunday." About a hundred people joined this trip. It was a large increase in numbers compared to the summer picnic the previous year, when about sixty paesani participated.

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[16]See the literature on the relationship between religion and ethnic identity: Ackerman 1988; Matthews 1988/1989; and Nagata 1987.

On the bus, there was a young couple in their late thirties, Anna and Tony; otherwise, the majority were first generation paesani of fifty years old or more. Nino's family left for the picnic site around four o'clock in the morning, three hours earlier than our bus, in order to save enough picnic tables for all the participants (and preferably ones protected by ceilings in case of rain). When the bus started to move, Concetta, the wife of the association president stood up in front, facing the participants, and began to pray out loud to God for a safe trip in her Italian dialect. The paesani in the bus recited her prayer. When Concetta sat down in her seat, Massimo, an old paesano (around seventy years old), stood up in front, also facing us, and started to sing old popular Italian songs. The paesani in the bus sang along with him. Within an hour, we arrived at the lake. Nino's family had successfully saved the largest section for our picnic. Picnic tables were lined in three, each of them probably fifty metres long, under the ceiling that covered them. On the column that supported the high ceiling over the tables, the Italian flag and the association flag were hung. Each family started to sit down at the tables, spread table cloths, and brought out homemade cookies and juice. Some were lounging around and chatting. Maria, Nino's mother, soon began chatting with each of the paesani who gathered there. She eventually came back to her family's table where I was also sitting. In response to my question about their village saint, San Antonio, she gave me a passionate explanation of his miracles. She wanted to show his picture to me, and began searching for the picture of San Antonio she kept in her large black purse. She found her wallet, opened it, and carefully pulled out the picture of San Antonio. Since she always carried it with her in her purse, it was quite wrinkled and (I should say) fragile. "Look, *bello*, this is Sant' Antonio. He protects us. He performed so many cures and miracles. Here, take it, take it, it's yours." She was holding it closely and extended it to me, determined. She also showed me two black-and-white pictures kept in the same wallet. One was her parents' picture when they were still young and another was her sons' picture when both Nino and Vittorio were around five years old.

Maria was born in Marzanello, a village in Italy and grew up there until she was thirteen. That is why "Conosco tutti qua, conosco tutti i membri dell'associazione, certo, ho visto (loro) nel mio paese quando ero piccola (I know everybody here and everybody in the association, of course - I met them in the village when I was small)." While we were talking, Nino, Vittorio and some other paesani were busily arranging volleyball nets. Other male paesani were renting pedal boats. The president was standing between the long tables, talking to Dino (the treasurer) and Antonio (a councilman). The Sicilian family settled in the middle of the long picnic table but

stayed alone among themselves (Later, Camillo, the husband, strolled around and talked to some Marzanellesi. But soon after, the whole family went to the beach by themselves). It was around ten- thirty. Some other male paesani were chatting, as were the women paesani. Soon, I saw some males already playing bocci. Other men were playing cards, as were some women, at the picnic tables. The president sat down and joined the card games with the men.

Actually, the only young participants were Nino, Vittorio, and Sara (the president's daughter), aged around twenty. Nino brought his college friend Paul, a second generation Portuguese, with him. Then around eleven, Nino's college friend, Sylvie, and her friend Manon (who was visiting Sylvie from Quebec City) arrived at the picnic site. They are both francophone Quebecers. These five, the same age, stayed together the whole day, playing volleyball and pedal-boating.

As Nino's mother poured cold water into my cup, Giulia came to talk to me. She is newly married to Nicola and they came to Montreal from Italy (to visit her uncle, Dino, treasurer of this association) for their honeymoon. It was her wish to visit her relatives in Montreal from Italy, repaying their many visits to her family in her village in Italy.

At eleven thirty, Nino, Vittorio and a few other paesani started to boil two large pots of spaghetti for about forty or fifty people. In another large pot, they heated the prepared tomato sauce. A large plate on which Italian sausage was heaped up was covered and heated at once. By twelve, the food was ready and the paesani formed a long line to the pots. The rest of the young group and I went to line up at the last moment. Everybody had spaghetti with Italian sausage and bread, and settled back to the picnic tables where their families were seated. The president stood up and made a quick speech in dialect: "Today is such a beautiful day. I'm very glad that we could get together. Let's pray and thank God, his Son, the Holy Spirit and Sant'Antonio. Buon appetito!" The family lunch started. Vittorio started the tape-recorder and played old Italian songs.

After lunch, men played bocci here and there, women sat at the table and chatted, and some other women played cards. The young went boat pedalling in the lake, then played volleyball. They spent the whole afternoon in this way. At first, Sara, the daughter of the president, was too shy to join the group of Nino and Vittorio, but in the end, joined them pedalling, and played volleyball with them.

Around six o'clock, it was time to leave. They quickly cleaned their tables, packed up plates and cups, and left the parking lot. By six-thirty, everybody had left but Nino,

Vittorio, Maria, Paul, Sylvie, Manon, Pasquale (the president) and me. The president checked and cleaned the picnic site at the last minute with Nino, Vittorio, and Paul, while we women sat and waited for our departure.

The village association Marzanello, I learned, was formed in June 26, 1975. Eleven paesani men gathered together at Paolino's house. At this meeting, they elected Pasquale as a president, Franco Chiello vice-president, Aldo Maietta secretary, and Enzo Medici treasurer. All the paesani were invited to become members, and 128 in total joined. This included a group from the neighbouring village, twenty-four from Marzani. Since then, with the natural increase and due to marriages, the membership grew to 172 made up of 57 families. During the past twenty years, some members left and lost touch, but others remained. For example, in 1988, 18 out of 24 Marzani left the association, for they and Marzanelli disagreed on the basic structure of the association. Marzani insisted on their own division with a special name and titles including president and so on within the same association 'Marzanello'. The Marzanellesi objected to the idea of a separate group within the single association. The dispute ended in a split. In another case, Domenico, Marzanello, left because paesani did not like his constant invitations to his daughter's orchestra performances which cost entrance fees. They felt he was forcing the issue, and Domenico, upset by attitudes he found to be insensitive, left the association.

After *Marzanellesi* emigrated to Montreal, they "naturally" helped each other: for example, lending money to each other (ranging up to large sums for the purchase of a house), or baby-sitting for couples who both worked during the day. This was natural because *paesani* were what they call *amici stretti*, close friends.

Pasquale and his wife Giulia first lived around Central Station when they emigrated to Montreal. He moved into the boarding house where his brother Amato, his wife Lina and their twin baby daughters were living under the padrone system. Five years later, in 1964, these two households bought a single house in the north-east of Montreal, and lived together. It was two blocks away from where Pasquale's family resided. The two families stayed together for about five years. When they moved from the Central Station area (the south end of the island of Montreal) to the north-east of the island, other paesani who already had been living around the Central Station followed Pasquale's family. One after another, they started to move to the same area. By 1975, many of the paesani of Marzanello found their new residences in close proximity to one another.

In the past, the association had more activities. Occasionally, they managed to offer scholarships to first year university and college students of paesani. They used to organized a ball for youth, but this did not attract them very well. Today, they have four *feste* a year, when they dine out at an Italian banquet hall. They enjoy picnics in summer. These activities are planned by the 'Assemblee' (assemblies) during the year. There are nine assemblies in a year in which the president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer and nine councillors discuss the details. They used to meet at Pasquale's residence after supper in the evening until they were given a regular space in the basement of the neighbourhood Italian parish church.

This association can function as a mutual aid group: when a *disgrazia*, or bad luck, befalls a family, the association offers help through monetary donations. For example, on someone's death, the cost of the mass at the church is paid, with some donations to help the family. The amount is decided each time by the president.

This association organizes similar picnics twice a year. They arrange a Christmas and a New Year dinner at the Italian banquet hall, which most of the paesani family attend.

Children are taken to the village/regional gatherings by adult members of the family. Often, children do not know the meaning of 'association'. As confirmed by various contacts with younger Italians, and my observation of association activities, teenagers and young adults typically lose interest in their parents' associations. If they join, it is usually only for such main festivities as the Christmas gathering with their families. Nino and Vittorio, of the young generation, seem to be unique in this respect. They are not unique, however, in the sense that they had not been active in association activities until they chose of their own accord to get involved. They are, nonetheless, unique since their

spontaneous involvement occurred at an early age.[17] Nino and Vittorio, both in their early twenties, have been actively and voluntarily working for the association for the past four years, after an interval of more than ten years following the days when their parents had brought them.

This is an excellent illustration of typical attitudes seen among young Italians. Born and brought up in Montreal, the social connections of Italians of the young generation are framed by their parents' networks. The village is a special location in Italy where their parents grew up and that they miss in their daily lives. For most young generation Italians I spoke with, the importance of the paesani relationship is, therefore, something to "learn" and "appreciate".

The chief editor of the Italian newspaper commented on the tendency of the young to "come back". According to him, when they get older and have their own families, they come back and participate more. They appreciate what they have and become active participants. When I asked him why, the editor repeated, "Because it is important, because it is important to keep our tradition and our culture". Association activities aimed at keeping up 'tradition' are in fact not necessarily traditional: members get together for picnics and dinners.

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[17]Also, there are many of the young generation who never come back to association activities.

Ball games (instead of, for example, 'folkdances') are an attempt to attract young people among Marzanellesi. Getting together, and recruiting new participants, are important in themselves. Associations in this way encourage the renewal of institutionalized ties and recruit qualified individuals to the established network.

4.2.4. Discourse of tradition, networks and ethnic identity

Interview 1[18]:

My association is only for culture.

What do you mean, "only"?
Well, it means not for money, and we're doing it only for our culture.

What kind of activities do you have?
We get together once in a couple of months for dinner, or for a picnic, stuff like that.

How do you make money out of an association, though?
I don't know, but I know a lot of people do it, but I don't know how.

Interview 2:

Is the association important for you?
Yes, of course. It is very important.

Why is that?
It's important to keep our tradition. Each region has its own tradition and culture. It's not for money, it's for culture.

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[18]These two dialogues took place in the Italian barber shop *Riviera* in LaSalle. Both men were hair dressers. They were born in Italy (in different regions). Massimo (dialogue 1) emigrated to Canada in his early twenties following his older brother. Claudio moved to Montreal in his mid-teens with his family. Claudio started to work at Massimo's barber shop in N.D.G. They have been working together for more than twenty years now in LaSalle.

What is your regional culture?
Well, we have our own dialect, and ... and ... yeah, we speak our own dialect. So, that's our culture.

The village/regional associations are institutions in which family and Italian ethnic identity are vigorously fused with distinctive regional culture, emphasizing all three. The religious affiliation (in the form of village saint worship) is effectively employed to legitimize, broaden and confirm a network based on the village of origin. The aim of the association activities is social. This contrasts to their ostensible objective of the preservation of their distinctive regional culture. As in Sal's experience, for many of the younger generation who grew up in Montreal, participation in the regional association occurs as they affirm their Italian ethnic identity, and not the other way around. Thus, they "come back" to their "origin" (or "background" as many Italians put it). On the other hand, the first generation Italians "socialize" the memory of emigration, they fuse it with the sense of family devotion, and they pass it on to their children to arouse sentiments of Italian origin.

There are more than eighty regional/village associations, a sign of the Italian Community's fragmentation. The internal rivalries belie the image of the wholeness of the Italian Community. And yet, as shown in more detail in the following chapter, this fragmentation is the key to their solidarity as

Italians when necessary.[19] As a social strategy, regional affiliation is very efficient. Montreal bishop Cimichella once brilliantly described regional associations as building blocks which make up the whole (Boissevain 1971). This reminds us that when Simmel cynically stated, "if you want peace, prepare for war" (1955: 13), he meant that conflict is a useful means to unite people against their enemies. Looking at the numerous social groupings that separate Italians, one realizes that they are brilliant in the use of this tactic. The open hostility toward other social groups effectively strengthens the solidarity within one's own group boundary. When, for example, my informants murmured "[f]or us, other than blood-family, they are all enemies", they also meant 'blood-family are allies'. On the other hand, others explained that "[r]eception hall owners are mostly southern Italians - Sicilians or Calabrians. When northern Italians are having a party there, they (owners and customers) don't talk to each other. They hate each other". By making this division, they imply that southern Italians *do* identify with each other. The Sicilian family (that participated in Marzanellesi's excursion) exemplified such a shift of identity at an individual level, from regional affiliation to southern

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[19]This is analogous to the principle of "segmentary systems" (Evans-Pritchard 1940).

Italian identity.[20]

The notion of Italian social groups as building blocks effectively explains important feature of the Italian Community. It is to understand, in other words, a complicated mesh of numerous social groups. The fact that each separate association is a structured organization reveals this aspect. To create an Italian association means to build up a structure composed of a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer and councilmen. To hold one of those positions, especially a presidency, is honourable. The size of the association can add to its reputation.

In this context, some associations are devised to make a name and/or a material profit (see Poulin and Painchaud 1988). If one wants to become known, one tries to become an association president, or create a new association and pronounce oneself

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[20]For example, Nagel and Olzak write:

> [G]roup identity ... is essentially fluid depending upon how the boundaries of an ethnic group are drawn in a specific context, and hence, the precise content of ethnic identity is defined in relation to distinct external stimuli (1982: 7).

Describing Ibo immigrant population in a Yoruba town, Peace observes that ethnic identification results from "the negotiation or working out of a generally agreed upon balance between self-interest ... and ... the sense of obligation to others" (1980:106). He argues the process that Ibo immigrants emphasize their mutual helps while they keep each own individual independence. Various other authors have argued on `situational' identity. See Burton 1981; Cohen 1978; Miles 1986; Nagata 1974; Foster and White 1982; and Patterson 1986.

president or a founder. Sometimes one village has two associations. They fight, and split.

> I decided to leave any association activity because what they are doing is not uniting people but actually dividing people. Why do we need so many associations anyway? We need only one if we want to unite people. Associations are not really for the people. It's all for the people who run them. My association for example was split because Mr. Marone got jealous of the president, Mr. Cioppo: "He's not that rich, his family is not as strong as mine, then why (is he the president)?" Mr. Marone organized a picnic on the same date at the same time but at two different locations. So, our association was divided in two: some went with Mr. Cioppo, others went with Mr. Marone. [a radio announcer, 56, Calabrian, the first generation]

As leadership positions in Italian social groups are often interlocking, the major Italian associations of different types are closely connected. Belonging to the Italian Community in this way requires an involvement in Italian social networks beyond one's family and village.

One step to broaden village-based social networks (village associations) is to create region-based social networks. These are called "*federazione*". Today in Montreal, there are at least twelve of these federations based on the Italian prefectures such as Campagna, Abruzzo, Molise, Sicilia, Calabria and Veneto.[21] The federation has its own administrative structure with the positions of president and

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[21]Characteristically, they embrace an active relationship with the prefectural government in Italy. Both the prefectural government in Italy and the Italian Government, through the local consulate, give financial support to these federations.

vice-president. Presidents of all member village associations comprise the federation councils who elect these leaders. The village association of Marzanello, for example, belongs to the wider association called *Federazione delle Associazione di Campania* (Federation of the Associations of Campania). Twenty village associations that fall in the region of Campania in Italy have 'federated' and institutionalized their relationship. The presidents of all the member associations of Campagnia (as councilmen) meet and decide upon annual leisure activities for the paesani. The president of the federation this year is Mr. Sano, the president of the village association of Avellinesi, who lives in LaSalle. In this way, participation in the regional association can link one to the wider social networks. Federations, put the emphasis on "unity" in a more obvious way, since it is a process of creating new friendships and alliances.

> "It is to unite people, it is for culture." [Mr. Lombardo, an Italian newspaper editor, first generation, 64]
>
> "It is simply nice to get together and get to know people." [a customer in the barber shop *Riviera*, a man around 40]
>
> "Italians unite. Italians, Germans and Japanese, we are disciplined people. We will win." [Mr. Lombardo, the editor]
>
> "Oh, we just have fun, and that's it." [Mrs. Di Giulio, first generation, a secretary of the regional association, 48]

People from different villages are encouraged to "unite", meaning, to socialize among each other. The *Congresso*

Nazionale di Italo-Canadesi, mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, was formed in this context.[22] By "uniting" Italians is meant the articulation of existent village groups through the meeting of *presidenti*. In fact, this establishes efficient communication networks. The Italian communities spread out over Montreal can thus be connected via the association networks of leaders, not 'in spite of', but 'because of' the fragmented social groupings.

4.3. Invention of friendship and realizing a community

The regional/village associations are comprised of Italians who live scattered in various areas of Montreal. On the other hand, seniors' associations recruit members according to local

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[22]The significance of the connection is directly mirrored in the current political and economic activities among Italians of Montreal (I will discuss this more in detail in the following chapters). Boissevain (1971) and Painchaud and Poulin (1988) both point out that in associations, presidents "make themselves known" among the people. Presidents can know, and be known by, presidents of other associations through federations of associations and the Congresso Nazionale. In this context, an informant commented:

> See, from the beginning, the Congresso was created so that you can be a president of the entire community; it is a big position. So, the Congresso is not really for the Italian people, but rather for some people who have an interest in becoming famous.

Poulin and Painchaud (1988) and Boissevain (1971) also note that association leaders tend to be well-off. From my observation, however, it is not necessarily so. Also, their occupational backgrounds are highly versatile: railway employee, small retail seller, plumber, cabinetmaker, jeweller, or banquet hall owner.

residential districts. Participants are mainly first generation (immigrant) Italians.[23] In comparison to the 'friendship' legitimized by the region/village of origin, the friendships among seniors in the district associations are understood as more "recreational" and less emphasis is laid on "tradition". Through regular gatherings and recreational activities (such as card games and bingo games), district senior Italians get to know each other.[24] Yet, like other Italian associations, seniors' associations are structured with presidents, secretaries and treasurers. It is often the case that the first generation Italians are active participants in both district associations and regional/village associations; thus seniors' organizations can function to interconnect individuals of different regional/village backgrounds who otherwise would not interact. The following ethnographic note exemplifies the regular meeting among district Italian seniors.

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[23]There are two *Optimist Clubs* mainly for the younger generation of Italians: one in LaSalle, another in St.Michel. Because of their strong politico-economic implications, Optimist Clubs will be discussed in the following chapters.

[24]There are often more women than men participating, although not necessarily so. The association in LaSalle holds a weekly gathering in the basement hall of the Italian parish church. About sixty women (with occasional male visitors) sit down at the table and play bingo from one o'clock until four. Hand-made crafts such as lace and tablecloth are the bingo prizes. At three o'clock, they have a coffee break, and collect money in baskets. This is repeated weekly.

[Case 4] Weekly gathering of senior citizens in Saint Michel

I started to attend the weekly gathering of the Saint Michel Italian Seniors' Association. It took place every Friday in the basement of the francophone Catholic church in the members' neighbourhood. Every week, the hall was filled with more than three hundred senior and retired Italians, both men and women. They sat at their favourite table with the same group of friends. They are mixed - 'mixed' in terms of regional background.

They start at one o'clock with card games. These men and women play the same game continuously until the coffee break at three. The atmosphere is usually very lively with their constant teasing and shouts of wins and losses. At three o'clock, women pass around cookies and cakes, both homemade and commercial, and coffee. Antonio, eighteen years old, the grandson of Anna, a member, shows up in the basement around this time and sets up the music. A series of old Italian songs are played on the tape-recorder. Men and women enter the central floor to begin dancing in couples. In the meantime, the card game continues, accompanied now by music, dancing, coffee and cookies. Carmelina and Giuseppina visit table to collect money for coffee and cake. Each participants puts one dollar, two dollars, or fifty cents into the basket, like the scene during mass in church. At four o'clock, Carmelina stops the music, and the remaining people start to fold up the tables and pile the chairs in a corner. This is a routine every Friday afternoon.

Other than this weekly gathering, the association organizes a formal dinner at an Italian banquet hall four or five times a year. The tickets, averaging twenty dollars, are sold during the card games on Friday. Interested association members and their families are invited. 'A father's day banquet' was held in the Italian hall in Saint Leonard at seven. Each of the large round tables for eight was occupied by a family: typically, grandparents (who are the members of the seniors' association), parents, and their children. The menu was quite simple: spaghetti with tomato sauce and free wine and soft drinks. Around eight o'clock, the association's oldest *papa* and his wife were called to the front of the hall, and were honoured as 'the best' oldest couple. Antonio set up the cassette of old Italian songs, and men and women started to dance. Toward the end of the party (it was after ten o'clock) almost everybody was on the floor dancing, making one big circle, joining hands and shoulders.

As mentioned before, Boissevain (1971) and others (Poulin and Painchaud 1988) have noted that regional/village associations

have their own internal politics surrounding who will become president. Of greater significance, from what I observed during the field research, is the way that informal social networks, involving not only regional/village associations but seniors' associations, connect to formal political systems in Montreal. Furthermore, the activities of regional/village and seniors' associations are directly beneficial to certain Italian businesses (such as retail, service and construction industries: the major businesses among Italians of Montreal).

As they consciously assert their ethnic identity, many younger Italians "come back" to regional/village associations and support the discourse of discrete regional culture. On the other hand, since they tend to relate to paesani as essentially their parents' friends, the village of origin does not condition their own selection of friendships. This is reflected in their social groupings: they form and act as a vital force of business and political institutions that are exclusively for 'Italians', yet regionally inclusive. In the following chapters, I will document the political and the economic articulation of Italians to wider formal systems in which social networks sustained by associations play an important role.

CHAPTER 5

ITALIAN PAESANI NETWORKS UNITE: LOCAL POLITICS AND PARC CHRISTOPHE COLOMB IN LASALLE

The political system of ethnicity is both prevalent and highly visible in Montreal Italian communities. This chapter's case study of the creation of a local park reveals the basic relationships between local politics and ethnicity. A number of elements coalesce around the issue of the park, a physical representation of Italian existence, culture and history. These elements include the strategy of Italian local politicians in the ruling municipal party, both positive and cynical reception among Italian residents, and cooperation among association leaders. For LaSalle Italians, the new park symbolizes their collective existence and the links between their history and their future. Surrounded by francophones in the city, Italians shape their own ethnic identity, and wish to show that a distinctive Italian culture is vital and alive in the city. Broad-based support from the Italian community for the park project can be understood as an example of ethnic self-assertion. I take a close look at various political manoevres employed to gain support through appeals to ethnic sentiments and manipulation of cultural codes.

In creating a new park for the Italian population, we can see the community's effective use of Columbus as a unifying symbol among separate Italian social groups. The separate associations, based on the region/village of origin, each have a definite administrative structure. In this chapter, I show how, through the creation of an Italian park, the leaders of these paesani-associations can function to unite with one another. This involves examining how these associations channel relations between local Italian politicians and Italian residents, and, how hierarchical networks order the Italian communities in Montreal into a greater collectivity.

My case reveals how the LaSalle Italian community is structured by the paesani-associations (or by paesani relationships). Furthermore, it illuminates how association leaders are connected to one other - or *not* connected - by principles of alliance and rivalry. Yet, ultimately, for the common cause of the Italian Community, these separate associations demonstrate that they can work together in harmony. Thus, while many Italians I spoke with claimed that "Italians are individualistic, hence, they never unite and there is no centre", this does not reflect the reality. Parc Christophe Colomb provides a classic example of how ethnicity and ethnic identity are symbolically constructed and act as a major resource for today's local politics. Complementing this chapter, which provides a close-up of the relationship between

local political process and the Italian community in LaSalle, the next chapter then investigates the links between such Italian local community politics and the formal Quebec/Canadian political system.

The Italian population in LaSalle represents only 10 per cent of total residents. The Francophone mayor Labelle, however, did not underestimate the Italian presence that is most prominent in three electoral districts out of twelve. He first approached Ascoli, an Italian real estate agent in LaSalle, to run for the municipal election in 1983. Since then, they have been working together. Labelle learned to use enough Italian words and sentences to please Italian constituents. When Labelle and his party founded the LaSalle Economic Development Corporation (LEDC) in 1984, the mayor became the first president and Ascoli was asked to be vice-president to attract the city's Italian merchants.[1]

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[1]On the initiative of Mayor Labelle and councillor Ascoli, the LEDC was created in response to the recession of the early 1980s. The LEDC is composed of political, industrial, commercial and educational representatives. The only city employee on the LEDC is the general manager, a position held by former banker Alain Marceau. The current members include the city mayor (as chairman), Ascoli (as president), Larin, municipal councillor (as first vice-president), and fourteen other representatives of LaSalle business and education institutions: for instance, Lepore, vice-president of human resource department, Seagrams' Ltd. (as second vice-president) and Bourque, Director General of the college André-Laurendeau (as administrator). Mayor Labelle commented in an interview with *Montreal Business Magazine* (April 1992: 48): "There were vacant lots, and people were throwing in the towel. We started by taking what was left of the territory and defined what we wanted to do. ...

