THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

FAMILY, HONOUR AND DESTINY: SOUTHERN ITALIAN IMMIGRANTS IN CALGARY, 1910-1990

BY

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE

DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

CALGARY, ALBERTA

APRIL, 1991

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ISBN 0-315-66845-8

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled, "Family, Honour and Destiny: Southern Italian Immigrants in Calgary 1910-1990", submitted by Antonella Fanella in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

Canada was the primary destination for many Italian emigrants after World War Two. During the 1950s and the 1960s large numbers of Italian immigrants, the majority from southern Italy, settled in various Canadian cities. This massive immigration has made the Italians the fourth largest ethnic group in Canada. Despite the large numbers, historians have paid little attention to the Italian migration. Scholars have only recently begun to express an interest in Italian immigrants, concentrating their research efforts in eastern Canada. They have virtually ignored Italian settlements in the western provinces.

Based on oral interviews, this thesis examines the migration experience of southern Italians who came to Calgary after the Second World War. As a case study, it goes beyond the causes and consequences of immigration; rather the focus is how the "Old World" culture of this conservative, rural group was transformed in an urban, industrial and often hostile, environment.

The post-war Italian migration experience was unique in many aspects. Regional poverty, along with the political, social and economic upheavals of the war and the chaotic post-war period, not only heightened the desire for emigration but also manifested profound effects on the ways in which the group adjusted to life in the new country. The migrants brought with them to Canada, a specific traditional culture (*la via vecchia*, "the old ways") that was related to their home communities. As they settled in Calgary, they began to alter and restructure their traditional value system in order to accommodate themselves to their new environment. These changes, examined over two generations, reveal that the first (immigrant) generation has managed to

retain much of its traditional culture and pass it on, in part, to the second generation. Urbanization, industrialization and the spread of mass culture did not destroy all of *la via vecchia*. Rather, it combined with aspects of the Canadian world to produce a new and vibrant Italo-Canadian culture. Through immigration then, Canada has become, in some ways, an extension of the old peasant world, but more importantly it has also served as the seedbed for the rise of the new.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are numerous individuals who contributed invaluably to the completion of this thesis. First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Herman Ganzevoort for his constant support, encouragement and advice; often beyond the call of duty. His dedicated supervision helped to sustain me through the difficult times. A note of thanks must also go to Dr. Howard Palmer, Dr. Holger Herwig, Dr. Valeria Sestieri-Lee of the University of Calgary and Dr. Gianfausto Rosoli of Centro Studi Emigrazione in Rome, Italy for their assistance.

To the individuals whom I interviewed and who allowed me to pry into their past, I am indeed grateful. I enjoyed their company and I thank them for sharing their thoughts and memories with me. My research would not have been possible without their cooperation.

My years at the University of Calgary have been happy and enjoyable, thanks in part to my fellow graduate students who were always willing to lend a helping hand. I also owe a debt of gratitude to the office staff of the History Department for their kindness and patience.

Most importantly, I would like to thank my family, especially my relatives in Italy for their generous hospitality while I did research there. A very special thank you must go to my brother Nick who contributed the maps and graph and who spent many hours proofreading the thesis.

Finally, I dedicate this thesis to my parents, Maria Difilippo and Giuseppe Umberto Fanella. They taught my to be proud of my Italian heritage and gave unstintingly of their love, support and encouragement. Like countless other immigrants, they left their homeland, made many sacrifices to give their children a better life and asked for little but love and respect.

With this work I hope to honour them and all the others who left the old ways for the new.

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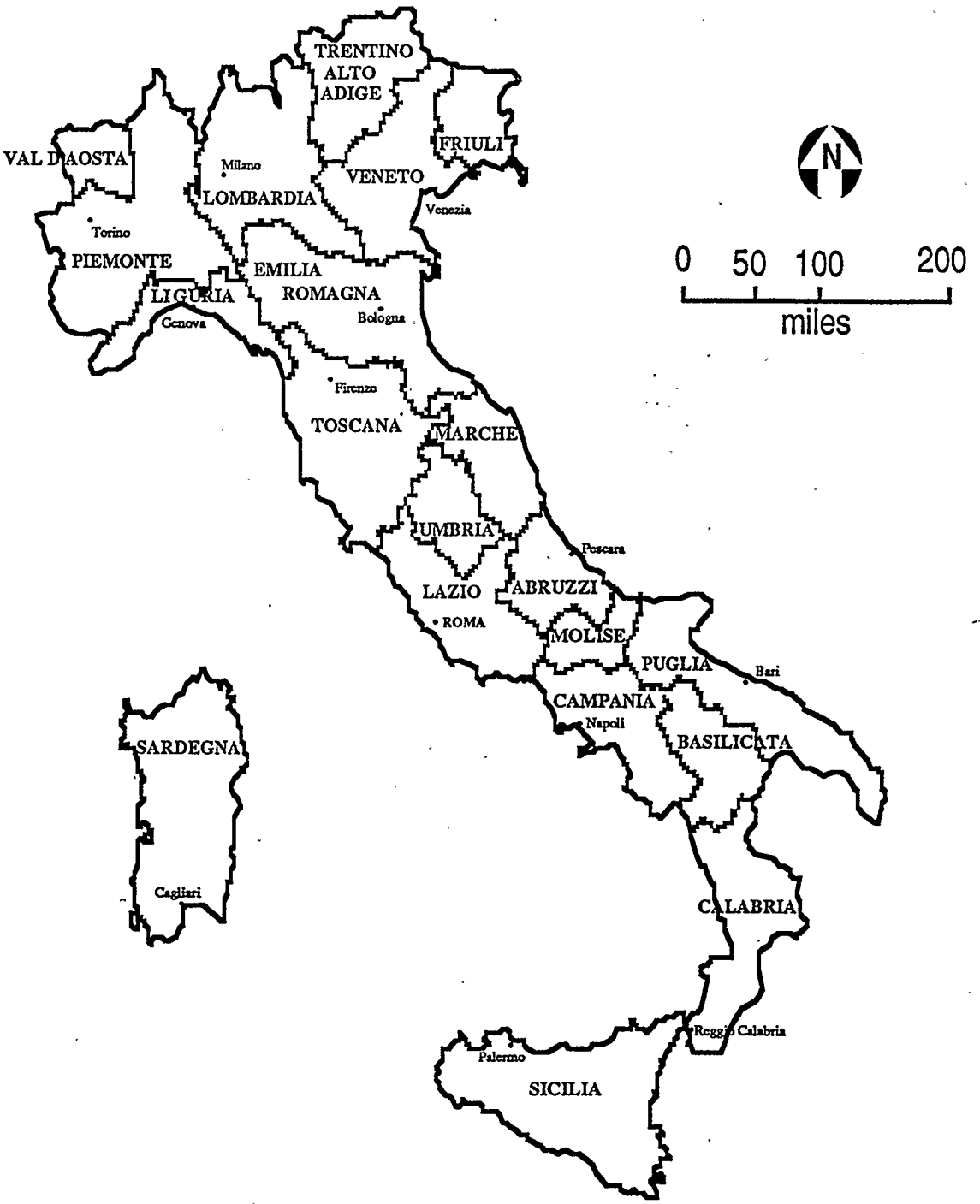
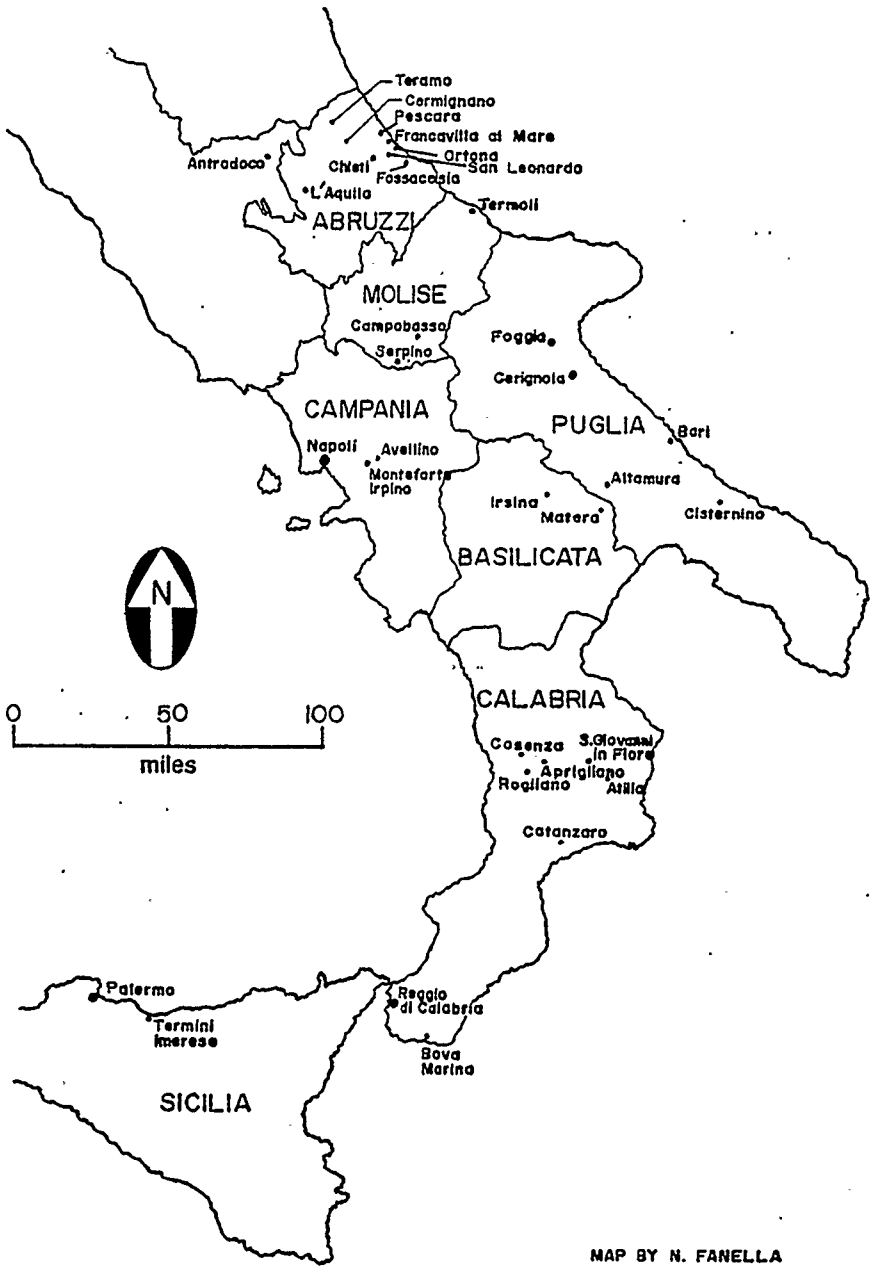
ITALY



MAP BY N. FANELLA

SOUTHERN ITALY
(IL MEZZOGIORNO)



MAP BY N. FANELLA

INTRODUCTION

> Undoubtedly the best source for the study of the cluster of motives which led to the decision to migrate and for the recording the details of the crossing is the immigrant himself. Passing through political jurisdictions, often clandestinely or anonymously, immigrants alone had a total view of their historical path from the country of origin to arrival in the New World.[1]

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the migration experience of southern Italians who came to Calgary after the Second World War. As a case study, it goes beyond the general treatment of causes and consequences of immigration; rather, the focus is on the ways in which the group's "Old World" cultural traits were transformed and altered as they encountered an urban, industrial and, at times, hostile environment.

The majority of southern Italians who immigrated to Canada after the Second World War were of peasant or working class origin. Most came from small, rural towns or tiny villages, which had been plagued by poverty and other economic difficulties. As they settled in the various districts of Calgary, they began to alter and restructure their traditional value system in order to accommodate themselves to the new environment. These changes are examined over two generations. The first (immigrant) generation has managed, despite the stresses and strains of the immigration process, to successfully retain much of their traditional culture and pass it, in part, on to their children. It is evident that urbanization, accompanied by acculturation and the spread of mass culture, did not destroy the specific aspects of their old world culture.

Research for this thesis is based on in-depth interviews with a selection of Italian immigrants, the majority of whom emigrated to Calgary between

1953 and 1968. In addition to oral testimony, standard historical sources including government documents, published and unpublished materials were utilized. As well, the author visited southern Italy in the spring of 1989. A total of 49 interviews were used, of which thirty-one were personally conducted by the author. The remainder were obtained from the Calgary Italian Club and the Glenbow Museum. The migrants were chosen at random. The author began with those she knew personally, they then suggested other possible informants.

The interviews were recorded on tape or in written accounts if the informant did not feel comfortable having the conversation recorded. Well over half of the interviews were conducted with southern Italian immigrants, primarily from the regions of Abruzzi and Calabria since these two groups make up a substantial percentage of Calgary's Italian community. However, the author also interviewed a number of individuals from northern Italy for a contrasting perspective.[2]

The interviews were designed to document the lives of the immigrants and to elicit their attitudes, opinions and perceptions. Questions during the interview session focused on specific issues such as reasons for emigration, family, settlement and employment patterns and community involvement. For the most part, the interviews encouraged open-ended discussion as opposed to highly directed question/answer sessions. The object of the interviews was to present as clearly as possible the immigrant perspective which often differs from the scholarly view.

Use of the oral history method was necessitated by the fact that there are no first generation written sources (e.g. diaries, manuscripts) dealing with the Italians in Calgary due to the high illiteracy rate among this group. As well, there are very few sources that deal specifically with Italians in Calgary

or in western Canada. By contrast, there is an abundance of secondary sources on the Italian communities of eastern Canada. While these studies are useful for comparative purposes, the experiences of Italians in the older, larger and more established "Little Italies" of Toronto and Montreal do not necessarily parallel those of Italians in a smaller, younger community such as the one which exists in Calgary.

Until recently, historians have not willingly accepted oral testimony as a legitimate source for the study of history. They object to research based on the frailty of human memory; preferring instead the use of hard data. Yet, while archives, city directories, payroll records and government documents are desirable in compiling the facts of ethnic history, they do not reveal much about the immigrant as a human being. They say nothing about the migrants' values and concerns nor their emotional and psychological experiences. To obtain this information one must go to the source:

> Oral testimony can elicit the perspectives of personal and group history, of identity, and of response to immigrant life which shape that invention and cause ethnic persistence. The record of this gradual altering of identity and culture forms the interior history of immigrant groups; it is ethnicity and it is especially accessible through interviewing.[3]

Oral history is the method that works best in studying immigrant culture, especially if the migrants come from a background where the oral tradition is used to transfer knowledge. However, it should be clearly stated that the purpose of oral history is not the preservation of folklore or nostalgic recollections, "but for comprehending the inter-relationship of the North American reality, old world culture, and the immigrant's system of choices in

ethnic maintenance".[4] Oral testimony, conducted in a proper and scholarly manner, has its place in historical research.

There are of course, disadvantages to the oral history method. The nature of oral history is such that it requires personal involvement. Therefore, only those who felt comfortable with the author and trusted her could serve as informants. The required intimacy, coupled with time restraints, resulted in a small sample. For this reason, it should be stressed that the findings in this thesis pertain directly to the sample group and while suggestive of broader trends, should not be interpreted as representative of all Italian immigrants in Calgary.

One of the common obstacles faced by researchers is judging the accuracy of the information derived from the interviews. It does not appear that the informants deliberately tried to deceive or mislead the author. The human mind can be fragile and memories are not always clear; time heals and distorts. What was once quite painful slowly becomes less so. In interpreting the interviews, the author took into account the selective perception of memory, as well as individual biases and prejudices. Another difficulty with oral testimony is in determining whether informants are concealing their true feelings in an effort to tell the researcher what they think he or she wants to hear. To compensate for this, the author involved herself in the life of the community as a participant observer attending various social functions as well as private gatherings in the homes of the migrants.

Although Italian settlers began arriving in Canada before the end of the eighteenth century, it was not until after World War Two that Canada became a primary destination for Italian emigrants. During the 1950s and 1960s, large numbers of Italian immigrants, the majority of them from

southern Italy, arrived in Canada seeking prosperity and a higher standard of living. At present, Italians are the fourth largest ethnic group in Canada after the British, French and Germans.[5] Despite the large numbers, little attention has been paid to Italian immigrants in Canada. Scholars have only recently begun to show an interest in the Italian immigration and have concentrated their research efforts in eastern Canada, primarily the province of Ontario where 64 percent of Canada's Italian immigrants live.[6]

Much of the research on Italian immigrants, both past and present, is inter-disciplinary, though it is clear that the subject has been more popular among some disciplines than others. In the mid-1970s, the historian Robert Harney, in an article entitled, Frozen Wastes: The State of Italian Canadian Studies, observed that "the study of immigration and ethnicity still seems to fall more to social workers, sociologists, and anthropologists than to historians. A vague lurking sense remains that to be immigrant or ethnic is to be a social problem".[7] Harney blamed the dilapidated state of Italian Canadian studies on the structure of Canadian university history departments which, at that time, focused on parliamentary history and political biography. There was little interest in studying the urban immigrant experience. According to Harney, "this predilection for political history combines with the fact that the country's historians are chiefly recruited from the founding races and from the middle and upper classes. To my knowledge there is only one Canadian born historian of Italian descent in a major university department".[8]

Largely due to Harney's efforts, Italian immigration history has blossomed and a number of historians of Italian descent have emerged as prominent academics.[9] While the current literature on Italian immigration is extensive and encompasses a variety of themes, there remains a need for

further studies. There still is, for example, only one historical survey on Italians in Canada. Much has been written on the Italian communities of the pre-war period but research on the post-World War Two communities is just beginning. Literature that concentrates on the Italian immigrant family and Italo-Canadian culture is limited, though significant studies have been done by researchers including anthropologist Jeremy Boissevain, sociologist Clifford Jansen and the historian Franc Sturino. These works, however, focus on the larger Italian settlements of Montreal and Toronto.

One theme in Italian Canadian studies which has not been systematically analyzed is the way in which immigrants make the adjustment from the old society to the new world environment. Immigrants arrive at destination with more than their clothing and household goods. They also bring with them a specific traditional culture that is related to the lifestyle of their home communities. For years, social historians have debated the effects that the migratory process has had on the immigrants "Old World" cultural traits. The American historian, Oscar Handlin, in his work, The Uprooted, described the migratory process as being essentially destructive to immigrant culture, especially the family unit. He wrote, "the history of immigration is a history of alienation and its consequences".[10] Handlin argued that the first generation, separated from familiar surroundings, lived in isolation and eventually became alienated from both societies. The second generation abandoned the culture of their parents and quickly assimilated.[11]

Handlin's view was challenged by Rudolph Vecoli in his 1964 study entitled, Contadini in Chicago: A Critique of the Uprooted. Vecoli criticised Handlin's study on the basis that "it fails to respect the unique cultural attributes of the many and varied ethnic groups which sent immigrants to the United States".[12] Using research gathered on Chicago's southern Italian

community, Vecoli concluded that the immigrants' past traditions survived remarkably well in the new world:

> The social character of the south Italian peasant did not undergo a sea change, and the very nature of their adjustments to American society was dictated by their "Old World traits", which were not so much ballast to be jettisoned once they set foot on American soil. These traits and customs were the very bone and sinew of the south Italian character which proved very resistant to change even under the stress of emigration.[13]

Much of the subsequent literature on Italians in the United States reinforced Vecoli's view. Numerous micro-studies on the Italian communities of various American cities revealed that the immigrant generation did manage to retain much of its old world culture while adjusting to life in America. The immigration process did not destroy the immigrant's culture; rather it allowed the continuation of a life that centered on family, honour and tradition.[14]

Contrary to Handlin's view, the second generation did not (with the odd exception), repudiate their parents' culture, although they certainly retained much less of it. The American literature also suggested that as second generation Italo-Americans moved out of the inner-city "Little Italies" and as they became upwardly mobile, there was an inevitable loss of ethnicity which eventually led to assimilation. The studies cited a decline in the use of the Italian language, increased inter-marriage with non-Italians and higher education as evidence of acculturation among the second generation. Strong family ties, however, remained a major component of their culture.[15]

The 'transplantation' model was adopted and expanded by Robert Harney in Canada. Harney did not see the migratory process as destructive to

immigrant culture. Yet, neither did he believe that immigrant culture survived intact in the North American environment. Rather than merely 'uprooting' and 'transplanting' cultural traits, Harney argued that immigrants play an active role in their transformation from rural peasants to urban workers. In his examination of Canada's pre-World War Two Italian communities, Harney theorized that in constructing their new social world, immigrants take the best aspects of their rural past and combine it with the best aspects of the urban, industrialized present to form a unique, third culture. "What emerges is neither an Italian nor a Canadian entity, but an 'Italo-Canadian' one...because this emergent entity is sufficiently consonant with the culture of the host society, it proves to be tenaciously durable".[16] Research gathered on the southern Italian community of Calgary supports Harney's view of the transplantation model.

All immigrants bring to their new homelands, the customs, values and beliefs of the old. Certain fundamental elements of culture (termed core values), are important for maintaining an ethnic group's identity as well as ensuring its cultural and social continuity.[17] It is unrealistic therefore to expect migrants to abandon a lifetime of training simply because they change countries. An individual's relationship to his roots is very strong. Yet, while many immigrants may still largely function according to the beliefs and values of the homeland, they find it impossible to avoid the influences of the North American environment. Initially, the migrants' culture remains intact. As they become integrated into the host society, they begin to modify their core value system. Those aspects of their culture which they choose to retain are altered and adapted to the new environment. What the migrant cannot use is discarded. In the same way, migrants select and adopt from the host society those cultural elements which they regard as acceptable and

desirable and incorporate them into their way of life.[18] Once this process is complete, immigrants "no longer represent the societies from which they originated in terms of culture, values and behaviors, even if they have not fully accepted those of the host society".[19]

In order to assess and fully understand this change it is important to examine the origins of the immigrants' social value system. The pre-migratory experience plays an important role in the construction of the migrant's new identity. Chapter One therefore, deals with the development of the southern Italian's culture from a historical perspective and in its original context. Southern Italian culture developed in response to the turbulent social, economic and political conditions which plagued much of southern Italy throughout its history. Chapter One emphasizes the ways in which the southern Italians' social value system helped them deal with their surroundings. Their traditions provided the only stability in an otherwise volatile society.

Rudolph Bell, in his study of four Italian peasant villages, identified the four elements which captured the essence of the peasants' response to life: fate (or destiny), honour, family and *campanilismo* (local patriotism).[20] These elements formed the basis of the peasant's social value system. They influenced his way of thinking and his view of the world. Such perceptions may very well disagree with "fact" but this is the world as they see it. It is within this framework of traditional patterns of thought and behaviour that the southern Italians adjusted to life in Canada.

Chapter Two reconstructs the Italian Community of Calgary from its origins in 1910 to its present-day state. It examines the period of transition and explores the ways in which these conservative, agrarian migrants adapted to a modern, industrialized society. The Italians in Calgary confronted the usual

problems experienced by immigrants elsewhere. The disruption of family ties, employment and financial difficulties, as well as prejudice and discrimination from the host society, ensured that the transition from the old world to the new was not without conflict and stress. Despite the hardships, or perhaps because of them, their old world culture survived.

Chapter Three documents and interprets the lives of the migrants and the transition they have made from Italy to Canada. It centers on the four hallmarks of Italo-Canadian culture: tradition, family, honour and *campanilismo*. These hallmarks categorize the migrants' world and life view and are examined individually although all are inter-related. Chapter Three also examines culture retention among the second generation.

This is a study of a courageous, determined people who left their homeland for a chance to better their lot in life. They accepted the challenges offered by Canadian society and succeeded. Yet, while they fulfilled their dreams and ambitions, they did not let go of their "old world" ways. For these post-war migrants, the transition has been painful but successful.

NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

[1]Robert Harney, Oral Testimony and Ethnic Studies, (Toronto: The Multicultural History Society of Ontario, n.d.), p.1.

[2]For an example of the methodological framework similar to the one that was used in this thesis see Franc Sturino, "Family and Kin Cohesion among South Italian Immigrants in Toronto", Betty Boyd Caroli, Robert F. Harney and Lydio F. Tomasi (eds.), The Italian Immigrant Woman in North America, (Toronto: The Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1978), p.289. See also Donna Mavis Minions, "Three Worlds of Greek-Canadian Women: A Study of Migrant Greek Women in Calgary, Alberta", Unpublished MA Thesis, University of Calgary, 1984, p.4.

[3]Harney, Oral Testimony and Ethnic Studies, p.1.

[4]Ibid., p.3.

[5]In 1981, there were 747,970 Italians in Canada. Census of Canada, 1981.

[6]Clifford J. Jansen, Fact-book on Italians in Canada, 2nd. ed., (Toronto: Institute for Social Research, York University, 1987), p.2.

[7]Robert F. Harney, "Frozen Wastes: The State of Italian Canadian Studies", S.M. Tomasi (ed.), Perspectives in Italian Immigration and Ethnicity, (New York: Center For Migration Studies, 1977), p.120.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Kenneth Bagnell, Canadese: A Portrait of the Italian Canadians, (Toronto: Macmillan, 1989), p.200.

[10]Oscar Handlin, The Uprooted, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1951), p.4.

[11]See Sturino, "Family and Kin Cohesion", p.290.

[12]Rudolph J. Vecoli, "Contadini in Chicago: A Critique of the Uprooted", American Journal of History, S1 (December 1964): 404.

[13]Ibid., p.417.

