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ITALIAN AMERICAN IDENTITY: A HERMENEUTIC EXAMINATION OF
TAMPA'S ITALIAN COMMUNITY

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION

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Abstract

This study focuses on how diverse interpretations of ethnicity within the United States produce meaning for Italian Americans. Research regarding Italian Americans and the effects of negative stereotypes, cultural products, and organized crime is plentiful, but the dialogue concerning the de-ethnicizing effect of assimilation on Italian American culture is limited (Barolini, 1985; Tamburri, 1998). Assimilation carries a specific discourse that functions as both an ideology and a system of control. As an ideology, it offers a positivistic solution to the dilemma of human difference. As a system of control, it organizes peoples' lives into a one-size-fits all framework. Moreover, the communication field, and the social sciences in general, lack a clear understanding of what it means to be both Italian and American at the same time because there is no consensus on its singular definition (Krase, 2005). The object of this study is to develop insights that allow communication scholars to understand the intercultural complexity associated with an "assimilated status" and to explore the dynamics of this culturally produced truth. This study attempts to look beyond the external signs of pragmatic assimilation and reveal the internal expression of Italian American culture. This study is a hermeneutic examination of the assimilated status of Italian Americans and the application of the assimilation narrative told by and for the Italian American community. Finally, this research builds and extends on research in cultural fusion and contributes to our understanding of the culturally fused experience of Italian American Identity.

I am Italian American...
                        I am, in other words, confused.
I am asking directions of people
                                who have never traveled this road.
        I am trying to follow the signs.
                                I am lost.
                I am certain
                                someone can tell me what I am.

George Guida[1]

Chapter I: Introduction

For decades, the inquiry of cultural assimilation has inspired research interests

across the social sciences. Traditionally, the field of cultural studies has been predicated

on the assumption that assimilation was a natural phenomenon and a desirable goal for

immigrants; therefore, theories were designed in a way to generate data that teach

individuals how to be "right," rational, and functionally fit for their new way of life. The

recent focus on multiculturalism has constituted a period of transition from adaptive

conformity to diversity, for already assimilated ethnic groups and cultural theorists

challenge the ways Western society uses the term *assimilation* to know a particular

culture. Many of them question who determines when, how, or if it is even possible for

one to assimilate (Tamburri, 1998). Is it the individual who makes these decisions or is it

the dominant culture that decides? (Tamburri, 1998). Others contend that integration

ideologies are linked to intolerance and discrimination (Murphy & Eposito, 2003),

alienation (Kramer, 2003), double consciousness (Du Bois, 1986), cultural schizophrenia

(Carnevale, 2003), and self-hatred (Barolini, 1999). These issues present numerous

cultural concerns, one of which is *identity*. The notion of identity along with discourse

regarding competing assimilation ideologies raises questions about the attempt to

associate or distance oneself from immigrant origins and ethnicity in order to integrate

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[1] Geroge Guida, *Asking Directions,* (Low Italian, 2007, p. 44).

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into another culture. It also raises questions regarding the various consequences of this de-ethnicizing process (Barolini, 1985; Tamburri, 1998).

American preoccupation with ethnicity is, in part, because America is a large colony, a hyper-colony (a manifestation of globalization) that seeks equilibrium within its political boundaries (Kramer, 2000). The drive for equilibrium produces theories, practices, and technologies that reduce differences. According to assimilation theory, society can only "improve if languages disappear and diversity smoothes out" (Kramer, 2000, p. 202). The implications of the assimilation or adaptation model have a direct effect on ethnicity. Thus, the concept of ethnic identity within the United States is rooted in equalizing ideologies such as scientific racism, social Darwinism, war, and color consciousness instead of descent, inheritance, and biological fusion (Gabaccia, 2003).

European and non-European immigrants that migrated to the United States during the turn of the 20th century quickly discovered that the desired path to assimilation and acceptance varied according to the newcomer's ethnicity (Gabaccia, 2003). The ease of acceptance was not equal for all. Some visible characteristics made it difficult to blend into the mainstream culture while others made it easy. Those that were fortunate enough to look "right" and behave "appropriately" had more access to jobs, federally subsidized loans, citizenship, property, civil rights, and political resources (Lipsitz, 1990). Consequently, countless immigrants tried to erase all the detectable signs of their ethnicity that were deemed unacceptable by the white Anglo culture—a process that is neither natural nor inevitable (Gardaphé, 1996; Sandel, Wong-Lowe, Meng, & Chang, 2006). The immigrant's means of adapting to their new way of life was a product of

learning, performing, and perpetuating an assimilated identity, in other words, an invisible self.

Relevance of Study

Intercultural Communication scholars recognize the importance of understanding cultural assimilation and the development of ethnic identity. Studies also attempt to provide insights into the diverse meaning of ethnicity and the way it functions within the United States (Rogers & Hart, 2002). This study focuses on how this process produces meaning for Italian Americans. Research regarding Italian Americans and the effects of negative stereotypes, cultural products, and organized crime is plentiful, but the dialogue concerning the de-ethnicizing effect of assimilation on Italian American culture is limited (Barolini, 1985; Tamburri, 1998). The justification of Italian American studies, which falls outside the margins of the White-Anglo American culture, is by way of African American and Jewish American studies (Bona, 2003). Both areas of study have opened the door for Italian Americans to express a counter-discourse that disputes the context of assimilation in which Italian American ethnic identity is typically framed (Bona, 2003; Tamburri, 1998).

Moreover, the communication field, and the social sciences in general, lacks a clear understanding of what it means to be both Italian and American at the same time because there is no consensus on its singular definition (Krase, 2005). Linear time as presumed in variable analytics does not adequately describe immigrant identity. Many Italian Americans do not experience their ethnic label as a merged term, but instead, two separate identities (Barolini, 1985; Tamburri, 1998). Some believe the singular definition to be a stagnant label that does not evolve because it is frozen in time by a nostalgic

discourse that is filled with leitmotifs of pizzas, nonnas, and gangsters (Tamburri, 2003)—all popular icons of Italian ethnicity and family solidarity (Alba, 1985). Unfortunately, ethnic values and images are part of a racist discourse that is remnant of American perceptions of the 20th century uneducated, poor, Italian immigrants that either could not or would not adapt to mainstream America. Hermeneutics argues that this is not remnant, but effective and now extends to Russians, Bulgarians, Romanians, Turks, and other immigrants now making up the majority of newcomers specific.

Specific to the Italian American experience, the gangster image represents a past, which many Italians have never known, except as a media fiction. Cinema and television portrayals of Italian gangster images paint an inaccurate portrait of the Italian American experience and ethnicity (Alba, 1985). The Italian American Historical Association (2005) contends that these negative images cause psychological, economical, and cultural damage to peoples' lives. Some might argue that the mere fact that stereotypes or exaggerated distortions exist is a sign that Italian American ethnicity is alive and well, but Barolini (1985) would argue that the negative imaging typically erases or mutes peoples' multiple experiences of individuality. She writes:

> Identity is the fixed sameness and stillness that Saint Augustine attributes only to God, the eternal and not changing…The same fixed perfect sameness is not meant for us, but instead one that is evolving. Only through death can one gain perfect stillness. (p. 109)

Similarly, Kramer (2003) contends that "realizing a world of non-distinction would be the same as death: zero cognitive complexity, absolute equilibrium—no mind" (p. 260). He also explains that to arrive at complete conformity, to be identical, one must presume that

the target one is trying to conform to is not moving, not evolving; hence, the myth of an unchanging monolithic white-Anglo American culture (Kramer, 2005). America, however, with all its regional difference, is in constant flux and so are the immigrants and their target identities. Part of its evolution is because of the coming of the Italians.

Many of the people who bear an ethnic title in the United States typically have little to do with the construction of their ethnic persona. Essentially, the term "Italian American" is a label shaped by political agendas and social classifications (Giunta, 2002), instead of the authentic characteristics of a fused culture. People who use stereotypes to distinguish Italian Americans from other immigrants believe themselves to be knowledgeable about them; therefore, it never even occurs to them that their perception could be false. The validity of their reality is grounded in the fact that Italian Americans appear to have assimilated; therefore, they are known.

Assimilation carries a specific discourse that functions as both an ideology and a system of control. As an ideology, it offers a positivistic solution to the dilemma from the point of view of those who want uniformity in the interest of industrial efficiency of human difference. As a system of control, it organizes peoples' lives into a one size fits all framework. There are certain qualities, practices, and boundaries within any discourse that make if a field of knowledge (Foucault, 1972). Thus, we must understand how assimilation arguments become claims, what makes them valid, and how they come to represent knowledge within a disciplinary field, such as intercultural communication. We must also question why social scientists feel as if there is nothing new or interesting to say about a particular people. Some are convinced that our ethnic and racial reality does not exhibit negative effects of assimilation. The idea that it occurs is doubted, but people

live with a different reality. Failure to acknowledge the ethnic makeup of any group is a form of discrimination and worthy of academic attention (Bona, 2003). Similar to other ethnic groups, Italian Americans are not the same people that migrated in the late 1800's (Tamburri, 2003). In fact, their identity is completely different from the identity of their ancestors and the monolithic caricature created in American media.

To be more accurate than the simplistic approach found in most intercultural communication literature, the present-day Italian American is differentiated by a multitude of variables including "class, education, political affiliation, religion, Italian origin, area of settlement in America, and the number of generations living in this country" (Barolini, 1985, p. 4). These characteristics are seldom used to describe their culture because the media image is more permanent than reality, and yet are part of reality. This problem is not exclusive to media, it is also applies to intercultural communication research. This paradox produces a de-ethnicizing effect on Italian American culture. Theirs is an identity that, on the one hand, is in constant flux, while on the other, bound to a permanent myth, a false image that is at odds with reality. The result is a less than permanent or dissociated sense of self (Barthes, 1972).

Italian American Identity

Italian American identity is shaped by a shared history of migration, Diasporas, and political and social chaos (Bona, 2003; Verdicchio, 1997). Italy, as a nation-state, came into existence in1861, but Italy, as a nationality, took much longer to become a way of life that represents our contemporary notion of an Italian identity. For centuries, the people who lived in this geographic location recognized themselves by provinces, which speak different Italic dialects and hold specific family names. Neighboring provinces did

not always get along, but the most common tension occurred between the northern and the southern regions (Guidice, 2000). Southerners, whose origins evolved from an archaic European peasant culture, suffered from extreme poverty, political oppression, and a long history of brutal invasions and foreign domination from various tribes and cultures such as Greeks, Phenicians, Vandals, Carthiainians, Goths, Austrians, Byzantines, Arabs, Normans, Romans, French, Spanish, and Northern Italy (Alba, 1985; Guidice, 2000). Italy itself was discriminated against as a southern country within Europe, but southern Italy's additional "southern way of life" was viewed as extremely backward and stagnant. Many considered the distinctions between these regions as high culture (North) and low culture (South), which, in turn, created a nationalist discourse that instigated anti-southern biases that carried over to America. Northern Italian anti-peasant prejudice led Northern Italians to believe that the inferiority of these people prevented national progress while Western Eurocentrism, nationalism, and Orientalism within Italy perpetuated the notion of "otherness" and "southern difference" (Schneider, 1998). the attempt to build an Italian nation was also an attempt to "civilize" the south and enslave the peasants to the growing industrialism and capitalism of the north. Gramsci (1926) contends that the northern bourgeoisie dominated southern Italy and the islands by turning them into exploitable colonies. The result has increased political feuds, economic oppression, violence, and a mass migration that instigated a major Italian diaspora (Bona, 2003; Mormino & Pozzetta, 1998). In recent years, the identity of south Italy caused many Italians and Italian Americans to raise the "Southern Question" (the battle between civilization and barbarianism) as a way of rethinking the historical events that lead to the south's disparaging identity (Gramsci, 1926; Guglielmo, 2003). Currently, tensions

between these regions still exist and affect the past and present situations for today's Italian Americans.

It is estimated that between 1880 and 1920, over three million Italians entered the United States (Mormino & Pozzetta, 1998). It is also estimated that nearly eighty percent of Italians that migrated to the United States were from southern Italy and Sicily (Guidice, 2000). In America, the term *Italian* traditionally collapses both Italian and Sicilian cultures into one category, a practice that only acknowledges the *higher* of the two cultures. This treatment, which is grounded in the Weberian notion of racial and ethnic membership, allows the cultural traits that Italian and Sicilian immigrants share instead of the ones that set them apart (Alba & Nee, 2003). Nonetheless, these immigrants imported their distinct values, codes, diverse regional identities, and ancestral customs to their new environment. They did not trust governments or clergy and held no sense of an Italian national identity, so their willingness to assimilate cannot be assumed (Bona, 2003).

It was not until Italians settled in the United States that they began to fuse the two cultures and experienced a dual identity based on *Chiaroscuro* (the juxtaposition of dark and light) (Barolini, 1999). Barolini's use of the symbolic dualisms of dark and light is grounded in the universal archetype of good and evil that structures the world in oppositions. The dark light metaphor is used by many cultures to represent various ethical, metaphysical, or spiritual symbolic dualisms—heaven and earth, body and soul, pure and impure, birth and death, sun and moon, day and night, and the biblical interpretation of God-as-Light or absolute goodness that connects humans to nature and to the absolute Being (as illustrated in the Old Testament of the Bible or in Dante's

Divine Comedy) (Dante 1996; Fasolini, 2005; Gebser, Ger. 1949/Eng.1985; Kramer, 1997). Other, western or modern, interpretations of the dark light metaphor tend to connect humans to cultural structures that are framed in such a way that the system, and those who have adapted to it, is good and right, while the contradiction is evil and wrong (Gardaphé, 1996). Kramer (2000) explains, "In modern dialectal parlance, people are defined as either "assets" or "liabilities" to cultural systems (p. 191). In order to be an asset "one must be well-adjusted, mature, balanced, and in control" (p. 194). This perspective derives from the Cartesian notion of progress and development where any deviation disrupts the equilibrium of the system (Kramer, 2000). In order to avoid the dark and wrong, one must conform to the system. Kramer writes:

> The more one adapts behaviorally, the more evolved one is, which is to say, the more one is becoming one with that which is mimicked (the host). "Emancipation" means escaping life via the denial of this life of "opposites" (meaning), of the self and the Absolute Other. But of course this presumes one huge antagonistic dualism, the individual versus society, which is a very modern problem. (pp. 205-206)

This issue is not only a local phenomenon, but also a global one (Kramer, 2003). As people strive to abandon the ways of their own culture, it becomes an "issue of shrinking variety of meanings, values, expectations, motives, and ways of living" (Kramer, 2003p. xiii). Moreover, the attempt to reject one's own distinctiveness in pursuit of other values, which in this case are Anglo-American values, is what Barolini (1985) refers to as "de-ethnicization" (p.25). She contends that it is "absurd to think that one can only model after Anglo-American values and not Black American or whatever American" (Barolini,

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1985, p. 25). Consequently, the right/wrong opposition proliferate a sense of inadequacy, irrationality, and inferiority among individuals, communities, and cultures that do not or cannot adapt or escape from the "life of opposites by becoming one with the "Host"" (Kramer, 2003, p. 206). As a result, the immigrant consciousness may express a never healed dichotomy between their old and new world values (Barolini, 1985) because, as Kramer (2003) explains, "identity conversion can never be complete" (p. 3).

Therefore, *Chiaroscuro* signifies the immigrant's exterior adaptation (light and right) to the systematic ordering of American culture; and their interior conflict (dark and wrong) over learning how to be alone, developing one's self-identity outside one's community and erasing ethnic difference (Kramer, 2003). The balancing of *chiaroscuro* created a double consciousness that resulted in new cultural expressions and confusions (Du Bois, 1973; Bona, 2003). Du Bois (1973) writings teach us that double-consciousness is,

> always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by
> the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels
> his two-ness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two un-
> reconciled strivings. (p. 3)

African Americans and ethnic groups had to learn how to negotiate between an internal identity and an external identity in order to fit into a society that tends to marginalized racial and cultural differences (Hedge, 1998). Guidice (2003) argues that contemporary Italian Americans inherit the same identity problems of their ancestors: residue of the old world floats above the new world, "never quite existing, never quite vanishing" (Lipsitz,

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1990, p. 135). In order to extend our understanding of how identity is constructed we need to understand the variables that influence the assimilation process.

Italian Assimilation

Italian Americans are considered one of the most assimilated ethnic groups in the United States—a feat that took a little over a century to accomplish (Lisella, 2002). Many Italian American scholars are trying to understand how this claim correlates with the breakdown of Italian American ethnic identity and expression (Goeller, 2003). According to Carnevale (2003), factors include notions of whiteness, language, the demise of little Italies across the country, and generational differences. Moreover, both Gans (1992) and Alba & Nee (2003) believe that intermarriage was also a powerful assimilatory force that aided in the process. Similar to other ethnic groups, first generation Italians wanted to adopt American customs and language in order to protect their children from an identity that could prevent them from succeeding within the American culture (Goeller, 2003). Thus, it was necessary for immigrants to consider ethnic difference in terms of the melting-pot attitude and, therefore, strive for an assimilated status (Tamburri, 1998).

Race. For Italians, the desire to assimilate also involved race, not just culture. It has been argued that Italians were recognized as white depending on where and when they entered the United States (Gabaccia, 2003), which made them "legally fit" for citizenship while setting them apart from other immigrant groups (Roediger, 2003). This occurred, in part, because many Americans overlooked Italian ethnicity whereas others considered them not "ethnic" in the same sense as other cultures. As migration increased, however, the color of southern Europe was called into question and perceptions of Italians as not fully white produced prejudices and suspicions against their "dark white,"

"white ethnic," or "less than white" appearances (Alba & Nee, 2003). Asante (2000) contends that America's "racial situation turns on the black-white axis and that all other relationships between peoples in the society are considered in light of the black-white encounter" (p. 19). In 1945, W. Lloyd Warner and Leo Srole's research findings on assimilation supported the notion that fair-skinned people assimilated quickly, but for people who possessed stereotypical racial characteristics (Armenians and Sicilians) assimilation took much longer (Alba & Nee, 2003). These researchers developed a timetable that placed "English speaking protestants at the top and "Negroes and all Negroid mixtures" at the bottom" (Alba & Nee, 2003, p. 2). According to the timetable, Italian assimilation was expected to take a "moderate" six generations (Alba & Nee, 2003). Many Italians, however, did not perceive themselves as belonging on a black/white axis (Du Bois, 1973; Bona, 2003, Gabaccia, 2003; Scarpaci, 2003). For example, Sicilian jazz singer Louis Prima, whose identity was often questioned, challenged being "made black" in America (Gennari, 2003). Prima's stage humor mocked notions of whiteness and ethnicity, while his musical performances frequently "blurred the race line"(Guida, 2005, p. 681). Guida writes, "He was a European American man acting like an African American," which sometimes prevented him from playing in white clubs (Guida, 2005, p. 682). In fact, Prima was even considered a national threat during World War II (Carnevale, 2003). Like many immigrants, Prima's ethnic identity was simply an expression of the fused African, Sicilian, and American culture in which he lived and interacted. The Irish-dominated Catholic Church, which felt endangered by the anticlerical views of Italian immigrants, to some extent, also instigated the racist attitudes toward Italians (Bona, 2003). Moreover, Anglo-Italian cultural relations were strained by

remarks in the media that referred to Italians as "nonwhites" or "dagoes" (Mormino &
Pozzetta, 1998). These instances, coupled by the lynching of Italian immigrants in both
Louisiana and Florida complicated how Italians came to view themselves racially. Thus,
Italian identity became an uncertain racial situation that varied by degrees of whiteness.

In their desperate attempt to escape their own race and class oppression in the
United States, European immigrants, who learned white racial domination from
Americans, began to demonize Blacks for all the postwar social and economic problems
they experienced (Guglielmo, 2003; Lucconi, 2003). Many Italian immigrants, especially
those living in the South, modified their interactions with the Black community, and
eventually, other ethnic groups that did not share the same white status (Scarpaci, 2003).
In their development of a "white consciousness," they were indoctrinated into American
racism (Gennari, 2003), as a form of groupthink. The result perpetuated racial
discrimination, blame and self-righteousness, dialectical tensions within the Italian
community, and violence with other groups (two famous episodes of violence occurred in
Harlem 1945 and Bensonhurst, 1989) (Guglielmo, 2003; Sciorra, 2003).

The "white question" is still relevant among Italian Americans today because
naturalization and whiteness did not guarantee them a fixed Italian American identity
(Guglielmo, 2003). Hence, the emerging awareness of one's ethnic identity is in constant
flux—adoption, resistance, and rejection—never stagnant or monolithic. Individuals
apply their own cultural value system while simultaneously challenging the other.
Consequently, many Italian immigrants of the past and Italian American citizens of the
present resist Italian stereotypes and assimilated notions of whiteness (Carnevale, 2003).
Italian American writers are embracing this shameful part of their American history by

opening up the dialogue, to understand their white ethnic identity and build social

networks with other people of color (Guglielmo, 2003; Scarpaci, 2003).

  Language. Although whiteness was instrumental to constructing the Italian

American assimilated status, the primary reason is the loss of the Italian language

(Lisella, 2002), especially during World War II (Carnevale, 2003). Throughout American

history, there have been many groups that went from being considered part of the

American mainstream to being looked upon as unsuitable and suspicious—Germans and

other central Europeans, Japanese, Jews, and currently Muslims (Alba & Nee, 2003).

During times of war, governments are wary of "enemy languages" and in the case of the

second world war, the U.S. government was fearful of the languages that supported

fascism—German, Japanese, and Italian (Alba & Nee, 2003; Glazer, 1993; Carnevale,

2003). In contrast to the Germans, Italians were the most recent ethnic group to settle in

the United States, so they were not to be trusted (Carnevale, 2003). Moreover, many

Italian immigrants imported anarchists views while others obtained these views in

America. In contrast to the Japanese, Italians had less observable physical traits, so

language was the visible marker for their distinctiveness or *Italianitá* (Carnevale, 2003).

The government considered placing Italians in camps, as they had with Japanese

Americans, but *Title 42, Chapter 7, Sub Chapter II, Section 431* strictly defined the

internees as Japanese, which excluded persons of German and Italian ancestry

(Carnevale, 2003). The U.S. government, instead, relocated 10,000 non-resident Italians

living on the west coast away from the water and placed 50,000 more under strict curfews

(Carnevale, 2003). Across the nation, another 600,000 non-resident Italian immigrants

were labeled enemy aliens. They were forced to register with the government and carry

identification. They were also prohibited from possessing radios, cameras, firearms, and flashlights (Carnevale, 2003). The FBI, the Foreign Language Division (FLD), the Foreign Nationalities Branch (FNB), and the Office of War Information (OWI) monitored the dissemination of foreign language media and information. In 1942, spot checks and reports on 121 aliens living in Oklahoma City led to the seizure of all documents written in Italian, most of which were letters and newspapers regarding the safety of family members and friends in Italy (Carnevale, 2003). Sixty-five Italian American radio stations serving four million people and the Italian language newspaper, *La Voce Della Partria*, were suspended and never revived.

As their language became stigmatized as a Fascist language, Italians reacted by proving their linguistic and patriotic allegiance. FBI records show that Italians began downplaying their attachment to their language by restricting its use in public spaces and Americanizing their names (Carnevale, 2003). Many children raised during this period were not taught to speak Italian; and if they were, they were discouraged from speaking it outside the home (Lisella, 2002). Shops and clubs across the nation changed their by-laws to require all meetings to be conducted in English, and even went as far as placing signs in their windows stating, "NO Italian spoken for the duration of the war" (Carnevale, 2003, p. 13). In addition, leaders within the Italian American community tried to break the connection between the Italian language and fascism by using Italian to demonstrate a commitment to the war effort. Many second-generation Italian Americans used their language skills to translate documents for the FBI. This activity further complicated their perception of their ancestral language (Carnevale, 2003). Moreover, the

Order Sons of Italy in America, founded in 1905, issued a resolution urging members to donate one day's salary to U.S. national defense (Carnevale, 2003).

Currently, the National Italian American Foundation and the Italian American Task Force are lobbying for a public apology from the White House and an update in U.S. history textbooks. The brutal images and stories of the traveling exhibit *Una Storia Segreta: When Italian Americans were Enemy Aliens* initiated this activism and produced a sense of cultural awareness that many Italian Americans did not fully appreciate or understand. This activism was perpetuated by those seeking legislative action for Native Americans, African Americans, and Japanese Americans that were mistreated during the war. In 1999, the Senate introduced the S-1909 Bill (Wartime violation of Italian American Civil Liberties Act). Overall, the breakdown of the Italian language during wartime not only intensified the pressures to assimilate, but also had a severe effect on Italian American ethnicity and expression.

Mobility. Immigrants sustained their culture through community and the Italian Diaspora that created hundreds of Italian communities around the world (Bona, 2003). Each neighborhood had its own distinctiveness as immigrants from specific regions in Italy and Sicily tended to settle in the same area where they could form local attachments similar to the Old World. Both Italy and Sicily are mountainous lands, so people subscribed to *companilismo*, which is a village consciousness that is distinct to those who lived in isolated locations with little means of leaving (Bona, 2003). The word *campanile* means bell, and the idea of *companilismo* refers to the villagers mobility—the limitations of their travel ended where the town bell could not be heard (Alba, 1985). Thus, little Italies were segregated communities that recreated the *companilismo* boundaries in

peoples' lives. On one hand, the segregation preserved their way of life (food, language, family values, customs, and religious practices), while the overcrowded living conditions encouraged social interaction that produced a specific ethnic community (Rapczynski, 1999). On the other hand, the segregation served as a sub-cultural prison.

Many immigrants were ignorant of American laws and fearful of the growing hostility towards them that was a response to mass migration hysteria during the early 19th century. In addition, many Americans, such as sociologist Edward Alsworth Ross's (1914), had issues with the declining birthrate among old-stock Anglo-Americans and immigration. "Americanism" rhetoric was perpetuated by fear of losing jobs to immigrants who would work longer hours for lower wages and the suspicion of foreigners having communist views. When the National Origins Act of 1924 "the quota" placed strict limitations on the number of immigrants that could enter the United States each year, immigrants were terrified of deportation and being separated from loved ones. As a result, many never left their neighborhood, even if it meant living in filthy public housing. They learned from relatives that they were not welcome in certain stores or in certain areas and that Americans called them disparaging names, such as "wop," "guinea," and "dago." There were also stories of discrimination and violence against Italians, including the 1891 occurrence in New Orleans where eleven Italian immigrants jailed under suspicion of murder were killed by an angry mob. As a result, Italians, like other groups, created a built-in social system that insulated them from the host culture. Upon entering the country, a landlord or *padroni* provided immigrants with housing, labor, and safety, but only for a commission. These *padroni* exercised a great deal of control over the Italian laborer, and in many cases, exploited and enslaved their own

paesani (countrymen). Little Italy sustained and fused the various Italian and Sicilian cultures, but the price of community insulation was downward social mobility (Alba & Nee, 2003; Gans, 1962). Only those who assimilated could reap the benefits from upward social mobility (Alba & Nee, 2003). Therefore, both European and Asian immigrant groups, who had unique geographic patterns of settlement, slowly dispersed from these segregated areas (Alba & Nee, 2003).