5.1. The Beginning: the 500th Anniversary of Columbus's Arrival

It was a rainy Sunday on October 12 in 1987 -- Columbus Day. Despite the gloomy weather, St. Zotique Street was full of people anticipating the appearance of the procession. I was standing in the street, waiting curiously. When it appeared, I quickly pulled out my camera and snapped pictures of people with umbrellas, colourful parade floats, and limousines in the procession line. I felt compelled to take pictures of all these foreign images, the parade and the local celebration. In the middle of the area called Petite Italie in the Jean-Talon area, I was surrounded by men and women chatting in

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When we decided to put this together, I started making phone calls to every big industrial boss around the city (of LaSalle), that we wanted a high-ranking person to sit on this corporation." In one of the corporation's major achievements, the LEDC acquired land and helped to create the largest shopping mall in LaSalle *Carrefour Angrignon*. They made swaps for other land and accommodated "the big customers already in LaSalle" (ibid.); according to the mayor, these land deals kept major plants (such as those of Labatt and Kruger) from relocating. The LEDC's economic strategies also include 1. keeping lower business taxes than most cities; 2. a frozen tax bill for the residential properties (between 1989-1991); 3. new development-projects for the remaining vacant land; and 4. development-projects to revamp the city's old sector, both residential and non-residential. In 1991, *L'Association des manufacturiers canadiens* (Canadian Manufacturers' Association) chose LaSalle "*Ville industrielle de l'année pour la région administrative de Montréal* (the industrial city of the year for the Montreal administrative region)" (*Les Affaires* Aug. 31, 1991).

dialects of Italian.[2] The procession was organized by the Italian Community to celebrate Columbus Day. It seemed to be the act of an 'ethnic culture', and yet, this presentation of an ethnic community was nested in a wider social context that was itself foreign to me. I was excited, as it was my first observation of the lives of Italian-Canadians. The procession marched down the street, as I snapped pictures. Later, I realize that it was but a tourist experience (MacCannell 1976). Only when I began to better understand the Canadian context, could I begin to understand ethnic Italians' conscious opposition and approaches to their surroundings, their own lifestyles and views. In 1992, I happened to end my ethnographic research with an invitation to the local Columbus Day celebration, commemorating the 500th anniversary of Columbus' arrival in the New World. I was again standing in the middle of the crowd, hearing one of my informants whispering to me, "Columbus is now a saint for Italians", as those who stood in ship-like floats waved at us, the spectators in the street.

5.1.1. The Symbolism of Columbus and Italian Ethnic Identity

The celebration on October 12 of the arrival of Christopher Columbus in North America was first observed in New York City,

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[2]It was only one month and a half since I had come to Montreal, the city of the cultural mosaic. For a person from a `mono' culture (the opposite extreme to Canada), the mere fact of people routinely functioning in different languages in the streets and the stores amazed me.

in 1792. The Society of St. Tammany (the Columbian Order) sponsored a dinner and organized ceremonies for the 300th anniversary of Columbus's voyage (Hatch 1978: 919; Foster and Grierson 1956:64). In 1892, on October 12, U.S. President Benjamin Harrison issued a proclamation calling upon citizens to participate in commemorative services and requested schools to organize programmes for the 400th anniversary. In 1909 the state of New York first passed legislation declaring Columbus Day a holiday. Within a few years, more than thirty other states followed New York's decision. In 1968, it was legislated as a national holiday in the U.S. In Canada, it has also been recognized as Columbus Day since 1892 and celebrated by Italian societies, but is not a national holiday. Numerous Italian authors in Canada emphasize that the original discovery of the North American continent was by a person of Italian origin. These authors attribute to his contribution the founding of the modern countries of North America. Mingarelli (1970, 1980), Spada (1969) and Vangelisti (1956) are examples; for them, it is of prime importance to acknowledge that the history of North America starts with Columbus and Cabotto, rather than with later colonizers. As if to confirm this, around Columbus Day, the various local Italian newspapers pay tribute to Christopher Columbus as a hero who made possible the emergence of New World nations.

For Columbus Day in 1992, the Italian Community (through the leadership of the CNIC and Casa) also prepared posters, banners and special logos for the annual parade. Although it is usually a parade organized by the CNIC and Casa in Petite Italie in the Jean-Talon area, the Italian community in LaSalle was also preparing their own parade. They were to open a new 'Italian' municipal park, named Parc Christophe Colomb in commemoration of the 500th anniversary of his arrival.

5.2. *Parc Christophe Colomb* and the Italian community in LaSalle

5.2.1. The organization of the special park committee

> The park is open to everybody, but it is done with the initiative of the Italians, so it is a park for Italians. But, it is for everybody. [a park committee member]
>
> It is a public park, but it is designed essentially for senior Italians who can have a nice little walk, not for children. [a park committee member]
>
> The City (of LaSalle) hasn't done anything for the Italians for years and years. I think it's time to acknowledge the existence of the Italians here in LaSalle. It's true. The City has done nothing special for us.[Mr. Ascoli, a city councillor]

The second meeting of the park committee is held in the corner of the empty hall at eight o'clock on Thursday night. Ten men sit down at a big table in the dim light. I sit between Mr. Conte and Mr. Ascoli. Mr. Ascoli introduces me to the men at the table, and they quietly nod as Mr. Ascoli explains to them about me. Soon after, Mr. Fortuno, president of the committee and owner of this reception hall, starts the meeting by thanking the members for coming. The atmosphere is formal and quiet. Then, Mr. Fortuno hands out the agenda of the night to the members; it reads 'LaSalle a Cristoforo Colombo, 11 giugno 1992 (LaSalle at Cristopher Columbus, 11 June 1992)'. It lists five points: 1. Congresso (Congress - CNIC) 2. Monumento

- Raccolta fondi (statue - funding) 3. Giornata inaugurale - da stabilire (inauguration date to decide) 4. Sfilata - tragitto da stabilire (procession - the route to decide) 5. Varie (others).

It was a political issue from the beginning. There was a piece of land on David Boyer Street already purchased by the City for a public park. Mr. Ascoli, a LaSalle city councillor proposed to the mayor it be made a park for Italians. Well aware of the importance of the 'Italian votes' in LaSalle, mayor Labelle gave full assent to this idea.[3] The mayor suggested, however, that they wait for the upcoming election in two years. By listing the Italian park plan as their agenda, they could draw voters' attention; they could then realize it during their term in power and receive full credit. Ascoli agreed with the strategy, so they waited for the upcoming election. They successfully won the election in November 1991.

In January 1992, Ascoli started to work on the project - to make a park for Italians in LaSalle. As planned, 1992 was an excellent year to initiate it, since it was the 500th anniversary of the first landing of Christopher Columbus. Since the city had already agreed to contribute one million dollars to this project, all Ascoli had to do at first was form a park committee that could take care of the project. He chose and phoned three Italians in the community, Sano, Bespa

[3]Labelle and Ascoli belong to the same municipal party which has governed LaSalle since 1983.

and Bescio, who he thought would be helpful in forming a committee: they were presidents of Italian associations and lived in LaSalle. Ascoli informed them of the City's financial support. Ascoli encouraged these three to select other suitable people to form a special park committee in order to implement it as an 'Italian' initiative.

Both Sano and Bespa are presidents of regional/village associations that have memberships of at least three hundred. Sano's association (Avellinesi), described in the previous chapter, was established in 1975, and he has been president since its foundation. This association has a sub-association for children's folk dancing. Sano is the owner of a shoestore located on one of the main commercial streets in LaSalle. Bespa, a Sicilian, is an ex-city councillor. He is an Italian banquet hall owner and is well known among the Italian community through his business and past political activities. Bescio, a second generation Italian, is a lawyer. Although he is not a president of a regional/village association, he is president of *Club Ottimista Michelangelo*, the Optimist Club of LaSalle chapter. This "apolitical", "non-profit seeking" organization of business people was formed in 1985 by eight young Italian men of LaSalle, including one city councillor (of the current opposition party) and Al, the president of La Casa. The Optimist Club itself is a world-wide youth organization, yet, characteristically, the LaSalle chapter was

founded by and for only Italian descendants. The current membership is estimated to be more than 500 people of exclusively Italian origin.

In response to Ascoli's proposal, these three individually selected three other committee members, presidents of regional/village associations who lived in LaSalle. Mr. Romeno, a Sicilian and another paesani-association president, was not invited, but volunteered to participate as a committee member. According to the committee members, he was perceived as egocentric and thus a problem figure. Since he was also a president of a regional/village association (hence legitimate), they could not reject him. He brought another fellow Sicilian, Massimo, to join the committee. Massimo is a Montreal representative of a Sicilian village association founded in Italy, but in LaSalle, according to Massimo, he has no other family but his own immediate family from the same village. Although he had just moved to LaSalle a year ago from Sicily, hence his relatively 'new' appearance in the LaSalle Italian community, he was already well known through his small jewellery business situated in the middle of the Italian district and through his active participation in the Sicilian dialect theatre group in LaSalle.[4] Besides these

[4]He writes poems in the Sicilian dialect. Later on he insisted his poem go on the statue epitaph and the memorial silver coin, which caused some argument among the committee members, especially when Massimo wanted to include his name as author. Other members did not want his name to appear - since

LaSalle Italians, Giuliano, as a representative of the CNIC (and the Casa d'Italia), became an observer. Al, a resident of LaSalle, was also involved. He has been working for the Casa d'Italia as president and has been politically active for more than fifty years in Montreal. As Al played a significant role as a fund-raiser for the provincial Liberals, which has long been linked to the Italian Community and their politics, my informant politicians call him "Mr. Politics" from behind-the-scenes. He is thus well known and respected, especially among Italian political and business networks of north and south Montreal. As he had experience in installing a bronze statue of Christopher Columbus in the City of Montreal, he participated in this committee as an advisor. Ascoli was an active member of the committee as a representative from the City, giving them necessary advice.

Once the committee was set up, Ascoli noticed that the committee had no women members: "Where are the women members? Typically Italian!" Ascoli chose two women that he already knew, D'Arrivi and Filippone, to be on the committee. D'Arrivi is a school teacher. Ascoli knew her uncle who lived in his campaign district, and approached him first about asking her to join. On the other hand, Ascoli had met Filippone at a political rally, since she has been actively

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"it stood out too much".

working for the provincial Liberal party.[5]

Thus, the fourteen committee members were selected. This group of people met one another at the meeting for almost the first time. They knew each other by name and in some cases by sight as well. Yet they had never talked to each other: regional/village association leaders do not routinely have much cause to meet each other. That is why the main concern for Ascoli and mayor Labelle was how to organize these people into an effective group:

> Do you know how I managed to let them work together? I gathered them and said to them, 'Look. We, as a city (of LaSalle) can give you the land and money, total one million dollars. The rest is your job. If you want a park for the Italian community, you better work together for the common cause.' See, I pressured them, and we're gonna do this and that, and are you guys sitting around like fools meantime? That pressure really worked. They felt they had to do something together, otherwise they looked like fools. So, they decided to work together and it has been working very well. [Ascoli]

The tension in the air was reduced as the committee's work progressed. At the fourth meeting, I noticed them starting to joke among one another. As for the female members, Filippone never attended Thursday evening meetings, but contributed two hundred and twenty-five dollars for the statue. D'Arrivi showed up a few times, but never said a word, nor did others ever ask her opinion.

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[5]Both women were born in Montreal. D'Arrivi is aged thirty-five, and Filippone, thirty-eight.

Ascoli emphasizes that he works for the Italians. At the park committee meeting, he repeats: "It is for you, it is for the Italians". One evening when Ascoli and I were taking a walk to the park site under construction, we saw two senior Italian couples strolling on the street beside the site. They noticed Ascoli, greeted him and shook hands. Ascoli proudly pointed at the park site: "This is all for Italians, this is all for you". The senior couples nodded to him and asked about the bocci site and the location of the statue.

Who had the initial idea for this project? Ascoli, city councillor in LaSalle says, 'It's me'; Conte, president of an association, says, 'It's me'. As to the initial idea to name the park *Cristoforo Colombo* with a statue of Columbus, most committee members recognize it as a Sano's idea (although some still maintain that it was Conte's idea). The question as to who first suggested the idea was important for the committee members, since the originator would, as they described, "get flowers" for it. It was a matter of "honour". Yet the committee emphasized the importance of 'unity' among Italians to carry out the foundation of the park, thus no one openly argued over this point; it only came up in gossip. The committee tried to avoid overt rivalry over the genesis of the idea with their arrangement of representatives. In any event, it was clear that Ascoli would gain political credit from the Italian community, since he was at the forefront of the effort

to found the park. Fortuno, who clearly was not the initiator, was chosen as president of the committee. He is well known in the Italian community in LaSalle and is a member of the municipal ruling party. One of two vice-presidents of the committee was Romeno, who is associated with the municipal opposition party. He is viewed as a rival figure to Sano (associated with the ruling party) in terms of the size of their respective regional/village association of which each is president. Since they were viewed as rivals, and Sano was named a vice-president of the park committee with members' unanimous consent (since to everybody's knowledge, he had this idea first), the rival figure Romeno had to be chosen to be another vice-president to avoid any future conflicts in decision making in the committee.

The lot assigned to the park is beside two elementary school yards -- one English-speaking school, the other, French-speaking. As soon as Ascoli started to work on the formation of a park committee, the opposition party in LaSalle began to move against it. First, they claimed the location of the lot was not ideal, since it was not accessible to children from the French-speaking school. The opposition party instead suggested a modification that would provide access to children of both schools. They submitted a new design for the park to the LaSalle school commission, who agreed to the modified plan. The school commission submitted to the City of LaSalle

a park proposal based on the idea proposed by the opposition party.

> They (the ruling party) rejected our suggestion, because this strip, at the end, touched my district. They don't want to do anything which benefits the residents in the districts of the opposition party. [Italian city councillor of the opposition party]

The City, of course, rejected the proposal. The ruling party countered the opposition party by insisting that the park should be primarily for adults, and not for children. This debate put the Italian councillors representing the opposition party in an awkward situation. This was because, by the time the opposition party made a move, the Italian residents were already informed of the Italian park (for adults) via informal and formal information flows through various social networks. The Italian councillors of the opposition party did not oppose the plan which had already captured residents' support: they would only have appeared to residents to be complainers.

The most strenuous opposition came from one of their own party members - one city councillor:

> She is opposing the park because of, she says, the 'Indians'.[6] She claims celebrating Christopher Columbus itself is offensive, which is nonsense, so she wants at least to change the name of the park. Then, it's not a park for the Italians anymore. She doesn't have any Italians in her district, so she doesn't give a damn about Italians [Ascoli].

The opposition party having caught wind of the subject, the

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[6]Aboriginal people in the Americas mounted a strong critique of the Columbus quincentenary celebrations honouring the so-called "discoverer" of the "New World".

final decision fell to the city caucus meeting. Politically, it was a matter of life or death for Ascoli. The committee members were asked to come to the City Caucus on Monday night, where the final decision on the naming of the park was to be made. Ascoli briefed his party's councillors before the caucus, including the dissident councillor. At the caucus, Fortuno, a committee member, made a long speech as a city resident. It was a symbolic show. The motion to name the park *Christophe Colomb* passed rather easily. The park committee members, sitting in the City Hall caucus room, looked at each other and smiled with satisfaction. They talked excitedly to each other. Ascoli, sitting at the councillor panel seat, winked and smiled at them.

After the caucus, at around ten o'clock at night, the committee members left the hall, chatting and laughing with the mayor. They decided to have a toast at "the Italian place". It is a café-bar with a French name, *La cité*, and obviously not all of them knew it as an 'Italian' place. "The Italian place" is located in a shopping mall. It is outside the Italian district, without any of the usual Italian symbols such as flags, or Italian names.[7] The park committee members, including Giuliano from the CNIC, Al ("Mr.

[7]I knew the place since Ascoli often took me there. He is acquainted with the crowd of customers who are Italians and who sit amid laughter at their usual table. The owner of the bar, Frank, likes to join the table and they all talk and joke in Italian.

Politics"), Ascoli and I, took two big tables together. Two francophone councillors of the ruling party joined the toast proposed by Al, who remarked: "Success had be achieved through everyone's cooperation". The members nodded. On that evening, in that friendly atmosphere, Romeno suggested creating a united association of associations of LaSalle and calling it "Associazione di Cristoforo Colombo". It was just an idea (and it would probably be difficult to decide on a president), but it indicated the satisfaction the committee members got from working together with different regional/village-based association representatives for a common cause - the Italian community in LaSalle.

5.2.2. Creating the Park: the Process

Finally, the name of the park was officially declared to be *Christophe Colomb*. In the meantime, the Italian sculptor Di Palma was working on the statue of Columbus which would stand in the middle of the park. The committee members agreed to put a gold name plate on the side of the statue's base, on which the name Columbus would be inscribed in three languages: first in Italian, then French and English. A statue of that size (about one meter high without the base) would normally cost $20,000. De Palma, for the common cause of Italians, reduced the price to $7,500. Despite this, the committee members knew that they did not have enough money. They started to argue for reducing the size of the statue or using

lower-quality materials. Then, Ascoli interrupted:

> Look, money is never a problem. All you have to do is to pick up the phone and call up Italian businessmen. And say, 'Do you want to donate such and such an amount? Your name will be engraved on the plate.' Everybody wants to put their name on it, something which remains forever. What you have to do now is to decide how much you have to ask for a name. This is how you collect money. It's very easy. Money is never a problem.

The committee members quietly nodded, agreed and discussed how much money was necessary. They decided to ask a hundred Italians for $225 each. The next thing they had to decide was the banner and logo for the parade. Various hand-drafted logo designs were passed around the meeting table. The committee members were very critical and quite picky. Despite their dissatisfaction, they came to a consensus as to which symbols should be included in the design. They agreed on the following items: the number 500, the three colours of the Italian flag and the symbol of LaSalle. They feel that they are Italians of southern Montreal who are different from those "snobbish" northern Montreal Italians. Their socio-economic status and condition is directly mirrored in their psychological distance from the 'northern' Italians. This is consistent with statistical data.[8]

> It is our celebration, it is our park. It is especially Italians of LaSalle. It's important to put LaSalle in it. [a committee member]

Ascoli then showed the committee, just as an example, a symbol of the 500th anniversary used on *Congresso Nazionale*

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[8]See Table 11 in the appendix.

letterhead.[9] The committee members shook their heads right away. Ascoli shrugged his shoulders:

> I think this looks very nice. This simple logo has everything: the ship, 500, and Columbus... The mark should be simple, you know. I think this is the best.

The committee members disagreed:

> This is Casa's mark. It's not ours. 'LaSalle' should be clearly marked.

Everybody at the table agreed. From then on, they discussed the best position for the old mill (the symbol of the City of LaSalle) in the design since none of the hand-drafted logos included it. Thus, the local identity of Italians of LaSalle was openly rewarded and affirmed.[10]

The logo issue was settled by asking the designer to include the desired symbols. The next problem was the date of the celebration: they wanted to hold the procession on Columbus Day, October 12. This, however, clearly conflicted with the

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[9]As mentioned in the previous chapter, the CNIC is located in the *Casa d'Italia*, which Italians call `Casa' for short.

[10]This special localness is, in fact, one of the driving motives for the committee members to make efforts to develop the park. Many Italians of LaSalle with whom I spoke referred to `those Italians of the north'. This designation `north' means the Italians of the north of Montreal, north of where Casa d'Italia is located, namely, Italians of Jean-Talon area, St. Leonard, St. Michel and Rivière des Prairies. St. Leonard Italians are stereotyped as snobbish, conceited and elitist; LaSalle Italians as more down to earth, casual and open. St. Leonard Italians are wealthier and include many big businessmen, while LaSalle Italians are working-class and not particularly wealthy.

annual procession of the CNIC and Casa. They hesitated to ignore the Casa's celebration, yet it was important to hold their celebration on the symbolic day itself. After more than an hour's debate, they decided to compromise by having their procession on October 11. Unfortunately it happened to fall on a Sunday, but this was acceptable as a compromise. They could not openly disregard the Casa's activities.

The procession was held on Sunday, October 11. It began with a mass at noon at Madre dei Cristiani, the Italian parish church. The Italian Bishop Cimichella read a sermon in Italian. In it, he strongly acclaimed Christopher Columbus as a saint for all the Italians; and he called for unity among Italians. The church was filled, and the entrance hall was packed with people standing. The door was kept open so that people standing outside could also hear and see the mass. Men and women, young and old, in formal dress were quietly listening to the sermon.

At two o'clock, the band in the front yard began to play a loud march as if urging the mass to end. Those who were inside the church began pouring out at the end of the mass. Soon the parade began. Several colourful flags were carried that represented different regional/village associations. In the ship float drawn by a car, all the committee members stood and waved at the spectators. Tony Viella, a city councillor

of Montreal, Angelo Giuliano from the Congresso Nazionale, Massimo Quarcia of Italian Government Aid and Al were walking together. When the procession arrived at *Parc Christophe Colomb*, Mayor Labelle read an opening speech in Italian.[11] The park for Italians was open.

5.3. Italian Identity, Associations and Local Politicians

The bronze statue of Christopher Columbus was thus created with funds raised among the Italian community. The creation of the park showed that Italians could work together for a common cause. They displayed a strong sense of group consciousness beyond village affiliations. The project of a park for Italians represented the essence of the political use of local ethnic support. To this end, the Francophone mayor and the Italian councillor worked together. Since the idea of a park appealed to local Italian sentiment, the whole issue summarizes an ongoing interdependency between politicians seeking support and an ethnic community in a local setting. On the other hand, the more Ascoli emphasized the city's offer of one million dollars ("with his effort"), the more Italians who were not directly involved in the project showed their

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[11]The entire ceremony proceeded in Italian with short translations in French or English.

mistrust.[12] They viewed the whole issue as a political show in which one Italian councillor had the most to gain. Still, such cynicism illustrated their recognition of his efficiency. In his effort to emphasize his devotion to Italians, Ascoli was well aware that it would appeal to Italian sentiment and work on the whole to gain their support. As Ascoli predicted, one hundred Italians in the LaSalle community quickly responded, paying $225 to have their names engraved on the statue base.[13]

Ascoli carefully chose three Italians, who were fairly well known as leaders and influential in the community, to approach with the city's proposal. The three are presidents of regional/village associations whose memberships number more than three hundred. Sociologically speaking, they occupy the centre of large social networks. What Ascoli did was to link these centres together and by that simple operation, he automatically gained access to innumerable circuits of communication. This indicates how the members of the regional/village associations are brought into play on issues

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[12]The figure of one million dollars was based on an estimated budget for the cost of the land, the construction and the parade. Since the park plan had been passed by the city caucus as a public space, items such as a statue of the Italian hero were not included. The naming of the public park thus became an issue in the city caucus later, although Ascoli and the Mayor had already planned to make it into an "Italian adults' park".

[13]Some of them paid to have their children's names put on the plaque.

of political significance. Although association leaders, *presidenti*, have no direct power over members' opinions, they can *influence* their decision making because they are generally respected. The strolling park for Italian adults already had firm support through the association presidents' backing, no matter what the local Italian politicians of the opposition party would later claim. On issues previous to that of the park, some regional/village association leaders had aligned with certain politicians. According to Ascoli, both of the association leaders that he called upon to initiate the formation of the park committee had supported his party in the past. This does not mean that association *presidenti* can order members to follow their support, but the members "understand" what the leaders' support can mean.[14] Furthermore, Ascoli quickly asked for advice from CNIC and Al. In this way, Ascoli's project acquired CNIC's backing in the form of their 'supervision'; Al's presence was highly significant, not only because he is experienced, but because Al is politically resourceful, hence a key player to have on side in gaining broader support. All this indicates how Ascoli opened a support network when he started to work on the project: a basic network among the immigrant generation (the targeted beneficiaries of the park) through regional/village groups; a business people's network in LaSalle through *Club*

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[14]I will touch on this issue in more detail in the following chapter.

