ITALIAN IDENTITY IN MONTREAL:

Issues of Intergenerational Ethnic Retention

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Abstract

Over time, the Italian community has become an integral part of Canada's ethnic mosaic. However, to what 'ethnic' cost has this integration occurred? This thesis looks at issues of ethnic retention among successive generations of Italian families living in Montreal. Focus is placed on three fundamental questions: (a) How did the Italian community change through generations? (b) Are the young generations displaying signs of symbolic ethnicity? and (c) How can the ethnic identity of Italians in Montreal be defined in 2005? Drawing on Herbert Gans' symbolic ethnicity approach, the initial hypothesis suggests that socio-economic upgrade spurs an ethnic consciousness founded on cultural symbols rather than on cultural values. Through ethnographic-based interviews, data was collected on 60 individuals grouped into 20 Italian families. Based on in-depth intergenerational comparisons between grandparents, parents and youth, results seem to confirm that young Italians reflect a pattern of symbolic ethnicity.

Résumé

La communauté italienne est devenue une partie intégrale de la mosaïque culturelle du Canada. Mais à quel prix cette intégration fut-elle acquise? Cette thèse se penche sur la rétention ethnique chez les familles italiennes de Montréal. L'objectif est de répondre à ces trois questions principales: (a) Comment la communauté italienne a-t-elle changé à travers les générations? (b) Est-ce que les jeunes générations reflètent des signes d'une ethnicité symbolique? et (c) Comment peut-on définir l'identité ethnique des Italiens de Montréal en 2005? Tirée de la théorie sur l'ethnicité symbolique formulée par Herbert Gans, l'hypothèse initiale suggère que l'amélioration du statut socio-économique engendre une identité ethnique fondée sur des symboles plutôt que sur des valeurs culturelles. Cette étude mise sur des entrevues à caractère ethnographique réalisées auprès de 60 personnes regroupées dans 20 familles italiennes. Les résultats des comparaisons entre générations – grands-parents, parents et jeunes – démontrent que les jeunes Italiens ont tendance à adopter un comportement ethnique caractérisé par l'absorption de symboles au détriment des valeurs culturelles.

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INTRODUCTION

As reported in the 2001 census, Italians are the sixth largest ethnic group in Canada, and the third largest in Montreal. Furthermore, the city has the second largest Italian community in Canada (after Toronto), with close to 225,000 *Italiani* living in this Census Metropolitan Area (CMA). In fact, roughly 90% of Italians in Quebec live in Montreal (Statistics Canada online 2005).

Italians have been in Montreal for over a century, and their development as a community is well documented. When studying the evolution of an ethnic group, the issue of ethnic survival inevitably surfaces in discussions. Although immigrants recognize the need to adapt to the host country, they nonetheless bring with them a set of cultural values associated with their homeland. The issue of ethnic survival therefore implies the preservation of some of these cultural values in a foreign country through time.

There are various methods for approaching the preservation of cultural values. This thesis draws upon the most common method, intergenerational ethnic retention, to examine the evolution of Italian identity in Montreal. Like many other ethnic groups, Italian immigrants transmitted their ethnic identity to their children as a mean to carry their culture into the future generations (Isajiw 1981). But at the same time, Italians felt a need to blend in, as they migrated to Canada mainly to improve their living conditions. Hence, the younger generations were exposed to an ethnic *duality*: integrating to the mainstream society while at the same time being raised through the Italian identity of their parents and grandparents.

This duality is reinforced by the social climate in place in Canada. On the one hand, Canada's multicultural policy, established in 1971 under Prime Minister Pierre E. Trudeau, is aimed at smoothing the integration of immigrants by allowing them to preserve ties with their cultural heritage. On the other hand, pressures exerting from the host country – such as language, employment, and schooling – prioritize the inclusion to the majority. Hence, it is to be expected that the Canadian-born children of Italian (and other) immigrants will maintain some aspects of their ethnic identity but will also lose some.

The problem I want to explore is the extent to which Italians have lost their Italian ethnic identity through generations. Are young Italians losing more than they are preserving? In David E. Aliaga's words, "How much of the old has survived?" (1994: 148).

Despite the prominence of the Italian-origin population in Canada, academic research seems to have overlooked this important field of study. While much of the literature has been concerned with the history of the immigration process and its settlement, little research has tackled the issue of intergenerational ethnic retention among Italians. As we shall see, there was one recent attempt to explore the Italian identity through generations, but this study focused on the transmission of the Italian language in St-Léonard, Montreal.

This thesis delves into the lives of 20 Italian families. The attention is focused on three fundamental questions: (a) How did the Italian community change through generations? (b) Are the young generations displaying signs of symbolic ethnicity? and (c) How can the ethnic identity of Italians in Montreal be defined in 2005?

The underlying premise of this research stems from Herbert Gans' theory of symbolic ethnicity. In short, he argues that ethnic revival comes as a result of socio-economic upgrade and is founded on cultural symbols rather than on cultural values (Gans 1979). Put in the context of my thesis, I suspect that the younger generation of Italians are upholding symbols of Italian identity rather than preserving its cultural values. In the following chapters, I shall elaborate on this concept to distinguish the notions of symbol and value, and to find ways to test their persistence.

The results will shed some light on issues of ethnic relations. For Canada, where immigration represents close to 60% of its annual growth rate, understanding the evolution of ethnic groups is crucial (Statistics Canada online 2005). The integration of immigrants is essential for Canadian society, but at the same time the preservation of an ethnic fiber is also important in order to keep attracting flows of immigrants. Understanding how an established ethnic group like the Italians in Canada maintains its ethnic identity may help us understand how more recent immigrants are likely to behave in the long run. Finally, this study may suggest whether an ethnic revival is likely to occur among Italians, and whether this revival will follow Gans' model.

This thesis is divided into four chapters. Chapter 1 presents definitions of key terms that will be used frequently, and then reviews the theoretical background related to the evolution of ethnic groups. Chapter 2 articulates the procedures employed to meet the objectives, and brings forward the analytical framework. Chapter 3 details the data collected from interviews and field observations. Chapter 4 contains my interpretation of the results, and attempts to answer the fundamental research questions.

CHAPTER 1: APPROACHES TO ETHNIC IDENTITY

1.1 Definitions: ethnicity vs. ethnic identity

The nature of this research revolves around humans and their ethnic identity. Due to the subjectivity of this topic, certain terms might be misinterpreted, and a careful definition of these terms – ethnicity and ethnic identity – thus seems imperative in order to fully appreciate the scope of this research.

Although there is a vast literature on ethnicity, defining the term remains a challenge, in part because of its multidisciplinary aspects and in part because of the changing conditions of an intergenerational study (Reminick 1983; Isajiw 1985). The term ethnicity can be employed in various ways; it can be linked to ethnic identity, ethnic groups, ethnic boundaries, or cultural ethnicity (Barth 1969; Pettigrew 1976). As a result, there is no single definition of ethnicity.

Isajiw (1985) provides a revealing observation about the challenge of defining ethnicity: "Only 13 [out of 65 studies] included some definition of ethnicity; 52 had no explicit definition at all" (p. 5). Furthermore, Isajiw (1985) examined a collection of 27 other definitions of ethnicity and created a table of common attributes that included at least 12 attributes (the ones mentioned most often in the 27 definitions).

For the purpose of this thesis, I will provide two definitions of ethnicity; a general one and a more detailed one. The terms 'ethnicity' and 'ethnic group' will be used concomitantly and will refer to the same broad definition, as suggested in the literature.

Scholars seem to agree that any description of ethnicity, or ethnic group, should acknowledge that it is a feeling of belonging of an individual toward a group that shares

one or more of the following traits: country of birth or origin, language, culture, history, religion, and kinship (Greeley 1974; Isajiw 1974; De Vos 1975; Yancey et al 1976; Alba 1981; Anderson & Frideres 1981; Isajiw & Makabe 1982; Gans 1997).

For a more detailed version of ethnicity, I rely on Isajiw (1985) who defines ethnicity as "an involuntary group of people who share the same culture or to descendants of such people who identify themselves and/or are identified by others as belonging to the same involuntary group" (p. 16).

Although similar in meaning to ethnicity, the nuance is that ethnic identity (or cultural identity) can be thought of as a set of efforts to maintain a certain level of attachment with people of similar ethnicity (Driedger 1978; Reminick 1983; Stephan & Stephan 2000). The subjective efforts involve the upholding of what Smolicz (1981) calls the core values of ethnic groups. Keeping an ethnic identity therefore means preserving the core values associated with the ethnic group.

The study of ethnic identity applies primarily to immigrants and their intergroup relations. People become labelled as "ethnics" when they settle into a foreign country. It is then that ethnic identity surfaces; when ethnicity becomes threatened by the influence of the majority on the minority. In other words, keeping an ethnic identity is not an issue for Italians living in Italy, but it is for Italians living in Canada or elsewhere.

The subjective trait of ethnic identity complicates its study. Indeed, a person can change ethnic identity in the course of its lifetime (Glaser 1958; Barth 1969). People can identify with an ethnic group without sharing the same biological descent (Stephan & Stephan 2000). The opposite is also true; people can refuse to identify themselves as

members of a group of shared origins. Moreover, people can identify themselves with more than one ethnic group or even none (Stephan & Stephan 2000).

In an insightful analysis, Reminick (1983) proposes four lenses through which we can interpret ethnic identity: social scale, cultural vs. social ethnic identities, time, and alienation. All four approaches reinforce the idea that a person's ethnic identity is likely to undergo changes, and remind us that ethnic identity is only one among various identities included in an individual's personality.

Is there a fundamental difference between ethnicity and ethnic identity? According to the literature, we might say that ethnicity is group-oriented and involuntary, while ethnic identity is individual-oriented and voluntary (Schneider 1980; Reminick 1983; Stephan & Stephan 2000). Therefore, a person is born with an ethnicity, but acquires an ethnic identity through actions and attitudes associated with his/her ethnic origin.

The content of this thesis is anchored in the notion of ethnic identity because of the way it can change through time as a result of subjective efforts. It is precisely the analysis of these changes and efforts that constitute the backbone of the research.

1.2 Cultural values among Italian immigrants: family, language and religion

The next task is to present an overview of the literature about the main cultural values associated with first-generation Italians (i.e. Canadian immigrants born in Italy). The purpose is to arrive at a general interpretation of the Italian identity that characterized early immigrants, as a starting point from which to analyse the evolution of Italian

identity through generations. Three sets of values receive much attention in the literature: family, language, and religion.

Family

Similarly to several other groups, such as the Jewish and Irish, the family ethos played a dominant role in the migration process of Italians. Following the fall of *padronism*[1], a pattern of chain migration lubricated by familial contacts characterized much of the Italian immigration in Canada (Harney 1979; Painchaud & Poulin 1983; Linteau 1989; Sturino 1989; Aliaga 1994). Family members sponsored the coming of relatives through the purchase of steamships tickets (Ramirez & Del Balso 1980; Zucchi 1985). The assistance extended to the provision of shelter or opportunities for shelter for the newly arrived (Painchaud & Poulin 1983; Jansen 1988; Harney 1996). During periods of mass immigration, it was common to see several Italian families living under the same roof (Ramirez 1984).

Family has been a predominant social and economic factor influencing settlement for Italian immigrants in Canada (Boissevain 1970; Zucchi 1988; Bagnell 1989; Harney 1996). Boissevain's (1970) study in the late 1960s revealed that over 75% of Montrealers of Italian origin had relatives living in the same building or within five minutes of walking distance from them. Spatial landmarks of Italian identity were seen through clusters of families living in the same neighbourhood. As a result, certain neighbourhoods reflected not only a national identity towards Italy but also a regional identity. They became small Italian *paesi* (i.e. village) in which most residents originated from the same

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[1] System controlled by *padroni* (i.e. labour agents) who recruited people in Italy and brought them in Canada as labour power (Iorizzo 1970).

village or region in Italy. This extended to neighbours (*paesani*) coming from the same *paesi* and friends of family members (Harney 1988; Peressini 1988).

To a greater degree than some other groups, the traditional structure of Italian families has been one dominated by men. The *potestà paterna* (authority of the father) conferred on the male the role of sole decision-maker of the family (Barbagli & Kertzer 1990). His authority often took the form of control over the wife's expenses, and the children's working and marital decisions (Gini & Caranti 1954). A wife asking for "[...] her husband's authorization before she could make gifts [...]" or a daughter pressured in an arranged marriage by her father (or brother) are reflections of the male-female relation in the Italian family (Barbagli & Kertzer 1990: 373).

As head of the family, the men worked and brought money home, while the women took care of the household and children (Gini & Caranti 1954; Lopreato 1970; Rolle 1980). Consequently, it was generally through their mothers' words that Italian children first learned the cultural traditions and values (Laurino 2000). In some cases, women worked on the land or at home, but their remuneration was little or took the form of exchange of goods and services rather than money (Gino & Caranti 1954). In addition to their prescribed role, the women's lack of education restricted them in terms of job opportunities.

Language

For first-generation Italians, knowledge of their homeland language constitutes a key trait of their identity (Smolicz 1981). Language provides them with a means of communication as well as features differentiating them from other ethnic groups. It is through their language that people are first identified as Italians. Indeed, we are what we

speak (Barth 1969). Further, the way Italian is spoken in the family highlights regional identities. For example, Italians from the north speak differently than Italians from the south.

Living in Canada confined the Italian tongue to a minority language to be spoken mainly in households (Biondi 1975). Despite this, the Italian language persisted through linguistic opportunities outside the household. A study in Montreal in the late 1960s revealed that Italians were likely to work in ethnic enclaves and thus speak Italian at work (Boissevain 1970). An ethnic enclave refers to an occupational zone where the workforce is composed of members of a common ethnic group (Painchaud & Poulin 1983; Model 1985). This study indicates that close to 60% of Italians in Montreal used only or some Italian discourse at work, and roughly 70% worked with or for Italians (Boissevain 1970).

Religion

The majority of Italians across the world have remained members of the Roman Catholic Church (Tomasi 1975; Alba 1985). During the initial phase of Italian immigration (1490-1881), religion was the first feature of Italian identity to 'cross' the Atlantic (through the work of missionaries). Still today, several Italian parishes in Montreal and religious orders are closely connected to Italy or are managed by Italian-born priests.

For first generation Italian immigrants, the church was important because it represented not only a place of faith, but also a place to preserve group identity and social structure (Tomasi 1970; Painchaud & Poulin 1983; Feagin 1984). The recognition given locally to particular saints and patrons of villages brought the need to express a religious

affiliation through feasts and Saints' day celebrations, and helped Italians to maintain contact with their heritage (Tomasi 1975; Ramirez & Del Balso 1980).

For first-generation Italians, the priests and the parishes were omnipresent in the community. Priests held responsibilities that extended outside the church. They provided assistance through various forms (legal, education, health, employment), and helped maintain ethnic identity among its parishioners through ceremonies (Boissevain 1970; Tomasi 1970; Zucchi 1988).