The 1950's marked the end of the first chapter in Italian American history as the destruction of little Italies around the country lead to a second diaspora (Bona, 2003). Italians initially settled in northeastern states, including New York, Chicago, Hartford, and New Haven, or port cities, such as San Diego, San Francisco, New Orleans, St. Augustine, and Tampa (Alba & Nee, 2003). They typically lived in cities where they could work in factories, but changing labor needs and stagnant economic conditions made it difficult to survive. Eventually, socioeconomic mobility, improved education, and housing opportunities lead to a substantial transfer of Italian Americans and their culture into suburban middle class neighborhoods (Alba & Nee, 2003; Rapczynski, 1999). The second diaspora marks a significant change in immigrant consciousness. Initially, second and third generations held on to the neighborhood identity in which they were raised, which helped sustain some of the cultural relationships between suburban and urban communities (Rapczynski, 1999). Within a decade, however, these relationships started to deteriorate. Many Italian Americans recognized the dangers of extinction and struggled to revive these old neighborhoods, but to no avail. It was not only a matter of losing their ethnic space, which preserved language, food, and customs, but most importantly, the breakdown of the village mentality and family codes, such as

sangu du me sangu—"blood of my blood." As the immigrants and their children become

"Americanized," they learn to be self-sufficient, and individualistic. They no longer

needed the *padroni,* the community, or the oppressive immigrant life that kept them

restricted to the boundaries of their ethnic space and their ethnic identity. Their growing

awareness of outwardness, individualism, and isolation made it easy for them to adopt an

assimilated status and lifestyle. Over time, the village consciousness of *companilismo*

came to be seen as an old-fashioned mindset and the "blood of my blood" was reduced to

the nuclear family. Remnants of the Little Italies exist in places, such as lower

Manhattan's Mulberry Bend and Arthur Avenue in the Bronx, but they exist largely as

symbols of cultural experience and identity that is recreated out of a nostalgic past. "The

secular ethnic culture that the immigrants brought with them is now only an ancestral

memory, or an exotic tradition to be savored once in a while in a museum or at an ethnic

festival"(Gardaphé, 1996, p.119). For the most part, these ethnic places uphold certain

types of cultural expression, but the specific mood created out of their original purpose is

no longer obtainable or necessary.

Generational differences. Italian American generational differences reveal a

dialectical tension that is integral to their assimilated status. For decades, Italian

American literature has demonstrated that many individuals experience an ongoing

struggle to reconcile old world traditions and new world perspectives (Gardaphé, 1996).

Those who have camouflaged or rejected their ethnicity in order to submerge themselves

in American traditions did so at the risk of losing their Italian heritage (Giunta, 2002).

Not all Italian Americans experience this loss, but the ones who do describe it as being

caught between assimilation and exclusion, displacement and belonging, betrayal and

allegiance (Gardaphé, 1996). This harmful state can lead to a type of cultural schizophrenia, self-hatred (Giunta, 2002), or role confusion (Goeller, 2003; Kramer, 2003). How they approach and manage their identity is uniquely determined by their generational position, and, as Groeller (2003) states, it is never without contradictions. As previously noted, the first generation immigrant adopted the assimilation (melting pot) perspective in order to survive. This generation is characterized by their trust in American values and hopes for a better life (Barolini, 1999). The communication of this group was strictly oral. Gardaphé (1996) compares the strong storytelling traditions of the Italian and Sicilian cultures to African American and Native American cultures. The narratives reveal the Italian concept of "self" and its place in public discourse. Gardaphé (1996) writes, "Historically, the self is suppressed; it was not used as a source of storytelling in the communal settings of Sicily, where one function of such stories is to create a temporary relief from reality" (p.128). Stories and proverbs were used to protect the individual and the family and uphold the code of silence and honor, *omerta*. Barolini (1999) explains that *omerta* is the conspiracy of silence that grew from the underworld. This code has a negative effect on one's self-concept because it keeps many Italians thinking that they are still "old world villagers" and, therefore, cannot progress. However, if one accepts the ways of the new world, they may be estranged from their countrymen and their way of life. Gardaphé (1996) provides examples of proverbs that uphold the code of silence and the old world:

> Di il fatto tuo, e lascia far il fatto tuo—Tell everyone your business and the devil will do it.

Odi, vedi, e taci se vuoi viver in pace—Listen, watch, and keep quiet if you wish

to live in peace.

Pensa molto, parla poco, e scrivi meno—Think a lot, speak a little, and write even

less. (pp. 28-29).

Gardaphé (1996) argues that the shift from "an oral culture ruled by destiny to a written

culture in which one could exercise greater control" affected their sense of being Italian

and of being American (p. 34). The dialectical tension occurs when the next generation

constructs their identity outside old world traditions (Barolini, 1999). Simply learning to

read and write separated children one degree from their parents or grandparents and

eventually, broke the code of silence. Consequently, it has taken three generations (one

hundred years) for Italian Americans to find a voice in this country (Gardaphé, 1996).

Apart from the ability to express oneself through writing, there were generational

attitudes that contributed to their slow development. Many second generation Italian

Americans wanted to appease the dominant culture, and did so by adopting the negative

stereotypes that were exaggerated during World War II or in the media. Groeller (2003)

explains how this group is characterized by shame and doubt about their heritage and

desires new goals in life. These goals most often resemble American middle class values.

Unfortunately, this group seldom confronted the injustices set forth by the dominant

American culture, instead hoping that it might change (Tamburri, 1998). The third

generation accomplishes more than the first or second by demystifying the stereotypes

and criticizing America's treatment of Italians. Their criticism is not well received

because it depicts an ugly picture of America that not only offends Anglo Americans, but

other Italian Americans as well (Daniels as cited by Tamburri, 1998).

Both the second and the third generation are central to the recorded experience of the immigrant and the construction of cultural narratives and myths. The third, however, is described as being on a spiritual journey in search of their identity—referred to as the "third generation phenomenon." Role confusion is common because the "goals of one's heritage, one's personal goals, and the goals of the new culture all seemed to be irrevocably at odds with each other" (Groeller, 2003, p. 126). Some travel to Italy while others learn to speak Italian, cook Italian food, and adorn their homes with Italian cultural symbols (Barolini, 1999; Groeller, 2003). Hence, "the journey is never over but must be reinterpreted by every generation" (Groeller, 2003, p. 89). This interpretation is not only on an interpersonal level, but on a national one as well. Americans' national consciousness has always influenced how they approach civil liberties and multiculturalism. Since before the Declaration of Independence, Americans have defined themselves by rational designation, not ethnicity (Glazer, 1990). The American identity, as Crevecoeur (1782) writes:

> is neither a European or the descendent of a European, hence that strange mixture of blood, which you will find in no other country…He is an American, who, leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones form the new mode of life he has embraced, the new government he obeys, and the new rank he holds" (Crevecoeur as cited by Glazer, 1993, p. 122)

The trend towards multiculturalism is forcing people to rethink their national identity and the idea that they are living in a melting pot.

The fourth generation moves from the margin to the mainstream. They have more "native roots" in America and can "speak out uninhibitedly as an American" (Daniel as

cited by Tamburri, 1998, p.9). Having found a voice as Italian Americans within the public sphere, they posses the skills necessary to resolve internal conflicts (if any) regarding their ancestral culture, their mainstream American culture, and their personal goals (Groeller, 2003). The fourth generation does not abandon their cultural heritage; instead, they find a way to transcend the experiences of their ancestors through "symbolic ethnicity" (Gardaphé, 1996). Similar to the previous generation, they attempt to recreate their culture and their ethnicity through various symbols and discourses that resemble old-world signs. Expressed through rituals, holidays, cuisine, and media, these symbols are more obvious and less original than the ones used by earlier generations who, incidentally, tried to erase them (Gardaphé, 1996). Clearly, these general descriptions cannot explain all people's feelings toward their ethnicity or assess their skills for resolving any internal conflict. Many generational lines are blurred. For instance, numerous second and third (and even fourth) generation individuals are raised in the immigrant subculture, and sometimes by their immigrant grandparents. In addition, both Glazer (1993) and Alba & Nee (2003) contend that the high rate of intermarriage among Italian males (due to lower Italian female migration) adds to the complexity of identity. For instance, the children of Irish-American and Italian-American parents grew up in ethnically diverse communities and negotiated multiple identities (Alba & Nee (2003). This discussion can only aid us in understanding the dialectical tensions of different generations and how the assimilated status influenced their *Italianità* (Gardaphé, 1996).

America was born out of diversity; all groups constitute the origins of this difference, but "difference" did not manifest itself in the North American cultural paradigm. Instead, it was overshadowed by concepts of Americanization and assimilation

(Glazer, 1993; Kramer, 2003). Murphy and Eposito (2003) believe that assimilation "can take a high toll on the soul of a culture" (p. 37). This is nowhere more evident than in the fact that after decades of being ethnically nearsighted, America is facing an identity crisis. Cultural recognition is at the core of this issue (Barolini, 1999; Kramer, 2003; Tamburri, 1998). Members of cultural groups are reclaiming their ethnic identity. It is a shift from an inward self-preservation to an outward individuality. They are trying to demyth the master narrative of America by decentering the assimilation ideology and replacing it with multiculturalism and cultural fusion. Hence, the assimilation metaphor—melting pot—is being replaced with ones that are more accurate representation of American diversity—kaleidoscopic or socio/cultural mosaic (Tamburri, 1998). Unfortunately, the myth of assimilation both within and among nations is grounded in the "moral ideology of progress" (Kramer, 2003, p. xii). This dogma places the burden of change on the immigrant, not society (Murphy & Eposito, 2003). D'Alfonso (2006) writes, "When people say that we have to assimilate, what they are asking us to do is to become citizens without a culture! This is what is asked of minorities here on the American continents" (p. 239). As a culture, we must rethink the concept of human advancement before we can fully accept multiculturalism or help people break free of their assimilated status.

Purpose and Objectives

The object of this study is to develop insights that allow communication scholars to understand the intercultural complexity associated with an "assimilated status" and to explore the dynamics of this culturally produced truth. As a communication scholar, I question the use of any theory or category that provides a concise, efficient, and complete

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perspective of a culture. Moreover, the notion of ethnicity cannot be "constructed as an internally coherent object of theoretical knowledge"; that such a categorization "cannot be resolved... without an altogether positivist reductionism" (Tamburri, 1998, p.5). "What emerges is an intensely narrow, self-reinforcing worldview" (Kramer, 2003, p. 7). Drawing from Tamburri (1998) and Kramer (2003), I argue against using assimilation as an ethnic yardstick because it does not the provide answers to the knowledge gaps regarding peoples' identity. Assimilation and adaptation theories are but two methods used to measure how immigrant groups succeed in American society and there is no guarantee that either will remain the dominant discourse in intercultural communication research. Our social scientists discredit the negative effects of assimilation, but this opposes the reality of individuals and groups who believe that their differences should be recognized and remembered. The "hermeneutic fusion" of cultures appears in all aspects of life such as music, food, fashion, language, graffiti, art, dance, rituals to name a few (Kramer, 2000). Italian Americans represent an assimilated group in our longstanding paradigm; yet many claim to be connected to the ancient traditions of Italian culture and civilization. Gardaphé (1996) contends that Italian symbols are evident, even when people are regulating the visible signs of their ethnicity, because the *accent,* which is a form of cultural fusion (Kramer, 2003), can still be detected (Giunta, 2002). This study attempts to look beyond the obvious signs of theoretical assimilation and reveal the undetectable signs of Italian cultural expression. I will examine the assimilated status of the Italian American and the application of the assimilation narrative told by and for the Italian American community. Finally, this research builds on and extends research in

cultural fusion and contributes to our understanding of the culturally fused experience of Italian Americans.

Research Questions

RQ1: How do Italian Americans speak of themselves as different from others?

RQ2: How do they talk about assimilation?

RQ3: How do they define themselves discursively in everyday talk, in the media, and in cultural images?

RQ4: What can be learned from an ethnic group that carries an assimilated status?

RQ5: How do they maintain their ethnic identity through ingroup interaction, symbols, and activities?

RQ6: What are the horizons of their ethnicity?

Outline of the Study

The remainder of this study continues as follows: Chapter two provides a detailed review of important literature in the following areas: (a) intercultural communication, including dominant approaches and theories applied to the study of intercultural communication and areas of research; (b) intergroup identity (c) a discussion of assimilation and the adaptation model of communication; (d) and Italian Americans. The intention of this chapter is to develop a rationale for investigating the empirical and theoretical usefulness of the adaptation model of communication.

This study attempts to analyze the *ethnic identity* surrounding the concept of Italian American, and it is based on an intercultural perspective that proposes de-ethnization is a result of assimilated dissociation. Ethnographic inquiry is used in this study to explore and describe the communication interactions of Italian Americans in

Tampa followed by a hermeneutic interpretation of the data. Applying cultural fusion theory to the investigation of ethnic identity has practical and theoretical outcomes that include being able to reveal how Italian Americans negotiate their assimilated status. For that reason, Chapter three provides detail for Kramer's theory of Cultural Fusion and hermeneutic methodology used in this study.

Chapter four discusses the history of Italians in Florida, data gathering details used in the research, and personal reflection. By examining individuals who are bound by a particular space and time, I can better understand the integration patterns and cultural fusion of Italian Americans with other ethnic groups. Chapter five discusses the fused horizons of three ethnic identities: Latin, Italic, and Italian American. This chapter is the case study in which I analyze the ways in which the Italian Americans communicate their ethnic identity and negotiate their assimilated status. The final chapter concludes the study with a summery of conclusions, strengths and limitations to the study, and areas of future research.

Chapter II: Literature Review

The study of intercultural communication as a discipline within the communication field has developed significantly over the past three decades (Gudykunst, 2002), but the ability to communicate "interculturally," has been occurring for more than 5000 years (Kramer, 2006). First, to understand the origins of intercultural communication, it is necessary to provide a brief discussion of human beings' discovery of culture. Gesber (Ger. 1949/Eng. 1985) explains that once humans discovered space, they shift their gaze from being one with nature to owning nature. The awareness of space leads to the longing for new landscapes and new worlds. Intercultural contact

evolves as a result of conquest, navigation and exploration—the travels of Marco Polo, the explorations of the Viking, the conquest of Alexander the Great, the Silk Road, to name a few (Kramer, 2000). These interactions lead to the exchange and fusion of peoples with distinct languages, habits, games, dress and adornments, cosmetics, medicines, gods, tools, technologies, architectures, foods, agriculture, and natural resources (Kramer, 2000).

The discovery of culture enhanced humans' desire for more personal space, ownership, and self-identity (Kramer, 1997). When humans internalized space, they discovered that they are no longer part of the landscape to which they once felt connected. The all-encompassing sky and earth are no longer whole, but isolated parts created by their perception (Gebser, Ger. 1949/Eng. 1985). Nature is now the "Other." As humans strive for a connection to nature, they recreate their world, thus insuring that every point and moment in their life is explained through scientific systems, realisms, and images that are refined, reproduced, and abstracted into truths (Buber, 1978). For many civilizations, the word "culture" does not exist (Kramer, 2003), so "thinking analytically about culture," in order to establish research objectives that "problematize culture" is a Western European phenomenon (Kramer, 1992, p. 1). To date, culture is defined in many different ways and with a variety of different meanings (Holliday, Hyde, & Kullman, 2004). Therefore, the perplexing struggle for achieving mastery over the natural world and its inhabitants is the onset of intercultural awareness, and, ultimately, the study of intercultural communication.

Intercultural Communication

The study of intercultural communication, within both academia and the greater society, promotes a shift towards educating individuals about ways to communicate effectively with people from different cultures as well as developing an intercultural perspective (MacLennan, 2002). This is relevant because intercultural relations is not just "a feature of crossing national borders; it's a feature of anyone's life, anywhere" (Agar, 1994, p. 27). It is articulated through countless forms of verbal and nonverbal channels of communication including language (Hall, 1976), myths (Barthes, 1972), art (Berger, 1972), music and performance (Lipsitz, 1990), fashion (Kramer, 2003), poetry (Guida, 2006),values and rituals (McIlwain, 2003), business and politics (Agar, 1994), the media (Rodriguez, 2001; Fisher, 1997; Kramer, 1997), the environment (Scannell, 2002), institutions (Fisher, 1997), medicine (Fadiman, 1997), education (Freire, 2001), military and tourism (Carbaugh, 1990), and technology (Postman, 1992). To date, the quest for a clear definition of intercultural communication along with a specific branch of learning is unsettled. Currently, some of the various disciplines discussing intercultural concerns are anthropology (Hall, 1964; Hymes, 1964), business (Gerritsen, 2006), education (Pearson, 2002), english (Scheu & Sánchez, 2002), history (Lüsebrink, 2004), psychology (Fiske et. al., 1998) sociology (Glazer, 1993), public policy and law (Haskew, 1999/2000), medicine (Almark, 2004), and journalism (Hudson & Hugh, 2004). Henceforth, this project focuses solely on intercultural communication within the realm of the communication discipline and draws on some theoretical assumptions that are specific to this body of literature.

As a multidisciplinary dialogue, intercultural communication is continuously subject to various interpretations and approaches. Many communication scholars define intercultural communication as face-to-face interaction between people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Carbaugh, 1990; Rogers & Hart, 2002). Some view this definition as limited because interaction occurs on multiple levels and reaches not only individuals, but also groups and organizations (Barnett & Lee). Accordingly, some scholars have extended this viewpoint by describing it as a transactional or symbolic process of sharing information between people from different cultures (Barnett & Lee, 2002; Gudykunst & Kim, 2003). Other scholars look beyond the linear model of communication by exploring the various ways cultures express time, space, and mood (Gebser, Ger.1949/Eng. 1985; Kramer, 1997). Moreover, the discourse regarding multiculturalism and globalization has broadened the scope of intercultural perspectives (Hamelink, 1990). Some adhere to the notion of McLuhan's (1962) "global village" and concentrate on the development of transnational identities and global citizenship (Hamelink, 1990). Others stand in opposition to the global village ideology because it examines intercultural interaction through the lens of a "global society" and a "monoculture" (Kramer, 2003).

Intercultural research can focus on a single culture or simultaneously compare characteristics of two or more cultures (Rogers & Hart, 2002). Some studies apply a macro perspective to explore structural issues involving ethnic or racial groups by forming social categories, classes, or strata (McCroskey, 2002). Others apply a micro perspective to examine the interpersonal experiences of strangers in order to understand the status of the newcomers' ethnic group within the host culture (Kim, 2001). Although

intercultural concerns are linked to interpersonal communication, there is much room for experimenting with various combinations (Hamelink, 1990). Currently, the field of intercultural issues has expanded to other specialized areas of communication research, such as health (O'Hair et al, 2005), organizational (O'Hair et. al, 2005), media and technology (Kramer, 2001) and semiotics (Hamelink, 1990). Moreover, underneath the rubric of intercultural communication are cross-cultural communication, cultural communication, and intergroup communication (Gudykunst, 2002).

After drawing distinctions between different types of intercultural communication definitions and viewpoints, it is important to discuss the various approaches and theoretical perspectives. Knutson et al. (2002) states that *etic* and *emic* approaches are typically used to distinguish research conducted across or within culture. The *etic* approach studies behavior outside and across cultural systems (Knutson et. al, 2002), and is exemplified in Hofstede's (1980) widely cited *Dimensions of Cultural Variability*. The *emic* approach to intercultural communication is different in that it focuses on understanding communication from the inside of a culture (Knutson et. al, 2002). For instance, Philipsen's (1990) *Speaking Like a Man in Teamsterville* describes language patterns that influence the cultural identities of people living in an urban neighborhood. Within these two approaches are three schools of thought that guide intercultural communication research.

The functional/behavioral philosophy dominates intercultural communication literature (Rogers & Hart, 2002). This body of literature is typically instrumental and prescriptive (Kramer, 2000). The development of functionalism along with the ways in which social scientists approach intercultural communication was influenced by

nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century intellectuals, such as Charles Darwin (evolution theory), Georg Hegel (positivism), Karl Marx and Herbert Spencer (social economics), Sigmund Freud (consciousness), and Ferdinand De Saussaure (Linguistics) among others (Rogers & Hart, 2002). Functionalists frequently explain culture as a whole system with functional parts and typically use quantitative methodologies for constructing ways to guide and predict communication (Lim, 2002). To be interculturally functional, therefore, meant minimizing human maladjustment to the cultural system while maximizing operational fitness (Kramer, 2003). Consequently, the two waves of immigration (late nineteenth and twentieth century from Europe and East Asia) correspond with new interests in cultural adaptation, culture shock, and assimilation (Alba & Nee, 2003). Unfortunately, ethnic and racial groups were "rated according to a cultural profile presumed to be required for success in an advanced industrial society" (Alba & Nee, 2003, p. 1). This new profile presented a fixed identity, which, over time, brought forth issues concerning ethnocentrism, racism, and cultural relativism (Alba & Nee, 2003).

There are a myriad of theories that have advanced the intercultural communication field, but a few of the major contributions that adhere to the functional perspective are Simmel's (1950) concept of the stranger, Hall's (1959) concept of monochronic and polychronic cultures and nonverbal communication across cultures, Hofstede's (1980) theory of cultural orientations, and Berger and Calabrese's (1975) uncertainty reduction theory. Recent work has developed theories such as cultural convergence (Barnett & Kincaid, 1983), anxiety/uncertainty management (Gudykunst, 1985), group decision-making (Oetzel, 1995), and communication networks (Yum,

1988), to explain effective communication outcomes with individuals and groups. Other studies are designed to investigate cross cultural adaptation (Ellingsworth, 1988; Kim, 2001; McGuire & McDermott, 1988), accommodation and acculturation (Gallois et al 1995), and co-cultural theory (Orbe, 1998). Finally, numerous studies explore identity management and negotiation (Ting-Toomey, 1993), cultural identity axioms (Collier & Thomas, 1988), and notions of self and the self in relation to others (Markus and Kityama, 1991).

The interpretive/language philosophy seeks to understand how language plays a formidable role in shaping humans' interpretation of culture. This perspective is *emic* in the sense that some researchers believe that reality is socially constructed from within culture (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003). While functional scholarship tends to approach "communication as influenced by culture," the interpretive scholarship views culture as created and maintained through communication (Martin & Nakayama, 2000, p. 36). This approach is not prescriptive or normative, but instead focuses on language and its relationship in, with, and to culture (Alba & Nee, 2003; Rogers & Hart, 2002). In addition, the interpretive scholar typically studies one culture instead of communication across several cultures. Moreover, both functionalism and interpretivism are situated between the subjective versus objective argument, which exemplifies their differences in methodological applications. Interpretive scholars generally apply qualitative methodologies for revealing speech patterns among individuals, communities, and cultures (Agar, 1994; Hymes, 1964); identity management (Goffman, 1967); linguistic representations, speech codes, and the negotiation of shared identities (Philipsen, 1990);

and cultural patterns, performance, and cultural identity (Carbaugh, 1990; Wieder & Pratt, 1990).

Critical philosophy emphasizes individuals and their relationship to social systems. This school of thought is least common among communication scholars, but frequently applied in English, education, and Feminists scholarship (Giroux, 1992). These studies tend to view culture as a struggle, a locus for multiple interpretations of communication (Giroux, 1992). Critical theory is based upon the use of analysis as a method of investigation that originated with the philosophies of the Frankfurt School (McCarthy, 1991). The Frankfurt School of thought held that social theory, whether it pertains to educational research, philosophy, literature, or art, should not only record the observations of the world, but should participate in changing it (McCarthy, 1991). Critical theorists, such as Giroux (1992), Freire (1970), and Foucault (1972) analyze the socio-cultural and economic forces of institution and other types of cultural systems. Research within the communication field that adheres to the critical perspective includes Jackson's (2000) examination of race, roles, and gender in academics, Hegde's (1998) transnational feminist perspective of difference and political representation, and Olson & Olson's (2003) exploration of exclusionary research criterion and usable knowledge.

This section has provided an overview of the dominant approaches and theories that conceptualize the motivations at work in the discourse, which in turn, influence our actions and determine how we define intercultural communication. It is logical to conclude that the majority of intercultural research is studied within the confines of efficiency and functional outcomes (Kramer, 2000). Theoretical advances have been made regarding such issues as cultural orientations, language, and identity; however, all

three schools of thought contain an important limitation to their methods, data, and ideologies of culture—Western bias. In addition, the deep-rooted arguments concerning qualitative versus quantitative is resurfacing in the intercultural discourse. Which knowledge will constitute a truth for communication? A large number of intercultural communication scholars base their truths on knowledge, while a minority contends that qualitative approaches with extensive pretests are preferred (Johnson & Tuttle, 1989). Finally, Barnett & Lee (2002) contend that more flexible research designs will prevent scholars from wrongfully interpreting their data and over-generalizing their observations of ethnic groups. In light of this criticism, a more diverse approach (one that includes a balance of qualitative and quantitative methodologies along with non-western views) to the study of intercultural communication is necessary.

Intergroup Identity

The renewed interest in intercultural identity has promoted a shift towards understanding intergroup communication and intergroup dynamics (Abrams, O'Connor & Giles, 2002). Intergroup communication is an overarching category for communication between members of different ethnic or social groups including able/disabled, intergenerational, interracial, and interethnic to name a few (Gudykunst, 2002). The majority of research in intergroup communication examines identities stemming from large social groups, such as ethnic identity (Harwood & Sparks, 2003).

Research indicates that interethnic identity is related to the set of ideas about one's own ethnic group membership, including cultural knowledge about customs, traditions, values, and behaviors (Martin & Nakayama, 1997). While some argue that people are simply born into an ethnic identity, others believe that it is cultivated over time and

created by through communication with group members" (Abrams, O'Connor & Giles, 2002). Thus, intergroup communication is typically defined as "any communicative behavior exhibited by one or more individuals toward one or more others that are based on the individuals' identification of themselves and others as belonging to different social categories" (Harwood, Giles, & Ryan, 2004, p. 141). In other words, it is the extent to which individuals perceive their self as "ingroup members" and the ways in which they respond to "group identification" (Kashima, Kashima, & Hardie, 2006). Gordon (1964) believed that group membership is increased by religious beliefs and practices, ethnicity, and race. Intergroup communication appears to be situational in that individuals compare their group's position in society with that of other groups and seek to obtain positive distinctiveness for their in-group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). These positive comparisons provide individuals with positive social identities that, in turn, bolster their self-esteem (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). For example, an Italian American might seek information or hold beliefs that suggest that Italian Americans are a valued ethnic group in American society.

In the communication literature, the primary theoretical perspective used to explore intergroup dynamics has been the communication accommodation theory or CAT (Hummert, Shaner & Garstka, 1995). CAT was developed to explain the social cognitive processes in which individuals mediate between the environment and their behaviors (Hummert, Shaner, & Garstka, 1995). Many intercultural communication studies use CAT to understand the ways in which individuals adjust their speech to others based on a variety of interpersonal and intergroup factors, such as age or gender (Coupland, 2004). Several studies, however, indicate that individuals gain a sense of identity and personal

worth from associating with certain social groups and making comparisons to others; therefore, "there is much to be gained by combining social-psychological and communication perspectives to communication and identity" (Abrams, O'Connor & Giles, 2002, p.229). Similarly, Kramer explains that belonging is "a symbiotic relationship between a person and others, including the environment as a whole" (Kramer, 2003, p. 5). The concept of intergroup identity is grounded in Tajfel's (1978) Social Identity Theory or SIT (Harwood, Giles & Ryan, 1995). SIT holds that positive social identity is the psychological distinctiveness one achieves when comparing oneself to members of other groups (Harwood, Giles & Ryan, 1995). Social identity theory is an extension of Erikson's (1959) Individual Self-Concept theory, which posits that self-identity is comprised of two parts: personal identity and social identity. Studies investigating social-psychological issues related to intergroup behavior usually focus on favoritism, racism, sexism, social classism, ageism, and ethnocentrism (Hecht, 1998; Maoz, 2004; Insko, Schopler, & Sedikides, 1998). It is argued that these social-psychological issues, under certain conditions, are effective in reducing hostility and prejudice (Insko, Schopler, & Sedikides, 1998). Thus, combining social-psychological perspectives with intergroup communication reveals the dualistic nature of one's social and personal self-concept. Intergroup communication is relevant to this study because it may provide insights to understanding the complex identity issues of Italian Americans.

Intergroup theorizing has yielded several important insights into intercultural communication. Many studies examine the influence of social groups and social stereotypes within intergroup communication (Harwood, Giles, & Ryan, 2004). Intergroup theory also provides an explanation for the prevalence of negative out-group

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stereotypes in numerous domains of social life. For instance, Hummert et al. (2004) revealed some of the effects of age stereotypes on interpersonal communication. Harwood, Giles, and Ryan's (2004) research on intergenerational communication suggests that members of negatively stereotyped groups can employ "social creativity" strategies in order to improve the group self-esteem by "investing in, rather than dissociating from" their group (p. 142). Once the group is perceived to be unstable and illegitimate, members may organize change or distance themselves from other members (Harwood, Giles, & Ryan, 2004). Many, Italian Americans, especially business owners, have distanced themselves from illegitimate images of their ingroup, although it is not always possible. In many situations, just having an Italian surname is enough to bring forth suspicions of mafia and organized crime. For the past few decades, Italian American organizations have actively worked towards reducing negative stereotypes so that more Italian Americans will associate themselves with their ethnic ingroup. Their efforts may create a slow, but steady change in Italian American perceptions of identity, which may be evident in the 2006 U.S. Census Bureau Report noting an increase for people claiming to be of Italian descent. An intergroup perspective provides an explanation for some of changes in Italian American intergroup association.