Ottimista Michelangelo; and the support network through the Italian Community represented by CNIC (and Casa)[15], as well as Al in his capacity as special advisor. Since each social group is well coordinated, all Ascoli had to do was persuade the association leaders to work together - Ascoli never seemed to worry about directly cultivating the support of the rest of the members of the associations.

[15]Although the CNIC does not provide financial support to the rest of regional/village associations (they in fact pay an annual fee to the CNIC), there is respect: the CNIC cannot control what people do, but it can *influence* their decisions as seen in compromise over the date of the procession.

CHAPTER 6

ITALIAN POLITICAL NETWORKS, ETHNIC IDENTITY AND THE FORMAL SYSTEM

> Mr. John Ciaccia, he went to school with my father and my mother, and has stayed friends since then. That's what we need. Close people. [a campaign organizer, second generation][1]

6.1. Introduction

I met Carmela soon after I started my field research in Montreal. She is a secretary of a seniors' association in the St. Michel area that has more than three hundred members. The district Italian seniors get together to socialize and for recreation: they play cards and dance every week; they go for a bus trip every summer; they also organize picnics or hiking at least twice a year; and they play bocci together and hold an annual championship. Pictures of the trips and championships on the wall in Carmela's living room indicate the members' active participation. She was obviously a good bocci player: six trophies were lined up on the matter of the fake fireplace in her living room.

Carmela lives in the middle of the Italian section of St. Michel. Her residence is the basement of a triplex. Her daughter, married to an Italian-Canadian, lives upstairs (the two levels are connected by inside and outside stairs). As in other Italian residential quarters, when children get married and form their own immediate family, they often manage to live in such close proximity to the parents' family. Carmela has another daughter living in the same quarter, who is also married to an Italian-Canadian.

When I visited her for coffee, her grandson, aged seven, was wandering about her living room. She said to him that he could stay there, but the grandson responded shyly and disappeared upstairs. Carmela speaks only Italian dialect. She immigrated from a village in Calabria to Montreal in the

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[1]Names in this chapter are pseudonyms except for J. Ciccia (provincial cabinet minister) and J. Doré (Mayor of Montreal) since I considered and treated them as public figures.

early fifties when she was twenty. She moved to Montreal to better her economic future, following her husband who had arrived two years before.

Over espresso coffee, she showed me the photos taken during seniors' association activities. Then, she pointed at the wall: "Guarda (Look)". I first noticed the framed document that 'officially' acknowledged her as the secretary of the association. Right next to it, there was an enlarged book-size framed photo. It was a puzzling picture. In it was a smiling man, dark-haired with a mustache, between thirty-five and forty years old in a dark blue suit. He was holding Carmela's shoulder. "He is a Member of Parliament, and he (pointing at a bald man who looked more than sixty years old) is the president of our association, now in Italy for a vacation." She seemed to be proud of being together in the photo with Bertrand, the francophone M.P. of her district. I could not see, however, the link between these people. Financially, her association was totally independent, or so she and other members claimed. Carmela was not going to tell me more than "He's a friend". I asked, "Parla Italiano lui? (Does he speak Italian?)" She replied, "No." Then, how could they communicate? I asked, and she just shrugged her shoulders. The photo of an M.P., the president and the secretary of one ordinary Italian seniors' association... This left me puzzled. The memory came back to me days later as a clue to the main concerns of my research: local politics, network strategies, class, and the discourse of 'culture' and 'identity'.

The previous chapter portrayed the internal dynamics of networking between social groupings within the Italian population. It illustrated the cohesion of various associations within a wider Italian community structure. In this chapter, I now delineate the process by which paesani networks and Italian ethnic identity work for Italian political advancement in the formal Canadian system. Italian social groupings as represented by associations are the key building blocks for all campaign organizers who work systematically for formal Canadian political figures. Links between formal and informal political systems are made

possible by campaign organizers and political brokers, who maintain close connections with association leaders in Italian communities. Since 'professional' political brokers work for various political figures, they promote linkages of Italian networks to the three levels of the formal political system - municipal, provincial and federal - and connect these three levels are interlocking in the involvement of Italian leadership within them.

In a political campaign, it is a must for incumbents and challengers alike to have political brokers working for them. These brokers are motivated to back a campaign by their own personal and material interests. It is thus a form of exchange between the candidate and the 'volunteers': votes, or channels to votes that the candidate wants on the one hand; and various business offers or help in job attainment - "favours", which the volunteers desire on the other hand. This form of relationship is not unique to Italians. In fact, successful francophone political figures seek actively to secure solid "Italian votes" through such exchange. In this case, similar political networking and brokering occur. The exchange of favours and services seems to be, however, more pronounced and more expected among Italians because, as my informant put it, "Italians help each other".

I will suggest in this context that what we consider local is a function of a wider national politics: as long as Italians categorize themselves in ethnic terms, they are a minority group, and thus they continue to experience limits in gaining representation. Because of this inherent condition, they in turn have to emphasize and mobilize their Italian ethnic networks. In reaction to the limits resulting from their ethnic background, they build even more closure into Italian socio-economic groupings. Active social, political and economic units among Italians are, in this sense, a reflection of such political contradictions. This chapter and the next illustrate Italians' struggles in the political economy of Quebec. In this chapter, I use an ethnographic description based on my observations as a participant at an election campaign office, combined with numerous interviews with those visible political figures (who occupy centre stage) as well as those political brokers of Italian origin who work in the wings.

6.2. Italian Social Networks and the Canadian Formal System

6.2.1. Setting up an Election Campaign Organization

Tonino, a one-time federal candidate, once said, "The bigger the family you have, the more votes you have". It is true that in most Italian campaign organizations I observed, three elements were strongly emphasized: family, friends and

organizers. Any campaign involves the following three elements: the candidate, the organization and the funding (Steinberg 1976: 9). 'The candidate' includes not only the candidate's physical presence, but also his or her utterances, positions and attitudes; the organization is composed of the campaign structure, the volunteers and the supporters; and the funding is what pays for the entire operation (ibid.). If family and friends are the primary supporters of (and voters for) the candidate, the organizers are the people who actually direct the candidate - where to go and what to do in the campaign. In other words, the organizers schedule campaign actions, or 'campaign events'. As one informant said, "Above all, without the organizers, there's no election". Although the same is true of the other two elements, I am looking specifically at the campaign organization (including the fund-raising) of Italian candidates, in which the special links between local politicians and ethnic communities are dramatically implicated.

Steinberg notes that "grassroots" campaigns, best exemplified by door-to-door visits, are highly effective for local office, in contrast to larger campaign which are usually more media-oriented (ibid.: 10). Other than numerous door-to-door visits during the campaign, my informants used the following conventional campaign events: banquets, receptions, rallies, shopping centre visits, walking tours, merchant campaigning,

factory visits, kitchen parties, seniors' home visits and so on. Among them, banquets, receptions and factory visits also function as fund raising. Large or small, most of the campaigns in Montreal that I observed focused on intensive personal contacts with variations in scale and modality. The following are the stories of Italian municipal councillors. Such smaller-scale campaigns best reveal the effects of ethnicity and ethnic culture in voting behaviours on the one hand, and the material interests that link the politicians with the voters on the other hand.

6.2.2. Three Italian Municipal Councillors in LaSalle

<Giorgio Ascoli, city councillor of the ruling party>

Ascoli was born in a village in Abruzzo, Italy, in 1944. He immigrated to Montreal with his parents when he was four years old. He grew up in the area called Ville Emard. After a high school education, he started to work in the office of the steel company where he worked for thirteen years. He then left the company to start an entrepreneurship in real estate with his brother. It was 1970, and the residential flow from Ville Emard to Ville LaSalle was already established. Ascoli was one of those Italians who moved from the poorer Emard Italian district to a newly developing residential area in LaSalle. His real estate business was successful and in a few years he became independent from his brother. The company is now located in LaSalle commercial district and employs

thirteen full-time workers. Ascoli has been involved in various business organizations. With his success in business, he began to play a representative role in the associations: he has been a member of the Board of Directors of the Montreal Real Estate Board (1976-1982), l'Immeuble du Quebec (1977, 1983 and 1986), and the LaSalle/Verdun Chamber of Commerce (1982-1983).

In 1983, he ran in the first election in his own district in LaSalle. He describes his motive for a political career:

> **So, how did you get into politics?**
>
> One day, the mayor called me, and suggested I become a councillor in his party. I gave it much thought, and I decided to go for it, and ran in the election.
>
> **You said you had no experience in politics before. How did you make it?**
>
> I spoke with Al. I consulted with him. He said, go for it, I'll get you somebody who will work for you. So, I got an experienced campaign organizer and others who could work for me.

He was appointed Deputy Mayor in 1984 - 1985 and in 1991. With Mayor Labelle, he was one of the originators and the first vice-president of the LaSalle Economic Development Corporation founded by the City of LaSalle in 1984. He then became the president from 1986 through 1992. The following illustrates his approach to an in-person campaign strategy:

> Personally, I prefer women as my campaign organizers, because they are more dedicated. I can train a woman to be a good campaign organizer. I take one of the potential volunteer workers on door-to-door visits and show her what is involved in the election campaign. It's

> the people. See who seems to support you. If he or she says at the door, what did you do in the past four years, it means, he's not well informed, so you shouldn't waste your time there. You just say, thank you, nice to meet you, and goodbye. You check which person seems to vote for you, and you mark it down, and you keep calling only these people to remind them to vote for you on the election day. Those who don't seem to want to vote for you, you don't call. You rather hope that they don't go to the voting on election day, because they're going to vote for the opponent. You rather hope that they forget and watch videos at home, or something.

Ascoli was elected for three successive terms from 1983 through 1991. He explains his such political success in the following two ways: the day-to-day effort to serve with a personal touch; and the strong connection that he keeps with the Italian communities. He stresses that he does not limit his efforts to the voters in his electoral district, since "everything is relevant, things come back together". By this, he reveals his intuitive understanding of the effect and influence of communication networks that have no boundaries. That is why he emphasizes the above two elements, both of which feed into the communication networks that work in his favour.

> There was a French senior couple who had a dog. This dog bit their neighbour. Now, they wanted to keep their dog. They came to ask me to help them out, since I was in City Hall the day they came. They are not even my residents, but I tried to help them. They noticed my genuine sincerity to help them. Although it didn't work out, they were impressed by my attitude, and they volunteered to work for my election campaign the last time, and they were in fact excellent workers. This is very good, you see: although they are not living in my district, they're going to tell you about this as their experience. It creates a powerful support, much better than my saying, "I'm sincere and genuine".

In the same vein, for Ascoli, the Italian association leaders

are most important and effective.

> Mr. Sano is on my side. He likes me and he works for me. It's really good. If I had fifteen Mr. Sanos, it would be really good (laughter). Yeah, the members of his association live all over Montreal. He can influence only the residents of LaSalle (of his association members). It (the number he can influence) is very limited (because those who actually live in my district are even fewer). But, his (Mr. Sano's) families will vote for me, and all these people can have a good influence on others in my district. Also, being president means he has more visible presence in church activities, and this and that. Just being a president, he is visible and gets some respect. He shows up in a photo with me or with the mayor, and that earns more respect for him. Yeah, yeah, people listen to him, yeah, yeah. Also, he's gonna tell me, "Mr. Ascoli, such and such a family seems to be weird these days, they are maybe turning against you, so you'd better watch out." You know, he tells me these things. It's important. Things come back as relevant in the end. Things are related. Also, he owns a shoe store, and many people come and see him in everyday life. If somebody criticizes me - "Oh, Mr. Ascoli, what did he do?" - then he defends me: "No, he did this and that." It's great to have someone to defend me on the spot like this. Also, it is taken more seriously if somebody else defends you, instead of yourself. People listen to it more, although we are both saying the same thing. It's very important that somebody else defends you, instead of my saying, "I did this and that for you". People become suspicious. But somebody else says, "He did this and that", then people listen to him: "that's true". Mr. Sano's got a big family. I can count on at least ten votes from them.

Ascoli thus carefully watches who is "on his side" and who is not. For association leaders, a close relationship with political figures in the formal Canadian system adds more importance to their leadership. At any occasion, association leaders exhibit a 'friendly' relationship with politicians. The first pages of association pamphlets (called *ricordi*, or albums) contain special messages from politicians and photos of politicians with association leaders. The anecdote of the

district seniors' association I related from my field notes is an example of this. As Ascoli's comment above indicates, he is well aware that Sano's close relationship with him as a politician is beneficial for Sano, a shoe store holder, in terms of his status as a president of a regional/village association.

Furthermore, as Ascoli's maintenance of his connection with the "Italian" community illustrates, the ethnic element is consciously calculated into his campaign strategy.

> Italian votes are so solid. Actually, any ethnic votes are solid. They go to vote. But for some reason, the French don't. For example, in the apartment I worked so hard by visiting door-to-door, only 10% actually went to vote on election day.

In Ascoli's electoral district in LaSalle, at most 20% of resident voters are Italians. In his past record, however, he managed to win elections by 66.4% (in 1983), 74.5% (in 1987) and 62.3% (in 1991). The third election was, he recalls, the toughest, since the opposition party put an Italian candidate against him. It was a competition for those limited Italian votes that tend to be most decisive.

> The opponent and Tavarico (a city councillor representing the opposition party) were good friends, like they sleep together (laughter). Labelle (the mayor) is loved by the citizens. He's just so popular. So, I don't have to work hard on the French voters. They go for the party that Labelle runs. The hardest ones are Italians. The last opponent the opposition party pushed was an Italian. That bugged me. I could take anything, but not an Italian. Don't give me an Italian. I beat a lawyer, I beat a school teacher in the past (they were French). I was really bothered by this Italian candidate, because it was so threatening. My strategy to win the Italian votes

> was to send a message that it's sacrilegious to stand against an Italian who is already working for the Italian community. Why would you challenge an Italian who is already working well for you? He was a Sicilian. I'm Abruzzese. All the Sicilians in my district voted for him. He got about one or two hundred Sicilian votes. But the rest of the Italians voted for me. Well, you mark down the number you think will vote for you and then you compare it with the result of the election. That's how you know who voted for whom.

Just as the opposition party put an Italian candidate against Ascoli, the city's ruling party put an Italian opponent against the incumbent in the district most populated by Italians in LaSalle (where the various Italian merchants run their business on Thierry street and where the Italian parish church stands).

> Tavarico (the incumbent, an accountant), well, basically, he has his customers in his district and they will vote for him, for sure. We put up a Sicilian opponent. Tavarico won with only 52%. It's really tough to beat someone already there, though.

<Tavarico, the Italian councillor of the opposition party>

Vince Tavarico immigrated from Calabria, Italy, to Montreal with his family when he was six years old. The family first lived in Ville Emard. In 1969, when he was nineteen years old, he opened an accounting office with Luigi Lanzi, his current partner in LaSalle, in the middle of today's Italian quarter in the city. In 1978, when Tavarico married a second generation Italian woman whose family is from the same region, Calabria, they moved to LaSalle. Since then, Tavarico has been in LaSalle. In the meantime, his parents are still in Ville Emard, and his brother and sister with their respective

families live in the same district of LaSalle as he does. Although Luigi Lanzi, his partner, has always been involved in politics, Tavarico's own political activity started in 1984 when he was appointed an official agent for Thomas, a member of the National Assembly for the *Liberal Party*. In the same year, he decided to run in the municipal by-election:

> I have known Al since I was a child.[2] He was a neighbour in the Laurentians where we had a place. Because he was a neighbour there, I know him very well. And actually I went into politics because he suggested it. When people started to push me, I went to see him. He asked me some questions, and I answered. He thought. And he said, "Go, go ahead. Do it." And he actually helped me out. He sent me a managing guy who knows how to organize an election campaign very well, and he worked for me as a manager. That's how I could win.

Since then, he won two consecutive elections, in 1987 and 1991. Tavarico believes that Italian associations can be a source of votes:

> People have known you for years, and you have helped them so long. So it's hard to turn your back. It's only natural. I have been helping the people in the community. They come to see me and ask me to write a letter, fix some tax problems, and so on.

In 1988, Tavarico and three other Italian friends bought up the whole shopping mall on the commercial street, LaPierre, including the *Bouffe LaPierre* banquet hall:

> The former owner was French. So, the customers are, I'd say, 40-50% French, 30% English, and 20% Italian. When it was French owned, the Italian customers were probably only 2% or so. So, we of course enlarged that part, but at the same time, we didn't lose the former French or English customers. French customers are good because they don't bargain much like Italians. Italians are really bad in that respect. But we need the bulk, too,

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[2]Al appeared in the previous chapter.

> you know. If the French have a banquet, there are at most a hundred people. If it's Italian, there are at least two hundred people. Also, Italians have a lot of occasions to have banquets - baptisms, confirmations, anniversaries, etc., etc.

The banquet business is beneficial also for Tavarico's political (and economic) activities. Not only can he have his fund-raising receptions and banquets, but business also taps into other dimensions of social networks that bring him direct contacts.

<Pesari, the Italian councillor of the opposition party>

Franco Pesari was born in Marche, Italy, in 1945. He emigrated to Montreal, Canada, with his parents when he was sixteen years old in 1961. He and his parents, three brothers and one sister lived around the Central Station area when they arrived, until they moved to Notre-dame-de-Grâce in the early 1970s. He was a plumber when he first ran for election for city councillor in LaSalle in 1983. He was a member of the citizens' committee that fought the city's plan to build a detention centre. The committee was against the idea for safety reasons. As an active member of this committee, he gained citizens' support and decided to run for election for the opposition party. Since his success in the 1983 election, he started to help his older brother with his car dealership in LaSalle. Also, since 1984, he has organized and produced a music show, promoting a singer from Acapulco, Mexico, mainly for Italian and francophone audiences in the city. For

example, for one show in 1989, he claims to have gained "sixty-nine sponsors and sold tickets to over four thousand people in LaSalle". The programme pamphlet is bilingual (Italian with a French translation); four songs out of ten in the programme are old Italian popular songs such as *Mamma* and *O Sole Mio* that are typical favourites of senior Italian immigrants.

> Organizing a highly cultural spectacle, presenting an international-quality singer for our City of LaSalle is truly a unique event.
>
> Today, I present to you with great pleasure the famous Mexican singer Julian Garcia from Acapulco. Considered by many to be one of Mexico's best singers, this singer mysteriously reminds of the late Claudio Villa, who remains in the heart of true music lovers.[3] (concert pamphlet)

In this way, the business he draws from his district is closely connected to his political activities. He believes that one of the main reasons he has been successfully re-elected is that he keeps in touch with over 8,000 residents in his district (for example, it is a daily routine to check residents' birthdays and make a phone call). He keeps up personal contacts in preparation for upcoming election years.

As the above examples show, the ethnic background of local Italian politicians itself appeals to the "solid" Italian vote. Yet, as indicated in Ascoli's case, local politicians are also targets of criticism in the closely knit community

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[3]The original text is in Italian.

where information flows easily. Their continued efforts to keep up their good reputations include direct or indirect contacts with voters, and friendly relationships with key people such as association leaders, who tend to have influence in the community. In Tavarico's case, he keeps Italian votes intact through his accounting business. His business partner has been working for him as an effective fund-raiser. Pesari also keeps up his visibility through show business, drawing large audience in his electoral district. Since Ascoli, as a real estate agent, lacks such regular contacts from business activities, he made a special effort to make his presence felt through the creation of the Italian city park described in the previous chapter. For the limited Italian votes, all three councillors must keep personal connections within the Italian community, and that is their core constituency.

6.2.3. "Political environment", Italian Political Brokers and Canadian Party Politics[4]

In actual election campaigns, as I described at the beginning of this chapter, campaign organizers play a key role. In Tavarico's case, for example, Ascoli could respond to mayor Labelle's proposal to run in an election campaign for the mayor's party, because Al, Mr. Politics, assured Ascoli he

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[4]"Political environment" is an expression that I heard from Italians in politics. Since they use it to designate `people engaged in politics', it is similar to the field designated by my use of the term `political networks'.

would provide him with campaign experience. Having an effective chief campaign organizer is the norm in North American election campaigns in general. Yet, what distinguishes Italians' campaigns in my observation is that various campaign organizers or political brokers are the people who can effectively channel the candidate to the various Italian social groupings: people who have close relationships with association leaders are assets.

Political brokers offer the candidate diverse services for "friendly" reasons. Italian volunteers for Italian candidates also offer their free services for "friendly" reasons. There are some parallels between such "friendship", patron-client relationships[5], machine politics[6] and the political role

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[5]Landé defines the patron-client relationship as "a vertical dyadic alliance, i.e., an alliance between two persons of unequal status, power or resources each of whom finds it useful to have as an ally someone superior or inferior to himself" (Landé 1977: xx). A `dyadic alliance' is "a voluntary agreement between two individuals to exchange favours and to come to each other's aid in time of need" (ibid.: xiii), based on what Gouldner (1960) calls the "norm of reciprocity": (1) one should help those who have helped him/her; and (2) one should not injure those who have helped them. See the detailed discussion on clientelism later in this chapter.

[6]Banfield and Wilson note, a "machine is a business organization in a particular field of business - getting votes and winning elections", thus, the machine is "apolitical" (1963: 115-116). See the exemplary work on Chicago ethnic machines by William Kornblum, *Blue Collar Community* (1974). Bruce Stave, in *The New Deal and the Last Hurrah: Pittsburgh Machine Politics* (1970) describes the historical establishment of machines in Pittsburgh. Following Shefter's definition, Katznelson specifies the political machine as "a party organization that both distributes patronage to elicit support

played by intermediaries[7]. Yet, as I will delineate later in this chapter, Italian political brokerage usually differs in some respects from patron-client relationships and from the machine in its form and roles. Conceptually, Italian political brokers are closer to 'political middlemen'. Across the political system, composed of competing parties at three levels (municipal, provincial and federal), the networks of the different formal governmental levels are articulated through organizers and brokers in a similar way: the difference is in the scale of support the political figures can bring in through their networks.

Al, Mr. Politics, president of the *Casa* until his death in 1992, is said by my informants to have been the first and last Italian to occupy a central position throughout such

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and is capable of reliably centralizing power within its jurisdiction" (Katznelson 1981: 113; Shefter 1976: 17). Katznelson further points out the special characteristics of the machines in the U.S. as key distributors of political rewards providing organized access to government. The bridge-like role between officials and electorate (he calls it the "dual role of the machines") "was especially critical at the turn of the century, because the mass migration of Catholic and Jewish workers from Europe brought into question the traditional hegemony of the Protestant ruling class.... By its lack of a class orientation, its emphasis on concrete rewards, and its material support for traditional social ties, the machine form of political organization maintained social order in a setting where the potential for threats to the social order was high" (Katznelson 1981:114).

[7]Silverman refers to "intermediaries" as political brokers who "provide contact between the two systems, but who do not necessarily fulfil both criteria" (Silverman 1965: 172).

"political networks": everybody in the political networks knew him and showed him respect. He was a major political broker and fund raiser for the provincial Liberal Party. It was in the Italian Community's interest to back the provincial Liberal Party in order to counter the rising power of the separatist Parti Québécois since the late 1970s. Although it is hard to estimate how much Al contributed to the Liberal Party, the fact that Al received two honourary medals, one from the Liberal Quebec Premier Bourassa, and another from the Italian government, indicates that the importance of Al's presence in the Italian Community was acknowledged in the formal political system. All the informants in the "political networks" claim that a figure like Al no longer exists:

> Let's say he built a base for what Italians (in politics) have now. The rest is ours. We have to build on top of that.[8]

Many Italians I spoke to who are in politics agree that there are more Italian political brokers than there are francophone counterparts proportionate to their populations. If such an

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[8]For many Italians outside politics, Al is said to have been a figure who encouraged Italians' social upward mobility: one informant said, shortly after his death, "I'm sure a lot of them became lawyers with his encouragement. He always said to the people coming to the *Casa*, `Go to law school, become a lawyer!'" I remember Al, sitting in his office in the *Casa*, earnestly working on the biography of Francesco Giuseppe Bressani, the first Catholic priest in Quebec who was of Italian origin. On the day of the Italian Consulate Garden Party for the *Medallo di Cavallo*, I was with Ascoli. I saw Ciaccia and other Italian politicians from the island of Montreal. Al introduced me to his wife, Anna, to his son, Tony (who was the Italian flower dealer), and to his grandchildren.

impression reflects reality, it is surely in stark contrast to the actual number represented in the provincial national assembly: in 1993, the 125 provincial Members of National Assembly were almost entirely of French origin with only a few exceptions - only four were of Italian origin.[9] At the federal level in Quebec, among 75 Members of Parliament, only two Italians won a seat in the 1993 election.[10] Tonino, an ex-candidate for the federal Parliament says: "It's because Quebec is not our country." Italians, especially of the immigrant generation, have to "stay behind the scenes" in order to be successful in the political field in Quebec. Tonino continues, "But it is different for my generation, and I should be more open to people of any background, too." While he indicates his ambition to represent citizens regardless of ethnic and racial background, he is careful to make use of the Italian social networks and fully expects Jean-Guy, the chief campaign organizer, to rely on his francophone background.