The parish was also of primary importance, because it set the spatial limits and central landmarks "for the reconstruction of southern Italian villages" in North America (Tomasi 1970: 192). It acted as a vehicle of cultural transmission and instilled social cohesion by creating a visible landmark and a meeting point for several generations (Boissevain 1970; Tomasi 1970; Ramirez & Del Balso 1980; Linteau 1989). In this sense, the Church helped expand the Italian identity outside the household.

1.3 Theoretical approaches: assimilation, amalgamation, pluralism and symbolic ethnicity

So far, I have tried to clarify the meaning of certain terms to better understand the concepts at play in this thesis. I have reviewed cultural values that characterized the early Italian immigrants. The next task is to sift through the main theoretical approaches related to the integration of ethnic groups in a foreign country, to identify a framework that might best explain how Italian identity has changed through generations in Montreal.

Ethnic studies are multidisciplinary, and as a result draw from a variety of theoretical traditions. Even within a single discipline, theories have been developed under

different intellectual traditions (e.g. Marxism or social evolutionism) and sub-divisions (e.g. pre-Marxism, neo-Marxism, etc.) (Anderson and Frideres 1981). I will narrow this search to approaches related to ethnic groups in a minority context: which theories can help understand how different generations of Italians uphold their ethnic identity as a minority in Montreal?

Assimilation

The first theoretical approach reviewed in this section is the theory of assimilation (also referred to as straight-line theory). Promoted during the first half of the 20th century through the works of sociologists Richard Park and Louis Wirth, assimilation interprets intergroup relations by the eventual dissolution of a minority group into a host majority following a four-phase model of contact, conflict, accommodation and assimilation (Park & Burgess 1921; Wirth 1928; Warner & Srole 1945).

This line of argument implies a loss of the distinctive ethnic elements (culture, language, religion, etc.) suffered by the minority group, as well as a full integration of its members into the spheres of the host society (Alba 1976; Massey 1995; Grant 1999). In this sense, assimilation implies the extinction of intergroup relations, and affects not only a person's ethnic identity but also his social and economic behaviours.

Several studies did conclude that classical assimilation has occurred among some generations of ethnic groups in US and Canadian cities (Sandberg 1974; Alba 1981; Crispino 1979; Weinfeld 1985). Gans (1962) and Matthews (1970) highlight that assimilation is accelerated by the immigrant community itself, and reject the notion that public schools act as agents of assimilation. Alba (1981) stresses the role of intermarriages, and to a certain extent college attendance, in speeding up assimilation

among groups of Italian Catholics in the United States. Using seven demographic and sociostructural variables, Weinfeld (1985) shows that for three sample groups (Jewish, Italian and Slavic) in Toronto, assimilation is associated with the improvement in socioeconomic status among the Canadian-born respondents. Schermerhorn (1949, in Reminick 1983) provides a list of ten factors of assimilation operating in the American society.

This rather radical approach, however, received much criticism over the years, first because of its lack of flexibility, and second because of the implicit political idealization of 'Americanization'. Newman (1978) points out that the "[...] assumption that ultimately minority cultures disappear has not been empirically validated" (p. 42). More studies have shown that assimilation, as defined above, is incomplete or even erroneous in predicting the outcome of intergroup relations (Kallen 1924 in Newman 1978; Glazer & Moynihan 1963; Gordon 1964; Newman 1973; Gans 1979; Moodley 1981). The impulse of science has therefore stimulated social scientists to bring forward corrections to the theory or to propose alternatives.

In particular, Glazer and Moynihan (1963) highlight the failure of assimilation theory to recognize the many differences that exist between ethnic groups, and therefore the many different degrees of influence of the host society on these groups. Further, they argue that the American society itself assimilates ethnic groups in different ways (Glazer & Moynihan 1963).

Milton Gordon (1964) draws upon the classical assimilation theory and refines it in order to make it more flexible. In his influential book 'Assimilation in American Life: the Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins', he distinguishes four categories to

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better interpret intergroup relations: cultural assimilation, structural assimilation, amalgamation, and identificational assimilation (Gordon 1964). These distinctions allow for different kinds of assimilation to be identified and studied independently. The novelty here is the recognition that assimilation can take on various forms and that these can occur at different periods in a person's life. However, Gordon too assumes that "total assimilation inevitably occurs" (Newman 1978: 44).

Rosenthal (1960) and Gans (1979, 1997) provide a rational critique of assimilation theory, and underline its inability to differentiate assimilation from acculturation. The distinction, they argue, should always be acknowledged. Assimilation is defined as the moving out of "formal and informal ethnic associations and other institutions into the nonethnic equivalents [...] in the host society", whereas acculturation is defined as the newcomer's adoption of the culture (i.e. behavior patterns, values, rules, symbols, etc.) of the host society [...]" (Gans 1997: 877). This distinction is useful, since studies indicate that acculturation tends to occur faster than assimilation (Rosenthal 1960; Mithun 1983; Gans 1997). Gordon (1964) makes out this distinction with his cultural and structural assimilation categories, but fails to move away from the prediction of complete assimilation.

Amalgamation

The second theory under review is the amalgamation theory, better known as the melting pot model. Derived from the assimilation approach, amalgamation entails the "merging of selective traits from different ethnic groups into a new, non-Anglo type" (Moodley 1981: 8). Amalgamation principles allow for some degree of ethnic persistence, but acknowledge some degree of voluntary assimilation mainly through

intermarriage (Smith 1971). Hence, a melting pot can be thought of as an ideal that involves either a cultural assimilation (i.e. loss of cultural ties) or a structural assimilation (i.e. loss of institutional or political ties) but not both.

Gordon (1964) conceives of this notion of selective assimilation through the process of intermarriage, but argues that it is only a step in the road to assimilation. A study by Draschler (1968) suggests that the European immigrants in New York tend to follow the amalgamation path. That is, immigrants engage in exogamous relationships while keeping strong ties with their ethnic community. Examples of melting pot scenarios emerge in such New York neighbourhoods as Little Italy and Spanish Harlem (Newman 1978).

Perhaps the most famous critic of the melting pot comes from the book 'Beyond the Melting Pot' by Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan (1963). They argue that the fate of ethnic groups lies not in intergroup relations but rather in the political structure of an ethnic group. Their work condemns the melting pot in favour of a more moderate version of assimilation, one that would prevail only after political assimilation has taken place (Glazer & Moynihan 1963).

Another vibrant critic of the melting pot comes from the work of Melvin Steinfeld. In his book 'Cracks in the Melting Pot', Steinfeld (1970) highlights the problems encountered by the American society that (should) force social scientists to disregard the amalgamation theory. These problems consist in recurrent instances of racism and discrimination in American life. While some immigrant groups did indeed 'melt' in America, the same is not true for the entire immigrant population. In the words of Steinfeld (1970), "while Anglos and other immigrants from northern and western

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Europe were 'melting', blacks were enslaved [...], Indians were shoved off the paths of western expansion [...], Chinese and Japanese were excluded [...], Mexicans were conquered and oppressed [...]" (p. *xx* in Introduction).

Pluralism

The third theory under review is the pluralism theory. Cultural pluralism stands as the complete opposite of assimilation in that it entails the mixing of groups in a host society without any dissolution suffered by the groups (Kallen 1924 in Newman 1978). The term 'social pluralism' is employed with reference to the co-existence of different social institutions (Newman 1973; Ley 1984).

Interpretations of pluralism vary among scholars and among study areas. In a study of British and Dutch empires in tropical Asia, Furnivall (1956) advocated the notion of a plural society, one in which economic factors prevail over social organization. Furnivall (1956) and Smith (1965) emphasize the notion that a plural society is one where economic and political powers are maintained by a cultural minority.

Greeley (1974) brings forward an alternative version that juxtaposes assimilation and pluralism based on a six-step paradigm. He proposes an ethnogenesis perspective to pluralism, which suggests that although disparities between ethnic groups and natives persist, the body of common traits is progressively enlarged as a result of common schools and mass media (Greeley 1974). In other words, pluralism does not represent a one-way assimilation (from minority to majority) but a two-way adaptation process allowing differences to co-exist (Greeley 1974).

Pluralism is not a recent theory. As early as 1791, a concept of pluralism was built into Canadian history through recognition by British colonial governments of the

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Catholic Church (Olson 2005). This concept was reinforced by debates over languages and rights of people living in Canada, including Natives and immigrants. The notion of pluralism became a state matter in 1971, when a multicultural policy was established under the Trudeau government. Its objective "was and still remains to encourage the maintenance of ethnic groups through financial assistance, public recognition of these groups and the establishment of national cultural agencies" (Anderson & Frideres 1981: 297).

An obvious problem with pluralism is that of potential conflict between groups. Across the world, clashes between ethnic groups are plenty. In Canada, tensions between Anglophones and Francophones, and between Canadians and Natives (i.e. Amerindians) persist today despite a formal multicultural policy and progress in cultural acceptance.

Newman (1978) advises that pluralism should not be viewed as the only alternative to assimilation, for doing so would lead to the replacement of a "one-sided theory of assimilation [...] with an equally one-sided pluralist view" (p. 40). Pettigrew (1976) and Gans (1997) share this opinion and threat these two theories as extreme approaches in the study of ethnic groups and intergroup relations.

Symbolic ethnicity

The next theory reviewed here is the symbolic ethnicity theory developed by Herbert Gans (1979, 1994). This approach comes in reaction to the ethnic revival mentioned in the literature in the 1960s and 1970s. Gans (1979) claims that no such revival took place in reality, and argues that it is instead a 'symbolic ethnicity' that has been occurring among third-generation ethnics. He coined the term to specify an ethnic identity founded on the upholding of symbols that "must be visible and clear in meaning

to large numbers of third generation ethnics, and [...] must be easily expressed and felt, without requiring undue interference in other aspects of life " (p. 9).

According to Gans' hypothesis, third generation ethnics are more interested in showing their ethnic identity than living it (Gans 1979). In this sense, it is not a return to cultural values, but rather a shift to cultural symbols that has characterized this visible movement of ethnic allegiance. Symbols become tools to hide one's fading ethnicity. These symbols take the form of consumer goods, holidays, mass media, political involvement, historical association, etc. For example, the fact of wearing religious jewels rather than participating in religious ceremonies reflect a symbolic behaviour.

Symbolic ethnicity supports a 'lighter' version of assimilation theory, one that makes the distinction between acculturation and assimilation. Put simply, symbolic ethnicity occurs as part of the process of acculturation and assimilation (Gans 1979, Alba 1981). Indeed, a rise in social status allows for ethnic people to exhibit symbols of ethnicity. When ethnics begin to resemble more and more the 'native-born' and come to realize that their difference is close to vanishing, they opt for the easy way of maintaining some degree of difference. Symbolic ethnicity does not necessarily promote group cohesion since symbols may vary from one individual to another (Alba 1981).

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research approach: towards a symbolic ethnicity perspective

Out of the four theoretical approaches reviewed earlier, I propose to exploit Gans' notion of symbolic ethnicity theory as a framework to achieve my objectives. Three reasons help justify this decision. First, I rely on personal experiences (I am myself from Italian origin and I live within an Italian community in Montreal) to support the idea about some form of emergence of selective behaviours toward the Italian culture by people of Italian roots. Through simple observations of everyday life, I sense that Italians in Montreal tend to embody patterns described in Gans' theory. One example stems from the language: I notice that very few young Italians speak fluently the traditional Italian language, but many use some Italian words (often in a dialect form) in certain situations.

Second, I choose this approach because it acknowledges the intergenerational dynamics influencing ethnic identity. Indeed, rather than assuming that ethnic groups follow a straight-line path toward assimilation, the symbolic ethnicity theory takes into consideration the various 'bumps' that can occur through generations (Gans 1992). In essence, the object of this thesis constitutes an in depth look at some of these bumps.

Finally, Gans' perspective stands as the only one that suggests a link between improvement in socio-economic status and an upsurge in attachment to ethnic culture. According to Gans (1979), a socio-economic upgrade affects a person's ethnic identity in two conflicting ways. On the one hand, it first influences people to put aside their ethnic background in order to move up the social scale. On the other hand, people tend to return

to their ethnic heritage once the upgrade has been achieved. However, the ethnic revival occurs through a preservation of symbols rather than traditional values.

In the course of this study, I seek to verify if this attachment, defined not as a return to traditional values but as a shift to cultural symbols, can provide a sound explanation for the changes in the ethnic identity of Italians through generations.

2.2 Data collection: snowball effect and ethnographic interviews

To explore intergenerational dynamics, I chose 20 families on the basis of two criteria: (i) the families had to be adult triads, i.e. at least three generations of adults from each family must be available for interview, and (ii) the first generation (husband and wife) had to be Italian-born. Therefore, my sample consisted of three groups: group A – first generation (20 participants), group B – second generation (20 participants) and group C – third generation (20 participants).

Research on intergenerational ethnic retention would not be as valuable if I included only two generations. This criterion also avoids ethical issues, since there are fewer constraints in interviewing participants who have reached the adult age. Interviewing adults ensures that respondents hold a certain level of knowledge and/or life experience necessary for the validity of ethnographic interviews. In some cases, the depth of life experiences, or 'real-life education', compensates for a lack of formal education.

The families were selected through the snowball effect, which can be understood as the friend-of-a-friend method. The first step was to get acquaintances to participate in the study. The second step was to exploit the initial participants' social networks to get other participants (friend-of-a-friend) until I reached 20 families.

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I took the precaution of ensuring a geographical spread across the Montreal CMA. Since the Italian community is fairly distributed across the Island of Montreal and its neighbouring island, the city of Laval, it is logical that the participants should also be spatially diffused. We do not want to confine the horizon to a small *paese*, i.e. people coming from the same town in Italy. In using a snowball method, I was careful to ensure that participants were not all clustered in the boroughs of St-Léonard, the largest in terms of its Italian population and which was the starting point for the snowball method.

The tactic of getting participants through the snowball effect, rather than through random sampling, was employed to facilitate researcher-participant collaboration. I did succeed in getting detailed responses from the interviewees. In a recent study on the role of Italian women in the transmission of language in St.Leonard, Venditti (2003) noted several problems with getting participants through random sampling.

The question raised by this method lies in the nature of the biases it might introduce. It did not, I think, affect the integrity of this study, as there is no reason to believe that knowing the participants (directly or indirectly) would influence their ethnic identity, defined previously as the efforts to maintain a certain level of attachment with people of similar ethnicity.

As I discovered potential candidates, I contacted each one and informed him or her of the opportunity to participate in my research. Then, a meeting took place with consenting respondents for introductory purposes and to discuss the procedures for this research. Following their approval through a written informed consent form, I then met with each consenting participant to conduct the interviews (see Appendix A for

duplicates of the letter of consent and the certificate of ethics). I only chose families in which all three generations agreed to be interviewed.