The notion of intergroup identity is relevant to communication literature because it brings along with it a field perspective on collective action and social change (Melucci, 1996). DeTurk (2006) explored the effects of intergroup dialogue on alliance building in the interest of social justice. She wanted to understand how face-to-face communication influenced participants' views on communicative action and sociocultural diversity. Abrams, O'Connor, and Giles (2002) contend that intergroup communication does not

occur in a vacuum; therefore, when individuals from different cultures interact there is often "a history of relations that may include rivalry, conflict, social inequality, and prejudice" (p. 229). Ting-Toomey et al. (2000) explain that people communicate their ethnic identity through conflict styles and negotiation. Face-negotiation theory is frequently used to addresses issues of face or situated identities that are called into question (Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998). Similarly, Collier (1997) argues that ethnic identities emerge when messages are negotiated, reinforced, and challenged. In other words, the stronger the conflict: the stronger the identity. Moreover, Stohl and Putman (1994) state that conflict not only demonstrates intergroup cohesion and similarity, but also highlights intergroup differences and boundaries (Stohl & Putnam, 1994). In addition, power is an important aspect of many intercultural encounters. Maoz (2004) contends that intercultural encounters may contain power struggles and processes of identity construction. Therefore, intergroup communication reveals varies styles of conflict and power that influence the collective identity and collective action of an ethnic group.

Research on social networks, interpersonal interactions, and language has produced additional insights to intergroup communication. Harwood and Sparks (2003) examined the extent to which identification with particular behaviors, or with groups that are associated with particular behaviors, might explain certain cancer-related social processes (Harwood & Sparks, 2003). During intergroup communication, the negotiation of interpersonal boundaries "implicates the socio-structural relations between groups as well as the choices individuals make based on the identities that are salient to them in a given context" (Petronio, 1998, p. 571). Moreover, research from a language perspective

distinguishes in-group identity by recognizing their unique language, stereotypes, and speech accommodation, as well as speech norms, attitudes, bilingualism, code switching (Gudykunst, 1989), and themes (Berteotti, 1994). Berteotti (1994) contends that themes do not randomly occur; they are result of "group or intergroup efforts to resolve specific differences and to create relatively unified views with regard to significant issues" (Berteotti, 1994, p. 157). Eventually, all groups within a system share certain themes (Berteotti, 1994). Finally, language perspectives also reveal the effects of harmful speech in intergroup encounters (Leets & Giles, 1997), and the influence of ethnicity and social class on intergroup discourse (Ellis, 1999).

Finally, many studies found within intergroup communication literature are skills-oriented and apply theories, such as Identity Management Theory to explain communication competence in intercultural interaction (Cupach & Imahori, 1993). Gudykunst (2004) believes that a skills-oriented approach will improve communication effectiveness between people from different groups. Phinney's (1992) research suggests that an individual's level of intercultural competence is associated with their ethnic group. Kim (2001) measures an individual's level intercultural competence by cultural adjustment. Drawing from Taft (1977), Kim's argument adheres to the notion that adaptation is a naturally occurring phenomenon for individuals who are socialized in different cultures. In addition, competence also refers to the degree of new cultural learning (acculturation) and unlearning (deculturation) of some of the individual's original culture (Kim, 2001). This study does not take a vocational or social engineering approach to intergroup communication, and instead looks at the cognitive ways in which in-group members perceive, judge, and narrate their personal and social identity.

One of the primary issues concerning intergroup identity is salience. Abrams, O'Connor & Giles (2002) contend, "Ethnic identity is likely to be salient, given that group distinctions are often evoked when engaging intercultural communication" (p. 225). Kramer (2003) writes,

> Once we are dialogized, put into discourse with an Other and so made relative, then who and what we are becomes both revealed and concealed. It is in that ironic moment of contact with an Other that we realized our sense of 'I' and, at the same time, call that into question. Thus, the world is dialogized, relativized, bringing about both the possibility and the crisis of identity. (p.11)

The rhetoric of otherness was constructed by Western culture as a way to measure and manage the strange "other" against western standards. Similar to other ethnic groups, Italian Americans sense of self and "otherness" is defined against the characteristics of White Anglo America. Once this worldview is internalized, individuals see themselves through the eyes of the dominant culture. Therefore, it is in the moment of intercultural salience that they are reminded of the undesirable characteristics of their group as compared to the mainstream.

Subjectivity is another concern that divides intergroup communication research. Since each group communicates its identity in different ways, identity should be approached as subjective and dialectical, not something that is permanently fixed (Abrams, O'connor, & Giles, 2002). Much of the communication literature, however, suggests that the boundaries of group identity are stable because "the individual operates as fragmented, whereas the group is treated as a unified whole" (Stohl & Putnam, 1994, p. 290). Consequently, many intercultural communication scholars conclude that groups

operating within a larger social system become more alike over time (Berteotti, 1994). The theoretical perspectives emerging from this view is "intergroup mirroring" and cross-cultural adaptation theory (Kim, 1995; Stohl & Putnam, 1994). Abrams, O'Connor, and Giles (2002) contends that the problem with these theories is the view of identity development as a static input-output variable, not something dynamic that is constantly being reconstructed (p. 230). A thorough rethinking of the concept of group identity is necessary to confront the dualism between structure and meaning (Melucci, 1996, p. 69). Melucci (1996) writes, "To begin, the term identity is conceptually unsatisfactory: it conveys too strongly the idea of the permanence of subject" (p. 85). On the other hand, the individual must maintain permanence through a "continuous constructive identity process" (Melucci, 1996, p. 85). On the other, there is not real sense of permanence because it is lost in western notions of linear progress (Melucci, 1996). The tension is always present and causes temporal anxiety (Gebser, Ger. 1949/Eng. 1985) and a "schizophrenic situation" (Melucci, 1996, p. 86). Intercultural communication research must avoid the trap of treating group identity as the object or as the "monolithic unity of the subject" (Melucci, 1996, p. 76).

Melucci (1996), unfortunately, declares that the traditional roots of ethnicity are "fading away under the impact of assimilation, migrations, and mass culture." He writes, "Ethnic identity is a container which offers individuals and groups a high degree of certainty in an uncertain world" (Melucci, 1996, p. 159). Unlike Gudykunst & Kim's (2003) sense of certainty that is positioned as a problem due to the unfamiliar host environment and the anxiety natives feel towards strangers or outgroup members, Melucci's (1996) sense of certainty refers to the history ensured with group identification,

but not to a fixed identity (Melucci, 1996). In other words, the label "Italian American" provides the certainty of a unique past while still allowing room for fluxing differences and action. Therefore, intercultural identity is not simply a result of group affiliation. Nor is it only situated in social relationships (symbolic interaction) or entirely skills-oriented (functionalism) (Abrams, O'connor, & Giles, 2002, p. 230). This study argues that conceptualizations of identity are subjective and contextual and, thereby, best understood as an ongoing interactive hermeneutic experience (fusion) (Kramer, 2003).

Assimilation: Past and Present

But most of all I fear
> *denying Italian,*
> *unlearning it,*
> *and leaving it to ghosts*
> *who whistle tarantellas in my ear.*
> (George Guida, Fear of Crossing Over)

Intercultural communication literature reveals that several thousand studies have been completed on the experience of the immigrant and the assimilation process (Wisemen, 2003). Across the social sciences, assimilation is the primary theoretical perspective for the study of ethnic relations. The Chicago School of Sociology (Alba & Nee, 2003) influenced the actual paradigm for assimilation that communication scholars employ. In 1890, sociologists Robert Park and E.W. Burgess devised a definition in which "people of different ethnic/racial origins and cultural heritages evolve a common culture that enables them to sustain a common national existence" (Alba & Nee, 2003, p. 10). The assimilation paradigm represented society as a homogenous social system that sustains equilibrium and social order when people uphold the societal norms and values set forth by the system (Alba & Nee, 2003). It appeared natural and inevitable that immigrants would want to shed their own cultures "as if these were old skins no longer

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possessing any vital force, and wrap themselves in the mantle of Anglo-American culture" (Alba & Nee, 2003, p. 2). There is nothing natural or inevitable about losing one's identity (Murphy & Esposito, 2003).

Contributing to the study of assimilation, within both academia and the greater society, were the writings of W.I. Thomas's (1921) *Old World Traits Transplanted,* Madison Grant's (1933) *Conquest of a Continent or the expansion of races in America,* Edward Alsworth Ross (1914) *The old world in the new: The significance of past and present immigration to the American people,* W. Lloyd Warner and Leo Srole's (1945) *Social Systems of American Ethnic Groups.* More sophisticated concepts of the assimilation process, including acculturation, behavioral and structural assimilation patterns (Gordon, 1964), straight-line assimilation (Gans, 1962), residential spatial assimilation (Massey, 1979), and socioeconomic assimilation (Blau & Otis, 1967) emerged during early 1960's to late 1970's. Societal changes, however, such the Civil Rights Movement, Black Power Movement, and the Feminist Movement, were contradicting ideologies of assimilation. People were not magically shedding their cultural habits, but instead, celebrating non-conformity—assimilation was futile.

The paradigm failed in many ways. First, it was grounded in the Eurocentric hegemony of Protestant White British ancestry and in the modern ethnically homogenous Anglo-American, middle-class culture (Alba & Nee, 2003). As assimilation moved from an ideal to a policy, it was connected with outdated notions of "Americanization" and functionalism (Ross, 1914; Glazer, 1993). The one-sidedness of the paradigm ignored the significance and sustainability of ethnic cultures, while white washing the ethnocentric and racist practices of Anglo-American society (Alba & Nee, 2003). Consequently, the

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American mainstream, the normative standard by which all ethnic groups were measured, "was the end point of assimilation" (Alba & Nee, 2003, p. 10).

Second, the willingness to assimilate varies among individual cultures. The majority of Sicilians who came to America (a group that comprised eighty percent of the consolidated Italian and Sicilian cultures) did not intend to stay. They heard myths about American streets being made of gold and believed that they could make their fortunes and return home as heroes (Mormino & Pozzetta, 1998). As a result, they were unwilling to shed their culture and, instead, kept it hidden by distancing themselves and their families from "agencies of Americanization," including American schools (Alba & Nee, 2003, p. 68). Southern Italians, along with Irish Catholics, Eastern European Jews, and East Asians were deemed "unassimilable" at the turn of the twentieth century (Alba & Nee, 2003, p. 68). This, in part, was because the assimilation paradigm determines success as full adaptation into society (Kim, 2001). Murphy and Esposito (2003) contend that the burden to change is placed on the minority; it never occurs to people that perhaps it is the system that must change (Kramer, 2003). The model has a built-in Cartesian bias where individual parts of the system are separate from the whole (Kramer, 2003). The immigrant had to abandon the traits that were "unfavorable to the cultural ideals most persons agree represent the best of humanity" (Murphy & Esposito, 2003, p. 36). The one-sidedness of their new home society left very little opportunity for ethnic or racial groups to make positive contributions to the well-being of their members. What the paradigm failed to take into account was that the system does change. It is in constant flux and part of this change is a direct result of the immigrants who have entered and re-colonized the structure (Kramer, 2003).

The main breakdown of the assimilation paradigm was a consequence of its own

hidden justification: racial and ethic prejudice. Assimilation is grounded in the

black/white axis and perpetuates racism and discrimination (Asante, 2000). The

assimilation paradigm and notions of "Americanization," which dates back to the

Declaration of Independence, was designed for European immigrants only and did not

have African Americans in mind (Glazer, 1993). DeBois (1973) questions the ability for

one to conform if the culture one is trying to conform to "defines you as never being

worthy of inclusion" (p. 14). Glazer (1993) writes, "Americanization was tied to

discrimination, poor working and living conditions. Assimilation stood for better

conditions and treatment—the reduction of prejudice and discrimination" (p. 132).

Assimilation was what the largest and most oppressed minority group wanted, but the

"incorporation of the Negro" into American Society was an enormous failure (Du Bois,

1973; Glazer, 1993, p. 123). The paradigm could not work its effects on African

Americans because they could not discard their physical traits. Many sociologists began

to criticize the assimilation theory as being an "ethnocentric and patronizing imposition

on minority peoples struggling to retain their cultural and ethnic integrity" (Alba & Nee,

p. 1). The flaws of assimilation redirects sociological research, which lead to an

explosion of literature across the disciplines regarding ethnic identity, multiculturalism,

pluralism, double consciousness, cultural diversity, and fusion. People from various ethic

and racial categories reclaimed their differences and formed new alliances with other

people of color, ultimately causing a contemporary social movement referred to as "the

rise of the unmeltables" (Outlaw, 1991, p. 34).

The Adaptation Model: The Resurrection

In 1993, sociologist Nathan Glazer published an article titled *Is Assimilation Dead?* Along with Alba and Nee (2003), Glazer (1993), believes that the pessimism surrounding assimilation is attributable to outmoded views and overly simplistic accounts of how past immigrants entered mainstream American society. Clearly, he is not aware that the assimilation paradigm has been resurrected by the communication field and lives under the alias of Cross Cultural Adaptation Theory.

The theory of adaptation involves both acculturation (learning) and deculturation (unlearning) cultural habits with the eventual outcome of assimilation (Kim, 2002). Adaptation research is typically driven by problem-oriented views of culture and emphasizes the difficulties of cross-cultural experiences, such as culture shock (Kim, 2002). Gudykunst and Kim's (1997) theory of adaptation and the later version of Kim's (2001) Cross-Cultural Adaptation Model is the leading discourse in the intercultural communication literature (Kramer, 2003). They define assimilation as the "convergence of strangers' internal conditions with those of the native and a minimum maintenance of the original cultural habits"(2003, p. 360). Their theories hold that over time individuals can "change from being cultural outsiders to increasingly active and effective cultural insiders" (Kim, 2001, p. 1). In contrast to other intercultural theorists, Kim is skeptical of the arguments that losing one's "cultural identity and the costs of having to adapt to a new culture" place immigrants or ethnic minorities "in the position of 'victims' in the face of cultural oppression" (p. 269). She contends that the stress-adaptation-growth dynamics found in her model is in "sharp contrast" with this representation of intercultural identity (p. 269). Compared to previous adaptation paradigms, Kim's (2002) model attempts to

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move beyond the problems of "conventional linear-reductionist-causal assumptions" by emphasizing a learning and growing facilitating process (p. 261), a phenomenon she refers to as 'natural and inevitable'.

Kim's theory is applicable and important to intercultural communication research and has adapted to theoretical criticisms over the years; however, this author argues that the theoretical position of her paradigm is grounded in traditional assimilation concepts. Foremost, Kim approaches adaptation through assimilation because it employs prescriptive measures and a one-size-fit-all methodology. She presupposes a homogenous society that sustains equilibrium and social order when people uphold the norms and values set forth by the social system. Finally, the discourse surrounding assimilation and adaptation contains certain qualities, discursive practices, and scientific boundaries that make it a produced knowledge, which shape cultural codes, and govern the language from which people structure and interpret their world (Foucault, 1972). This discourse is filled with words and ideas that position a success/fail condition while perpetuating notions of whiteness, exclusion, dissociation, and erasure of identity. Furthermore, power found within any established discourse has the dual effect of impeding and enabling knowledge. Usually, the struggle occurs between dominant scientific knowledge, which sets up certainty and authority by stating what is true, and rejected non-scientific knowledge. The importance of such an argument lies in the implication of reality for the lived experiences of many immigrants and their offspring who will not or cannot easily adapt. Because power relations exist within assimilation rhetoric and because this rhetoric guides adaptation discourse, other interpretations must be investigated. An examination of Kim's model demonstrates the need for communication scholars to continue

developing new hypotheses or alternative forms of knowledge to explain intercultural communication.

<div align="center">Cross-Cultural Adaptation Model</div>

The Cross-Cultural Adaptation Model takes a socio-psychological approach to understanding an individual's personal and social experiences in a new setting (Kim, 2001). Specifically, this model focuses on the "dynamic process by which individuals, upon relocation to an unfamiliar cultural environment, establish (or reestablish) and maintain relatively stable, reciprocal, and functional relationships with the environment" (Kim, 2002, p. 260). This theory not only applies to immigrants, but to minority groups as well (Kim, 2002; Sandel et al. 2006). As one moves through the stages of enculturation (adopting new behavioral patterns), deculturation (shedding previous cultural habits), and finally acculturation (adaptation), he or she will show signs of interpersonal growth and an identity transformation with the eventual outcome of an intercultural personhood (Kim, 2002). She emphasizes that interpersonal communication is one of the key elements for learning the host socio-cultural system. Mass communication is also central to adaptation, but not as intense or direct as face-to-face interaction (Kim, 2003). According to this model, there are three stages to identity transformation: a) functional fitness; b) psychological health; and c) development of intercultural personhood. All three stages are contingent upon the success of one's ability both to learn from and to communicate with their coethnic groups and the host environment. A brief description of these stages is necessary for analysis.

Functional Fitness

At the core of Kim's model "is the goal of achieving an overall person-environment 'fit' for maximization of one's social life chances" (Kim, 2002, p. 260). Kim defines fitness as the "operational capacity that enables a person to carry out behaviors externally in accordance with the host cultural patterns (1997, p. 342), or the ability to "communicate in accordance with local cultural norms" (2001, p. 62). Thus, the success of one's adaptation is determined by how well one copes and adjusts or gains communicative competence in the host culture (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997; Kim, 2003). In other words, if immigrants can function in the host environment, then they "can perform the required social roles without having to formulate a mental plan of action in accordance with the cultural rules and norms of the host society" (Gudykunst & Kim, 1992, p. 220). Function also refers to balancing the "social communication" or interaction between one's coethnic networks and the dominant culture (Gudykunst & Kim, 1992). As the person gains host communicative competence, he or she is able to function successfully in the host environment without relying on ethnic media for information or ethnic groups for socializing. In this sense, function is the enabling factor to fitness; hence, without it, the probability of one effectively entering the host environment decreases.

Psychological Health

The second criterion for attaining identity transformation is a psychologically healthy state of being—"a state in which the individual's cognitive, affective, and operational tendencies work in harmony" during the integration process (Kim, 2001, p. 187). Because entering a new culture can cause anxiety, immigrants must resolve the "internal stress that promotes the qualitative transformation toward growth—a greater

maturity and psychic integration as well as an increased capacity to cope with varied environmental challenges" (Kim, 2001, p. 67). During this process, strangers undergo "psychological ups and downs until they achieve an increased internal integration—a sense of inner cohesiveness and confidence" (p. 64). According to Kim, when a person is moving up or forward, he or she is actively "internalizing new cultural elements" and "negotiating new formations of reality" (Kim, 2001, p. 191). Kim refers to this mental process as the "dynamic fit between parts of the internal system and external realities" that an individual experiences (Kim, 2001, p. 189). She also contends that "intense stress can reverse the process at any time, and strangers may indeed 'regress' toward reaffirming and reidentifying with their ethnic origins" (p. 191). While Kim believes that long-term communication with ethnic groups will impede one's ability to move forward and upward, others such as Gordon (1964) and Sandel et al. (2006) contend that the well-being of immigrants, minorities, and their offspring, is enhanced by their continuing involvement with coethnic groups.

Intercultural Personhood

The final component, intercultural personhood, is becoming a non-cultural being. Self-development is contingent upon many adaptation-facilitating or impeding variables, such as the individual's predisposition, the host environment, and communication activities (Kim, 2001, p. 263). This is described as a dual process of acculturation and deculturation at which "the 'old' person breaks up and a 'new' person emerges at a higher level of integration" (Kim, 2001, p. 184). Kim (2002) presents integration as a plus/minus mutation. She writes,

Acculturation is not a process in which new cultural elements are simply added to

prior internal conditions. As new learning occurs, deculturation (or unlearning) of

some of the old cultural habits has to occur, at least in the sense that new

responses are adopted in situations that previously would have evoked old ones.

(p. 261)

Thus, as the individual moves through the stages of adaptation, old cultural habits

disappear as new ones are learned. The entire process is expressed as a "downward-

58backward pull of adaptive stress" and a "forward-upward push for adaptation and

growth" (Kim, 2001, p. 205). The growth is not "a smooth, linear progression, but in a

cyclic and continual 'draw-back-to-leap' [forward] representation"(Kim, 2001, pp. 56-57).

According to this model, being functionally fit, having a psychologically healthy state of

being, and developing an intercultural personhood will lead to successful adaptation.

<p align="center">Cross Cultural Adaptation Model: Another Interpretation</p>

There are theoretical implications to all theories and methods, which is why new

hypotheses are continuously replacing outdated ones. The antiquated views attached to

the Cross Cultural Adaptation Model lies in the assumption that this theory can

effectively cure individuals of their intolerable disease—difference. As communication

scholars, we understand that the complex ways in which culture and identity interact can

only be "imperfectly understood," not calculated or studied in isolation (Mormino &

Pozzetta, 1985, p. 7). Moreover, the language used to explain the model is shaped by

assimilation rhetoric. A closer examination of the methodology and discourse driving the

model reveals an inflexible and problematic theory.

Functioning to Fit

Regarding the terms *functional fitness*, one can assert that the word *function* positions the ability to learn or unlearn cultural habits as a problem in need of a solution, while the word *fitness* contains "cultural and ideological prejudices about what constitutes good versus bad intercultural communication" (Kramer, 2006, p. 2). The ability to adapt becomes a matter of adapting appropriately to the dominant Anglo culture. Any deviance or resistance causes disequilibrium in the host culture and decreases the strangers' ability to achieve an overall 'person-environment fit'—a flaw in the theory because cultural equilibrium is never stable (Kramer, 2006). The Cross Cultural Adaptation Model fails to recognize that for those who fall outside the margins of the host environment, culture is acting more like a moving target than a fixed environment (Kramer, 2003), thereby, making assimilation an oscillating process (Sandel et al., 2006). The only thing that can correctly adapt to such an environment is a machine (Kramer, 2006; Mumford, 1934).

For humans, "fitting" or "not fitting" into the host environment could be involuntary, deliberate, or contingent on many variables, none of which is always observable, measurable, or predictable. Frustrated in their attempts to achieve functional fitness, many find ways to manage or fuse their adaptation experiences through various cultural expressions such as music, literature, poetry, and film to name a few. For example, Gardaphé (1996) contends that Puzo's *Godfather*, a lens through which Italian American culture is viewed and understood by both the host culture and Italian Americans, is actually a form of resistance. Gardaphé (1996) writes:

The novel is read as a struggle to protect a family, at all costs, in a hostile environment. If the family is to be preserved, then it must not assimilate into the American culture. This can only be fully accomplished if America assimilates into the culture of the Don.(p. 94)

As the godfather "renders powerless the forces that attempt to control him," in a traditional western heroic fashion, he is trying to re-create conditions of the old world (Gardaphè, 1996, p. 94). This, Gardaphé (1996) argues, is the real American dream.

Mob narratives are not exclusive to Italians, nor are the problems of feeling powerless in a society that recognizes technology, notions of progress, and hyper-rational ideas of functioning more than individual difference. Other ethnic groups express similar frustration over trying to adapt or assimilate into the dominant Anglo culture. For example, common themes in 'gangsta' narratives are individual hopelessness, irrelevant warriors, and extinction (Fields, 2004). When identity becomes homogenous, people suffer feelings of loneliness and alienation. This is illustrated in the writing of Jean Gebser (Ger.1949/Eng.1985):

Isolation is visible everywhere: isolation of individuals, of entire nations and continents; isolation in the physical realm in the form of tuberculosis, in the political form of ideological or monopolistic dictatorship, in everyday life in the form of immoderate, "busy" activity devoid of any sense-direction or relationships to the world as a whole; isolation in thinking in the form of the deceptive dazzle of premature judgments or hypertrophied abstraction devoid of any connection with the world. (p. 95)

Similarly, Serra (2003), describes immigration as the "discovery of the individual…breaking away from the undistinguished mass of peasants, detaching himself from his ancestral land where men stick like shells on a rock" (p. 43). In the assimilation of the world, everyone becomes the same. However, the thought of losing personal identity threatens our magic consciousness. As a result, the struggle against the destruction of personal identity manifests itself in the politics of identity and difference, such as in nationalism, ethnic pride, or gangster narratives (Kramer, 1997). In other words, individuals want to be recognized as members of groups different from all others. Thus, adaptation, as a superiorly situated knowledge in the Communication field, does not account for the lived experiences of culture that is dialogical and fusing.

Not only does this model assume those who cannot fit are either deviant or defiant, but it also fails to take into consideration what is lost. As previously mentioned, Italians who wanted to 'appropriately fit' into American society during World War II refrained from using their native language. Some continued to speak Italian in the privacy of their homes, while others only spoke the English language. According to Kim's model, Italian Americans have accomplished *host communication competence*. But what they have lost are the verbal and nonverbal nuances (*Italianità)* of Italian that can only be expressed through living language (Gadamer 1975). The consequence of their adaptation is that many of their children and grandchildren did not learn to speak Italian or express *Italianità.*

Italian language descends from Latin, which is a quantitative stress system (Moreland & Fleischer, 1977). In Latin, the nature or position of each vowel determines the stress of the syllable. Latin words typically have one syllable that is slightly stressed

over the other (Moreland & Fleischer, 1977). For example, in the word dixīssem, the emphasis on the *i* makes it sound like a long *e* in English. Italian signals a quantitative stress system by redoubling consonants after a stressed vowel. The stress falls regularly on the penultimate syllable, which makes it sound very heavy (Glendening, 1980). For instance, in the words *radoppiamento* (redoubling) or *pizza*, the vowel before the double consonants is long and thus emphasized. Similar to English, the stress can be as heavy as one likes (Glendening, 1980). Italian can be spoken in a rapid pace, but the intense stress combined with double consonants and frequent long vowel sounds has a slowing affect on the language (Glendening, 1980). Even though the rules for Italian echo the rules of Latin, the language is not as fixed or rigid, which distinguishes it from Spanish (Glendening, 1980). In many cases, there are no typographical traces of such rules or universal accents marks. According to one participant, some words leave you guessing. He explained that in such instances, "You must develop a musical sense of when the accent comes." Italian is a musical language because it has a singsong vowel emphasis, which greatly varies by region (Glendening, 1980). The ear for the language along with the verbal and non-verbal nuances is an expression of *Italianità.*

As a "one country language" phenomenon (Glendening, 1980, p. 7), *Italianità* is not an exact formula found in textbooks and difficult to learn in a standardized language class or through the media. It is not to say the Italian American *Italianità* (even the one created by Hollywood) is not as authentic as the language of the first generation immigrant, but different in a heteroglossic sense (Bakhtin, 1981). The immigrant language, which was contingent upon various geographical and temporal conditions, was never stable. In addition to English, many Italians fused their language with other

languages upon their arrival to the United States. For example, in Tampa, most Italians learned to speak Spanish before English, out of economic need—Spaniards ran the cigar factories. This process resulted in many words or phrases being integrated into their daily talk, such as *El Lector, Bolita,* or *Café con Lechè*. Some Italian American participants claimed their grandparents spoke an undocumented dialect specific to Tampa that consisted of both Spanish and Italian. A more obvious, but frequently overlooked illustration of fusing is that Sicilians learned to speak basic Italian, the standardized version of Italics used in school and publication. In Tampa, the *Italianità* changed over time; it integrated Spanish, Cuban Spanish, Afro Cuban, and English words and nuances. Clearly, the language second or third-generation Italian Americans learned in the home or in the neighborhood was different from the language in Sicily or Italy, however, their sense of *Italianità* was present and arguably strong. The Italian of second or third generation Italian Americans, however, who did not learn the language in the home or in the neighborhood, but instead in school, was not only different from their ancestors, but also different from that of their own parents and grandparents. Many Italian Americans are concerned that the *Italianità* of the Godfather, Tony Soprano or the realty show *Growing up Gotti* is becoming the standard for how Italians are supposed to express their Italianess. The perplexing struggle over what was lost and the longing for a tribal connection to the language is the impetus for Italian American Organizations, Italian American studies, and ultimately intercultural awareness.