When I first met Tonino, he was only 22 years old. His father, a construction business owner, had long been actively participating in the political campaigns of various

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[9]There are at least 104 Francophone Members of National Assembly of Quebec. See *Journal des débats*, Assemblée nationale, deuxième session, le mardi 8 mars 1994.

[10]There are at least 65 francophone Members of Parliament. See *House of Commons Debates* vol. 133 (063), Wed. May 4, 1994.

candidates. As his son, Tonino was taken to the campaign sites and polls from the age of twelve.[11] Tonino thus met many people in the political networks. He was approved to run for federal election by the Conservative Party in the district of St. Leonard. The following ethnographic note illustrates several of my earlier points.

[Scene from Tonino's federal election campaign]

In the main campaign office in St. Leonard, Cristina, 26, works from nine o'clock in the morning until ten o'clock in the evening every day including weekends. She is Tonino's fiancée. Jean-Guy, chief organizer, works there almost every day, as does Anna, a volunteer. Another campaign organizer, Louis, a francophone, is also in the office every day. Tonino's father, with a hunting cap and the usual red sweater, smokes cigarettes, comes in and out, glances around to make sure that everything is alright in the main office. Tonino's two younger brothers, with their baseball caps, sometimes come into the office and sit around. Cristina jokes a little bit with Vitto, Tonino's brother, but usually they do not speak much to Cristina. Occasionally, Cristina's aunt and uncle drop in to the office and pick up posters of Tonino to hang at the shopping malls. There are two other women who work in the campaign office. Both of them are francophones. Sometimes Tonino comes into the office, accompanied by his friend Silvestro, 43, a lawyer. Tonino's and Silvestro's families have known each other as neighbours for more than ten years. Tonino mainly works from door-to-door in a suit. Pasquale takes care of the press releases to send to Italian newspapers. The volunteers' job is simple: to call every single household in the district, correctly pronounce the name of the candidate, To-ni-no, ask for volunteer help for the campaign, check if volunteers and voters need any help (transportation and so on), and take a poll. His district is made up of about 40% Italians, 50% francophones and 10% others. There are 174 polls where volunteers work for Tonino's campaign. In the evening, Tonino goes to a 'kitchen party', where he can introduce himself and make a speech. In

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[11]It is a similar approach that I noted among Italian business owners: the father takes the son to the work site and lets him "learn"; this is especially the case in the construction business.

a cordial and homy atmosphere, he gets introduced and becomes known as a friend. He goes to such parties a couple of times a week.

During the campaign I soon notice the differing attitudes among the volunteers. In the main office located in St. Leonard where I work as a volunteer, Anna, 'the neighbour' of Tonino's family, works 'on a voluntary basis' every day like the francophone workers. There are two rooms in the campaign office, one in front and another in the back. Italians including Anna hang around in the front room. On the other hand, francophone workers are put in the back room and answer the telephone all day long (I, non-Italian obviously, was put in the back room with them). The Italian volunteers, Tonino, his father and his two brothers chat in friendly fashion, work in the front room, and hardly visit the back room, except when they pick up something from the fridge. Francophone volunteers do not go to the front room, either.

When asked, Anna stresses the long-term relationship that she and the Tonino family have developed, implying future prospects in their relationship. The facts that Anna is a neighbour and friend and that she got the volunteer job are inseparable. Her husband is also, to use their expression, 'active in politics', meaning that he supports and works for a candidate. For Anna, politics is as important as her own job, where she has worked for eleven years. She in fact is taking days off for her volunteer work. Anna's daughter, before or after her university lectures, drops by the office, socializing with the (Italian) campaign workers and Tonino's family in the front room (she never goes into the back room). Volunteer work is valuable, Anna explains, since it can 'help' her in the future. Anna declares that she has to leave at three o'clock but she does not. She stays thirty minutes or forty minutes longer, and with obvious hesitancy, she finally leaves. This is not the case among the francophone workers. They work and they leave. For them, it is only one-time election service. Their family members never visit them here, either. As Yoland, one of the francophone volunteer workers, explains, volunteer work is worthwhile because she is now assured of getting a highly paid job as a reward on election day. They are happy enough with that arrangement.

Tonino used to work for the provincial Liberal Party. Through working for the party, he met among others Jean-Guy and Cristina, his fiancée. Jean-Guy is an accountant and has worked for the provincial Liberal Party for the past twenty years. Trusting Jean-Guy's long experience in various campaigns and the rapport Tonino established with him, Tonino asked Jean-Guy to direct his campaign as chief organizer. Tonino valued his francophone background (complimenting the ability of Tonino and his family to cover Italian networks) as

advantageous in this predominantly francophone district. In the whole operation, Jean-Guy is the only paid worker. Other staff, including the workers in the main office and approximately six or seven hundred workers outside the main office, all work on a volunteer basis.

During Tonino's campaign, he actively attends the meetings of the various regional associations. He finds it useful since he can make speeches and become known to even more people by word of mouth. Tonino himself is not interested in active involvement in his own regional association ("I'm not into such small things"), yet he supports such activities among Italians ("I think it's very important").

From my observation, Italians in businesses such as Italian restaurants, banquet halls, the marriage industry, flower shops, pastries, construction, construction-related business, etc. as well as professionals tend to be more involved than working-class Italians in electoral activities. The following statement by a caterer represents the strong concordance between political activities and business activities:

> When you know these people, they think of you. Meaning, if they need catering, they call us, because we're friends - because we help them, because we're friends. Also, it's very prestigious doing work for these people, because they are high position people. And you can use them for a recommendation. So, that way it helps me. That's the credibility.

The strong connection with people who occupy political positions in the formal system is an asset in many respects. Local business and local people are the driving force in local politics. It is such local Italian ethnic networks that enable the system to work.

> They grew up with you, don't forget, those people (involved in municipal politics) are involved with provincial or federal politics, too. Anybody you meet in the political atmosphere, they are all involved at the three levels. Because, remember, even (people) at a

> federal level help (at) the municipal level. Or provincial level helps a municipal or federal, because they are all the same people.

'They' means political brokers and organizers. Italian political brokers stress the fact that they help many political figures at all levels (and thus how well they are 'connected' to these 'important/powerful people'). These political brokers are the people who can basically mobilize and connect Italian social units to the political figures. They do so through their close links with Italian social unit leaders, especially the *presidenti* of the two main kinds of Italian associations: regional/village associations and seniors' associations, both of which have well established, extensive and close networks.

The strength of regional/village associations in "political networks" is the strong solidarity among members based on the discourse of shared culture, hence the influence of the association leaders over members. As described in the case of the local politician Ascoli, although members of associations are not necessarily concentrated in one electoral district, they can create either a positive or negative reputation for a district politician through gossip. Actual voting is a private matter, thus nobody can force a voter's choice. Yet, it is understood that what the association presidents suggest can significantly influence members' voting behaviour. In an extreme instance, one informant who is the secretary of a

regional/village association speculated that when the preferred candidate was successfully elected, monetary rewards might be distributed to members through the association leader (not necessarily a common practice).[12]

On the other hand, the strength of seniors' associations in politics lies in the fact that these social units are organized by residential district, which is effective since electoral constituencies are comprised of local districts. Lacking the ideological basis and kin networking that regional/village associations have, seniors' associations do not manifest as much cohesion among members, and the result is

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[12]Gina has been a secretary of one of the largest Italian regional associations in Montreal for more than thirteen years. It is a voluntary job and she enjoys doing it. Since I visited her with Lino, a good friend of mine, Gina treated me as a friend right away; Gina and Lino have been friends for more than ten years. Lino calls Gina "my mother in Montreal". Thus, she was frank, informal and casual. She was quite cheerful when telling me many `behind the scenes' anecdotes. And yet when Gina asked about my thesis topic and I briefly described it, she responded with a great sigh: "Mio dio, mio dio (My god, my god)". This is the conversation I had with her:

So, you say you are studying the Italian community in Montreal,
but, what exactly are you researching?

I'm particularly researching the link between business and political activities among Italians in Montreal, to see how Italian identity works with it. For example, what kind of role all these associations play in politics, and...
Aiya-ya, aiya-ya, mio dio, mio dio....

What's wrong? Anything wrong?
You are looking at the heart of their interest. It's the core! They're not going to tell you anything about it.

that leaders have less influence over members. Yet, it is a useful social unit for information flow.

The larger a campaign becomes (from municipal to provincial or federal), the more effort strategists invest in conducting intensive in-person campaigns, contrary to what political scientists theorize (cf. Steinberg 1976). The following statement of an informant who worked for the mayoralty campaign is indicative:

> We were the first ones to help him (the mayor of the City of Montreal) from the beginning. My father opened the door to the Italian community for him. He used to be a lawyer for the union, which is across the street from the provincial building. He used to come across here for lunch to eat. Eventually he was going for the leadership, so, we said, 'Oh', because he used to be a lawyer we know, and that's all. And also, don't forget, when people decided to name a new leader, well, it was in the newspaper. We said, 'we think Jean Doré will go for mayor, he's going to a (nomination) party on Saturday'. So he comes here for the party, and we said, 'O.K., he looks like a nice guy, looks like a young fellow'. Plus, the old mayor was a good friend of ours, but he's not there any more. He's gone. So, you have to move with the times. Let's face it, when you know people, they know you, which means when you know someone and ask their services, they just make it easier for you, meaning they help and they give you the services you need, saying, 'Well, speak to that guy in the urban department, and he'll give you plans, and he'll tell you how to go ahead'. They give you the right ways, instead of wasting time. So it helps you save time and makes you to get to the right place. That's all it is. [Claudio, a restaurant owner, 28, the second generation]

As this statement indicates, Italian organizers work not only for Italian candidates but for francophone candidates too. Meanwhile, francophone candidates know the importance of ethnic votes. This has already been indicated by the LaSalle

mayor's special concern to keep Ascoli at his right hand. Also, it is in this context that Al, Mr. Politics, worked for the provincial Liberal Party, whose main support must come from the francophone majority in the province.

Many Italians in politics with whom I spoke stressed that to know people and to be known by people is the first step toward success in politics. To be well enough known in political networks is critical, in bringing the candidate into contact with the people who know what to do and who will work for the candidate in the future. This is why Tonino's father had taken Tonino to various campaign events since his childhood, as had the father of Claudio (a second generation political broker). Tonino then created a broad network through his work for the provincial party over the past ten years, while Claudio remained a political broker for the sake of his business activities.

> I'm not that known yet, after only three years in the community. I haven't closed the door (to politics) in the future. You have to be involved. The Optimist Club is one of them. Helping the church, helping, for example, your local or provincial or federal riding. You have to join them. You could either be a treasurer, or right-hand man or whatever. Most of the time, in these ridings they have financing activities as well. You get approached by other business people to contribute to a little local riding, and eventually, they're going to get to know you. You know, I'm so and so, from so and so, I'm working for so and so, I'm going to collect some money. So, eventually, they are going to get to know you and once you get to be known in the business community, then, you can work at the other levels subsequently. I joined two associations. [an accountant in LaSalle, 42]

Being Italian is thus a resource. Successful candidacy

depends upon one's capability to mobilize the ethnic vote. Speaking the language shows the candidate's commitment to his or her Italian background.

> The fact is that, one time, we had a gentleman come into this district, and say "I'm going to represent you", which is fine, except that he's not a representative. We have a lot of people who have called and they speak to me in Italian. This district is Italian. He does not speak Italian, and they don't know that. His name is Italian, he's of Italian origin, but, he does not speak Italian. He's already third generation here. He's lost his language, I don't know why, but he did. [Italian city councillor in St. Leonard, 40, the second generation, construction business and restaurant holder]

The friendly links with politicians appeal to the association leaders' self-esteem, and politicians on the other hand enjoy their own prestige in being able to give such 'honour' to others, as well as practical support. In this way, through the use of organizers as intermediaries, both Italian and non-Italian politicians initiate and maintain material and symbolic links with Italian social units.

6.2.4. Politicians, Organizers and Material Pay-offs

The services that organizers offer the candidates include many features. The following are some examples of how they serve the candidates:

> Because my father was in politics since he was 17, he has been involved in all levels of politics. So, I sort of followed in his footsteps. He was always involved as an organizer of some politicians. We worked for the mayor. My father was the principal organizer, campaigning for funds, and we also took care of four executive members: John Gardener, Joseph Biello... We offered them our place (restaurant), we offered them food, we offered them services, and any pamphlets to be distributed, and if they needed on election day anybody to speak English or

> Italian or French, to answer the phone to explain how to go to vote and where to go, we organized certain aspects of the campaign. Mine is basically going to polls and being sure that the day before, the little mailing cards are deposited in the mailbox, so this way people will remember which poll to go to and who to vote for. And to find the people to help me, find people to help on the phone, and deliver food. He (the father) has been helping all sorts of prime ministers, all types of premiers, all types of mayors. He's been involved since the beginning of 1950 maybe, when he was young.
>
> (If they need) the distribution of pamphlets, if they need food to go to the polling station, (if) they need people on the phone ... because if the district is 60% Italian, you need to find Italian ladies that go to the polling stations to phone to say, 'Don't forget to vote for your candidate', 'cause, they are Italian.
>
> If they ask, 'Look, we need your help to find a place to run (our campaign)', we can do that. We can find out, we have the right people that know in that respect, agents who work for me. When they say, 'Look, by the way, can you find a place to rent', they can go to someone (we'll send them). [a campaign organizer in the City of Montreal, a restaurant owner]

Yet, organizers rarely reveal what they really expect out of volunteering for political figures and candidates[13]:

> I'm interested in politics for the right reasons. I'll be there to help people. We know all the politicians. We know them all from prime minister to MPs. I worked for the mayor of Montreal. We organized the campaign, we worked in the provincial campaign, in the federal campaign, we worked on all the levels of campaigns. ... we took care of one city councillor, we helped all of them in their campaign, helped in every way. In a mental way, a physical way and a financial way. [Claudio]

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[13]One organizer put it this way:

> But I mean, they (politicians) don't really make decisions, because, more and more you're going into politics, you know that politicians in the past were caught for wrong doings. People don't do that any more. They try to be safer. But they could suggest to you, but they don't get involved.

Few local politicians are open about what they can do in return:

> I need 50 volunteers. If you have fifty good volunteers, you are laughing. I had thirty-eight in the last election. That was good. After the election, if they come and said, let's say, I have five family members who need jobs. Give me five jobs. I can't do that. I may be able to give one or two, but, there's a limit.

The following statement of another ex-candidate of Italian origin who became a city councillor is typical of what one hears from local political figures:

> This is what happens, because of the (construction and restaurant) business I'm in. On a Saturday alone, I could see a thousand people here. I have all sorts of people come around to ask me, 'Could you please do me this favour'. 'I'm calling them, they don't understand me, I don't understand them, but I know you have friends at City Hall so maybe you can help me'. All these... some thing very simple like snow removal this winter. The tractor passed by and hit the fence. Nobody has gone back to repair it. So, the gentleman called the City to have it repaired, the City is telling the gentleman we'd send the councilman, but the councilman's got a million things to do, he forgot about the fence. So, they tell me, well, I know the people at City Hall, I can ask them. So, I would call and because they know me, they'll do it right away. Some people had water that used to come into the basement of the house because the sewage wasn't done properly. That's not my job, but, I would call and say, "If it's possible, or if you're around that area doing some work", I would call the city, of course. The fact is that when you pay two or three hundred thousand dollars a year in business tax, I got more word at City Hall than a councilman probably has. But I wouldn't mind the title too much. I was doing this for so many years. Like I said, we have been building over 30 years. Where we are building now is the church across the street. Every day there's something wrong. Every day, we're looking at something to fix. I've got some people so they come and they know we are pretty reasonable and all that. People come over and sometimes the priests come and say, "I've got a problem, can you send me some electrician", and I have never denied them: "sure, no problem". Or, another day, we had to block off part of the street, I had the City and the police reroute (traffic) so that the church wouldn't be bothered by

> that. I had it done. If you went to the city councillor in that district, it would be never done, it takes time. I had it done on the same day. That's what the difference is. My councilman will do it for me because I don't want to make trouble with City Hall, but, (if) my councilman tells me, "I don't have time to do it today", then, goodbye, because I'll pick up the telephone and I'll call the mayor directly. We are at that level with them. When you are a big builder, they know who you are, they know how much tax you pay, they don't fool with you, you know. These guys come around and say, "Yes, Sir". [Mr. Sittacani, a construction businessman]

I am not suggesting that Italian councillors help only Italian residents. In fact, they are willing to help any residents regardless of ethnic background. The point here is that both Italian councillors and Italian residents *expect* (and therefore routinely practice) this kind of informal and personal reciprocity.

Consistent with Silverman's observation on clientelism in central Italy (1965), Italians with whom I spoke carefully avoided the word 'favour'. Instead, they refer to the exchange relationship using the word 'friends'.[14] The actual conduits, as I illustrated, are nonetheless informal links and material exchange networks organized by various social

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[14]Silverman notes: "Personalized terms of address are used, there generally are affective overtones to the relationship, and frequently there is a denial of utilitarian motives and an insistence instead upon the non-priced demands of `loyalty', `friendship', or being `almost like one of the family'" (1965:176).

units.[15]

> Basically we're involved in the City of St. Leonard, City of St. Laurent, City of Outremont.[16] Just to remind you, my father grew up with many, many people. He knows many people. So, you help your friend. Just like they help you. But, don't forget, my business is in the City of Montreal. We live in the City of Montreal. So we're more implicated in the City of Montreal, because we are here. Whereas, the other ones, it's just a matter of being polite, helpful, because we know people running, so they grew up with you, (we help) the same way, by organizing the campaign. Just like the federal level or provincial level. (Claudio)

Many authors discuss patronage and the patron-client relationship in terms that apply readily to political brokers. For example, Pitt-Rivers describes patrons as appearing in "the tension between the state and the community" (1955: 154-155). Patrons are "gatekeepers" because "they largely dominate the paths linking the local urban world" (Kenny 1960: 17-18). Thus, patrons are "mediators between the local and national system" who usually have "a distinctly defined status in both systems" and "operate efficiently in both" (Silverman 1965: 175).

In *Patrons and Partisans*, White described how conflicts over the distribution of limited resources are expressed in terms

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[15]Landé defines a favour as "something received on terms more advantageous than those that can be obtained by anyone on an *ad hoc* basis in the market place, or which cannot be obtained in the market place at all" (1977: xiv). In politics, favours are "services performed by political party officials [that] include, [for example] helping people get public jobs and showing people how to get social benefits" (Clark 1975:339) and so on.

[16]See the map at the beginning of the thesis.

of competition for power between political parties, using the method of clientelism (White 1980).

> Although clientelism has historical and conceptual links with the patron-client relation between landlord and peasant that pre-dates the formation of the modern state and the development of party politics, the 'clientelism' under discussion here exists within the ambit of contemporary political parties. Parties compete for votes so that they can form the government and distribute state-controlled resources. [...] Scarce resources such as jobs, loans, grants, electrical and water connections, tarred roads and so forth are distributed (or often only promised) in exchange for political support. The 'client' gives his own vote and his energy in recruiting the votes of others for the party of his benefactor. (White 1980: 4-5)

Although there is a certain parallel between the clientelistic relationship White observed in southern Italy and the 'friendly' relationship I am describing here in Montreal, in the sense that they do exchange services (or "favours"), the relationship in the two settings is not strictly identical: in Montreal the power relationships between the political figures and the political brokers are not necessarily hierarchical and lifelong. They are instead practised as a *reciprocal* exchange of resources. For example, the 1990 municipal election in St. Leonard where nine city councillors out of twelve are represented by Italian descendants involved fierce backbiting; former allies in Italian political networks, comprised of organizers and city politicians, split and fought against one other. One active campaign organizer whose centre of activities lies in the City of Montreal commented:

> That one, we stayed out of. We don't get involved now. So, we didn't help anybody. We stayed neutral. You can't fight your friends because friends are on both

> sides. So, we just made a campaign contribution to both of them.

This example illustrates that one can keep a distance from one's 'friends' -- at least one can choose to stay away: one is not obliged to be loyal and committed to a certain political figure.

Italian political brokers differ from the political 'machines' once prevalent in the United States. 'Machines' directly collected the potential votes and sold them to the incumbents/challengers; the Italian political brokers of Montreal *mediate* between the political incumbents/challengers and the Italian social units represented by *presidenti*, and they do not usually 'sell' votes. In this sense, Italian political brokers show greater similarity to what Wolf calls political middlemen.

As Wolf describes (1966:1075), political middlemen "stand guard over the crucial junctures or synapses of relationships which connect the local system to the larger whole." The various association leaders can serve as middlemen between their members and political figures in the formal Canadian political system.

Dennis (1977: 21) states:

> ... we see the middleman capitalizing on his position as sole intermediary between different but related social systems. This ability to operate effectively in both

> systems is the key to his success. He must be able to speak different languages, behave appropriately in both village and government offices, and manipulate the symbols of two different cultures. ... The effect of the policy ("political middleman") was to emphasize the unity and solidarity of the village community, and to make use of the critical importance of the roles linking the villages and higher levels of government.

Italian association leaders are able in some respects to serve as 'political middlemen', capable of interacting effectively within and between two social sectors -- Quebec/Canadian political networks and local Italian ethnic networks.

On the other hand, association leaders rarely 'organize' campaigns directly, nor do they offer voluntary services for campaigns. They tend not to be visible in campaigns, but rather act as behind-the-scenes middlemen by introducing their members to the politicians. Many association leaders that I spoke to in fact speak only an Italian dialect with some English. Campaign organizers or political brokers on the other hand are people who speak Italian, English and French languages. Italian association leaders, nonetheless, pave the way for others in Quebec/Canadian political networks -- including politicians, organizers and political brokers -- to connect with Italian communities.

Can associations, especially paesani groups, be considered 'factions'? There are conflicting views on 'factions' in terms of a faction's membership recruitment and its duration as a group. Murdock (1949: 90) refers to factions as

competing regional districts, tribal moieties and village political divisions. Similarly, According to Landé, for Lewis (1954) factions are rival kinship groups; on the other hand, for Mayor (1961: 122ff) and Lasswell (1931), they are "temporary groups" gathered for a particular issue (see Landé 1977). Thus, as Firth defines, factions are "loosely orderèd groups; ... their bases of recruitment are structurally diverse; and ... they tend to become activated on specific occasions and not as a regularly recurring feature" (1957:292).

Paesani groups are not factions strictly speaking, because they are *not* kinship groups although kinship is one mechanism of their solidarity, and may be a metaphor for group cohesion); nor are they 'competing' village divisions (although there is an element of a rivalry between groups in terms of size and strength; nor are they temporary groups whose members are gathered for a particular political opportunity. Paesani are apolitical social groups that recruit members along lines of village and regional origins in Italy and aim at permanent existence as a group. They can be activated as a political force in terms of their special associations with politicians or political brokers, however, because paesani groups are 'apolitical', they are well suited to a patronage politics in which favours and votes are

exchanged.[17]

6.3. Conclusion: Political Backing and Ethnicity in Montreal

Describing Jewish political leadership and Jewish community politics in Montreal, Weinfeld[18] stresses the division between the governmental (formal) political system and the Jewish community power structure. He recognizes two structures working independently yet in parallel. Similarly, we can observe in the Italian community two somewhat independent but connected systems: the formal Quebec/Canadian political structure and informal Italian social networks. Italian communities are, however, manifest as 'distinct' regional/village social units, each with its own leadership structure, and this poses both limits and opportunities for wider ethnic integration. The CNIC represents a proportion of such social units and acts as representative for the whole Italian Community. The separate Italian social units are effectively mobilized into the formal Canadian sector, because electoral politics at all three governmental levels (municipal, provincial and federal) focus on personal

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[17]Clark explains the `apolitical' nature of patronage politics: "The more supporters share an outlook of nonideological particularism (in politics), the less they should care about (most) policies and the more about favours" (1975: 328, the first parenthesis added).