In selecting the participants, I decided to include a mix of both men and women. In so doing, I hoped to achieve two things: understand the Italian identity of both genders, and uncover new patterns in kinship roles. The literature indicates that in the first generation men were the financial providers and dominant figures, while women took care of the household and were the dominated figure. I intended to explore how this may have changed.

Drawing on work by Spradley (1979), Wolcott (1985), and Cole (1991), I conducted ethnographic interviews (or ethnographies). The relevance of an ethnographical approach "lies in its focus on culture through the participant's perspective and through firsthand encounter" (Marshall & Rossman 1999: 112). For my work, this implied rich descriptions of the participants' responses, including life events, behaviours, perceptions, and cultural activities (Spradley 1979; Wolcott 1985).

In addition to in-depth observations, ethnographic interviews require the researcher to understand, if not speak, the language of the group being studied. The fact that I am fluent in Italian, English and French facilitated the researcher-participant relation (especially when interviewing first-generation respondents who generally spoke only Italian), and opened the door for extended conversations, and thus more data.

It is important to mention, however, that a classic ethnography involves more than interviews. It often implies the embedding of the researcher within the participant's environment for long periods of time, and can thus take several months or years to complete (see Shostak 1981; Cole 1991; Lee 1993; Green 1999). For this reason, my

research should not be considered as classic ethnography *per se*, but rather as a work using ethnography-based interviews.

I started my interviews with the participants of the first generation, then continued the interviews with members of the second generation, and finally ended my fieldwork with interviews on the third generation. Therefore, I completed all interviews for one generation before shifting to next group. This was an important decision, and it is consistent with an ethnographic approach. It allowed me to discover values of one group and then re-focus the questions for the second and third groups. For example, I took into consideration some customs mentioned by the first generation, and examined whether these were lost or maintained in the second and third generations.

The interviews, which took place at a location chosen by the participants – usually the respondent's home – delved into the person's perceptions and behaviours toward an Italian identity. In total, the interviews consisted in roughly 100 questions, which were grouped into six broad categories of topics: (i) socio-economic status, (ii) family, (iii) language, (iv) religion, (v) cultural behaviour, and (vi) socio-spatial organization. The majority were open-ended questions with a few multiple-choice answers (see Appendix B for a duplicate of the questionnaire).

Interviews were conducted in French, English, or Italian, depending on the respondent's choice. As well, interviews were audio-recorded and coded, unless participants objected. In such cases, I wrote down their answers. Participants did not receive any form of compensation, nor were they penalized if they chose not to answer certain questions. All original data will be kept in my personal archives and will remain confidential.

A total of 60 participants, divided into 20 family triads, composed the backbone population of my fieldwork. The mean ages for interviewees of the first (sample A), second (sample B) and third (sample C) generations were 76.5, 51.7, and 24.6 years respectively.

Italy was the country of birth for the all the respondents in sample A (this was a selection criteria when choosing the families). In sample B, fourteen respondents were born in Italy, four were born in Canada, one was born in Belgium and one in Venezuela. In sample C, all were born in Canada.

The origin of each family was based on the place of birth of its first generation. Out of the twenty families investigated, eighteen originated from the southern regions of Italy, such as Campania (n = 8), Molise (n = 5), and Sicily (n = 5). The other two families came from the region of the Marches (n = 1) in the central part of Italy, and from Lombardy (n = 1) in the northern part of the country. Although this strong dominance of southern families may be a result of the snowball effect, it is consistent with the literature, which suggests that Italian immigrants to Canada originated mostly from the southern, rural regions of the country.

2.3 Analysis

The central method of analysis consisted of intergenerational comparisons based on the six categories of data obtained. The aim was twofold: (a) examine the variations (if any) between generations in terms of socio-economic status, family, language, religion, cultural behaviour and socio-spatial organization, and (b) identify, when possible,

symbols associated with these differences. I shall briefly explain the main points of analysis that were used to compare the triads.

Socio-economic status

The socio-economic analysis was quite straightforward, and focused on the following variables: education, employment and income. These variables were aimed at verifying the improvement of Italians along the social scale, as suggested in the literature, and I expected to find higher education levels, improved working positions and superior incomes among the younger generations (Neidert & Farley 1985). Although I did ask about their income, it should be noted that this variable was not explicitly compared through generations since many people of the first generation were retired or had never worked outside the home.

Family

The next categories of data represented more complex analyses in that they involved themes rather than just simple variables. The family analysis probed into the evolution of this value. As we saw earlier, the literature suggests that the North American setting has influenced the structure of the Italian immigrant family. Once a sacred institution, the *famiglia* seems to have lost some of its prestige. I intended to explore just how much change this has brought to Italians in Montreal. The study was concerned with the following themes: marital unions, family organization, and family traditions.

For the 'marital unions' theme, I was concerned with the intrinsic features behind Italian unions, such as civil status, age at marriage, and intermarriage. For the 'family organization' theme, I asked about the family size for each generation of the triads, and then investigated the internal structure of the family, ranging from gender roles to family

values to residential proximity. I was attempting to expose new patterns of family structure, such as an increase in exogamous unions, smaller families, and a balancing of the roles between husband and wife.

In the 'family traditions' theme, I considered the fate of certain traditions as an important indicator of the family ethos. I took into consideration some customs mentioned by the first generation, and examined whether these were lost or maintained in the second and third generations. My purpose was to discover whether young Italians still rely on family traditions to express their ethnic belonging. I expected to find a strong attachment to family customs in the first generation, but a decline in the upholding of these customs in the other two groups, especially in the third generation.

Language

The next point of analysis, language, enquired into the participants' upholding of the Italian tongue. Sociological studies suggest that the loss of the cultural language impinges on the transmission of customs and traditions, and ultimately threatens the survival of ethnic groups (Reitz 1974, 1980; Angle 1981; Fishman 1989). In light of this, my research sought to contrast how different generations employed the Italian language in order to shed some light on the effects of language retention on ethnic identity. The analysis drew the attention on two themes: language knowledge and language use.

For the 'language knowledge' theme, I was concerned with the proficiency of the several generations vis-à-vis the Italian language. I inquired about the participants' mother tongue, and then observed their linguistic skills (in terms of understanding, speaking, reading and writing Italian).

For the 'language use' theme, I scrutinized the participants' linguistic behaviour, placing the emphasis on the speaking of the Italian language in their lives. The interviews were devoted to the who, what, when, where, why, how of the Italian tongue for each respondent. This detailed analysis allowed to inspect the role and importance of *la lingua italiana* through generations. I covered such aspects as the use of Italian at home, the use of a dialect, and the watching of Italian TV programs.

In general, I expected to find a drop in the knowledge and use of the Italian tongue through generations, ranging from an everyday communication tool for first-generation respondents to an occasional language for third-generation interviewees.

Religion

The next point of analysis, religion, underlined what was left of this declining traditional value. Painchaud & Poulin (1983) noted that the church played a leading role in the integration of Italian immigrants in the 1950s and 1960s. In this study, I sought to 'update' the role of religion through generations. I relied on Gans' (1994) work on symbolic religiosity to establish the framework for this analysis. The intention was to extract the participants' spiritual and physical attachment to their religion. The distinction between the two is important. The notion of spiritual attachment conveys the more personal, intimate allegiance to the church, and often requires 'invisible' efforts (e.g. keeping the faith). On the other hand, a physical attachment reflects the 'visible' efforts associated with religion, such as church attendance, participation in religious feasts, and consumption of religious items.

It was my expectation that the upholding of religion would be weak, but that it would provide symbols for the eroded Italian identity. Symbolic religiosity occurred

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when the symbols seemed to outweigh the spiritual efforts, but did not impinge on everyday life. In Gans' words, "[...] symbolic religiosity [...] involves the consumption of religious symbols in such a way as to create no complications or barriers for dominant secular lifestyles" (1994: 585). In this study, I expected to see an overall decrease in spiritual attachment in favour of a symbolic attachment to religion as generations increase.

Cultural behaviour

In exploring cultural behaviour, I chose to centre attention on the following themes: food-making, consumption, celebrations, and household features. For the 'food-making' theme, I was not so much preoccupied by 'Who eats Italian food and who doesn't?', since eating Italian food does not necessarily make you Italian. Rather, my interest lied in the social processes surrounding the production of foods and their role in (re)shaping Italian identity. In the past, the making of certain meals implicated a rich set of cultural traditions passed on through generations (Laurino 2000). Hence, I placed the analysis on the upholding of such traditions. I expected to find a fading attachment of the young generations toward the making of food customs and rituals.

For the 'consumption' theme, I surveyed interviewees' attitudes toward Italian brand names. Questions and observations during this part of the interview were narrowed to three important categories: food, clothing, and Italian places. The goal was to discern why certain Italian products or places remain attractive and some do not. I tried to clarify how consumption patterns could mask an ethnic identity in favour of a symbolic ethnicity. I expected to find a tendency for the young generations to purchase Italian brand names despite their detachment from values such as family and language. This

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would associate the Italians with modernity, youth, visibility, sport and leisure, the Europoean and the cosmopolitan, rather than with the 'old-fashioned', the traditional and the local *paese* that belong to Italian-born immigrants.

Looking at the 'celebrations' theme, I aimed at capturing the way in which special events are celebrated among Italians in Montreal. It is a known fact that Italian gatherings, be it weddings, baptisms or communions/confirmations, often reach disproportionate measures. During the interviews, I explored the participants' perceptions and attitudes toward the 'bigness' of Italian festivities. I was interested in knowing whether such behaviour could be interpreted as a traditional concept of generosity among Italians, or as a symbol reflecting status achievement, or as an indication of a social system based on invitations, gifts and expectations.

I designed the 'household features' theme to look into the physical structure of the household. The impetus was to identify landmarks of Italian houses and observe whether these landmarks were present in the younger Italian families. To do so, the interviews delved into participants' insights about interior and exterior household features that typify the Italian culture. Although I did not take pictures (for confidentiality purposes), I did create a list of the most common ones for each generation. I wanted to understand the role of the dwelling in shaping ethnic identity, and I expected to find that certain household features became obsolete while others became symbols for younger families to cling to.

Socio-spatial organization

The socio-spatial analysis was interested in the participants' personal social connections with their ethnic background and their surrounding environment. How did

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successive generations of Italians identified themselves in a Canadian context? How lively were social contacts with non-Italian people? I set the attention on three themes: territoriality, home, and work and friends.

Through the 'territoriality' theme, I intended to gain information on participants' connections with Italy. I started by looking at citizenship. When Italians migrated to Canada, they had the options of keeping their Italian citizenship, getting Canadian citizenship, or keeping a dual citizenship (i.e. holding a citizenship in both countries). During the interviews, the idea was to gauge the territoriality of participants toward Italy. Territoriality, or spatial identity, implies "the persistent attachment of individuals or peoples to a specific location or territory" (Knox & Marston 1998: 237).

Among first-generation Italians, I expected to find a sense of place based on a regional, rather than national, Italian territoriality. That is, I suspected that group A felt a stronger bond toward a region (or hometown) in Italy than toward the country itself. Reasons for this include the push factors (corrupt government, lack of jobs, poverty, lack of governmental help) that instilled a sense of abandonment and led thousands of Italians to leave the country. Among the second and third generations, I expected to find a dominance of Canadian territoriality.

In the 'home' theme I was interested in finding out which of the three main urban form models – the Burgess concentric model, the Hoyt sectoral model, or the Harris & Ullman multiple nuclei model – could best explain the spatial distribution of Italians in Montreal since the 1950s (Murdie & Teixeira 2000). It also considered the evolution of housing tenure of participants.

The concentric model relies on the notion of invasion and succession of residential space to explain the outward movement of people in a city, from cheaper inner-city houses for low-income groups to more expensive outer-city units for higher income groups (Burgess 1925). The sectoral model suggests that movement is rather caused by the preference of high-income groups for amenities (such as elevated areas and waterfronts) found in certain sectors of the residential landscape (Hoyt 1939). The multiple nuclei model implies that urban forms "[...] tend to be organized around relatively discrete nuclei" (Murdie & Teixeira 2000: 205). These authors claim that the residential movement of ethnic groups follows the multiple nuclei model, since immigrants tend to segregate close to people of similar ethnic origin.

Lastly, the 'work and friends' theme captured the web of social connections at play in the ethnic identity of interviewees. The critical element was to determine the level of social and spatial segregation for each generation. To accomplish this, I investigated the participants' abovementioned social environments and their interactions with both Italian and non-Italian people.

Due to the language barrier, Italian immigrants often lived and worked in ethnic enclaves, where opportunities to mingle with non-Italian people were practically inexistent (Painchaud & Poulin 1983). As a result, these people were limited in terms of contacts with outsiders, and thus experienced social as well as spatial segregation. The situation should be quite different today, as the language is no longer an issue for the second and third generations. I therefore expected the scenario to be reversed; opportunities to socialize with Italians now seem to be disappearing in favour of social contacts with non-Italians. The younger generations should display lower levels of social

and spatial segregation than their parents or grandparents. I should also find the persistence of symbols in their socio-spatial behaviour reflected in the preference for Italian places but not necessarily for Italian people.

CHAPTER 3: INTERGENERATIONAL COMPARISONS

In the following chapter, I present the results from interviews conducted on the 60 participants of my study. The length of the interviews varied between generations; for group A they lasted an average of roughly 30 minutes, while those for groups B and C lasted an average of 45 minutes. Except for one participant, all others agreed to be audio-recorded during the interview.

3.1 Socio-economic status

The education level was relatively low for participants of the first generation. In fact, the highest level of academic training among group A was high school, although the majority did not reach this level (Table 1). The participants of the second generation generally had a better educational background than their parents. In this group, 20% possessed a university degree, while 10% owned a college diploma, and 55% did not go further than high school. The third generation showed the highest achievements in terms of academic training, as 55% held or were pursuing a university degree, 30% held a college diploma or trade certificate, and 15% held a high school diploma.

TABLE 1. LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF PARTICIPANTS

Education	1st Generation (N = 20)		2nd Generation (N = 20)		3rd Generation (N = 20)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Never attended school	1	5	-	-	-	-
Grade school	16	80	3	15	-	-
High school	3	15	11	55	3	15
College	-	-	2	10	6	30
University	-	-	4	20	11	55
SOURCE: Author's fieldwork (2004)						

Looking at employment status, I found out that 60% of the first generation was retired, 10% was working part-time, and 30% never worked. In the second generation, the employment rate grew, and nearly all participants (95%) were working or had been working in the past (Table 2). Although several were still attending school, all participants in the third generation had a job; 70% had a full-time job and 30% were employed on a part-time basis. The ones working part-time were all enrolled as full-time students at the university level.