[14]See for example, William M. De Marco, Ethnics and Enclaves: Boston's Italian North End, (Ann Arbour: UMI Research Press, 1981); Deanna

Paoli-Gumina, The Italians of San Francisco/Gli Italiani di San Francisco 1850-1930, Bilingual Edition, (New York: Center For Migration Studies, 1978) and Virginia Yans-McLaughlin, Family and Community: Italian Immigrants in Buffalo, 1880-1930, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977).

[15]See Andrew Rolle, The Italian Americans: Troubled Roots, (New York: Macmillan, 1980); Joseph Giordano, "Ethnicity, Social Class and Mental Health", S.M. Tomasi (ed.), Perspectives in Italian Immigration and Ethnicity, (New York: Center For Migration Studies, 1977), pp.7-12; Frank Arricale, "Italian Americans and Myths", S.M. Tomasi (ed.), Perspectives in Italian Immigration and Ethnicity, (New York: Center For Migration Studies, 1977), pp.15-18; Robert F. Harney, "The Italian Experience in the United States", Italians in North America, (Toronto: The Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1979), p.16. See also Leonard Dinnerstein and David M. Reimers, Ethnic Americans, (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1975), Chapter Eight.

[16]Sturino, "Family and Kin Cohesion", p.291. See also Robert F. Harney, "Chiaroscuro: Italians in Toronto, 1885-1915", Polyphony Vol.6, No.1 (Spring/Summer 1984): 44-49.

[17]J.J. Smolicz, "Tradition, Core Values and Intercultural Development. A Humanistic Perspective on Cultural Change with Reference to Australia and Ethnically Plural Societies", Studi Emigrazione, no.90 (Giugno 1988): 221.

[18]Ibid., p.217.

[19]Clifford J. Jansen, Italians in a Multicultural Canada, (Queenston: Mellen Press, 1988), p.11.

[20]Rudolph M. Bell, Fate and Honor, Family and Village: Demographic and Cultural Change in Rural Italy since 1800, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), p.1.

CHAPTER ONE

This is the World

Questo è il mondo e questa è la vita
This is the world and this is life.

Italy as a nation-state is relatively new, having resulted from an amalgamation of small and often warring states dominated by various foreign powers. Political unification took place in 1861 but for many years the process was socially and culturally incomplete. Italy was a country of great social and economic disparities. Until well into the twentieth century, a small elite enjoyed immense wealth while a large stratum of society lived in varying degrees of poverty. A visible class structure was clearly delineated by differences in dress, housing, educational levels, and most importantly, ideology. The social antagonisms between the classes were deeply rooted and resistant to change and there were many barriers to social advancement and little social interaction between the classes.[1]

Class antagonisms were compounded by regional hostility. History had sown the seeds of conflict and misapprehensions among Italians of different regional extraction. French, Spanish and German rule as well as the geographic isolation of many towns and villages, produced variations in custom, tradition and language. Regional differences were so strong that Italians (particularly in the south) had a local rather than a national outlook. They tended to identify themselves in terms of *paese* (town), *provincia* (province), and *regione* (region). Hence, they were *Cerignoliani, Napoletani* or *Calabresi* before they were *Italiani.* [2]

The sharpest regional conflict was, however, between north and south Italy. Scholars of Italian history often refer to the "two Italies": the prosperous, progressive and industrial north, and the backward, impoverished, agricultural south (*il mezzogiorno* or *il meridione*).[3] Although each region of the peninsula was at a different stage of economic development, the north was, in general, at a higher level. By contrast, the *mezzogiorno* was largely agricultural with most of the inhabitants living at less than a subsistence level. Although the majority of southern Italians were poor, not all of them were peasants (*contadini*). Nor were all *contadini* southerners. Just as *contadini* were found in the northern mountain valleys of Piemonte, Veneto and Friuli, upper classes and the nobility could be found in the *mezzogiorno*. *Contadini,* however, were overwhelmingly concentrated in the *mezzogiorno* due to the area's overpopulation and the population's almost exclusive involvement in agriculture.[4]

The term *contadino* is used here in two senses. Primarily it is used to describe an occupation. *Contadino* refers to those who work and own land of their own, distinguishing them from day-labourers (*giornalieri* or *braccianti*) who do not own the land they work. *Contadini* also refers to a social class which includes all those who preform manual labour and whose very livelihood is tied to the land (whether or not they own the land). This separates them from the artisan class (*artigiani*) and the well-to-do (*benestante*). [5]

Contadini held the lowest status in the prestige and power structure of southern Italy's rigidly stratified society. Receiving no benefits or protection from the political and the social system, *contadini* learned to rely on themselves, developing their own unwritten laws and codes of behavior. In the southern Italian ethos, manual labour, especially labour on the land, was

considered degrading and in southern Italian culture, the word *contadino* is synonymous with *cafone* (boor) implying that one is coarse, ill-mannered and ill-bred.[6] Stereotyped by the other classes as stupid and lazy, they were in reality, a smart, shrewd people who readily made the necessary sacrifices to survive.[7] The *contadini* believed they were born destined to a life of hard work and misery (*la miseria*). They viewed the world as a cruel place where one had to be constantly on one's guard. As a result *contadini* were cautious and pragmatic. Life's mysteries and injustices were blamed on fate (*destino* or *fortuna*). It was fate which caused one man to be rich while another was poor, or one man to be healthy while another was sickly.[8]

In response to centuries of oppression, exploitation and poverty, the *contadini* developed a system of core values, beliefs and traditions that affected all aspects of their lives. Once this value system (referred to as *la via vecchia*, "the old ways") became embedded in their culture, it remained firmly intact. Under this system the *contadino's* first loyalty was to *la famiglia* (the family). "In a basically traditional society that had yet to witness effective intervention and encapsulation by the modern state, and subsequent individualization, people first of all acted as members of corporate families, the basic building blocks of the community."[9] The demands and needs of *la famiglia* came before all else. Individual members of *la famiglia* were expected to maintain its welfare while protecting its honour. Those outside of the family, *gli estranei* (outsiders) were viewed with suspicion. The volatile nature of southern Italian society was such that the only defense against disaster was family loyalty. Since they were potential competitors, *estranei* were also potential enemies and had to be kept at a distance.[10] Secondary to family loyalty was loyalty to one's native town or village. While this attachment, (termed *campanilismo*) did not necessarily imply community

cohesion, it did manifest itself quite prominently among southern Italian emigrants.[11]

The regional disparity between northern and southern Italy was rooted in the economic, political and social history of the peninsula. The *mezzogiorno* was not always underdeveloped. In classical times, it was the most advanced part of the peninsula. The Roman and Greek city states of the mainland (*Magna Graecia*) and Sicily, were in the forefront of civilization and were important economic and cultural centers. But as the centuries passed, the *mezzogiorno* (mostly under Spanish domination) fell back into the slower pace of the Mediterranean way of life. By contrast the north turned towards Western continental Europe and played an important role in the mainstream of European progress.[12]

The geography and climate of the *mezzogiorno* also played an important role in its development and was partially responsible for the poverty of the inhabitants. The economic development of the Abruzzo-Molise, for example, was hindered by its rugged, mountainous terrain and the frequent earthquakes, hailstorms and heavy rains. In Calabria, the terrain (composed mainly of limestone with some clay), lack of rainfall and high elevations proved unsuitable for the cultivation of herbaceous crops.[13] The high barren hills and the lack of large plains in many regions prevented mechanization while encouraging "traditional, labour-intensive farming techniques that relied upon an ox or cow, a few simple tools and brute strength".[14] Many areas suffered from poor irrigation and soil erosion, a result of hot, dry summers and heavy winter rains. While in some areas like Puglia, it was possible to successfully grow tobacco, fruit, olives, almonds and grapes, most areas concentrated on farming wheat and other grain crops. Although wheat production was not well suited to many regions, it was a

popular crop because it was cheaper to grow than other products and it did not require constant attention.[15]

At the heart of the poverty and backwardness of the *mezzogiorno* however, lay a persistent feudal system in which political power and social influence were based on a hereditary possession of land. Land ownership was strongly correlated with social prestige. In the final years of the feudal period (toward the end of the eighteenth century) almost all of the available land was owned by the nobility and the Roman Catholic Church. The landless *contadini* possessed little leverage in their dealings with the landlords. They were subject to short-term lease agreements and could be easily evicted. Their tenuous position did not enable them to make the substantial capital investments that were required to improve the quality of their yields. In addition, *contadini* were constantly in debt which, when combined with the relentless taxation, often lead to bankruptcy.[16]

Throughout the *mezzogiorno, contadini* lived in misery. They languished in hunger, disease and exhaustion. Everyone in the household worked to the limits of their energy not only to satisfy their own minimal needs but also to support the entire superstructure of aristocracy and clergymen. If the *contadino* failed to meet his obligations, his meager possessions were seized and sold.[17] The upper classes manipulated the municipalities to their personal advantage. The *baroni* (barons) bribed royal officials and expropriated land. As well, the upper classes felt free to abuse, humiliate and physically punish the *contadini:*

> ...in addition to the old "royal rights" of the lord, which in the course of centuries had been expanded to included absolute ownership of peasant holdings and communal lands...there were also the "personal rights". These included a great variety of

> privileges that went all the way from the right to the best fruit...to the famous right of the first night.[18]

The Catholic church was a corrupt institution, insensitive to the sufferings of the peasantry.[19] Not surprisingly, the majority of the *contadini* were strongly anti-clerical. Their religious rituals were more pagan than Christian:

> Magic, not religion, pervaded their everyday existence; through the use of rituals, symbols and charms, they sought to ward off evil spirits and to gain the favor of powerful deities. To the peasants, God was a distant, unapproachable being, like the King, but the local saints and Madonnas were real personages whose power had been attested to by innumerable miracles.[20]

The relationship between the *contadini* and the saints and Madonnas was based on mutual interest and took the form of bargaining. A woman whose pregnancy was in trouble might vow to *Sant'Antonio* to name the baby for him, if he allowed her child to arrive safely. Saints were popular because they represented decent, honourable people who had suffered tremendously while on earth. The clergy, on the other hand, were generally thought of as sanctimonious hypocrites. "For the Church, which they had known as an oppressive landlord, they had little reverence; and for the clergy, whom they knew to be immoral and greedy, they had little respect. They knew little of and cared less for the doctrines of the church".[21]

The use of magic and pagan symbols held popular appeal for a group of people who believed that their world was predetermined and was independent of man's free will. A popular charm among the *contadini* was the *corno* (a goat's horn initially made of coral but later made of gold). The *corno* was carried as protection against the dreaded *malocchio* (evil eye) that a

jealous rival might inflict.[22] Since they lacked the leadership, the legal support, the education and the moral strength to change their surroundings, they accepted the existing order of things as not only given, but also unalterable. They resigned themselves to the notion that their fate had been decided at their birth. It was their *destino* to suffer.[23]

Yet, ironically enough, their common state of constant oppression failed to unite the *contadini*. Unfortunately, *campanilismo* did not translate into a strong sense of civic responsibility or sacrifice for the common welfare. Each person was expected to look after his interests and those of his family. Envy, jealousy and distrust typified the attitudes toward those outside of the family. While *parenti* (blood relatives) could occasionally be trusted, *estranei* never deserved such confidence. A favourite proverb states; *fidarsi è bene ma non fidarsi è meglio* (to trust is good, but not to trust is better). This sentiment was a serious obstacle to any form of cooperation among the *contadini*:

> ...at the least provocation they struck out against one another and applied to each other criteria of treatment analogous to those applied against them by their superiors...The peasants learned to play among themselves the game of the wolf and the lamb; and so it was that they turned to making all manner of prestige gradations within their own estate. Those who possessed even a small "*fazzoletto*" (handkerchief) of land were superior to those who did not...those whose strips of land were situated near the village were more important than those whose land was farther away. Those who were on amicable terms with the landlords were superior to those who were not.[24]

The rule of the Bourbons in the early part of the nineteenth century began a new era in the history of southern Italy. The abolition of feudalism in 1806 sparked a strong hope among the *contadini* who believed they would

receive land of their own. The city states had agreed to divide their land into lots and grant them to the poor. However the landed classes resisted and under the Bourbons the lands were distributed unevenly.[25] Peasant families received plots of land that were too small (.83 to 1.5 hectares maximum) to be farmed economically and encouraged parcelization.[26] As the *contadini* lacked the necessary capital to properly cultivate the land and turn a profit, their plots were seized for failure to pay taxes and sold to creditors. The *contadino's* disillusionment soon turned to rage as the bulk of the lands fell into the hands of the *galantuomini* (new middle class) who purchased property as it became available in the open market.[27]

The abolition of feudalism curtailed the wealth and power of the *baroni* and saw the emergence of the *galantuomini* as the dominant social class. The *galantuomini* were made up of merchants, administrators, money lenders and commodity speculators and, since they were more visible than the *baroni* (who were largely absentee landlords), they were blamed by the *contadini* for the latter's deteriorating living conditions. "This was particularly the case given that feudal obligations such as tithes remained fixed, whereas the rampant economic inflation of the eighteenth century made renewable mortgages and contracts all the more onerous".[28]

In general the abolition of feudalism failed to improve the standard of living for the *contadini*. They worked every single day of the year and, provided they were in good health and it had been a good year, barely managed to produce the basic necessities of life after the landlord had been paid.[29] If the excessively high cost of living and heavy system of indirect taxation were not enough, *contadini* also had to contend with malaria, blight, hailstorms or earthquakes; all of which could cripple them physically and economically:

> Phylloxera (*fillossera*), the dreaded grapevine blight, spelled ruin for many vinegrowers of the Puglia, but it also cut off the seasonal cash income of migrant workers from the Abruzzi and Molise. It meant in turn an inability to raise money for property taxes, seed costs, mortgages and dowries...[30]

By the middle of the nineteenth century, southern Italy was in a dreadful economic and social state. Many areas had vast masses of sickly, demoralized peasants living in wretched conditions. Their homes were "strange entanglements of hovels and caverns built on hills and mountain tops with little connection to one another, often quite inaccessible and entirely cut off from the external world in the rainy months".[31] Most of the *contadini* were in poor health. They ate a meager diet that was largely based on bread, oil, tomatoes, onions and olives. They shared their one room dwellings with their livestock and, since few homes were equipped with chimneys, the inhabitants constantly inhaled smoke.[32] In addition to the daily turmoil of economic survival, the *contadino* endured cruel social and psychological abuse by the upper classes to the point that "to be a peasant in southern Italy was to be a stupid and despicable earthworm. An image accepted by the peasant himself who was little more than a semi-slave".[33]

Artigiani, although considered socially superior to *contadini*, also lived at subsistence level. They worked from dawn to dusk, six days a week (tailors and shoemakers worked seven) in poorly ventilated *botteghe* (workshops). Apprentices were often abused and workers were exposed to extreme heat, dust and smoke from the forges. Not surprisingly, alcoholism was endemic among *artigiani.* [34]

The unification of Italy in 1861 raised hopes of reform among those who believed that once the peninsula was unified, the north-south hostilities

would disappear. The new national government enacted a series of reforms designed to ameliorate conditions in the *mezzogiorno,* but these reforms were ill-fated from the start. Failing to seriously study the problems of the south, the government erroneously assumed that given similar economic and legal structures, the south would be able to catch up to the north and in time could compete on an equal basis.[35]

The government failed to win support as well as cooperation from the *contadini* because they did not understand the latter's mindset. Social deprivation had prevented the growth of any desire among the *contadini* to actively participate in any type of communal or collective undertaking. "Cooperation, conduct directed to the public good, and faith in one's fellow men, particularly the political elite, had long ago disappeared from the cultural endowment of the southern people".[36]

The state could not help the *contadini* because it did not understand them or their needs. Instead, the *contadini* preferred to lend their support to the *briganti* (brigands). The *contadino's* view of justice was having the power to make wishes prevail. The *briganti* were not considered criminals because they were correcting injustices. In the same way, the *contadini* did not believe it was a crime to steal from the landlord because he was taking what rightfully belonged to them. Stealing was not regarded as a crime if it was done for the welfare of the family.[37]

While northern Italy prospered after unification, the southern economy remained stagnant. In the north, life in the rural districts improved dramatically through the use of crop rotation, machinery and fertilizers. In areas like Piemonte, agriculture was conducted on a capitalistic basis. Crops were raised and exported for profit rather than being produced primarily for the needs of the local community. Lands were consolidated to form larger

farms, making capitalistic agriculture more feasible as well as permitting the introduction of machinery.[38]

By contrast, most of the land in the *mezzogiorno* remained in the form of large estates (*latifondi*) or else was divided into very small peasant holdings. The *latifondo* was owned by an absentee landlord who had no interest in investing capital to improve yields. The *contadino's* practice of subdividing lands (for male heirs and dowries) resulted in scattered plots that were too small to provide for the needs of a family. In addition, the topography (e.g. olive groves and vineyards) of the *mezzogiorno* was such that the use of machinery would not have been feasible. Hence, lands were tilled with the same handplows and *zappas* (hoes) that had been used for centuries.[39]

These differences not only halted the country's overall economic growth, it also fueled the social animosity between north and south. The central government was dominated by northern policymakers who treated the *mezzogiorno* like a colonial possession. "After 1870, a new middle class of lawyers, notaries, *mercanti di campagne* [country merchants], petty officials and *campieri* [private guards] showed themselves more ingenious and efficient in the *sfruttamento* [exploitation] of the lower orders than their Bourbon predecessors had been".[40]

The exploitation of southern Italians was justified on the grounds that they were inferior to northern Italians. Prejudice and discrimination toward southern Italians bore racial overtones. After unification, Italian social scientists like Alfredo Niceforo and Rodolfo Livi began producing studies which suggested a link between physical characteristics, racial origins and a tendency toward criminality. Since most southern Italians were shorter and darker than their northern compatriots, these studies "became ammunition in

the slurring of rural southerners".[41] Blaming poverty and crime on genetic deficiencies was much more convenient than attempting to correct social and political injustices.

The Italian government introduced new policies aimed at economic prosperity which unfortunately ended up strengthening the north at the expense of the south. First it dropped customs barriers exposing southern firms to competition from northern industries which then gained access to larger markets and became profitable. Southern firms either shut down or survived by further exploiting workers. Then the government reinstated a policy of high tariffs to protect northern industries from foreign competition which dealt a heavy blow to the southern economy. The tariff war with France for example, resulted in the loss of the lucrative French market. This hit the *contadini* particularly hard since the *mezzogiorno* exported mostly agricultural goods. Wheat fell to a record low price of 22 lire per *quintale* (100 kilos) in 1888 and to 13.5 lire in 1894.[42]

The Italian state also introduced a more efficient tax system in order to pay the heavy debts incurred during the wars of unification. Although taxes were collected from all regions, revenues were not distributed evenly. Nor did everyone pay their fair share. It was the southern *contadini* who bore the brunt of the new tax system.[43] Mortgages were taken on land in the *mezzogiorno* by government officials who in turn raised taxes, passing the burden on to the *contadini.* Taxes were levied on everything from mules and vineyards to wheat and salt. The high taxation forced many *contadini,* to use as much as 90 percent of their crops for rent payments.[44] As taxes escalated beyond the means of the *contadini,* many sold their small plots of land and became *braccianti.* [45]

When it seemed that conditions could not possibly become worse, the

mezzogiorno was hit by several periods of unemployment. *Contadini* as well as impoverished town dwellers, remained at the mercy of economic cycles that threw them repeatedly out of work.[46] Part of the problem was Italy's large population which had grown from 29 million in 1881 to 33 million by 1901 and to over 35 million in 1911.[47] In a country that had yet to become industrialized, such density created a fierce competition for jobs. Employers took full advantage of the situation and hired those who would work for the lowest wages, "producing a wage system that was scandalous even by European standards".[48] Those who refused to work for such paltry wages found themselves unemployed.

During the post-unification period, the economic gap between northern and southern Italy widened instead of closing. For the *contadini,* the failure of the government to improve living conditions in the *mezzogiorno* strengthened the centuries old reliance on *la famiglia,* and *la via vecchia.* It also reaffirmed their long held conviction that the upper classes, even when they preached policies of reform and rising prosperity, would continually exploit the lower classes for personal advantage. "Any public intervention however honest and well meant, was defined only in this light".[49] Political apathy became the order of the day.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, the Italian government created a commission, the *Inchiesta Agraria* (Agrarian Inquiry) to study the agricultural conditions of the *mezzogiorno.* Following the commission's recommendations, the government did lessen some of the regressive taxes but did little else.[50] The *contadini* fed up with the government's broken promises and obviously inept attempts at reform, began looking for a viable alternative to their desperate situation.

Throughout their travail, the *contadini* did not give up their dream of

land ownership. Land had been the only source of wealth in the *mezzogiorno*. Those who had land, had power. The upper classes, anxious to remain in control and prevent social change, naturally resisted any type of land reform Emigration overseas was not only a way of escaping poverty and social class deprivation, it was also a way of accumulating the funds necessary to buy land at home. Consequently millions of *contadini* took advantage of lowered fares and improvements in sea travel and emigrated to work in the booming economies of the Rio de la Plata region of South America and in the United States.[51]

During the latter part of the nineteenth century, emigration took the form of sojourning. Initially, emigration to South America was favoured because of the reversal of seasons. Many men left Italy during the winter months to work on farms and plantations in Argentina and Brazil after which they would return home in time to engage in the Italian spring planting. The constant crossing of the Atlantic earned these men the Argentinian nickname of *'golondrine'* (swallows). After 1900, Italian emigrants were attracted by the cheaper fares and better wages of the United States.[52] For example in 1902, *braccianti* in Sicily, earned the equivalent of 25 cents (US) for twelve hours of hard work. By comparison, new immigrants to the United States received wages of $1.50 to $2.00 a day.[53] By the early part of this century, over half a million Italians a year were emigrating.[54]

During the sojourn period of this migration, a man could expect to be separated from his family for several years. In the patriarchal society of the *mezzogiorno*, the absence of males usually meant disaster for *la famiglia*. Sojourning was made possible, however, by the *contadino's* strong family structure and sense of identity that was formed by *la via vecchia*. During his absence, a sojourner's family received support from *parenti*, especially those

on the male side. Women with small children received domestic help as well as emotional support. If the sojourner was injured, died or abandoned the family while overseas, *parenti* would help with the financial support of the family. These assurances alleviated the tensions associated with sojourning for both men and women.[55]

The patriarchal nature of southern Italian society does not imply that there were rigid male and female work roles. A 1902 government report revealed that for every 100 male workers, there were 67 female workers in Abruzzi; 75 in Campania and 33 in Calabria.[56] Females laboured alongside the men in the fields clearing plots, sowing and planting, in addition to domestic responsibilities.[57] Female labour, which made important contributions to family income became even more valuable during the sojourning period. Females became responsible not only for doing the heavier jobs but also for making all the decisions regarding the well-being of their families.[58]

In spite of this fact, the birth of a female was often met with displeasure because until she married, she was considered an economic liability to her family. Daughters had to be provided with a *corredo* (dowry) if they hoped to make a satisfactory marriage and this usually strained her family's meager income.[59] It was not uncommon for young women to work outside the home, usually as domestic servants, in order to accumulate a suitable *corredo*. Those whose families were quite poor or who had no male *parenti* to provide for them, had to work at whatever job they could find: picking olives or fruit; making cheese; spreading manure or in some cases going away to work in garment or textile factories.[60]

In southern Italian society it was assumed that a man and a woman who were left alone together would engage in sexual relations. Women in particular were thought to be unable to resist this temptation.[61] During the

sojourning period when wives and daughters were left alone for years at a time, women were subject to strict restrictions on their sexuality which *parenti* helped to enforce: women were chaperoned in the company of unrelated males and bridal bedsheets were examined for the signs of a lost virginity. Such restrictions "reassured migrants that their absence from home would not lead to dishonour. It assured migrants that their families would remain intact, for indeed the sojourn itself would have little meaning without the safe assumption that there would be an honourable family to return to afterwards."[62]

Onore (honour) was an important aspect of the *contadino's* culture. Southern Italian society was (and still is) male dominated. A man was the head of his family and his wife deferred to his wishes and desires. Any deviation from this tradition not only undermined the *onore* of *la famiglia,* it also questioned his masculinity. A man maintained *onore* by providing for the welfare of his wife and children. His wife reciprocated by remaining sexually faithful.[63]

It was this strong belief in the value of *onore* that made the long separations acceptable to the *contadini:*

> For men, the centrality of their role as the family's provider, which was linked to a peasant ideology of hard work and sacrifice, made deprivation in North American work camps tolerable since it was expected that their *sacrificio* would later be redeemed in the village by the attainment of a home, land and increased respect.[64]

Ironically, the *contadino's* strong emphasis on female sexual *onore* had little to do with male domination since a mother, mother-in-law or aunt could be as strict as any male relative. It had more to do with protecting one's

possessions. In a society where land was scarce and precious, it was vital that it be inherited by the children of one's own blood. "Only the confidence that one had legitimate heirs could validate the 'sacrifice' of labour expended by small peasants in acquiring a patrimony, which ultimately, it was hoped, would ensure the family's corporate unity through generations".[65]

Coercion by the village community lessened the chances of a man being labeled a *cornuto* (cuckold). As well, the structure of village life was such that there was little opportunity for a clandestine encounter.[66] On the rare occasion that infidelity did occur (usually in the larger towns) the consequences were serious. Village gossip slandered the reputation of the participant's families and in some cases it was not uncommon for the cuckolded male to resort to violence to restore *onore* .[67]