The loss of *Italianità* caused a sense of de-ethnicization for many Italian Americans. For example, two married participants of this study, who did not learn Italian at home, took Italian lessons. One participant's family is from Italy, the other from Sicily.

Neither one learned the dialect of their grandparents, nor the *Italianità* of their language. To communicate, they use basic Italian grammar and conversations skills learned in school. They also have unique memories of the *Italianità* of older family members and media references of both home videos of family gatherings and mass-produced films. Both participants are concerned about recovering their ethnicity, their *Italianità* and being able to teach it to their children. On an international level, some believe that the state of the Italian language, both spoken, written, and published worldwide, is in crisis (D'Alfonso, 2006). Thus, the loss of any linguistic expression encourages monocultures, global cities, and homogenous societies—language unification implies extinction of identity (Bakhtin, 1981; Kramer, 2003).

Psychologically Healthy People

Adaptation theory insinuates that only psychologically healthy people can be stress free and happy. Happiness and harmony, from a positivistic perspective, are measured by certainty (Kramer, 2003). One of the central theses in both Gudykunst and Kim's (2003) research is uncertainty reduction—the more accurate our predictions about the stranger, the more our uncertainty and anxiety are reduced. Since the status of the unknown other is defined by the host culture (Gudykunst and Kim, 2003), the responsibility for being predictable falls on the stranger (Murphy & Espostito, 2003; Sandel et al. 2006). This responsibility should not be difficult for immigrants because, according to Kim's model, they are merely passive participants in a natural and inevitable process (Sandel et al. 2006). Yet, there is nothing passive, normal, or easy about trying to assimilate. Immigration, according to Serra (2003):

Is not the heroic drive of someone who finally feels himself realized, "arrived" but

a simple thinking—the thinking of the defeated, made of a thousand new

departures, disillusions, and renunciations….includes many failures and

betrayals and a deep sense of loss counted to the last drop. (p. 41)

The immigrants at the turn of the century, who feared the uncertainty of deportation,

discrimination, and violence, discovered that the only behavior they could predict was the

unpredictability of their host. As a result, immigrants and their children tried to erase

traces of their ethnicity and mimic the values of the host culture, to gain certainty and

become the epitome of predictability: the model minority (Kramer, 2003). The term

model minority is used to describe ethnic groups that have adopted white customs in a

manner acceptable by the dominant culture—Korean Americans are one example of a

model minority group (Asante, 2000). This label implies living up to an unrealistic

standard of predictability, something only a robot can accomplish because it does not

have an identity and does not resist reprogramming (Kramer, 2000).

Model minority, similar to assimilation, is an ill-defined term. People classified as

model minorities did not develop the concept; it was designed by American culture as a

way to measure and manage the "other" against western standards. From the outset,

assimilation rhetoric served as a governing discourse that attempted to incorporate people

by providing them with alternative identities. The best way to control the "other" is to

define him/her by ones own terms, a strategy that proved successful in the near extinction

of the American natives, who never called themselves Indians (Scannell, 2002).

Constructing human beings of a particular group places them as subjects having specific

needs, desires, and behaviors. Once the individual accepts the particular identity, his/her

behavior is perceived as either conforming to or deviating from the norm. Thus, the invention of labels, such as model minority, not only shaped the ways in which westerners understand Korean Americans, but also the ways in which Korean Americans have come to understand themselves within western society.

Italian Americans were never considered model minorities, even though they mastered white customs (Asante, 2000) and carried a fully assimilated status (Lisella, 2002). This could be, in part, because the negative (but predictable) stereotypes regarding organized crime, backward urban villagers, or sexual predators prevent them from being completely accepted in some social or political groups in the United States. Moreover, many Italians were stigmatized as socialist or communists during the late 19th and early 20th century. According to historian Gary Mormino (2003), states, such as Florida, only wanted the "right type of immigrant" to populate and contribute to economic development (p. 11). The Florida Times-Union rejected "foreigners who are not willing to mingle and assimilate with the native element" (Mormino, 2003, p. 11). The Florida Department of Agriculture did not want the people of southern Europe, poles, Hunns [sic], or Italians because, "These people who emigrate are of the lowest order…they are the breeders of socialism and anarchism"—a view that influenced the infamous *Sacco and Vanzetti* trial (Mormino, 2003, p. 11). Italians, at this time, were not the right kind of laborer (Mormino, 2003).

Currently, the political views of many Italian Americans reflect conservative values—not anarchism. And their label, "assimilated status," carries a sense of predictability and certainty similar to model minority. It also shapes the ways in which Italian Americans have come to understand themselves (both positively and negatively)

within American society, which is the root of their problem. Who are they? Their unique history, according to Serra (2003), is the "ethos of their identity…not an occasion of scandal, and mark of shame" (p. 30). A negative identity is a failure in assimilation.

Kim does acknowledge that some ethnic or minority groups can *fail* in personal evolution, and mentions issues such as ethnic proximity (the degree to which the immigrant's facial features or race is close to those of the members of the dominant culture). She falls short, however, in explaining the deep-rooted reasons why adaptation practices, for decades, prevented people from integrating into American society. Such as why many psychologically healthy and functionally fit Asian Americans describe themselves as bi-cultural, not completely American (Min & Kim, 2000). Or why Italian American literature is concerned with issues of identity. In line with positivistic reasoning, Kim (2001) believes that most individuals are able to overcome their "temporary setbacks along the path of gradual intercultural transformation" (p. 205). Unlike Gordon (1964), Kim does not place any responsibility on the host culture to respect difference, and instead advocates full adaptation. Moreover, the responsibility to overcome setbacks is a path that one must travel alone—a perspective that coincides with America's emphasis on individual achievement. Modern medicine is one example because it places the responsibility for getting better on the patient—the one who is broken, the one whose physical or mental health prevents his/her from keeping up or progressing (O'Hair, Scannell, & Thompson, 2006). Similar to healthcare, adaptation is perceived as a problem awaiting some type of solution, development, improvement, or correction.

Adaptation Growth: Circle or Line?

Kim contends that adaptation growth takes place in a circular, wheel-like motion, but the use of the word *forward* to imply *adjusted* and *backward* to indicate *maladjusted* demonstrates an inconsistency with both circular logic and the hermeneutic circle. The circle symbolizes sameness and unity, while maintaining a continuing and balanced relationship in all things. For example, many indigenous cultures involvement with the earth and nature through holistic practices expresses a circular logic. Most Native American tribes used the natural resources of their environment in a way that allowed the earth to rejuvenate. Circular logic represents an attitude towards space and place that does not indicate mobility or direction. For instance, most people understand the concept of village to mean commonality, shared identity, extended family, and permanence. The circle and its center are also important to mythological cycles that guide the universe— sun and moon, birth and death, good and evil; hence, village life was influenced by cosmological, spiritual, or religious beliefs about the world, not geometric shapes (Kramer, 1997). The opposing symbol is the line, which first came into conflict with the circle when Europeans arrived in the western hemisphere over 500 years ago (Bruchac, 1994). Western civilization emphasizes straight lines, as in the land grid allotments, linear thinking, and the ideology of progress (Mumford, 1961; Gebser, Ger. 1949/Eng. 1985; Kramer 1997). Straight lines or rows represent individuality and hierarchy, economic and linear advancement (Kramer, 1997), a sense of unending frontier (Blaeser, 1994), death (Baudrillard, 2001), and assimilation.

The Cross Cultural Adaptation Model reveals hierarchy and linear advancement through words, such as *forward, backward, progress, regress, adjusted, and maladjusted*.

These words represent notions of progress, rational (positivistic) thinking (Kramer, 1997), and appear in many established types of knowledge including science, law, medicine, politics, economics, military strategy, administration, and education. In addition, these terms are part of western upbringing and prepare people for isolation, individuality and mobility. In other words, we are continuously leaving—leaving our schools and childhood friends, leaving home, leaving jobs for upward mobility, and leaving cities and states (Tall, 1993). The immigrant not only faces the difficulty of a physical departure from their home, but also symbolic departures such as "changing roles and shaping himself after each situation"—pizza maker, telegrapher, ditch digger, cigar roller, shoemaker (Serra, 2003, p. 42).

The immigrant must move away from their ethnic community, to move *forward* and *learn* new cultural habits. But to progress is also to dissociate oneself from the clan, or one's identity (Kramer, 1997). Not only does this study argue against the view that people are *moving backward* when they move closer to their ethnic communities, but *forward* and *backward* are linear and spatial expressions that contradict any circular interpretation. Kim's model describes enculturation, acculturation, and deculturation as independent variables, not intersecting phases; therefore, making her theory more of an linear process than a hermeneutic experience. Moreover, the hermeneutical circle is a phenomenological concept, a metaphor, and a sense-making process, not a systematic adaptation method. Hermeneutic interpretation is a "constant process that consists of the revision of the anticipations of understanding in light of a better more cogent understanding of the whole" (Dostal, 2002, p. 47). The logical value of the hermeneutic circle is that there is no real spatial shape, but the rendering of a phenomenological

process. Kim's explanation of the circle is closer to the viscous geometric shape that Heidegger foresaw. As a form of verbal domination (Foucault, 1972), adaptation implies conformity to a one-size-fits all framework or, in this case, a "melting pot" that dissolves all differences.

The adaptation perspective of intercultural relations and the methods most frequently used to solve communication issues are linked to ideologies of positivism and functionalism (Kramer, 2003). The problem with this model of adaptation is that Kim presents it as a prescription, a method, a "social psychological technology" (Kramer, 2003, p. 249). Techniques claim no bias, but, in fact, present only one perspective (Kramer, 1997, p. 82). Kramer writes,

> There is no single best or correct interpretation (solution) of the world. It certainly is not a problem to be solved once and for all like a mathematical puzzle. There is no "solution" to life. It is to be lived. (p. xix)

Since problems are in need of "(ab) solution" (Kramer, 1997, p. xix), they must be identified and broken down into smaller pieces, so that a solution can be implemented. The primary interest for most scholars studying intercultural communication is making it more effective (Kramer, 2006). Thus, one's perception of adaptation in its entirety is framed as an either/or solution. Individuals will experience either uncertainty or stability, they will either engage in the host culture or disengage from the host culture, they will either acculturate or deculturate, they will either conform or resist, and they will either succeed or fail (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997, Kim, 2001; Kramer, 2003). These either/or solutions foster a competitive winners/losers situation that generates violence and discrimination among ethnic and racial groups (Kramer, 2003).

Current disagreement over adaptation and actual shedding of culture is increasing (Kramer, 2003; Murphy & Esposito, 2003). While most communication scholars believe that adaptation is the superior way to know and predict intercultural communication, there are others who believe that relying on a single theory and method of social engineering is decultualizing (Kramer, 2003), dehumanizing (Scannell, Scannell, & McIlwain, 2002), and de-ethnicizing (Barolini, 1985). Others simply find the acculturation/deculturation hypothesis misleading—one does not shed his/her native language skills with the learning of a new language (Sandel, et. al, 2006). In addition, some scholars draw on behavioral assimilation (Gordon, 1964), which focuses on how people function without fully shedding their cultural habits. It is not enough, however, to accept that people can behaviorally fit into any society or not; communication research should attempt to understand the *chiaroscuro*—the dark and light—that many immigrants, including Italian Americans, profess.

Thus, the primary issues involving Italian American ethnic identity including de-ethnicization, self-hatred, *chiaroscuro,* along with their long-standing "assimilated status" correlates with the concept of adaptation. The leading adaptation model not only appears to disregard the "intrinsic worth" of an ethnic group's unique values, beliefs, and practices (Sandel et al. 2006), but it also does not provide answers to the "knowledge gap concerning the 'ethnic myopia' found in the United States" (Tamburri, 1998, p. 5). The approach to adaptation may be a novel concept within the developing communication field, but the notions of functional fitness, psychological adjustment, and identity transformation are the residue of the assimilation theory.

Italian American Literature

Intercultural communication research within the communication discipline is currently on the rise, but studies pertaining to Italian Americans are nearly absent in the literature. A small body of research was located in the *Critical Studies and Mass Communication Journal*, the *Journal of Popular Culture*, and the *Journal of Communication Inquiry*. The studies examined issues involving mafia (Fields, 2004), negative stereotypes, (Cavallero, 2004), masculinity (Bertellini, 2005), ethnic discrimination (Trasciatti, 2003), and media images—*The Soprano's* (Jaramillo, 2002). Although most of the studies were attempting to reframe ethnic biases and overly simplistic views of Italian Americans as ignorant, racist, and violent, the universality of the topics speaks volumes about the lack of Italian American representation and the power of the assimilation "metanarrative" (Tamburri, 1998). Hence, the research shows no recognition of Italian Americans as an ethnic group that "shares a history, a country, a diaspora, and an aesthetically rich response to migration" (Bona, 2003, p. 3), but instead a stagnant identity constructed out of worn-out ideologies of assimilation. Overall, by examining intercultural communication literature within the communication discipline, one might think that Italian America does not exist, and according to assimilation theory, it should not. On the other hand, if Italian America does exist for mainstream society, it is only through the cultural images created and sustained in popular culture. In fact, exploring the literature via electronic communication journals and abstracts with the word "Italian" proved ineffective, but using clichéd words or phrases including "o*rganized crime," "drug trafficking," "corruption," "gangsters," "Godfather,"* "*violence*," and "*The Sopranos*" produced more results.

There is a substantially larger body of literature regarding Italian Americans outside the communication field. Some of the literature comes from anthropology and history. These studies focus on issues regarding immigration, religious customs, folklore, architecture, and urban history. There was also a large body of literature in sociology. Much of this literature examines the immigrant experience through the assimilation paradigm, and therefore presents elements of the Italian community that appear to have erased or "lost" their culture. In addition, many sociology studies claim that ethnicity is a manifestation of class dynamics. The literature typically concentrates on issues, such as language, intergenerational changes, social interaction, social structures, social mobility, socioeconomics, suburban growth, and urban planning. One seminal text in this area is Herbert Gans (1962) *The Urban Villagers: Group and Class in the Life of Italian Americans.* Written from a sociologist's perspective, his observations of a Boston West End urban neighborhood concluded that second generation Italians and Sicilians had not maintained their culture. According to Gans (1962), Italian and Sicilian immigrants imported few cultural objects, so the fact that they "consumed" American material items and mimicked consumer behaviors was evidence that they were accepting the outside world. In his final analysis, Gans claims that the urban renewal planning project will have negative consequences on peoples' lives, but his view of Italians as unable to politically mobilize in order to save their neighborhood further stigmatizes Italian American identity as "disinterested in the public sphere" or "apolitical" (Alba, 1985). Moreover, sociologist Richard Alba's (1985) *Italian Americans: In to the Twilight of Ethnicity* supports the view that the Italian American culture is slowly losing it's distinctiveness as the shadows of assimilation moves stealthily over their ethnic identity.

The majority of Italian American literature comes from Italian American studies (Bona, 2003). During the last decade, Italian American writers have reclaimed their cultural heritage and repositioned the Italian American field of inquiry (Giunta, 2002). Currently, Italian American female scholarship has advanced (Bona, 2003). After many years of having no academic voice, women are finally participating in the struggle against "caricatured identities in the media" (DeSalvo, & Giunta, 2002, p.13). They are also creating a forum for the Italian American female identity, which is, in many ways, a suppressed sense of self. Other than the Italian mother or the Madonna, female characters in literature or film are simply backdrops in men's' lives. For instance, the most recognized image, the mafia, is a male phenomenon. The trend towards female scholarship is "modernizing" the Italian American field. One could argue that feminism is another sign of assimilation—western academic progress. However, the disparaging images of Italians continue to make it difficult for Italian American writers, both male and female, to receive recognition outside their field (Giunta, 2002).

Several themes throughout this body of literature serve to enlighten the reader about what it means to be an Italian American. I argue that one underlying theme in the literature is their assimilated status. It seems to be intertwined with issues of identity and cultural schizophrenia (Barolini, 1999). As Tamburri (2003) states, if assimilation was not an issue then why is it a topic of concern? Unfortunately, Tamburri (2003) contends that Italian American literature, similar to ethnic studies in general, often reflects the assimilation ideologies that position ethnic people in terms of the melting-pot attitude. Further investigation of the current effects of assimilation on one's ethnic identity and how this identity is negotiated will advance the field.

Another important issue addressed in the literature is the negative stereotyping of ingroups members from the dominant culture (Groeller, 2003). This primarily comes from popular literature and the media. For many years, there has been a fascination with the Godfather and organized crime (Messenger, 2002). Some argue that Mario Puzo's book appealed to the American psyche because it was published during a time when male authority and patriarchy were contested—Vietnam, feminist movements, civil rights to name a few (Messenger, 2002). The Godfather was the epitome of the "strong and benevolent father" who could provide for his family and run his business (Messenger, 2002, p. 220). Currently, there is much discussion over the Cable TV series *The Sopranos.* Italian Americans are in disagreement over the portrayal of their culture—the foul language, the ignorance, and the mob boss. Some believe that the show is perpetuating negative images while others simply view it as fiction. The Italian American academic community adheres to the notion that ethnic scholars have a responsibility to teach society about their culture, not sensationalize it, or cater to media images or gender stereotypes (Barolini, 1985; Tamburri, 1998). Guida (2001) explains that Italian American intellectuals and artists have contributed to the construction of negative stereotypes, especially the disparaging images of the Italian American male as a sexual predator, a brute, or an overly sentimental lover. The Italian American blasphemers list includes Francis Ford Coppola, Mario Puzo, Martin Scorsese, Al Pacino, and Robert De Niro (Tamburri, 1998). Others, such as journalist Gay Talese, are criticized for not embracing their full ethnicity or only visiting their ethnicity on occasion—"ethnic slumming" (Tamburri, 1998). Included in this theme is also the "southern question" and

prejudices regarding the "lower other" that followed immigrants to America (Gardaphè, 1996).

Recent literature is focusing on historical situations that pertain to the Italian diasporas (Bona, 2003), whiteness and race (Gabaccia, 2003), and World War II discrimination (Canevale 2003). These topics share a common integration theme, but the central purpose of the literature appears to be more of a healing process or an awareness building than an assimilation argument. Many Italian Americans are not aware or fully understand their history and culture during the interwar and postwar years. In addition, the shame surrounding race and racist attitudes had silenced the Italian American community. The media, in part, perpetuated the disgrace the Italian American community felt by sensationalizing incidents related to ethnic and racial violence (Sciorra, 2003). Throughout U.S. history, the Italian American community has demonstrated repeatedly that it is better to ignore the stereotypes of the mainstream than to draw attention to themselves; hence the need for social healing. Moreover, Italian Americans, similar to other ethnic groups are absent from U.S. history books. Thus, Italian Americans must examine a restructured history of their identity by considering counter knowledge and interpreting it in a manner not perceived before.

Finally, the literature also serves to reinforce the sense of cultural and ethnic preservation. Some of the most common expressions of Italian American culture, in not only literature, but also film and art, are religious iconography (Barolini, 1985) and cuisine (Pipino, 2003; Leto, 2003). Gardaphè (1996) explains that this is because they have been "stultified by the media" (p. 96). Even though Catholicism is patriarchal, the practice of religion is gender oriented towards women—hence the importance of the

Madonna, female saints, and ancient goddesses (Gardaphè, 1996). Many literary works analyze the fusion of pagan folklore that is unique to southern Italian identity and Christian myths still practiced in Italy. Finally, other studies deconstruct the places that have been designated as "Italian" such as the churches, kitchens and dinner tables, and pizza parlors (Gardaphè, 1996).

Italian American studies leans more toward nostalgia than critical analysis (Tamburri, 2003). Since the field is in its early stages of development, Italian American writers are prone to model their literary choices and political representations after ethnic writers who place heavy emphasis on oral history (Barolini, 1985), mob narratives (Barolini, 1985) and longing (Lisella, 2002). Tamburri (2003) argues that Italian American studies must continue to evolve from narratives to cultural examinations and multiculturalism. Giunta (2002), however, contends that the narratives are relevant because they reveal a type of identity confusion that stems from the assimilation myth. She believes that it is necessary to articulate their multiple and complicated Italian American national and cultural identities to the mainstream. She argues against "misguided, ethnocentric cultural work that tends to isolate and ghettoize instead of opening up creative and intellectual opportunities on an ever-widening cultural and political scale" (p.xvii). Accordingly, Italian American literature attempts to expand the cultural and political dialogue and reinvent Italian American ethnicity (Gardaphè, 1996) by emphasizing signs of ethnicity or *Italianita* (Guida, 2001). Gardaphè (1996) challenges the ethnic signs generated through written expressions of Italian Americans. He contends that it is not enough for individuals to emphasize their differences, individuals must construct a dialogical scene between what is Italian and what is

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American; only then, can people read the ethnic signs, and understand the Italian American perspective. In conclusion, the lack of Italian American research within the communication field coupled by the need for more critical analysis within Italian American scholarship illustrates that incorporating communication perspectives into Italian American studies may provide a better understanding of their assimilated status and their ethnic identity while promoting the development of research in both disciplines.

Chapter III: Hermeneutic Examination of Italian Identity

In this chapter, I will provide an overview of Hans-Georg Gadamer's fusion of horizons as presented in *Truth and Method* (1960). First, I will briefly discuss hermeneutics as an analytical approach to understanding. Second, I will describe the various aspects of Gadamer's notion of hermeneutics and horizons. Third, I will discuss how Italian American culture and identity, as objects of this study, are related to both hermeneutics and fusion theory.

Hermeneutics refers to the historical and interpretive conditions of human understanding and its effects on individuals and society (Dostal, 2002). The process of understanding regards how one comprehends, explains, and interprets—"transcendentally and independently of any and all contingent instances of explanation and understanding" (Kramer, 2006, p. 139). The pursuit of "accurate" interpretation has a long history of theoretical changes before it became an analytical approach to understanding. Hermeneutics developed out of the Platonic and Aristotelian preference for deductive reasoning and pragmatic systems of knowledge and was originally used as a means for interpreting non-secular texts like the Bible (Kramer, 2006). Early hermeneutic philosophers, such as Friedrich Schleirmacher (1768-1834), approached interpretation

through historicism, which meant that analysis required the historical background of the text along with the intentions and experiences of the author (Dostal, 2002). By the nineteenth century, hermeneutics moved toward a rigorous "science of interpretation" and broadened to include the analyses of classic texts, arts, laws, philosophies, and ideologies (Dostal, 2002). This hermeneutic approach was linked to both positivism, in that it sought to produce explanations derived from formal systems of knowledge, and reductionism in the sense that it treated understanding, interpreting, and translating as separate parts from the whole experience of comprehension (Kramer, 2006). In addition, historicism instigated historical determinism, which in turn, ignored the semantic power of historical experience that is "already manifestly operating in our ways of thinking, perceiving, and inventing" (Kramer, 2006, p.132). As a field of inquiry, early positivistic hermeneutics limited the range of possible interpretations and overlooked the experience of sense making that occurs outside theoretical observations (Dostal, 2002).

The heightened need to understand the process of interpretation led to three hermeneutic principles. First, philosophers, such as Friedreich Nietzsche, began to reject the notion of author intent, and instead placed emphasis on perspectivism (Kramer, 2006). When reading a text, we cannot escape our own perspective, so the only way we can understand the author's intent is through our own. Second, our understanding is tentative because it is "always subject to revisions when confronted with more convincing evidence and interpretations" (Dostal, 2002, p. 44). In other words, our perspective changes, which, in turn, changes our interpretation of the text. Hence, "understanding is an event, a verb not a fixed object-position" (Kramer, 2006, p.151). Moreover, the shift from positivism left interpretation open; there was no longer an end-

point, a progression, or a final truth (Kramer, 2006). Experiences add up, not in a positivistic, linear fashion, but in a circular way, which makes hermeneutical understanding a "constant process that consists of the revision of the anticipations of understanding in light of a better more cogent understanding of the whole" (Dostal, 2002, p. 47). Finally, hermeneutics stresses the "thesis of minor causes" by attempting to understand causal relationships (Kramer, 2006). This means that all components of the text are of equal importance and affect one another equally. These three principles shift the field from the rigid interpretation of texts to the study of the phenomena of human understanding in general (Kramer, 2006).

Contemporary hermeneutics draws on phenomenological principles to further develop the ideas of translation, meaning, and interpretation (Kramer, 2006). In contrast to earlier hermeneutics, this approach does not reduce or separate these principles, but instead considers them a unified process of experience (Kramer, 2006). Moreover, it is believed that human awareness has an interpretive dimension that is continually integrating new information into the subconscious structures of the mind, thereby affecting everything from mood and memory to imagination (Kramer, 2006). A text or experience can be "any specifiable object of awareness from a dream, a historical era, a movie, a sunset, a hunch, a feeling like nostalgia, a memory: anything that is specifiable to awareness" (Kramer, 2006 p. 146). Furthermore, Kramer (2006) explains that truth is manifested in our daily lives, and is discovered in both high culture (the arts) and low culture (carnivals and fairs), as demonstrated in Bakhtin's interpretation of *Rabelais and his World*. The "low," according to Bakhtin (1981), is a place where the rules, norms, and roles of mainstream languages and social structures are challenged. Language, which is

connected to images of various worldviews and the people who use it, functions in a heteroglot nature. Heteroglossia is the "base condition governing the operation of meaning in any utterance" (p.428). Similar to Gadamer, Bakhtin contends that there is a constant flow of interacting utterances, words, and meanings within a language, and all meaning is understood as part of the greater whole. Similarly, Gadamer (1975) writes:

> Every word causes the whole of the language to which it belongs to resonate and the whole worldview that underlies it to appear. Every word, as an event of a moment, carries with it the unsaid to which it is related by responding and summoning. (p. 458)

Gadamer contends that understanding is dependent on culture, history, and context. The same utterance can be used differently depending on the social, historical, or physiological situation. Words are part of a "living language" and convey essential meaning for the people who use them (Gadamer, 1975, p. 436).

This study uses hermeneutics as a frame of reference for understanding culture and identity. Our understanding of culture and identity is, in part, through traditional forms of knowledge and discursive practices (Foucault, 1972). On one hand, modern communications and scientific standards have advanced our understanding of the world (Gadamer, 1975). For example, we know that whales are mammals, so we do not refer to them as fish (Gadamer, 2004). On the other hand, linguistic designation can reduce both the diversity of names for things along with the nuances of meaning. Gadamer argues against the notion of a monolithic description of the world. He writes:

> Pragmatic meanings are never harmonized in living language. That is why it is always artificial and contrary to nature of language to measure the contingency of

natural concept formation against the true order of things and to see the former as purely accidental. This possibility comes about through the human mind's necessary and legitimate range of variation in articulating the essential order of things. (p. 436)

Some believe that eliminating heteroglossia will provide a society with a sense of unity and order. However, the forces of heteroglossia produce dialogism, not unification. Our experience of the world is not bound to a single, monolithic language or truth.

Linguistic designation can affect cultural identity, especially when one ethnic group is linguistically lumped together with another, as in the case of Sicilians and Italians. As human beings, we find meaning, identity, and freedom through a world of multiple languages (Bakhtin, 1981). Just as we do not expect all people to wear the same shoe size, we cannot expect all people to place their values, beliefs, and traditions, into one language. The standardization of one culture's language into another may appear as mere adaptation, but in reality, it can serve as a form of dissociation and, ultimately, extinction.