TABLE 2. EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF PARTICIPANTS

Employment status	1st Generation (N = 20)		2nd Generation (N = 20)		3rd Generation (N = 20)	
	n	%	n	%	N	%
Full-time	-	-	14	70	14	70
Part-time	2	10	3	15	6	30
Unemployed	-	-	-	-	-	-
Retired	12	60	2	10	-	-
Never Worked	6	30	1	5	-	-
SOURCE: Author's fieldwork (2004)						

Looking at employment type, I found that 72% of group A occupied, or were retired from, jobs in the secondary sector (e.g. construction, manufactures, and landscaping), 21% from jobs in the tertiary sector (e.g. sales, service jobs), and 7% from jobs in the primary sector (e.g. farming). In addition, 21% were employers. In group B, only 26% chose secondary sector jobs and more opted for tertiary or quaternary sector (e.g. engineers, lawyers, doctors, professors) (Table 3). The proportion of interviewees who were employers reached 37%. In group C, the highest proportion of people with white-collar jobs (quaternary sector) was found, which reflected the improved socio-economic status of the third generation. (Table 3). None were employers, but this might be a result of their relatively young age.

TABLE 3. EMPLOYMENT SECTOR OF PARTICIPANTS

Sector of employment	1st Generation (N = 14)		2nd Generation (N = 19)		3rd Generation (N = 20)	
	n	%	n	%	N	%
Primary	1	7	-	-	-	-
Secondary	10	72	5	26	2	10
Tertiary	3	21	10	53	10	50
Quaternary	-	-	4	21	8	40
SOURCE: Author's fieldwork (2004)						

The income variable for the first generation was not taken into consideration because the majority was retired or working part-time. It would be inappropriate to compare the incomes of group A with today's incomes, as the economic conditions and monetary value of the Canadian dollar has changed. For the other two cohorts, I considered only the individual salary of full-time workers. In the second cohort, half made more than $50,000 annually and half made less; in the third cohort the majority (71.5%) had an annual income below $50,000 (Table 4).

TABLE 4. INCOME OF PARTICIPANTS WORKING FULL-TIME

Financial provider(s)	1st Generation (not available)		2nd Generation (N = 14)		3rd Generation (N = 14)	
	n	%	n	%	N	%
$10,000-19,000			-	-	-	-
$20,000-29,000			-	-	3	21
$30,000-39,000			4	29	5	36
$40,000-49,000			3	21	2	14.5
$50,000-59,000			2	14.5	3	21
$60,000-69,000			2	14.5	1	7
$70,000 and +			3	21	-	-
SOURCE: Author's fieldwork (2004)						

3.2 Family

Marital unions

In the first generation, 40% were married, 55% were widowed and 5% were single as a result of divorce. These figures show the strong commitment of early immigrants toward marriage, as only one participant broke this sacred union. I expected to find increasing rates of divorce among group B, but this was not the case. In the second generation, 80% were married, 15% were widowed and 5% were in common-law unions as a result of divorce. These numbers are similar to the previous generation, and reveal the continuance of marital commitment. In comparison, the divorce rate in Montreal reached 10% in 2001 (Statistics Canada 2005). In the third generation, 50% were married and 50% were single. The high proportion of single people derives from the fact that half of group C were still living with their parents at the time of the interview. These results are therefore limited in terms of looking at divorce rates.

The majority of the participants in group A got married at a relatively young age: 85% were between 18-21 years old at their wedding day, 10% were between 22-24 years old, and 5% were between 25-27 years old. The mean age at marriage was 20 years. In comparison, people in group B married later. Indeed, 65% were 22 years or older when they tied the knot, and the mean age at marriage was 23 years (Table 5). Although incomplete, results do suggest that the age at marriage continued to increase. In group C, 60% were 25 years or older, and the mean age at marriage reached 25 years (Table 5). For those who married after the age of 25, the reasons brought forward to marry at a later age were "Wait until was financially stable", "Met spouse late", and "Education".

TABLE 5. AGE AT MARRIAGE

Age at marriage	1st Generation (N = 20)		2nd Generation (N = 20)		3rd Generation (N = 10)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
18-21	17	85	7	35	1	10
22-24	2	10	6	30	3	30
25-27	1	5	7	35	4	40
28 and over	-	-	-	-	2	20
SOURCE: Author's fieldwork (2004)						

There was no intermarried couple within group A. This homogeneity was also noted in the regional commonality of the unions, as 95% were married (or widowed) to a person who shared the same regional identity (i.e. came from the same Italian *paese*). The fact of living in Montreal, however, impedes on the probability of this trend persisting in future generations. For this reason, the regional commonality of unions will not be used in the analysis. The first incidences of intermarriage were observed in the second generation, where 15% had non-Italian spouses or common-law partners (Table 6). These results signal a weakening in the need among Italians to preserve ethnic continuity. The rates of intermarriage in the third generation were the highest, as 30% of those who were married had non-Italian spouses (Table 6).

TABLE 6. INTERMARRIAGE AMONG PARTICIPANTS

Ethnic origin of unions	1st Generation (N = 20)		2nd Generation (N = 20)		3rd Generation (N = 10)	
	N	%	n	%	n	%
Both spouses are of Italian origin	20	100	17	85	7	70
Only one spouse is of Italian origin	-	-	3	15	3	30
SOURCE: Author's fieldwork (2004)						

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Family organization

A proclivity for women to have children at a younger age was noted within group A, where 75% of the women (including female participants and wives of male participants) had their first children between the ages of 20-24 (Table 7). The child rearing age of women increased in group B, where 80% of the women had their first children between the ages 25-29 years (Table 7). The results for group C were limited because only two actually had children. I cannot compare these results since it is impossible to know how many children these young participants will have. Although incomplete, the trend seems to be persisting in group C. I observed that out of the twelve participants who were older than 25 years, 83% did not have children yet. This could mean a prolonged waiting period before having a first child, or even an increase in couples without children.

TABLE 7. CHILDREARING AMONG PARTICIPANTS

Childrearing age						
Age of mother at birth of first child	**1st Generation (N = 20)**		**2nd Generation (N = 20)**		**3rd Generation (N = 10)**	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
20-24	15	75	3	15	n/a	n/a
25-29	4	20	16	80	n/a	n/a
30 and over	1	5	1	5	n/a	n/a
Family size						
Number of children	**1st Generation (N = 20)**		**2nd Generation (N = 20)**		**3rd Generation (N = 20)**	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
None	-	-	-	-	n/a	n/a
One	-	-	3	15	n/a	n/a
Two	6	30	8	40	n/a	n/a
Three	8	40	8	40	n/a	n/a
Four or more	6	30	1	5	n/a	n/a
SOURCE: Author's fieldwork (2004)						

Participants of the first generation showed a preference to have larger families, as 30% had two children, 40% had three children, and 30% had four children or more, giving an average of 3.15 children per couple. These high values were expected, as studies indicate that fertility rates are higher among first-generation immigrant communities (Campisi 1948; Foner 1997; Portes & Rumbaut 2001). Although still relatively high, the fertility rates began to drop in the second generation. This was mostly visible through the decrease of families with four children or more, and the rise of single-child families (Table 7). The average number of children per couple in group B fell to 2.35.

The interviews also looked at the financial roles of spouses in order to see who 'brought the money home'. I observed that 75% of the older group were in a relationship where the husband was the sole financial provider, while 25% were in a relationship where the husband was the main financial provider. The latter implied that the women had a small contribution in the household finance through part-time jobs.

TABLE 8. FINANCIAL ORGANIZATION OF HOUSEHOLDS

Financial provider(s)	1st Generation (N = 20)		2nd Generation (N = 20)		3rd Generation (N = 10)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Husband as sole provider	15	75	1	5	-	-
Husband as main provider	5	25	5	25	-	-
Wife as sole provider	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wife as main provider	-	-	-	-	-	-
Both spouses	-	-	14	70	10	100
SOURCE: Author's fieldwork (2004)						

An increased participation of the women was noticed in the younger families, where 70% of group B and all of group C answered that both spouses contributed to household income (Table 8). It should be mentioned that there were no single-family households in all three generations.

Similarly, I then looked at the parental role in families. I asked respondents to identify who had been generally involved during their own rearing as a child. For all three groups, it was generally the *mamma* who was responsible for the children's education at home, but a balancing of the roles seems to be emerging among the third generation (Table 9).

TABLE 9. ROLE OF PARENTS AS CHILD REARERS

Principal caregiver	1st Generation (N = 20)		2nd Generation (N = 20)		3rd Generation (N = 20)	
	n	%	n	%	N	%
Father	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mother	18	90	16	80	12	60
Both parents	2	10	4	20	8	40
SOURCE: Author's fieldwork (2004)						

As well, I examined whether family clusters were still present in Montreal. I asked participants who had children not living at home to estimate how far they lived from them. As illustrated in Table 10, half of the first generation lived in a different borough than their children, 10% lived in the same borough but not within walking distance, 10% lived in the same borough and within walking distance of their children, and 30% lived in the same house or block. For the second generation, only 10% lived in the same borough and within walking distance from their children, and 90% lived in a different borough. Since nobody in the third generation had children that moved out of

the house, I could not examine the proximity of residence between participants of group

C and their children.

**TABLE 10. RESIDENTIAL PROXIMITY BETWEEN
PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR CHILDREN**

Residential proximity	1st Generation (N = 20)		2nd Generation (N = 10)	
	n	%	n	%
Live in same block	6	30	-	-
Live in same borough and within walking distance	2	10	1	10
Live in same borough but not within walking distance	2	10	-	-
Live in different borough	10	50	9	90
SOURCE: Author's fieldwork (2004)				

Family traditions

Through this theme, I asked participants of the first generation to list a few family

traditions that they had brought along when they migrated here. It allowed me to then

take these same traditions and observe if the second and third generations had kept them.

The five most common answers obtained were "Sunday meal", "Name" tradition,

"Relatives as wedding witnesses", "Residential proximity", and "Living with parents

until marriage". I will briefly explain the first four traditions (the fifth one is quite

straightforward) through the words of four different participants (their answers were

translated). For anonymity purposes, their names were not revealed.

> "[...] Every Sunday afternoon, at around 1-2pm, we used to get together, the
> close family, and have a big lunch. There was pasta, meat, vegetables, salad,
> beans, wine, coffee, desert, fruits. It was a big meal, and good food. Then,
> after we finished eating, the men played cards or watched a soccer game or
> took a nap, while the women talked and the kids played. These meals were
> so big that we did not need to eat supper on Sundays [...]".

"[...] The name tradition is the tradition of naming your first son after your father's name. So for example, if your father's name is Antonio, then your first son's name should be Antonio. Then, your son will name his first son after you. Some people also follow this tradition with girls, so they name their first daughter after their mother's name. Many Italians from the South have this tradition [...]".

"[...] For their wedding, the spouses often chose a member of their family to be their *compari* (best man and maid of honour). It was a way of keeping close ties with our relatives. In some cases, even the wife chose a family member from her husband's family to be her maid of honour [...]".

"[...] I remember that when young couples used to get married, they often lived very close to one of the spouse's parents, sometimes in the same block, or sometimes on the same street. It was a way of keeping close family ties, they used to see each other everyday, they used to make wine and sauce together, they had a big garden. Also, this way, the women had company at home while the men were working [...]".

Since I completed all interviews for one generation before shifting to the next group, I was able to ask the second-generation participants which of the abovementioned traditions they still practiced or kept. As regards the "Sunday meal" custom, 40% of groups B and C said they continued this weekly gathering regularly (Table 11). I was interested in knowing why this tradition had lost some of its appeal. Out of those who said they maintained the "Sunday meal" ritual occasionally or rarely, the main reasons given were because "We just don't do this as often as before", "People live further away than before", and "Times have changed, we do other things on Sundays now".

Concerning the "Name" tradition, 19 participants in group B said this practice was a part of their heritage, either through their own family or through their spouse's family. Out of those, a small proportion (26%) said they kept this tradition for the naming of their first son (Table 11). In group C, only 16% said they had kept, or intend to keep this custom (Table 11). The "Relatives as wedding witnesses" tradition was quite popular

in the younger generations, where 75% of group B and 60% of group C followed this tradition when they got married (Table 11).

TABLE 11. TRADITIONS AMONG PARTICIPANTS

Tradition 1: Maintenance of the "Sunday meal" tradition among the married participants											
2nd Generation (N = 20)						3rd Generation (N = 10)					
Regularly		Occasionally		Rarely		Regularly		Occasionally		Rarely	
n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
8	40	9	45	3	15	4	40	4	40	2	20

Tradition 2: Did, or will, participants keep the "Name" tradition?											
2nd Generation (N = 19)						3rd Generation (N = 19)					
Yes		No		As middle name		Yes		No		Do not know	
n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
5	26	12	63	2	11	3	16	11	58	5	26

Tradition 3: Did the participants keep the "Relatives as wedding witnesses" tradition?							
2nd Generation (N = 20)				3rd Generation (N = 10)			
Yes		No		Yes		No	
n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
15	75	5	25	6	60	4	40

Tradition 4: Maintenance of the "Residential proximity" tradition (see Table 10)

Tradition 5: Did, or will, participants live with their parents until marriage?							
2nd Generation (N = 20)				3rd Generation (N = 20)			
Yes		No		Yes		No	
n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
20	100	-	-	19	95	1	5

SOURCE: Author's fieldwork (2004)

The fourth tradition, "Residential proximity", was indirectly covered in the previous section on family clustering (see Table 10). The final tradition, "Living with parents until marriage", was maintained as all of group B and 95% of group C said they did, or will, live with their parents until marriage (Table 11).

3.3 The Italian language

Language knowledge

In order to study the evolution of the Italian language, I first needed to examine the participants' mother tongue. It was no surprise that Italian was the mother tongue for all of the first and second generations, and for most (75%) of the youth generation (Table 12).

TABLE 12. LANGUAGE AMONG PARTICIPANTS

Mother tongue						
Mother tongue	1st Generation (N = 20)		2nd Generation (N = 20)		3rd Generation (N = 20)	
	N	%	n	%	n	%
Italian	20	100	20	100	15	75
English	-	-	-	-	3	15
French	-	-	-	-	2	10
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-

Best known language at present time						
Language	1st Generation (N = 20)		2nd Generation (N = 20)		3rd Generation (N = 20)	
	N	%	n	%	n	%
Italian	20	100	7	35	1	5
English	-	-	11	55	16	80
French	-	-	2	10	3	15
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-
SOURCE: Author's fieldwork (2004)						

I then sought to find out which language participants knew best at the time of the interview. Was the mother tongue later replaced by another language during the person's

life? For the first generation, all said that Italian was still their language of predilection. In the second generation, however, 55% said English was the language they knew best, while 35% said it was Italian (Table 12). In the third generation, signs of erosion were greatest; 80% said English was the language they knew best, while 15% said it was French, and 5% said it was Italian.

Participants were then asked to rate, on a scale from 1 to 5 (5 meaning "Very well"), their ability to understand, speak, read, and write Italian. In group A, all chose "5" as their level of proficiency in respect to understanding and speaking Italian. A lack of formal education probably explained why the results for reading Italian were not as high. In fact, 45% chose set their reading skills at level "5", 40% at level "4", and 15% at level "3". The results were even lower for writing Italian. The values are summarized in Table 13.