The exodus of Italians overseas remained high until the 1920s when countries such as the United States and Canada began enacting immigration acts designed to restrict the numbers of Italian immigrants. The closing of these foreign countries to immigration resulted in a decreased number of emigrants and the elimination of potential remittances sent back home. While emigration abroad did not solve the problems of the *mezzogiorno,* the reduction in population as well as the cash remittances certainly helped alleviate some of the misery.[68]

The rise of the Fascist regime of Benito Mussolini in 1922 marked the beginning of an important period in the history of Italy. The Mussolini regime provided Italy with its first stable government and it tried to unify Italian society by downplaying the importance of regional loyalty and promoting national patriotism. Scholars of Italian history have generally taken an unfavourable view of the Fascist regime, pointing out the negative effects of its policies on Italy and its people. Yet the perceptions of scholars and

the masses are not always one and the same. Many southern Italians have fond memories of life under *il Duce,* at least before World War Two! They remember a strong, capable leader who was good to them and made Italy a great nation:

> Mussolini was a good man...he do a lot of good for Italy. He help the farmer; he help the poor; he build roads and schools.[69]

Without doubt, Mussolini's regime was riddled with corruption and exalted brutality and violence. However, Mussolini was an expert showman who knew how to play the crowd. The image he projected of a powerful, competent leader was cleverly conceived by *il Duce* himself and helps explain why he appealed in particular to the lower classes of the *mezzogiorno.* Mussolini was a master in the art of *fare bella figura* ("to cut a good figure") which was the central theme of life in southern Italy: appearance is the only thing that counts, nothing else is important. Mussolini fit their image of a leader. He was charismatic and macho. He was also a study in contradiction; seemingly devoted to his family while keeping a mistress. "His mixture of showmanship and vulgarity appealed to the common people, who liked to hear of his adulterous relationships and illegitimate children because he then became more human and virile".[70]

Mussolini's appeal to the lower classes of the *mezzogiorno* was not entirely superficial. His aim was to make Italy a great nation. In order to achieve this aim he tried to regiment the various social classes. Unlike past political leaders, Mussolini did not ignore the plight of the southern *contadini,* although he certainly had underlying motives behind his policies. One of Mussolini's goals was to make Italy self-sufficient in food production as the country's dependence on food imports seriously limited his options in

international affairs. In order to reach this goal, Italy had to remain mainly agricultural and for this he needed the support of the *contadini*. "Peasants, he asserted, were more necessary to fascism than intellectuals or town artisans, both of which categories were, as he had to admit, unenthusiastic about his regime if not strongly hostile".[71]

Among the many campaigns used by the Fascists to increase agricultural production was the *battaglia del grano* (battle for grain). Mussolini personally urged the *contadini,* to produce higher yields. He offered short-term agricultural courses on wheat production; incentives such as money, medals and prizes and established a pension program. So successful was the *battaglia del grano* that by the early 1930s, Italy reduced its food imports by 90 percent.[72] During this campaign Mussolini strengthened his image as the 'man of the people'. Published photographs showed him stripped to the waist, displaying his heroic jaw while pitching grain among the *contadini* at harvest time.[73]

The success of the *battaglia del grano* was, however, short-term. Critics point out that wheat cultivation was the least economical type of agriculture for the *mezzogiorno* as there was too much land under wheat production already. In the long term, the *battaglia del grano* decreased the profitability of agriculture, because the wheat was not produced economically. This led to higher domestic prices and a distortion of the economy as marginal land was transferred from cattle, fruit and olive production. The final result of this campaign, and its greatest failure, was that the *contadini* remained tied to the land and their wages were kept low, much to the delight of the landowners.[74]

What mattered to the *contadini,* however, were the immediate results of the government's agricultural policies. They believed he genuinely cared about them. Mussolini certainly gave the impression that he did. Not only did he keep them fed and clothed, he also gave them hope for the future;

something no other leader had given them.[75]

It is important to understand however that admiration for *il Duce* did not change their generally negative opinion of government:

> They were not Fascists, just as they would never have been Conservatives or Socialists, or anything else. Such matters had nothing to do with them...To the peasants the State is more distant than heaven and far more of a scourge, because it is always against them. Its political tags and platforms and, indeed, the whole structure of it do not matter.[76]

Their loyalty was to Mussolini the man, not to the Fascist party and not to the government. Fascism failed to eliminate political apathy and it did not increase confidence in the ability of the political process to solve basic social problems. Those feelings were too deeply rooted to be easily removed.[77] Though they were fond of Mussolini, they could be indifferent to his policies, especially if they saw no immediate benefits for themselves.

In the desire to make Italy a glorious and internationally respected nation, Mussolini implemented social policies which interfered in family life. His imperial dream prompted him to introduce new population policies. He restricted emigration and encouraged Italians to marry young and have many children, hoping to increase the population to 60 million before 1960.[78] In 1924, penal sanctions were introduced against those advocating birth control and later on the distribution of contraceptives was declared a crime against the state.[79] The minimum legal age for marriage was lowered from fifteen to fourteen for females and from eighteen to sixteen for males.[80]

As in the *battaglia del grano,* monetary incentives were used. Fathers with the greatest number of offspring received higher wages. The civil service and private firms discriminated in favour of family men. Single men, with

the exception of disabled veterans and clergymen, paid a 'celibacy tax'. Newlywed couples were eligible for loans that needed to be repaid only if the couple failed to produce enough children.[81] Women were encouraged to remain at home and reproduce for the fatherland. "Each year he honoured the ninety-five most prolific mothers at an elaborate ceremony in the Palazzo Venezia, giving each a monetary prize and a free insurance policy; in 1939 he added a special medal with a silver bar for each child in the family".[82] Mussolini's family policies had little influence on the *contadini* as they had been producing large families for generations. Such policies appealed more to the petty bourgeois and the working classes who believed that adherence to them was necessary for social mobility.[83]

Fascism strengthened the patriarchal nature of Italian society. New fascist legal codes established male supremacy and increased the authority of the husband as *capo della famiglia* (head of the family).

> He gave special praise to those who called intellectual women a monstrosity, for which reason higher education for women should preferably be reduced to those subjects where the 'feminine brain' could adequately operate-for example, household management.[84]

Fascism served to reinforce the already well-defined concepts of masculinity and femininity.

Despite its successes and its initial widespread popularity, fascism failed to solve the problems that had plagued Italy since unification. As well, it committed an ill-prepared country to total war. In the end, the failure of fascism "ultimately reinforced the popular suspicion that politics responds far more readily to the pressure of powerful vested interests than to demands for social justice".[85]

The outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 and Italy's involvement with the Axis powers put an end to even the miniscule advances which had been initiated by the Fascist regime. Some areas of the *mezzogiorno* such as Abruzzi (especially Ortona), Naples and Foggia received the brunt of the war's physical damage since much of the fighting after the Allied invasion of 1943 was concentrated there. Food, housing and clothing were in short supply. Families in the Abruzzi who had been evacuated returned to find their homes levelled by bombs and their possessions destroyed. Recalls one survivor:

> The crops were gone...food was scarce. We ate dried *fave* [broad beans] for months. The house was gone so we slept outside in wine casks. The orchards were ripe with fruit but couldn't be harvested because of the landmines...Our family had nothing; no bed, no dishes, **nothing**.[86]

After the war, Italy was in a state of total economic and political chaos. Millions were unemployed and there was widespread suffering.[87] To make matters worse, there was no experienced and established government to lead the country. In June 1946, the monarchy was ousted by a constitutional referendum in which 54 percent of the vote was cast in favour of an Italian Republic.[88] The new government was headed by *democrazia cristiana* (the Christian Democratic party), a centrist coalition most of whose members had no practical government experience.[89] The *democrazia cristiana* was faced with the enormous task of repairing the tremendous physical damage suffered in Italy. Reconstruction was made possible in part by the vast amounts of money (roughly two billion dollars' worth) invested by the United States.[90] "Fueled by foreign aid, the government intervened in many areas of Italian life on an unprecedented scale. Numerous programs were launched, designed to provide new social, educational and medical services to

the populace".[91] But it was the north not the south, which benefitted most from these programs.[92]

By far the greatest challenge to the new government was the backward and still largely rural *mezzogiorno*. The Italian census of 1951 revealed that three and one-half million (51 percent) of southern workers were employed in agriculture. In Abruzzi and Calabria, this figure rose to over 60 percent, second only to Basilicata.[93] The difficulties created by overpopulation, a high birthrate, poor educational facilities, archaic communications and few natural resources, grew with each passing generation to hinder economic progress. [94]

In the regions of Sardegna and Sicily, which had remained under feudal systems, poverty was so extensive that it was not uncommon to find large numbers of families living in caves or even subterranean cellars. In other areas the misery of inhabitants was intensified by inadequate sanitation and drinking water supplies, coupled with malnutrition and disease brought on by the post-war shortages.[95] In Abruzzi, post-war reconstruction was hindered by vicious rain and hailstorms which ruined crops and livelihoods, forcing many to emigrate. One woman remembered the daily struggle for survival:

> We were poor, we had no shoes...we ate meat only on Christmas and Easter...we worked twelve hours a day. I walked four kilometres to work, four times a day, even when I was pregnant. We did everything by hand. We had no machines...I had to wash clothes at the stream. Life was so hard. I don't know how we survived.[96]

In areas untouched by the war, the inhabitants continued to live in precarious conditions. In Calabria the majority still worked as *braccianti*. They tilled the land in much the same way their grandfathers had:

> ...men and women, early in the morning...walk seven or eight miles down the valley of desolation and over intervening hills to poor lands where they work for 100 or 120 days in the year, often at a wage far below the legal minimum. In the evening they can be seen wearily toiling up home, some on donkeys but most of them on foot.[97]

Calabria was seriously overpopulated and the only relief could come from emigration.[98] Moreover, like many areas of the *mezzogiorno,* it had a high illiteracy rate.[99]

Italy's new constitution (1948) emphasized the right of every citizen to an education but most *contadini* failed to see the benefits of education. They questioned how reading Dante or learning Latin was going to result in an improved standard of living. Children often missed school to help their parents in the fields. Those who did attend the minimum number (five) of required years soon lapsed back into illiteracy since books were a luxury. Some areas lacked schools or, if there were suitable buildings, they lacked adequately trained teachers.[100]

The Italian government soon realised that the backwardness of the *mezzogiorno* was having ill effects on the entire nation's economy. The prime minister, Alcide De Gasperi, knew that in order for Italy to be truly united, the tensions and conflicts that had plagued the nation since the beginning of the century, would have to be removed. Focusing on the inequalities between the social classes and the regions, he introduced greater welfare benefits. In addition to social security measures, he gave agricultural and industrial workers "security of tenure for an emergency period until unemployment could be reduced".[101]

The government then introduced new legislation aimed at land

reform. It created the Agrarian Reform Agency (1951) and the *Cassa per il Mezzogiorno* (Fund For the South). The Agrarian Reform Agency's main function was to redistribute large estates to the landless *contadini.* [102] However, agrarian reform involved more than expropriating land and redistributing it to the peasants. It also aimed at creating an improved standard of living and a new social structure. The *Cassa* provided the necessary capital for investments and projects such as the building of roads, dams, aqueducts and irrigation works.[103]

In the early 1950s, the government expropriated some two million acres of uncultivated land from the *latifondisti* (owners of large, landed estates).[104] Government officials believed that the large estates were at the heart of the problems of the *mezzogiorno.* Its solution was to divide up the estates to create a larger class of smallholders in order to accommodate as many *contadini* as possible. Unfortunately, this goal was not achieved. There were simply too many landless *contadini* and not enough hectares. Consequently not everyone received a parcel of land.[105]

Small landowners were no better off than tenant farmers as they had no money to make the necessary improvements to their holdings. Parcels of land were often too small (5 or 6 acres) to accommodate the needs of the family and were quickly abandoned. In many cases land was given to families who had no agricultural skills whatsoever or to those who had no intention of cultivating their parcel. So widespread was this practice that "an inquiry concerning the recipients of the land expropriated by the Agrarian Reform in Apulia, Basilicata and Molise revealed that a large proportion were people who lived elsewhere and let their lands to peasants under varying forms of lease".[106] Like their predecessors, these absentee landlords were only interested in making as much money as possible without reinvesting in the land. They had little

regard for the well being of the tenants whom they thought ignorant and in constant need of supervision.[107] As well, the abolition of the *latifondi* put many *braccianti* and *giornalieri* out of work since the families who owned the lands needed no outside help.[108]

Although the land reform project of the 1950s, enabled more *contadini* to own land of their own, it did not solve the agricultural problems of the south. In fact, it contributed further to the unproductive nature of land tenure in the *mezzogiorno*. The *contadini* continued to work on scattered plots of land most often located several kilometres from the village, using methods that were quite backward by European standards. Small parcels did not make the use of modern machinery practical and as a result, the *contadini* were geared more to subsistence than to market-oriented farming.[109]

As the government soon discovered, eliminating the regional disparity between northern and southern Italy proved to be very difficult. According to the 1961 census, twenty million of Italy's fifty-three million people lived in the *mezzogiorno,* a region that had few natural resources and little free capital.[110] Most of Italy's profitable industries such as Fiat, Olivetti and Pirelli, were located in the north. The government had been determined to alter this situation but its efforts had been met with strong resistance.

In 1954, the government introduced the 'Vanoni Plan' (largely constructed by finance minster Ezio Vanoni), which was designed to reduce unemployment in the *mezzogiorno* by direct public investment and incentives to private industry. It was expected to create real income growth double that of the north.[111] However, strong pressure from the business community against state intervention in the economy saw to it that the 'Vanoni Plan' was never implemented. Much of the opposition came from private industry in the north which saw an advantage to keeping the

mezzogiorno dilapidated and poor as it would provide a large pool of cheap labour for their northern factories. Economic development was also hampered by corrupt politicians and little coordinated planning between the *Cassa* and other government agencies.[112]

While government officials were wistfully outlining the benefits of land reform, few *contadini* actually paid any attention to them. Land reform had been attempted throughout the past century without success. *Contadini* no longer believed land reforms would end their misery since it did not mean an increase in the standard of living. As long as there was a surplus population, wages would be kept well below the legal minimum. More importantly, they were no longer willing to recruit their children into what they considered "an anachronistic and dying way of life".[113] After 1957, when all restrictions on internal migration were removed, the *contadini* abandoned the land and headed for the traditionally prosperous north. Swift, post-war economic expansion in the northern industrial triangle of Milano-Torino-Genova, attracted over 1,303,000 *meridionali* between 1951-1961.[114]

Southern Italians who migrated to the north soon discovered they were not welcome. The northern view of the *mezzogiorno* was revealed in the wisecrack that "Africa begins twenty miles south of Rome".[115] The *settentrionali* (northerners) resented and even feared the short and swarthy *terroni* (dirt-dwellers). Many lamented that the presence of these *'mangia sapone'* (so called because it was believed they were so ignorant and poor that they ate soap instead of bathing with it) would result in an increase in violent crime. Prejudice, along with feelings of isolation, forced the *contadini* into run-down neighbourhoods where they lived among those from the same villages. Economically, most of them fared no better in the north than they had in the south. Discrimination, combined with lack of skills and illiteracy,

concentrated them in low-paying, low-status jobs, if they found work at all. Northern employers were not anxious to hire workers they regarded as not only stupid but dirty, lazy and dishonest, as well.[116]

During the 1950s and the 1960s, the standard of living in the *mezzogiorno* improved dramatically. Large amounts of government money were spent and many areas had roads and proper water supplies for the first time. Unemployment and under-employment were significantly reduced, though in many areas both remained at high levels. Yet, despite having made more progress than it ever had before, the *mezzogiorno* failed to catch up to the north. The gap in income levels and industrial development widened instead of closing after the Second World War.[117]

Tired of broken promises, shattered dreams and growing increasingly impatient, many southern Italians began to view emigration overseas as the best solution to their economic woes. This idea was shared by the Italian government which as early as 1946, regarded emigration as the quickest and easiest solution to the nation's serious unemployment problem. Post-war Italy's economic situation was such that it simply could not provide all its workers with full employment.[118] Fearing that the excess population would provide a large recruiting ground for the Communist Party, pressure was applied to Western European countries as well as Canada and the United States to increase their quotas for Italian immigrants.[119]

In the late 1940s, countries like Belgium, France, Luxembourg and Switzerland, experienced labour shortages and began accepting immigrant workers. Many Italians (mostly northern) took advantage of the situation and emigrated there. In 1949, the Italian government presented the ECA (Economic Cooperation Administration) with a plan for the emigration of 971,000 Italian workers in a four year period to various cities in North

America, Europe and Australia to meet specific labour shortages.[120] Whether it was openly admitted or not, emigration was still thought to be the natural safety valve for Italy's problems. In particular, it was the easiest means of dealing with the never ending problems of the *mezzogiorno*.

As in the previous wave of migration, northern Italians emigrated first. Southern Italians, since they were poorer, could not afford the voyage. In addition, many lacked the skills to enter western European countries as guest workers. Between 1946-1961, southern Italians accounted for 46 percent of the total Italian emigration. After 1962, the percentage rose to 63 and was largely directed overseas.[121] Contrary to popular view, it was not the 'dregs' of the *mezzogiorno* who made up most of the overseas migration. The passage was expensive, therefore it was undertaken by those who had been able to accumulate savings by selling their plots of land or surplus crops.[122] Some of these migrants were the artisan children of the *contadini*. As skilled workers, they were preferred over unskilled labour by admitting countries.

In contrast to the pre-war migrants who went overseas as sojourners wanting to accumulate savings to purchase land back in Italy, the post war southern migrants left for a different reason:

> Far from a strategy to deal with abject poverty, emigration served to offset the dwindling opportunities of peasants, especially newly married couples, to improve property holdings. In this way, they avoided loss of status and obtained family property elsewhere.[123]

These migrants were quite ambitious. They wanted to enter the social order on an equal basis and they felt that such entry would always be denied in Italy where they were regarded as inferior by their own countrymen.[124] They wanted a better life for themselves and for their children. Government

officials could preach all they wanted about agricultural reform. They could produce figures and charts showing the vast amounts of money spent on the *mezzogiorno*. They could promise a brighter future. It did not matter because the *contadini* did not perceive the future in the same way. As far as they were concerned, the government had not done enough. They had received no personal benefits from the government's expenditures.[125] Consequently, throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, many *contadini* as well as artisans frustrated by the lack of opportunity and the political patronage that was needed to obtain even the most menial of jobs, in Italy, joined *parenti* and *paesani* overseas. They preferred emigration to destitution.

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

[1]See Edward R. Tannenbaum and Emiliana P. Noether (eds.), Modern Italy: A Topical History Since 1861, (New York: New York University Press, 1974), Introduction.

[2]See Margaret Carlyle, The Awakening of Southern Italy, (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p.13; William M. De Marco, Ethnics and Enclaves: Boston's Italian North End, (Ann Arbour: UMI Research Press, 1981), p.3; Gustav Schachter, The Italian South: Economic Development in Mediterranean Europe, (New York: Random House, 1965), pp.51-52.

[3]See Luigi Barzini, The Italians, (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1964), p.235; Kenneth Bagnell, Canadese: A Portrait of the Italian Canadians, (Toronto: Macmillan, 1989), p.111; Carlo Levi, Christ Stopped at Eboli, Translated from the Italian by Frances Frenaye. (New York: The Noonday Press, 1947), p.140; Schachter, The Italian South, pp.18-33.

[4]Carlyle, The Awakening of Southern Italy, p.14; Schachter, The Italian South, pp.22, 85. In 1914, 58 percent of southern Italy's workforce were peasants. This figure dropped to 48 percent in 1940 and to 18 percent in 1973. Tannenbaum and Noether, Modern Italy, pp.xix-xx.

[5]See Edward C. Banfield, The Moral Basis of a Backward Society, (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1958), pp.69-70. In some areas of southern Italy it was quite common for *contadini* to own a plot of land while hiring themselves out as day-labourers to earn extra income. See Franca Iacovetta, "From *Contadina* to Worker: Southern Italian Immigrant Working Women in Toronto, 1947-1963", Jean Burnet (ed.), Looking into My Sister's Eyes: An Exploration in Women's History, (Toronto: The Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1986), p.198.

There is also a difference between country peasants and town peasants. Country peasants are considered inferior to town peasants by the mere fact that the former lives in the *campagna* (country). For further discussion of the peasantry as a social class, see John Berger, "Historical Afterword", Pig Earth, (London: Writers and Readers Pub. Cooperative, 1979), pp.195-213 and Teodor Shanin (ed.), Peasant and Peasant Societies, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Education, 1971).

[6]See Joseph LoPreato, Peasants No More: Social Class and Social Change in an Underdeveloped Society, (Scranton, Penn.: Chandler Publishing , 1967), p.4; Tannenbaum and Noether, Modern Italy, p.xviii; Schachter, The

Italian South, p.74.

[7]LoPreato, Peasants No More, pp.89-90; Berger, "Historical Afterward", p.196.

[8]See Banfield, The Moral Basis, p.35; Rudolph M. Bell, Fate and Honor, Family and Village: Demographic Change in Rural Italy since 1800, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), pp.1-2; Schachter, The Italian South, pp.66-67.

[9]Franc Sturino, "The Role of Women in Italian Immigration to the New World", Jean Burnet (ed.), Looking into My Sister's Eyes: An Exploration in Women's History, (Toronto: The Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1986), p.22.

[10]Banfield, The Moral Basis, p.116; Bell, Fate and Honor, p.3; De Marco, Ethnics and Enclaves, p.2

[11]Rudolph J. Vecoli, "Contadini in Chicago: A Critique of the Uprooted", American Journal of History S1 (December 1964): 406. See also Bell, Fate and Honor, p.3 and De Marco, Ethnics and Enclaves, pp.2-3.

[12]See Schachter, The Italian South, pp.28-33.

[13]Ibid., pp.43-46.

[14]Iacovetta, "From *Contadina* to Worker", p.198.

[15]Ibid., Carlyle, The Awakening of Southern Italy, p.40.

[16]William A. Douglass, Emigration in a south Italian town, (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1984), p.50.

[17]Ibid., pp.49-50.

[18]LoPreato, Peasants No More, p.14.

[19]Banfield, The Moral Basis, p.18; Douglass, south Italian town, p.50.

[20]Vecoli, "Contadini in Chicago", p.415.

[21]Ibid., Such attitudes still prevail in southern Italy. During a visit to the towns of Cerignola and Cisternino (Puglia) in the spring of 1989, the

author heard local people refer to priests as "*i primi bastardi e cornuti del mondo*" ("The first bastards and cuckolds of the world"). For further discussion of religion and the Roman Catholic Church in southern Italy, see Banfield, The Moral Basis, pp.129-132; Robert F. Foerster, The Italian Emigration of Our Times, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1919), p.97; Levi, Christ Stopped at Eboli, pp.116-118, 257-264; Schachter, The Italian South, p.66.

[22]See Vecoli, "Contadini in Chicago", p.416. Even today many southern Italian homes (both in Italy and Canada) are decorated with statues of the Madonna, portraits of patron saints (*Sant'Antonio di Padova* is a particular favourite), rosaries and crucifixes. These items are believed to protect the home and its inhabitants from misfortune. The *corno* is still popular but is worn largely as a fashion accessory.

[23]LoPreato, Peasants No More, p.15.

[24]Ibid., See also Leonard W. Moss, "The Passing of Traditional Peasant Society in the South", Tannenbaum and Noether (eds.), Modern Italy, (New York: New York University Press, 1974), p.157.

[25]Foerster, The Italian Emigration, p.65.

[26]Douglass, south Italian town, p.63.

[27]Ibid., p.53.

[28]Ibid.

[29]Joseph LoPreato, The Italian Americans, (New York: Random House, 1970), p. 29.

[30]Robert F. Harney, "The Italian Experience in the United States", Italians in North America, (Toronto: The Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1979), p.5.

[31]LoPreato, Peasants No More, p.21.

[32]Douglass, south Italian town, p.72; Foerster, The Italian Emigration, p.95.

[33]LoPreato, The Italian Americans, p.33.

[34]Douglass, south Italian town, p.72.

[35]LoPreato, Peasants No More, p.25.

[36]Ibid. p.26.

[37]Douglass, south Italian town, p.86; LoPreato, Peasants No More, p.19; Schachter, The Italian South, p.68.

[38]See Shepard Clough, The Economic History of Modern Italy, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), pp.13-14.

[39]See Denis Mack Smith, Italy: A Modern History, (Ann Arbour: The University of Michigan Press, 1969), pp.43-46; Humbert S. Nelli, "The Italians", Stephan Thernstrom (ed.), Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980), p.547.

[40]Harney, "The Italian Experience", p.6.

[41]Robert F. Harney, "Italophobia: An English-speaking Malady?", Studi Emigrazione, no.77 (Marzo 1985): 28. While some scholars may dismiss this analysis as complete nonsense, the fact is that such attitudes still exist in Italy. Northern Italians tend to regard themselves as "Aryan" while labelling southerners as "Greeks" or "Arabs". Racist remarks are no longer acceptable but a change in behaviour does not necessarily imply a change in attitude. As Chapter Two will discuss, this north-south hostility would manifest itself quite prominently among immigrants in North America. Harney's article contains an excellent discussion on this topic. See also De Marco, Ethnics and Enclaves, p.1; Denis Mack Smith, "Regionalism", Tannenbaum and Noether (eds.), Modern Italy, (New York: New York University Press, 1974), p.137; Schachter, The Italian South, pp.50-51.

[42]LoPreato, Peasants No More, p.24. See also Moss, "Peasant Society in the South", p.153; Schachter, The Italian South, p.31.

[43]See Schachter, The Italian South, p.32.

[44]De Marco, Ethnics and Enclaves, p.10.