[18]Personal communications. See Harold M. Waller (1993) or Daniel J. Elazar and Stuart A. Cohen (1985) on internal Jewish community politics.

contacts.[19]

Association leaders in Italian communities play an important role in connecting their members to the formal political system. Yet, it is more avowedly political Italian middlemen, such as campaign organizers and political brokers, who are the immediate synapses between formal figures of Italian and non-Italian origin, and Italians in informal networks.

Working for politicians means doing favours for political candidates, in expectation of a return after a successful election. It is because 'politics' involves unbounded, multi-faceted network relations that they play an important role in business/commercial activities. Merchants and professionals, like politicians, welcome new and broader contacts. There are other valuable benefits to be gained from politicians that are not transacted in the open market: jobs for family members, recommendations, and so on.

Katznelson argues that American urban politics and ward organization reinforce what he calls "this system of

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[19]One informant put it in this way:

> That's the most important. Larger or smaller campaigns, that's the most important. Of course the strategy might be different, such as, if it's a federal election, you may use a lot more telephone soliciting, but it's the same thing. You check out who is going to vote for you and who is not before the election day as much as possible. And door-to-door.

ethnicity, community, and party" (1982: 7). This is because "the urban system has been essentially a system of ethnic bargaining and accommodation" in which "ethnic groups have been joined in a complex game whose prizes are patronage and city services" (ibid.). In Montreal, a political candidate in a larger-scale election faces an electoral district which includes a large number of what most Italians I spoke with called 'nationalities'. As a result, Italian votes, although they are dependable through the steady relationship between the middleman and association leaders, constitute a minority of the necessary votes to win the seat. As seen in Tonino's case, this requires a dual strategy: mobilizing the Italian votes, while being 'open' to 'all nationalities'. Without inter-ethnic relationships at the political level, electoral districts with their various ethnic populations are viewed as very "tough". Politicians and organizers stick to the conventional in-person campaign, targeting Italian ethnic votes while collaborating with francophone workers/politicians to attract the francophone vote. In this way, the whole electoral organization reveals its dependency on the ethnic identity.[20] This strategy should be seen in combination with

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[20]Within such a framework, Italian political candidates, Italian organizers, francophone candidates and francophone organizers find a cooperative solution to maximize their support; at the provincial level, federalist francophones and Italians have joined together, based on their support of federalism, and stand against the francophone separatist Parti Québécois. The 1993 federal election showed, however, the limitations of these alliances in larger-scale elections, with the sweeping success of the new federal Bloc Québécois whose

Italians' economic struggles in a francophone province. The next and final chapter will focus on the economy and lead me to conclusions about the inter-relationship of politics, the discourse of distinct culture, and economic interests, as represented and exemplified by the Italians of Quebec.

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political platform is staunch Quebec-separatism. In Quebec, among 75 Members of National Assembly newly elected, the Bloc Québécois won 54 seats, the Liberal got 19 seats, with 1 seat going to the Conservative Party and one to an Independent. As for Italian candidates in Montreal, only incumbent Alfonso Gagliano (Liberal) from the district with the Italian concentration in St.Leonard won his seat.

CHAPTER 7

UBI ROMANUS IBI ROMA: ECONOMIC SURVIVAL IN NATIONALIST QUEBEC

> "To collaborate with the S.A.Q. has been a challenge. A big, big challenge."[1]
>
> Having the title "Elenco Buon Giorno Italia (Directory Hello Italy)" is sound. In fact, the "Directory Hello Italy" is a blessing because finally the Italian community unites and presents a communal face and knows with the birth of "Directory Hello Italy" that an industrial association which can propel and defend development and safeguard old and new Italo-Canadian entrepreneurs may be organized. (Elenco Buongiorno Italia - Pagine gialle italiane [Italian Yellow Pages], July 1993/July 1994: 26)[2]

This final chapter examines the links between Italian ethnic identity and the economic interests that underlie politics in Montreal. To approach the complexity of the problem, I proceed in steps. First, I begin with a social history of the creation of the Italian commercial district in LaSalle in suburban Montreal. This exemplifies the process of emergence of this now Italian-concentrated district, the political/electoral importance of which is described in the previous chapter. In this process, highly successful Italian construction-business holders evolved. Second, I examine the diversity of class among Italians and the ideological

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[1]S.A.Q. stands for Société des alcools du Québec. It is a hundred per cent provincial government owned enterprise that monopolizes alcohol retailing.

[2]Original text in Italian. This is cited from the preface. This is the first issue.

link that unites Italians of differing social classes. I discuss Italians' economic struggles as manifested in the context of francophone governance - what Levine (1990) calls the "French framework" - in the province. For this, the relationship between the provincial government monopoly of wine sales and Italian merchants illustrates Italians' "perception" of francophone domination in the market economy of Quebec.

Various sources were used to prepare this chapter; these include numerous interviews with Italians of differing classes and scales of capital assets, historical records including land transactions, and other written materials such as statistical records, water tax files, business magazines, pamphlets, Italian Community magazines and newspapers.

7.1. The Construction Industry and the Italian Community

7.1.1. Background

The construction industry has been at the politico-economic heart of the Italian Community, past and present. Two inseparable factors should be noted to explain why this is so. First, the majority of Italian immigrants who came to Quebec with no financial resources and barely any educational background participated upon arrival in a physical labour force at various construction sites. Since that was, as many immigrant Italians put it, "the only on-the-job training" that they got, many stayed in construction-related industries throughout their occupational lives. Today, the

population in this line of business is statistically over-represent in the active Italian labour force in Quebec (Quebec 1981, see Table 1; Statistics Canada 1991, see Table 16 in the Appendix).

Secondly, among those who stayed in the construction industry in the wake of the construction boom in Montreal, there emerged a giant, inter-provincial and international Italian construction business network. Wealthy construction business owners are today the main financial source and influence in Italian Community affairs (for example, *Fondazione* and *Borse di studenti* by CIBPA) and they enjoy a certain hegemony in the Italian Community as witnessed in the monthly Montreal Italian business people's magazine, *La Voce* (I will discuss this later). Active business networking among Italian professionals and capitalists, large and small, including those in the construction industry, is institutionalized in the form of Italian business/social associations beyond those based on regional background and interlocking trades associations (CIBPA since 1949, Young-CIBPA, founded in 1990, and various Italian Optimist Clubs, to name a few).

The following case study of the construction of the suburban Italian district in LaSalle illuminates 1. the economic process of the formation of an Italian suburban parish-community in Montreal; 2. the process of the emergence of highly successful construction business owners of Italian origin; 3. the relationship between

property ownership and ethnicity among the overwhelmingly working-class population in the district; and 4. the relationship between the LaSalle Italian community and the greater Italian Community.

Table 1. Active Italian Immigrant Population by Occupation, 1981

	Italians				Total Active Population	
	Quebec		Metropolitan Montreal		Quebec	
Number (%)	Number	(%)	Number	(%)	Number	(%)
Professional and Managerial						
Directors	3,410	6.1	3,195	6.0	255,505	9.4
Professionals of Pure Science	920	1.7	820	1.5	87,195	3.2
Proessionals of Social Science	225	0.4	215	0.4	41,275	1.5
Clergy	30	0.1	25	0.1	12,865	0.5
Teachers	1,080	1.9	1,000	1.9	135,095	5.0
Medical Professionals	555	1.0	490	0.9	139,770	5.1
Other Professionals	490	0.9	455	0.9	44,980	1.7
Total	6,710	12.1	6,200	11.9	716,685	26.4
White Collar						
Office workers	5,555	10.0	5,460	10.2	521,075	19.2
Sales	3,970	7.2	3,875	7.2	238,910	8.8
Total	9,525	17.2	9,335	17.4	759,985	27.9
Blue Collar						
Service workers	6,435	11.6	6,080	11.3	313,945	11.5
Processing	3,550	6.4	3,455	6.4	133,820	4.9
Factory	2,265	4.1	2,185	4.1	70,395	5.3
Manufacture	6,430	11.4	5,730	23.3	269,020	9.9
Construction	6,340	11.4	6,130	11.4	144,395	5.3
Transportation	1,635	2.9	1,585	3.0	110,620	4.1
Others	3,140	5.7	2,980	5.6	200,680	7.4
Total	39,320	70.8	38,145	71.1	1,242,875	45.7
Total	55,555	100.0	38,145	100.0	2,719,545	100.0

Source: Les caractéristiques socio-économiques de la population immigrée au Québec au recensement de 1981, Cahier no. 4, Government of Quebec: Ministère des Communautés culturelles et de l'immigration, Direction de la planification et de l'évaluation.

7.1.2. The Economic Creation of the LaSalle Italian District

7.1.2.1. Background

> Construction is always a driving force of economy in general. It affects everything, everything, everything. You buy a house, you put in furniture, you put in plants, flowers, you shop, you have to buy everything. [Alfonso, insurance company holder]

The massive wave of post-war Italian immigration was also the time of the post-war economic boom in Montreal (see Table 2). Linteau and others report that between 1946 and 1956 the manufacturing sector saw a 165% increase in the value of production in Quebec (Linteau et al. 1990). It was a period of rapid and dramatic urbanization. This involved an array of other factors that increased the population. The birth rate, which was depressed before and during the war, jumped and remained high. Advanced medical technology and hygiene care greatly lowered the death rate. With Montreal's economic boom, the rural exodus of francophone Quebecers from regional Quebec increased again. Together with all these factors, the massive wave of post-war immigration (with Italians comprising its majority) contributed to galloping population growth in Montreal.

Such rapid increase in the urban population was one of the major factors behind the boom in residential and commercial construction. The post-war period was the time when the major urban infrastructure projects got under way. For example, according to the 1961 census, 45% of housing units that then existed had been built only since the end of the war (Linteau et al. 1991).

This construction rush was made possible by federal and provincial aid. The governments encouraged the construction of less expensive housing for lower-income families (see Linteau et al. 1990). In 1945, the federal government set up the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation. In 1954, the government further broadened its mandate with the National Housing Act. In the meantime, the Quebec government passed legislation to facilitate borrowing from caisses populaires in 1948. According to Linteau and others (ibid.), in Quebec, most new housing was constructed with loans from the caisses populaires.

Table 2. Two indications of the economic growth of Quebec, 1921-1971

Year	Hydro electric production (million kWh)	Value of mine production ($)
1921	1,791	15,522,988
1931	8,066	36,051,366
1941	17,741	99,700,027
1951	29,690	255,931,822
1961	50,433	455,522,933
1971	75,274	770,000,000

Source: Annuaire du Québec 1962, Annuaire du Québec 1966-1967, Annuaire du Québec 1971, Annuaire du Québec 1973 and Kenneth McRoberts and Dale Posgate, Développement et modernisation du Québec Montreal: Boréal Express (1983)

7.1.2.2. Construction in Suburban Montreal

> It's not something unique only to the Italian community. The same thing happened to the Jewish community, too. Look at Côte-St.-Luc. The synagogue was going to be built, and thousands of Jews moved there. [Mr. Moran, real estate agent in LaSalle]

The post-war residential construction boom continued on through the

1960s. The most notable development in this period was the rapid growth of new suburban municipalities and attendant population growth in the suburbs of Montreal (see Tables 3, 4 and 5). The development of the various Italian suburban communities occurred in this context.

Table 3. Construction in LaSalle and in St. Leonard

	LaSalle			St. Leonard		
	1981	1986	1991	1981	1986	1991
Total Number of Occupied Private Housing	28,050	29,365	30,170	26,945	27,390	28,200
Average Value of Housing	$72,900	$104,411	$161,437	$103,364	$151,267	$241,628
Construction Periods						
Before 1946	1,560	1,580	1,710	75	110	220
1946-1960	5,915	5,890	6,445	1,375	1,470	2,005
1961-1970	13,840	12,715	12,905	12,430	11,820	13,335
1971-1980	6,740	7,715	6,020	13,065	13,125	10,165
1981-1985	---	1,475	1,725	---	865	2,270
1986-1991	---	---	1,365	---	---	1,185

Source: Statistics Canada 1981, 1986 and 1991

Notre-Dame-du-Mont-Carmel and Notre-Dame-de-la-Defense were the first two Italian Catholic parishes in Montreal, for Italian immigrants and their descendants who came to Montreal around the turn of the century. Apart from these relatively old Italian parishes, new parishes emerged as Italian families left these old areas for new houses in provisional 'new Italian' sectors (see Table 6 and Map 1 and 2). Today's LaSalle Italian district exemplifies one product of such interplay between the municipalities' urban development schemes, the (mainly Italian) construction business people's interests, the Italian parishes'

interests and Italian social networks (mainly family and paesani).[3]

Table 4. Building Permits, 1960-1991

Dwelling Units (total no.) and value ($1000)

Year	LaSalle	(value)	St. Leonard	(value)	Montreal	(Value)	Total	(Value)
1960	475	3,959	342	2,952	7,514	49,791	15,564	121,934
1961	806	6,542	575	5,861	7,680	48,659	21,950	187,358
1962	725	6,311	763	7,744	12,171	70,806	27,333	224,118
1963	822	6,766	1,102	10,814	11,227	80,230	29,620	260,887
1964	912	7,559	1,438	12,648	11,334	85,466	28,920	266,738
1965	2,311	19,128	1,662	15,922	10,738	107,661	30,360	307,417
1966	2,257	18,452	1,398	13,440	6,451	56,866	24,429	259,440
1967	1,744	14,833	1,754	16,374	7,913	53,880	27,972	268,348
1968	2,619	20,945	7,859	16,132	1,650	59,478	32,296	300,035
1969	1,719	12,622	1,640	14,667	3,551	31,295	22,158	215,700
1970	878	6,337	1,408	14,974	4,425	47,709	21,291	230,627
1971	528	4,884	1,803	19,224	5,026	53,185	25,363	285,802
1972	908	7,583	1,826	20,927	4,818	55,328	25,632	295,772
1973	853	8,283	2,699	25,812	8,112	88,647	31,218	406,288
1974	437	6,480	1,519	16,737	2,611	37,000	21,618	415,704
1975	656	12,756	1,049	16,043	2,401	58,151	27,567	604,190
1976	710	12,174	844	14,798	5,239	115,658	37,356	850,209
1977	200	3,965	173	3,193	3,316	90,573	24,470	617,607
1978	853	21,609	432	8,626	2,337	79,442	17,191	543,086
1979	836	22,124	548	12,939	2,566	86,704	16,095	581,991
1980	343	12,565	108	2,925	3,157	114,119	14,443	645,050
1981	257	9,092	75	2,803	4,294	1,969	16,208	836,549
1982	204	7,681	39	2,019	4,172	194,701	12,995	645,355
1983	423	19,477	126	6,980	7,512	338,723	21,114	1,056,309
1984	198	10,006	224	14,161	7,192	338,139	20,594	1,093,340
1985	263	10,571	273	17,588	7,427	359,750	21,234	1,187,969
1986	283	12,803	216	12,376	7,994	386,588	33,304	1,973,226
1987	517	22,574	228	12,009	7,080	384,528	40,529	2,811,102
1988	99	5,573	320	20,063	6,139	397,528	29,172	2,358,497
1989	85	6,374	226	10,482	3,575	228,764	23,604	2,109,714
1990	104	5,372	292	25,043	2,929	229,040	20,736	1,802,759
1991	91	6,291	5	2,228	2,881	215,622	18,213	1,679,572

Source: Statistic Canada, Building Permits, monthly summary and annual summary from 1960 to 1991.

[3]This pattern is not unique to the LaSalle Italian population; a similar pattern is seen from the little Italy area to St. Leonard and St. Michel. Today, we are witnessing the move from St. Leonard to Rivière des Prairies. The Italian church, Maria Ausiliatrice, was built in 1982 to cater to and attract a greater Italian market in Rivière des Prairie.

Table 5. Value of Construction including Industrial, Commercial, Governmental and Institutional Buildings, 1960-1991

Year	LaSalle	St.Leonard	Montreal	Total
1960	13,120	3,656	154,261	290,265
1961	10,948	10,781	117,770	318,917
1962	7,976	9,742	170,715	404,777
1963	11,066	13,711	185,023	470,301
1964	11,594	17,200	243,082	540,017
1965	21,559	22,399	300,553	625,884
1966	24,798	16,953	155,662	486,671
1967	20,364	20,698	173,699	500,721
1968	25,894	20,415	154,904	559,134
1969	17,126	24,320	178,908	480,499
1970	16,956	22,746	120,635	430,300
Total	181,399	182,621	1,955,212	5,107,486
1971	15,401	30,720	164,337	516,808
1972	16,635	36,210	164,491	592,623
1973	16,601	42,646	235,320	886,643
1974	13,284	35,451	313,019	986,751
1975	17,933	29,068	287,534	1,109,303
1976	18,369	27,339	404,474	1,427,874
1977	9,498	11,044	328,960	1,151,599
1978	24,437	16,866	198,288	869,904
1979	27,356	20,917	212,166	1,001,065
1980	17,252	10,818	294,921	1,159,378
Total	176,766	261,079	2,603,510	9,701,947
1981	13,840	13,123	604,687	1,577,058
1982	14,644	13,596	557,875	1,244,772
1983	27,301	17,774	532,965	1,564,279
1984	15,255	25,274	734,513	1,875,840
1985	66,989	42,204	680,044	2,083,578
1986	30,645	29,702	1,022,099	3,285,721
1987	61,037	34,931	811,719	4,141,716
1988	24,456	65,140	990,711	4,162,610
1989	34,057	28,985	1,061,600	4,095,513
1990	38,304	43,048	1,054,665	3,664,360
1991	17,704	9,364	869,612	3,048,822
Total	344,232	323,141	8,920,490	26,581,659
TOTAL	702,397	766,841	13,479,212	41,391,092

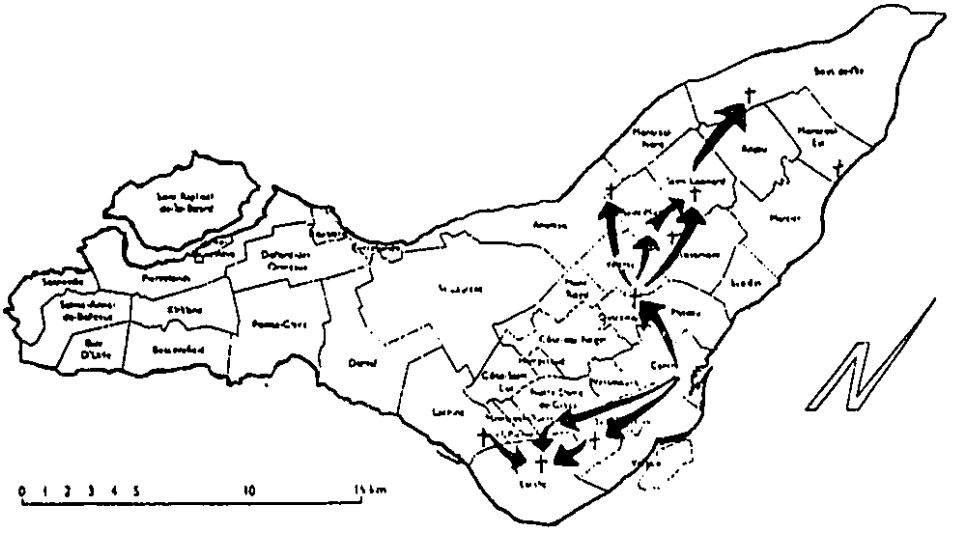
Source: Statistic Canada, Building Permits, monthly summary and annual summary from 1960 to 1991.

Table 6. Italian Parishes by year of establishment

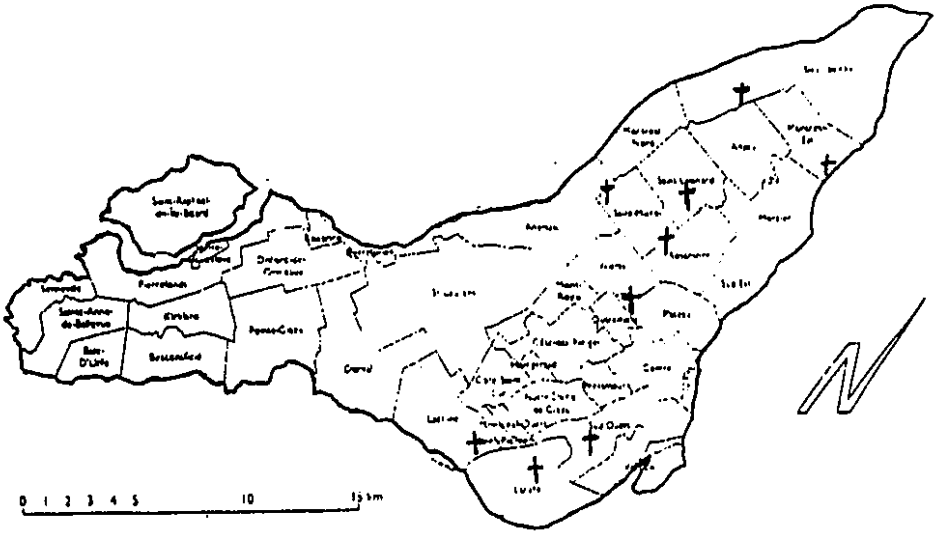
Italian parishes	the year	families
Paroisse Notre-Dame-du-Mont-Carmel	1905	4000
Paroisse Notre-Dame-de-la-Defense	1910	3650
Paroisse Saint-Jean-Bosco	1949	1200
Paroisse Notre-Dame-de-la-Consolata	1953	4500
Paroisse Notre-Dame-de-la-Pompei	1961	8000
Mission San Domenico Savio	1965	1000
Mission de l'Annunziata	1965	300
Mission Mère-des-Chrétiens	1972	1600
Mission Marie-Auxiliatrice de Rivière-des-Prairies	1982	1800

Source: L'Eglise de Montreal 1836-1986, Aperçus d'hier et d'aujourd'hui: Fides 1986

Map 1. General Residential Relocation of Italians of Montreal



Map 2. Italian Parish Churches



7.1.2.3. The Market Creation of the LaSalle Italian District

> Goose Village, now it's just the area for the factory. Once it was inhabited by many Italian immigrants, mostly uneducated, absolutely no education. It's called Goose Village because Italians had geese. The Polish had chickens. Irish immigrants were living in Griffin Town. LaSalle back then was a big swamp. Italians liked to pick mushrooms there, chicory here, and dandelions there for their salad. They started a vegetable garden at 5th Avenue, planted tomatoes and cucumbers. They liked to fish at Acquaduc. So, we realized that Italians liked the area. In Goose Village, there was a big meat company. Canada Packard and all that. It smelled, dirty... The working conditions were so bad that nobody else but immigrants wanted to work there. They worked there, and put every penny into the bank to buy a house, to get out of that area. I'll tell you something: one guy used to get up early, every single morning, carrying a brown bag for lunch, going to somewhere to work. The guy in the apartment, sitting in the couch, watching TV, used to laugh at him. "Look at that poor guy passing, carrying a brown bag." He was laughing at him, but the guy didn't know that this guy owned the building where he was living. That's how it is. French laugh at Italians, and these immigrants own all the buildings eventually. (LaSalle real estate agent, first generation)

The farmland that covered LaSalle was bought up by Jewish land dealers in the early twentieth century. In 1922, the land was divided into parcels and they were transacted further. After changes of ownership, the whole area which now covers the Italian section in LaSalle was developed in the 1960s into residential housing. Out of the twenty-five major builders, ten were Italian developers in this area (see Maps 3 and 4 in page 194).

The LaSalle Italian district started with a business plan by Jewish landholders. According to LaSalle real estate agents today, one Jewish landholder donated a lot to the priest of the Italian parish, St. Jean Bosco in Ville Emard, with the mutual agreement

that they create another Italian mission or parish in that area.[4] Subsequently, Jewish landholders (including the one above) soon sold the land that surrounded the lot to Italian construction business people.

Because of the factory jobs along the St. Lawrent River, many Italian immigrants resided in the southwest part of Montreal. LaSalle was an attractive choice for Italians because of the close proximity to the neighbourhoods in the central-western part of Montreal where they had lived, such as Ville Emard, Pointe-St. Charles, Notre-Dame-de-Grâce and St. Henri. Italian families had been saving money to buy homes since their immigration in the 1950s and 1960s, and the timing was good. The Italian construction business people were, as informants describe, "well aware" of the strong desire of working-class Italian immigrants to own their homes, and of their savings towards the future purchase of houses.