In group B, 80% chose the highest level to describe their ability to understand Italian, and 20% chose "4". In respect to speaking Italian, a drop was noticed, as 45% selected "5". The reading component showed that 60% answered "5", and the last component, writing, showed the lowest level of knowledge; 30% indicated "5" as their writing skills, while 70% indicated a skill level of "4" or lower. Table 13 illustrates these values for group B.

In group C, the overall knowledge of Italian was low. When asked about their own level of understanding Italian, 50% chose the highest level. In respect to speaking, reading and writing Italian, the decline was sharp, as only 15% selected "5" (Table 13).

TABLE 13. LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE OF THE ITALIAN LANGUAGE

Level of ability to:	1st Generation (N = 20)		2nd Generation (N = 20)		3rd Generation (N = 20)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Understand Italian						
1 (very poor)	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	-	-	-	-	2	10
4	-	-	4	20	8	40
5 (very well)	20	100	16	80	10	50
Speak Italian						
1 (very poor)	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	-	-	-	-	3	15
3	-	-	8	40	11	55
4	-	-	3	15	3	15
5 (very well)	20	100	9	45	3	15
Read Italian						
1 (very poor)	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	-	-	-	-	2	10
3	3	15	5	25	9	45
4	8	40	3	15	6	30
5 (very well)	9	45	12	60	3	15
Write Italian						
1 (very poor)	-	-	-	-	4	20
2	3	15	4	20	8	40
3	5	25	5	25	4	20
4	11	55	5	25	1	5
5 (very well)	2	10	6	30	3	15

SOURCE: Author's fieldwork (2004)

Language use

To describe language use, I asked participants to select, out of a given list, all the people with whom they spoke Italian fluently: father, mother, grandparents, siblings, spouse, children, grandchildren, friends, and colleagues. In the first generation, all of them employed Italian in any of these social interactions. In the second cohort, respondents all said "Father", 95% said "Mother", all said "Grandparents" (when they

were alive), 30% said "Siblings", 60% said "Spouse", 30% said "Children", 35% said "Friends", all those who were grandparents said "Grandchildren", and 21% said "Colleagues". In the third generation, only 25% said "Father" or "Mother", all said "Grandparents", and none said "Siblings", "Spouse", "Children", "Friends", or "Colleagues". These results signal an obsolescent attachment of young Italians towards their ethnic tongue.

I continued the investigation by asking respondents to list all the places at which they went because they could communicate with the staff in Italian. In group A, the most common answers obtained were "Family doctor" (n = 19), "Italian food shops" (n = 17), "Bank" (n = 12), "Pharmacy" (n = 9), and "Auto mechanic" (n = 5). The number in parentheses indicates the number of interviewees who gave that particular answer (maximum 20). In group B, the most popular answers were "Family doctor" (n = 5), "Bank" (n = 4), "Italian food shops" (n = 4), and "Pharmacy" (n = 3). In group C, the only answer mentioned was "Italian food shops" (n = 1). These results showed a sharp decline in the number of people choosing places solely because of their Italian-speaking staff. In other words, an Italian-speaking staff did not necessarily attract young Italians.

The next task was to examine the participants' exposure to the Italian language in terms of spatial, written, visual, audio, and online sources of information or entertainment. For the first generation, the results were unanimous; all participants acknowledged all of the mentioned Italian sources except online medias on a regular basis. For the second and third generations, exposure to the Italian language generally occurred through spatial sources (such as Little Italy), and audio sources (such as music) (Table 14).

TABLE 14. EXPOSURE TO THE ITALIAN LANGUAGE

Sources	1st Generation (N = 20)		2nd Generation (N = 20)		3rd Generation (N = 20)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Spatial						
Regularly	20	100	12	60	15	75
Occasionally	-	-	6	30	3	15
Rarely	-	-	2	10	2	10
Written						
Regularly	20	100	6	30	-	-
Occasionally	-	-	7	35	4	20
Rarely	-	-	7	35	16	80
Visual						
Regularly	20	100	10	50	8	40
Occasionally	-	-	6	30	5	25
Rarely	-	-	4	20	7	35
Audio						
Regularly	20	100	14	70	16	80
Occasionally	-	-	4	20	3	15
Rarely	-	-	2	10	1	5
Online						
Regularly	-	-	2	10	8	40
Occasionally	-	-	4	20	7	35
Rarely	20	100	14	70	5	25

SOURCE: Author's fieldwork (2004)

In terms of forms of Italian spoken, 55% of group A spoke mostly a regional dialect, while 45% generally used the standard Italian often referred to as the Tuscan form. In group B, 70% spoke a dialect-form, and when I asked whether they mixed French or English words when speaking Italian, 60% answered "Sometimes". In group C, nearly all (85%) spoke a dialect form of Italian, and a quarter said they often mixed French or English words in their Italian speech.

3.4 Religion

Spiritual attachment

The idea behind exploring religion among participants was to discover whether

the upholding of religion was weak, and whether it provided symbols for the eroded

Italian identity. Through the 'spiritual attachment' theme, I was interested in the people's

religious beliefs and devotion. At first, participants were asked which religious body they

adhered to. Every member of the sample specified an affiliation with the Roman Catholic

Church. But when pressured to set a scale on the importance of religion in their lives, the

second generation set that value lower, the third still lower (Table 15).

TABLE 15. SPIRITUAL ATTACHMENT TOWARDS RELIGION							
	Level of importance	1st Generation (N = 20)		2nd Generation (N = 20)		3rd Generation (N = 20)	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
How important is religion in your life?	1 (not important)	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
	3	-	-	3	15	10	50
	4	3	15	8	40	5	25
	5 (very important)	17	85	9	45	5	25
How important is religion in keeping an Italian identity?	1 (not important)	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
	3	-	-	4	20	9	45
	4	-	-	6	30	6	30
	5 (very important)	18	90	10	50	5	25
	Do not know	2	10	-	-	-	-
SOURCE: Author's fieldwork (2004)							

I continued the investigation with a look at the importance of religion in keeping

an Italian identity. I wanted to find out if respondents believed religion was a

'prerequisite' of being Italian. In the first generation, 90% said religion was an integral

part of the Italian identity, while 10% answered "I don't know". In the second cohort, half believed that Italian identity was closely related to religion; and in the third generation only 25% shared this view (Table 15).

Physical attachment

The 'physical attachment' theme implied the visible efforts that ensured some continuity in religious fervour. The interviews first considered the frequency of church attendance of participants. I observed that 50% of the group A attended church regularly, while 40% attended church occasionally and 10% attended rarely. In group B, only 20% attended church regularly, and in group C none followed this practice on a regular basis (Table 16).

TABLE 16. PHYSICAL ATTACHMENT TOWARDS RELIGION						
	1st Generation (N = 20)		2nd Generation (N = 20)		3rd Generation (N = 20)	
Physical attachment	n	%	n	%	n	%
Attendance to church						
Regularly	10	50	4	20	-	-
Occasionally	8	40	5	25	5	25
Rarely	2	10	11	55	15	75
Attendance to Saints feasts						
Regularly	15	75	12	60	9	45
Occasionally	3	15	5	25	7	35
Rarely	2	10	3	15	4	20
Have religious items in household						
Yes	16	80	3	15	1*	10*
No	4	20	17	85	9*	90*
Wear jewelry with religious connotation						
Yes	18	90	16	80	17	85
No	2	10	4	20	3	15
* Out of participants not living with their parents						
SOURCE: Author's fieldwork (2004)						

A second visible effort I chose to explore was participation to celebrations of Saints. In the words of a participant:

> "In Italy, many cities and villages are associated with a Saint, whom is believed to be the protector of the place. For example, the village of Alife [in the region of Campania] is associated with San Sisto. Every year, during the third week of August, the people in Alife celebrate San Sisto; this small village is transformed into a spectacle of lights, fireworks, music, processions, and food. The *Alifani* living in Montreal also celebrate this feast. The event takes place in a park, where all *paesani* and friends get together and recreate the original ceremonies".

Compared to church attendance, I found that participation in religious events (feasts, Saints Day) was more popular for all three groups. In group A, 75% participated in these events regularly; in group B it was 60% and in group C it was 45% (Table 16).

To look at 'consumption' of religious items, I relied on household features (pictures, cross, statues, etc), and jewellery. I noticed that participants preferred wearing crosses rather than having them in the household. In the first generation, 80% said they possessed religious artefacts in their household, and 90% said they wore religious jewels (Table 16). In the second generation, only 15% said they possessed religious artefacts in their household, while 80% said they wore jewels with a religious denotation (Table 16). In the younger generation, the difference is even greater, as nearly all (85%) admitted they wore religious jewels.

3.5 Cultural behaviour

Food-making

In the 'food-making' theme, I found that all interviewees of the first generation were, at some point in their lives, involved in the preparation of *casalingha* (homemade) products, generally pasta, tomato sauce, wine, sausages and cheese. Because of *la*

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vecchiaia (old age), however, the majority of them do not participate anymore, or very little, in these cultural traditions (Table 17). The most popular answers given to explain an attachment to food rituals were "The importance of these foods in our daily diet", "The preservation of traditions", "The fact of spending time with family when we make these foods", "The pride in creating good food", and "It's part of who we are".

TABLE 17. INVOLVEMENT IN FOOD-MAKING						
Level of involvement	1st Generation (N = 20)		2nd Generation (N = 20)		3rd Generation (N = 20)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Actively	7	35	12	60	1	5
Moderately	7	35	3	15	1	5
Not involved anymore	6	30	-	-	-	-
Not involved	-	-	5	25	18	90
SOURCE: Author's fieldwork (2004)						

For the second generation, I observed that 60% contributed actively to food traditions, while 25% did not participate at all (Table 17). The main reasons given for their lack or absence of involvement were "Somebody in my family, [generally their parents], already makes these foods" and "I don't have time". I pushed my investigation further and asked them if they would consider taking up these traditions once their parents stop making these foods or if they had more time. Two out of eight said "Yes", while two said "No" and four said they "I don't think so".

In the third generation, only one of the ten married participants participated actively in food traditions, and one of the ten that lived with their parents participated moderately. Motivations were similar, but new comments emerged to explain disinterest in this cultural activity: "I don't eat Italian food as often as my parents", "My parents don't do it", "I don't have to do it", and "I'm too young". Would they continue food

customs in the future? Only five out of eighteen said "Yes", while eleven said "No", and two answered "I don't think so".

Consumption

Through the 'consumption' theme, I first looked at the purchase and consumption of Italian foods. For 90% of group A, grocery shopping was devoted to the purchase of Italian products. When asked about the types of food they most often prepared at home, all said 'Italian food'. In group B, the appeal for Italian foods was not as customary, as 45% said they did not have any preferences when grocery shopping, and 40% said they liked to vary and were not limited to Italian dishes at home. In group C, only a small proportion (30%) of the married participants preferred buying goods of Italian brand names or preparing Italian meals.

In an attempt to see whether people made efforts to 'look' Italian, I then inquired participants about their attachment to Italian fashion and its clothing apparel. The first cohort was not overly concerned with purchasing fashion wear 'made-in-Italy', and several added "Italian clothing is expensive". The second cohort expressed a noticeable attachment, as half preferred buying clothing wear from an Italian brand name. Among them, 40% said this preference was influenced by the fact that they themselves were of Italian origin. The highest desirability was found in the third cohort, where 70% favoured Italian brand names. For most, their ethnic origin served as a stimulus for this interest.

I ended this theme by looking at commercial environments during which participants came in contact with their culture. For the older group, the most popular answers were "Food-related stores, including Italian grocery stores, bakeries, wine-making shops, etc.", and "Italian gift shops". For the middle and younger groups, the

most frequented *negozie italiane* (Italian stores) were "Restaurants", "Bars & cafes", "Furniture stores", and "Clothing boutiques".

Celebrations

For the 'celebrations' theme, I examined the people's perceptions and attitudes vis-à-vis the 'bigness' of Italian festivities. I asked the participants about their thoughts on the way Italians in Canada celebrate weddings, baptisms, and communions/confirmations. For all three generations, the most common answers given were "These parties became too big/exaggerated/expensive", "They're nice events because get to see all your family", "Too Americanized", "More people go to the reception party than to the church ceremony", and "Just to show off". I then asked the participants about their own wedding celebration and whether it was as 'big' as the ones of today. In group A 30% answered "Yes"; this proportion raised to 45% in group B and 80% in group C.

Household features

Through the 'household features' theme, I was able to explore the elements characterizing Italian dwellings. For respondents in the first generation, I asked them to list interior and exterior items of their own house that, in their view, would likely be found in another Italian house. The most popular interior items listed were a *cantina* (cold room), religious artefacts, family pictures, and food-making equipment. The most popular exterior items were a garden, a big backyard, and a white-brick façade.

To the second and third generations, I asked the following questions: "What are some features, interior and exterior, of a typical Italian house?" and "Of your own dwelling, can you list some features you believe are representative of an Italian

identity?". The most common answers to the first question were a *cantina*, a 'museum room', the 'basement' feature, religious artefacts, the 'two-kitchen' feature, a *'crystalliera'*, a garden, a well-maintained façade, and a big backyard. In response to the second question, however, interviewees had different answers for the indoor features, as several said an espresso coffee machine, Italy-imported materials such as ceramic, marble and granite, and a separate dining room. Seven participants indicated that nothing in their household was typically Italian. In addition, many said that Italians are known to be homeowners rather than renters. This was confirmed in my sample, as all interviewees of groups A and B and 70% of C are, or were, homeowners.

The participants explained a 'museum room' as one rarely used by the homeowners but furnished with expensive and old-fashioned furniture, sometimes covered with plastic for protection. The 'basement' feature referred to the tendency for Italians to have multiple-floors dwellings in which the basement represented the main living area. The 'two-kitchen' feature reflected the trend of having two kitchens; one used frequently and found generally in the basement, and one hardly ever used but more 'elegant' generally found on the upper-floor. The *crystalliera* was a piece of furniture in which they placed their expensive dining ware, crystal glasses, and souvenirs of their homeland.

3.6 Socio-spatial organization

Territoriality

For the 'territoriality' theme, I first interrogated participants on their actual citizenship status. I found out that 40% of group A held Canadian citizenship, while 35%

held dual citizenship, and 25% held Italian citizenship. In group B, 60% had Canadian citizenship and only 10% had Italian citizenship, and none in group C had dual or Italian citizenship (Table18).

TABLE 18. CITIZENSHIP OF PARTICIPANTS

Citizenship	1st Generation (N = 20)		2nd Generation (N = 20)		3rd Generation (N = 20)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Canadian	8	40	12	60	20	100
Italian	5	25	2	10	-	-
Dual (Canadian-Italian)	7	35	6	30	-	-
SOURCE: Author's fieldwork (2004)						

Next, I was interested in the main reasons behind participants' decisions to keep or relinquish legal rights with Italy. For those who kept Italian or dual citizenship, the most common explanations given were "To keep rights in case we go back in Italy", "Because spouse kept it", and "Because it's an advantage for travelling". The most common reasons to relinquish Italian or dual citizenship were "Because I live here and I'm not going back", "My spouse didn't do it", "I have no connection with Italy", and "To avoid military service".