[45]Ibid., p.13.

[46]Andrew Rolle, The Italian Americans: Troubled Roots, (New York: Macmillan, 1980), p.3.

[47]Istituto Italiano di Statistica (ISTAT), "Evoluzione della popolazione attraverso il tempo", Annali di Statistica, serie VIII, Vol.17 (Roma, 1965). Of the 35 million in 1911, 13 million lived in the *mezzogiorno*. See Schachter, The Italian South, p.86. Although demographic rates varied from region to region and from rural to urban centers, the birthrate declined earlier in the north than it did in the south. For further discussion of Italy's demographic rates see Clough, The Economic History of Modern Italy, pp. 61-62.

[48]Rolle, The Italian Americans, p.3. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, day-labourers in Basilicata, Calabria and Sicily earned wages of .5 to 1.5 lire a day. See Foerster, The Italian Emigration, p. 85. Women earned far less than men even when they did the same type of work. For example, a male labourer in Teramo (Abruzzi) earned 1 to 1.5 lire a day while a female labourer earned 60-75 centesimi (100 centesimi=1 lira). See Emiliana P. Noether, "The Silent Half: Le Contadine del Sud before the First World War", Betty Boyd Caroli, Robert F. Harney and Lydio F. Tomasi (eds.), The Italian Immigrant Woman in North America, (Toronto: The Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1978), pp.5-6.

[49]LoPreato, Peasants No More, p.26.

[50]De Marco, Ethnics and Enclaves, p.11.

[51]Douglass, south Italian town, p.91. During the first phase of this exodus, well over half of the emigrants (about 67 percent) were from northern Italy. Southern Italians made up approximately 22 percent of the migration. Bruno Ramirez, The Italians in Canada, Canadian Historical Association, (Ottawa, 1989), p.4; Mack Smith, Italy, p.241. After 1891, southern Italians began to outnumber northerners in emigration. In all, approximately fourteen million Italians left Italy between 1876 and 1914. Foerster, The Italian Emigration, p.8. Harney estimates that by 1930, as many as 20 million Italians may have emigrated. "The Italian Experience", p.6.

[52]Foerster, The Italian Emigration, pp.243-244; Harney, The Italian Experience", p.5; Mack Smith, Italy, pp.239-240.

[53]Rolle, The Italian Americans, p.3.

[54]See Mack Smith, Italy, p.239; Nelli, "The Italians", p.547; Ramirez, The Italians in Canada, p.3. It is difficult to determine how many of these were permanent immigrants as there are no exact figures until 1932. Harney estimates that after 1890, approximately 200,000 Italians were emigrating annually with about one-third returning. "The Italian Experience", pp.6-7.

[55]Sturino, "The Role of Women", p.25.

[56]Noether, "The Silent Half", p.6. The lower rate in Calabria probably indicates lack of available employment and not strong opposition to women working.

[57]See Iacovetta, "From *Contadina* to Worker", pp.201-202.

[58]Noether, "The Silent Half", p.8.

[59] Ibid.

[60]Ibid., p.7; Iacovetta, "From *Contadina* to Worker", p.201.

[61]Banfield, The Moral Basis, p.140; Robert F. Harney, "Men Without Women: Italian Migrants in Canada, 1885-1930", Betty Boyd Caroli, Robert F. Harney and Lydio F. Tomasi (eds.), The Italian Immigrant Woman in North America, (Toronto: The Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1978), p.85.

[62]Sturino, "The Role of Woman", p.25.

[63]Ibid.

[64]Ibid.

[65]Ibid., p.26.

[66]See Harney, "Men Without Women", pp.85-86.

[67]See Bell, Fate and Honor, p.2; Douglass, south Italian town, p.25.

[68]Mack Smith, Italy, p.409.

[69]Adelina Carloni, interview by R. Audia and K. Savoia, 10 June 1985, Calgary Italian Club Collection. For a similar example, see Schachter, The Italian South, p.61. Many of Mussolini's admirers had been indoctrinated with fascist propaganda as children through the school system and organizations such as the *Gioventù italiana del Littorio* (Italian Fascist Youth). For further discussion on the Italian school system and social programs under Fascism, see Edward R. Tannenbaum, "Education", Modern Italy, Tannenbaum and Noether (eds.), (New York: New York University Press, 1974), pp.239-245 and Shepard B. Clough and Salvatore Saladino, A

History of Modern Italy, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), pp.469-473.

[70]Mack Smith, Italy, p.398. See also Roland Sarti, "Politics and Ideology in Fascist Italy", Tannenbaum and Noether (eds.), Modern Italy, (New York: New York University Press, 1974), pp.52-77.

[71]Denis Mack Smith, Mussolini, (New York: Vintage Books, 1982), p.121.

[72]Douglass, south Italian town, p.170. See also Mack Smith, Italy, p.407.

[73]Mack Smith, Italy, p.398.

[74]Ibid., pp.405-407; Mack Smith, Mussolini, p.121.

[75]It is interesting to note that these favourable opinions of Mussolini have grown stronger over the years. While visiting the town of Cerignola (Puglia), the author asked several *contadini,* who had lived under Fascism as teenagers, what they thought of Mussolini. In retrospect, they replied that he was a strong leader; much better than any Italy has had since. They blamed Mussolini's bad policies on the *traditori* (traitors) in his government. For a similar example, see Banfield, The Moral Basis, pp.96-98.

[76]Levi, Christ Stopped at Eboli, p.76.

[77]See Sarti, "Politics and Ideology", p.75.

[78]Douglass, south Italian town, p.169; Mack Smith, Italy, p.409.

[79]Mack Smith, Mussolini, p.160.

[80]Bell, Fate and Honor, p.87.

[81]Mack Smith, Italy, pp.409-410.

[82]Mack Smith, Mussolini, p.210.

[83]See Renzo De Felice, Mussolini il duce: II Lo Stato Totalitario 1936-1940, (Torino: Einaudi, 1981), p.129.

[84]Mack Smith, Mussolini, p.209.

[85]Sarti, "Politics and Ideology", p.75.

[86]Ida and Pasquale Fornaro, interview by R. Audia and K. Savoia, 3 June 1985, Calgary Italian Club Collection.

[87]In 1948, Italy had the worst unemployment in Europe: approximately two million, of which half lived in the *mezzogiorno*. This figure does not include the one and a half million farm workers who were under-employed (i.e. worked one hundred days or less in the year). See Schachter, The Italian South, p.155; Franc Sturino, "Post-World War Two Canadian Immigration Policy Towards Italians", Polyphony, Vol.7, No.2 (Fall/Winter 1985): 68.

[88]The *mezzogiorno* voted heavily in favour of the monarchy. Carlyle, The Awakening of Southern Italy, p.132; Douglass, south Italian town, p.175; Mack Smith, Italy, pp.494, 505.

[89]Carlyle, The Awakening of Southern Italy, p.132; Douglass, south Italian town, p.175.

[90]Mack Smith, Italy, pp.493-494.

[91]Douglass, south Italian town, p.175.

[92]Carlyle, The Awakening of Southern Italy, p.132-133; Schachter, The Italian South, pp.130, 154-156.

[93]These figures, when compared to those of northern Italy as well as other western countries, reveal that during the period of 1861-1951, the number of agricultural workers rose. Obviously, there had been no growth of alternate employment in southern Italy. Carlyle, The Awakening of Southern Italy, pp.34, 84.

[94]Mack Smith, Italy, p.504; Schachter, The Italian South, p.154.

[95]Mack Smith, Italy, p.500; Iacovetta, "From *Contadina* to Worker", p.203.

[96]Fornaro interview.

[97]Carlyle, The Awakening of Southern Italy, p.64.

[98]In 1950, the population of Calabria was over two million. Bagnell, Canadese, p.111.

[99]In the 1960s, one-third of the Calabrese population was classified as illiterate; compared to one-fifth of the southern population in general. See Schachter, The Italian South, pp.28, 77. Illiteracy rates were higher in rural than urban areas and higher among women than men. See Carlyle, The Awakening of Southern Italy; p.22; Mack Smith, Italy, p.521, Moss, "Peasant Society in the South", p.155.

[100]See Banfield, The Moral Basis, pp.20-23; LoPreato, Peasants No More, pp.138-139, 191-192; Schachter, The Italian South, pp.77-82; Tannenbaum, "Education", pp.239-245.

[101]Mack Smith, Italy, p.501.

[102]See Schachter, The Italian South, pp.158-159.

[103]LoPreato, Peasants No More, pp.33-34; See also Schachter, The Italian South, pp.169-171.

[104]Mack Smith, Italy, p.501.

[105]See Schachter, The Italian South, pp.159-166.

[106]LoPreato, Peasants No More, p.34.

[107]See Carlyle, The Awakening of Southern Italy, p.10.

[108]Schachter, The Italian South, p.165.

[109]See Douglass, south Italian town; p.178; Iacovetta, "From *Contadina* to Worker", p.198. The Land Reform Agency chose to distribute land to individual families rather than organize large peasant holdings on a commercial basis. The latter would have been more profitable but would have met with opposition from already established commercial farm owners. As well, the peasants themselves may have not been open to the idea of a cooperative. Schachter, The Italian South, pp.166-168.

[110]Mack Smith, Italy, p.504.

[111]Ibid., p.505. See also Schachter, The Italian South, p.171.

[112]Mack Smith, Italy, p.506; Schachter, The Italian South, pp.192-193. Some firms did set up industry in the south but these tended to be in a few

favoured cities. Olivetti, for example, set up an office machine factory in Pozzuoli (near Naples). Whatever improvements came out of the government's programs, patronage played an important role which meant that assistance often went to areas that needed it least. See Barzini, The Italians, p.248.

[113]Douglass, south Italian town, p.179.

[114]Istituto Centrale di Statistica, Annuario Statistico Italiano (Roma, 1961).

[115]Harney, "Italophobia", p.27.

[116]See Bagnell, Canadese, p.110; Tannenbaum and Noether (eds.), Modern Italy, p.xviii; Schachter, The Italian South, pp. 51, 96-97.

[117]Mack Smith, Italy, pp.520-521; See also LoPreato, Peasants No More, pp.35-36. In the early 1960s, few households in the *mezzogiorno* had telephones, electricity or running water. For example, in 1958, there were 72 telephones per 1000 inhabitants in the north versus 16 per 1000 in the south. Even fewer owned cars: 1 in 60 in the south versus 1 in 10 in the north. Schachter, The Italian South, pp.25-26.

[118]Gianfausto Rosoli, "Politiche Sociali e Problematiche Istituzionali Dell' Emigrazione Italiana Dalla Fine Del Secondo Conflitto Mondiale ad Oggi", (Unpublished manuscript, 1990), pp.1-3.

[119]Sturino, "Immigration Policy Towards Italians", p.68.

[120]Rosoli," Politiche Sociali", p.3.

[121]Ibid., p.4.

[122]See Iacovetta, "From *Contadina* to Worker", p.203.

[123]Ibid., pp.203-204.

[124]See Douglass, south Italian town, p.202.

[125]During the 1954 elections, the *democrazia cristiana* showed the people of a small town in Basilicata the immense amounts of money it had spent on local public works. This strategy may have worked against them as the townspeople voted for the Communist Party. Banfield explains, "Seeing

what vast sums had been expended, the voters asked themselves: Who got it all? Why didn't they give me my fair share?" The Moral Basis, p.101.

CHAPTER TWO

Cross of Gold

Ecco a voi l'America: duro lavoro e denaro;
una croce d'oro, ma sempre una croce...

Here is America for you: hardwork and money;
A cross of gold, but all the same a cross...[1]

For Italians, emigration to Canada has proven to be a mixed blessing. While Canada has enabled them to have a higher standard of living than that which they might have had in Italy, it has never lived up to the image that had been built up in their minds prior to emigrating. Encouraging letters from *parenti* and *paesani* had described Canada as the "land of opportunity"; a place where enthusiasm and hard work meant wealth and a comfortable life. Exaggerated or not, the letters made quite an impact on a group of people who faced a bleak future. But the "dream of America" often lasted only until the ship docked in Halifax. The long and restless ride across Canada's great distances evoked suspicion and concern as to what would be waiting for them in the new land. Disillusioned, lonely and unable to speak the language, their first inclination was to return home. Financial considerations aside, pride, stubbornness and the determination to succeed kept them in Canada. It was, as they say, "their cross to bear".

When Italian emigrants spoke of going to 'America', most often they meant the United States. Canada did not become a major destination until after the Second World War. During the first wave of Italian immigration to North America (1901-1910) over two million Italians entered the United

States while less than sixty thousand entered Canada.[2] This was due in part to Canada's selective immigration policy which favoured immigrants from Great Britain and northern Europe while classifying southern Europeans as 'undesirable'. Clifford Sifton, the Minister of the Interior, viewed Italians as particularly unsuitable since they tended to settle in urban centers. He told a deputy minister, "No steps are to be taken to assist or encourage Italian immigration to Canada...You will of course understand that this is to be done without saying anything that will be offensive".[3]

Sifton's remark may have been irrelevant as few Italians had any knowledge of Canada prior to WWI. Fewer still had any desire to emigrate there. The Italian image of Canada was of a cold, desolate and unfriendly place and, since the Canadian government preferred agricultural settlers, it did not promote Canada as a country of immigration in Italy. As well, most Italian emigrants did not have the money to purchase large amounts of land in the Canadian West. This was acknowledged by the Italian Commissariat of Emigration when it "issued several *bollettini* on conditions in Canada which pointed out that the country was not suitable for colonizing except by wealthy peasants".[4]

Nevertheless, Italians did make their way to Canada at the turn of the century. Most were recruited by *padroni* (Italian labour agents) for such companies as the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) and the Dominion Coal Company. Concentrations of Italian labour were also found on construction sites and in lumbering.camps.[5] A large percentage of the CPR's multi-ethnic labour force was Italian; "out of a total workforce of 8,576 men in the employ of the Canadian Pacific Railway, 3,144 were Italians".[6] Such a situation seemed to directly contradict the Alien Labour Act of 1897 that had been passed in an

effort to control the numbers of Italian railway construction workers coming from the United States.[7]

The first wave of Italian immigration to Canada was also temporary and seasonal in character. It was largely made up of young, single males. Married men also came but without their wives and children.[8] The constant moving to various job sites as well as the remoteness of the workcamps would, in any case, have made family life difficult. Early Italian immigration to Canada came mostly from the United States rather than directly from Italy. With the appearance of employment agents associated with steamship companies in Toronto and Montreal, it became possible to recruit labour directly from Italy in the latter part of the nineteenth century, "thus laying the base for a permanent migration stream between Italy and Canada".[9]

Although Italians never made up as large a contingent as the other 'non-preferred' groups, such as Asians or Jews, they were not welcomed by Canadian society. Labour unions resented Italians even though they did the heavy, dangerous and dirty work.[10] Having no knowledge of the English language, or of the Canadian way of life and without legal protection, these men were open to exploitation, most notably by the *padroni*. The activities of one of these unscrupulous *padroni*, Antonio Cordasco, was at the center of the 1904 Royal Commission Inquiry into the Immigration of Italian Labourers in Montreal and the Alleged Fraudulent Practices of Employment Agencies. Cordasco recruited Italian labour by promising steady work at high wages. After extracting a commission fee of three or four dollars, he abandoned the men on the streets of Montreal. Those who had the courage to complain were threatened with bodily injury.[11] Not all *padroni* were corrupt of course, but there were enough of them to generate concern for the well-being of the men they recruited.

> A series of articles appearing in *Corriere della Sera* of Milan in 1901 had caused questions to be raised in the Italian Parliament about conditions in Canada. The principal criticism arose about the way in which labourers were recruited in Italy and the way the individual was misled by everyone concerned.[12]

At the turn of the century, 10,834 Italians lived in Canada.[13] The majority had settled in Ontario and Quebec where employment opportunities were greater, though small Italian communities had formed in the western provinces.[14] During the 1890s, many Italian railroad navvies settled in British Columbia and Alberta. Some found permanent employment with the CPR's (formerly the Heinz) smelter in Trail, B.C., which along with Fernie, B.C., became a popular destination for Italians from the region of Abruzzo-Molise. By 1900, Trail had a number of Italian grocery stores and by 1905 a *Società Soccorso Cristoforo Colombo* [a mutual aid society] had been organized in its 'Little Italy'.[15] The Alberta mining towns of Blairmore, Coleman, Lethbridge, Nordegg, Bankhead, Canmore and Exshaw also attracted Italian labour. A few Italian families homesteaded on the outskirts of Edmonton, near the villages of Venice and Naples while a large number of families from Fossacesia in Abruzzi settled on farms near Delia, Alberta.[16]

Despite their rural, peasant backgrounds, early Italian immigrants had little desire to settle on the land. As sojourners, their primary motive was to earn as much money, as quickly as possible, before returning home. Most of them lacked the capital, as well as the necessary farming skills, to successfully earn a living from the land. In addition, some had left Italy to escape the drudgery of farm labour; an aspect ignored by the Edmonton Journal which

described the average Italian as a "born farmer and gardener...[who] takes to agriculture as naturally as he takes to music".[17]

At the end of the nineteenth century few Italians lived in the city of Calgary. During the city's first period of growth (1883-1914), Calgary held little economic appeal for Italian sojourners who were more attracted to the mining industry of the Crow's Nest Pass and the east Kootenays. However, from 1910 to 1912, a small number of Italians came to take advantage of the city's economic boom. Calgary was becoming an important regional center largely due to the construction of the Canadian Northern and the Grand Trunk Pacific railway.[18] Most of the Italians, however, found jobs with the CPR.

These early settlers were not sojourners. They came to Calgary intending to settle permanently in the city. Males came first and after a short while, sent for their spouses and children. They settled in the Bridgeland/Riverside district along with German and Austrian immigrants. The Italians were concentrated on First, Second and Third avenues. A few Italian families also lived in the Hillhurst/Sunnyside district [19]

Italians did not constitute a large percentage of Calgary's population at this time but they did have some impact.[20] A couple of Italian entrepreneurs formed the short-lived Alberta Macaroni Company in 1907 while others organized a band under Professor Pompiglio which gave open-air concerts and played in Stampede Parades for twenty years.[21] Several Italian families opened small businesses; Giulia and Nick Galleli started Galleli Construction, the Gaspari family opened Roma Grocery, the Casubo family owned a confectionery store in Hillhurst and the Violini family bought and sold coal. Most of the families were of working class background but the community did have some prominent individuals, most notably Giorgio Pocaterra, (a

rancher and explorer originally from Vicenza, in the region of Veneto). Italians were also prominent in sports. Mushy Gahlahan (Morizzio Vietto) and Pet Lazlo (Peter Grigiali) became provincial boxing champions while Tony Aiello was a provincial champion in track.[22]

Although documentation is scanty, the Italians of Calgary seem to have co-existed peacefully with the other ethnic groups in the city. They are described as being "concerned with working hard at their jobs and restricted their socializing to drinking a 'few beers' in bars and 'an occasional card game on Sunday'".[23] Nevertheless, some hostility was expressed towards them. The majority of Calgarians were of British origin and assimilation to anglo-conformity was the accepted ideology. The British considered Italians, along with Poles and Russian Jews, to be 'unassimiable' and associated their presence with squalor and poverty, an attitude reflected by the local press. [24] Italians, whose customs and standard of living contrasted sharply with those of the Anglo-majority, were regarded as 'undesirable'.[25] Hostility toward Italians was expressed mostly in name calling, ('dago' was a popular insult) and seems to have lessened as nativist attention focused on labour radicals and enemy aliens in wartime. Italy's role alongside the Allied powers in World War I helped reduce, but did not eliminate, prejudice and discrimination towards Italo-Canadians.[26]

In 1920, Calgary received a second influx of Italian immigrants. By 1921 the Italian community had grown to 425 and a large number had come directly from Italy. [27] Most of the migrants were farm labourers from the town of Antrodoco in Lazio and various places in Abruzzi and from northern Italy, primarily Veneto. A substantial number also came from Nordegg, Alberta when its mining operations went into decline. They boarded with family and *paesani* in Bridgeland/Riverside. Through family connections they found

employment with the CPR, the City of Calgary (waterworks division), Burns Meat Packing Plant, and the Calgary Brewery. Some of the women worked in the dairy department of Burns or at the Palliser Hotel where Mario Grassi was the assistant *maître d'*. Two women, Cesira Di Paolo and Angelina Rebaudengo, worked as furriers. None were professionals but a few enterprising individuals started their own businesses. The children of the Italian immigrants generally attended St. Angela's or St. Ann's Catholic schools and those who went on to high school graduated from St Mary's.[28]

The community's religious needs were served by St. Mary's Parish and in the chapel of St. Angela's school parish. Church attendance was sporadic among the immigrants mainly due to transportation problems, although there certainly were those who were anti-clerical. St. Mary's was located too far to be easily accessible to the residents of Bridgeland/Riverside, especially during the winter when it was too cold to walk. Many of the immigrants went to church only to receive the sacraments, preferring to pray at home. Knowing how difficult it was for their parishners to attend church services, priests often visited them at home.[29]

As Calgary's 'Little Italy' grew, it began to provide its members with some essential services. Antonio Rebaudengo became the honourary Italian consul between 1936 and 1938.[30] Mr. Rebaudengo, who apparently was appointed to this unpaid position by the Mussolini government because he was one of the few individuals in the Italian community who was fully literate and had an education, had already begun assisting fellow countrymen in such a capacity in the mid-1920s. He also wrote articles on the activities of the Calgary Italian Community for Italian newspapers in Toronto and Vancouver. The consular office acted as a contact between Italians in Canada and the Italian government. Although Mr. Rebaudengo held the official title,

it was his wife Angelina who carried out most of the duties. She not only handled the necessary consular paperwork but she also assisted new immigrants in finding housing and employment. Since many of the immigrants spoke no English and were illiterate in Italian, Mrs. Rebaudengo wrote letters for them to relatives back home, helped them fill out forms and acted as translator. Her services often went beyond the call of duty. She assisted many women with their marriage preparations and even during pregnancy and childbirth.[31]

At the center of the community's social life was the *Giovanni Caboto Loggia No.8*. Founded in 1918 as a branch of the *Ordine dei Figli d'Italia* (Order of the Sons of Italy). The lodge later merged with the *Indipendenti Fiori d'Italia* (Independent Order of the Flower of Italy) whose head office was in Fernie, B.C.[32] This order was initially organized as a benevolent society which provided social assistance to members in times of illness, bereavement and other misfortunes in return for a fee of one dollar a month. In the beginning, the meetings were held in the homes of lodge members but later a garage on Edmonton Trail was purchased and used as a cultural center. The lodge held meetings, organized an Italian school, a band and a variety of other social activities. During the Depression, many members left the lodge due to the financial stresses of the time. Other members left to form a rival organization, the *Associazione Italo-Canadese* in 1933.[33] In the latter part of the 1930s, a few of the more affluent members tried to revive membership by reorganizing the lodge and rebuilding the existing clubhouse but with onset of World War Two and the accompanying hostility toward Italo-Canadians, the new facilities had to be sold.[34]

During the 1920s and the 1930s, there was also an active fascist party in Calgary, the *Fascio*. It seems to have existed outside of the *Giovanni Caboto*

Loggia but it is not known whether it was a chapter of the Canadian Union of Fascists.[35] Little is known about the activities of the *Fascio* but it was probably more a social club whose members admired Mussolini and the glory he was bringing to Italy than a political organization.[36] Although support for the *Fascio* was exclusively Italian it is not known how many immigrants belonged to the party. The head of the *Fascio* was Antonio Rebaudengo, the honourary Italian Consul. After he was arrested by the RCMP in 1940, his wife destroyed all the documents relating to the *Fascio* including the names of members. Mr. Rebaudengo had instructed her to do so in order to prevent any other Italian from being interned.[37]

Italian immigration to Calgary virtually ended in 1927, in part because Italy's fascist government restricted emigration but also because the Canadian government, reacting to the wave of xenophobia and radicalism that was sweeping the United States, began curtailing southern European immigration in the mid-1920s.[38] With the onset of the Depression, further restrictions were added to Canada's immigration policy. After 1931, Canadian immigration law permitted entry only to "British persons, U.S. citizens, wives, fiancés and dependents of these and agriculturalists having sufficient means to farm in Canada".[39] During the 1930s, the Italian community's growth came from natural increase and internal migration.

Evidence is lacking in regards to the impact of the Depression on the lives of Italians in Calgary. Some respondents recalled that they "did okay" or that "it wasn't all that bad".[40] None of the respondents reported losing their jobs or suffering extreme hardship, but all knew of a few Italian families who were on relief and were forced to use soup kitchens on occasion. Those who were hit hard by the Depression survived by relying on kin for support. Families economized by sharing housing and food. Strong family ties, along

with the code of obligation to look after the needs of blood relatives, ensured that few Italo-Canadians went hungry.[41]

Whatever the impact of the Depression on the Italian community, it would pale in comparison to that of the Second World War. On 10 June 1940, Benito Mussolini declared that Italy was entering the war as an Axis partner. That same day, Prime Minister Mackenzie King announced that the RCMP had been authorized by the Minister of Justice to arrest anyone of Italian origin who engaged in activities deemed to be dangerous to the security of Canada.[42] Italian immigrants who had not become naturalized citizens prior to 1 September 1929, were declared to be enemy aliens and were required to turn in their firearms and register with the RCMP.[43] Fearing internment, many immigrants became reclusive and avoided one another.