The City of LaSalle was an attractive urban/residential development that could fill open space with new residents who would vitalize commercial activities in the city. The builders' plan to run the main commercial street 'Thierry' in front of the future Italian

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[4]With its close proximity to the City of Montreal (today fifteen minutes by car), LaSalle has firm economic potential. Along the St. Lawrence River, major beer companies and large factories such as Sidbec started to operate, and that added commercial value to the land as a potential residential area. As CDLS was devised by the City of LaSalle, the City's urban planning is directed toward economic development through residential and industrial growth.

church was accepted.

Through the Italian church St. Jean Bosco in Ville Emard mentioned above, positive information about the new houses in the LaSalle area spread quickly among Italian parishioners. The low prices relative to new housing in St. Leonard also attracted them. Italians thus started to move into LaSalle in the late 1960s. A family would bring relatives, and their relatives attracted other relatives. A massive chain reaction among paesani thus occurred over a few years.[5] The residential development (targeting the Italian working-class as a potential market), the commercial street (inviting Italian retailers) and the construction of the Italian church all began together. Joe, resident of the LaSalle Italian district, exemplifies experiences of the Italians who reside there today.

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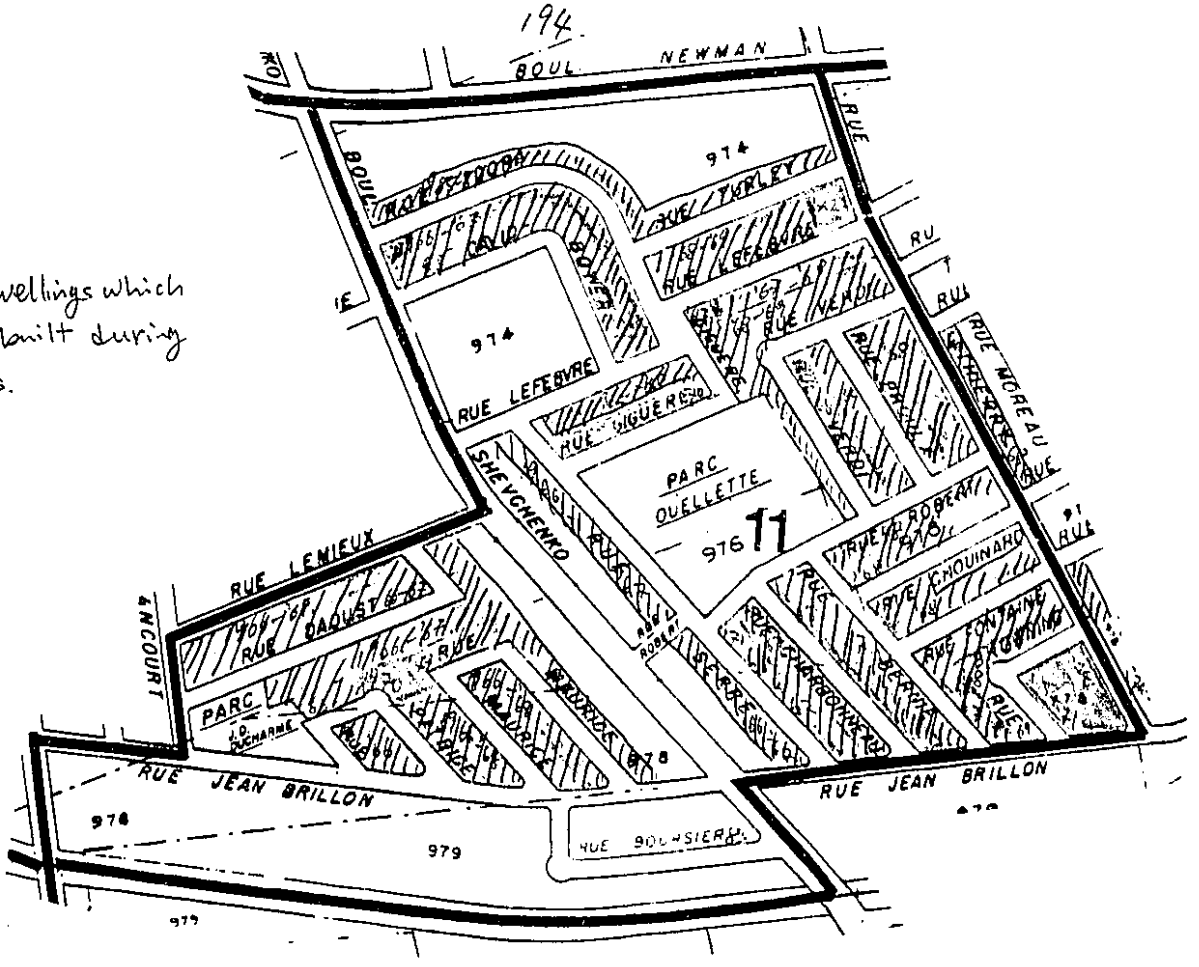
[5]The Italian population thus grew dramatically in LaSalle: the Italian population in 1986 is twenty-three times what it was in 1961. See Table 12 in the Appendix.

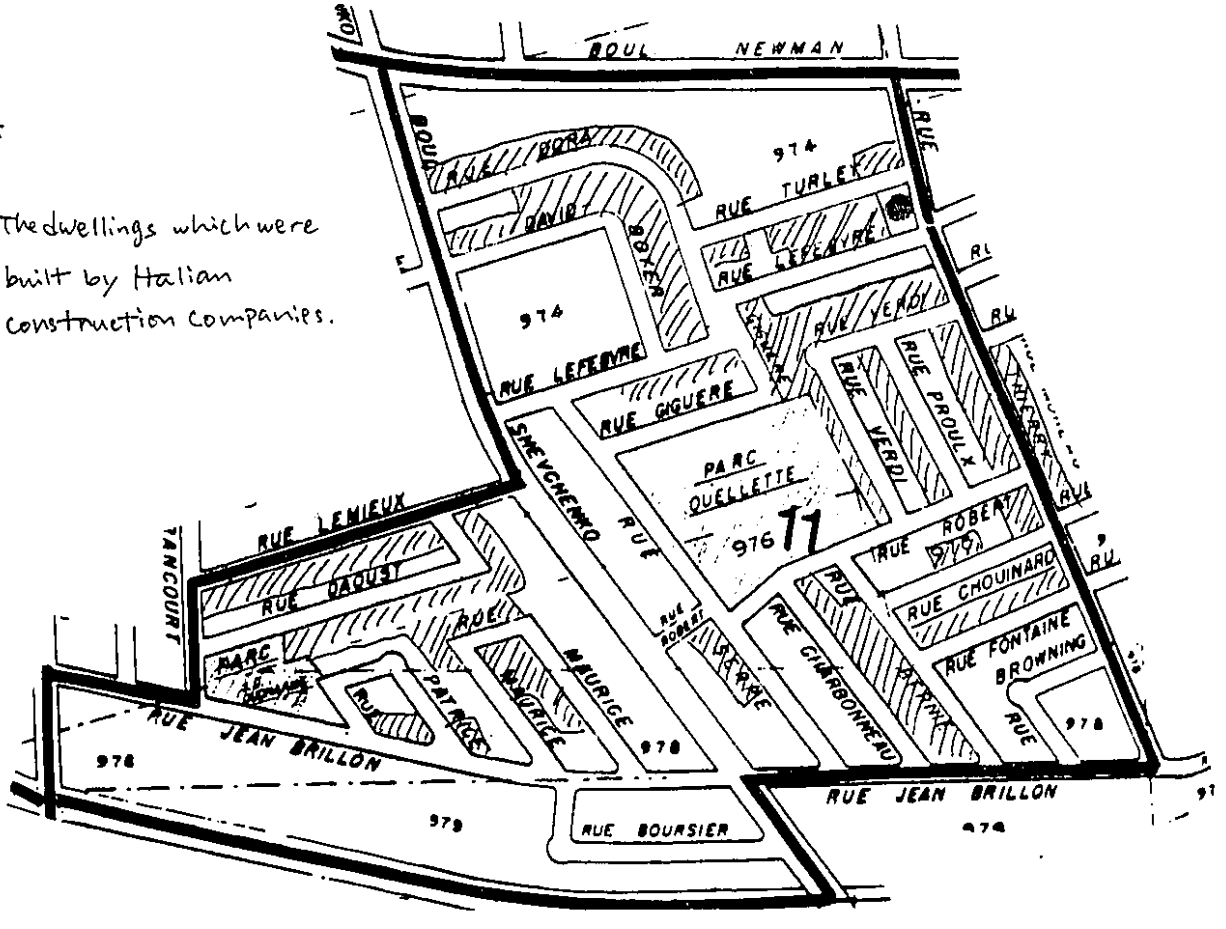
Map3

The dwellings which were built during 1960s.



Map4

The dwellings which were built by Italian construction companies.



[Arella family on Turley Street]

Joe Arella's parents, Enrico and Maria came to Montreal in 1910. Joe has been in LaSalle for twenty-nine years now. He first lived in Montreal-North, where he was born and grew up, then moved to Ville Emard in 1954, when he got married, since his in-laws were living in Ville Emard, and owned three duplexes. Joe and his wife Anna lived in one of these three duplex houses for ten years. During these ten years, living at Anna's father's property with the minimum rent helped them to save money. When their third child, Antonio, was born, they decided to move out and buy a house. Anna's brother had an Italian friend who was a real estate agent. Through him, they learned of a relatively inexpensive newly built house on Dora Street in LaSalle. They went to see it. It was a duplex building. They liked it, and bought it. The provincial government in those days helped people to buy new houses, funding one thousand dollars. They stayed there for four years. But once they moved in, they found the new house was not really large enough for the whole family, since Joe's divorced sister had started living with them. One day at work (CP Rail), Joe heard that there would be a new house built on Turley Street, very close to a large empty lot. An Italian friend at work told him that the lot was already assigned for an Italian church that would be constructed very soon. Joe went down to see the new house, he liked it and the location close to the future Italian church, and decided to buy the house. In fact, three years after they moved in, the Italian church was completed. That was 1969, and Joe, Anna and their family are still living there today. The building is a two-storey duplex with a bachelor apartment in the basement. They bought an entire duplex building and, other than the floor they live in, they are renting it out. The renters are all relatives: Anna's sister and her husband, Joe's sister, and Joe and Anna's son in the basement. Renting to family members, according to Joe, is the best way. "They will stay long and you do not have to worry about damage. Also, it helps the family members with the cheaper rent. They can save money and buy their own house later. It is a mutual help." Joe renovated the house once ten years ago. At that time, the father of their daughter's husband, a contractor, helped to do the job. "Family members help each other. That is simply natural." Joe smiles.

7.1.3. "Italian Culture" Unites: Italian Economic Elites and Working-class Italians

7.1.3.1. The Emergence of Italian Economic Elites

The construction boom in Montreal thus brought about new Italian niches in suburban municipalities of both the south (LaSalle) and

northeast (St. Leonard and Rivière des Prairies) of Montreal during the late 1960s. In due course, creation of the large residential districts with commercial streets and buildings produced some highly successful Italians in construction-related industries.

While Melatti, Coletta, and Vitale in LaSalle are the major Italian families who built numerous houses in today's Italian district in LaSalle, including the main part of the Italian commercial street, Thierry, the Italian Community's main financial force that was dramatically empowered through such suburban construction is found in the north part of Montreal, or St. Leonard.[6] This is so

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[6]The following ethnographic notes illustrate builders' experiences:

[Giuseppe Coletta, early developer]
When Giuseppe Coletta came to Canada, it was 1956 and he was flat broke. He was nineteen years old. He had no education in Italy whatsoever and was introduced to construction day labour in Montreal. He worked for five years as a labourer, and he learned how to build a house during these years, hoping to have his own construction business later. He started his own construction business when his son Pasquale turned two years old in 1961. He began with residential houses mainly in Ville Emard, since that was where he and his family lived; then slowly moved to LaSalle. In LaSalle, he first worked for the Jewish construction company, Worsely, which was one of the major builders in LaSalle.

> Jews and Italians never got along or worked together, but, Mr. Goldberg (of Worsely) was exceptional. He was really nice, so he was the only Jewish guy that an Italian worked together with. And it was me.

Then, he became acquainted with another Italian builder, the Vitale family, and they started to build houses together as business partners. Today, the Colletta, and Vitale families still work together. The first son, Pasquale Coletta was born in 1962. Since he was twelve years old, he was taken to the construction site by his father. Pasquale recalls:

> I know the poverty. I know the life without anything. My

because, compared to LaSalle, construction projects for Italian families were much larger and more extensive in St. Leonard; today, nearly 30,000 Italians live in St. Leonard, comprising almost 40% of that city's population. This number is more than three times of the Italian population in LaSalle.

A careful look at the process of the formation of powerful Italian business interests requires special attention to the following two issues: Italian business networks on the one hand, and the effect of family on business succession and trade networks on the other.

As the term 'industry' suggests, the construction industry includes numerous lines of related business: contractors, builders, electricians, plumbers, suppliers of materials (including cement, wood, carpets, steel, nails and so on), various transportation services, machinery suppliers, etc. In addition to all these, people in these businesses need the professional services of accountants and insurance and legal agents. In this context, when

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> father took me to work since I was twelve years old. Since then, I had no summer vacation, I worked with my father every single day. Other kids had vacation, playing around, I didn't. Ask my father, I had no toys in my life. They couldn't buy any toys. I slept on the kitchen floor. I'm so insecure, I'm scared to come back to that life, so I work hard, every day. I'm at the site at seven o'clock in the morning, every day.

Mr. Moran is a real estate agent who has been working with Joe more than twenty years. They are family "friends", inviting each other for weekend dinners, phoning and joking on an everyday basis. Pasquale has been "good friends" with him, too. "My father and he were getting along so well over the years, so why not me, too, right?".

my informants state that "construction touches everything" or "construction affects everything", it is not necessarily an exaggeration.

In this vein, one should note that Italian capitalists have not only tended to keep business among Italian "friends", but also, in diversifying their lines of business, they have tended to keep business in family circles. The story of Mauro, one of the Italian economic elite from one of the most powerful construction-business families in the Montreal Italian Community, best illustrates all these elements:

[Mauro Sittacani, builder, property owner, restaurant owner and city councillor in St. Leonard]

Mauro is forty-three years old, born in Montreal. His parents came from Potenza, Italy, in the early 1950s. Mauro's father Dino started to be a builder, following his brother Emilio, who is two years older. Dino was quite successful in his business as a contractor. Mauro's father ran for election as a municipal councillor and won a couple of times. That kept Dino, Mauro's father, active on the public scene during the sixties. In the meantime, Mauro graduated from university in political science in Montreal. Then, he began to help with his father's construction business. In 1978, he also started his own business, an Italian restaurant/banquet hall, in the commercial building which the Sittacani family had built and owns. Referring to the business relationships, he explains:

> Due to construction, we touch almost everything imaginable, from the door knobs to the carpets, so we contract everyone ourselves. That's another thing, being in the business of restaurants or construction: Sooner or later, you see all sorts of people. A lot of them (friends) are now professionals. We have an accountant and lawyer who used to be my school friend and so on and so forth.

According to his and his family's business experiences, Mauro maintains that Italian background "definitely" helps.

> Basically, I would imagine if they don't own the company,

people we deal with and top lines of the companies who own the companies, like them or not, most of them, are Italians.

So, you know, the president might be someone from somewhere else, but the man we've been dealing with is the same (Italian) guy who has been selling cement (to us) for the last forty years, so, there's no, you know, there's no argument. He knows exactly what we are looking for, and we know exactly what he's going to tell us. We know (him) through the business and kept that connection.

Mauro emphasizes the importance of long-term business relationships with Italians, calling them "friendships".

A lot of people I see today (in my business) are people touched by things said to them as kids. I know children that used to be with us all the time. And today they are involved in construction, something or other. It'll be cement or selling windows, something along that line, and it's funny to see that a lot of people we stuck with didn't turn the wrong way. Long-time relationship is important. It's different when you know someone who knows you for thirty-six years, in the case of my father. When you phone the cement company and say, "I need a truck at seven o'clock tomorrow morning, they are there at seven. They know you, you know them. And that's very important.

Mauro goes on:

For example, the gentleman who is selling to us today goes back to my father over the years. So, my father, when he was twenty-four, he was still very very Italian, he was here maybe for five years at that time. So, if I go back, most of my father's generation, which is in business today, came at the same time as he did. They all made a mark for themselves, they all came basically two years before, two years after, everybody knows who everybody is.

Thus, he stresses the fact that he and his family's "friends" in business "grew up together":

You know when we started meeting the people from the bank, my father was just a small builder. Today we sit with the same person who was a manager then, he is a president today. He remembers when we started and we remember where he was, you know, it's one of those things where everybody turns around and says, this is Mr. Sittacani, and no kidding, there is a lot of respect. Everybody knows these stages straight all his life.

In his business activities, he consciously tries to connect with his family members' business interests;

> My cousins own one or another kind of business. They are in real estate, or a cousin's selling ceramics or marble. I have another cousin who builds and does real estate. The other cousin in New York owns real estate there. I relate them (his cousins) in this line of business as much as possible (in tradings).

Mauro, however, refers to difficulties involved in family business that led him to the decision to divide the business and maintain "loose" connections between the different segments:

> Eleven years ago, although it made terrible waves, sounds, noises ... and eleven years later, that was the right move to make. And I did it. If I hadn't, I would have a bigger problem today. I had a lot of discouragement, but I managed to stick to it. And it worked. Different lines of business stick together in a loose way. The travel agency (his sister's business) connects with me. People come in to get married, and I ask them if they booked their flight, if they had the honeymoon booked, then, are they staying or going on a vacation or whatever. If they say we're booking it now, then, I just tell them, we also own a travel agency, so if you feel like getting the price, makes sense, everything is a package, so we send them downstairs. Downstairs, we send them on their way, it works. If it doesn't work, it's up to them. ... We have separated as far as business and family go. Each one of us decided to do whatever they would do best. Although we are all overseen by our father, we do our own things. There is no intervention from me, for example, in my sisters' business, or my sister into one of my businesses. Everybody tries to handle one's own things.

He explains the nature of the "problem":

> It entails a lot of outside people. Four children are married. She (my sister) now is looking into getting married. The gentleman who's marrying her has nothing at all to do with this business, knows nothing of this business, but he'd like to take over this business. So, there's a problem, now. What do you do in case like that? She's my sister, I love her very much. Fine. But this is my business. So do I let him in and hope that he wouldn't destroy our business in the air? Or, do I not let him in and argue with my sister the

rest of my life? It's a very touchy situation.

The big builder families like the Sittacani are intimately related to the Italian Community (for example, in addition to their active involvement in CIBPA, the main office of the CIBPA is located in their building). One architect and various others of Italian origin that I spoke to said, "Construction is Italian tradition". These families are inarguably supporting such an image by being remarkably successful and influential in the Community - they are visible in business activities while at the same time holding leadership positions in the CIBPA and other business associations as well as being charitable donors to the Community. These successful Italian economic elites are touted as 'cultural heroes' through various Italian Community media such as Italian radio and TV programmes, various Italian newspapers and Italian business magazines. The following section focuses on how the Italian Community media treat these members of the Italian elite. Since, as I mentioned, the elite occupies key nodes in Community networks, media messages should be understood as reflecting the elite's self-expression.

7.1.3.2. Their success is "Our" Success

La Voce, the monthly business magazine for Italian-Canadians written in Italian, first appeared in 1982. It aimed to act as "collegamento ideale tra gli italiani del Canada e la terra di origine (the ideal link between Italians of Canada and the land of origin)". The magazine aims to be "the bridge extended to all the

regions of Italy with one particular specialization: as the monthly magazine of ITALIAN-CANADIAN ENTREPRENEURSHIP".[7] It stresses the importance of the construction business in the Community:

> A single grand tradition, that of Italians of the cement and construction sectors, and here in Canada, the Italian entrepreneurs in this field, have almost no competition. The bridges, the streets and the big real estate development have the same Italian "steam" (La Voce Oct. 1992: 18).[8]

The following are a few examples taken from the magazine *La Voce* that give a glimpse of who is selected and how they are appreciated as successful Italian entrepreneurs in Montreal.[9]

<G. Borsellino, a giant construction company holder>

Borsellino came from Sicily in 1954. For twelve years he worked as a milk carrier from door to door. Then, for several years he changed to various jobs, working as an operator in a factory, then started a construction company with his cousins in 1959, a pavement and gardening company called "North State Paving". In the meantime, he went around to buy some land on which in the future he could build "some beautiful highrise ..." In 1970, he founded a construction company called Roma Construction. He married Elina Saputo[10] in 1963, and remains happily married, with enthusiasm in

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[7]The large capitals are in the original text: "il ponte si é esteso con tutte le regioni d'Italia con una specializzazione particolare; come mensile dell' IMPRENDITORIALITA ITALO-CANADESE."

[8]The original text is in Italian.

[9]Since the following are excerpts from the magazine sold in Montreal, I have kept the original names as they appeared in the text. Original text in Italian.

[10]The Saputo family owns a giant cheese company in Montreal. Their business extends internationally (seven plants in Canada and two plants in the U.S.). Saputo products represent "more than 15 percent of the total cheese production in Canada and about 40 percent of the mozzarella production" (*Montreal Business Magazine* Aug. 1992: 53). The business magazine reports that "[s]ince its creation in 1954 as a small cheese factory, Saputo's history has been one of constant growth and expansion, going beyond the daily field to *construction and real estate, with Roma Construction and*

every step of his life. "My family is absolutely the most important element. The support of my wife has been fundamental because she is the woman who makes the family happiness." It is in this way that G. Borsellino speaks about his family members who have, as he confirms, priority over work and over any other aspect in life. "There have always been complications and obstacles; but I didn't lose my energy ... patience is in essence the word with which one can make (others) understand the success of this Italian-Canadian (construction) industry." (*La Voce* Dec. 1991: 3-5)

<M. Tozzi, an electrician>

He is an example of the new generation. He is president of Enterprises Laurentien electrique. He hasn't changed, remains the same: always available, well-disposed to everybody, but very distinguished, smiling, confident of himself. His company has done many electrical installations, commercial, industrial and residential... For example, the Courthouse of Montreal, the Complex Desjardins, Jean-Talon Hospital, and various churches in Montreal. He could have assigned his business to his sons and he could have quietly rested, being sure that the business was well operated. Instead, early every morning, never missing a day, he is always at his post, which for forty-three years he has been taking care of, qualifying him 'Master Electrician'.... For sure he is most appreciated by the Italian-Canadian Community. (*La Voce* Mar. 1991: 5-7)

<Rocco di Zazzo, a giant developer>

"I have to tell you that the most important success, the most positive and most precious success in my life has been my family. It is on this that my success is based. Before everything, the caring presence of my wife Fernanda, then the intelligent cooperation of my children. Besides them, there is my brother Umberto, an administrator of the projects and my nephew Pasquale Carbone, secretary-treasurer of the company." The family of Rocco di Zazzo, like many similar intelligent (Italians), gives us a better picture of an Italian-Canadian family that succeeds in maintaining our culture, our Italian entrepreneurship in foreign countries and that lends pride to the immigrants' life, to our success in Canadian society. The effort, the work, the family, and the children. (*La Voce* Jun. 1990: 12-14)

Group Petra" (Aug. 1992: 52, italic added). Mr. Saputo is, as one of giant Italian economic elite in Montreal, an honorary member of CIBPA.

<M. D'Errico, a paving company holder>

The story of Mario D'Errico is completely different from those that are normally written and presented to our readers: different from those of many of our immigrants who made their way from nothing. He was born in Montreal in 1951. His father built the company called Pavage d'asphalte Beaver Ltée, which deals with excavation, transportation, equipment, etc. "At eighteen years of age, I became a sales representative and worked in the office to oversee the price of contracts. For three years between 1971 and 1974 I was assigned to be a manager of contracts for asphalting outside the city. In 1975 and 1976, sales representative, and in 1977, vice-president of sales and finance...." The decision is clear: from the time he was eighteen years, Mario D'Errico has seen the whole administrative organization of the company that was founded by his father, his most effective and exemplary model. (*La Voce* Dec. 1993: 22-26)

The above four examples exemplify the approach taken and emphasis placed by the Italian media on Italians' economic lives: the emphasis on family; long-term business relationships among Italian "friends"; the hard work for economic success; the memory of the immigrant background starting from nothing; and the modesty (despite economic success). If we reflect upon these qualities and concepts carefully, we realize that they accord with what Italians of different social classes have emphasized during my field research: the importance of family and hard work.