I then asked participants to state the place – a country, region, city, or village – towards which they felt the strongest attachment. Nearly all (90%) of the first generation mentioned their hometown (often a village) in Italy. Interestingly, nobody answered "Italy" or "Canada". Responses varied among the other participants. In the second generation, 60% answered "Montreal", 30% said "Italy", and 10% named their hometown or a region in Italy, and in the third generation nearly all (90%) specified "Montreal".

I ended this theme by examining the participants' affiliation with Italian associations. In all, 60% of group A, 45% of group B and 5% of group C were members of such associations.

Home

In the 'home' theme, I was concerned with the spatial dynamics of Italian settlements. I began by asking first-generation interviewees where they had first settled when they arrived in Montreal. I found out that 75% initially established in the city's Little Italy, while 15% settled within the quarters of Parc-Extension and 10% in St-Michel. The most popular reasons given were "The presence of other Italians, including family and/or friends", "The presence of Italian shops and jobs", and "The affordability of the housing market".

I pursued the investigation by looking at the participants' place of residency at the time of the interviews. The Little Italy and Parc-Extension neighbourhoods were no longer preferred locations for Italians. All participants in samples A and B were now living in Montreal's outer ring areas, such as St-Léonard, St-Michel, Rivière-des-Prairies, Montreal-North, Pierrefonds, Kirkland, Ahuntsic, LaSalle, while the majority of sample C (out of those who were married) were concentrated Montreal's neighbouring island of Laval.

Motivations to move outward, however, differed between groups. In the older group, the move was driven mainly by "The opportunity to buy a bigger house for the family at affordable price", "Proximity to relatives", and "A growing presence of an Italian community in these new areas". In the younger groups, important factors influencing the location of the dwelling were "Proximity to family and friends",

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"Proximity to work", "Proximity to amenities such as roads, services, and schools", and "Safety of neighbourhood".

Work and friends

Through the 'work and friends' theme, I first intended to discover whether Italian enclaves still persisted in Montreal. I asked participants whether or not they worked close to where they lived i.e. within walking distance. Out of the people of group A who were retired or working part-time, 86% said "Yes"; in group B this proportion dropped to 31%; and in group C it was 10% (I chose to include all participants, even those living with their parents, because the key element was to observe whether or not distance had a negative effect on the location of work). For the most part

I then asked participants about the presence of Italians in their working environment. In the first generation, 58% of the working or retired respondents had worked for an Italian employer, and all said that their co-workers were predominantly of Italian origin. In the second generation, only 16% worked for an Italian employer, and 31% said most of their co-workers were of Italian origin. The tendency to work for, or with, Italians continued to decrease in the third generation, where only 10% worked for an Italian employer and 20% said most of their co-workers were of Italian origin.

The interviews then inquired people about their personal preference when working with Italian or non-Italian people. In the first generation, 79% preferred working with Italian co-workers, mainly because "We speak the same language", and "We have more in common, to talk about". This marked preference towards having Italian co-workers was not seen in the other groups, as 74% of the second cohort and 90% of the third group said the ethnicity of their colleagues did not make a difference.

Lastly, I focused on the friendship relations of participants in order to see whether there was a proclivity for Italians to mingle with other Italians. All participants of the first generation said their friends were, for the most part, of Italian origin. I found similar results for the other participants; 80% of group B and 75% of group C had a circle of friends composed primarily of people of Italian descent.

CHAPTER 4: THE DYNAMICS OF ITALIAN IDENTITY IN MONTREAL

In light of the data presented in the previous chapter, it is clear that third-generation Italians in Montreal reflect an identity distinct from their parents and grandparents. We observed their preservation of certain ethnic symbols, which may be keeping this group from undergoing complete assimilation. The following chapter draws on the results gathered through this research and interprets them to resolve the initial questions: (a) How did the Italian community change through generations? (b) Are the young generations displaying signs of symbolic ethnicity? and (c) How can the ethnic identity of Italians in Montreal be defined in 2005?

4.1 How did the Italian community change through generations?

Socio-economic upgrade

In all twenty triads, the socio-economic status of participants seems to have increased through generations. The first generation is the one with the lowest level of human capital (i.e. education, employment, income). This was expected, since Italian immigrants arriving during the post World-War II period were mostly farmers and peasants from rural regions of southern Italy. Bleak opportunities in their homeland prodded their decision to migrate. The first-generation participants thus started their Canadian lives at the bottom of the socio-economic scale, with little education and a language handicap, hence low-paying jobs mainly in the secondary sector.

The second and third generations show progress in their socio-economic status, as more participants have a college and/or university degree, and occupy superior job

positions. All of group B and 79% of group C reported annual incomes above the Canadian average, which was $31,950 in 2003 (Statistics Canada online 2004).

The socially advantageous context in Canada, including accessible education, equal rights, and a multicultural policy, can partly explain this social upgrade. However, people must also make the efforts to benefit from these tools and improve their situation. Put in the context of my sample, I argue that upward mobility, as an objective and as an achievement, is associated with adoption of Canadian ways and compromises with Italian traditions.

New family patterns

While the first generation mostly married at a relatively young age (below 25 years old), the second and third generations generally tied the knot at an older age. The priority of being financially stable and having a better education were factors that led participants to get married later. Hence, the need to ensure a socio-economic improvement has postponed the trend among Italians to marry young. As well, parents have played an important role as they have encouraged their children to make these choices.

The average size of Italian families has decreased through generations. At the same time, the average age at which women have their first children has increased. These characteristics are parallel to Canadian families, and help understand the evolution of Italians. Such results reflect the findings of other scholars, that the Italian community has changed from being an ethnic group displaying fertility rates typical of other immigrant groups to being an ethnic group displaying fertility rates typical of the host country (Herberg 1989).

Changes were also observed in the financial organization of families and gender roles. The results indicate that today's Italian households in Montreal are no longer dominated by the husband-at-work-wife-at-home feature nor the *postesta paterna* (authority of father). Rather, the double-income, coupled with a balancing of the roles between husband and wife and increasingly liberal values, are more appropriate when describing the young Italian households in Montreal. In Italy, a study by Palomba and Quatrrociocchi (1996) found that the husband-at-work-wife-at-home feature still characterizes nearly 35% of families, despite a general rise in the education of Italian women. From an ethnic identity perspective, Italian families have blended in the western mould and have evolved according to their host country. The disparity between generations highlights the desire and ability to integrate.

The proportion of exogamous relationships increased slightly in the second and third generations. This inevitably has implications in the transmission of ethnic identity (Chimbos 1971). Indeed, exogamous (i.e. intermarried) parents tend to leave some ethnic baggage aside when entering the married life, which thus impinges on their proclivity to teach their children the traditions of their ancestors (Fandetti & Gelfand 1983; Stevens 1985; Spickard 1991). However, larger samples would be needed to evaluate a trend among young Italians.

According to the results, young Italians tend to live further away from their parents, especially for participants of group C. The dispersal of generations suggests that proximity to family members is no longer a prime factor when choosing a residential location. Although still strong, familial bonds have become less visible in terms of geographic space. From an ethnic identity standpoint, the greater physical distance

between generations spawns a social distance, which reduces intergenerational contacts and obstructs the cultural bridge between the older and younger generations.

The *pranzo della Domenica* (Sunday meal), which stands as an opportunity for intergenerational contacts and cultural transmission, has lost some of its appeal through time. While the first generation held tight to this weekly ritual, the same enthusiasm was not seen among their children and grandchildren. In addition, residential proximity and the name tradition are other customs that seem to be slowly disappearing through generations.

From an ethnic identity perspective, the erosion of these traditions, especially in the third generation, implies that young Italians do not rely as much on the family ethos to express their ethnic belonging. In the first generation, the family fuelled a two-way process; it essentially promoted an Italian identity, which in turn led the Italian identity to be strongly related to family values. For them, family ensured their survival through their segregated spatiality. This process faded out in the second and third generations. New family structure and values no longer put the accent on maintaining an Italian identity. Further, the survival of young Italians in Canada is more a question of education, employment and language. Young Italians do not feel the same pull vis-à-vis certain family traditions.

Language on the brink of extinction

A rapid decline in the knowledge of the Italian language, especially regarding speaking, reading and writing skills, is taking place among the young Italians. This was predictable to a certain extent, since Italian is not an official language in Montreal. I did not expect to see the pace of this decline, as language loss began in the second

generation. These results reflect the overall situation of Italians in Montreal, where the population using Italian as a home language decreased by 53 % between 1991 and 2001 (Table 19).

TABLE 19. POPULATION IN MONTREAL USING ITALIAN AS A HOME LANGUAGE, 1991-2001	
Year	Count
1991	63,600
1996	56,070
2001	29,975
SOURCE: Statistics Canada online (2005)	

A close look at the third generation indicates that although it is mother tongue for a majority of participants, the Italian language is poorly mastered. This tells us that many parents initially raised their children using the Italian language, but once they started school, the parents switched to the language taught at school, and relied on the grandparents to continue the Italian language.

A poor knowledge of Italian causes the young generation to make little use of this language. The rare occasions when they employ Italian words generally occur with their grandparents. We might say that Italian has become a grandparents' language. Once the older generation passes away, the need to communicate in Italian will also pass away. Despite the numerous linguistic opportunities available in Montreal, the third generation keeps little contact with the language other than through music and websites. Therefore, it is a lack of effort, rather than a lack of opportunity, that is threatening the Italian language.

English has become the mainstream language of groups B and C. Although French was an easier language to learn (because of its Latin origin similar to the Italian language), Italians preferred to give their children the opportunity to learn English

because of its linguistic advantage in the world (Boissevain 1970; Castonguay 1979). The desire to integrate and provide the best conditions for the family thus weakened the need to know Italian.

From an ethnic identity perspective, this suggest that with time, the cultural value of language will lose its importance as a factor in Italian identity. That is, Italians living in Montreal will have an Italian family name, but will not be able to converse in the language of their ancestors. Loss of the native language threatens the survival of many ethnic groups (Reitz 1974, 1980; Angle 1981; Fishman 1989).

Erosion of religion

While the first generation has retained a vivid connection with the Roman Catholic Church, a spiritual detachment has taken place among the second and third generations. Such a decline has been witnessed not only among Italians but among the North American population in general. In group A, religion was perceived as an important facet of Italian identity. Explanations derive from the fact that religion played a vital role in the survival and integration of first-generation Italians in Canada (Russo 1970; Painchaud & Poulin 1983). This perception withered in groups B and C, as the steady growth and development of the Italian community diminished its reliance on the Church. Nowadays, survival and integration depend more on socio-economic status than parish networks. From an ethnic identity perspective, the bond between Italians and religion has been eroded, and the young generations, brought up in a Canadian context, do not believe religion to be a 'prerequisite' for an Italian identity.

Cultural detachment

An early sign of cultural detachment is seen in the food-making traditions. The first generation attaches great importance to the making of traditional products (e.g. tomato sauce, wine, sausages) because it provides them with their main source of food, allows them to keep traditions alive, and reinforces family bonds. On the other hand, the second and third generations participate only sporadically or not at all in the actual making of Italian foods, thus compromising the transmission of such customs.

It can be argued that the detachment of younger Italians toward food rituals is a consequence of the availability of these products through their parents, grandparents or even specialty shops, and time constraints. The fact that older family members produce these items and make efforts to transmit the customs does not seem to encourage younger generations to do the same. Hence, the weakness appears to be in the 'preservation' rather than in the 'transmission' process. From an ethnic identity perspective, food-making traditions for young Italians do not arise as a necessity in a Canadian life-style, and thus the efforts to keep alive this fibre of Italian identity are fading out.

When it comes to grocery shopping and meal preparation at home, the first generation prefers Italian brand names and Italian cooking. This reflects a certain chauvinistic attitudes towards the homeland: participants believe Italian meals can only be prepared with Italian-made ingredients. It also suggests a form of segregation in which people restrict themselves to consuming goods associated with their ethnic group. The preference declines in the second and third generation, as does the frequency of Italian meals prepared at home. Young Italians seem more receptive to Canadian culture, which in turn exposes them to new eating habits and consumption patterns (Laroche 1991).

Consciously or subconsciously, the importance of Italian foods at home tends to disappear, while the popularity of Italian foods in restaurants remains strong. The Italian community has been successful in giving a good reputation to Italian restaurants; the local population, including the younger generation and the tourists, patronizes them. So 'eating Italian', like 'dressing Italian', has become something modern, fashionable, trendy, and cosmopolitan, all of which appeal to a younger generation, rather than something old-fashioned, senior, and out-of-date.
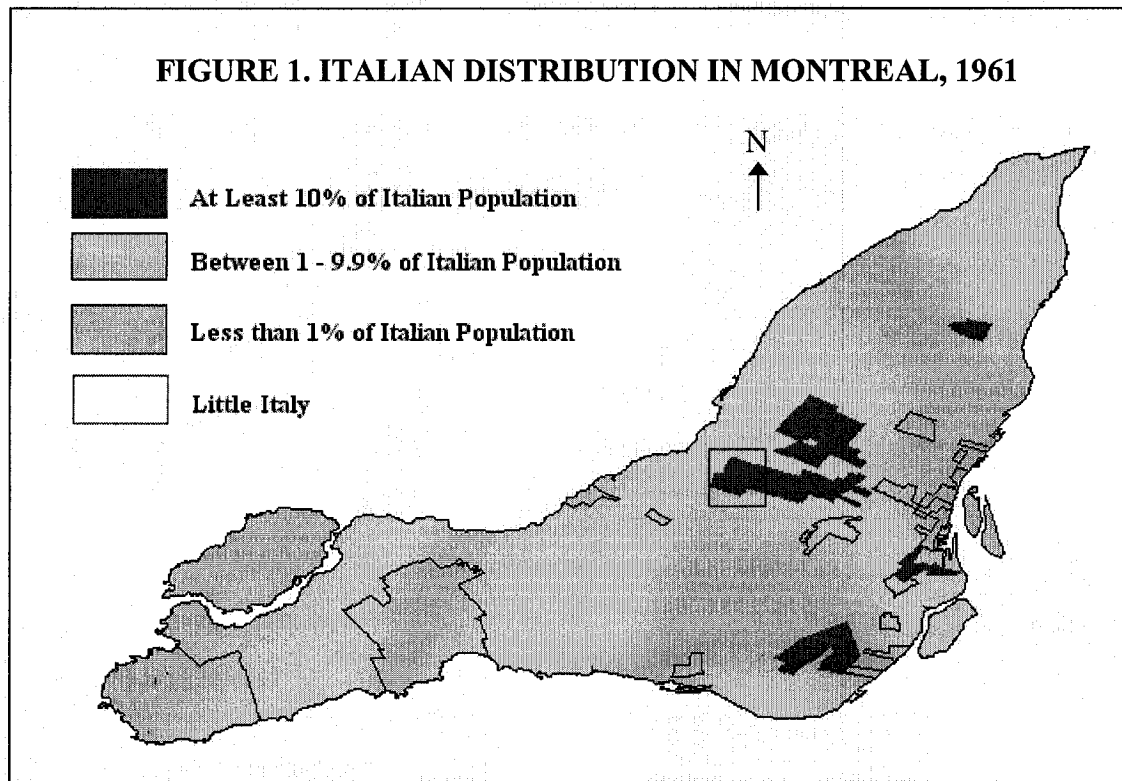
Socio-spatial amalgamation

Among the first generation, people with Canadian or dual citizenship outnumber those who have Italian citizenship. This finding exposes a certain bond between Italian-born immigrants and their host country. The welcoming conditions in Canada and the need to integrate in their new society prevail over the expectation of returning to Italy. At the same time, a territorial detachment occurs, fuelled by distance and memories of grim opportunities and corrupted government. In this study, none of the interviewees in group A expressed a vivid attachment to Italy as a country. Instead, what becomes evident is a persistent regional identity – i.e. connection with the region or hometown in Italy. Although they are Canadian citizens and seem little interested in Italy and its government, they sustain a marked territoriality vis-à-vis their childhood environment. This helps us understand why some people hold dual citizenship or remain members of an Italian association; it allows them to keep a connection with a distant hometown.