During the Second World War, many Italo-Canadians became the victims of prejudice and discrimination. Tony Valerio's application to be a pilot and navigator in the Royal Canadian Air Force was rejected, because he was the son of an Italian immigrant, even though he was fully qualified.[44] Ironically the enemy alien declaration did not prevent the drafting of Italo-Canadians into the Armed Forces although they were kept away from the Italian war zone. Some businesses fired their Italian employees while others refused to hire them. In an effort to demonstrate their loyalty, most Italo-Canadians co-operated with the authorities and did not question the actions of the federal government. However one Italo-Canadian fought back. When Angelina Rebaudengo was denied the wartime allowance given to the mothers of servicemen, she wrote Prime Minister Mackenzie King a letter calling him a liar. Describing her injustices, she demanded and to her surprise received, the allowance.[45]

Throughout Alberta, Italians who were suspected of being fascist leaders or sympathizers were arrested and sent to internment camps. In Calgary, the only Italian interned was Antonio Rebaudengo who spent three years at the Kananaskis, Petawawa and Gagetown camps before being released in 1943. In the Crow's Nest Pass, the mining industry's need for labour kept many Italians out of the internment camps.[46] One survivor sums up the wartime experience:

> We were called 'dago', 'Mussolini', 'fascist'. We tried to ignore it. We were the minority. We were the aliens. War was not on our side.[47]

At the end of the Second World War, Italo-Canadians began to inquire about the possibility of sponsoring relatives from overseas. Such inquiries were somewhat premature as Canadian immigration policy still classified Italian immigrants as 'undesirable' and as enemy aliens they were barred from entering the country.[48] However in the latter part of the 1940s, the post-war expansion in industry and its need for unskilled labour combined with the pressure of hundreds of thousands of other Europeans eager to emigrate, to force changes in Canada's existing immigration policy. The categories of admissible relatives was widened to include siblings, spouses and distant relatives and the Department of Citizenship and Immigration was created.[49] The enemy alien designation was removed in 1947 and in January, of the following year, the Canadian Embassy opened in Rome. In 1948, 3,202 Italians entered Canada compared with 139 in the previous year.[50]

Although Italian immigration to Canada resumed in 1948 it did not reach significant levels until the mid-1950s. As in previous migrations, Canada was not the preferred destination of Italians. The United States was their primary choice but numerous restrictions including the McCarran-

Walter Act of 1952 which upheld the quota system, made it difficult to emigrate there.[51] Argentina, a popular choice in previous migrations, soon lost its attractiveness as news of political unrest and economic instability reached relatives in Italy. Australia actively recruited immigrant labour but its population was openly hostile toward Italian workers and after 1952, it pursued a pro-white immigration policy that not only discriminated against Asians but non-western Europeans as well. As the options dwindled, Canada became a favourable alternative.[52]

The first wave of post-war Italian immigrants came primarily through the sponsorship of relatives who had emigrated prior to the war, although there were some individuals who were permitted to enter Canada to meet specific labour shortages. Italians without relatives to sponsor them sought entry as contract labour by registering with the Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Security.[53] Canada's need for unskilled manpower saw an active recruitment of Italian labour through such established employers as the Welch (Veltri) Company of Thunder Bay, Ontario, which was an important railway subcontractor, and through advertisements placed in European newspapers.[54] Those who were accepted for employment in Canada were signed to one-year contracts as farm, mining or railway labour.[55]

The initial post-war Italian immigration to Calgary was made up predominantly of males unaccompanied by family members. These men worked under contract for the CPR in Canmore and Banff or on farms. When their contracts expired, they moved to Calgary to board with relatives or *paesani* in Bridgeland/Riverside or else they rented cheap housing in Victoria Park. Some were assisted by Catholic Immigration Services or Angelina Rebaudengo in finding accommodations.[56]

Only rarely did entire families emigrate. It was more common for a married man to sponsor a brother or cousin in order to share housing and expenses and save money. These men would later send for their wives. After 1955, women began to make up a substantial portion of the Italian movement to Calgary.[57] Many of these women came as young brides; a few as 'picture brides'. The 'picture brides' were introduced to their *fidanzato* (betrothed) in a photograph sent home to Italy by a brother, uncle or cousin. The girl's family would, with the aid of the local priest, make inquiries about the family of the prospective husband and if all was agreeable, a wedding would take place once he returned to Italy. However, she might not accompany him back to Canada for a few months or even a year. 'Picture brides' were not common and such activities were generally discouraged by Canadian immigration officials because of the numerous problems which arose from this type of marriage.[58] Unfortunately, many a 'picture bride' discovered that her groom had not exactly been truthful in their long distance romance. Despite this, divorce or annulment was not usually considered by 'picture brides' as most chose to live with their disillusionment rather than face the humiliation of family and friends in Italy.[59]

In emigrating to Canada, southern Italians with their strong ties to *la famiglia*, took advantage of the sponsorship system. The pre-war migrants did everything possible to facilitate immigration for their relatives. They contacted immigration officials, secured employment and loaned money for the voyage. Since relatives received priority in the immigration process, sponsorship quickly became most the popular method of entering Canada.[60] So popular in fact, that after 1955, "the sponsorship of relatives took up so much of the Italian quota that practically no open placement recruitment of Italian immigrants took place".[61] These immigrants, in turn, sponsored

relatives who then sponsored other relatives, thus forming a chain migration.

By the end of the 1950s, partially as a result of chain migration, southern Italians began to significantly outnumber northern and central Italian immigrants in Canada. Of the 250,000 Italians who entered Canada between 1946-1961, nearly 60 percent were from *il mezzogiorno.* Roughly 20 percent of those were from the regions of Calabria and Abruzzo-Molise.[62] In Calgary, most of the post-war migration also came from Calabria and the Abruzzo-Molise with smaller percentages from Campania, Puglia, and the northern regions of Veneto, Friuli and Piemonte.[63]

The emerging predominance of southern Italians did not go unnoticed by the largely Anglo-Saxon Canadian population. As the southern Italian community grew so did hostility:

> Even federal immigration officials who did recruit from Italy focused on the inferiority of southern Italians, whom they portrayed as backward and slovenly, and worried that these peasants significantly outnumbered their more "industrious" northern compatriots. "The Italian South peasant", one official wrote, "is not the type we are looking for in Canada. His standard of living, his way of life, even his civilization seems so different I doubt if he could ever become an asset to our country".[64]

The stereotype of the southern Italians portrayed hot-headed *latinos* who were prone to violence and crime. These stereotypes persisted even though a 1957 Report on Criminality Among the Foreign Born revealed that Italians had the lowest crime rate of all immigrants, "far below immigrants from the United States, the United Kingdom and Scandinavia. And when compared to

the general population, the Italian crime rate was only one-sixth the national average".[65]

Concern over the numbers of Italian immigrants entering Canada grew so strong that by the late 1950s pressure was put on the Conservative government of John Diefenbaker to review Canada's immigration laws. Hostility over Italian immigration was more prevalent in eastern than western Canada as their numbers were higher there. Politicians, union leaders and nativist Canadians were alarmed when figures revealed that in 1958, Italian immigration surpassed British by 2,000.[66]

The severe recession of 1958 combined with fears over the changing nature of Canada's 'racial' composition to produce what one historian describes as "a near panic" situation.[67] The federal government responded in 1959 by enacting an order-in-council restricting the admission of sponsored relatives. However, criticism from the Liberal opposition "proved effective in rallying a large segment of public opinion and various ethnic groups and the government was forced to rescind the restrictive order a month after its passage".[68]

Whether seen as restrictive or lax, Canada's immigration policy needed changing. In the 1950s, the Canadian economy had expanded rapidly and the labour force had grown to meet the demand. Many unskilled immigrants quickly found employment in the construction industry, on farms or as labourers. After 1960 Canada became less agrarian and industrialization was accompanied by urbanization. The new immigration policy of 1962 reflected the needs of the labour market by placing more emphasis on the individual immigrant's education, job training and skills and less on his country of origin:

> The long standing preference for British, West European, American and white Commonwealth immigrants was replaced with occupational criteria in which country of origin was officially irrelevant. This stance was expanded and culminated in 1967 with the universalistic immigration policy known as the "points system".[69]

Under the new regulations it became increasingly difficult for sponsored relatives to enter Canada unless they met the "points system" requirements. As a result, Italian immigration fell sharply and by the early 1970s, it made up only 3.8 percent of all immigration into Canada.[70]

The restrictions initiated in 1962 did little, however, to stop the flow of Italians into Calgary. The Italian community grew from 4,720 in 1961 to 9,810 in 1971.[71] In comparison with those who came in the 1950s, the 1960s group was more educated and more consumeristic "with a kaleidoscope array of skills and trades".[72] Italians who had emigrated during the 1950s tended to be unskilled labour by occupation. The 1960s group was largely composed of skilled artisans such as finishing carpenters, tailors, mechanics, along with, geologists, professors and other professionals as well as unskilled labourers. Some immigrants were also tenant farmers who had learned a trade in previous migrations to northern Italy, West Germany, Belgium, or Switzerland. However, the majority of the artisans had been trained in the *botteghe* of southern Italy.[73]

Not all of the immigrants came directly to Calgary. A few came from Calabria to join kin in Fernie, Natal and Kelowna in British Columbia where they were horrified to discover that the only employment was in the mines or as farm labour. They usually left quickly, moving in with other relatives in Calgary. The children of pre-war Italian immigrants in Lethbridge, Blairmore and Coleman also moved to Calgary during this period.[74]

Although the majority of the post-war immigrants had higher levels of education than those of the pre-war wave, educational levels were still quite low by Canadian standards. Nationally, 59 percent of the Italian immigrants aged 15 and over had less than a Grade Eight education.[75] Calgary's post-war Italian population had on average, *la quinta elementare* which was the end of compulsory education in Italy that is, roughly the equivalent of Grade Six in Canada. Some had Grade Three or less. Teenaged immigrants who started school in Canada often left once they reached the legal dropout age, frustrated by language difficulties and embarrassed by being put into classes with students far younger than themselves. Those who started school at age 10 and under generally finished high school.[76]

Lack of education was not a hindrance to finding employment but language difficulties could be. Most immigrants managed to begin work within a few days of arrival as jobs were often secured beforehand by a relative. Not being able to speak English, however, meant that they had to start at the lowest level of the construction industry or service sector. Some worked at jobs far below their skill level. David Colonna, for example, worked in the tailor shop of the Hudson's Bay department store even though he had a diploma in fashion design from *Istituto Salesiano Milano* (Salesian Institute of Milan) and had designed costumes for the opera house, La Scala. Until he could overcome the language barrier, his credentials meant little.[77]

Language classes were held at the Calgary Italian Club for a small fee or free of charge at St. Mary's Parish, but few found the time to attend. There was little incentive to learn English since Italians tended to work for companies where fellow co-workers were often *paesani*. Atco Construction, Paragon Construction, The City Of Calgary, and the CPR (Ogden Shops) employed Italian labour. Women worked as seamstresses, (the majority of these were

northern Italians); hairdressers or as unskilled labour in dry cleaning plants, hospitals or Italian restaurants. Despite the linguistic advantages of working for an Italian employer, most immigrants preferred Canadian companies where they were less likely to be exploited.[78]

It was not uncommon for men and women to hold two or even three jobs in order to save money for a house (often purchased within three years of emigrating with sizable down payments), or else a business of their own. Owning a business was the dream of many Italian immigrants and what they lacked in education they made up for with good business sense, hard work and fierce determination. While Italians tended to concentrate in the ownership of restaurants, grocery stores which specialized in imported goods from Italy, clothing stores, bakeries, construction and contracting firms, they also owned a variety of other businesses. Shaganappi Chevrolet-Oldsmobile, Reality World-Tempo Real Estate and Statecraft Furniture were all started by post-war Italian immigrants. Other Italian owned businesses include Alberta Brake and Clutch, Big Horn Transport, the North and South Center Inns and The Hatchwear Uniform Company.[79]

The chain migration pattern of the 1950s and 1960s resulted in large concentrations of Italians in the Bridgeland/Riverside district, although they could be found in other districts of the city. After boarding with kin, they would find living quarters of their own within a few weeks. This was especially true in the 1960s when it was more common for families to emigrate together. Usually they would occupy the basement of a relative's home until separate accommodations became available. Family members preferred to live near each other and if one individual moved out of an area the relatives often followed. This pattern was quite common with the Calabresi and Abruzzesi and reflected their strong ties to *la famiglia.* [80]

Of the four geographical divisions in Calgary the northwest has been the most popular with Italians. The northend in general has always been preferred over south Calgary. Italians tended to choose neighborhoods that were close to downtown, Catholic schools and of course other family members. As Italians became more affluent during the early 1970s, a great many built homes in the newly formed district of Huntington Hills. Duplexes were a favorite type of housing since one side could be rented to help pay the mortgage or else shared with family members. The economic boom of the late 1970s and early 1980s saw these same families move to the districts of Beddington Heights, Dalhousie, Edgemont and Silver Springs where they built elaborate homes, usually within a block of other family members. Again the same phenomenon occurred, when one family moved, another followed. The areas of Renfrew and Marlborough also have large numbers of Italian residents. Only the older, retired immigrants remain in Bridgeland.[81]

In the 1960s, Italians were only the eighth largest ethnic group in Calgary. The British were the largest group, followed by the Germans, Scandinavians, French, Dutch, Ukrainians and Poles.[82] Numerically they were insignificant yet they were subject to prejudice and discrimination. Relations seem to be most troublesome with the British. One informant recalled that the "goddamn limeys always made trouble for Italians" and that "they were jealous of us".[83] Italians were frequently called 'dago', 'wop' and on occasion, 'mafioso'. Victor Fornaro remembered being involved in fights as a schoolboy over being called a 'DP' and being told to "go back where he belonged".[84] Overall, prejudice and discrimination tended to be related to isolated incidents. Italians were not prohibited from working or living in any area of the city. Construction companies welcomed Italian labour as it brought much needed skills to the industry.

In an effort to cushion the shocks of life in the new country, Italian immigrants tried to reproduce as much of the homeland as possible. They planted fig trees in their greenhouses and grapevines in their backyards, played favourite folk songs at social gatherings, cooked traditional foods and visited friends and family on weekends. On one occasion reproducing Italian tradition landed them into trouble with the local authorities. Late one night in 1964, some seventeen families in Bridgeland were raided by the RCMP who smashed demijohns filled with wine, took away wine making equipment and fined each family $100. Other families, fearful of being arrested, drained their wine supply into the sewer.[85]

Anger over the raids created a strong sense of community cohesion. The leaders of the community, Alberto Romano, Elia Martina, and Tony Sanguin hired a lawyer and through petitions and various appeals to the public, they successfully lobbied the provincial government to allow winemaking at home. In 1967, a new law was passed permitting 25 gallons of wine for every person over the legal drinking age.[86]

The desire to reproduce the traditions of the homeland also carried over into religion. Until 1965, Calgary's Italian community did not have its own church. Italian services were held at Our Lady of Perpetual Help (OLPH), St. Mary's and St. Joseph's Parish whenever Italian priests visited. Two priests, Father Dale at OLPH, an Irishman who spoke some Italian, and Father Gino Violini at St. Mary's, were available to assist immigrants. In 1963, the Italian community received its first permanent Italian Scalabriniano father, Monsignor Angelo Sacchi. Monsignor Sacchi resided at St. Joseph's Parish but held Italian masses at St. Paul's. Under his guidance an old, abandoned Presbyterian Church in the district of Inglewood was transformed into *La Parrochia di Sant'Andrea* (St. Andrew's Parish).[87]

In comparison to the pre-war migrants who were not strong in church attendance, the post-war immigrants became closely attached to St. Andrew's. While they claim to have felt comfortable in the 'English' church the immigrants felt the need for their own church as only an Italian parish could accommodate their special cultural traditions such as *compareggio* (godparenthood), *festa dei santi* (festival of a patron saint), first communion, weddings, or a special mass for a deceased relative in Italy. Oddly enough, Calgary's Italians never continued *la processione* (the religious procession of the Madonna or a patron saint) which is common in the Italian communities of Toronto, New York and Boston.

It is ironic that the southern Italians, who had been so religiously indifferent in Italy, would grow attached to the church in Canada. However, in the new country the church was a social as well as a religious institution and it became a means of maintaining Italian culture. Since 1975, the religious and social functions of the Italian church have had the highest level of participation in the Italian community.[88] Its activities are far more popular than those organized by the Italian club, clearly indicating the strong role religion plays in group maintenance.[89]

Despite its popularity, not all Italians joined St. Andrew's Parish. Many of the older immigrants felt more comfortable in the parishes of St. Mary's or OLPH or else did not have easy access to St. Andrew's as many of them did not own vehicles. Even so they did attend St. Andrew's on special occasions. St. Andrew's served the Italian community until 1985 when Our Lady of Grace was constructed in Renfrew.

Throughout the 1950s and the 1960s, the center of Italian associational life in Calgary was the Italian Club. It was organized in 1955 when the *Associazione Italo-Canadese* merged with the *Giovanni Caboto Loggia.*[90] As

the club had no permanent home, meetings and other social activities were held in Luca Carloni's restaurant, "Isle of Capri" until 1 May, 1959 when a barn was purchased to house the club.[91]

The new club operated purely as a social organization as it was no longer a benevolent society. It held dances, *bocce* tournaments, banquets and festivals. Its soccer team, "Juventus", gave young men the opportunity to play their favourite sport. One of the most popular activities was the annual picnic which was attended by members and non-members alike. The club enabled new immigrants to meet other Italians who often provided assistance with lodging, employment and introduced them to potential spouses. In the 1960s, single males no longer returned to their home village to marry. Instead they began to choose brides from the Italian community. This led to a high number of inter-regional marriages. The Calabresi, however, not only tended to chose a spouse from the same region but also the same province. Moreover, their marriages were often arranged by family members. Marriage outside of the ethnic group was rare and when it did occur it was the males who wed non-Italians. Marriage to non-Catholics was even rarer. Contrary to the popular view, not all Italians are Roman Catholics and in Calgary, there are some Italians, usually second or third generation, who belong to the United Church and Jehovah's Witnesses. These Italo-Canadians are in the minority and are not accepted in the community.[92]

The Italian Club thrived in the 1960s because it filled the needs of a growing community. Members worked together to establish a variety of services. They created the Columbus Savings and Credit Union in 1960 in response to the problems many Italians had in trying to secure loans from established financial institutions. In 1974, with the aid of grants from the federal government, club members founded the Italian Saturday School and

Italians For Community Action (a television media group). A Ladies' Auxiliary, a *bocce* club and the Sportsman Dinner Association were all extensions of the Italian Club.[93]

Neither the club nor the community has been successful in establishing an Italian newspaper in the city of Calgary. One possible explanation is that there appears to be an insufficient number of literate readers to support a local paper. As well, there are a number of alternative sources available which make it difficult for a local paper to succeed financially. Some of the immigrants subscribe to Italian newspapers published in other cities such as *Il Congresso* from Edmonton and *L'Eco d'Italia* from Vancouver. Others keep abreast of events in the homeland by reading newspapers from Italy such as *Corriere Della Sera* of Milan or journals published by Roman Catholic churches in Italy, like *Messagero di Sant'Antonio.*

As the Italian community grew, it became more diverse and less cohesive. Economic competition fueled class antagonisms, but the greatest obstacle to the organizational unity of Italians in Calgary has been regionalism. Immigration did not serve as a basis for long term community cohesion. Pride, arrogance, traditional enmities and jealousy causes immigrants to regard those from outside of their region as distinct, inferior types. This division is most prevalent between northern and southern Italian immigrants. Northerners refer to southern Italians as ignorant *cafoni* (boors) while southerners call northern Italians by the derogatory term *polentoni* (*polenta* eater).[94] Regional hostility is so strong that any project requiring cooperation from the Italian community is certain to create controversy and has a high probability of failure.[95] It is perhaps for this reason that Calgary's Italians do not organize cultural activities like *la Settimana Italiana* (Italian week) held every July by Vancouver's Italian community.

These internal divisions eventually carried over into the Italian Club. The board of directors, which was dominated by northern Italians, was regularly accused of misappropriating funds. Heated arguments and bitter confrontations over mismanagement of the club ended with resignations and the turning in of memberships. Often as one member resigned, his relatives followed suit. Past-presidents were harshly criticized and even ostracised in the community. The creation of regional clubs such as the Fogolar Furlan (northern Italians) and the Abruzzesi Club simply made the problem worse as there was not enough money for these groups to have separate buildings.[96]

By 1975, the Italian club found itself in serious financial trouble. Membership had declined drastically and the organization was criticized for everything from its 'poor' entertainment facilities to its Bridgeland location. Many objected to the new sixty dollar membership fee and cancelled their memberships, preferring to hold family functions at the Italian church. An accurate assessment of Italian club membership is difficult to determine as the club has not kept records since 1960. As well, there are those who pay the membership fee but do not attend and those who attend the club regularly, but do not officially join.[97]

While the problem of contending regionalism was a serious one the decline in membership and participation in the Italian Club was most likely due to the process of acculturation. In the 1950s and 1960s, the role of the Italian Club was to help settle the new immigrants. As Italians became established in the Canadian mainstream, they no longer needed the services of the club. Once the club fulfilled its aim, its decline was inevitable.[98] In its present state the Italian club seems to serve no purpose within the community. As a social center it offers little in the way of cultural activities

and more importantly, it has failed to generate interest among second generation Italo-Canadians.[99]

The Italian immigrants generally blame the decline of the Italian Club on poor leadership. They argue that the pre-war Italians made better leaders than the post-war ones. In a sense that is true. The pre-war migration developed the Italian club in an effort to maintain the community's *Italianità* and they realised that if the club were to survive, it had to change as the needs of the community changed. By contrast, the post-war leaders are described as "stubborn individuals who resist change".[100]

The post-war migrants do not need to rely on secular organizations to maintain their ethnicity. Therefore, unless a new role is found for the Italian club, it may cease to exist. Some of the members have contemplated operating a social services center which would direct those in need to the proper agencies. Similar centers in other cities have proven to be successful. At present there is no organization in the Italian community to assist immigrants with problems such as family violence, substance abuse, financial and employment difficulties or an emotional crisis. There is a need for such a center, especially in cases where the language and cultural barrier makes it difficult, if not impossible, for immigrants to use existing social service agencies.[101]

Italians in Calgary have done quite well for themselves. Through hard work and determination they have risen from their peasant and working class origins to middle class status. While they are under-represented in the professions, there are a few first and several second generation Italo-Canadians in law, medicine and business.

Italians in Calgary have yet to make an impact on the political scene. No Italian from Calgary has been elected as mayor, councilman, MLA, or MP.

The only person of Italian descent to seek the latter two positions is Darryl Raymaker, a lawyer whose mother was from Piemonte. While Italians did have a tendency to did vote Liberal during the early 1970s, mostly because they were fond of the party's leader, Pierre Trudeau, they are politically apathetic, rarely affiliating themselves with any political party.[102] As well, federal and provincial politicians have not actively sought the Italian vote in Calgary, due to the fact that there are not enough Italians in one riding to significantly make a difference in an election.[103]

The immigrants are less apathetic than they had been in Italy where there is much contempt for government and its officials. Politicians are thought to be corrupt and are referred to as *magnacci* ("pimps"). Italy's infamous bureaucracy has made them distrustful of all authority figures, an attitude which they brought with them to Canada. Their apathy towards the political system has to do with the fact that their primary concern is for the well-being of themselves and their families. They state over and over that the political system of Canada has little to do with them. One man echoed the sentiment of many other immigrants, "It doesn't matter who runs this country...NDP, PC, or the Liberals...I still have to go to work each morning".[104]

At present there are 11,240 Italians in Calgary.[105] The post-war migrants have now reached middle-age. Most of them have abandoned their dreams of retiring to Italy. Their children have married and they cannot bear the thought of leaving them or their grandchildren. Most call Canada home, visiting Italy only occasionally. They have discovered on numerous trips to their native towns and villages, that they no longer belong there. Italy itself, even the towns in the south, has changed in so many ways. A few families who attempted to resettle in Italy in the 1970s quickly came back to Canada. They had returned not to the Italy of their youth but one of legalized abortion,

divorce, cohabitation before marriage, terrorism and increased affluence.[106] The old towns looked the same; the friends and family they left behind were still there, but somehow it was all different. They had not expected so many changes. What they did not realise was that they had also changed. They were not the same people who had left Italy so many years earlier. They had absorbed some of the Canadian way of thinking. Confused and disillusioned they now prefer life in Canada where they can continue to cultivate the old ways-the customs and values that represent the vanished Italian eras of the 1950s and 1960s.[107]

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

[1]Italian popular song cited in Carlo Levi, "Italy's Myth of America", LIFE, 7 July 1947, pp.89-90.

[2]Robert. F. Harney, "Italians in Canada", Italians in North America, (Toronto: The Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1979), p.5. Italian immigrants also favoured the United States over Canada. In particular they were attracted to the large cities on the eastern seaboard where job opportunities were greater. This preference continued until the 1920s, when the United States enacted legislation restricting the numbers of immigrants based on nationality. The Johnson-Reed Act of 1924 allotted Italy a yearly quota of 5,802, effectively ending large scale Italian immigration to the United States. Leonard Dinnerstein and David M. Reimers, Ethnic Americans, (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1975), pp.71-72.

[3]As cited in Harney, "Italians in Canada", p.5.

[4]Robert F. Harney, "Men without Women: Italian Migrants in Canada, 1885-1930", in Betty Boyd Caroli, Robert F. Harney and Lydio F. Tomasi (eds.), The Italian Immigrant Woman in North America, (Toronto: The Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1978), p.82.