In the magazine, economic giants of the Italian Community are treated as "ours" ("nostro"), symbols of the collective success of Italians in Canada. The representation of extremely rich Italian families as culture/heroes can both encourage ambitious Italian entrepreneurs and gain support among readers ("Il nostro ingegnere Tony di Risi é un 'portabandiera' di questo impegno e un vessillo della sua riuscita -- our engineer Tony di Risi is a 'flag-carrier'

of this business and a vessel of its success").[11] Such representations generate a two-fold message: an inversion of the economic reality on the one hand, and an emotional address calling for Italian unity/sympathy beyond social class, on the other hand. It is an inversion of the economic reality because the rich Italians' success is based on other Italians; and yet it remains the rich Italians' success. The call for unity depends on an image of wealthy Italians who maintain the collective culture of family tradition and hard work; thus other Italians should congratulate these successful Italians and, if possible, cooperate with them. The close business relationships promoted and exercised among Italian networks appear in the same context: the promotion and exercise of Italian ethnic identity.

7.1.3.3. The Ethnic Tension between the Francophone and Italian Working Class

Home-ownership is a significant element in many Italians' economic lives, underlying the large-scale residential moves that have occurred since the 1960s. In this context, Italian men and women of all social classes, and of older and younger generations, indicate a profound interest in investing in real estate. They are not necessarily wealthy, yet, using bank mortgages, corporately or individually, they are inclined to invest their capital in land and properties. A second generation restaurant owner describes;

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[11] *La Voce* Jan. 1992: 6.

> You have to know where you come from. We are taught to be entrepreneurs. We are brought up that way. When I was 20 years old, I made my first, initial investment in life with a few of my father's investment associates. They gave me a break, I had put my money. And it took eight years for it to be developed, but I made a very nice number on it. Since then, I have been buying buildings and I have been buying land. That's what I have been doing - capitalizing on my money. And my catering, my mother (main) company, it makes my living, and gives us money to invest. The other one, I see it as a long-term RRSP (Registered Retirement Savings Plan). I'm always on the road, I'm driving down the street, you see, it's very easy to integrate, I see the property for sale, I call. Buildings will never go lower. Very good way of capitalizing. [Claudio, caterer, second generation, 32]

Italians in the current workforce, predominantly of the working class, have actively invested in properties.[12] In the local context of the Italian district in LaSalle, the tendency toward home-ownership is further underlined by the fact that home-owners are often the landlords of other houses at the same time (see Map 5).

Tensions arise between francophone renters and Italian owners, both of whom are often predominantly working-class. During the field research, I heard the statement, "The French are jealous of us"

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[12]Fainella conducted sample research on home-ownership in the Italian district of St. Leonard (1986). Italian owners comprise 70.5 percent of all the owners in the district he researched. His study (1986: 67-8) reveals that among all the owners, 83.6 percent of the owners fall in the working class, including unskilled workers (6.7%), semi-skilled (35.6%), skilled (11.1%), sales etc. (28.9 %). The rest of the owners are either in administration (15.6%) or managers (2.2%). Comparing with his sample data for the City of Montreal, Fainella also shows: 1. the higher occurrence of duplicate kitchen and livingroom facilities (44% of the houses included these facilities in St. Leonard, compared to 6% in Montreal); 2. the higher possibility of an additional apartment in the residence (46.9% answered yes in St. Leonard, compared to 27.7% in Montreal); and 3. relatively newer buildings in St. Leonard compared to those in Montreal (13.4 years newer).

from Italians of different social classes in different contexts.[13]

My informant analyses the situation as follows:

> There's a lot of racism in Quebec. I went to French school, and believe me, there wasn't one day that they didn't remind me that I was an Italian. Wop, and all that stuff. I heard plenty of them. Definitely a lot of racism. I don't know why it's all geared towards the Italians. I could probably find hundreds of Italians... that could speak French ... (where) I could find one Greek... I think overall the Italian community really integrated well to the society in Quebec in general, maybe too well. We even passed them, financially. And I think THAT is what they cannot accept. The fact that we came from Italy, we started with nothing, and now we probably have one or two homes - that they still don't have. I think that really is the problem. (Paolo, accountant, second generation)[14]

The overall framework of power relationships between dominant majority francophones and the Italians as "immigrants" (regardless of their generation) - especially in home-ownership among the

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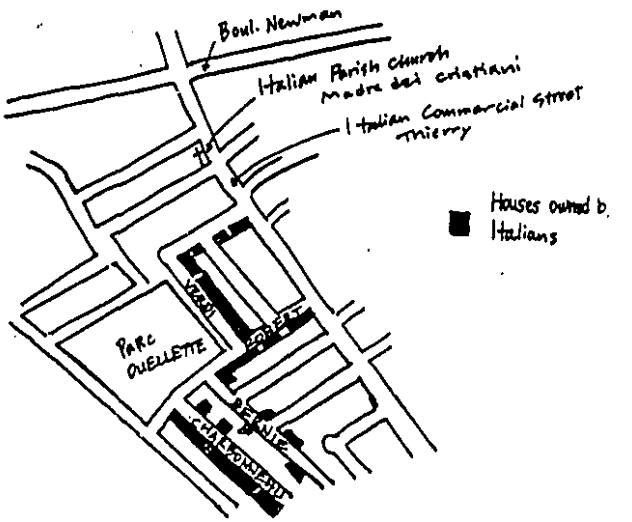
[13]For example, Aida (who appeared in chapter 3) became a house owner and a landlady with her purchase of the building. She bought the property from a francophone woman who was moving to Quebec City. When she purchased the building a year before her own move to the building, the second floor was not rented. Yet, by the time Aida was ready to move into the third floor, the second floor was rented out to a francophone family. Aida felt that since she had become the landlady, this couple had been behaving unreasonably: every single month, the cheque for the rent was returned by the bank due to insufficient funds. In the end, the family did not pay the rent for the last month they lived there. They also broke a water pipe when they left (so Aida had to hire a plumber to fix the leaking pipe). I was there on the day Aida moved into her house to live. When I arrived, Aida and her brother Lui were quite upset about the damage. Aida perceives the reason as follows:

> I don't want to sound like a racist, but I think they do this to me because I'm Italian, I'm of immigrant background and I own the house. This French family, actually, I think they resent that.

[14]For a reference on statistical data of language use by country of origin, see Table 15.

working-class - is reversed from this economic perspective.

Map 5. Home-ownership by Italians in four streets in the LaSalle Italian District[15]



Source: Water Tax File, 1991, City of LaSalle

7.2. Italian Identity and the Francophone Context

> People at Caisses populaires lend you money even if you're unemployed, and have no money in the bank (if you are French). But if I go asking for money, no matter how much I have in the bank and I own this company here, still they wouldn't lend me money. They'd say, "We don't know you enough." So, fine, we (Italians) stick together.

The relationship of the construction industry among Italians to their immigration history, and to Montreal urban development shows how Italians have confronted difficulties and have attempted to become winners in the economic battles of the province.

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[15]The four streets (Verdi, Robert, Bernie and Charbonneau) in the Italian District are randomly chosen. Because all these houses are either duplex or triplex, owners of these buildings usually rent out floors (basement and first or second floor) in which owners are not living.

Francophone political domination is encountered at an individual level in everyday economic life. This legitimizes strategies of social closure and further encourages the exclusivity of Italians' blossoming social and economic groupings. The networks go beyond paesani divisions, however, to embrace an integrated mesh of networks in wider political fields.

The following account focuses on perception of Italian merchants in their daily business activities as they relate to the Quebec-owned liquor enterprise, the *Société des alcools du Québec*. Since both managers and workers of the S.A.Q. are predominantly francophone, the difficulties Italian merchants encounter in business are often attributed to ethnic relations. In this section, I combine materials such as S.A.Q. annual reports with various interviews with Italian merchants and S.A.Q. officials.

7.2.1. Italian wine dealers and the *Société des alcools du Québec*

The competition over the import (and subsequent sale) of wine is exercised by dealers in French wine (who specialize in imports from France) and others including Italian wine dealers[16] (who specialize in Italian liquor import). The *Société des alcools du Québec* owned by the Government of Quebec, mediates the whole

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[16]There are two Italian wine importers in Montreal. Both companies started from Italian restaurant businesses, and imported wine for their own business needs. Italvin started in 1961, and Montalvin started in 1969.

process of purchase and permit of the brands.[17] It is a provincial government monopoly, which often makes the Italian dealers feel it is a constant fight against the S.A.Q., who are perceived as favouring French imports.

Over the years since the inception of the provincial alcohol authority in 1921, as observed in annual reports, managerial positions have been almost entirely occupied by francophones with only a few exceptions. The administrative employees and liquor store personnel of the S.A.Q. are also predominantly francophone.

The ten best-selling wine labels in 1992, for example, were from either Quebec or France. The sharpest contrast is in the number of permitted brands. Compared to 1,754 brands of French wine permitted for import to Quebec, 365 Italian brands were permitted for import in 1993.[18] Yet, this is how the Italian business crowd

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[17]In 1921, the *Commission des liqueurs de Québec* was established. Until it was replaced by the *Régis des alcools du Québec*, the permit section and sales section were not really separated in the institution. Since 1961, with the expansion of the institution, a clearer division was made between the two sections. Since the 1960s, the sale of wine started to soar. In 1971, the *Régis des alcools du Québec* was replaced by the further enlarged body, the *Société des alcools du Québec*.

[18]Although the circumstances are different, the figures in Ontario, for example, form a clear contrast with the competition in Quebec (see the table in Appendix). I met many Italians of Montreal who produce and consume large quantities of home-made wine. They rarely purchase a bottle at the store. If we assume that Italians prefer Italian wine, then one may argue that this will affect the consumption of Italian wine at retail sales. The point I am raising here refers, however, strictly to the annual `permission' and its process, authorized and controlled by the S.A.Q., and not the `sales amount'.

feels:

> It is a kind of trade barrier the French put to us. It is a monopoly by the French. They can do whatever they want. They put a higher price range, store keepers don't put much on the shelf or put them in a small corner or something, so the people don't see them. If they don't sell well, well, then they blame the wine and those wines don't reach the amount (of sales) to get a permission in Quebec.[19]

Table 7. Number of Wine Brands by Country, *La Commission des liqueurs de Québec*

Year	French	Italian	Canadian	Portuguese	Others
1923	100	1			
1924		----n.a.--------			
1925	105	0	2	0	0
1926	105	1	2	0	0
1927		----n.a.--------			
1928	137	1	3	0	0
1929	131	1	3	0	0
1930	134	1	3	0	0
1931	136	1	3	0	0
1932	133	1	3	0	0
1933	134	1	5	2	0
1934	123	1	6	2	0
1935	120	1	6	2	0
1936	117	1	9	2	8
1937	119	1	11	2	8
1938	104	3	16	2	9
1939	105	3	19	2	10
1940	90	3	20	2	6
1941	43	2	20	2	6
1942	14	0	22	2	7
1943	17	0	19	2	5
1944	19	0	18	2	5
1945	19	0	16	2	5
----------		n.a.	----------		
1967	119	27	25	n.a.	9
----------		n.a.	----------		
1969	142	28	25	n.a.	n.a.
----------		n.a.	----------		
1988-89	1,109	198	137	26	259
----------		n.a.	----------		
1993	1,759	356	75	23	441

Source: Commission des liqueurs de Québec, Rapport Annuel, 1923-1993

[19]Given that francophone Québécois are *not* French (of France) and have a separate francophone identity, this statement by my informant suggests that she naively associates francophone Québecois with the French.

The Italian dealers' perception that "In Toronto, (wine) business is much easier" is somewhat supported by the ratio of labels permitted: In Ontario, French labels make up of 25% of the total and the Italian labels 11%, while in Quebec, the French labels make up of 66.3% and Italian labels 13.4% (see Table 14 in Appendix).

"The Italian wine business is just tough in Quebec". Two Italian importers expressed various frustrations in dealing with S.A.Q. officials, liquor store personnel (S.A.Q. employees) and the general market trend.

> Five years ago, they didn't even reply. It changed only when the vice-president changed to Mr. Wong. He reads a lot about Italian wine, tries to taste it, and gives us a chance. But things can change a hundred percent in two years, if he is changed for another person who doesn't appreciate Italian wine [Italian wine dealer]

Permission for a label depends upon the amount of sales, so it becomes an especially tense issue for Italian dealers when they wish to introduce a new label in a competitive market. The process involves a few important steps. First, a wine dealer's proposal to introduce a new label *has to be* checked and accepted by S.A.Q. officials. If it is accepted, then a new label has to undergo a six-month 'test period' during which sales of the introduced wine must reach a certain level; otherwise, the label will not be accepted for sale in the province. Once the label is accepted, it is the S.A.Q. that decides its sales promotion, retail price and shelving. In the process of market competition, Italian merchants frequently interpret events in terms of ethnic divisions.

As I came into the office of Emilia, the president of Montalvin, she was angry. Her expression of emotion at that moment depicts the element of frustration prevailing among Italian dealers.

> I just went to the liquor store to pick up a bottle of wine for myself. And I found Sambuca Ramazzotti is placed at the bottom of the shelf! I was so angry that I couldn't be diplomatic with them. I complained! Then, they said, the manager is on vacation. But I'm going to go back and talk to the manager.[20]

Another Italian merchant explains:

> I once tried to introduce a French wine to diversify my business. You know what they (S.A.Q. officials) said to me? After my long explanation and showing the sample and all that, they looked at me like this (sitting back and squinting his eyes) and said, 'But, it's not for you.' You can't do it, because you're not French. That's the message they gave me. You can't argue with them. It'll get worse. [an Italian wine dealer]

Both cases are excellent examples to uncover the underlying sense of dilemma. Italian merchants feel that they should not "argue" with the managers of the S.A.Q. and should be "diplomatic with them" because they are aware that it is the managers who control the situation. These managers are, as I mentioned, almost a hundred percent francophone (see S.A.Q. annual reports).

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[20]The S.A.Q. administration has a clear policy on sales priority. The popular liquor has to get the most visibility and the best position where consumers can see the product without bending their backs. Yet, according to Italian wine importers, whether liquor store personnel follow the administrative guidelines or not is another thing. Emilia was quite upset because, according to her, Sambuca Ramazzotti, which her company imports from Italy, ranks third among liquors in Quebec, and yet, Sambuca of other brands which do not sell much, but are imported by francophone agents, were placed on the best shelves. This could be, of course a simple mistake in shelving. The point I am raising here is not about what really happened in the store, but rather, how the Italian merchant locates the issue, interprets and reacts to it.

"Quebec is a French province" -- so S.A.Q. officials bluntly stated regarding the gap between French and Italian wine importation. Italian sales agents perceive the whole process as 'ethnic discrimination'. The power relationship (S.A.Q managers - merchants) slips into ethnic terms (francophones - Italians) as Italians interpret events. Italian merchants report "tension in the air" every time they speak with liquor store personnel, employees of the S.A.Q. When "French restaurants shut the door right in front of my nose", Italian merchants feel it is because "the French are scared to introduce Italian wine because it is now as good as French." Ethnicity and power figure into business transactions, including liquor permit negotiation, the promotion of liquor products, and retail sales or promotions. Economic competition in the wine trade is thus translated, experienced, and vocalized in terms of ethnic power.

Facing economic difficulties according to their perception of ethnic power relations in Quebec, Italian merchants have been adapting their survival strategies. In the wine trade, they try to introduce "better quality" wine to break the image of "Italy as lacking class".[21] In this process, the Italian government, through *Istituto Nazionale per il Commercio Estero* (ICE) - the

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[21]Italian wine dealers admit that Italian wine was of lower quality in the past, contrasted to the high reputation of the French counterpart. The Italian dealers, therefore, have to "clean up the image".

Italian Foreign Commerce Institute[22] - is offering financial support to promote various Italian - Quebec business transactions.[23] For example, ICE organizes large public advertisements and large wine promotion galas, inviting members of Italian business circles.[24] Second, in the context of the wine trade, they focus on working with Italian restaurants and the banquet and hotel industry, relying on and mobilizing established Italian networks. These Italian business networks in the form of Italian institutions not only involve smaller merchants such as wine dealers and related service industries, but are also open to

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[22]The Italian Chamber of Commerce, another direct channel with the government of Italy, ranks the Montreal office, which started operations in 1964, as "the fifth most important in a 42-bureau, world-wide network that services 35 countries" (*Montreal Business Magazine* Aug. 1992 vol. 4(4): 44-5); "[d]espite the disparity between Montreal's population - 250,000, compared to Toronto's 450,000 - much business activity with Italy is still done through Montreal" (ibid.).

[23]The Italian Consulate in Montreal also actively works with local Italian immigrant communities. It is in Italy's material interest to sell commodities from Italy. The editor in chief of the Italian community newspaper *Corriere Italiano* thinks that Italian immigrants can be good customers and possible market promoters as well; therefore, for the Italian government, it is materially significant that Italians abroad keep their Italian identity.

[24]The link between Italy and the Italian community in Montreal is extensive, and is in fact promoted through cultural, social, political and economic channels by both parties. Both the various Italian government agents and leaders in the Montreal Italian Community act as promoters and mediators. For example, tied with Quebec's political agenda to diversify international trade from the U.S. to Europe, John Ciaccia, the Quebec minister of foreign affairs helped to broaden the trade opportunities between Quebec and Italy; the entry of Bombardier, the Quebec-based transportation company, to Italy is a quick example of this. Also, each regional government in Italy, according to my informants, financially supports regional association activities in Montreal.

other dimensions of industry, including larger capitalists in the construction industry who perceive eventual benefit from the wine trade as consumers of a prestigious symbol of Italian identity.

7.3. Promoting Italian business and social networks

Besides individual business networks among Italians as illustrated in Mauro Sittacani's case, there are various 'growing' Italian business associations today. The CIBPA is one of those institutions that encourages the exchange of business and information among Italian entrepreneurs and professionals.

The CIBPA, formed in 1949, now keeps its main office in St. Leonard. The majority of the "honorary members" and "directors", as typical Italian business people, are investors in real estate and construction related industry, and professionals, representative of Italians' economic investment attitudes and successes. The total membership is estimated at more than seven hundred. The growing figure of the *Borse di Studio* (scholarship for Italian students organized in 1961) symbolizes the affluence and success of the institution (see Table 8). With the creation in 1990 of the Young-CIBPA to cater to and encourage younger Italian entrepreneurs and professionals, such CIBPA expansion epitomizes the prominence of Italian business circles in St. Leonard. During the political crisis over the Canadian constitutional accord of 1990, the CIBPA commented on behalf of Italian business circles to

the federal government, in strong support of federalism. This reflects the role of opinion leader that the CIBPA (or, more precisely, the leaders of the CIBPA) can play in the Italian Community.

Table 8. Bursaries given by CIBPA

	Year	Number of scholarships	Total amount
Between	1961-1988	562	$356,000.
	1989	50	$ 75,000.
	1990	60	$ 90,000.
	1991	66	$109,000.

Source: La Voce (Dec. 1991: 15)

The *Fondazione* (Foundation), on the other hand, is made up exclusively of the most affluent Italian business people.[25] It is a charity organization for the Italian Community. Not only do they work to gain financial support from the province, but they actively organize fund raising events such as golf tournaments.[26] One of the major projects of the institution, for example, is to construct a highrise for Italian seniors' homes.[27]

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[25]*Montreal Business Magazine* reports "[w]ith its `several million' invested in treasury bills and the like, and with annual outgoing donations at $500,000 to $1 million", the Foundation constantly augments its assets through 180 foundation governors who contribute $10,000 upfront and pledge $1,000 a year (Aug. 1992: 44). The president of 1992, Tony Meti, 37 year old senior vice-president at the National Bank of Canada, is a `governor' himself, "representing the corporate governorship of the National Bank, which boasts a large Italian clientele" (ibid.).

[26]For example, one tournament raised $30,000, which was donated to the *Fondazione* on the spot (*La Voce* Sep. 1993: 9).

[27]Since many such affluent members are involved in construction related business, their charitable activities can, as some of my informants told me, speculatively generate more economic

In addition to the established CIBPA and the *Fondazione* led by the most affluent Italian business circles, there are various other economic institutions as well as social groups whose aim is to promote networks among Italians[28]. Important social groups include the Optimist Clubs: *Club ottimista, Dante, Club St. Michel Ottimista, Club Ottimista di St. Leonardo* and *Club Ottimista Michelangelo* in LaSalle. The following narrative of an Italian professional best explains the social function of an Optimist Club, the economic benefits from charitable activities, and the political contacts, and the ethnic competition.

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incentives for them. Thus, what is beneficial for the Community is beneficial for members as well.

[28]According to the *Montreal Business Magazine*, three banking institutions that include Banca Commerciale Italiana of Canada (BCI), Banca Nazionale del Lavoro of Canada (BNL) and Ficucie Canadienne Italienne (FCI) are "initially established to serve Montreal's Italian community" and they have shown "continued growth" from "modest beginnings" (Aug. 1992: 56). The BNL vice-president and manager describes his institution's strategy as "niche bankers" by which he means that they "find areas" where their strengths are "most evident and build upon them" (ibid.). The FCI, on the other hand, as a trust company, "ranks fourth, after the Royal Montreal and Laurentian trusts, in profitability - $1.6 million on assets of $206 million" (ibid.). The FCI now has seven branches in Italian districts (parishes) in Montreal. Di Battista, the president, who has bought the majority control of FCI, has "no immediate plans to expand outside Montreal", since according to Di Battista, "[t]here are still too many opportunities here" (ibid.). Di Battista immigrated to Canada in 1958 at the age of 21. He worked as a construction labourer and a bus driver, then he worked for the Bank of Montreal to serve Italian clients. Di Battista comments, "I knew nothing of banking then, but I did know my compatriots" (ibid.). He is one of the honourary members of CIBPA. one of the "giant" members of the Italian economic elite in Montreal.

[Paolo and *Club Ottimista Michelangelo*]

> Basically, it (Italian Optimist Club) is geared to the (Italian) Community in LaSalle. But we don't close the door to French-Canadians or others. It's for the youth and the handicapped. It started in 1985. You need thirty-five members to start. At first, there were two partners (accountant), two lawyers, one in the insurance business, one in the real-estate business, another in construction. You see, I think, people got together, they were all at the French (Optimist) Club, so, they got a few people there. They thought the I lian community could benefit from it, so it took about three weeks to form the club. The first week, we (Italians) were only ten. The second week, we were twenty. And finally, by the third week, we found thirty-five. Just from word of mouth, bringing friends in and so on.

Paolo is thirty-seven years old. He was born in Montreal. His parents immigrated to Montreal in the 1950s. He grew up in Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, on the west side of the City of Montreal. He is an accountant operating in the middle of the Italian district in LaSalle. It is the third accounting firm in his career. He met his current partners through an Italian social club, Club Ottimista Michelangelo. He specializes in personal income tax, appraisal, sales tax, GST and so on. He is married, and has a two-year-old son.

> One of my partners is a city councillor in LaSalle, so that helps a lot, because he's in the public view almost every week, every month, you name it, so that brings in a lot of business. He's Italian. My other partner, he's also Italian, he does a lot of work for politicians. He helps a Quebec MP here in LaSalle, also, he helps Martin, he ran for the Federal Liberals at the last convention, against Sheila Copps, against Chrétien. So, he's in the public eye, also. So, we have a lot of referrals. I think you have to give to the community, as well. You can't only take. I realized sometimes, I was thinking this year, of being a coach, for example, for soccer, or hockey. You get known like that. I think it works a lot better than just placing the business card in the Italian bulletin or whatever, you know, mass bulletin, or whatever. We still help most of the time, we put the business card in the LaSalle soccer association bulletin, we are not gonna get any customers or anything from that, but at least we are

> helping the association. The same thing with the Italian parish. We still get the business card in the weekly bulletin, costs us maybe a hundred dollars a year. We don't get any customers or anything, but in the long run, we'll be paid off. ... I'm not that known yet, three years in the community. I'm not closing the door (to politics) in the future. ...once you get to be known in the business community, then, you can work at the other levels, subsequently. I joined two associations.

Paolo's case illustrates the motif underlying Italian social networks. The economic interests welcome wider networks that intersect with political networks. Expecting eventual pay-offs, Paolo is willing to participate in voluntary charitable activities organized by the Optimist Club. As his partner, an accountant of Italian origin, has been involved in politics as a political broker (see the previous chapter), he realizes the importance of political contacts in bringing in customers. Such an in-person marketing approach in business is parallel to the approach taken in political campaigns, described in the previous chapter. Local economy and local politics involve the same actors.