As expected, nearly all participants in the second and third generations are Canadian citizens. This inclusion into Canadian society extends to the sense of place, as the majority express a territoriality towards Canada. Participants who expressed a

territoriality towards a place in Italy were likely to keep the identity of that place, while participants who expressed a territoriality towards Canada were likely to act like other Canadians. From an ethnic identity perspective, this shows that sense of place is an important element shaping one's ethnic identity.

A noteworthy proportion of interviewees in group B, however, still feel spatially connected to Italy. Interestingly, this territoriality is more national than regional. I interpret this as 'symbolic territoriality', which occurs when people develop a national identity for a country in which they have sporadically, or never, lived in. This attachment relies on a positive perception towards a country according to various indicators such as its economic growth, its political regime, its scientific community, its physical geography, its living conditions, and religious beliefs. Therefore, a symbolic territoriality can stimulate a symbolic ethnicity, which represents the visible manifestation of this attachment through the upholding of symbols related to a country.

The results indicate that early Italian immigrants were spatially concentrated, evidence consistent with the Harris & Ullman multiple nuclei model of urban form. Their proximity to relatives and compatriots was essential for subsistence, and it provided a pool of much needed services and social networks (Kalbach 1981). Figure 1 shows the distribution of Italians in Montreal in 1961. Some form of clustering is visible around the Little Italy neighbourhood.

FIGURE 1. ITALIAN DISTRIBUTION IN MONTREAL, 1961

At Least 10% of Italian Population

Between 1 - 9.9% of Italian Population

Less than 1% of Italian Population

Little Italy

N

SOURCE: Modified from Minister of Supply and Services Canada (1989)

As the Italian community grew in numbers and in social status, its members began moving out of their segregated neighbourhoods. From Montreal's inner-ring districts, Italians are now fairly well dispersed across the city's outer-ring boroughs, such as St-Leonard, St-Michel, Rivière-des-Prairies, Ahuntsic, Kirkland, Pierrefonds and LaSalle (Figure 2). In this case, the Burgess concentric model helps understand the outward movement of Italians through time. This ethnic group has moved up the socio-economic scale and gained sufficient financial power to locate in more comfortable areas where opportunities for homeownership were abundant. At the same time, other ethnic groups have moved into the residential spaces left vacant (De Martinis 2005, Statistics Canada online 2005).

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FIGURE 2. ITALIAN SETTLEMENTS IN MONTREAL, 2001
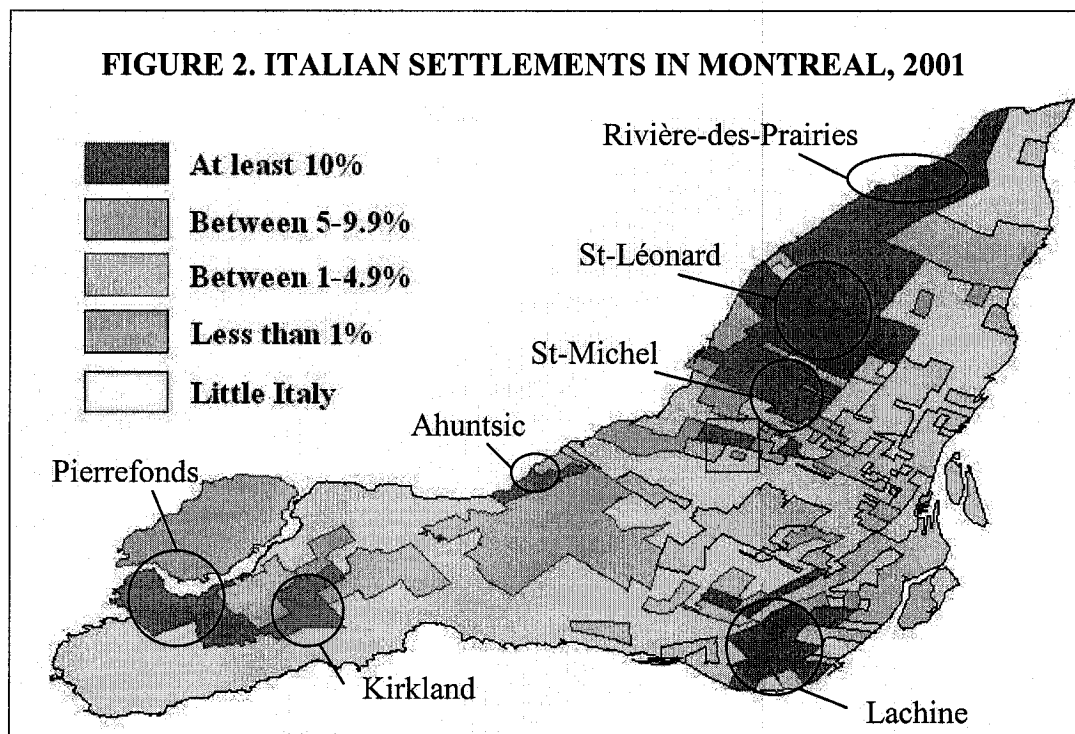
SOURCE: Statistics Canada online (2005)

From an ethnic identity perspective, the expansion of Italian boundaries has increased the interactions of Italian with non-Italian people, and has therefore hampered their need to act Italian in favour of a more Canadian approach. Moreover, it helped define a new set of criteria influencing the location of a house among the younger generation, such as proximity to roads, services and schools rather than proximity to family members.

Through the second and third generations, Italian enclaves practically disappeared from the Montreal landscape. Nowadays, Italians work in a variety of settings, with ethnically diverse colleagues, and travel greater distances to get to the office. Working skills and academic training, rather than ethnicity, provide job opportunities (Allen & Turner 1996). The preference of working with people of Italian origin is no longer obvious. From an ethnic identity point of view, these results suggest that young Italians

rely less on ethnic networks and more on their human capital baggage to find work. Similarly to the expansion of Italian boundaries, the disappearance of ethnic enclaves has encroached on their need to behave Italian.

4.2 Are the young generations displaying signs of symbolic ethnicity?

In order to answer this question, we need to analyse how Italians have remained Italian. In the previous section, we looked at the changes undergone by the Italian community. In this section, the focus is placed on the second and third generations. The objective is to discuss, from a symbolic ethnicity perspective, the categories of data containing ethnic symbols retained by groups B and C.

Family symbol

From my survey, only one family-related symbol, namely the tradition of having relatives as *compari* (wedding witnesses), surfaced in the second and third generation. Otherwise, results show a weak retention of family structure and traditions among participants in groups B and C. From a symbolic ethnicity perspective, this tradition stands as a symbol because it allows people to express close ties with family members without having to follow other more 'demanding' requirements of the family ethos.

The results also indicate that Italian children tend to live with their parents until they get married. Since the age of marriage has increased, they therefore stay in the familial house for a longer period than before. We saw, however, that this does not necessarily imply a greater 'absorption' of Italian identity.

Language symbols

While young Italians struggle to speak the language of their ancestors at a high level, their ability to understand Italian is still relatively good. This is not surprising, since learning how to speak a language (especially a second or third language) demands more effort than just understanding it (Fishman 1991). To compensate for their lack of dialogue, young Italians cling to visible linguistic symbols that project an Italian identity, but rely mainly on understanding Italian rather than speaking it.

In the course of my analysis I have found four main sources of linguistic symbols. First, the younger ones utilize heavily the public places, like restaurants, in which people are welcomed but not obliged to speak Italian; second, they watch Italian television or movies; third, they listen to music by Italian artists; and fourth they browse through Italian websites. These are all opportunities for people to express an attachment to the Italian tongue without having to make the more tedious efforts of learning to speak it. Classic examples of this occur when young Italians prefer watching a soccer game at the nearby Italian café, when they listen to Italian music in their car, or when they shop in Montreal's Little Italy. As a result, young Italians rarely engage in extended Italian discourse, but they frequently come in contact with it. This reflects a form of ethnic revival in which a sense of peoplehood is created through relatively superficial bonds.

Religious symbols

The Roman Catholic Church does not exert the same influence on the second and third generations as it did on the first. Yet religion has not completely disappeared, and I found the perpetuation of the celebrations of Saints and the popularity of religious jewels symbolize the 'modernized' attachment of young Italians to the Church.

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These two symbols help project a sense of religious affiliation and faith (Gans 1994), but do not require significant amounts of effort. Indeed, the celebrations usually occur once a year and, from personal experience, young Italians attend these events primarily for social rather than religious purposes. Wearing religious artefacts can almost be considered a fashion, as many Italians display pious articles through jewels, car accessories, etc. Consistent with the symbolic ethnicity perspective, these symbols provide a link to an Italian identity while leapfrogging a religious identity.

Cultural symbols

When it comes to clothing, the older generation do not prefer Italian brand names, while the younger generation do. In addition, the young participants' attraction to Italian places was largely driven by the popularity of restaurants and cafes rather than by grocery stores. From an symbolic ethnicity perspective, we can say that older Italians do not feel a need to show off their Italianness through clothing or public places, while the younger participants seem to compensate their weakening Italian identity with visible items reflecting their ethnic background. In this respect, Montreal's Little Italy symbolizes an ideal place where young ones can come in contact with their heritage without having to immerse themselves exclusively in its culture.

The high proportion of people in group C choosing Italian brand names may be due to the fact that this generation is in the target market group of many Italian clothing companies selling their products in North America. In other words, they may be buying more because there is more to buy. Nonetheless, the survey shows that many young Italians feel some kind of ethnic connection when choosing to purchase clothing wear.

Through generations, the cultural behaviour of participants has lost some of its Italian authenticity. We saw that cultural traditions such as sauce- and wine-making, which provide opportunities for intergenerational contacts on an intimate level, are fading out, while occasional celebrations, such as weddings, baptisms, and communions/confirmations, are retained and even augmented as symbols to maintain intergenerational contacts. This characteristic of Italian culture, frequently displayed in films, stands as a popular method to show respect to family members and their friends, even those second- and third-degree relatives. From a symbolic ethnicity perspective, celebrations provide younger Italians with opportunities to connect with their roots without having to rekindle these relations on a daily basis.

Material properties of the home also express symbolic attachment of young people towards their ancestors' identity. As I see in the results, young Italians tend to chuck out their parents' old-fashioned taste in favour of 'trendy' features, some of which still evoke an ethnic background without interfering with the household's layout. Consistent with a symbolic ethnicity, selective choices – such as having an espresso coffee machine or Italy-imported furniture – are made to give the dwelling an Italian sense without having to recreate the familial residence.

Socio-spatial symbols

Despite the sprawling of Italian boundaries in Montreal, some form of ethnic cohesiveness is maintained. The preferences of young Italians to have Italian friends and to live close to them stand out as socio-spatial symbols of their identity. A majority of participants in the second and third generations had a group of friends that were of Italian origin. The outward residential movement of Italians has influenced many other Italians

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to do the same. To a certain extent, it can be said that young Italians imitated the older generations by settling close to other Italians, but they are dispersed over a larger area and settle further away from their parents or grandparents.

While spatial boundaries have expanded, social bonds between Italian peers (i.e. people of same generation) remained strong. From a symbolic ethnicity perspective, this indicates that young Italians tend to keep an Italian identity through their friends rather than through cultural values. Young Italians still want to mingle with other Italians, but at the same time they do not want to be confined to the Italian identity of their ancestors. Friends represent an opportunity to cling to a distant culture without having to (re)learn its basic principles.

4.3 How can the ethnic identity of Italians in Montreal be defined in 2005?

The answer to this question is more complex than it seems, primarily because of the intergenerational differences observed among the participants. Italian identity is undergoing a transition phase, from the old-fashioned identity of the immigrants to the symbolic identity developed by their Canadian-born children. Let us focus on the Italian identity of the third generation.

Ethnic weathering

Through generations, Italians have undergone what I call 'ethnic weathering', defined here as a loss of ethnic authenticity. The responses tend to confirm the initial hypothesis, suggesting that the third generation has developed its own Italian identity, one founded on symbols rather than on cultural values. These symbols expose a person's

affiliation with the group, but limit the need to merge with this group. In this sense, the importance of 'looking Italian' has outweighed the importance of 'being Italian'.

This new identity has allowed Italians to integrate into mainstream society without having to undergo complete assimilation. Through symbols such as TV, Little Italy, or big celebrations, the Italian community has kept ties with its homeland and solidified its position as an established ethnic group in Montreal. This symbolic identity, however, lacks the cultural genuineness of Italians. Cultural values such as family kinship, language and religion, are fading out, some faster than others.

What remains is a vibrant Italian community, but a low level of individual Italian identity among the young ones. Across the Montreal landscape, institutions such as community centres, newspapers and associations symbolize the social accomplishment of this ethnic group. Nevertheless, the third generation struggles to authenticate an ethnic revival with the embracing of antique traditions, preferring the option of a symbolic ethnicity that will not interfere with their achieved lifestyle.

Ethnic revival: the cost of integrating

In his typology on acculturation strategies, J. W. Berry's notion of integration pinpoints the adaptation of Italians in Canada. In his words, "Integration is an orientation within which the culture of origin is maintained but combined with frequent contacts with members of other cultures, i.e. this orientation implies a flexible and competent situational switch between cultural rules, norms and values; it undoubtedly depends on high personal resources and competencies, but provides a double option of access to the culture of the (minority-) society of origin and the (majority-) receiving society" (in Nauck 2001: 468). This concept of integration supports Gans' theory in that it depicts the

conditions that played a role in the rise of symbolic ethnicity. People first integrate in their host country to secure a certain lifestyle before they can return to an ethnic identity embellished by symbols.