This study posits that although scientific and technical discourses are applicable to the social and scientific world, it is not possible to know all the possibilities of identity or culture by empirically measuring or qualitatively describing behaviors and practices. Both discourses can provide reasonable explanations of human conditions, but human understanding is neither objective nor subjective because it "belongs to the being of that which is understood" (Gadamer, 1975, p. xxxi). Kramer (2006) contends that twentieth century hermeneutics recognizes the "perspectival nature of human knowledge" and rejects the notion that one's own perspective (including science) is "universally valid," if

validity is exclusionary to new insights (p. 145). In addition, he explains that

understanding is dialogical; and genuine dialogue involves risking ourselves in the

dialogical process so that we may be open to new experiences. He writes:

> *First,* we must accept that being open is a risk to our selves. *Second,* we must
>
> understand that our presumptions may be fallible or less interesting and therefore
>
> vulnerable to   modification. In short, although the ego is central to perspectival
>
> perception, "I," am a   contingency. *Third*, all things are read or approached as
>
> being initially of equal importance. *And fourth*, such an analysis requires that one
>
> remain open to the possibility that what one may have initially guessed to be
>
> unimportant, turns out, in the knowledge of greater contexts, to be pivotal for
>
> understanding. (p. 6)

Truth cannot exist outside of our engagement with the world. Understanding is here and

now, something we do while living our life (Kramer, 2006). **T**he primary task for

hermeneutics is to explore how understanding is possible, inasmuch as recognizing how

much truth is there in any given method. As the study of interpretation as universal to

human knowledge, hermeneutics does not present a specific methodology, but instead an

explanation of human comprehension and an alternative context of knowledge (Dostal,

2002).

The hermeneutic perspective used in this research stems from Hans-Georg

Gadamer who recognized that truths are communicated through various modes of

understanding (Gadamer, 1975). Influenced by the philosophical writings of Heidegger

and Nietzsche, Gadamer contends that human understanding is more than just a possible

outcome or experimental finding; it is the realization of our existence (Dostal, 2002), "the

mode of being of existence itself" (Gadamer, 1975, p. xxx). Gadamer's *Truth and Method* addresses the hermeneutic problem of interpretation and truth that lies between history and science (Kramer, 2006). For Gadamer, truth is a mode of experience that cannot always be verified through traditional methods. In addition, truth is not discovered in the method, but in the objectives of knowledge.

<div align="center">Gadamer</div>

Drawing from Kant, Gadamer questions the conditions and the scope of human knowledge that makes modern science possible. He seeks to understand the sciences, "beyond their methodological self-consciousness, and what connects them with the totality of our experience of world" (Gadamer, 1975, p. xxii). He believes that scientific and technical discourse is superiorly situated, but this superiority is rendered false when it fails to recognize the truth that speaks to us from various modes of expression, such as art and historical tradition. He writes, "Our historical tradition is made the object of investigation, but at the same time, truth comes to speech in it. Experience of historical tradition reaches much further back and mediates truth in which one must try to share" (p. xxiii). In contrast to the modern sciences, Gadamer does not approach understanding as a task in need of direction. Instead, he attempts to reveal how "what has grown historically and what has been transmitted historically" is objectified—"as if tradition were alien, and from the human point of view as unintelligible, as an object of physics" (Gadamer, 1975, pp. xxxiii-xxxiv). The objectification of history is evident in the museum context where mundane items from a particular history are transferred into antiquities (Kramer, 2006). Effective history is not simply the retelling of facts, but instead how the events of the past situate "themselves in the researcher's perspective and affect what object of inquiry he or

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she will choose and which questions will be asked" (McIlwain, 2003, p. 9). Hence, Gadamer's hermeneutics is not a prescription for the sciences, but an attempt to reveal any misconceptions as to what they are.

Gadamer's writings suggest three crucial elements to understanding (Dostal, 2002). First, there is a cognitive element to understanding tradition. Traditions are self-evident cultural material handed down from the past and made inherent to us. Gadamer writes:

What has come down to us by way of verbal tradition is not left over but given to us—whether through direct retelling, in which myth, legend, custom have their life or through written tradition, whose signs are as it were immediately clear to every reader who can read them. (p. 390)

As ongoing conversations, traditions provide individuals with a sense of validity and belonging not just to each other, but also to the subject and the participation process in general. Traditions are found in all understanding and all understanding of tradition is affected by the element of effective history (Gadamer, 1975).

Understanding has a practical/applicative, "know-how" element. Gadamer's "practical" notion of understanding derives from Aristotle's *phronesis*—where practice takes place in the actualization, not the abstraction. Practical understanding is different from cognitive (I can swim) in that it is exercised in the ability of understanding something, not a specific type of knowledge (Dostal, 2002). Gadamer makes clear that application is not adaptation, but instead knowing one's way around the text. Hermeneutics holds that human beings are in constant search of perspective (Dostal, 2002). Gadamer (1975) explains, "To have an orientation of world means to keep oneself

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so free from what one encounters of the world that one can present it to oneself as it is" (p. 443). Consequently, understanding implies an orientation of self-understanding "in the sense that it is always a possibility of my own self that is played out in understanding" (Dostal, 2002, p. 38). For instance, I know that I know how to speak Italian. Gadamer explains that the ability to have a sense of self and world is the ability to have a language.

Understanding contains a linguistic element in that language is the place where facts are complied and logic is applied in order to make knowledge. To understand is to be able to put something into words, articulate a meaning, and then agree on the thing itself. According to Gadamer, coming to an agreement is to establish a common ground so that one can understand what the other person says about the subject matter, "not to get inside another person and relive his experiences" (p. 383). He writes:

> The ground is not established by explicit agreement or social contact that could be negotiated in advance nor by a psychological process of empathy/sympathy. It rests on a common willingness of the participants in conversation to lend themselves to the emergence of something else—the subject matter that comes to presence in the conversation. (p. xvii)

In addition, communication is not the linear flow of information, but how the "subject matter becomes mutually accessible for people while the medium (language) withdraws from prominence" (p. xv). Therefore, Gadamer's analytical approach to hermeneutics illustrates an epistemological (cognitive) understanding of the tradition/text, a practical understanding for "knowing" the text, and finally, a linguistic agreement of what the text means.

Hermeneutic Circle

In order to understand Gadamer's hermeneutics, one must understand the circularity of interpretation. To begin, interpretations are bound to our prejudices and affect the way in which we translate meaning. What we seek to translate (understand and apply) is at first foreign and then binding to our prejudices. Gadamer states that prejudices are necessary "prestructures" for interpretations, without them, we would not be able to make sense of the world. All understanding is interpretation and all interpretation takes place in the medium of language. Language brings the object into words, and at the same time reveals the interpreter's own prejudices. An interpretation disappears behind speech, but at the same time is expressed as something that is supposed to disappear. Hence, "the possibility of understanding is dependent on the possibility of this kind of mediating interpretation" (Gadamer, Ger.1960/Eng. 2004, p. 398). Similar to a conversation, interpretation functions as a dialectical circle. The hermeneutic circle is "a phenomenological to and fro motion of any attempt to understanding, from the parts to the whole and from the whole back to the parts"(Dostal, 2002, p. 47). It is a "constant process that consist of the revision of the anticipations of understanding in light of a better more cogent understanding of the whole" (Dostal, 2002, p. 47). Some hermeneutic philosophers, such as Heidegger, argue against the viscous geometric shape of the circle; however, the logical value of Gadamer's circle is that there is no real spatial shape, no end, but the rendering of a phenomenological process.

Hermeneutic Horizons

Gadamer's hermeneutical horizons identify an experience (Dostal, 2002). The phenomenological concept is both a metaphor and a sense-making process. The horizon is the visible intersection of earth and sky. As we move, our perspective of the unfixed line moves with the curvature of the earth. When someone describes something as "beyond the horizon of knowledge," he/she is referring to the metaphoric line that divides the possibilities of understanding. As a sense-making process, the horizon of hermeneutics shapes our perceptions of the text or being in the world. The hermeneutic horizon is the tradition, the text (object, person, or event) that we are trying to translate (understand and apply) into a meaningful interpretation. Similar to the visible horizon, the hermeneutic horizon is not fixed or static, but continuously changing with one's perspective. It is the "range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point" (Gadamer, 1975, p. 302). Kramer (2006) writes, "Each horizon, each perspective, each condition of throwness and situatedness presents a unique set of limitations but also a unique cluster of opportunities that constitute openness" (p. 16). Openness refers to overcoming the limitations of our prejudices (to change and be changed) and expanding the interpretive options that make up our horizons. We should also "transpose ourselves into a situation" by looking "beyond what is close at hand—not in order to look away, but to see it better" (Gadamer, 1975, p. 305). Accordingly, interpreting the meaning of the text involves "relating it to a whole complex of possible meanings in which we linguistically move" (Gadamer, 1975, p. 396). The movement is in the ability to find the correct language (agreement) to read the text. However, there is no single correct interpretation of the text because it is constantly adjusted and interpreted by

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each individual. In other words, the horizon of understanding cannot be limited by the author or by the horizon of the person who reads the text.

Gadamer's horizon-formation is actually the fusion of multiple horizons, which manifest through the event of linguistic and dialogic understanding. Since, "Life has innumerable 'frontiers'; edges to the horizon of the world," interpretations are constantly mixing with past and present experiences (Kramer, 2006, p. 22). Hence, experience is "not the residue of isolated moments, but an ongoing integrative process in which what we encounter widens our horizon, but only by overturning an existing perspective" (Gadamer, 1975, p. xiii). The integration process challenges and even contradicts our horizons, but it never erases them (Kramer, 2006). Gadamer explains:

> The fact that our experience of the world is bound to language does not imply exclusiveness of perspective. By entering foreign language-worlds, we overcome the prejudices and limitations of our previous experience of the world. This does not mean that we leave and negate our own world. We just return home with new experiences. (p. 448)

In relation to intercultural communication, Gadamer's hermeneutic horizon-formation is a "complex process of endless integration and invention" that connects us to other people, to our cultural pasts, and to present dialogues of understanding (Kramer, 2006, p. 11). In short, our orientation of the world and self-understanding, along with truths that speak to us from the text, do not exist in monolithic human experience and minimal possibilities, but instead, a fusion of dialogical communication and unpredictable, fluxing cultures and identities.

Cultural Fusion Theory

Cultural fusion theory is especially appropriate for understanding the assimilated status of Italian Americans. Expanding on Gadamer's hermeneutic-formation of horizons, Eric Kramer (2003) explains the global scale of assimilation and its effects on cultural diversity. His writings suggest that we are facing issues of "shrinking variety of meanings, values, expectations, motives, and ways of living" (2003, p. xiii). The push for global cities and global citizenship creates a monoculture based on "nihilistically predictable and redundant" communication. As such, an examination of Kramer's fusion theory is particularly relevant and applicable to intercultural communication and Italian American identity. The theory of cultural fusion sheds light on the rhetoric of assimilation and adaptation that affects how people interpret their horizon of ethnic identity and community.

One of the primary critiques of Gadamer's fusion of horizons is the vagueness of his analytical approach. There are no precise theoretical guidelines or themes to direct the hermeneutic researcher. While some may view this as a methodological impediment, others welcome this as an opportunity to bring into awareness the meaning of a phenomenon. Kramer's rationale for fusion theory is the need for a new hypothesis to explain intercultural communication within the communication field. As previously mentioned the theory of adaptation dominates communication literature and influences our interpretation of cultural interaction. Kramer argues, "Cultural exchanges and fusion of styles, technologies, and ideologies is the rule not the exception in world history" (p. 3). The ideology of American assimilation, rooted in equalizing beliefs, such as scientific racism and social Darwinism, is the master narrative, the ongoing conversation, the

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tradition passed down to us that translates into meaning. Kramer's writing suggests the need for expanding the possibilities of the academic horizon that informs our understanding of both culture and cultural identity. Openness allows us to evaluate and challenge our western positivistic prejudices, and question how assimilation arguments become claims, what makes them valid, and how they come to represent knowledge within intercultural communication.

The theory of cultural adaptation presupposes a fixed horizon that one can accurately interpret and to which one has to adapt. Similar to positivistic hermeneutics, adaptation seeks to produce explanations derived from formal systems of knowledge, treats identity as separate parts from the whole experience of culture (hence the melting pot metaphor), and limits the range of possible interpretations for both culture and identity. The continual movement of horizon, along with endless integration, changes our understanding and perceptions. Our lived experiences of culture are dialogical and fusing. Kramer argues against the notion of a steady, unidimensional, and unidirectional culture. No such civilization exists. In fact, America's rapid change in "cultural styles, the heterogeneity of its population, and the openness of its boarders to flows of information, immigration, and trade" makes adaptation impossible there (p. 8). He writes, "Adapt to what? The target is multifarious and continually changing because newcomers do not adapt but colonize" (p. 8). Furthermore, it is naïve for Americans to believe that the effects of integration are one-way. The laws of hermeneutics hold that we bring our own concepts and ourselves into the interpretation, but we do not leave the text unchanged. Kramer explains:

Immigrants bring alternatives, which constitute challenges to our ways prompting comparative judgments. They help us break out of ourselves and expand our horizons. Their difference, the uncertainty that they present should not be met only with anxiety. Often immigrants bring something new to their adopted homes, something not already there. Their influence in part depends on the host culture's willingness to listen to their   alternatives of how to live. Thus, insofar as these alternatives are not suppressed, the "American way of life" remains dynamically in flux. As Ralph Waldo Emerson says, America (indeed all dynamic societies) remakes itself in a different way each morning. (p. 34)

Cultural fusion theory provides insights to the multidirectional horizons that influence intercultural communication. Kramer (2007, in press) defines it as "an interpenetrating process that is continual and synergistic." Fusion theory describes how people or cultures learn from and modify each other through the process of coevolution and interdependency. Coevolution is a dialectical process that allows people to participate in "substance" symbolic systems in which they "share and negotiate meanings, form agency, share a scene or situation, an act, and a purpose" (Kramer, 2007, in press). Shared meanings converge and fuse, and expand one's horizon and awareness in many ways, but the ways are not always equal; they can be very different for each individual. Communication is "not a simple linear dialectic but a field of semiosis, a field of complex interactions from which meanings emerge, many interactions occurring simultaneously, in parallel." Moreover, cultural fusion is not the result of a "third culture" or "cultural hybridization" where individuals are "bred" to behave a certain way (Kramer, 2007, in press). In contrast to the Cross Cultural Adaptation Model, the process of cultural fusion

is not a passive experience; "the individual is at least partially aware of the stresses, tensions, opportunities, and liberations opened up with the presentation of a new cultural horizon" (Kramer, 2007, in press). In other words, Kramer (2007, in press) contends that learning (enculturation) is a dynamic process. He writes:

> Horizon is a consequence of a complex and never ending semantic ecology, which involves a continual process of the self and environment. The interaction of the self and its environment results in a dynamic reality more complex than a simple combination of the two. The self is at least in part a cultural self, especially since much of the process is structured by conventional codes. The self is a continually shifting message. The self is a message for others and the world. (in press)

Thus, the hermeneutic circle of interpretation clarifies how experiences add up; there is no minus-mutation of unlearning. Culture is never stagnant so the horizon reflects not only what endures, but also what changes. The changing perceptions reveal the changes in culture.

The idea of culture used in this study stems from Gadamer's use of the word *Bildung*. While scholarship on the concept of *bildung* is complex and broad, a brief description demonstrates the relationship between Gadamer's *bildung* and Kramer's cultural fusion theory. *Bildung* is translated as "culture" and related to "cultivation" or "cultivated" and is defined as the "properly human way of developing one's natural talents and capacities" (p. 10). Originally, *Bildung* implied a mystical capacity to which the human soul fashions itself in the image of god or a rising up to humanity through culture. The root of *bildung* is *bild*, which is to form or copy. Overtime, the word loses its

mystical reference and acquires a technical definition: the "process of forming the self in accordance with an ideal image of the human" (p. xiii). The transformation of the word is associated with rational thinking, traditional forms of knowledge, assimilation, and notions of model minorities. Similar to Kramer, Gadamer believes that "a self can be formed without breaking with or repudiating one's past and that this formation cannot be achieved by any merely technical or methodical means" (p. xii). The hermeneutic horizon of *bildung* used in this study attempts to transcend western notions of adaptation and one-size-fit-all method of interpretations. Drawing from both Gadamer and Kramer, *bildung* is the "basic character of the historical spirit: to reconcile itself with itself, to recognize oneself in other beings" (Gadamer, 1975, p. 15). Cultural fusion is the churning way in which things connect, the "harmonious movement" within various cultures (Gadamer, 1975, p. 15).

Italian Americans engage in the process of *bildung* through language, identity, custom, and community. By examining these hermeneutic horizons, I will attempt to discover how these perceptions are formed and interpreted by this particular community. This study seeks to examine the hermeneutic horizons of Italian Americans in Tampa in order to determine their understanding of their assimilated status and the application of the assimilation narrative told by and for the Italian American community. Finally, this research builds and extends on research in cultural fusion and contributes to our understanding of the culturally fused experience of Italian American Identity.

Chapter IV: Italians in Florida, Methodology, and Reflection

La Florida, named by Spanish explorers for its tropical flowers and foliage, orange groves, and promises of youth, is a fascinating intercultural setting in which to

observe the dynamics of fusion. Once discovered by Europeans, it did not take long for Florida to become a meeting ground for multiple cultures; the extraordinary coastal landscapes and ecosystems appealed to Europeans, Greeks, Minorcans, Africans, Caribbeans and South Americans (Mormino, 2003). Isolated from the rest of the U.S., Florida's new inhabitants typically spoke two languages (Spanish and French); some spoke as many as four languages (Mormino, 2003). Although Florida's land reached 60,000 square miles, it remained the most under-populated state in the South until the late 1800's. The wildlife, the swampy terrain, and the heat made it a nearly impossible place to dwell. To populate and develop the state, the Florida government metaphorically presented it to the world as the "Italy of America." Italian names, such as Naples, Venice, Vero Beach, Lido Key, and Genoa, became names of Floridian cities. Ironically, the metaphor was not too far from the reality; Italian and Sicilian immigrants figure prominently in the history of Florida (Mormino, 2003).

From Spanish Florida (1565-1763/1783-1821) to British Florida (1763-1783), to American Florida (1821 to present), Italians have participated in the exploration and transformation of the Sunshine State (Mormino, 2003). Records indicate that merchants, sailors, farmers, and soldiers from Tuscany, Naples, Genoa, and the Venice settled in Saint Augustine (Serra, 2003), a place some historians believe was the "most Italian city in America" between the years 1770-1870 (Mormino, 2003, p. 11). During Florida's Spanish period, Italians worked among the Apalachee and Timucaua tribes as missionaries (Mormino, 2003). Italians also helped construct El Castillo de San Marcos and served in the king's army (Mormino, 2003). There are even stories about Italian pirates "marauding silver fleets" (Mormino, 2003, p. 1). During the British period

(French and Indian War), Italians figured in the British "Florida fever" (Mormino, 2003). In a sensational attempt to recreate paradise in what the British saw as an extensively exotic land, Italians helped the British cultivate rice, cotton, sugar, indigo and olive trees. In addition, many Italians resided along the ports, to work on the docks and fishing boats. They also contributed to the shrimp industry, the construction of railways, and the excavation of swamp channels for the cultivation of sugar cane in St. Cloud (Serra, 2003).

Italians played a significant role in Florida's agricultural, industrial, and communal development. Their survival was dependent upon their propensity toward hard labor and their adaptability to Spanish, British, and American culture. They lived and worked alongside other ethnic groups and African Americans, in a land that was considered, by some, as untamed as the Wild West. The fusion of ethnicity placed Florida's Italian immigrants in a unique intercultural situation; one worthy of intercultural research. Among Italian immigrants in the United States, however, they are the most neglected group (Serra, 2003). Their late migration and relocation patterns, especially in south Florida, were not recognized as a significant phase in Italian immigrant history for many decades (Serra, 2003). After African Americans, this ethnic group was look upon as the "lowest order" of human beings. Their presence was not always welcome, which may have contributed to their low status in the history of the development of Florida. Historians are concerned about the lost migration memoirs. Serra (2003) writes, "If we lack a history of Italian immigration to South Florida told 'from above,' we miss even more the voice of the very protagonist of immigration, of their narrations, 'from below' (p. 27). On the surface, Italians have Americanized and incorporated Anglo values, but

the history of Florida contradicts a monoculture. The personal accounts and autobiographies of Italian immigrants reveal more than a single integration patterns. They tell a story that is different from the assimilation narrative, one that includes the fusion of many ethnicities and languages. The fact of the matter is that adaptation does not necessarily mean adapting to one culture, adapting to the dominant culture, or adapting in a plus/minus fashion. Historians conclude that Italian American culture in Florida was influenced by many intercultural variables, but the Italians never lost their strong sense of heritage; hence, *Italianità* survived and thrives in Florida's most significant Italian colony, Tampa (Mormino & Pozzetta, 1998; Mormino, 2003; Serra, 2003).

Tampa

The late 1800's marked a significant change in Florida's immigrant history. Two events shaped this transformation: the closure of a sugar colony in St. Cloud and the flourishing of the cigar industry in Tampa (Mormino, 2003). According to Mormino (2003), Louisiana was the largest sugar producer, but the work was sporadic; Sicilian immigrants and African Americans traveled far and wide to find work. Many arrived in St. Cloud around 1886, but the sugar mill was losing business. Eventually, brutal work conditions and wage cuts led Sicilians to Tampa—they heard rumors of work in cigar factories. Other Sicilians made their way to Tampa after the 1891 Mafia riot in New Orleans (Mormino, 2003). Upon arrival, the Sicilians found a company town on the edge of Tampa colonized by Spaniards and Cubans, called Ybor City.

Ybor City

In 1886, a Spaniard named Vincente Martinez Ybor, who was frustrated by the lack of proper transportation, water supply, and land in Key West, relocated his cigar

business from that island to Tampa. The development of railroads and steamships along with the humid climate made Tampa an ideal place for cigar manufacturing (Mormino & Pozzetta, 1998). Martinez Ybor staked out a swampy area on the edge of town and began the construction of the first cigar factory and housing for workers. To build "Ybor City," he borrowed architectural designs from various cultures and regions. The streets were laid in an American grid-pattern. The red brick courtyards and buildings were fashioned after structures in Havana, Cuba, while the railings and balconies were formed by Spanish wrought iron. Finally, the close-knit "cigar houses," were similar to small Southern shotgun style cottages (Simpson, 1997).

The success of Ybor City drew more cigar manufacturers and within a couple decades, nearly two hundred factories existed. The city, which was previously full of alligators, swamps, and mosquitoes, had a tremendous growth spurt between 1890 and 1930, as immigrants from Germany, Cuba, Spain, Italy, and Sicily traveled to Tampa seeking work in cigar factories (Mormino, 2003). The factories employed more than 12,000 immigrants at the industry's peak in 1920 (Mormino, 2003). The cigar industry exerted a pervasive Latin influence over Tampa. Non-Spanish speaking immigrants had to learn Spanish to communicate at work. Contributing to this distinct work culture were El Lector (the reader), who sat on a stool and read (in Spanish) newspapers, political documents, books, and international news, among other items, to the cigar makers. Highly skilled Spanish-speaking cigar makers who lived and worked together populated Ybor City (Mormino, 2003). Eventually, more women and children immigrants entered and worked in cigar factories side by side with men. The proximity of the immigrant's daily social interactions allowed them to build a strong labor community and a home.

Governing forces outside the community were trying to give Tampa national recognition and economic growth; therefore, it did not take long before intercultural tensions surfaced.

The Italian and Sicilian immigrants entered Tampa's cigar industry during a period of unfolding labor conflicts and radical ideologies. By the early 1900's, the city was in a state of tension as the immigrants, who made up half of the population, and the Anglo natives tried to live together. Conflicts continued to grow between the immigrant workers, who created a community life, and the politically powerful capitalist society that surrounded them (Schneider, 1994). Factory owners hired immigrants, to lower costs and increase production, which meant long hours and low wages. Italians, Cubans, Spaniards, and Germans joined in radical groups and formed unions to improve laborers working conditions. The majority of these immigrants had a "heightened sense of class-consciousness," and was skeptical of organized religion and established order (Mormino & Pozzetta, 1998, p. 10). Their deeply held views on anarchism, fascism, socialism, and communism (practiced in Spain, Cuba, and Italy) existed before their arrival in the United States (Mormino & Pozzetta, 1998). Factory owners tried to suppress labor unions from organizing, but the immigrants managed to form strikes that would cause factories to close down for days, weeks, or even months. One 84-year-old first generation Italian American male participant tells his story:

> The cigar factories would go on strike. A man would stand on a table and yell 'strike!' and everybody would go home. The factories would close down. One time they closed for 21 days. Some of the factories would hire no Latin people. You hear? That's how come I was born in New Jersey. My parents had to find

somewhere else to work for a few years.

(Anonymous Participant)

The labor unrest and strikes of 1899, 1901, 1910, 1920, and 1931 paralyzed Tampa's economy, and eventually put many cigar factories out of business and left many unemployed (Simpson, 1997).

For many years, both the immigrants and the natives were blinded by prejudice and intolerance toward one another. The native citizens, already angered by the influx of immigrants, resorted to brutality, deportation, assault, kidnapping, public lynching, and even exile on strike instigators (Schneider, 1994). Moreover, the immigrants' views toward *Bolita* (gambling), *Omertá* (code of silence), cockfighting customs, and prohibition conflicted with Anglo values, which generated further miscommunication (Mormino & Pozzetta, 1998). The Mafia created additional anxieties for Italians. A period of violence from the late 1800's to 1940's heightened the public's fears of the Mafia and increased hostilities toward Italians (Mormino & Pozzetta, 1998). The worst mass lynching in the history of Tampa occurred in 1910, when two Italian men, arrested on suspicion of murder, were hung by an angry American mob. The act resulted in one of Tampa's greatest mass protests by immigrants. This violent era resulted in the oppression of many people, as well as increased segregation among the divided cultures that lived within the larger Tampa Bay community.

Tampa's "cigar city" produced unique intercultural social structures, community formations, and ideological divisions (Mormino & Pozzetta, 1998). This was, in part, due to Tampa's immigrant urban-ecological make-up, which was more homogeneous than the make-up of industrial cities in the Northeast and the Midwest (Mormino & Pozzetta,

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1998). For example, the majority of Sicilians that inhabited Ybor City came from several southwestern villages in the Magazzolo Valley found within the province of Arrigento: Santo Stefano di Quisquina, Alessandria della Rocca, Agrigento, Sambuca di Sicilia, Cianciana, Sciacca, and Contessa Entellina (Mormino, 2003). This allowed the immigrants to form communities and camaraderie that were similar to were they came from. In the following excerpt, a sixty-nine year old participant shares a communal story of how these particular Sicilians found their way to Florida:

It all started with four young teenagers, 18, 19 years old. Two were brothers, Cacciatore and one was Di Bona. The year was about 1885, more or less, and they left Sicily, because south Italy, especially Sicily was referred to by the Sicilian and the Neapolitans as the forgotten sons of Italy. All the industry was in the north, the political situation was in the north so the south really they were worse off before they became independent. They left their village, these four boys were from Santo Stephano, they walked two-day walk to Palermo. Then upon arriving to Palermo, they took a small boat to Naples and then they took a liner, it took a period of two weeks and a few days to get to New York. But anyway, when they got to New York, each country had a social worker, the Germans, English, Irish, and Italians had social workers. In those days once you hit at that period, they had a list where there were job openings all the way to California. So they asked these four boys 'where you from?' 'Sicily' 'Oh great we got a place just like Sicily, the sun shines all the time, it's called St. Cloud'. Saint Cloud is Disney World, of all places. The railroad from New York, you could get to St. Cloud, but you couldn't get to Tampa. Tampa, at that time, did not have a railroad at all. So they

sent them to Saint Cloud, there was a sugar cane plantation, a huge, huge

plantation. And they would receive, from sun up to sun down, for working,

seventy-five cents a day. And then, a little later those who became experience

received a dollar a day. And to these Sicilians, that was a lot of lot of money. That

was equivalent to four or five hundred dollars compared to what they had in

Sicily, which was nothing. They managed to save enough money, the trip to New

York to St. Cloud was fifty dollars, so as soon as they would save enough money,

they would send for a friend or member of the family and that's how this little

trickle of four men turned into a flood from these villages in Sicily. Actually, a

flood.