7.4. Conclusion: Italian culture, Italian identity and Italian Business for Economic Survival in Quebec

Urban development during the late 1960s in LaSalle and elsewhere was enabled by financial support from various levels of formal political institutions. The post-war economic boom accelerated infrastructure development, including Highway 15 to the west and Metropolitan Boulevard, which elevated the value of the suburbs as residential-industrial areas. Capital accumulation, increasing

numbers of new suburban residents, a developing Montreal economy and a growing population together created a sprawl effect on residential moves from downtown Montreal to the suburbs. In this vein, Italians were both the builders of the suburbs and the buyers of new housing: as when they immigrated from Italian villages in the 1950s and 1960s (Harney 1978; Sturino 1981), Italian families in the late 60s, with their daily savings and hard work, created a massive chain flow of relatives and paesani to the same areas. Through such a massive influx, the Italian construction business circle grew dramatically.

Such physical concentrations of Italian population, realized by Italian builders and networks of kin and friends, have created and re-created the Italian ethnic market in and outside these areas.[29] Also, these concentrations make so-called 'Italian votes' possible, paving the way for politicians (who are not necessarily of Italian origin) in the Canadian electoral system as described in the previous chapter.[30]

All these elements help to reaffirm 'traditional Italian culture'. Yet, all this did not occur in isolation. Italian collective

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[29]This includes the clientele for Italian flower shops, Italian bakeries, Italian cafés, Italian food shops, and Italian wedding services such as video operations, ritual gift shops, bands, banquet halls, and so on.

[30]The Italian residential concentration has also meant concentration of Italian children at school in the districts, and the locus for neighbourhood socialization around the Italian parishes.

identity, whether kin-based, region/village-based or ethnicity-based, is intensified and reaffirmed through constant reaction against francophone nationalism, actively inscribed in relationships in which economic competition is constantly translated into terms of ethnic power. As we have seen, the concrete and direct economic power derived from francophone political domination has been 'perceived' as discrimination by the minority Italian merchants. As discussed, this has been a historical process because the francophone domination has been evident since the time of the massive Italian immigration to Montreal; the Quiet Revolution in the 1960s and the active separatist movement during the 1970s underlined Italians' minority status.

In the construction business, the economic heart of today's Italian Community, ethnic competition is even more clearly represented in close Italian business networks. While Italian capitalists emphasize business and social ties amongst themselves, they also try to be in tune with Italians of the working-class. Rich Italians' strategy is culturally framed: family, hard work and an immigrant background "starting from nothing in one's pocket", bidding for the empathy of the less successful. Despite the fact that this image is usually true, it is also an ideological translation of their own success into communal and collective Italian success. In the meantime, working-class Italians in the Community serve as good customers for Italian business circles and

enjoy special community services and leisure activities catered by Italian entrepreneurs.

It has been important for Italians to maximize their influence in formal political structures; and possible inasmuch as most of their business/social networks also function as political networks. *Politics and political connections bring business,* and vice versa. For builders, since local land use and development opportunities are controlled by various levels of government, it is of prime importance to be aware of shifts in political winds, and to influence those shifts to the extent possible. Italian economic networks sometimes compete against, sometimes work with those of francophones; but ethnic solidarity and internal cooperation, in the framework of a Quebec political-economy where ethnic lines are never blurred, remains paramount. Members of different social classes subscribe to common identities, Italian and francophone, on either side of that particular ethnic divide. In this way, 'self-sufficient' economic circles within the Italian Community have evolved in response to specific social and historical conditions that have surrounded them.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

> If a racketeer commits murder, that is news. If he proceeds quietly with the daily routine of his business, that is not news. If the politician is indicted for accepting graft, that is news. If he goes about doing the usual personal favors for his constituents, that is not news. The newspaper concentrates upon the crisis - the spectacular event. In a crisis the "big shot" becomes public property. He is removed from the society in which he functions and is judged by standards different from those of his own group. ... It is not a good way to understand him. For that purpose, the individual must be put back into his social setting and observed in his daily activities. In order to understand the spectacular event, it is necessary to see it in relation to the everyday pattern of life (Whyte 1955: xviii).

This thesis has been an attempt to illuminate the functioning of ethnic ideology in the political processes of urban Quebec. Accordingly, throughout the thesis, I have examined both how Italians define their ethnicity for themselves and how their ethnicity serves as a basis for action in the wider political and social relations of Quebec. A close look at the role of social networks in local politics reveals important aspects of ethnicity in Quebec. First, the research demonstrates the utility of getting past conventional views of an ethnic community as a bounded entity, segregated by the larger society. Italians skilfully use networks of information and mutual support to maximize their economic interests in Quebec. Thus, their Italian identity is a resource in the process of

articulating themselves successfully within the Quebec political economy. Second, various proximate and far-reaching social networks among Italians challenge the simple premise that "community" is limited to physical concentrations in certain areas. Individual threads of Italian identity in Montreal run through the economic and political texture of dispersed local neighbourhoods, and extend to the wider society in an unbounded way. Italian social networks are, at the same time, useful political and economic tools to enhance success within the ethnic community. All this is possible because Italians create and recreate a strong ethnic identity. In what follows, I delineate the conclusions that I draw from the study of ethnicity and networks in Montreal.

8.1. Ethnicity and Social Networks

For most Italians of different generations, ages, genders and classes, the family symbolizes and defines Italian culture. In the process of self-definition, Italians 'choose' to be Italian, and especially younger generation Italians actively objectify their 'family-oriented' style of life as distinctive. In practice, a vertical power relationship, characterized by sexism and patriarchy, is positively exercised by family members. 'Closeness' among members is acted out by frequent phone calls and visits, habits that sometimes mask an underlying psychological distance; the

intense unity within the extended family is also realized through frequent visits and phone calls during the week and weekends. This is their everyday style of life.

In gender relationships, however, the myth of 'family' as Italian culture, the myth that every Italian shares the same values, gives way to a less unified reality. Working-class women tend to maintain traditional familism, committing themselves to their extended family relationships and accepting the traditional woman's domain and role: home and housekeeping. Another group consists of women interested in career advancement who believe in gender equality and require of their husbands an equal commitment to the household chores. Simply put, this is a contrast between working-class women and professionals (or managerials). Yet, this is a broad divide that includes a wide range of middle ground in between. These women all negotiate and compromise their gender self-definitions within their social surroundings, to fit with their family lives. On the other hand, the family accepts the actual changes on the basis that those changes are harmonious with their family values. The combination of the four women's stories and the rise and fall of the Italian feminist centre indicate the mixture of ambivalence, firm belief, compromise, and challenge that characterizes their gender identities vis-a-vis Italian familism.

Family relations and networks also enhance regional alignments outside kinship relationships. This is because the stress on Italian familism and its maintenance accompanies the preservation of paesani relationships and regional/village 'tradition'. Regional/village groups, in turn, function as an ideological vehicle that powerfully supports the discourse of 'distinctive Italian culture'. Thus, both elements resonate with one another.

Various forms of association are important constituents of social, political and economic networks in the local communities and the larger Italian Community. On the one hand, associations have the manifest purpose of promoting traditional Italian culture; on the other hand, they function to create and re-create 'friendship' among the members, and in so doing foster Italian ethnic identity. The common reliance on hierarchical structure facilitates interconnections between various forms of association (each with a "president"), through links among presidents. Politically, presidency of an association, particularly of a seniors' or regional association, affords respect and the ability to influence members' voting behaviour. In political processes, associations and presidents are connected to formal politics *through* the mediation of political brokers.

Regional/village associations generate broad yet tight and effective social networks among Italians. In practice, they not only socialize the memory of the immigration process (chain migration from villages) but they also attempt to establish new social experiences and institutionalize friendships through communal activities. As such, they often stress religious affiliation through the ritualization of their relationship in the form of village (of origin) saint worship. Active recruitment of participants to such relationships calls for incessant efforts to build up a larger size association, what Italians call a "stronger" one. On the other hand, a remarkable numbers of associations in Montreal express themselves in a unique form of ethnic Italian community life that they create and to which they devote great energy. The discourse of 'distinctive regional culture' is constantly objectified and stressed through the local customs, cuisines and dialects as elements opposed to those of their fellow Italians of different regional origins. This discourse is further materialized in an exchange form, especially in rites of passage, in which paesani induce individuals - including those of young generations - to join and remain in networks through reciprocal invitations of an obligatory nature. Italians of young generations typically "come back" to regional/village associations as an expression of their Italian identity; however, many prefer to participate in the "Italian" social/business associations that transcend regional

divisions.

The social activities and district structure of seniors' associations complement the regime of village and regional associations. Through the regular gatherings and recreational events, district senior Italians get to know each other. Since first generation Italians are often active participants in both district associations and regional/village associations, seniors' associations can function to interconnect individuals of different regional/village backgrounds who otherwise would not interact.

Regional/village associations are still the major institutions in the Italian community through which an ambitious individual can establish his or her name. Italian entrepreneurs and politicians, even Italian government trade agencies, value and support regional associations and 'cultures'. Furthermore, the Italian Catholic parishes also support such associations, since belief in a village saint strengthens Italians' commitment to church affiliation. Most significantly, presidents of various social, regional/village and seniors' associations can act as mediators between the members (paesani) and political figures in formal sectors.

A case study approach to the local political process in the LaSalle Italian community revealed the internal dynamics of

social groupings among Italians, in particular the cohesion and the alliance of village-based social units, and the shaping of local politics by ethnicity. For local Italians, an Italian park with a statue of Christopher Columbus was physical recognition of Italian existence, Italian culture and history. The local politicians took the initiative and succeeded in creating a cooperative park committee by linking presidents of various Italian associations. Overall support from the Italian community was an example of ethnic self-assertion on the one hand, and an illustration of effective use of social networks and presidents' influence over members on the other.

The Italian associations are key building blocks for any campaign organizer who works systematically for political figures in the formal Quebec/Canadian system. Links between formal and informal political systems are made possible by campaign organizers and political brokers who are personally known to association leaders. Since 'professional' brokers work for various political figures, informal networks are simultaneously implicated in all three levels of the formal political system - municipal, provincial and federal. These brokers are motivated to back a campaign by their own personal and material interests. A form of exchange is thus established between candidates and brokers. The candidate wants access to votes; brokers expect rewards after a

successful election, in addition to new and broader contacts that are as important in business as in politics.

Italian middlemen, including campaign organizers and political brokers, are synapses between francophone as well as Italian political figures in the formal sector on the one hand, and Italian community networks on the other. Many successful francophone political figures value solid "Italian votes", and resort to "political networking" with Italian brokers.

Nevertheless, a relatively pronounced ethnic closure is practised in Italian networks, conditioned by Italians' economic and political struggles in a francophone-dominated province. As long as Italians categorize themselves and are categorized by others in ethnic terms, they are a minority group, and experience limits in gaining representation. Consequences of francophone political domination are experienced in everyday economic life. This legitimizes and reinforces ethnic definition of burgeoning social and economic clubs, associations and institutions. At the same time, networking to non-Italian interests in the formal political system captures benefits that are then strategically recirculated within Italian networks.

Ethnic identity cuts across social classes and districts. Active business networking among Italian professionals and

capitalists, large and small, is institutionalized into Italian business/social associations and interlocking trades. Meanwhile, working class Italians are invited to think of the success of wealthy paesani as the collective triumph of Italians at large.

The suburban Italian communities were not gradual creations, but sudden phenomena capitalizing on the strength of Italians in the construction industry and a ready ethnic clientele. This involved a residential marketing strategy that targeted working-class Italians who had been saving to buy a house since their immigration to Canada. The Italian parish churches were supportive of the idea to create a new parish and to expand their territory. For the city, it was also a welcome strategy that could attract masses of new homeowners and accompanying merchants to vitalize the city's economic growth. Thus, the city backed the urban development by issuing the necessary building permits to the church, residents and commercial sectors. Once the news of new and affordable houses close to the Italian church spread among Italian neighbourhoods, massive moves began and were completed within a few years. Significantly, during this process an Italian economic elite developed, many from extremely modest beginnings. They were the builders, land and property holders, material suppliers, and other entrepreneurs in construction-related industries. Some of them grew to an

inter-provincial or international size. The intense, rapid and extensive construction of suburban residences affected other sectors of the economy: food, clothes, furniture, and domestic services, to name a few. Most significantly, in the course of these residential construction booms, Italians made efforts to keep business *within* Italian networks, and thus they say, "We grew up together". This 'nationalistic' aspect of social networks, focused on economic benefits, aims to maximize interests *within* the group, clothed in love of 'culture', family and community. In this way, the construction industry has been at the politico-economic heart of the Italian Community past and present, and the elite enjoy a certain hegemony in the Italian Community.

Mass relocations have depended in large measure on the fact that home-ownership is a significant element in many Italians' economic lives in Montreal. After purchasing their own homes, many Italians continued to save money and invest in real estate. This created tension between francophone tenants and Italian landlords, both of whom were predominantly working-class; from the perspective of francophones it was a grotesque inversion of the 'normal' ethnic relationship. Such tension enhanced the emotional tone of appeals for unity among Italians of differing social classes, despite enormous income gaps, and fuelled the belief in the superiority of the "Italian family tradition" that francophones, allegedly,

lacked.

While Italian capitalists emphasize business/social ties internal to the elite, they also try to stay in tune with Italians of the working class, and to avoid alienating them. Rich Italians' strategy is culturally framed: family, hard work and immigrant background are advocating as grounds for identification among all Italians. These are the very elements that define "Italian tradition" and "culture" as we saw at the beginning of the thesis.

The networks and demography of new suburbs affected formal sector politics. Italians developed a reputation for "Italian votes", designating solid, trustworthy electoral resources. Local politicians deeply embedded in the Italian social networks, succeeded in achieving consecutive terms of representation. As I have discussed, in due course the dynamics of interethnic political networks extended to the further level of formal politics in which federalist Liberals and separatist Parti Québécois are principal rivals.

Italian identity, economic activities, and political agendas become intimately linked, each element reinforcing the other in the context of the particular historical, social and political conditions of Quebec. In response to the political and economic dominance of francophone Quebecers, Italian identity takes on a 'nationalistic' tone of its own, resulting

in the progressive interlocking of business and political relations among Italians. For Italian entrepreneurs, this is highly beneficial to the building of their business networks. In the meantime, working- class Italians in the community serve as good and loyal customers for the Italian business elite, and enjoy special community services and leisure activities sponsored by Italian entrepreneurs.

8.2. Living as an Italian in Montreal: Ethnicity, Ideology and Political Processes in Quebec

Italians, framed as "immigrants" by the provincial majority francophones, experienced several disadvantages upon arrival in Quebec. The basic difficulties of anglo-linguistic adaptation under the prevailing francophone nationalism, sharpened their sense of being a minority and reaffirmed their status as such. The ideological dynamics of ethnicity are revealed in the process of the creation and re-creation of belief in a distinctive 'Italian' ethnic culture, that in the first instance separates Italians into different families, regional groups of paesani, or other cohesive groups, but then brilliantly unites Italians of different generations, genders, ages, occupations, and regions and social classes into one group, 'we Italians', according to necessity. This means, most significantly, that the belief in ethnic culture effectively transcends the vast gap in income levels within

the Italian communities.

Within such an ideology of ethnic culture, we witness that Italians in Montreal choose to affirm a traditional way of life accompanied by traditional concepts of morality. In the process, as described in chapter 3, new attitudes are increasingly and peculiarly incorporated into tradition, often not without pain.

Still, the experiences of Italians in Montreal described here refute the notion that there is any single way of being 'Montreal Italian'. As traditional familism itself shows signs of change, Italians of different classes, occupations, genders, generations and ages are going through different life experiences and taking different approaches to them. Tony and Lina in chapter 2, Aida, Paola, Maria and Marissa in chapter 3, Vittorio, Franco and others in chapter 4, Ascoli, Sano, Al and others in chapter 5, Tonino, Claudio, the Sittacani family and others in chapter 6 and 7, and numerous others throughout the thesis exemplify a diversity of Italians' lives and experiences in Montreal.

Accordingly, during the field research, I met many second generation Italians who were not living in densely Italian populated areas. I met and became friends with many second generation Italians who had nothing to do with La Casa, with

regional or other Italian associations, or the Italian Community. They nonetheless shared a strong belief in Italian culture and in the Italian family. They keep in close touch with Italian friends and relatives on a daily basis. In their economic lives, they also promote informal business relationships between Italian friends and friends of friends. This was considered natural, since 'they are friends' who 'happen to be Italians'. In this way, those who were most cynical about the Italian Community, nonetheless replicated in their personal networks what I was observing elsewhere in the Italian Community. Furthermore, I witnessed that Italians who denied any direct links with community affairs were nonetheless quite informed about 'who's who' in the community. Often, their relatives are involved in Community affairs, as political brokers, as association members, and so forth.

Ethnic identification is an evolving phenomenon, responsive to and creative of change. As some informants told me, those who concealed their ethnic identity in the 1960s ("I don't speak Italian"), in the late 1970s started to be proud of being Italian ("People started to marry between Italians, and started to think 'We're not that bad, we are accepted, we are O.K.'"), and are now proudly interlocking their business and political activities with those of other Italians in strategies of "social closure". Such shifts and dynamics in ethnic identity eloquently reveal both its subjective nature,

on the one hand, and the importance of social impacts framed by incessant contacts with the wider social environment on the other.

In Montreal, the variety of individual experiences is subject to some common changing circumstances of politics, economy and the blending of these elements. Provincial campaigns to simultaneously promote francophone cultural hegemony (Handler 1988) and multiculturalism, various provincial monopolies operated predominantly by francophones, the economic growth and expansion of suburban Montreal, the shift in political and economic power from anglophones to francophones, the accumulation of wealth and property ownership among Italians, the increasing scale and density of social networks among Italians - all these elements affect and constitute the changing experience of Italians in Montreal. Ethnicity is socially constructed, and, in Montreal, it is politically activated. Diverse experiences in networks of families, friends and paesani define the way that Italians approach their styles of life, their economic strategies, and most particularly, the way that Italians exercise power in the formal political system dominated by francophones. As the immigrant generation becomes older and Italians of younger generations opt increasingly for pan-Italian forms of association, the ethnic presence of Italians in the future political scene in Montreal will continue to evolve.

APPENDIX

Table 9. Period of Italian immigration, Quebec

Before 1946	1,735
1946-1966	67,305
1967-1977	13,780
1978-1982	1,660
1983-1986	580

Source: Statistics Canada, 1986.

Table 10. Italian immigrant population in Quebec over 15 years old by education, 1981

Education	Number	%
Primary and less	44,495	51.5
Secondary	16,040	18.4
Non-university	20,020	23.0
University	6,585	7.0
Total	87,145	100.0

Source: Les caractéristiques socio-économiques de la population immigrée au Québec au recensement de 1981, Cahier no. 4, Government of Quebec: Ministère des Communautés culturelles et de l'immigration, Direction de la planification et de l'évaluation.

Table 11. Income -- LaSalle and St. Leonard (1985 and 1991)

	LaSalle (1985)			LaSalle (1991)		St. Leonard (1991)	
	Male	Female		Male	Female	Male	Female
	(over 15 years old)						
Less than $1,000	845	1,425		760	1,065	800	1,050
$1,000 - $2,999	1,190	1,980		835	1,530	900	1,475
$3,000 - $4,999	1,145	1,920		635	1,360	985	1,530
$5,000 - $6,999	1,375	2,450		1,135	2,015	1,120	2,235
$7,000 - $9,999	1,990	4,285		1,555	3,455	1,775	3,845
$10,000 - 14,999	3,145	4,470		2,885	4,825	3,255	5,230
$15,000 - 19,999	3,355	4,065		2,920	3,840	3,135	4,005
$20,000 - 24,999	3,275	2,920		3,205	3,525	3,240	3,400
$25,000 - 29,999	3,200	1,650		2,920	2,700	2,815	2,355
$30,000 - 34,999	2,575	800	$30,000-39,999	4,730	2,630	4,410	2,345
$35,000 and more	4,360	670	$40,000-49,999	2,780	1,000	2,240	780
			$50,000 and more	2,470	640	2,180	445
Average income	$21,379	$13,089		$26,002	$17,322	$24,856	$16,320
Median income	$20,212	$11,052		$24,000	$14,982	$22,055	$13,662

Source: Statistics Canada 1986

Table 12. Population by Ethnic Origin in 1961, 1976, 1986 and 1991, City of LaSalle

Year	1961	1976		1986	1991
Population	30,940	76,715		75,335	73,804
English	11,513	28,035		10,215	7,905
French	16,689	38,695		35,225	31,750
Italian	342	4,290		7,970	8,095
Ukrainian	458	720	Black	1,725	n.a.
German	509	380	Portugese	760	n.a.
Other	1,429	2,605	Greek	635	740
Not stated		1,990	Jewish	65	135
			Other	7,715	14,374
			Multiple	11,020	10,805

Source: Statistics Canada, 1961, 1976, 1986 and 1991

Table 13. Population of City of St. Leonard by Ethnic Origin, 1976, 1981 and 1991

Year	197	1981	1991
Population	78,450	79,430	73,120
English	6,990	3,410	1,130
French	44,940	39,050	27,565
Italian	20,865	27,995	28,825
Greek	380	740	485
Others	5,275	7,533	15,115

Source: Statistics Canada, 1981

Table 14. Permitted wine labels by country of origin, Ontario, in 1993

	Canada	France	Italy	Others	Total
white	142	86	39	146	413
red	54	86	39	93	272
Total	196	172	78	239	685
per cent	30	25	11	34	100

Source: Annual Report, Ontario Liquor Commission

Table 15. Knowledge of French or English: Percentage of Immigrant Population by Country of Origin, Quebec, 1986.

Country of Origin	French only	French and English	English only	Others only	Total
Italy	30.7	50.7	5.2	13.3	100
U.S.	21.9	56.3	21.4	0.4	100
Greece	1.7	29.4	54.5	14.4	100
Portugal	37.3	42.2	7.3	13.3	
Poland	6.4	37.4	52.2	4.0	100
Vietnam	40.1	39.5	9.7	10.8	100
Germany	5.3	51.7	42.0	1.0	100
China	7.2	14.1	41.6	37.1	100
Israel	4.1	69.4	24.4	2.1	100
Total Immigrant Population	24.1	45.0	24.8	6.1	100

Source: Ministère des Communautés Culturelles et de l'Immigration, 1989, based on Statistics Canada 1986

Table 16. Active Italian Ethnic Population by Occupation, 1991

	Quebec				Montreal			
	Italians		Other groups (total)		Italians		Other groups (total)	
	Number	(%)	Number	(%)	Number	(%)	Number	(%)
Managerial/administrative	13,467	12.6	436,800	12.2	12,533	12.4	224,266	13.7
Professionals (Pure Science)	3,833	3.6	142,633	4.0	3,633	3.6	74,067	4.5
Professionals (Social Science)	1,133	1.1	74,600	2.1	1,033	1.0	37,833	2.3
Teachers	2,633	2.5	162,433	4.5	2,367	2.3	72,533	4.4
Medical Professionals	2,700	2.5	203,066	5.6	2,367	2.3	92,467	5.7
Clerical and related occup.	21,467	20.0	661,066	18.4	20,600	20.3	334,300	20.5
Sales	12,733	11.9	318,600	8.9	11,900	11.8	156,667	9.6
Service workers	10,933	10.2	479,300	13.3	10,400	10.3	202,833	12.4
Farm/Horticulture	1,067	1.0	72,133	2.0	967	1.0	11,667	0.7
Other primary occup.	133	0.1	39,800	1.1	67	0.1	1,533	0.1
Processing	3,900	3.6	134,933	3.8	3,600	3.6	42,933	2.6
Machine/fabric/assemble	18,000	16.8	335,966	9.3	17,633	17.4	147,567	9.0
Construction	8,200	7.6	192,800	5.4	7,533	7.4	70,667	4.3
Transportation	2,200	2.1	125,533	3.5	2,100	2.1	53,600	3.3
Others	4,901	4.4	214,967	5.9	4,537	4.4	109,432	6.7
Total	107,300	100.0	3,594,630	100.0	101,267	100.0	1,632,365	100.0

Source: Cross tabulated 3% samples of Long Form (20%) based on Census Canada 1991.

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