[5]Robert F. Harney, "Frozen Wastes: The State of Italian Canadian Studies", S.M. Tomasi (ed.), Perspectives in Italian Immigration and Ethnicity, (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1977), p.123.

[6]Bruno Ramirez, The Italians in Canada, Canadian Historical Association, (Ottawa, 1989), p.7.

[7]Howard Palmer, Land of the Second Chance, (Lethbridge: Lethbridge Herald, 1972), p.174.

[8]By 1910, 7 out of every 10 Italian immigrants were male. Clifford Jansen, Italians in a Multicultural Canada, (Queenston: Mellen Press, 1988), p.19.

[9]Ramirez, Italians in Canada, p.6.

[10]Harney, "Italians in Canada", p.5.

[11]Kenneth Bagnell, Canadese: A Portrait of the Italian Canadians, (Toronto: Macmillan, 1989), pp.3-4; Luigi Bruti-Liberati, "Le relazioni tra

Canada e Italia e l'emigrazione italiana nel primo Novecento", Studi Emigrazione, no.77 (Marzo 1985): 46-47; Harney, "Italians in Canada", pp.8-9.

[12]Jansen, Italians in a Multicultural Canada, p.19.

[13]Palmer, Second Chance, p.174.

[14]Ramirez, Italians in Canada, p.6.

[15]Gabriele P. Scardellato, "Beyond the Frozen Wastes: Italian Sojourners and Settlers in British Columbia", in R. Perin and F. Sturino (eds.), Arrangiarsi, (Montreal: Guerica, 1989), p.144; William A. Douglass, Emigration in a south Italian town, (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1984), p.194.

[16]Palmer, Second Chance, p.175; Charles and Lena Violini, interview by M. Fedori, 21 March 1987, Glenbow Archives; Giovanni Ambrogiano, interview by R. Audia and K. Savoia, 23 May 1985, Calgary Italian Club Collection; Adrian Bussoli, interview with author, 30 June 1988, Glenbow Archives.

[17]As cited in John G. Fainella, "The Development of Italian Organizations in Calgary", Alberta History 32, 1 (Winter 1985): 21.

[18]Max Foran, Calgary: An Illustrated History, (Toronto: Lorimer and Company, 1978), p.67.

[19]Flavia Santucci, interview by R. Audia and K. Savoia, 22 May 1985, Calgary Italian Club Collection; Angelina Rebaudengo, interview by M. Fedori, 23 February 1987, Glenbow Archives; Violini interview.

[20]In 1911, Italians in Calgary numbered 114, making up .3 percent of the city's population. Census of Canada, 1911.

[21]Foran, Calgary, p.86; Rebaudengo interview.

[22]Giulia Galleli, interview by R. Audia and K. Savoia, 28 May 1985, Calgary Italian Club Collection; Rebaudengo interview; Violini interview; Fainella, "Italian Organizations", p.26.

[23]Quoted in Fainella, "Italian Organizations", p.20.

[24]See for example, Robert F. Harney, "Italophobia: An English-speaking Malady?", Studi Emigrazione, no.77 (Marzo 1985): 37-38.

[25]Foran, Calgary, p.89; Fainella, "Italian Organizations", p.21. For further discussion of the roots and history of anti-Italian sentiment in Canada, see Harney, "Italophobia", pp.6-43.

[26]Fainella, "Italian Organizations", p.22; Howard Palmer, Patterns of Prejudice: A History of Nativism in Alberta, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982), p.61.

[27]Census of Canada, 1921.

[28]Camila Dileandro, interview by R. Audia and K. Savoia, 24 May 1985, Calgary Italian Club Collection; Cesira Di Paolo, interview by R. Audia and K. Savoia, 24 May 1985, Calgary Italian Club Collection; Zuppe D'Amico, interview by M. Fedori, 12 February 1987, Glenbow Archives; Adelina Carloni, interview by R. Audia and K. Savoia, 10 June 1985, Calgary Italian Club Collection; Rebaudengo interview; Santucci interview.

[29]Dileandro interview; Rebaudengo interview; Santucci interview.

[30]Rebaudengo interview. Mrs. Rebaudengo could not recall the exact date that her husband became the Italian consul.

[31]Ibid.

[32]Fainella, "Italian Organizations", p.22.

[33]Ibid., p.23.

[34]Fainella reports that the *Loggia*, along with the newly formed *Associazione Italo-Canadese*, "suspended their meetings on recommendations of the authorities and closed their doors for a period of time". Fainella, "Italian Organizations", p.24.

[35]Ibid. p.22.

[36]Rebaudengo interview. See also Bagnell, Canadese, pp.78, 90 and Harney, "Italians in Canada", pp.17-18.

[37]Mrs. Rebaudengo believes that if the names of the other members had been known to the RCMP, they would have been arrested and sent to internment camps. After they arrested her husband, the RCMP searched her home on two occasions and harassed her on numerous others. They

demanded to be told the names of the other members. She refused to cooperate. Rebaudengo interview.

[38]Harney, "Italians in Canada", p.15. Harney also suggests that, "Italians who had never been welcome immigrants, were among those classified as undesirable when clearer, and clearly racially inspired, definitions of desirable immigrants became a matter of quotas and restrictions in the 1920s". "Italophobia", p.40.

[39]Jansen, Italians in a Multicultural Canada, p.29.

[40]Angelo De Paolo, interview by R. Audia and K. Savoia, 24 May 1985, Calgary Italian Club Collection; Santucci interview; Dileandro interview.

[41]De Paolo interview; Santucci interview; Dileandro interview. It has been estimated that by 1940, ten percent of the 108 Italian families living in Calgary were on relief. Fainella, "Italian Organizations", p.24.

[42]Bagnell, Canadese, p.73.

[43]Ramirez, Italians in Canada, p.19; Harney, "Italians in Canada", p.19.

[44]Nina and Tony Valerio, interview with the author, 18 August 1988, Glenbow Archives.

[45]Mrs. Rebaudengo wrote the letter one evening after listening to a radio broadcast in which Prime Minister Mackenzie King promised he would look after the mothers and spouses of Canadian servicemen. Earlier that day, Mrs. Rebaudengo, whose son was in the Army, had been told she was not entitled to the wartime allowance since she was an enemy alien. She had been denied relief for the same reason. In her letter to Mackenzie King, she asked to be put into an internment camp so that at least she could eat. Rebaudengo interview.

[46]Overall, approximately 700 Italo-Canadians, from various social and economic backgrounds, were interned. Except for three women who were sent to the Kingston Penitentiary in Ontario, all of the internees were male. Unlike the Japanese internment, homes and properties were not confiscated but some bank accounts were frozen. There was never any evidence that any of the internees were a threat to national security. All of the internees were released by 1943. At present, the National Congress of Italo-Canadians is lobbying the federal government for an apology. See Bagnell, Canadese, Chapter Four; "The Day Freedom Ended", The Globe and Mail, 9 June 1990; "Internment Angers Writer", The Calgary Herald, 13 November 1989.

[47]Mario Rebaudengo, interview by R. Audia and K. Savoia, 23 July 1985, Calgary Italian Club Collection.

[48]Franc Sturino, "Post-World War Two Canadian Immigration Policy Towards Italians", Polyphony Vol.7, No.2 (Fall/Winter 1985): 67.

[49]Jansen, Italians in a Multicultural Canada, pp.29-30. See also Bagnell, Canadese, pp.105-107.

[50]Clifford Jansen, Fact-book on Italians in Canada, 2nd. ed., (Toronto: Institute for Social Research, York University, 1987), p.73.

[51]Dinnerstein and Reimers, Ethnic Americans, p.83.

[52]Sturino, "Immigration Policy Towards Italians", p.67.

[53]Ibid.

[54]Robert F. Harney, "Italians in Ontario", Polyphony, Vol.7, No.2 (Fall/Winter 1985): 6.

[55]Ambrogiano interview; Elia Martina, interview by R. Audia and K. Savoia, June 1985, Calgary Italian Club Collection; Alberto Romano, interview with author, 31 July 1987, Glenbow Archives. See also Valeria Sestieri-Lee, "From Tuscany to the Northwest Territories: The Italian Community of Yellowknife", Canadian Ethnic Studies, XIX, 1, 1987, p.78.

[56]Ambrogiano interview; Martina interview; Rebaudengo interview.

[57]Between 1946-1950, only 34 percent of Italian immigrants were dependent women and children not destined for the labour force, compared to 48 percent for all immigrants to Canada. After 1950, the percentage rose to between 40-54 percent and was comparable to that of other immigrant groups. Jansen, Fact-book, p.16. See also Franca Iacovetta, From *Contadina* to Worker: Southern Italian Immigrant Working Women in Toronto, 1947-62", in Jean Burnet (ed.), Looking into My Sister's Eyes: An Exploration in Women's History, (Toronto: The Multicultural History Society Of Ontario, 1986), p.196.

[58]Rebaudengo interview.

[59]There is at least one case of divorce. A Sicilian woman from Termini Imerese (near Palermo), was shocked to discover that the man her brothers had arranged for her to marry was nothing like the description he had given

of himself in his letters. The couple separated less than a year after their marriage in Calgary. Eventually they were divorced and the woman, along with her young daughter, returned to Termini Imerese. Luisa Romano, interview with the author, August 1988, Author's Collection.

[60]Sturino, "Immigration Policy Toward Italians", p.70.

[61]Ibid., p.71.

[62]Franc Sturino, "Family and Kin Cohesion among South Italian Immigrants in Toronto", in Betty Boyd Caroli, Robert F. Harney and Lydio F. Tomasi (eds.), The Italian Immigrant Woman in North America, (Toronto: The Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1978), p.289.

[63]Roughly one-third of the Calgary Italian community is from the Abruzzo-Molise; another one-third comes from Calabria while the final third is composed of families from the regions of Campania, Puglia, Veneto, Friuli and Piemonte along with several individuals from Lazio, Basilicata, Sicilia, Sardegna, Trentino Alto-Adige and Emilia-Romagna. Analysis based on interviews; marriage register of St. Andrew's Italian Parish and Our Lady of Grace Italian and English Catholic Church and membership records of the Calgary Italian Club.

[64]Iacovetta, "From *Contadina* to Worker", p.197.

[65]Bagnell, Canadese, p.222.

[66]Sturino, "Immigration Policy Towards Italians", p.71. In Calgary, a city which has a large population of Anglo-Saxon origin, British composition dropped from 68.5 percent in 1951 to 58.9 percent in 1961. At the same time, Italian composition rose from .8 percent to 1.9 percent. Census of Canada, 1951. Census of Canada, 1961. Italians in Calgary report that opposition towards them increased in the early 1960s.

[67]Sturino, "Immigration Policy Towards Italians", p.71.

[68]Ibid.

[69]Ibid.

[70]Ramirez, Italians in Canada, p.9.

[71]Census of Canada, 1961; Census of Canada, 1971.

[72]Fainella, "Italian Organizations", p.25.

[73]David Colonna, interview with author, 19 October 1987, Glenbow Archives; Giuseppe Fanella, interview with author, 21 May 1987, Glenbow Archives; Vincenzo Girimonte, interview with author, 13 July 1987, Glenbow Archives.

[74]Girimonte interview; Maria Mosca, interview with author, 7 July 1987, Glenbow Archives; Valerio interview.

[75]Jansen, Italians in a Multicultural Canada, p.32.

[76]Victor Fornaro, interview by M. Fedori, 1979, Author's Collection; Mosca interview. See also Sestieri-Lee, "Italian Community of Yellowknife", p.81.

[77]Colonna interview, 19 October 1990.

[78]The interviewees were not willing to discuss instances of exploitation on tape. However, a few of them did admit afterwards that they had been exploited at some time during their employment history by an Italian employer, usually a *paesano*. One woman confided that she worked twelve hours a day, six days a week for one year in an Italian restaurant without ever getting paid overtime or even a raise in pay. When she complained to her employer, he humiliated her in front of her co-workers and threatened to make trouble for her. She stayed for two more years until she found another job. Anonymous, interview with author, August, 1987, Author's Collection.

[79]Italo Sartorio, interview with author, 19 March 1988, Glenbow Archives; A. Romano interview; Santucci interview; Raymond Blasetti, interview with author, 2 June 1988, Glenbow Archives; Fornaro interview.

[80]See Jansen, Italians in a Multicultural Canada, p.35.

[81]Al Iafolla, interview by M. Fedori, 1979, Author's Collection; Fornaro interview; John Fainella, interview by M. Fedori, 1979, Author's Collection; Calgary Italian Community Directory, 1986-1988, Calgary Italian Club.

[82]Foran, Calgary p.164.

[83]David Colonna, interview with author, March 1988, Author's Collection.

[84]Fornaro interview.

[85]Ambrogiano interview; Gabriele Brandelli, interview by M. Fedori, 26 May 1978, Author's Collection; Martina interview; Darryl Raymaker, interview with author, 3 May 1990, Author's Collection; A. Romano interview.

[86]Ibid.

[87]Father Riccardo Bezzegato, interview with author, 27 January 1988; Glenbow Archives.

[88]Fainella, "Italian Organizations", p.24.

[89]The leadership role played by the Italian church has been unintentional. The immigrants simply prefer it to the Italian Club because no one regional group nor one specific group of individuals dominates. Bezzegato interview. See also Clifford Jansen, "Community Organizations of Italians in Toronto", in L. Driedger (ed.), The Canadian Ethnic Mosaic, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1978), pp.313-315.

[90]Fainella, "Italian Organizations", p.24.

[91]Ibid.; Ambrogiano interview; Valerio interview.

[92]Fainella interview.

[93]A. Romano interview; Fainella interview.

[94]*Polenta* is a type of cornmeal dish which is eaten frequently by peasants in northern Italy.

[95]For a similar example see Rudolph J. Vecoli, "Contadini in Chicago: A Critique of the Uprooted", American Journal of History S1 (December 1964): 413.

[96]Colonna interview 19 October 1990; A. Romano interview; Fornaro interview; Blasetti interview.

[97]Unofficial estimates of current membership place it between 200-300 families. Blasetti interview.

[98]For further discussion on the role of organizations within the Italian community, see Jansen, "Community Organizations of Italians", p.311.

[99]Colonna interview 19 October 1990; Valerio interview; Blasetti interview; Valeria Sestieri-Lee, interview with author, 17 June 1987, Glenbow Archives.

[100]Fornaro interview; Colonna interview 19 October 1990.

[101]Blasetti interview; Pier Siccardi, interview with author 1 February 1988, Glenbow Archives. It will take several years for such a center to come into existence. Bureaucratic and financial obstacles aside, it will take much effort to convince Italians that there is nothing disgraceful about going outside of the family to resolve a crisis. The Italian way of thinking stresses that family problems are the responsibility of family members. See Bagnell, Canadese, Chapter Twelve.

[102]Raymaker interview; A. Romano interview; Fainella interview.

[103]During the 1984 federal election, MP Harvey Andre, turned down an invitation to appear on the Italian cultural television program, "Calgary Italiana". The show's host, Mrs. Sara Lacentra, announced that Andre did not consider the Italian vote important since he was running in the federal riding of Calgary Centre.

[104]Fanella interview.

[105]Census of Canada, 1981.

[106]Bagnell, Canadese, p.254; Ramirez, Italians in Canada, p.21; Jansen, Italians in a Multicultural Canada, p.208.

[107]Fornaro interview; Sartorio interview; Gloria Marin, interview with author, 30 June 1987, Glenbow Archives. All three had attempted to move their families back to Italy but without success.

CHAPTER THREE

Old Ways/New Ways

Chi lascia la via vecchia per la nuova,
sa quel che perde ma non sa quel che trova.

He who leaves the old ways for the new,
knows what he lost but knows not what he finds.[1]

Italians are a people rich in tradition and they come from one of the oldest European cultures. The southern Italians (the *contadini* in particular), have a specific traditional culture related to the lifestyle of their small, rural communities. Their value system, *la via vecchia,* came out of their historical experience. It defines who they are and helps explain why they behave the way they do. Southern Italy's poverty and difficult living conditions created an atmosphere in which one constantly attempted to avert disaster. Southern Italians are, by nature, conservative people who do not readily accept change. However, they are also a people who take advantage of opportunities for social mobility and economic advancement. As immigrants, they altered their social value system, enabling them not only to survive but also succeed in their new environment. In the process, they created a new, immigrant culture which they have passed on to their children.

To the post-war generation, the retention of ethnic identity means continuing the cultural traits of their *paese.* While the immigrants do not necessarily practice *la via vecchia* exclusively, it has remained an important part of their identity. They believe it is foolish to abandon *la via vecchia* because the 'old ways' are deemed to be the best. After all, it has withstood the test of time and must be passed on. They believe it is their duty to teach their children the 'old ways' and it is the children's duty to learn.[2]

How much of *la via vecchia* is retained and practiced depends on several factors; the most important is the immigrant's socio-economic background. In general, southern Italians in Calgary retain more of their cultural traits than northern Italians but even among southern Italians there are differences. Those who have large numbers of relatives and *paesani* have been able to retain their culture much better than those who do not. Those immigrants who were *contadini* tend to retain more of *la via vecchia* than artisans. As well, immigrants who lived in small villages or towns most of their lives have a stronger cultural retention than those who had moved to larger cities prior to emigrating to Canada.[3]

Cultural retention also varies between regional groups. Among the Italian regional groups in Calgary, the Calabresi show the highest level of cultural retention. They are the largest group of post-war migrants, making up roughly one-third of the Italian community. Although the Abruzzesi also make up a third, many of them emigrated prior to the Second World War and have had more time to become acculturated. The majority of the Calabresi came through chain migration from villages or small towns in the provinces of Cosenza and Catanzaro where most of them had been *contadini* or *braccianti.* Only a few were artisans, and those primarily cabinetmakers. The Calabresi are quite clannish and rely extensively on a large network of family and *paesani* who reinforce their traditional social values. Few socialize outside of their sphere. When Calabresi intermarry, the new spouse is expected to adopt the customs and habits of the group.[4]

The clannishness of the Calabresi has made them the most disliked group within the Italian community. Often they are the butt of insults. One will hear remarks like, "he is ignorant like a Calabrese" or "stubborn like a Calabrese".[5] However, one should not form the impression that they are the

sole targets of hostility, because inter-regional conflict is a serious problem in the Calgary Italian community. It is interesting to note, however, that every interviewee cited regionalism as a serious problem in the community except for those from Calabria.

Although regionalism has contributed to a lack of solidarity in the community, it is not the major cause. The conflicts and dissension that plague the community have their roots primarily in economic competition. Social relations among first-generation Italo-Canadians are characterized by what Edward Banfield termed 'amoral familism'.[6] The immigrants are extremely competitive, distrustful of those outside of the family and do not assist persons or organizations unless there is the opportunity for personal gain. An Abruzzese from Francavilla al Mare echoed this sentiment: "People say we should help this guy or we should help that guy. I say to my wife, but nobody ever helped us. **Nobody!**".[7]

This lack of community solidarity may help explain why there is no active 'Little Italy' in Calgary. Italians who came to the city from eastern Canada in the late 1970s were astonished by the absence of community related activities. John Fainella, in his study of Italian organizations in Calgary, reported that: "Italians from eastern Canada tended to expect the same amount of ethnic services and co-operation from the community as they were accustomed to receiving in the *ambiente* of St. Clair in Toronto, or in Montreal's 'Little Italy'".[8] Unfortunately, their needs were not met by the Calgary community in Bridgeland. A few enterprising individuals from the east did attempt to set up organizations, in the hopes of reviving community spirit but they were quickly frustrated by the discord and disinterest of their western counterparts.

While the immigrants express regret and even sadness over this state of affairs, few are willing to do anything about it. There is almost no desire to devote either time or money to secular organizations like the Italian Club. The immigrants seem to feel that these organizations are not necessary to maintain their culture. For these mostly former peasants, it has been *la famiglia* and not the Italian Club, that has helped them transmit the best aspects of the old country.[9] As in Italy, their primary allegiance is to the family. The welfare of *la famiglia* must come before all else. When asked why they do not attend the Italian Club, they respond, "first priority is family, then the Club".[10]

By comparison, the early post-war community was close and cohesive. In the absence of family members, the immigrants had to rid themselves of their prejudices, at least temporarily, and try to get along with everyone regardless of regional origin or social class. One woman, the daughter of a furniture shop owner, explained that back in her hometown of Termoli (Molise), she was accustomed to socializing only with those of her social class. In Canada, she had to learn to associate with everyone because "either you mixed or you were an outcast".[11] In those days, being an outcast meant that one would have a tough time surviving, economically or otherwise. Therefore, although the immigrants strongly believed in self-reliance, they could not practice it in an alien environment. They needed each other, not only to find employment or housing, but also for psychological comfort.

As the community grew larger and more diverse, as family and *paesani* came from overseas and as the immigrants established themselves in mainstream Canadian society, cooperation between them diminished and eventually ceased. The immigrants say that the community is now full of greedy, selfish people who do not care about anyone except themselves.[12] A

businessman from Abruzzi finds it ironic that the community was closer when it was poorer. He remembers that as a teenager, his family would take the bus on Saturdays even in sub-zero temperatures, to spend the evening with friends. "Now we have dozens of cars and we find it difficult to visit".[13] Some immigrants, even those from northern Italy, harbour a more callous view of friendship: "Friends, they cost you time and they cost you money," says a seamstress from Belluno (Veneto) "I no have either of those to spare".[14]

The immigrants should not be surprised at the emphasis that the community seems to place on money. After all, their primary goal in Canada was economic betterment of themselves and their families. As the immigrants focused their energies on getting ahead, they came into conflict with each other. The severing of friendship ties was balanced by the strengthening of family ones.

Among southern Italians, there is no institution more important than the family. In Italy, the family has always been the most important social and economic unit and it is no less important in Canada.[15] Immigration simply reinforced the formal code of privilege and obligation that existed between family members.[16] Family ties and assistance were vital in helping the immigrant adjust to the new world. In the absence of family, some immigrants relied on *paesani,* though the amount and type of assistance varied from regional group to group and was not as dependable as what one could expect to receive from family. Scholars should not underestimate the importance of immigrant family ties. As Danziger noted; "Such help and support takes on many forms, from the purely economic to the purely psychological and the high value placed on it is by no means unrealistic".[17]

Family support helped cushion the emotional impact of immigration. This was especially essential for immigrant women who seem to have more problems in adjusting than males. Women without family members recall feeling isolated, lonely and quite often depressed. Through tears, one woman told how difficult it was to be a new bride in Canada:

> Except for John, I didn't have anyone here. Was just the two of us and we told each other everything but there are some things...well, you need someone else, to get it off your chest and there was nobody there...I was really lonely, it was really quite hard...I had a few friends but how often can you go to your friend's house? Everyday?...I thought, 'Gee, what I'm doing here?. My family is in Italy...I'm here alone'.[18]

Throughout their interviews, immigrants cited the presence of family members rather than the Italian Club, as being the most important factor in helping them adjust to life in Canada.

In his study of Italians in Montreal, Jeremy Boissevain reported that the family occupies a much more important place in the lives of Italians than that of North Americans.[19] He pointed out that the immigrant's obligation towards family members is so strong that "the southern Italian divides the world around him into kin and nonkin".[20] The same is true of Calgary's southern Italians. Their world is divided between *parenti*, who are trustworthy, and *estranei* whom are not trustworthy. The social relationships among the immigrants can be explained as follows.[21]

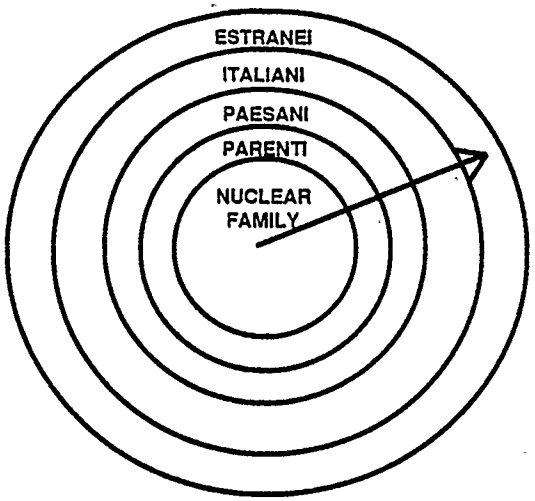


Figure 1

The formal code of obligation and assistance is strongest between members of the same nuclear family (children, spouse, parents and siblings). As genealogical distance between family members increases, the ties of obligation diminish.[22] Therefore, *parenti* (aunts, uncles, in-laws, first and second cousins) are apt to receive less aid than members of a nuclear family. There is no formal code regulating behaviours towards *paesani* but they are more likely to receive some form of assistance than an Italian from a different region. This is especially true if the *paesano* is from the same village. For example, Calabresi from the town of San Giovanni in Fiore enjoy a special relationship because many have known each other since childhood. Assistance to *paesani,* however, is not the same as what is owed to family. It perhaps takes the form of social obligation such as shopping at their grocery store or attending their social functions. *Estranei* are considered outsiders and since they are potential competitors as well as potential enemies, they are not trusted and there is little regard for their well-being.[23]

The only way non-kin can gain admittance to the family is through *compareggio* ; the process through which an individual grants to another

"the honour of godparenthood at baptism, sponsorship at confirmation, or witness at marriage". [24] The individuals involved in the sacraments refer to each other as *compare*. In theory, *compari* are supposed to be treated like family but among the Calgary immigrants, the relationship between *compari* is often quite flimsy. In many cases immigrants chose *compari* from members of their family to avoid becoming too close to strangers. For example, in Italian weddings, the best man and maid of honour, the *compari d'anello* are more apt to be siblings of the bridal couple than close friends. The immigrants feel that this is too important a role to be given to non-kin especially since the *compari d'anello* (according to Italian custom) become godparents to the first-born child.[25]

The strong ties that exist between family members do not necessarily dictate harmonious relations at all times. Strife within families can and does occur. A new marriage or the death of a parent, because it involves the division of land or money, often results in family members quarrelling amongst themselves and ceasing to be on good terms. Parents will often intervene and help make peace between feuding siblings. However, once the parents are gone, some siblings no longer feel obligated towards one another and focus their concerns on their own families.[26]

Five of the interviewees stated that they were not on speaking terms with a brother or sister. In two of the cases, they had not spoken to one another for at least ten years. The interviewees blamed family break-ups on individuals who adopt "too many Canadian habits".[27] One man, a restaurant owner from a village near Catanzaro (Calabria), claimed that family break-ups did not occur in Italy because the poverty of his region fostered closeness in families:

> Here people work, make money...Once they make money, they think they no need anybody anymore...They no help nobody, turn their back on family and friends...become greedy".[28]

Without doubt, family rivalries also occurred in Italy, although with less frequency in poorer areas since strong familial relations were important for economic survival. The affluence of the new world means that it is no longer vital that one be on good terms with kin, although it is still desirable. As Danziger has noted; "It is only when the immigrant feels very securely established that family ties lose some of their importance..."[29] In the Canadian environment there has been a weakening of ties to the extended family and increased emphasis on the nuclear family.