(Anonymous Participant)

There are several variations of the collective story, but they all produce the same

ending—Sicilian people who came from the same valley and shared similar cultural

struggles. In addition, the Spanish, Cuban, and Italian immigrants were culturally

sympathetic to one another, a circumstance, which differed from interethnic relations in

other ethnic cities at the time: Detroit, Chicago, and Cleveland (Mormino & Pozzetta,

1998). Historians Mormino and Pozzetta (1998) write:

We had certainly never witnessed anything quite like this in our own

backgrounds, even though we had both grown up in Italian American

settings…The diversity we saw all around us in Ybor City heightened a sense of

uneasiness about prevailing conceptions of how immigrants have created—or

recreated—their new social worlds. (p. 6)

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The most striking intercultural distinction, however, was the city's interracial social conditions, which sharply differed from most cities located in the Deep South. Although people who identified with traditional southern values populated Tampa, the city faced "no simple black-white equation in its race relations" (Mormino & Pozzetta, 1998, p. 14). Historians describe Ybor City as a "remarkably tolerant and fluid place"; Black Cubans, dark white immigrants, and African Americans lived in close proximity and worked side-by-side (Mormino & Pozzetta, 1998, p. 14). One first generation Italian American male, who grew up in Ybor City, remembers playing with African American boys in the neighborhood. In the following excerpt, he explains how his uncle adopted one of the boys when the child was suddenly orphaned:

> The blacks of the community worked in grocery stores or restaurants, and spoke Sicilian. The children spoke Sicilian because they were raised with the families working the stores. I remember my uncle adopting a little black boy whose mother had died. He just raised the kid and put him through school, and then he died. There's a tombstone in the black grave yard with C on it.
>
> (Anonymous Participant)

The participant's story, however, is a story about community and segregation. He also talked about how African Americans and Afro Cubans lived, worked, and played in the same neighborhood until Jim Crow Laws forced them out and "changed everything." The next excerpt illustrates this:

> And the blacks and whites lived in the same community and worked in the cigar factory until they enforced the Crow law, the Jim Crow law. And then most of the Cuban blacks were left like in New York. You didn't have this, your not supposed

to get along with each other. We integrated until they told us you're not supposed to do that.

(Anonymous Participant)

Latin Community

The immigrants learned the importance of group solidarity; this "did not spontaneously grow from within, but was imposed from without" (Mormino & Pozzetta, 1998, p. 242). The prejudicial stereotypes, the violence, and the reluctance of the Anglo natives of Tampa to grant political and economic equality to immigrants created an "us against them" mindset (Mormino & Pozzetta, 1998). The restrictions forced each group to turn inward; henceforth, the neighborhood, the schools, and the social clubs would be "critical agents" of communication (Mormino & Pozzetta, 1998, p. 17). The social clubs served as a "sanctuary" or "a cathedral for the working class" (Mormino & Pozzetta, 1998, p. 17). The Italian club, for instance, offered social activities: dances, picnics, theatre, and weddings. By the late 1800's, the immigrants got together to create Florida's first Italian mutual aid society, which provided "cradle to grave" medical care and burial services in the Italian, Cuban, and Spanish cemetery (Mormino & Pozzetta, 1998). The fee for both social and medical benefits was $1.25 per month. L'Unione Italiana (the Italian Club, 1918), El Centro Asturiano de Habana (the Cuban Club, 1914), and El Centro Español (the Spanish Club, 1912) included access to health clinics. In the following excerpt, a first-generation Italian American male participant proudly remembers stories of President Roosevelt's delegate visiting Tampa, and refers to Ybor City as one of the first HMO's in the country:

So, so these men sat down and organized the mutual aid society, which was really

HMO as we know it today, except a step further it went from birth to cemetery.

Cradle to grave. And, uh you had medical services. My great cousin, my

grandfather's first cousin, Filippo Licata, at the age of fourteen, he was a child

prodigy, at fourteen he sat down with the adults and worked out this HMO as we

know it, exactly as we know it today. And they adopted it. And it was so good

that in 1933 Roosevelt sent a delegate to Tampa to it down with the Italian club

and explain how we worked our HMO, if you call it a HMO. If you got hurt on

the job, the thing about it, it was for twenty-five cents a week your whole family

was covered for Medicare. It worked real good because everybody was honest,

nobody was, ah hey I can't go to work because I'm still hurting, because once the

community would find out your stealing their money, you'd be excommunicated

forever. Sicilians are a little, little strange about money. That's, uh, like I said, if

somebody needed an operation, they'd get operated and the club would pay for it.

They would either go to Centro Asturiano or Centro Español hospitals, cause they

had their hospital organized already. And the Italian club never did get a hospital

nor did the Cuban club, which is a good thing cause that would take some real

administration and in the end it would folded, both Centro Asturiano or Centro

Español hospitals folded.

(Anonymous Participant)

The hospitals and clinics, however, angered Tampa's medical community who called

them socialistic, un-American, and radical. Any doctor who volunteered services at the

clinics was blacklisted from hospitals in Hillsborough County (Mormino & Pozzetta,

1998). Although there was a fused community, individuals' still experienced cultural tensions arising from segregation, which unfortunately encompassed all aspects of life, including illness and death. For example, an Italian individual was expected to only socialize at the Italian club and visit the Italian clinic when sick. Intermarriage was not acceptable. Mormino and Pozzetta (1998) argue that segregation enabled the immigrants to retain "distinctive identities," which "shaped their internal histories" (p. 90). But the economic resources and opportunities attached to these identities were not equal among the different groups, especially for the African American community; they deeply suffered when it came to health care. A second-generation Italian American doctor who grew up in Ybor City said, "The Black clinics only had fourteen beds. The Spanish clinics had over fifty. My father tried to help them as much as possible." Ybor City was, in some ways, a cultural prison. Physically, the city's boundaries were defined as being "between Nebraska Avenue to the west, Twenty-Second Street to the east, Michigan Avenue to the north, and Third Avenue to the South" (Mormino & Pozzetta, 1998, p. 236). Psychologically and spiritually, the "mental maps" of the immigrants were ethnic markers for certain places in Ybor City and the greater Tampa Bay area (Mormino & Pozzetta, 1998). Many describe it as a difficult place to live. The following by a second-generation Italian American female participant illustrates this point:

> We all knew our place. We had our own dances at the Italian club and the Centro Español, which was across the street and all of that. We were not allowed to go to certain neighborhoods. Sulfur Springs had dances there, they had a pool, the hot springs, a big dance hall, the arcade. We weren't allowed to go to the dances, like at Sulfur Springs because they used to have a sign that actually said, "No Spics,

No Wops, No Niggers."

<div align="right">(Anonymous Participant)</div>

The labor unions, the mutual aid, the ethnic clubs, and the close proximity of housing gave residents a strong sense of solidarity and loyalty, which united the three groups and influenced the nature of their social interactions. This was Florida, pre-air-conditioning, so doors and windows were left open; people spent a lot of time on their porches. In other words, there was little privacy among the immigrants. If I learned anything from the stories about old Ybor City, it was "We all lived together." A distinctive Latin community evolved, "supplying and nurturing dual identities among residents"(Mormino & Pozzetta, 1998, p. 234). By1920, the three groups had fused as a one Latin community. According to Mormino (2003), the word Hispanic was never used in Tampa until the 1970's. The local vernacular term, "Latin," was preferred and still used by many people in this community. While growing up, I never heard the term "Hispanic" or "Latino." If you were of Italian, Spanish, or Cuban descent, you were Latin—different from the term Latino, which generally refers to an American of Latin American descent, or Hispanic American heritage. A sixty-nine year old, first-generation Italian American explains this phenomenon in the following excerpt:

> They were all alone. They were here in a strange world, but the community was so
> tight, and we were a mixture of Cuban, Spanish.

<div align="right">(Anonymous Participant)</div>

In 1950, the Urban Renewal Project (referred to as Urban Removal by locals) began moving people out of Ybor City. The project "leveled seventy acres of land, including 660 houses, two ethnic club buildings, a fire station, and a cigar maker's

school, dislocated many people" from their home (Simpson, 1997, p. 26). Ybor City,

unfortunately, was never renewed; eventually, it became a predominately lower class

black neighborhood. Many Cuban and Spanish residents of Ybor City relocated to West

Tampa while the Italian immigrants relocated into several different suburbs. For decades,

the storefronts where cigar shops, bakeries, grocery stores, coffee shops and restaurants

once occupied stood vacant. Until the early 1990's, Ybor City remained a desolate town,

with only a few businesses and residents in the area. The Historical Association of Tampa

and Ybor City Chamber of Commerce, along with local politicians and businesses are

working to revitalize the town and restore old buildings and cigar houses for tourism and

housing development—gentrification. Ybor City is now a historical district where tourists

can browse museums, ride the modernized version of the old trolley that ran down

Seventh Avenue, shop for souvenirs, dine in Spanish and Italian restaurants, drink Cuban

coffee, and enjoy Latin entertainment. The Cuban and Italian clubs still exist, but their

activities are few compared to what they once were.

Methodology

Intercultural communication does not occur in a vacuum; it is embodied in the

living languages and the fused identities of individuals, communities, and cultures.

Ethnography is one way of trying to "understand humans, to meet people face-to-face in

the context in which they live, to take part in their political and social reality" (Simpson,

1997, p. 34). Ethnographic inquiry is used in this study to explore and describe the

communication interactions of Italian Americans in Tampa. The process entails

minimizing the distance from the informants of the study, interacting with them in their

natural environment during a prolonged period, networking, collecting observational

data, focusing on themes that naturally occur from the data, and then analyzing the findings. Some contend that the qualitative process is inductive because it builds abstractions, concepts, hypotheses, and theories through many details, not measurements (Creswell, 1994; Lofland & Lofland, 1995; Schwandt, 2001). Serra (2003) believes that tracing a language complete with theory, reflections, original sounds, and human content makes it possible to start a story or study from below. One of the main problems surrounding cross cultural adaptation research is that it typically starts from above, looking for general findings, while missing the array of possible language configurations and cultural frameworks that influence the assimilation process. Sandel et al (2006) write:

> Assimilation is embodied in the language or languages the assimilating individual speaks, or the language or languages spoken by those nearby, such as one's children or grandchildren. It is also embodied in the clothing one wears, the food one eats, and the features and pigmentation of one's face. (p. 12)

It is not to say quantitative methodologies, including triangulation methods, could not be applied to the study. By surveying general intercultural themes discovered from above might compliment intercultural themes discovered from below, ultimately increasing external validity. I argue, however, that the nature of the phenomenon is best suited for qualitative measures, because it requires a unique hermeneutic interpretation of the data. Using ethnographic and hermeneutic methodologies, I will explain how I gathered data, focused on naturally occurring horizons (themes), and then analyzed my findings.

Gathering data involves accessibility to the community, familiarity with the data, evaluation of the data site, collection of the data, and, finally, logging the data. As an ethnographer, one lives as a participant-observer. I was already a member of this

community, but now I had to become an observer, hanging in the background, asking many questions, and placing myself in the middle of social interactions. As a participant, I had the unique opportunity to network among the Latin community, build relationships, and witness particular backstage behavior that permitted me access to first-hand information. From January 2005 to January 2006, I began to spend more time in Tampa, frequenting Italian, Spanish, and Cuban restaurants, cafés, groceries, bakeries, and coffee shops, watching, listening, and talking to people. Ybor City, in its hey day, was filled with places, such as coffee shops, restaurants, and clubs, where men could gather and discuss radical politics. Their venues also permitted frequent interaction with neighbors and other ethnic groups. The Urban Renewal Project of the 1950's not only changed the physical foundation of Ybor City, but also the social landscapes (Simpson, 1997). As people left their community, they experienced a disruption in their daily social interaction. They no longer had the same places to meet; their sense of shared communal stories by which cultural memory and identity were created and maintained was changed (Lipsitz, 1990). Today's coffee shop is a residue of the old Ybor City neighborhood. These are not the sort of coffee shops one goes to read, study, or have intimate conversations. The volume of talk is much louder than, say, inside a Starbucks. Mostly neighborhood regulars visit these shops, but there are also tourists and voyeurs. Many non-locals or non-Latins want to experience the Cuban bread, Cuban sandwiches, *Café con Lechè,* or the Latin community. People may or may not being using these establishments for political discussion, but their existence is important because it provides people with a "shared sense of disconnection from the past" (Lipsitz, 1990, p. 6).

One particular site, the *West Tampa Coffee Shop*, is a regular place for the elderly

Italian men (roughly twelve) in this community to gather, except when it is closed on

Mondays, and then they go to the *La Tropicana Restaurant*. They referred to themselves

as a "club," but other than getting together each morning, there were no obvious signs of

a traditional club (name, agenda, mission, to name a few). Although Cubans and

Spaniards also patronize this restaurant, they too have distinct places they meet, such as

the *Gallo De Oro* (the golden rooster), *La Terasità*, and *La Ideal*. The Italian women,

some of them wives of the men who gather at the *West Tampa Coffee Shop*, meet for

coffee at *La Tropicana* a few times a week.

Participants

The participants of this study are Italian and Sicilian Americans that are members

of Tampa's Latin community. The term "Latin" encompasses Italian, Spanish, Afro

Cuban, and Cuban individuals, and the term "community" refers to specific temporal

conditions and spatial boundaries. This study focuses on Latin individuals whose families

migrated to Tampa before the 1960's and lived in Ybor City or its surrounding

neighborhoods, Wellswood, Palmetto Beach, Seminole Heights, Gary, and West Tampa.

By examining individuals who are bound by a particular space and time, I can better

understand the integration patterns and cultural fusion of Italian Americans with other

ethnic groups. These individuals and their families belong to the unique migration that

shaped Tampa's history and development. In addition, their memory of lost histories,

their knowledge of undocumented facts or secrets of organized crime, their lived

experience, and their fused dialect preserve their communal identity.

This study consists of twenty-one participants, thirteen males, and eight females. Two participants are Sicilian immigrants, who came to the United States with their families in the early 1950's. Both are in their in their early seventies. Five are first generation Sicilian-Italian Americans, ranging from ages sixty-nine to eighty. Seven are second generation Sicilian-Italian Americans ranging from ages thirty-one to sixty-four. Four are third generation Sicilian-Italian Americans ranging from ages thirty six to forty-two. Three participants are first generation Spanish Americans who grew up in Ybor City, and, finally, one participant is an Anglo American who is part of the Latin community.

All participants speak English. Five participants speak Italian, Sicilian, and Spanish. Two participants speak Sicilian inside the home on a regular basis. Five seldom speak Sicilian at home; most of their conversations are with other Italian Americans in social settings: grocery stores, cafes, festivals, among a few. Five participants understand Sicilian and/or Italian from hearing parents and grandparents speaking it at home, but do not participate in conversations. Four of them claim to use Italian, Sicilian, or even Spanish words or phrases in their everyday talk, even if they are not fluent in the language. Three only speak Spanish. Only two studied Italian formally, in college. Most can read or write varied degrees of Italian, but only four can read and write in Sicilian.

The two immigrants in my study have no education, one worked as a carpenter, and the other a sales clerk. They arrived in the United States in their late teens and entered an established network of family and friends. Their children are educated professionals. Among the eight first generation participants, six are business owners, one professional, and one teacher. Most of their children (second generation) are educated,

and many of their grandchildren are educated professionals. Among the second-generation participants, five are business owners, only two are educated professionals. Finally, among the four third generation participants, three are educated; two are in business for themselves, and two are working professionals.

Interviews were designed to elicit initial accounts of the respondents' assimilation experiences, they include a series of questions relating to Ybor City, migration narratives, language, social interaction, traditions, and Italian American communication practices (if applicable). The interviews were in-depth and lasted between one and three hours, depending on each individual's desire to disclose. They were tape recorded (with permission) and transcribed verbatim, thereby preserving the participants' own use of language. The transcribed data within this study uses pseudonyms to protect participant identity. The data consists of eight individual interviews, two group interviews, a tour of the Italian Club, and visits to the following celebrations and places: the ethnic festival, the St. Joseph's religious feast, the Italian festival, the Gasparilla Parade, the Italian cemetery, the Ybor City museum, the Columbia Restaurant museums, a Sons of Italy spaghetti dinner, two local coffee shops (West Tampa Coffee Shop and La Tropicana), the Alessi Bakery, Cacciatore and Sons Deli, and Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church. I gathered observational field notes at these settings. I also collected printed public texts, such as the *La Gaceta* newspaper, *Cigar City Magazine*, and religious symbols. Finally, I keep a journal of my own participant experience. Goffman (1989) once wrote that in order to do participant observation one must:

[subject] yourself, your own body, and your own personality, and your own social

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own social situation, to the set of contingencies that play upon a set of individuals, so that you can physically and ecologically penetrate their circle of response to their social situation, or their work situation, or their ethnic situation….so that you are close to them while they are responding to what life does to them. (p. 125)

Ethnographic fieldwork includes observing both the participants and oneself. Only then can we understand both the successes and failures of our research (Goffman, 1989).

Tampa is a large city, but it still functions interpersonally, like the small town it once was. While doing fieldwork, I encountered many people I knew from school, relatives of people I knew from school, or acquaintances and friends of my family. I was involved in numerous discussions about the past: the good old days, growing up in Tampa, getting into trouble, and my grandfather's life. Hence, knowing others involves knowing yourself (Simpson, 1997). On many occasions, my point of entry to this community was my grandfather. He was, and, to some extent, still is, a very talked about person in this community. To some people, my grandfather was a gambler or *mafioso* character, but to others, he was a Robin Hood figure. One participant who remembered my grandfather said, "For a nickel, you could buy a number. He paid seventy cents to the dollar, you understand, the Lotto pays thirty cents…Alota of kids got to go to college. That's how come we have so many Italian doctors."

My position in my family and my community stemmed from how I was perceived—female, third generation Italian American, and educated. On one occasion, my uncles, who meet with several other Italian American men at the West Tampa Coffee Shop, invited me for coffee, to do fieldwork. I had permission to sit with them and tape record their conversations. When I arrived that morning, however, my uncles had

changed their minds and moved me to another table. One uncle was worried about talking

about the old days into a tape recorder. If I asked too many questions or the wrong

questions, he would say in Sicilian, *"Parlare trenta e quaranta anni di arre porta*

travaglì" (talk about thirty forty years ago and you get in trouble). He also didn't want

the Cubans (sitting at the next table) to hear him talk. Although I explained, in great

detail, the logistics of the study, and was only asking the designed research questions, he

was suspicious of my wanting to know about the family. Not many women in our family

concern themselves with such topics. Becoming the observer, the one with a tape

recorder, altered my relationship with family members and broke gender rules, ultimately

limiting my access to some data. I gradually had to step back into the community, to be

identified by others as part of the clan before I could regain their trust.

The data was first collected, then analyzed for emerging horizons (themes), and

finally framed, to develop patterns of relationships and meaning. The discussion provides

detailed descriptions of the people and activities studied, and include my own personal

experience, private emotions as a participant and observer that affect the interpretation of

the study. The reliability of the study can be found in its replication. There will be some

new themes discovered in this study that others may replicate, but there will also be

themes that support current studies, which I have replicated.

Hermeneutics and the Horizon of Identity

The study of interpretation hermeneutics is an explanation of human

comprehension and an alternative context of knowledge and history (Dostal, 2002).

History is not simply the retelling of facts, but instead how the events of the past situate

"themselves in the researcher's perspective and affect what object of inquiry he or she

will choose and which questions will be asked" (McIlwain, 2003, p. 9). Cultural traditions, which are located in all understanding, are affected by the element of history. Traditions provide individuals with a sense of belonging and are so powerful they cannot be weakened by modern historical consciousness that place ethnic or racial groups in rational categories: for instance, having "assimilated status." The themes that emerge from the data are referred to as horizons. The horizon is the tradition, the text, the person, the object, or event that the researcher is trying to interpret. Since it is the individual that constructs reality, his or her hermeneutic horizons are subjective. Only a description of the process, through words and images, and not a concrete course of action with steps and measures, can attempt to reveal meanings; it cannot be discovered objectively. Hermeneutics takes into consideration that multiple realities exist in any given situation for the researchers, the participants, or the readers. In addition, plural constructions, the absence of certainty, intertexutality, shifting identities of subjects, and the indeterminacy of interpretation is always present. Finally, language brings the participant's world into words, while simultaneously revealing the interpreter's own language.

Drawing from Gadamer (1975) and Serra (2003), I look for the participants horizons that resonate in the living language and the communication practices of Tampa's Italian Americans. First, most of them speak a unique Sicilian or Italian dialect that is shaped by English words, Spanish words, and Italian American patois. All language in which their stories are told is a living language, reinvented and fused at every sentence. It is important to note that these immigrants never spoke perfect Sicilian or Italian. Not only were most of them uneducated, but also many of them migrated when they were children, so their Italian and English language is fused with Spanish.

The hermeneutic identity horizons discovered in this study are the horizon of a Latin identity, the horizon of a Sicilian identity, and the expanding and shifting horizon of an Italian American identity. During interviews, the participants frequently shifted back and forth between being Sicilian and being Italian. It was also typical for them to refer to themselves as being part of a Latin Community. Their Italian American identity, however, was usually connected with being American and their ideas of assimilation. My discussion of all three ethnic horizons are influenced by the following verbal themes: the nostalgia for Ybor City, spatial markers, recollections of the Mafia, language, superstitions, prayers, naming, Omertá, and Bolita numbers; and the following non-verbal themes: cultural artifacts, texts, buildings, and streets, and historical traditions, such as celebrations, parades, feasts, venues, and memberships in social organizations.

<p align="center">Reflection</p>

My personal and scholarly interest in this research project stems from wanting to have a voice in Tampa's Italian American community that can also be part of a larger academic conversation. This is important because many studies and sensationalized books about Tampa's history, its immigrant culture and customs, its celebrations, and its crime are authored by people who were not raised in Tampa's immigrant culture or do not belong to the Latin community. Many of Tampa's immigrants and their children remain silent. Serra (2003) refers to immigrant silence as "the great mute tragedy" (p. 28). She writes, "Its victims did not know how to write, and could almost not express themselves" (p. 28). At best, we can attempt to preserve our ancestors' stories and integrate them into our lived experience. The story I want to uphold is of cultural fusion, which goes beyond how and why Italians mastered Anglo customs and behaviors. The Italians Americanized

to a point; they also developed a sense of identity from the Spaniards and the Cubans. The assimilated status, constructed by the dominant Anglo culture, is an ill-defined concept that affects the lived experience of many Italian Americans, including myself.

Writing about Italian Americans in Tampa required inward reflection. I am a third-generation Italian American female, raised part-time by immigrant great-grandparents. Discussing private business in pubic was not the sort of thing that would make my family proud. Our family name, compromised by my notorious grandfather and his *Bolita* activities, appeared in the *Tampa Tribune* newspaper on more than one occasion. Like many Italian Americans in Tampa, I was taught never speak about the family outside the home because it would only bring trouble. Trouble, according to my elders, meant shame, violence, incarceration, or death. In the event that my relatives did speak about the family, they drew the drapes and lowered their voices to whispers. "Deny all, admit nothing," is what my great uncle once told me. *Omertá*, the code of silence, is still evident in Tampa's Italian American community. Suffice it to say, the immigrant mindset runs deep in the cigar city.

Chapter V: The Horizon of Three Identities

This chapter applies the concept of hermeneutic fusion to the intercultural identity of Italian Americans in Tampa. In chapters three and four, I discussed how identity is a process of fusion between two or more horizons, and I argued that the horizons of Tampa's Italian Americans resonate in their living language and their communication practices. I claim that multiple realities and shifting identities exist in any given situation for the participants and are revealed in the participants' talk: I am Latin, I am Sicilian, I am Italian, I am American. The data illustrates how language (both verbal and non-

verbal) brings the participant's world into existence; their identity is invented, reinvented, and fused in every sentence and every interaction. The following discussion will examine the horizon of a Latin identity, the horizon of an Italic identity, and the horizon of an Italian American identity.

The Horizon of a Latin Identity

As previously established, Italian and Sicilian immigrants were influenced by many intercultural variables, rather than a single integrated culture. Their personal accounts reveal horizons that include the fusion of different ethnicities and languages unique to Tampa's ethnic and geographic ecology. The cigar city was not only Tampa's "financial soul," but also its intercultural center, or as locals say, "ethnic paella" (Mormino & Pozzetta, 1998; Simpson, 1997). As a dish, paella is an assortment of meats, seafood, and vegetables that clings to seasoned rice. The assortment never dissolves; the unique shapes and color of, for example, rabbit, shrimp, and chorizo, lie distinctly in the rice, all sharing flavor while individually adding to the essence of the dish. Similar to the paella metaphor, the immigrants and the native established population were both influencing and being influenced by one another, while still maintaining cultural distinction. The mixture was not always amicable—Spanish and Cuban immigrants were divided by nationalism, racism, and radicalism—and interpersonal boundaries were regularly challenged (Mormino & Pozzetta, 1998). On the one hand, people enjoyed the exotic blending of the cultural paella; on the other, the ethnic mixture brought uneasiness among locals, which increased with the arrival of each immigrant group. Every change to Tampa's human ecology changed the physical and semantic environment of the city.

Ethnic identities emerge when messages are negotiated, reinforced, and challenged (Ting-Toomey et al., 2000). In other words, the stronger the conflict the stronger the identity (Collier, 1997). After years of dialectical tensions between the immigrants and the Anglo community and dialectical tensions among the immigrant populations, a unitary Latin community and a horizon of a Latin identity emerges. Many forces complicate the emergence of a common Latin identity among the participants—multiple layers of communication intertwine and sometimes clash. Each person experiences his or her individuality differently, but it is possible to locate recurrent themes within the horizons of a cultural group. The hermeneutic horizons are simply sense-making tools with which we see the world and from which we see ourselves in the world (Kramer, in press). Over the course of six months, I thoroughly read over the interviews. After careful consideration, I was able to identify several complex horizons that supported the major research questions of this study. The horizons serve to illuminate the ways in which Italian Americans perceive and interpret their Latin horizon, which is both limiting and open to many possibilities. Some of the horizons appeared to have an external influence on the participants' perception of their Latin identity. I recognized these horizons during their talk about ethnic labels, discrimination, violence, the media, and local events. Other horizons appeared to have an internal influence on their interpretation of being Latin. I recognized these horizons during conversations regarding ingroup membership, nostalgia, dialectical tensions, food, language, and bolita. The following sixty-six excerpts highlight the most important aspects of these horizons.

Ethnic Labels

Prior to 1920, a Latin community did not exist in Tampa (Mormino & Pozzetta, 1998). The immigrants initially formed sub-communities to recreate the home they left behind and to maintain a sense of "we-ness"(Mormino & Pozzetta, 1998). The spirit of these early communities was powerful enough to enable them to sustain their cultural habits and traditions. Some Italians argue that traces of this spirit endure today (Mormino & Pozzetta, 1998) and manifest in people's talk. The concept of a unified Latin community evolved as the use of the word "Latin" was naturalized into everyday talk (Goffman, 1967). "Latin" was an ethnic label imposed on the Spanish, Cuban, and Italian immigrants as a convenient way for Tampa natives to talk about the "ethnic other" or merely a way to melt similar looking and speaking people together. Some claim the term referred to the exotic mixture of cultures (Mormino & Pozzetta, 1998), but the reality of any label is stigmatization and oppression. The Latins have a history of labor tensions and political inequality, so it is conceivable that the use of the word was problematic. The fact that Italians had their own language and culture made absolutely no difference. They spoke Spanish at work and resembled Spaniards; therefore, they became "Spanish" by association. Many Italian immigrants felt resentment or *vergogna* (shame) over their Latin classification, but their primary concern was survival, which meant getting along with the dominant Spanish and Cuban cultures of Ybor City. The term, Latin, unfortunately, not only overlooked the unique cultural differences of the three groups, but it left out the Irish, the German, the Jewish, and the African American citizens who also influenced the development of Ybor City and Tampa. Eventually, the Italian, Cuban, and Spanish immigrants found solidarity and strength in their group identification; the ethnic label became the reality, their horizon of identity, and part of their celebrated history.