In this respect, ethnic revival appears to be more a product of group-based decisions than of individual-based choices (Vallee et al 1971). Why do people maintain some attachment to a faded Italian identity? I argue it is because of the positive image reflected by the Italian community and its successful integration into Canadian society. The notion of group identity is what attracts young Italians to cling to symbols. Evidence presented in this thesis highlight several group-related symbols. Ethnic revival thus seems inappropriate to describe young Italians in Montreal, since they are not reviving an Italian identity but rather changing it into something 'lighter' requiring little effort but expressing a membership to a larger unit.

CONCLUSION

As a third-generation Italian, I have experienced firsthand many of the issues discussed in this thesis. My personal background has been helpful during the fieldwork component of the study. It allowed me to gather participants through the snowball method, which proved to be an effective strategy and yielded high-quality data. My knowledge of Italian opened the door for a more detailed approach and facilitated the interviews conducted with the older generation.

Through the findings, I present some important intergenerational changes that have taken place among the Italian community since the 1950s. A socio-economic upgrade has been a key element in the evolution of Italians as an ethnic group. This upward move in the social scale has smoothed their integration process, and as a result has affected their ethnic identity.

Italian cultural values have undergone what I call 'ethnic weathering', defined here as a loss of ethnic authenticity. Signs of ethnic weathering were observed throughout the study and included new family patterns, loss of linguistic connection to Italy, erosion of religious values, cultural detachment, and socio-spatial amalgamation.

The responses then revealed ways through which young generations keep ties with their ethnic heritage. The upholding of cultural symbols, rather than cultural values, is what Gans refers to as symbolic ethnicity, and this argument stands out in explaining the intergenerational disparities of Italian identity.

The analysis drawn from the interviews exposed a variety of symbols, from having relatives as wedding witnesses to listening to Italian music to owning Italian-made furniture to going to Little Italy. These symbols help project an Italian attachment, but at

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the same time do not require great amount of efforts. They provide opportunities to revive an ethnic background without having to (re)learn its basic principles.

Although the geographical boundaries of Italians have been diluted, social bonds still exists, mainly through socio-spatial symbols. The prevalence of being with other Italians and going to Italian places outshines some form of ethnic cohesiveness among people of Italian origin. These bonds, however, transcend more an intragenerational (rather than an intergenerational) attachment.

The Italian community has become an integral part of the city's ethnic mosaic; it has developed its own institutions, created intricate networks of social relations, and made significant progress along the political and socioeconomic scales. Meanwhile, its younger members seem to have forgotten where they come from. We can say that Italians have lost more than they have preserved. Intergenerational ethnic retention did not significantly contribute to an ethnic revival, but did spark a sense of peoplehood through ethnic symbols.

No major obstacles were encountered in this study, but a few improvements could be added for further research. First, a large proportion of group C (50%) were still relatively young and living with their parents at the time of the interviews. I believe this might have downplayed some of the results, since ethnic revival often surfaces at a later period in adulthood (Gans 1979). New research on this topic should involve only married participants, or at least participants of a certain age group (maybe 30 years or older).

Second, some changes observed among the Italian families in Montreal may also be occurring among Italian families in Italy, and thus are not necessarily a result of a Canadian lifestyle. A more comprehensive study involving empirical work on families

living in Canada and families living in Italy would improve the integrity of the findings. For example, religious values have declined among Italians in Canada, and perhaps this is also occurring among Italians in Italy.

Finally, this thesis scratched the surface of a wide range of possibilities for ethnic studies. Interest for intergenerational issues among immigrants is growing, as governments must find ways to attract and keep immigrants. In this respect and in light of the results found through this research, a few questions regarding Canada's position on immigrant cultures surface to discussion. Despite Canada's multicultural policy, established in 1971 under Prime Minister Pierre E. Trudeau, why are Italians losing their ethnic identity? Is this policy still effective in preserving a multicultural fibre? Must immigrants in Canada choose between discrimination (albeit in more subtle forms) and assimilation? Is the case of Italians unique, or are other groups witnessing the same ethnic weathering?

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APPENDIX A

Supervising Committee: Department of Geography
Dr. Ludger Müller-Wille   McGill University
Dr. Sherry Olson   Burnside Hall
                            805 Sherbrooke Street West
                            Montreal, Qc, H3A 2K6

Subject: Geography Research, McGill University

My name is Lucio De Martinis, and I am completing a Master's Degree (thesis option) at McGill University. Under the supervision of Dr. Ludger Müller-Wille and co-supervision of Dr. Sherry Olson, my research looks at Italian identity in Montreal. More specifically, the objective of my study is to examine how Italian identity changes through generations, and how it affects space.

The purpose of this consent form is to provide you with the necessary information in order for you to make an informed choice as to whether you are willing to participate or not in my research.

In the event that you agree to participate, your role in this matter will consist in answering questions during an interview. The interview will be conducted in French, English or Italian, depending on your choice. You will not be required to write your answers on paper. Rather, the interview will be audio recorded. However, if you do not want the interview to be audio recorded, then I will write down your answers on paper. Questions will investigate everyday actions that have an ethnic connotation. These include language used, family practices, religious and cultural traditions, places visited, etc. You can, for any reason and at any time, refuse to answer certain questions or cancel your participation from the research. The interviews will take place at a location chosen by you. Locations can include public places, dwellings, parks, etc.

Confidentiality in this research is assured. Your personal information (name and address) will not be asked for, and therefore not recorded, during the interview. Each participant will be given a code. I will be the only person who will have access to the data, and who will know the codes associated with each participant. Once the research is completed, the collected data will be kept in my personal archives and nobody will have access to them. The results of the interviews will serve the sole purpose of my research, and will not be used in any other way.

Please sign this informed consent form only if you agree to become a participant for this research and agree to the procedures mentioned above.

Respectfully,

_____

Lucio De Martinis   Tel: (514) 326.3924

MA Candidate, Geography.   Email: lucio.demartinis@mail.mcgill.ca
McGill University

To be completed by the participant:

I have read the consent form and agree to participate in this research: Yes___   No___

I agree to the fact that the interview will be audio recorded: Yes___   No___

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Place: _____

McGill

Research Ethics Board Office
McGill University
845 Sherbrooke Street West
James Administration Bldg., rm 429
Montreal, QC H3A 2T5

Tel: (514) 398-6831
Fax: (514) 398-4853
Ethics website: www.mcgill.ca/rgo/ethics/human

Research Ethics Board I
Certificate of Ethical Acceptability of Research Involving Humans

Project Title: The geography of Italian identity in Montreal: issues of intergenerational ethnic relations

Applicant's Name: Lucio De Martinis   **Department:** Geography

Status: Master's student

Supervisor: Dr. L. Muller-Wille

Granting Agency and Title (if applicable): FQRSC

This project was reviewed on _8 MARCH 2004_ by

Expedited Review ___✓___
Full Review ___

8 MAR 2004

Signature/Date

Catherine Lu, Ph.D.
Acting Chair, REB I

Approval Period: _March 8, 2004_ to _March 7, 2005_

REB File #: 108-0304

cc: Geography Dept.
   Dr. L. Muller-Wille

APPENDIX B

McGill

Supervising Committee: Department of Geography
Dr. Ludger Müller-Wille McGill University
Dr. Sherry Olson Burnside Hall
805 Sherbrooke Street West
Montreal, Qc, H3A 2K6

SUBJECT: QUESTIONNAIRE (ENGLISH VERSION)

Please answer the following questions to the best of your abilities. If you wish not to answer certain questions, you are free to do so. If you wish to stop or cancel your participation, you are free to do so. The answers will be audio recorded or I will write them down on paper. Your name and personal information will not be asked nor required during the interview. Answers will remain confidential. I will be the only person who will have access to the answers. The sole purpose of this questionnaire is to collect data for an academic research and results will not be used for any other purposes.

1.   Gender?
2.   Civil status?
3.   Year of birth?
4.   Place of birth?
5.   How many years have you been living in Montreal?
6.   What is your mother's place of birth?
7.   What is your father's place of birth?
8.   What is your spouse/partner's place of birth (if applicable)?
        8.1 Is your spouse/partner Italian or from Italian origin?
9.   What is your level of education?
10.   Are you currently enrolled in an academic institution?
        If so:
        10.1 Part-time or full-time? At What level?
11.   Are you currently employed?
        If so:
        11.1 Full-time or part-time?
        11.2 In what field do you work?
        11.3 What is your annual income approximately?
            a) 10,000-19,000   b) 20,000-29,000   c) 30,000-39,000
            d) 40,000-49,000   e) 50,000-59,000   f) 60,000-69,000
            g) 70,000 and over
12.   Are you retired?
        If so:
        12.1 In what field did you work?
        12.2 What was your annual income approximately?
            a) 10,000-19,000   b) 20,000-29,000   c) 30,000-39,000
            d) 40,000-49,000   e) 50,000-59,000   f) 60,000-69,000
            g) 70,000 and over
13.   Number of children?
        13.1 At what age did you have your first children?
14.   Number of people living permanently in household (including yourself)?

        If married:
15.   At what age did you get married?
16.   Did you choose a member of your family to be your 'best man' or 'maid of honour'?
17.   Did your spouse choose a member of his/her family to be his/her 'best man' or 'maid

of honour'?

18. Which of the following best describes your situation?
   a) Husband is sole financial provider   d) Wife is main financial provider
   b) Husband is main financial provider   e) Both spouses contribute equally
   c) Wife is sole financial provider

19. During your own childhood, who was generally responsible for your education at home?
   a) Father   b) Mother   c) Both

20. If you have children not living with you, how far do you live from them?
   a) Live in the same block
   b) Live in same borough and within walking distance
   c) Live in same borough but not within walking distance
   d) Live in different borough

21. For first-generation interviewees: can you list a few family traditions that characterize Italians?
22. For second- and third-generation interviewees: do you follow the traditions mentioned above?
23. At what age did you move out of your parents' house?
24. Did you, or will you, live with your parents until marriage?
25. Do you, or did you ever, live in an apartment belonging to your parents?
26. In your opinion, did the concept of family change among italians in Montreal? If so, how?
27. What is your mother tongue?
28. What is the language you know best?
29. What is the second language you know best?
30. On a scale from 1 to 5 (5 being very well), how well do you:
   30.1 Speak Italian?
   30.2 Understand Italian?
   30.3 Read Italian?
   30.4 Write Italian?
31. On a scale from 1 to 5 (5 being very well), how well do you:
   31.1 Speak French?
   31.2 Understand French?
   31.3 Read French?
   31.4 Write French?
32. On a scale from 1 to 5 (5 being very well), how well do you:
   32.1 Speak English?
   32.2 Understand English?
   32.3 Read English?
   32.4 Write English?

What language(s) do you speak with your:
33. Spouse/partner (if applicable)?
34. Children (if applicable)?
35. Mother?
36. Father?
37. Sibblings?
38. Maternal grandmother?
39. Maternal grandfather?
40. Paternal grandmother?
41. Paternal grandfather?
42. Please select, out of the following, all the people with whom you speak Italian fluently:
   a) Father   c) Siblings   e) Spouse   g) Grandchildren   i) Colleagues
   b) Mother   d) Grandparents   f) Children   h) Friends
43. What language(s) do you use the most with your friends?
44. At home, what language do you use the most?
45. Can you list a few places where you go based on the fact that the service is provided in Italian?

How often do you:

46.   Go to Italian places: regularly, occasionally, or rarely?
47.   Listen to Italian music or radio?
48.   Watch Italian TV programs or movies?
49.   Read Italian books or journals?
50.   Browse through Italian websites?
51. Do you speak an Italian dialect or the standard Italian or both?
52. When speaking Italian, do you mix some English or French words with Italian words?
53. In your opinion, is Italian becoming a threatened language in Montreal?
        53.1 If so, what could help preserve it?
54. What religion do you adhere to and practice?
55. On a scale from 1 to 5, how important is religion for you (5 being very important)?
56. In your opinion, how important is religion in keeping an Italian identity?
57. In your opinion, did religion among Italians in Montreal change over the years? How?
58. Do you attend church?
        58.1 How often: regularly, occasionally, or rarely?
59. Do you attend or participate in religious ceremonies, feasts, gatherings, etc.?
        59.1 Which ones?
        59.2 How often: regularly, occasionally, or rarely?
60. Do you have religious items in your house?
61. Do you wear jewelry with religious connotation?
62. In your opinion, what is the role of the priest in the community?
63. Do you or a family member produce home-made Italian products?
        63.1 Which products?
        63.2
        What is your level of involvement: active, moderately, not involved anymore, not involved?
        63.3 Why?
        63.4 If you are not involved now, will you continue these traditions in the future?
64. When grocery shopping, do you prefer things that are 'Italian'?
65. At home, do you prefer cooking Italian dishes?
66. When shopping for clothing, do you prefer buying clothes reflecting an Italian identity?
        66.1 If so, is this because you are of Italian origin?
67. Can you list a few commercial places that provide you with a connection to the Italian culture?
68. What is your opinion on the 'bigness' of Italian festivities, such as weddings, baptisms and communions/confirmations?
69. If married, was your wedding event a 'big' celebration?
70. For first-generation interviewees: can you list a few interior and exterior items of your own house that would likely be found in another Italian house?

For second- and third-generation interviewees:

71.   What are some features, interior and exterior, of a typical Italian house?"
72.   Of your own dwelling, can you list some features you believe are representative of an Italian identity
73. Do you own or rent your dwelling?
74. Do you have a family member working in the construction business?
75. In your opinion, is Italian culture disappearing in Montreal?
        75.1 If so, what could help prevent that?

If you were born outside of Canada:

76.   Do you have a Canadian citizenship? Why or why not?
77.   Did you keep the citizenship of your birth country? Why or why not?
78.   At what age did you migrate to Canada?
79.   Where did you migrate from?
80.   Did you migrate with your parents?

81.   Did you or your parents know somebody in Canada before migrating?
82.   If so, were these people relatives, friends, etc.?
83.   What were the main reasons for moving in Montreal?
84. Can you name the place – a country, region, city, or village – towards which you feel the strongest attachment?
85. What do you consider yourself to be: Italian, Canadian, Canadian-Italian or other?
86. Are you part of any Italian association or club or social group?
87. Where did you first settle when you arrived in Montreal? Why?
88. In which borough do you live now? Why?
89. Do you, or did you, work close to your home?
90. Do you, or did you, work for an Italian employer?
91. Are, or were, your co-workers predominantly Italian?
92. Do you, or did you, prefer working with Italians?
93. Are most of your friends of Italian origin?
94. In your opinion, is the young generation of Italian origin losing its Italian identity?
     94.1 If so, what makes you believe this?
95. Do you prefer going to places that have an Italian sense to them?