Among the immigrants, the nuclear family serves as a basic unit of a multi-dimensional social organization. Each member (father, mother and child) has a specific role to play. Much has been written on the patriarchal nature of the Italian family and it is often described as "father dominated but mother centered".[30] The father is considered the head of the household and is responsible for the economic well-being of his family. His status is undermined if he is *sfatigato* (lazy) and relies too much on his wife's income or if he is a *ribusciato* (bum) who drinks or gambles away the family finances. Interestingly enough, womanizing impulses seem to have little or no effect on a man's status in the community so long as he does not neglect his family. In addition to being considered the breadwinner, a man is also responsible for doing chores such as gardening, home and auto repairs.

A wife's primary responsibility is to look after the house and the domestic needs of her family. This is so even if she works outside of the home. All of the female interviewees were, or had been, employed on a full or part-time basis outside the home, but it was obvious that this was considered

to be of secondary importance to their domestic duties.[31] Most of the women said their husbands approved of their working outside the home, although some men allowed their wives to work only until their children were born or else were old enough to start school. A few women, usually those from upper income families, were full-time homemakers. For most immigrant families, a wife's income was necessary to help make ends meet, especially in households were the husband was employed in construction which tends to be seasonal. The female interviewees said they enjoyed working outside the home because it gave them a feeling of independence and helped allay feelings of loneliness. Husbands are not threatened by their wives' employment because in most homes the husband's income payed for major expenses such as mortgage or car payments. The wife's paycheque was used to buy groceries or to meet various other household expenses, or else went into savings.

In addition to working outside of the home, immigrant women performed numerous tasks which contributed to their families' incomes. Their household skills enabled them to cut costs and save money. They sewed clothes, canned fruits and vegetables, baked bread and even made their own prosciutto and sausages. In working class families, immigrant women also looked after the family's finances. Many continue these tasks to this day.[32]

Men and women who deviate from their prescribed roles risk becoming the butt of vicious gossip within the community and the consequential slurs on the family's *onore*. As in the *paese*, fear of being maligned in the community acts as a powerful deterrent to improper behavior.[33] For example, upon entering an immigrant's home, one is struck by how immaculate and well-decorated it is. This often reflects not only a natural fastidiousness but also the community's view that, a woman who neglects her home, is a *zozza* (slovenly woman) and is jeopardizing her family's respectability.[34]

The immigrants believe that family *onore* must, at all costs, remain sacrosanct. One must be careful not to engage in behavior which will bring disgrace to the family. In order to minimize the possibility of damage to *onore* the family acts as a form of social control, providing its members with a basic moral code.[35] Children in particular are expected to adhere strictly to this moral code. The immigrants believe that children have natural impulses that, unless controlled by the parents, can lead them into trouble. Children are expected to defer to parental authority.[36] Under these circumstances, adolescent rebellion against parental control seems a likely possibility. With rare exceptions, this does not happen. Parents are strict but not to the point of tyranny. Most enjoy a loving, close relationship with their children. Adolescent Italo-Canadians are models of obedience and conformity who accept rather than reject their parents' values.[37] They are a source of pride to their parents as well as the envy of many Canadian parents who know them.

Among southern Italian immigrants it is quite common to find unmarried children (of both sexes) in their twenties or even thirties still living at home. By contrast, none of the northern Italian interviewees, even those of peasant background, had unmarried children over the age of twenty-one living at home. As an incentive, parents do not require them to pay rent, although this does not mean that children are allowed to squander their earnings. Having children live at home until they marry serves two purposes. It allows them to save money to put towards buying a house or paying for a wedding and more importantly, it allows parents to regulate their children's activities. By keeping them at home, they can be prevented from getting into trouble and ruining family *onore*. [38]

The immigrants dismiss the notion that individuals who live at home for too long a period of time become irresponsible or else too dependent on their parents. A saleswomen from Molise argued:

> My daughter's going to be twenty-seven...[Canadians] say 'Why don't you kick her out?' Why should I? Why should I have her go out, be on her own?...I find a lot of Canadian people, soon as the kids turn eighteen, out you go! They don't do enough for their kids, some of them. I honestly don't think they do enough for their kids. I wouldn't even dream of charging my daughter board and room unless, I see her splurge her paycheque, then I'll save it for her...Why not keep your kids with you as long as you can?[39]

The immigrants believe that the "Canadian custom" of having children leave home before they marry is detrimental to family unity. One woman, a homemaker from Cerignola (Puglia), blamed "Canadian" parenting techniques for turning out troubled individuals:

> We don't say 'leave, get out' like Canadians do...They don't know how to handle their kids. That's why their kids come out bad, that's why they have problems...Kids don't ask to be born, if you have them, take proper care of them and give them a future.[40]

In order to fully function as members of *la famiglia,* second generation Italo-Canadians have been raised with the traditional values of their parents. Yet while both sexes are encouraged to retain the traditional cultural values, there are distinct differences in what is expected from each gender. Immigrant parents seem to place greater emphasis on socializing females in the maintenance of *la via vecchia.* In his study of Italian immigrant girls in Toronto, Danziger explains that, "The reason for this may lie in the fact that the definition of the female role is seen as critical for the preservation of

family culture patterns which the older generation wishes to preserve".[41] In families with more than one daughter, cultural retention is strongest in the oldest child.

Immigrant parents tend to be more strict with daughters than sons. Male adolescents have greater freedom in social activities than females. They go out unchaperoned and generally do not have to adhere to a curfew. Parents are also less likely to disapprove of a son's Canadian girlfriend than their daughter's Canadian boyfriend. A young woman whose parents came from San Giovanni in Fiore (Calabria), responded that her parents did not trust Canadian boys and did not allow her to go out with them.[42] Another young woman, a university student whose parents emigrated from Sepino (Molise), shared the same experience:

> It didn't bother my parents if my friends were not Italian. But Italian boyfriends were **always** preferred, as were Catholic friends. Their attitude was non-Italian boys and non-Catholic friends probably weren't raised right and would probably hurt me or make me a bad person.[43]

However, a preference for Italian boyfriends did not translate into more freedom in dating activities. Even among parents who do allow daughters to "date", strict rules are enforced. The boy has to meet with parental approval, an early curfew is set and many can go out only in groups which usually includes the girl's siblings or cousins. Parents fear that too much freedom in dating activities might compromise their daughter's reputation in the Italian community and make it difficult to arrange a suitable marriage. This stems from the old double standard; males are free to experiment sexually but a female must remain a virgin until she marries.

Young women are given stern warnings about the consequences of losing *onore*.[44]

No doubt, some women resent this treatment but few rebel. For the most part, female adolescents understand their parents' concerns. Diana, a university graduate whose parents came from Calabria, voices the frustration of many second generation young women:

> During high school, my parents preferred that I did not go out. My upbringing always emphasized family closeness. My friends went out to bars, to movies, dancing, whereas I stayed home with my family. My non-Italian friends were very sympathetic but I felt socially deprived because I could not do the things my friends did. My parents felt that 'nice Italian girls' stayed home....Implicitly, staying home was to protect their daughter's reputation. We bickered about what bad Canadian girls did and what nice Italian girls didn't [do]. Boy, did they forget that I was Canadian by birth and not Italian.[45]

Although she resented her parents' control, Diana feels she will probably raise her children with the same values that she was brought up with. Now that she is older, she agrees with her parents that the 'old ways' are the best.

Second generation Italo-Canadians, both male and female, often complain that strict parental control prevented them from being as independent as they wanted to be. They still resent what they perceived as a lack of trust from their parents and envied the freedom of their Canadian classmates.[46] Although many first generation interviewees showed a remarkable understanding of the conflicts their children experienced growing up between two cultures, they were not willing to permit unrestricted freedom. Most of the interviewees equated the laxity of Canadian family relationships with irresponsibility on the part of the parents and disrespect on

the part of the children. However, when conflicts did arise, as adolescents grew older, some parents were willing to make compromises. They allowed more freedom in social activities as long as their children behaved responsibly, did not place family honour at risk and continued to participate in family activities.[47]

If sacrifice was required of children, they had role models in their parents. Immigrant parents regard children as the "purpose of marriage".[48] They believe that it is their duty to give their children everything that they need. Placing the needs of their offspring before their own, they have striven to provide the very best for them. During the interviews, the immigrants cited 'a better life for their children' as one of the primary motives for emigrating. Indeed, many parents deprived themselves for years in order to give their children a higher standard of living than that which they themselves had known.[49] To parents, this *sacrificio* is necessary because unless children get a better start in life than they had, they will fall behind in social status. Their *sacrificio* is rewarded by their children's love, respect and care in old age. Within the Italian community, there is nothing more disgraceful and dishonourable than the neglect of an aging parent.[50]

Immigrants consider a good education to be of utmost importance because they want their children to get ahead. Education is thought to be an investment in the future and "an assurance for unforseen (sic) problems".[51] Most of the interviewees equated education with high paying, high status jobs. They recalled how back in the *paese*, educated individuals received respect and preferential treatment.[52] Although both males and females are expected to finish high school, a post-secondary education is considered by some to be more important for males than females since males are regarded as the breadwinners. An engineer who was born in San Giovanni D'Albi

(Calabria), remembered the pressure his parents put on him to go to university: "My parents decided for me, they wanted me to go to university, so I went. But I wasn't ready, so after two and a half years I decided to leave...They were in shock, [my parents thought] I was a bum".[53] His parents were so upset over their son's decision that they enlisted the help of his godfather and together they convinced him to return to school.

Italo-Canadian males who go on to university tend to pursue professional and technical careers. Of the interviewees who had sons in university, none were enrolled in the faculties of social welfare, humanities or fine arts. These fields are thought to be better suited to females or else lacking in prestige. Moreover, many parents do not understand the usefulness of such a degree.[54]

Interviewees were divided on the issue of sending females to post-secondary institutions. Some parents realised the importance of higher education for women because it would give them the job skills "to support a family in the event of a divorce, God-forbid".[55] But even when females are encouraged to continue their education, they are still expected to marry and have children. This is perhaps one reason why Italo-Canadian women tend to choose traditional female careers such as teaching or secretarial work. These professions can be pursued after marriage without interfering with family duties. Among the interviewees, there were those who discouraged their daughters from continuing their education past high school. A seamstress from Monte Forte Irpino (Campania). feared that a university degree might hurt her daughters' chances of marrying,[56] while a Calabrese said he did not think education was important for women since, "they are eventually looked after by the husband".[57]

At this point, it is important to mention that while Italian parents are very proud of children who have earned post-secondary degrees, there is also some resentment and fear. There is a belief that the more educated an individual becomes, the more likely he is to abandon *la via vecchia,* to marry outside of the community and Roman Catholicism and become alienated from his parents. While they realise that a good education is important for social and economic mobility, they fear that such mobility may disrupt family ties. After all, a child who earns a law degree or a Ph.D may find he has little in common with his labourer father or else he may come to regard his parents as an embarrassment.[58]

Within the Italian community, one is not considered an adult until he or she has married. Young people, particularly women, in their early twenties are frequently greeted with, "*Quando ti sposi* ?" ("When are you going to marry?"). For Italian parents there is no more important obligation than the *sistemazione* (setting up) of their offspring. They will do everything possible to place their children in a position to marry and have a family of their own. Marriage is important because it means the continuation of *la famiglia.* As well, parents take comfort in knowing that in the event of their death, their child will not be alone.

As in Italy, getting children, especially females, properly set up is a source of concern for most parents. Immigrants recalled that back in the *paese* a daughter without a *corredo* or a son without land usually made a bad marriage, in economic terms. The affluence of the new world has made *sistemazione* much easier. Money is saved to buy the newlyweds a house. Items for the *corredo* are collected at an early age. In Italy, the *corredo* may have consisted only of a few items of bedding and linen, clothing and household necessities. The quality and amount varied depending on income

and local custom. In Canada the *corredo* often includes enough material to furnish a home including complete sets of china, crystal and imported linens. Although a *corredo* is no longer a necessity for marriage, many immigrants think it is best to assemble one and avoid 'talk' in the community. *Parenti* of the bridal couple help contribute to their *sistemazione* by giving gifts of furniture, major appliances or substantial cash sums. This is done with the mutual understanding that the bridal couple and their respective families will do the same for them.[59]

A wedding is a joyous occasion and the preparations are truly elaborate. The immigrants have incorporated some Canadian customs into the wedding ceremonies, altering them to suit their tastes. For example, the bridal shower, a custom not practiced in Italy, is not an intimate gathering of a few close friends in someone's home. It is usually held on Sunday afternoons in a rented hall or restaurant. Guests, as many as two hundred, are treated to a three or four course meal with an abundance of wine and sweets. After the meal, the bridal gifts are opened and displayed for the guests to admire.[60]

The same lavishness marks the wedding day. Brides wear expensive gowns and veils. Numerous bridesmaids and groomsmen, an adopted Canadian custom, are chosen from the relatives of the bridal couple. The reception is often held in a hotel ballroom where a seven or eight course meal is served; a band plays at the dance and a host bar is open all evening. In lieu of thank-you notes, guests receive *bonboniere*, crystal, porcelain or silver keepsakes, to which a piece of tulle containing *confetti* (sugared almonds) is attached. In Italy, wedding guests tossed *confetti* to symbolize the bitter and sweet of life.

Although many immigrants lamented that the costs of such affairs are becoming outrageous, few would do things differently. To the immigrants, a

wedding is not merely a union of two individuals; it is a union of two families which is sanctioned by the community. It provides *parenti* and *paesani* with the opportunity to assess one's worth in the new world. At the same time, it provides the immigrant with a chance to display his success. One woman stated that a wedding ceremony is an extension of one's self. Therefore, if one can afford to make it extravagant, one should. She added, "After all you don't want people to say you couldn't marry your kids properly".[61]

During the interviews, many immigrants admitted that while they would be willing to accept a non-Italian in-law, they do prefer their children to marry Italians. One interviewee from Calabria explained why he was reluctant to accept a Canadian in-law: "Italian men make better husbands. Italian son-in-law will listen to me. He will respect me like his father. Canadian son-in-law will not respect me like that".[62] Despite parental preferences, second generation Italo-Canadians are increasingly marrying outside of their ethnic group. Few, however, are marrying outside of their religion.[63] Marriage to a non-Catholic is apt to meet with strong parental objections. On those occasions when it does occur, the parents insist that the ceremony be performed in the Catholic church.[64]

Among the Italian regional groups in Calgary, the Calabresi appear to have the lowest rate of exogamous marriage. This is partially due to their custom of arranging marriages. If a particular union is much desired, the relatives or friends of the prospective couple arrange to have them meet at a formal function, hoping of course, that they will find each other attractive and begin a relationship. Meanwhile family and friends do all they can to encourage the relationship. Although there is no evidence of families forcing individuals to marry against their will, it is not uncommon for them to put

pressure on an individual to end what is considered an unsuitable relationship. In Calgary there are even a few cases of parents sending their disobedient teenagers to live with relatives in Italy in order to terminate displeasing love affairs.[65]

Obviously the preference for an Italian in-law has much to do with the desire to protect *la via vecchia* but it also stems from the attitudes Italian immigrants have towards Canadians. Many interviewees believe that Canadians are not committed to their families and that marriage to a Canadian is likely to end in divorce. The immigrants hold many negative stereotypes about Canadians. They regard Canadians as 'lazy' and 'jealous of immigrant success'. Canadians are said to drink too much and squander their money on frivolous things.[66] One interviewee felt Canadians were not bad people but that they simply had different priorities; "Canadians like to go out to dinner and for holidays. We prefer to save for our children's future".[67]

While Canadians may be perplexed by the immigrant's tendency to reduce the value of everything to money, it is important to understand where this behavior comes from. Arrogance is often a reflection of insecurity and preoccupation with material gain. Displays of wealth are attempts to downplay past poverty. As in Italy, the central theme of their life is *fare bella figura*. To the immigrants, appearance is much more important than reality because a person's worth is measured by the **display** of possessions. Immigrant homes are a good example of *fare bella figura*. Quite often the first floor of the house is reserved for entertaining guests. The living room is exquisitely furnished with expensive items. Sofas and chairs are kept covered with furniture throws which are removed when visitors arrive. The family does most of its living in the basement where the old furniture is kept. The

basement is less formal and is not shown to outsiders. It is the only part of the house which is allowed to become untidy.

Events are always planned with deep concern over what their *paesani* will think. Since materialism is viewed as a sign of progress in the new world, there is a tendency to turn every family gathering, including funerals, into an extravagant spectacle. No one wants to be labelled a *pidocchioso* ("pauper") by the community.

Their poverty-stricken past has fostered a will to better themselves. Most have not forgotten the harshness of rural life. They tell their children of the hardships they endured back in Italy:

> I had heard stories from relatives that they had to eat from a large bowl, not individual bowls like in North America. Meals were given once a day and not everyone could eat because there wasn't enough food to go around.[68]

Children are taught to work hard and prepare for the future because only God knows what lies ahead. Calamity, they warn, can strike at any time. Their motto is 'prepare for the worst'.

In emigrating to Canada, the immigrants sought financial security and they were willing to make the necessary sacrifices in order to achieve it. They were determined never to live in poverty again and they had the necessary skills to survive on meager wages. In Italy, financial security had meant owning land. In Canada it translated into owning a house, and more than one if possible. One interviewee explained that home ownership is important to Italians because:"...when you are in someone else's country you want roots. You want a good living. To own a home you must be prepared to give up a lot of things".[69] 'Mortgage' is a dirty word among Italian immigrants. In order to

pay off a home as quickly as possible, many worked two or three jobs and went without entertainment, vacations and other luxuries.

However, even when the immigrants reach a level of relative financial stability they still fear losing it all and returning to poverty. As a result, they are careful to avoid placing themselves in a position where they can be taken advantage of. Immigrants do not believe in being in debt. Few own or use credit cards. To owe money is to give someone control over you. Initially, few post-war immigrants trusted banks. They scrimped and saved to buy what they needed or else they went without.[70]

Although the majority of the immigrants have made enormous advances economically, they seem unable to overcome their feelings of insecurity. There is a constant need to impress others in the community of their success. This has sparked extreme competition among Italo-Canadians in Calgary. For example, during Calgary's economic boom in the late 1970s, there was a fever among some of the immigrants to build even more extravagant custom homes. Two and three-story dwellings were built with cedar siding, marble floors and oak panelling. Even members of the same family competed with one another to see who could build bigger and better homes. As one family built its showplace, other relatives purchased land nearby and often reproduced the exact same type of house.[71] During this period, jealousy and backbiting within the community ran rampant. One Calabrese recalled: "People tried to outdo each other and it got out of hand".[72] Fighting was also common between family members but that did not prevent them from assisting one another in the construction of their homes.

As Italians became more affluent, class divisions were created in addition to regional ones. Within the Italian Community, the most intense conflict seems to be between those immigrants who belong to the working

class and self-made individuals, that is, businessmen or entrepreneurs who have reached middle-class status or higher. While the immigrants respect and admire professionals in the community, they feel much contempt for the *pezzenti arricchiti* ("thriving beggars") who were once their equals. One possible explanation for the animosity between these two classes is that the self-made represent what the immigrants dreamed of becoming. Certainly these former peasants have done very well for themselves but they are not millionaires nor do they command the respect of Canadian upper class society.

The self-made, particularly those who display their wealth, evoke feelings of jealousy and envy among the working class migrants. One man, an affluent businessman from Termoli (Molise) expressed bitterness over the treatment he receives from his countrymen:

> In the Italian community, if you successful businessman, people they look to you way up because you done very well. In the meantime always that jealousy involved...They see you drive Ferrari they are so jealous make you head spin!...They are polite but soon you turn you back probably they say some mean words...Me? I always admire people which they work hard, are a success. Why should be jealous? They didn't steal from me. They didn't steal from you. Hey, more power to him![73]

While this interviewee may be fully justified in his feelings, he fails to realise that for the working class immigrants, the self-made can, indirectly, intensify feelings of failure for not having achieved the "dream of America". The working class deal with these feelings by denying the self-made the merits of their success. Among rural people there is a belief that there is only so much wealth in the world. If one possesses too large a share, that leaves less for

everyone else. They also harbour the mentality that the rich are dishonest, corrupt individuals who made their fortune by cheating honest folk.[74]

Many less successful immigrants believe that it is fate which decides who will be successful and who will not. They state that it was not their *destino* to become wealthy. Some implied that affluent people are born lucky:"You can work hard all you want", said one interviewee, "but if *destino* doesn't want you to succeed you won't".[75] While many immigrants admitted to believing in *destino* , it is difficult to determine how profound this belief really is. It may be that *destino* is used as a way of explaining lack of success in the new world. Rather than admit that one was not clever or industrious enough to become wealthy, it is face saving to suggest,"it was not my destiny". By contrast, the self-made believe that choice, not chance, determines destiny:

> Nothing come easy...If you willing to work hard, you will achieve what you have in mind...Ignorant people, when something go wrong, they blame everybody except themselves.[76]

As a result of this animosity, the self-made tend to avoid any sustained contact with their countrymen, further intensifying the conflict. This is an unfortunate situation because those who are in the best position to do much good for the community have chosen to disassociate themselves from it.

In its current state, the Calgary Italian community is a collection of tightly structured family groups, each one looking out for its own interests. The drawback has been that loyalty to *la famiglia* has limited social mobility for first generation Italo-Canadians. They fear that a further climb on the ladder of success will jeopardize their family life as well as those other traditions which they hold dear.[77] In their drive for middle class status, the immigrants have not bloomed as public or corporate figures. There are a

handful of first generation Italo-Canadians who are millionaires or near-millionaires, but they are no longer active in the community. They are viewed by the community as "too Canadianized". The terminology may not be correct but it is true that the self-made have had to resocialize themselves in order to fit into their new environment. Consequently, they have dropped many of their old world traits.

First-generation Italo-Canadians in Calgary have been successful in retaining much of their old world culture, altering it where necessary to adapt to the Canadian environment. Emigration helped preserve *la via vecchia* and *la famiglia.* Family values and customs have changed in Italy; a fact many of the interviewees have been shocked to discover on trips back home. They complain that people in Italy have become selfish and are especially troubled by the increasing disregard among the younger generation towards parental authority.[78] In essence, they see modern Italy in the same way they see modern Canada; a society lacking in tradition and morality. Some are thankful their children have not grown up in Italy.[79] By comparison, relatives back home are often amused at the backwardness of the "Americani", who strike them as fossils of a bygone era.

Naturally, since the immigrants were not living in Italy while these changes were taking place, they could not incorporate them into their culture. Therefore, they continue to cultivate an "Italian" culture that no longer exists in Italy. The immigrants were willing to make the necessary adjustments to their cultural traits in order to survive economically, but they were not willing to completely abandon their culture. Their ethnic traditions served as a safeguard against the unfamiliar Canadian environment. Those aspects of their culture which they chose to keep were zealously protected from what they perceived as the destructive influences of Canadian society. As a result,

the first generation lives in isolation from the rest of Canadian society in a form of "ethnic limbo". They do not really belong in Canada, but they no longer belong in Italy. They are alienated from both societies. As the immigrant generation grows older, *la famiglia* becomes even more important. As their friends and relatives die off, their world begins to center on their children and grandchildren. Family gives their lives meaning. It provides continuity of identity, of values and of worth. Were it not for their families, many first-generation Italo-Canadians in Calgary would live in total isolation.[80]

For the first generation, retention of *la via vecchia* has not been an obstacle to leading a normal life. However, the second generation finds that time honoured ways can interfere with some parts of their lives. Many realise that Canadian society rewards those who have assimilated. A male university student echoes a common sentiment: "Despite the government's official stand on multiculturalism, I feel that Canadian society does not reward those who maintain ethnicity".[81] Like the self-made of the first generation, the second generation has dropped outward signs of ethnicity. Some, perhaps fearing discrimination in education or employment, anglicize their names: Salvatore, Pasquale and Giulietta become known as Sam, Pat and Julie. None of the interviewees however had legally changed either their first or last names.