Intergroup theory provides an explanation for the prevalence of negative out-group stereotypes (Hummert et al., 2004). The Latins, in turn, refer to Anglo citizens as "crackers." The term is a disparaging nickname for poor, Southern, white residents of Florida and Georgia that worked low paying cattle-herding or pecan-cracking jobs—both activities make cracking sounds. Today, the term is commonly used to represent Anglo culture in general, and is part of the daily lexicon of Tampa citizens, along with similar words such as "Latin," "Cuban," "Italian," "Spaniard," or "Jew." Anglo citizens know they are referred to as crackers and many joke about being one (in the same way some joke about being rednecks or hicks). It appears that many people in this community are comfortable using the ethnic labels they bear and that Tampa is a city defined by ethnicity. People are also proud of their ethnic labels, and to mislable someone could be offensive, especially if the label one is mistakenly assigned is perceived as being lower class or having a lower social status. For example, many Spaniards in Tampa take offense to being called "Cuban" or "Puerto Rican." Some simply refuse to identify with the oppressing group, or the group by which they define their identity. The Latin community's sense of "we" depends on being able to distinguish itself from "them"—the Anglo community. In other words, to call or even imply a light-skinned Sicilian or Spaniard is a cracker is very offensive. A second-generation female who was mistaken for a cracker illustrates this:

> Because I was blonde haired and blue eyed, uh, I used to have people tell me
> "You can't be Eye-talian, you don't have dark skin and dark eyes." When I was
> little, I didn't know any better, so I asked my grandfather. I said, "Nanu, they tell
> me I'm not Italian, because I have blue eyes like you." And he said to me, "You

tell them we are not mixed with the Arabs." Sicily was occupied by many

cultures. We traced our side of the family, and part of our family has German

blood.

(Anonymous Participant)

The label "Latin" and its counterpart, "Cracker," reveal approximately eighty-seven years

of dialectical tensions and a vernacular that is specific to Tampa residents. It is common

for people to use these labels on a regular basis, and sometimes more than one is used in

the same sentence. The labels contain multiple realities and experiences for each

individual, and can be used in either an innocuous or a disparaging manner, to establish

group identification or otherness.

Discrimination, Spectacles, and the Media

According to Kramer (in press), group cohesion is based on perceived mutual

interest and threats among members. External prejudices made many immigrants fearful

and suspicious of the Anglo community. Their fears only intensified with Jim Crow laws

and racist traditions of the South. For example, racist signs placed in certain areas outside

Ybor City discouraged African Americans or immigrants with dark skin from entering.

One place that several participants mentioned is Sulfur Springs Park. The park

represented the quintessential experience of American leisure during that period—scenic

springs and foliage, a picnic area, a swimming pool, a bathhouse, a two-story arcade, and

a dance hall—and notions of whiteness. The park, however, attracted people of all

nationalities and races, and in large quantities. For example, in 1911, a picnic hosted by

El Centro Astriano drew 6,000 Cuban members, while another drew 4,500 (Mormino &

Pozzetta, 1998). According to one participant, many people chose to ignore the signs. She

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said her father and his friends deliberately went to dances held at Sulfur Springs to meet "Anglo girls" and instigate fights with "Cracker boys." They did it, she said, because the "Cracker girls loved to dance with the Latin boys."

Tampa's Latin community has always felt persecuted by the Anglo culture, and, as a result, passed their feelings down to their children. Powerful stories of injustice and discrimination are part of their oral traditions and their horizon of a Latin identity. The following story is told by a second-generation female:

> When my mother was a young girl, two Italian boys had gone fishing and I think someone had raped a girl or something like that had happened. And they grabbed the two Italian boys with their fishing poles, and they couldn't even speak English. They had no idea what was going on, and they put them in the wagon, and they were supposed to take them to jail, but they hung them. Here in Tampa. This is probably back 80, 100 years ago. They also tarred and feathered the black people, whether they were guilty or not, they managed to blame them. And that's what they did to us.

> (Anonymous Participant)

It was a violent era and many believe that the local government intentionally whitewashed this period by creating a false sense of affiliation through social events, such as the Gasparilla Parade (1904 to present). The annual event, referred to as "Gasparilla" by local citizens, celebrates a mythic pirate named Jose Gaspar, who allegedly terrorized the Caribbean and Florida during the late 1700's, instead of recognizing the actual people who built the city. Many argue that the parade was never more than an economic endeavor to increase tourism and development, similar

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to New Orleans' Mardi Gras. As the spectacle unfolds each year, the memory of the celebration represents tradition and community for most citizens. Some individuals do not question the authenticity of the story, they simply move through the event interpreting the recurring spectacle as a form of history. A spectator shares his views on the parade:

> I think that Gasparilla is cool because it is keeping the culture of Tampa together. By bringing everyone to one place, on a given day, at a given time, it promotes Tampa's culture, past, and history.

(Anonymous Participant)

The parade also evokes memories of ethnic tension and racism for the Latin and the African American communities who perceive the parade as only displaying the wealth and power of the elite social class. Their exclusion from the master narrative made them feel alienated and oppressed from the history of Tampa. Foucault (1972) contends the rules of production decide who can participate in a particular event. In 1992, eighty-eight years after its creation, the parade owners were accused of racial discrimination, and forced to admit black members into their organization. Power, however, is about people acting in ways that prevent others from believing that they have any (Foucault, 1972). Consequently, before the owners agreed to any type of change, they canceled the entire parade—causing a major loss of revenue for Tampa's tourist industry and national and local businesses. Although some efforts have been made to include wider participation in the parade, the racism and exclusion experienced by these communities is what they remember about the spectacle.

According to Lipsitz (1990), interpretations that go beyond myth and history are counter-memories. He writes:

> Counter-memory looks to the past for the hidden histories excluded from dominant narratives. But unlike myths that seek to detach events and actions from the fabric of any larger history, counter-memory forces revision of existing histories by supplying new perspectives about the past. (p. 213)

Both myth and history function as a tool to give people a past, but also cause feelings of discontinuity. The history of the parade tends to leave out certain people and events, while its myth derives from the ideologies of a dominant class (Barthes, 1972). Counter-memory does not deny myth and history; it just rejects the social order and division of the narrative (Barthes, 1972). The son of a Sicilian immigrant explained how he always felt segregated by the parade. In his view, the history of Tampa belongs to the immigrants that made it possible for Tampa to grow. At seventy-seven years of age, he has never observed the parade. Similarly, another participant strongly disagrees with the pirate metaphor because it represents American enterprise and capitalism, instead of a community working together to improve their living conditions and their intercultural differences. He does not want this to be the history he passes down to his children:

> Pirates are nothing but thieves. When my children get old enough to understand, they will not be going to Gasparilla. I'll have to sit them down and explain it to them. All you can do to make changes is to do right by yourself. You cannot wrongfully educate.
>
> (Anonymous Participant)

In 1970, the Krewe of the Knights of Sant' Yago organization emerged as a way to preserve the Latin culture of Tampa. Among their social festivities is an alternative parade, the Knights Parade of Sant' Yago of Ybor City, which celebrates the history of the Latin community.

Adding to the external influences of oppression and persecution by the Anglo community is the *Tampa Tribune Newspaper*. The paper is known for their continuous defamation of Latin citizens that dates backs several decades. The following excerpt from a second-generation male participant is an illustration of a how some Latins feel about the paper:

> My mother told me this, "Remember the Tribune is always against the Latins." The tribune always went against the Latins, when somebody ran for mayor, they would run them down in the paper. They didn't stand a chance.
>
> (Anonymous Participant)

The Tribune's claim to fame is their sensationalized coverage of the Mafia and any of its alleged players. The fascination may be, in part, because one of the most notorious Mafia figures of Tampa, Santo Trafficante, managed to live an unscathed criminal life. Trafficante is a Mafia legend and his name and any connection to his name sells newspapers. Unfortunately, the fascination with the Mafia had negative effects on local citizens.

> You gotta understand, from about 19, I wanna say it started in the 50's, 53 till through the 60's, my father was in the newspaper at least once a week. No matter what. Uncle A got stopped one time for a DUI: "Brother of King Pin Gangster Arrested," then they'd write a thirty page article about my daddy, and then at the

end, they would say A was discharged on bond and paid a hundred dollar fine.

After they, so as a kid, I had to constantly deal with that. That's why I wound up

going to Mary Help a Christian, because it was a boarding school to get me away.

The kids didn't see newspapers, they didn't sit with their mother and father,

while they talked about gangsters.

(Anonymous Participant)

The issues with the Tampa Tribune are not exclusive to first and second generation

Latins. Many third and fourth generation participants experienced shame and

embarrassment over their family names being printed in the newspaper for being

involved in organized crime. In 1993, the Tribune printed a series on organized crime that

insinuated that Tampa's entire Italian community was involved. The National Italian

Association accused the Tribune of "the worst form of systematic defamation against a

large segment of a community" (Tribune, 1993). Moreover, politicians ran on tickets

against illegal gambling (bolita) and its Latin offenders—even though Anglo citizens,

such as blue blood Charlie Wall and numerous cops, lawyers, mayors, and judges, were

integral to the organization. As one participant explained, "The Latins didn't do it alone;

they didn't have all the power. That's the newspaper. Okay. No Anglo Saxon names."

The following excerpt is from a Sicilian male who talks about his experience of having

his father's name disparaged by politicians:

All my life, all I ever saw, was politicians talk about my father, what a

horrible person he was. Almost every campaign, state attorney, or sheriff, they

promised to arrest Q and his mob and get them off the street. Yet the very people,

would, you'd see them on television, like one time I saw Julian Lane, "we're going

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to arrest Q." And I remembered, what the hell, this guy was at my father's place last week. He was at the Bar. My father and him, talking, laughing, joking. I couldn't figure it out. My father said, "He's got to get elected son, so he's got have something." "The problem is the people," I said, "Dad, that's your name." He said, "There's nothing I can do." So, that's the way it was.

(Anonymous Participant)

Discrimination is on the horizon of the Latin identity. Latins felt persecuted by the local media and politicians, excluded from certain events, and prohibited from certain places. Their ethnic labels kept them in their place while creating a sense of "us versus them." Urso (2005) writes, "All *barrios* let their inhabitants know they're different. Perhaps that's what creates solidarity among the people" (p. 4). External tensions united the groups and gave them a sense of group cohesion, but the internal relationships were the binding factors that kept them together.

Ingroup membership

The Latin identity developed out of the set of ideas people not only had about their own ethnic group, but about their neighbor's ethnic group as well. On the surface, the cultural customs, the values, the language, and the behaviors of the Italian, Spanish, and Cuban were more similar than dominant Anglo culture or the German, Jewish, or African American people who also lived and worked in the same community.[2] Ybor City was different from the Italian enclave of Bensonhurst, New York, in that Italians were

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[2] *It is not to say that other ethnic or minority groups do not have a Latin horizon. Any inhabitant of Tampa during this era most likely shares a sense of kinship and history with the Latin Community. Moreover, intermarriage adds a different and complex level to how people view their identity. For example, an Anglo individual married into the Latin community will be part of a new network, which will extend his or her sense of reality and experience. This study, however, only focuses on the Latin horizon formed by Sicilian and Italian individuals.*

freely fusing with other cultures. In Bensonhurst, they did not learn to speak Chinese or other languages in order to get along with other immigrant communities. An informant from Bensonhurst said, "We either stayed in our neighborhood or entered the mainstream culture." The racial borders of Tampa's immigrant community and its surrounding area were loosely segregated. The Afro Cubans lived and worked alongside white or dark white immigrants. Tampa Anglos overlooked integration, as long as it was limited to Ybor City—"Full-strength segregation" only applied to "southern blacks" (Urso, 2005, p. 2). The following excerpt illustrates how participants talk about mixed neighborhoods:

> Even though my father moved his family out of Ybor City, the neighborhood that
> we moved into, on my block, on Adalee Street, there was the Cacciatore's, the
> Ferlita's. It was mixed with Italians and Spaniards, everbody. In the city of
> Tampa, it's always going to be a mix.

(Anonymous Participant)

Central to identity and cultural expression is the Dimensional Accrual/Dissociation Theory (Kramer, 1997). Each culture has a dominant mode of expression that is evidenced in the ways in which it communicates time, space, and mood, all of which are related to its identity. Time involves distributing information and feedback, space involves a sense of place and the social distance used to communicate, and mood involves the magic of the ritual that occurs within a sacred space. Humans also long for a sense of community (Gebser, Ger. 1949/Eng. 1985), and in their striving for a connection, they recreate their world (Buber, 1978). The people of Ybor City recreated their world by expressing clan-like behavior, which was a remnant of original civilization where magic/mythic identity is solidified through shared blood, rituals, myths, and sacred

places. Their village life was not only arranged by the proximity of their cigar houses, but also by their spiritual and philosophical beliefs about the world (Kramer, 1997). The spirit of the Latin community manifests in peoples' ability to recognize themselves in other beings (Gadamer, 1975). The frequency of their communication created and sustained the notion of community by translating shared meaning through concrete social practices (Goffman, 1959). People joined in radical political groups, formed labor unions to improve working conditions, and fought for political equality. Their community was a result of survival, which, according to Kramer (in press) is a form of Coevolution Semiosis. In line with hermeneutics, semiosis is non-linear; interactions occur in a complex manner and meanings emerge, sometimes more than one, sometimes simultaneously and in parallel (Kramer, in press). The immigrants learned from each other and influenced each other, which, in turn, extended their awareness of themselves and their group identification. The common ways in which people view themselves and others is what ties them together in a symbolic community (Adelman & Frey, 1999). Their dialogue reveals how people used the term Latin to achieve a Latin identity. The extent to which individuals perceive their self as ingroup members is illustrated in the following excerpt:

> You will find that the Italians who grew up here are Latinized; they consider
>
> themselves Latin. Tampa Italians think they're part of the Spanish and Cuban.
>
> (Anonymous Participant)

Group membership and group identification is not exclusive to first generation members; it extends to third and fourth generation participants, even the ones who are only half-

Italian. The following excerpts illustrate how a second generation participant and third generation (half German/half Sicilian) participant discuss their Latin membership:

> I grew up here. Italian is one of the Latin languages. I thought I was Latin. I thought I was Latin. I am not a Latino, but I always thought of myself as Latin because that is what we call ourselves.

> (Anonymous Participant)

> I don't know the best way to put it, but my mother isn't Italian. I didn't feel a lot of her culture growing up, so I always felt predominantly my dad's side of the family, the Latins are very family oriented.

> (Anonymous Participant)

> I have felt that I have three identities – American, Spanish, and Italian.

> (Anonymous Participant)

Belonging to any social network involves mutual influence and obligation (Kramer, in press). The decision to work together symbolized friendship, loyalty, and responsibility to one's neighbor. Almost every participant could recall the unconditional way in which people supported members of their community, which was expressed through phrases such as "that's the way this community worked," "that's the way it was," and "people helped each other." The following three excerpts demonstrate the different ways in which members of this community worked together.

> *People used to help each other*, I was at a picnic, a St. Joseph picnic, and someone called me by my last name, C. This old lady come running over, she said, "Are you C?" I said, "Yes." She said, "Are you from the Periconi?" I said, "Yes." She grabs me, she gives me a big kiss and a hug, and tears come in her

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eyes. "You know your grandparents were my god parents." Her name was Felicia Falsoni. I said, "Well I knew the Falsoni's were dear friends of our family." "Well," she said, "Well, when your uncle Pasquale," who was the oldest, we're talking about at the turn of the century, "when he had a baby, my mother had me. My mother could not feed me. She was ill. She could not feed me." So it, my grandmother, her, her son, and Felicia, and she said she survived by my grandmother feeding her, breast-feeding her. *And that's the way things were*.

(Anonymous Participant, Italics Added)

There was no such thing as an orphan in Tampa. *Somebody would pick up the kid*. Never had an orphan with no place to live. If there was no relative, somebody would.

(Anonymous Participant, Italics Added)

This was our library. The walls were covered with shelves, and had big tables with chairs all around. And as a kid, I'd come in here, look in there, and there'd be a gentlemen that could read in there, reading the newspaper from NY or stories, like the readers in the cigar factory. And people would just sit there and listen. He'd read out loud to his friends. And he would read to them, and, uh, *it was that kind of community*.

(Anonymous Participant)

Your grandmother was a G. And, uh, my great grand parents, my grandmother was a G. But anyway, when they came from Italy, your grandfather, they stayed at my grandmothers house until they got established. *That's the way they used to do it*. You stayed with someone.

Communities involve membership, which involves obligation, and there were many obligations in the Latin community. As individuals became part of this network, they shared life, children, motives, expectations, and meaning, to "help each other achieve what no one alone can do"(Kramer, in press). They cohered until Urban Renewal forced them to enter the mainstream culture and rethink their communication interactions. The shift away from the community is a gain as well as a loss (Gebser, Ger. 1949/Eng. 1985). On the one hand, people were able to live and work beyond the confines of Ybor City; on the other, they no longer shared the same experiences that made them a close-knit community. Currently, individuals, groups, and the media who long for the old Ybor City express the loss.

Nostalgia for Ybor City

The Latin community experiences nostalgia for the old Ybor City ways of life, which offered a common heritage with no class or ethnic barriers. Halbwachs (1985) contends that memory is made of "notions of persons and of facts—that are singular and historic in a sense, but that otherwise have all the characteristics of thoughts common to a whole group" (p. 34). The similarity of memories within a group is a sign that these individuals share a community of interests, experiences, and language. Coser (1992) explains "what makes recent memories hang together is not that they are contiguous in time; it is rather that they are part of a totality of thoughts common to a group, the group of people who have a relationship" (p. 52). Their stories help group members achieve symbolic convergence, coordinate activities toward common goals (Adelman & Frey, 1997), and enable them to survive (Kramer, in press). The symbolic interaction of the

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participant's world is perpetuated by how one remembers, recognizes, and shares one's history. Common stories in this community involve living in Ybor City during the good years and cigars. The next five excerpts are examples of participants' nostalgia for both:

I remember a lot. Sometimes I dream about Ybor City. I dream I'm there again, you know. My uncle Al lived by the park. They took that pool out about a month ago. We used to go swimming there when we were teenagers. I remember a Halloween carnival at the park.

(Anonymous Participant)

In Ybor City it was alive, the stores stayed open until nine. Ybor City and down town, that was the place to be. I lived in Ybor City until I was seventeen, but anyway, when we moved Ybor City was down, way down. The Urban Renewal they were buying up property real cheap, but they didn't want to give my mother enough money. Now the police department stands where that house used to be, 8th avenue and 21st. Right behind the America's restaurant. It is a sad place to live. All the old families moved away.

(Anonymous Participant)

Yeah, we know everybody, everybody knew everybody. And Joe says, "Everybody's your cousin". And we slept with open doors. I remember that. The screen door. We had no air-condition, you could hear everything.

(Anonymous Participant)

Many of them settled there and became cigar factory workers. Many of them were men, mostly the men were punchers, they called them, they were the ones that

punchiere, what do you call it in English? Punchers. They, um, the women were

rollers, they would roll the cigars and the men, like my father, was a puncher.

<div align="right">(Anonymous Participant)</div>

Lots of cigars. There were the kind of cigars, there were the crooked ones soaked

in rum, and they broke like a twig. You smoked half at a time, and they would put

them in their mouth and actually start a little flame going, then they'd blow it out,

and then smoke it. I haven't seen one since.

<div align="right">(Anonymous Participant)</div>

In addition to oral stories, the Latin community is kept alive through *La Gaceta Newspaper*. *La Gaceta* is a trilingual newspaper (English, Spanish, and Italian), founded in 1923 by Victoriano Manteiga, a Cuban immigrant who worked as a lector for the Morgan Cigar Factory. The newspaper has been circulating for eighty-four years and services the Tampa Bay area. It is also the oldest minority owned paper in America and is still run by the Manteiga family. The paper publishes international, national, and local news, along with community announcements: festivals, marriages, deaths, real estate. Each publication features a historical photograph of Ybor City and its inhabitants on the cover. It also includes the memoirs of Dr. Ferdie Pacheco, *Pacheco's Dreams,* which describe his youthful days in Ybor City, and an article titled, *What's Happening in Old Ybor.*

Today, Ybor City is a historic district where the boundaries of time have temporarily collapsed and social life is transformed into a textual moment, a distant and timeless present that "beckons you back to another era" (Ybor City Chamber of Commerce, 2006). Lacan (1981) explains that nostalgia occurs when the present is seen

as part of a mythic past and envisioned through the eyes of the idealized spectator—"the one who believes in it for us, in place of us," (Zizek, 1992, p.112). The nostalgia for Ybor City is reinforced through mediated communication, including newspapers, tourist brochures, and museums, which portray it as a neighboring place, where people had a strong sense of kinship. These texts are merely representations of a once thriving community. They are neither created by Latins in this community, nor representative of today's Tampa Latin, which is influenced by other Hispanic groups. In addition, the brochures never reveal the poverty or Black ghetto that surrounds the area. Just a few blocks over from the main attractions stand original cigar houses, *casitas,* that are now dilapidated or turned into crack houses. Although some Latins, such as Ferdie Pacheco, have published independent memoirs recounting their experiences as immigrants, children of immigrants, or cigar workers, these voices are lost among the large number of scholarly and fictional works written about them by people outside their community. Their silence could be attributed to the fact that they have not been thinking, writing, or celebrating their ethnicity as much as they have been living it.

As a muted group, members of this community understand the importance of controlling their identity and exerting agency. O'Hair, et al. (2003) describe agency as:

> A state of condition where individuals become empowered to the extent that they understand the choices they want to make, advocate their own rights, take control of their own destiny, and demonstrate the competency necessary for acting in their own best interests. (p. 27)

One way to exert agency is to tell your own story. The *Cigar City Magazine* is a two-year-old publication that encourages muted voices to speak out, "rediscover, remember,

and relive" the blended cultures and forgotten histories of Tampa's heritage. The magazine publishes memoirs and family photographs, including a photograph of this researcher's grandmother. Many third and fourth generation Latin citizens want to know how their family arrived, where they came from, and how they lived. The muted immigrant generation and their children did not always pass down these stories. Many participants expressed regret for not asking grandparents the right questions, enough questions, or understanding their trials and tribulations of migrating to America. Many only have fragments of stories. As one participant explained, "That's all we have, incomplete stories; we don't know everybody's lives." The following excerpts are examples of fragmented stories:

You know, I always wondered how it was for my grandfather, ya know, coming here. You know, he came here as an eighteen or twenty year old. What it would be like for me today to leave this country and go to another country? And to do that, what courage it took to do that, you know, and not have any education, and only having a trade, and that was his hands and his eyes and fixing shoes. And that's what my grandfather did.

(Anonymous Participant)

My grandfather left Sicily with his father, but his father was killed in a bar in New Orleans. Shot down in a bar when my grandfather was a small boy. And he came to Tampa. It was just a dispute in a bar. That's all I know.

(Anonymous Participant)

A sixty-nine year old second-generation Sicilian American participant researched his family genealogy. He said that he was doing it for his grandchildren, and he traveled all

the way to Milwaukee to meet distant cousins and gather information. He explained that his book was a work in progress, but so far, the family tree dates back to 14th century Spain. He plans to have a seminar for family members, so they can get together and share information and photographs, and clarify family relationships—names, births, deaths, marriages, divorces. He shares his thoughts about his project:

> The history and the family tree, the reason why I did it is that I heard this story. About ten years ago, my mother and aunt were talking about their history. And uh, I got my dictation equipment here, so I sat down and recorded everything they said for about two hours. And they told me about how they grew up, and as much as they could think of. Later on, I thought, if I don't do this, my kids will never know how they're able to have what they have, because people sacrificed and people worked.

<div align="right">(Anonymous Participant)</div>

Community life, however, is hardly ever a free-floating, uncontrolled activity (Adelman & Frey, 1997, Goffman, 1963). One memoir in particular contradicts the nostalgic narrative. *A Stranger in the Barrio: A Memoir of a Tampa Sicilian* by Frank Urso offers a different perspective on growing up in Ybor City—not all recollections were pleasant. Urso (2005) describes pungent smells of Ybor City life (tobacco from the factories and alley garbage cans), poverty, the health risks of working with tobacco, and life in a barrio. As Urso recounts his childhood experiences, he speaks with unrefined language, filled with sexism, racism, and classism, to illustrate his point. His book offends many, but agency takes place in various forms—all narratives, regardless of their position, are important to group identity.

Dialectical Tensions: Close but Distant

Relational Dialectics Theory holds that interpersonal communication is comprised of many dialectic tensions, which enable people to learn, not only what they have in common, but also what makes them different (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996; Kramer, in press). Dialectical tension, like difference, is a healthy occurrence; it is during talk that people maintain, negotiate, contest, and repair communication (Meyer, 2003). Central to dialectical relational research is independence versus interdependence (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996). According to Kramer:

People constantly feel tension between being independent and being connected, being open and vulnerable and being strategic in our communication (defensive), and being spontaneous and being predictable. Relationships do not vacillate toward one or the other. Rather both sides of such dialectical realities are always present and possible. (in press)

The Latins of Ybor City lived and worked in close proximity to each other, which made their daily social interactions inescapable. They needed each other to survive, but they struggled for independence and dominance. Drawing from Burke's (1950; 1966) notion of consubstantial identification, Kramer (in press) contends this process happens when "two or more organisms share a 'substance,' a symbol system that allows them to share and negotiate meanings, form agency, share a scene or situation, an act, and a purpose" (in press). The sharing is not always equal, and, accordingly, there was some pecking order within the Latin community. The Spanish ranked highest in social status—they owned the cigar factories and participated in local politics. The Cubans were next in social ranking with the Sicilians and Italians near the bottom. When the Italians first

arrived, they were prohibited from working in the cigar factories for fear of taking jobs away from Cuban and Spanish workers. Eventually, they were allowed to hold janitorial positions, and, in time, advanced to cigar roller and puncher positions. The Italians continued to work their way up the social and political ladder, and were said to have surpassed the Cuban community (Mormino & Pozzetta, 1998). The following excerpt explains how their social status changed:

> See the Italians were the shop owners. They owned the meat markets and the restaurants, most of them were the entrepreneurs. And even those who worked in the cigar factory eventually worked their way out of the cigar factory.
>
> (Anonymous Participant)

The three groups continued to maintain a significant distance by upholding social rules about what was shared and what was not. The following three excerpts illustrate such rules:

> In my father's generation, it was not acceptable for an Italian girl to marry a Spaniard or Cuban.
>
> (Anonymous Participant)

> Now they also had their own dances and social gatherings at the Italian club, which was across the street from the Centro Español.
>
> (Anonymous Participant)

> The Italians didn't have their own hospital, but they paid their membership, and they had a pharmacist down stairs in the Italian club, and I used to go with my nannu B. and he'd pick up medicine there. But, if he had to go to the hospital, he'd

go to Centro Asturiano, which was the Spanish hospital. The best doctors went to

the Centro Asturiano. It was a good hospital.

(Anonymous Participant)

Compared to most cities located in the Deep South, Ybor City was a culturally tolerant

place; nevertheless, its inhabitants experienced racial and ethnic tensions (Mormino &

Pozzetta, 1998, p. 14). The following excerpts are examples of these tensions:

They were here in a strange world, but the community was so tight, and we were a

mixture of Cuban, Spanish, uh they say two types of Spanish, one El Centro

Asturiano and El Centro Español. They actually fought each other. So, civil war

in Spain was not not new. They had it here; they had two different clubs, two

different hospitals. Had they united they, could have been great.

(Anonymous Participant)

[Cuban Negroes and Mulattos] were not banned from socially mixing in public,

but they were never welcomed in Sicilian homes. (Urso, 2005, p. 2)

The Italian, Cuban and Spanish boys were always in fights. I was constantly in

fights.

(Anonymous Participant)

Latin children stick together, yet we fight with each other. It is a form of

nationalism. Italians pit themselves against the Spanish-speaking bunch and vice

versa. I make no distinction between Cubans and Spaniards—don't know how.

(Urso, 2005, p.150)

For some Italians, dialectical tensions are a product of living in a Spanish-speaking town,

a barrio. The following excerpt by Frank Urso (2005) illustrates this point:

Hispanics romanticized the *barrio*, portraying it a Shangri-La, one big happy

Latino family. Perhaps it was to them, but I was neither Cuban nor Spanish. I was

a wop rolling with the punches while my family rolled cigars to put pasta on the

kitchen table.