The second generation, like their parents, has kept those aspects of their culture which they regard as advantageous. They have a strong commitment to the family but not all of them agree that family should be a person's first priority. As one young woman noted:

> I think families are an important aspect of our lives but quite often family interferes with other parts of

> my life...For example, living at home keeps me from being as independent as I would like to be.[82]

While the second generation appreciate the efforts their parents have made on their behalf, they do not think that parents should sacrifice everything for their children: "I feel parents should go out and enjoy life. See different places, not just work for their children", says a male college student.[83]

Unlike their parents, the second generation does not think of divorce as taboo. They use credit cards, take out loans, go on holidays before they pay off the mortgage, and give their children non-Italian first names. Most have still kept the old custom of naming the first son and daughter after the husband's parents, although the names are often anglicized. While they respect some aspects of *la via vecchia* , they question the validity of others. A teacher who was born in Bova Marina (Calabria), remarked: "I was raised according to traditional values, but I do not feel the old ways are the best, some are ridiculous to say the least!".[84]

Although second generation Italo-Canadians have retained some aspects of non-verbal expression, behavior and attitudes common to their parents, other aspects of the first generation's culture has not been transmitted to the second generation. Most of the second generation admitted they knew little of the ethnic culture of their parents' home region. Very few knew the popular songs, nursery rhymes and proverbs so familiar to their parents. Many second generation Italo-Canadians frequently cook spaghetti, lasagne and pizza (the North American versions), but virtually none of them know how to make focaccia, taralli or even homemade wine.[85]

The most startling aspect of the rapid assimilation of the second generation is however, lack of language retention. Few second generation Italo-Canadians can be considered bilingual. Their fluency in the Italian

language is minimal at best. Most can only speak their parents' dialect or "Italese", which is a blend of Italian and English. Italese takes words from the English language and nativizes them. For example, cheque in Italian is *assegno* but most immigrants say "checka".[86] Even among those who study the language in university or summer school in Italy, few retain the language since they cannot practice it. Most of their parents cannot properly speak standard Italian and the use of the Italian language at home is on the decline.[87] If culture retention depends on language retention then the Italian culture in Calgary is in serious trouble.

The first-generation is naturally alarmed by the lack of interest among the second-generation in retaining *la via vecchia.* They did not imagine that a higher standard of living would contribute to the decline of their traditional way of life. But the fact is that urbanization, education, acculturation and increasing affluence have all combined to erode la *via vecchia.* For the first generation, *la via vecchia* represents the Italian culture, not as it really is, but how they remember it. *La via vecchia* developed in response to poverty and oppression. It was how the first generation dealt with the volatile conditions of southern Italy and the unfamiliar surroundings of Canada. The second generation did not grow up in poverty and oppression. They do not believe they were born destined to a life of hard work and misery. They do not need to rely on family to see them through bad economic times. They harbour no suspicion towards those outside of the family and their social circle includes Canadians. They do not view the upper classes as their enemy; the Canadian sphere provides opportunity. The second generation does not consider *la via vecchia* to be necessary for survival because the Canadian environment has taught them a different method of survival.

The first generation has a nostalgic connection to Italy. As the source of their identity, Italy is filled with fond (and not so fond) memories. It represents the way life used to be. The second generation sees Italy as a foreign country. It is not their home but the home of their parents and grandparents. Most of the second generation identify themselves as Italo-Canadians. They are proud of their Italian heritage but they are just as proud to be Canadian:

> I respect my Italian heritage, and I'm proud to be who I am. But I also consider myself a Canadian. Living here in Canada, I know a lot of Canadian people...my future lies here.[88]

An increasing number, however, are dropping the "Italo":

> I am a Canadian, I love this country, it's been good to me and my family. I was raised and schooled here. [There are] many other reasons as well.[89]

It is inevitable that the second-generation would be influenced by the Canadian environment. After all, one cannot live forever between two cultural worlds. As the second-generation becomes older, they may find themselves leaning more towards the norms and values of mainstream Canadian society, especially if their parents are no longer around to enforce *la via vecchia*.

NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

[1]Old Italian proverb.

[2]Giovanni Ambrogiano, interview by R. Audia and K. Savoia, 23 May 1985, Calgary Italian Club Collection.

[3]Explanatory note: This analysis is based on views expressed by the immigrants (both directly and indirectly) through the interviews and through participant observation by the author.

[4]These are commonly held beliefs which the immigrants expressed through their behavior in social situations.

[5]The Calabresi are also one of the most disliked regional groups in southern Italy. For a similar example, see Gustav Schachter, The Italian South: Economic Development in Mediterranean Europe, (New York: Random House, 1965), p.51.

[6]See Edward C. Banfield, The Moral Basis of a Backward Society, (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1958), Chapter Five.

[7]Pasquale Fornaro, interview by R. Audia and K. Savoia, 3 June 1985, Calgary Italian Club Collection.

[8]John G. Fainella, "The Development of Italian Organizations in Calgary", Alberta History 32, 1 (Winter, 1985): 25.

[9]Robert F. Harney, "The Italian Experience in the United States", Italians in North America, (Toronto: The Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1979), p.16. See also Sheldon Goldenberg, "Kinship and Ethnicity Viewed as Adaptive Responses to Location in the Opportunity Structure", Journal of Comparative Family Studies Volume VIII, No.2, (Summer, 1977): 153.

[10]P. Fornaro interview.

[11]Antonietta Iavasile, interview with author, 1 June 1987, Glenbow Archives.

[12]Ambrogiano interview; Maria Fanella, interview with author, 27 May 1987, Glenbow Archives; Flavia Santucci, interview by R. Audia and K. Savoia, 22 May 1985, Calgary Italian Club Collection.

[13]Victor Fornaro, interview by M. Fedori, 1979, Author's Collection.

[14]Anonymous, interview with author, 26 May, 1988, Author's Collection.

[15]Franca Iacovetta, "From *Contadina* to Worker: Southern Italian Immigrant Working Women in Toronto, 1947-62", in Jean Burnet (ed.), Looking Into My Sister's Eyes: An Exploration in Woman's History, (Toronto: The Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1986), p.199.

[16]See Leo Cellini, "Emigration, the Italian Family, and Changing Roles", in Betty Boyd Caroli, Robert F. Harney and Lydio F. Tomasi (eds.), The Italian Immigrant Woman in North America, (Toronto: The Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1978), p.276; Francis A.J. Ianni, "Familialism in the South of Italy and in the United States", in S.M. Tomasi (ed.), Perspectives in Italian Immigration and Ethnicity, (New York: Center For Migration Studies, 1977), pp.104-105.

[17]Kurt Danziger, "The Acculturation of Italian Immigrant Girls", in K. Ishwaran (ed.), The Canadian Family, rev. ed. (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1976), p.211.

[18]Iavasile interview.

[19]Jeremy Boissevain, "Family and Kinship Among Italians of Montreal", in K. Ishwaran (ed.), The Canadian Family, rev. ed. (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1976), p.508.

[20]Ibid., p.509.

[21]Author's model.

[22]Boissevain, "Family and Kinship", p.508. For further discussion on the rights and obligations of kinship among Italians see Franc Sturino, "Family and Kin Cohesion among South Italian Immigrants in Toronto", in Betty Boyd Caroli, Robert F. Harney and Lydio F. Tomasi (eds.), The Italian Immigrant Woman in North America, (Toronto: The Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1978), pp.293-296.

[23]Italian immigrants are not likely to turn to social service agencies in times of a family crisis because from an early age Italian children are taught that family problems are not to be discussed outside of the home. It is

believed that social workers and counsellors, since they are non-kin, are not likely to have an individual's best interest at heart and therefore are not trusted.

[24]Sturino, "Family and Kin Cohesion", p.307. See also Banfield, The Moral Basis, p.120; Iacovetta, "From *Contadina* to Worker", p.199; Rudolph J. Vecoli, "Contadini in Chicago: A Critique of the Uprooted", American Journal of History, S1 (December 1964): 405.

[25]See Sturino, "Family and Kin Cohesion", p.307.

[26]Father Riccardo Bezzegato, interview with author, 27 January 1988, Glenbow Archives. See also Banfield, The Moral Basis, pp.116-119.

[27]David Colonna, interview with author, 19 October 1987, Glenbow Archives; M. Fanella interview; Iavasile interview.

[28]Frank Lucente, interview with author, 19 October 1987, Glenbow Archives.

[29]Danziger, "Italian Immigrant Girls", pp.211-212.

[30]Vecoli, "Contadini in Chicago", p.405. See also Colleen L. Johnson, "The Maternal Role in the Contemporary Italian-American Family", in Betty Boyd Caroli, Robert F. Harney and Lydio F. Tomasi (eds.), The Italian Immigrant Woman in North America, (Toronto: The Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1978), pp.234-244.

[31]In conversations with the author, many of the female interviewees admitted that they resented being burdened with housekeeping while their husbands had free time to relax. Yet few of the woman said they did anything to change the situation. One interviewee expressed the dilemma of many Italian working women: "Italian women spoil their men, we do everything for them...No! It's not right! But what can you do? It's the way they were raised, it's the way I was raised. You can't change that". M. Fanella interview. For a similar example see Iacovetta, "From *Contadina* to Worker", p.213. See also Harriet Perry, "The Metonymic Definition of the Female and the Concept of Honour Among Italian Immigrant Families in Toronto", in Betty Boyd Caroli, Robert F. Harney and Lydio F. Tomasi (eds.), The Italian Immigrant Woman in North America, (Toronto: The Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1978), p.228.

[32]For further discussion on the economic role of women in the Italian immigrant family, see Iacovetta, "From *Contadina* to Worker", pp.207-208.

[33]See Banfield, The Moral Basis, p.144.

[34]See Perry, "The Metonymic Definition", p.228.

[35]Boissevain, "Family and Kinship", p.508.

[36]Ambrogiano interview.

[37]See Giuliana Colalillo, "The Italian Immigrant Family", Polyphony, Vol.7, No.2 (Fall/Winter 1985): 120.

[38]See Clifford Jansen, Italians in a Multicultural Canada, (Queenston:: Mellen Press, 1988), p.180 and Johnson, "The Maternal Role", pp.241-242.

[39]Iavasile interview.

[40]M. Fanella interview.

[41]Danziger, "Italian Immigrant Girls", p.203. See also Colalillo, "The Italian Immigrant Family", p.121.

[42]Angela Nicoletti, interview with author, September 1989, Author's Collection.

[43]Julie Tiberio, interview with author, November 1989, Author's Collection.

[44]For further discussion of *onore* and sexuality among Italo-Canadian girls, see Perry, "The Metonymic Definition", pp.225-227.

[45]Diana Mosca, "The Italian Community", (Unpublished Manuscript, 1986), p.14.

[46]Vincent Davoli, interview with the author, 24 March 1988, Glenbow Archives; Tiberio interview.

[47]Colonna interview, 19 October 1990; Vincenzo Girimonte, interview with author, 13 July 1987, Glenbow Archives; Anna Mandaione, interview with author, 11 September 1988, Glenbow Archives.

[48]Mandaione interview.

[49]See Sturino, "Family and Kin Cohesion", p.298.

[50]Ibid., p.301.

[51]Mosca, "The Italian Community", p.11.

[52]See Banfield, The Moral Basis, pp.74-75.

[53]Davoli interview.

[54]See Jansen, Italians in a Multicultural Canada, p.179 and Sturino, "Family and Kin Cohesion", p.299.

[55]Maria Mosca, interview with author, 7 July 1987, Glenbow Archives.

[56]Mandaione interview.

[57]Girimonte interview.

[58]See Goldenberg, "Kinship and Ethnicity", p.161 and Frank Arricale, "Italian Americans and Myths", in S.M. Tomasi (ed.),Perspectives in Italian Immigration and Ethnicity, (New York: Center For Migration Studies, 1977), p.17.

Within the Calgary community, exogamous marriage tends to be higher among second-generation Italo-Canadians who have post-secondary education. Marriage register of St. Andrew's Italian Parish and Our Lady of Grace Italian and English Catholic Church.

Institutions of higher learning provide the opportunity to meet a wide selection of prospective marriage partners from various ethnic, social and religious backgrounds. While parents encourage their children to earn a Bachelor's degree (which they know is necessary to get a good job), they are not as enthusiastic about post-graduate studies. They fear that more education will lead to further alienation from the family. See for example, Joseph Giordano, "Ethnicity, Social Class and Mental Health", in S.M. Tomasi (ed.), Perspectives in Italian Immigration and Ethnicity, (New York: Centre For Migration Studies, 1977), p.8.

[59]See Sturino, "Family and Kin Cohesion", p.306.

[60]Bridal showers provide guests with an opportunity to judge the reputation of a family in the community. While the gifts are being opened, the guests correlate the value of the gift with the reputation of the giver.

During a bridal shower attended by the author, the bride-to-be displayed an inexpensive salt and pepper set. Many of the guests gasped in horror and waited anxiously for the bride to reveal the name of the person who had the 'nerve' to give such a 'chintzy' gift. When the giver was revealed to be a Canadian, the guests smiled sympathetically. The story is significant because if it had been an Italian who committed such a serious social *faux pas*, she would have been the subject of some nasty gossip and from then on would have been referred to as "*quella tirchia* " ("that miser").

[61]Mandaione interview.

[62]Lucente interview.

[63]Marriage registers of St. Andrew's Italian Parish and Our Lady of Grace Italian and English Catholic Church.

[64]See Boissevain, "Family and Kinship", p.517.

[65]Anonymous, interview with author, 31 March 1988, Author's Collection.

[66]Colonna interview, 19 October 1990; M. Fanella interview; Iavasile interview; Mosca interview.

[67]Giuseppe Fanella, interview with author, 21 May 1987.

[68]Mosca, "The Italian Community", pp.6-7.

[69]Mosca interview.

[70]V. Fornaro interview. See also Kenneth Bagnell, Canadese: A Portrait of the Italian Canadians, (Toronto: Macmillan, 1989), p.118.

[71]Mosca, "The Italian Community", pp.21-22.

[72]Girimonte interview.

[73]David Colonna, interview with author, 2 December 1987, Glenbow Archives.

[74]See Banfield, The Moral Basis, pp.78-79, 114 and Joseph LoPreato, Peasants No More: Social Class and Social Change in an Underdeveloped Society, (Scranton, Penn.: Chandler Publishing Co., 1967), pp.135-257.

[75]Mandaione interview.

[76]Colonna interview, 2 December 1987.

[77]See Arricale, "Italian Americans and Myths", p.17.

[78]Ambrogiano interview; P. Fornaro interview.

[79]See Jansen, Italians in a Multicultural Canada, p.208; Ramirez, Italians in Canada, Canadian Historical Association, (Ottawa, 1989), p.21.

[80]Ramirez, Italians in Canada, p.21.

[81]Raniero De Iure, interview with author, September 1990, Author's Collection.

[82]Tiberio interview.

[83]Paolo Milicic, interview with author, August 1989, Author's Collection.

[84]Leo Mafrica, interview with author, March 1989, Author's Collection.

[85]Focaccia is the original form of Italian pizza. It consists of dough sprinkled with oregano, salt, olive oil and in some regions, tomatoes. Taralli are a type of pretzel. Both are quite popular in southern Italy. For further discussion on culture retention among second generation Italo-Canadians, see Valeria Sestieri-Lee, "From Tuscany to the Northwest Territories: The Italian Community of Yellowknife", Canadian Ethnic Studies XIX, 1, 1987, pp.83-84. See also Wsevolod W. Isajiw, "Ethnic-Identity Retention", R. Breton, et al (eds.), Ethnic Identity and Equality: Varieties of Experience in a Canadian City, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990): 34-91.

[86]See Marcel Danesi, "Ethnic Languages and Acculturation: The Case of Italo-Canadians", Canadian Ethnic Studies, XVII, 1, 85, pp.98-103; idem, "Canadian Italian: a Case in Point of How Language Adapts to Environment", Polyphony, Vol.17, No.2 (Fall/Winter 1985): 111-113.

[87]In 1971, 57 percent of Italo-Canadians spoke Italian at home. By 1981, the percentage dropped to 48. Clifford Jansen, "Italians in the Multicultural Society of the Eighties", Polyphony, Vol.17, No.2 (Fall/Winter 1985): 129.

The standard Italian language was born in the central Italian region of Toscana. Until the Second World War, standardized Italian was used only by the educated classes. In the early 1950s, 13 percent of Italians still spoke no standardized Italian at all, while four-fifths of the population habitually used dialect. Denis Mack Smith, "Regionalism", in Edward R. Tannenbaum and Emiliana P. Noether (eds.), Modern Italy: A Topical History Since 1861, (New York: New York University Press, 1974), p.141. For further discussion of language retention among second generation Italo-Canadians see Isajiw, "Ethnic-Identity Retention", pp.49-56.

[88]Nicoletti interview.

[89]Mafrica interview.

CONCLUSION

Ognuno di noi ha il suo destino.

Everyman has but one destiny.

The southern Italians who came to Calgary after the Second World War have been remarkably successful in adjusting to life in a modern, industrialized western Canadian city. Rather than merely 'uprooting' and 'transplanting' their ethnic culture, they have combined aspects of their rural past with that of the urban present to form a third culture, one that is uniquely Italo-Canadian. This new identity, has met with approval from the host society and has proven to be quite durable.

The core values of Italo-Canadian culture have their roots in the historical volatile living conditions of southern Italy. This region was characterised by endemic agricultural underdevelopment and peopled primarily by indigent peasants. The turbulent social, economic and political conditions which plagued much of southern Italy throughout its history created an atmosphere in which one had to constantly attempt to avert disaster. Since the peasantry occupied the lowest stratum of that society's rigidly stratified class structure, they received only a miniscule amount of protection from the social system. Therefore, they learned to rely on themselves by developing a system of core values, beliefs and traditions which affected all aspects of their lives. This value system, termed *la via vecchia*, helped them to survive centuries of man-made and natural disasters. Its main components were: a strong attachment to the family, a strict code of honour, a belief in destiny (or fate) and *campanilismo*. Once *la via vecchia* became firmly embedded in the culture of the peasantry, it

influenced their way of thinking and their view of the world. Adherence to *la via vecchia* ensured continuity which in turn assured survival. Hence, it was passed on from generation to generation. *La via vecchia* represented age-old customs which were known to work. Deviance from *la via vecchia* was strongly discouraged since it left the individual vulnerable to the tragic consequences of "foreign ways".

On emigrating to Calgary, the southern Italians brought with them *la via vecchia* and used it to help cushion the shocks of life in the new country. The immigrants tried to recreate as much of the home village as possible, often in the face of adversity. As southern European Roman Catholics, Italians were not welcomed in Canada and were subject to prejudice and discrimination. This alienation strengthened their reliance on *la via vecchia.* They repeated the same family patterns, practised the same social customs and even recreated the same regional and class divisions within their community in Calgary.

Southern Italians are, by nature, conservative people who do not readily accept change. However, they are also an ambitious people who take full advantage of economic and social opportunities when they present themselves. The immigrants soon realised that in order to succeed in their new environment they would have to alter their social value system. In the process, they created a new culture which they passed on to their children.

While the immigrant's culture was being transformed in Canada, the same was occurring to the culture that they had left behind in Italy. In time the migrants came to identify more with the Italo-Canadian world than the Italian one. The commitment to life in Canada evolved slowly and for some migrants, it came about forcibly; only when they tried (unsuccessfully) to return to Italy did they realise that Canada was their home. The rapid

industrialization of the post-war period ended the homogeneity of the old world culture in both countries, making repatriation quite difficult. More importantly, everything that they value is located in Canada; their homes, their children and grandchildren. The immigrants seem to be satisfied with their lives here even if they do occasionally reminisce wistfully about how "good things were back home". There still are, however, a few immigrants who continue to live in the past, having never adapted to life in Canada. The overwhelming majority of these men and women emigrated at middle age or older and have found it very difficult to adjust.

The migration experience has not been an easy one for the post-war immigrants. Nor was it without pain and ambivalence. The decision to emigrate was motivated by the possibility of greater economic prosperity not religious or political freedom. Nevertheless, it took courage and determination to leave the warmth and security of a familiar environment for a land few knew anything about. Although the Italians welcomed the opportunity to improve their economic well-being, they were saddened at the thought of leaving their home, family, and friends. The long journey from the Italian south to the Canadian west was fraught with fear, uncertainty and misconception. They arrived in their new homeland with only a few possessions and many dreams. They wanted to make a lot of money, buy a house and give their children a better future. These dreams equipped them with the determination to succeed in the new world.

The immigrants entered the Canadian world as strangers who had no understanding of the Canadian way of life. Their first impressions were not favourable. They had come to Canada believing it was the land of opportunity, but it also seemed to be a land devoid of tradition and morals. They found Canadian customs strange, especially the one celebrated with

"turkey instead of saints"! When Canada failed to live up to their expectations, they cursed the fate that had forced them to forsake their beloved homeland and seek their fortune in an alien and hostile land. The immigrants' frustration was expressed in the popular execration, "*mannàggia l'america* !"("damn America!"). In the face of this alienation and isolation, the immigrants clung to their traditional way of life. The 'Canadian way' was not acceptable.

Due to necessity or curiosity, the immigrants gradually adopted a more practical approach to tradition. They began to blend their cherished Italian values and customs with Canadian ones. During the adjustment process, their old world customs were redefined and altered to fit Canadian society. Such modifications, however, did not alter their overall significance. Some were dropped completely while others became more important. Those aspects of the old country that were retained often became stronger and more rigid than they had been in Italy.

At the same time, the old world was subject to reinterpretation. The Italian world became the ideal standard for measuring the worth of the Canadian world. The immigrants looked to the past to interpret the present. Though they no longer lived in a poverty-ridden agricultural environment, their thought processes remained much the same. Long established ways of thinking have a life of their own regardless of the particular conditions which gave rise to them. In this way, the immigrants adopted from the host society only what made sense to them. Immigration, rather than destroying the traditional system of values and beliefs, molded and changed it while at the same time permitting the retention of some of the traditional ways of life.

Part of this "old world" culture was transmitted to the second generation. Many second generation Italo-Canadians continue to uphold

some of the traditional values of their parents, especially the strong attachment to the family unit. Family is the most important element of Italo-Canadian culture. It shaped the pattern of settlement, set the social code and transferred part of the culture to the younger generation. Like their parents, the second generation tends to perceive changes to the family unit as symptoms of social breakdown and although the divorce rate among the second generation is increasing, it is still well below the Canadian average.

The immigrants continue to maintain ties to Italy through letters, phone calls and visits. The contacts though, are less frequent than in previous years because the Italian world has become less important. Distanced by time and geography from the source of their identity, they can no longer be considered 'true Italians'; a fact that they are aware of. Just as they are different from other Canadians they are also different from Italians in Italy. As the immigrants grow older and, as they become further estranged from the Italian world, it is the Italo-Canadian world which is at the center of their identity.

The Italo-Canadian world also provides a sense of belonging in an otherwise alien environment. The new patterns of identity and culture are subsequently reinforced through community involvement. Despite regional differences, the immigrants all share the perspectives of the Italo-Canadian world. They are bound together by strong kinship ties, a belief in honour and tradition, along with an underlying belief in destiny. Emigration to Canada is thought to have been their fate. While there is, naturally, variation among the migrants concerning the observation of ethnic customs, they do not (with rare exception) completely accept the Canadian way of life. Some regard Canadian customs as inferior to Italian. Others perceive complete acceptance of the culture of the host society as disloyalty to the mother country. In either

case, individuals who abandon too many of their cultural traits are no longer thought to be *Italiani*. The community calls such individuals *Canadesi*.

The first generation, though integrated into Canadian society, remains largely unassimilated. In fact, in many ways they appear to be much more traditional than present-day Italians living in Italy. By contrast, research gathered on the second generation suggests that although they have partly retained the traditional core values of their parents' culture, there is a general trend towards assimilation and the minimization of cultural differences with Canadian society. The second generation appears to be unable and unwilling to reproduce the traditional lifestyle of their parents.

Although the second generation was raised with the same cultural values as their parents, they have also been exposed to a wide variety of influences which have contributed to a loss of ethnicity. The most powerful of these has been the school system. Instructed in Anglo-Canadian values, many second generation Italo-Canadians tend to regard visible ethnic maintenance as a detriment to upward mobility. The loss of the old world culture among the second generation is also evident in the declining use of the Italian language and the high rate of inter-marriage with non-Italians.

Given the current situation, it is plausible to assume that Italian culture in Calgary is in danger of disappearing once the first generation is gone. Large scale Italian immigration from Italy ended over twenty years ago and is unlikely to resume anytime in the near future. Italy currently enjoys a high standard of living. Therefore, with the death of the immigrant generation, the younger generation may cease to have little more than touristic contact with the old world culture, making them more vulnerable to the forces of assimilation. It may be too early to speculate, but one might

assume that the third generation will probably retain very little of their grandparents' culture, especially if they are the products of a mixed marriage.

The future of Italian community associations is also in jeopardy. Calgary's Italian community, while it shares many similarities with other Italian communities, lacks the characteristic institutionalized features of the larger concentrations in eastern Canada. The Calgary community has no active "Little Italy" and demonstrates a lack of effective leadership. The most striking feature perhaps is the relative absence of community organized cultural activities. The early leaders of the community have now retired and second generation Italo-Canadians, like their parents, have little or no interest in filling these positions.

In reality, the presence or absence of secular organizations has little influence on ethnic maintenance. Of much more importance is the home environment. Community associations are fine, but an individual conscious interest in maintaining ethnicity must be present. The family plays the most important role in ethnic maintenance. If the parents have a strong desire to retain and practice their ethnic culture, so will their children. If Italian culture in Calgary is to survive, it will be through the family, that the best aspects of *la via vecchia* will be transmitted to the new generation.

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