(Excerpt from Stranger in the Barrio, p. 5)

Abrams, O'Connor, and Giles (2002) contend that when individuals from different

cultures interact there is often "a history of relations that may include rivalry, conflict,

social inequality, and prejudice" (p. 229). Moreover, Stohl and Putman (1994) state that

conflict not only demonstrates intergroup cohesion and similarity, but also highlights

intergroup differences and boundaries (Stohl & Putnam, 1994). Some of these differences

are decreased through community practices, including speech, eating, and social

interactions.

Language-Worlds

As human beings, we find meaning, identity, and freedom through a multi-

language world. Language, which is connected to images of various worldviews and the

people who use it, functions in a heteroglot nature. Bakhtin (1981) explains that

heteroglossia is the "base condition governing the operation of meaning in any utterance"

(p. 428). There is a constant flow of interacting utterances, words, and meanings within

language that shape one's language-world view. Heteroglossia thrives in places like Ybor

City where people from different cultures interact. Similar to Italian Canadians, who

speak three languages, the Ybor City Sicilians learned to speak Spanish, English, and

even Italian. Their daily social interactions were expressed within the use of a Spanish-

Italian dialect that characterized the group. Recognition of heteroglossia provides insights

to the functions and meanings of language within the Latin community. The next three excerpts reveal how language fuses in a heteroglot manner:

I speak Spanish, but my grandmother fused them together sometimes. Because of the fact of the cigar factories. That's the only reason my mother, Lucy, and my uncle spoke Spanish.

(Anonymous Participant)

When I say the words "just imagine," I don't say it in English. I always used the Spanish phrase "Sito Figura," but my grandfather taught me to say Sito Figuratté, which is part Spanish, part Italian.

(Anonymous Participant)

My mother and father spoke Spanish too. My father spoke Spanish, he learned the Castilian, because they were first-generation, so the ones that he learned from spoke the Castilian.

(Anonymous Participant)

Heteroglossia is also how participants' create, maintain, and build words onto one another:

My mother and grandmother spoke an Italian and Spanish dialect unique to Tampa because of the fact that they had to change channels so often; eventually it all blended together.

(Anonymous Participant)

I don't speak Italian or Spanish fluently, but I do use some words from both languages for certain expressions that I learned as a kid, like when someone is frowning, they have a fungia, I think that's really more Sicilian, or when you have

to go out of your way to get somewhere we say casa carajo, house of hell. Mostly

just names of things that you learn from friends and family that never change.

Most this stuff I can't even spell.

<div align="right">(Anonymous Participant)</div>

Other Spanish and Cuban words that Italian participants claimed to use are ¡Que Pena!

(embarrassed) and Chuma (gossiper). Moreover, all participants know the words for

grandparents, aunts, and uncles in Spanish, Italian, and Sicilian: abuelos, abuelas, nonnas,

nonnos, nanas, nanus, tios, tias, zios and zias. Through marriage, many of them have a

variation of ethnic relatives. For example, one participant revealed having two Cuban-

Italian cousins, two Spanish-Italian cousins, four Italian-Anglo cousins, and five Italian-

African American cousins.

Hermeneutics suggests that individuals live in a language-world specific to their

native language, and it is from this standpoint that they establish their view of the world

(Gadamer, 1975). For Gadamer, worldviews are shaped by what is said or handed down

in the language, which differs from linguistics. Gadamer also argues against the notion

that our language-world inhibits our perspective. According to Gadamer (1975) when we

enter foreign language-worlds, "we overcome the prejudices and limitations of our

previous experience of the world" (p. 448). This does not mean that we completely shed

our perception of the world when we learn a new language, "we just return home with

new experiences" and expressions (448). Gadamer (1975) writes:

> It is not learning a foreign language as such, but its use, whether spoken or read
>
> that gives one a new standpoint "on one's previous worldview." However
>
> thoroughly one may adopt a foreign frame of mind, one still does not forget one's

worldview and language-view. Rather, the other world we encounter is not only

foreign but is also related to us. It has its own truth in itself but also its own truth

for us. (pp. 441-442)

Individuals carry over their own worldview and language-view into a foreign language,

but this "achievement is not experienced in a pure and perfect way" (Gadamer, 1975, p.

448). Urso (2005) writes:

I spell words phonetically; phonetically distort them, for the bilingual first

generation survives on oral tradition. Most of my relatives are illiterate in English

and Italian, so phonetic mistakes go undetected in Italian and English, recycling

themselves with each new generation. I speak incorrectly, fade in and out of one

language and another, fade in and out of double negatives, and punctuate

sentences with "you know." (p.10)

Since many words are pronounced incorrectly, I had difficulty finding the etymology and

correct spelling of words. The problem is that the Sicilian of the early 20th century was a

language with little text and many illiterate speakers. In addition, some claim that Tampa

had a unique dialect—a fusion of Sicilian, Southern Italian, Castilian Spanish, and Cuban

Spanish. One way to capture this dialect, if such a dialect really existed, is to examine

letters and memoirs written during this period; in other words, history from the bottom-

up. Verbal form and historical content cannot be separated from the hermeneutic

experience (Gadamer, 1975).

Identity is What We Eat

Tampa's Latin community is clarified by Italo-Spanish food located in eating or

retail establishments as such bakeries, deli's, restaurants, and grocery stores. For instance,

it is common to find *Baked Ziti* right next to the *Arroz con Pollo* (yellow rice and chicken) behind glass cases in bakeries or on buffet tables at restaurants. *Scacciata* (Sicilian style pizza) and *Devil Crabs* (Cuban style crab-filled croquettes) are typical finger foods served at social gatherings (weddings, graduations, baptisms, funerals); while *Mojo Roast Pork* and *Lasagna* are main courses in some Italian homes on Christmas day. Moreover, there are several festivities that celebrate Tampa's ethnic cuisine, such as Fiesta Day, Flan Fest, Fiesta de Reyes, St. Joseph, Italian Festival to name a few. In addition, there are specific dishes that originated in Tampa. For example, the *Cuban Sandwich* was introduced around 1900 by Cubans, who settled in Ybor City long before the Cubans of Miami, as an inexpensive lunch for the immigrants who worked in the cigar factories. It was originally called a sandwich mixto, because of the mix of ingredients: smoked ham, Genoa salami, Swiss cheese, marinated roasted pork, pickle, butter or mustard and mayonnaise. The sandwich is made with Cuban bread, which is wrapped in palmetto leaves for baking. Another well-known dish is *Crab Enchilada* (crab enchilau by locals), which is a spicy red crab sauce ladled over spaghetti. Both the Genoa salami on the Cuban and the pasta served with the Spanish crab sauce are, arguably, the influence of Italian cuisine on the Spanish/Cuban cuisine, or vice versa. As one female participant explained, "Some of these dishes, you're going back a hundred years, so it's difficult to say whether they're Italian or Spanish."

It is common to hear cultural critics say that the Cuban sandwich isn't Cuban any more than Spanish bean soup is Spanish. Such comments reveal more about people's attitude towards assimilation than it does about the fusion of food. Many dishes were created in old Ybor City, but they were not a product of a melted culture, or a hybrid

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culture. As much as the outside community longs for a unified Ybor City, there was never a hybrid "Latin" cuisine. Food was a form of coevolution. People may not be able to take their worldly possessions with them when they migrate, but they always carry specific eating habits, which they tried to sustain. The moist, tropical terrain of Florida was similar to Cuba and Sicily; many foods, such as vegetables or fruits, were easy to harvest. For the Cubans, it was guava, for the Italians, it was figs and herbs. They came in and changed the landscape by planting trees and growing produce, but not everything grew in the same manner as it did in their previous environment. Food was influenced by different climate variables, similar to how the immigrants were being influenced by and influencing different cultures. The majority of Sicilian immigrants were extremely impoverished, even starving, and the ones who were not starving were probably eating the same food everyday. The novelty of eating Cuban and Spanish food was probably exciting, not to mention a symbol of prosperity. For those who remained in poverty, there were staple dishes, such as beans and rice, that were incorporated into their diets. Hence, any change in a culture's eating habits will change the culture (Visser, 1999). Beans and rice was not a common food source for Sicilians but quickly became a staple dish, in part, because it was inexpensive. Many participants grew up eating black beans and rice on a weekly basis, including this researcher. One participant exemplifies this practice:

> Everybody ate black beans and rice. The Italians, the Spanish, and the Cubans; it
> didn't matter who you were.

<div align="right">(Anonymous Participant)</div>

Intermarriage, restaurants, and grocery stores are other variables that changed their diet and helped clarify their Latin identity. The next excerpt addresses how a participant's

mother was influenced by Southern and Spanish cooking. The following one describes the food items served in an Italian restaurant.

My mother probably ate more traditional growing up. The immigrants grew vegetables in their back yard, like in Sicily, so they ate a lot of cucuzza and fennel. My mother learned to cook Southern—mustard greens, collard greens— and Spanish once she was married. That generation started intermarrying. My grandmother's generation never married outside themselves. The food was more traditional.

(Anonymous Participant)

My daddy's restaurant served devil crabs and Cuban sandwiches, which is really a Tampa thing. Some dishes are specific to the Spanish and Cubans living in Tampa. And a lot of fish. The Spanish and the Italians ate a lot of fish.

(Anonymous Participant)

Food is also a powerful narrative and cultural marker. It not only tells us who we are, but where we are spatially and temporally, by connecting us to neighbors, communities, buildings, places, other groups, regions, and nations (Padolsky, 2005). The next two excerpts reveal how participant's memories of food are associated with places, people, and experiences growing up:

We used to go down to the Courtney Campbell Causeway with my grandfather to catch crabs, so my grandmother could make the crab enchilau sauce.

(Anonymous Participant)

Every Friday night my mother and my aunt, we'd go to Cuervo's and we'd get Cuban sandwiches, which was only thirty cents.

(Anonymous Participant)

The food is tied to memories of places that no longer exist, but sharing common spatial markers was one way participants could themselves as Latin.

According to Gadamer (1975), the verbal event reflects not only what persists, but also what changes. Changes in words representing food reveal changes in eating customs and values. The multicultural meal influenced how people perceived themselves as having a Latin identity. Their horizon shifted with the introduction of each Spanish or Cuban word that entered their daily lexicon and diet. One participant recounts the different Spanish and Cuban cuisine she ate at home:

> When we were growing up my mother made rellow rice and chicken, garbanzo soup, black beans and rice, plantinos, breaded palomilla, picadillo. Some were Spanish dishes, some were Cuban dishes. Everybody ate that way, so I didn't think nothing of it.

(Anonymous Participant)

The horizon of food produces multiple meanings for people based on tastes, smells, textures, sounds, preparation, cooking utensils, and memories. For example, most participants can recall the smell of *cafe con lechè* and Cuban bread. Every morning, bread suppliers, La Joven Bakery (1896-1922), the Ferlita Bakery (1923-1974), and La Segunda Bakery (1915 to present), made bread at sunup, and distributed it to neighborhood restaurants, while Cuban coffee shops brewed *cafè con lechè* and expresso—both scents permeated the neighborhood. Adding to the aroma was baked bread that the Italian women made on Fridays. Others remember the smell of spicy food coming from inside their neighbor's home, or the fragrant smell of basil, oregano,

tomatoes, and greens growing in backyard gardens. Currently, one can stand in the streets of Ybor City and smell bread and coffee. The scent is much fainter (one bread company, a few coffee shops, and no Italian women baking on Fridays), but the olfactory evidence supports the memories passed down to younger generations.

Food is a cross-cultural terrain where friends and enemies meet and where history and intercultural relations take place (Padolsky, 2005). Cultures use food as a means of power and negotiation (Padolsky, 2005). For example, Spanish colonizers ate with native Indians to discuss social relationships, trade, and authority (Rodriguez-Alegria, 2005). In their struggle for cultural dominance, they were influenced by a variety of indigenous pottery, food, and eating practices, which, in turn, permanently changed their culture (Rodriguez-Alegria, 2005). These influences are evident in Spanish households throughout Florida, the Caribbean, and the Andes (Rodriguez-Alegria, 2005). Hence, the culture that is under attack imprints itself on its attacker. Similarly, the Latin groups of Ybor City expressed their struggle for economic dominance through food.

According to Mormino and Pozzetta (1998), each group brings with them skills and resources that determine their relationship to the host culture. The Italians were successful in agriculture, which allowed them to be self-sufficient (Mormino &Pozzetta, 1998). Their backyard gardens consisted of items such as *cucuzza* (type of squash), fennel, tomatoes, figs, and herbs. Tampa natives believed them to possess special handling skills for these products; their mastery leads to fruit and vegetable stands and dairies throughout Ybor City—clearly dominating the market and influencing how and what the Latin community ate (Mormino &Pozzetta, 1998). In 1910, the Florida License Bureau issued fifty-two pushcart permits to Italians, and none to other groups (Mormino

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& Pozzetta, 1998). In turn, the Spanish and Cuban consumption practices imprinted the way Italians thought about food—they began to carry Caribbean produce, such as mangos, guavas, and sapodillas on their pushcarts, and learned to brew Cuban coffee (Mormino & Pozzetta, 1998).

Over the years, Italians were influenced by a variety of eating and cooking practices, which are observed in many Italian households today. Individuals do not appear as discerning about the big corporations that dominate their food resources. I argue that their struggle has shifted from an economic need to cultural ownership. Since many dishes date back a hundred years, there is dialectical tension between the three groups regarding who created certain food traditions or who cooks it best. This attitude is evident in the following two participants' discussion of a much-loved dessert in Tampa called flan:

> When I was growing up, the Spanish didn't call it flan, they called it custard, and it had a different consistency. Now, their flan is very similar to how my grandmother used to make it. And, she had a little pot that she used. My grandfather removed the handle, so she could use it to mold the flan. Then, she would put the little pot in a bigger pot filled with water, so the flan could boil.
>
> (Anonymous Participant)

> People say I make the best flan. I had a party here last week and the Cubans, Spanish, Germans, Jewish, everybody, they all said it was the best flan they ever tasted. I use my mother's recipe. She made the best flan, better than any Spaniard or Cuban.
>
> (Anonymous Participant)

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The Latin horizon of ethnic identity is a site of struggle. Residents were dislocated from their homes and then dissociated from their community. Over time, they recreated new forms of social interactions, but their oral histories passed down to family express dissociation and longing for a distant past, or as one participant said, "the happiest moments of my life." Children of these ghosts from Ybor City past are trying to locate their identity and exert agency by upholding their culture through food. They have the stories, the recipes, the magic utensils, and if they are lucky, the skills to bring Nana's crab sauce to life and with it a sense of identity. Thus, what, how and where we eat is an expression of culture, and it is tied to many contradictory consumption practices, and complex issues including traditions, desires, national resources, food systems, politics, and war (Visser, 1999). The participants in this research do not reveal a hybrid cuisine, but shifting vistas of food, smells of food, textures of food, and food related words expressed in their daily interactions.

Bolita: Magic Numbers, and Mythic Dreams

One of the primary social interactions that brought Anglos and Latins together was crime, especially illegal gambling (Mormino & Pozzetta, 1998). Unlike Chicago and New York, Tampa immigrants did not encounter established crime organizations; Tampa was a frontier for many illicit activities—liquor, cockfights, prostitution—and local authorities turned a blind eye. A participant explained:

> Tampa began as a wild port outpost situated at the top of the Bay, and was governed by the same laws as the Wild West. A Tampa native from the twenties would have absolutely nothing in common with the Tampa resident of today. It would be impossible to fully understand the nuances that shaped Tampa's past.

Crime exposed the immigrants to a new world of interactions that allowed them "to step outside the *barrio* and visit America" (Urso, 2005, p. 4). According to Mormino & Pozzetta, (1998), criminal behavior is a normal "social-economic response to local, regional, and international factors," and each ethnic group approaches it in their own distinct ways (p. 280). The Italians initially specialized in bootlegging, while the Spanish and Cubans trafficked the much more profitable gambling ring, the bolita (Mormino & Pozzetta, 1998). The bolita was a numbers game based on the old Cuban lottery and was introduced to Ybor City in the late 1880's by a Spaniard named Manuel Suarez. Historians say that Tampa's free-enterprise economy, along with private entrepreneurs and consenting politicians, set up the perfect conditions for bolita to flourish (Mormino & Pozzetta, 1998). Once established, however, the bolita became a "series of attempts by civic, political, and ethnic factions to rationalize, regulate, and control an enormously profitable enterprise" (Mormino & Pozzetta, 1998, p. 281). The bolitia took on a life of its own.

The evolution of bolita accompanied the rapid growth of Ybor City, which by 1900 had more saloons than the city of Tampa (Mormino & Pozzetta, 1998). For a nickel, you could purchase a number with your beer. As its popularity increased, operations fell into the hands of Spanish and Cuban boliteros who organized the numbers network well into the 1930's (Mormino & Pozzetta, 1998). By 1927, there were hundreds of bolita houses in Ybor City, which pushed the Latins into a "dynamic network of alliances and deals" (Mormino & Pozzetta, 1998, 281).The bolita existed because people wanted it and because powerful members of the Anglo community reaped the profits of its success.

Charlie Wall, the "Big Boss," and son of one of Tampa's most powerful and influential families, managed and controlled the bolita until the late 1930's. Independents would sell the bolita in their establishment and turn over fifty percent of the profits to Wall. The Bolita was so deeply infiltrated into the political and legal systems that even the occasional arrests made no impact on Bolita peddlers; it only rid the "organization of independents who couldn't afford the payoffs" (Mormino & Pozzetta, 1998, p. 283). One first-generation participant explains how this worked:

> The police would come in and you'd have to pay them *coinatta*, and then they'd leave you alone. The bolita was sold under their nose.
>
> (Anonymous Participant)

The Italians, being on the low end of the social ladder, were not part of the bolita operation, so they focused on bootlegging. It did not take long for them to dominate the production of moonshine, and within a couple decades, they gained the necessary monetary and networking resources to branch off into bolita (Mormino & Pozzetta, 1998). The struggle for power escalated when the Italians, and other groups, such as African Americans, started entering the business. The added dialectical tensions cast a dark shadow over Tampa. Between 1930 and 1950, Tampa citizens experienced a reign of violence as bolita racketeers began to kill each other for power. Moreover, other rackets (jukebox, pool table, and cigarette) contributed to the violence. The following excerpt is from an eighty-year-old Sicilian woman:

> It wasn't just the mafia, there were all sorts of rackets going on. The policemen in those days were crooked. It was like the Wild West. Every Saturday night there was a killing in the 50's. Every Sunday morning the papers would announce

somebody got killed, every Sunday. It was always the Italians who were
suspected.

<p style="text-align: right">(Anonymous Participant)</p>

Within a decade, the Italians succeeded Charlie Wall and the Cuban-Spanish *boliteros*.
The new "Big Boss" was Santo Trafficante Sr. and his three sons: Santo Jr., Henry, and
Salvatore. Meanwhile, Tampa's criminal underworld was gaining tremendous power.
"Bankers" or "kingpins," who collected from independents and took care of paying off
law enforcement and politicians, controlled the bolita cash flow. They also established
political power and controlled the city's voting precincts. The son and daughter of one of
the most infamous kingpins in Ybor City discuss the power:

> Believe it or not, my father had more connections than Santo did. Nobody
> believes that, but judges, sheriffs, and mayors in Hillsborough County, my father,
> at one time, was the most powerful man in this city. He controlled the hotels and
> restaurants; he controlled the health department, the sheriff dept, the mayor's
> office. He controlled sixty percent of the judges. Now, having said that, that was
> before the drug era, when judges didn't see nothing wrong with gambling. They
> didn't see nothing wrong with bolita. My father never did drugs, never worked
> prostitution, never. He was highly respected for what he did, which was only run
> numbers.

<p style="text-align: right">(Anonymous Participant)</p>

> What my father would do, the way they did it was, because my father knew all
> these people. Whenever my father had an election coming up, these people voted
> the way my father told them.

<p style="text-align: center">150</p>

(Anonymous Participant)

Twenty years of violence and Mafioso, however, triggered negative attitudes towards illegal gambling. The game was no longer a victimless crime that needed protection; instead, many people needed protection from its force. Moreover, the influx of drugs changed the criminal element of Tampa, and the way people felt about crime in general. Politicians of the 1950's vowed to clean up the city, to increase economic development, and to crack down on bolita. Unlike the previous phony attempts to suppress the game, these were bona fide endeavors. The bolita was vilified, and even though all ethnicities and races played the game, the villains were the Latins in Ybor City, especially the Italians. The following excerpts from individuals who grew up during this era reveal some of the ways politicians used force against suspected gamblers and the newspaper to paint corrupt and dangerous images of the game and Ybor City:

> I was here in 1951 when P started the investigations all over again. I was married to C and I remember that they used to come in and take him in for vagrancy, and they would put him in jail for vagrancy. I'd say, "What do you mean he's in jail, for what reason?" For being a vagrant. They would take him in and question him, and this, and that because of the bolita. And P came in and starting wiping out the bolita, and everything else. And all kinds of investigations. They were hauling all kinds of people in.

(Anonymous Participant)

> What the papers never said was how they stripped searched my daddy, right there on Nebraska Avenue for no reason at all.

(Anonymous Participant)

We never beat nobody, they used to put it in the paper that people were paid off

and all that, never. How could we survive? We were illegal. If you don't pay-off,

how can you survive? You wanted hits, every time we had hits, and people

would win, it would go through the neighborhood.

(Anonymous Participant)

As far as what everybody thinks, everybody cuts throats and shoot each other in

Ybor City. This was the safest place to live because, to begin, nobody had a phone

to call the cops. Number two, who was crazy enough to commit a crime in a

community like this? Rape was unheard of, you couldn't get ten feet, they would

of caught you. As far as the crime, it was the businessmen who were running the

numbers racket, all white crime. Working for control.

(Anonymous Participant)

The more attempts to destroy the operation, the further underground it went. People

found creative ways to keep it alive and keep it covert. The following excerpt is from an

individual whose family ran a bolita operation. He is amazed that the bolita has remained

so mysterious, many of the secret schemes never surfaced:

I'm going to go to my grave, and this whole generation, they haven't figured it out

yet. If it wasn't that people told them stuff, they wouldn't know squat. These

people are dead now.

(Anonymous Participant)

The following excerpt illustrates two covert ways the community played the game:

On Saturdays, they'd call it Cuba, so everybody would listen to the Cuban radio

station. They knew the numbers. See Cuba, on Saturdays, Cuba, it was legal and

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Santo had the Tropicana and they would draw the number from there. Just like the lotto now, they do it with the balls, they didn't do it with the air, they had ping pong balls with numbers and a wheel. A guy would spin the wheel and after it got so fast, it'd throw a ball out, and he'd stop. 100, and he'd crank the wheel again. Now, during the week, the numbers were formed from the stock market. So, it was the last two numbers, unless it was a zero, then the last number would be a single digit. So let's say the stock market, NASDAQ, closed at 400.12 dollars, well that was 12, that's the winner. Then, uh, the SAP closed at 400.32, 32, that was the number. So it was the last two digits of the stock market posted in the newspaper daily, but they never knew that. That's why the law enforcement, they thought we were fixing the numbers, they don't have a clue.

(Anonymous Participant)

Other gambling methods involved fashion magazines in department stores that were arranged in such a way that women could place their bets on pieces of paper, and then put the paper inside the magazine and wait for someone to collect the bet. Soda fountain shops were also common places for people to greet a numbers runner, and place a bet (Ferlita Capitano, 2006).

In everyday life, people determine what is true by seeing, experiencing, and discussing their surroundings, their horizons. When I asked participants how they felt about their illegal gambling activities, many of them responded by stating that it was simply part of their culture:

We didn't think as much about it, it was life. That's how life was.

(Anonymous Participant)

Tampa has an underside with the bolita. Everybody played bolita. That was just a numbers racket, Italian and Spanish people loved to gamble.

(Anonymous Participant)

The bolita was naturalized in many ways. First, gambling changed the physical and social space of their community. Not only were there hundreds of bolita houses, but most local businesses were a front for gambling. People's relationship with the bolita was connected to spatial references of where they lived, worked, and played:

Let me explain, every grocery store, everybody, played their nickels and dimes on the bolita. Okay. You could call your grocer or whoever.

(Anonymous Participant)

The drug stores and the grocery stores, they were more like convenient stores, they were on every corner. Look at Hillsborough High School. There's a building right on the sidewalk, it was a grocery store, used to sell Bolita, right across from the school. They used to sell it to kids; it was for people in this neighborhood. Floribraska and Nebraska was a meat store, across from the Checkers, it's gone now, Joe's Meat Market. Jimmy Rings TV, one block down, right on Nebraska, almost to Adalee, right where Q Street comes in, there was a television shop, they sold bolita.

(Anonymous Participant)

Second, although the participants and their families were employed, they looked upon the bolita as a principal source of revenue, one that would allow them to provide a better future for their children:

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Even women sold numbers. They did it because they have to have that extra

money. You know what N was making? Sixty dollars a week, working eight

hours a day at a 1.25 an hour. Do you know what it is to make forty dollars on a

Saturday if you're making sixty dollars a week? You sit on the phone and write

numbers down, but you're home with your kids. You don't do it continuously

anyway. So you just call the house every once in awhile.

(Anonymous Participant)

So what you would do is, you'd walk in and say give me single five for a nickel,

cause it was all pennies. Because with a nickel, you could win sixty dollars, that

was a weeks work for a nickel.

(Anonymous Participant)

At the time, you gotta understand, coming out of the depression, bolita helped a

lot people, gave them a second income.

(Anonymous Participant)

Finally, many participants condoned the bolita on the basis that it helped immigrants to

progress economically and socially. Some participants even romanticized bolita

operators, like this researcher's grandfather, for their Robin Hood-like deeds:

Your grandfather paid seventy cents on the dollar for numbers. The state of

Florida pays thirty-seven cents on the dollar. You think of that. Maybe they were

a lot more honest than the state of Florida; I'm talking about as far the return on

the dollar, return on the investment.

(Anonymous Participant)

My daddy helped a lot of people. All my life people tell me, "Boy your dad, he

helped me out."

(Anonymous Participant)

The communication surrounding the game had a life of its own and made

demands on its behalf (Goffman, 1967). Numbers were sold in most business

establishments, so it affected business transactions. The game created numerous social

networks and new forms of communication from its dealings, while consuming time,

money, space, and energy from the community. The supplemental income, however, was

perceived as a means for upward social mobility, education, wealth—the American

dream. The game prompted numerous words, gestures, acts, and minor and major events

(Goffman, 1967). Most importantly, the bolita shaped the way people thought about the

game, talked about the game, played the game, and even ritualized the game.

Illegal lotteries were thriving in America during the late 1800's and early 1900's

and each culture had a unique approach to the game (Yronwod, 2006). For Italians, the

game was "numbers." For the Cubans it was bolita, and for the African-Americans it was

"policy." Policy was first introduced in Chicago in 1885 by an operator nicknamed Policy

Sam, who used a verbal code when collecting bets on the street: "Would you like to take

out an insurance policy?" Policy bets were placed on groups of numbers from 1 through

78, which is similar to the number of cards in a tarot deck (Yronwood, 2006). For many

African Americans, policy was more than a game of skill; it was mystically intertwined

with the spiritual world. Supernatural traditions are an integral part of Southern African

American culture and are the fused result of many influences on their culture—European,

Native American, and African. Sorcerer practices in slave communities in the antebellum

South, and then hoodoo traditions, are expressed through art, music, dance, language, religion, and even gambling (Yronwod, 2006).

African hoodoo tradition is based on dreams. According to Gebser (Ger. 1949/Eng. 1985), the world conceals any physical movement that is not first experienced within the soul, so "whatever we are to discover outside ourselves, we must first discover inside ourselves" (Gebser, Ger. 1949/Eng. 1985, p. 167). The dream speaks directly to the soul, which manifest temporally and spatially (Gebser, Ger. 1949/Eng. 1985). Policy players used dreams to guide their gambling activities. Dream books, such as *Aunt Sally's Policy Players Dream Book*, are based on ancient number systems that connect numerical cycles to the natural world. Dream book numbers are not arbitrary; they possess a magic association because the numbers and the dreams are interchangeable. The interpretation of dreams is a magic gambling ritual and the strong emotional attachment to numbers is an expression of identity. The book lists hundred of items, objects, and scenarios that one might encounter in a dream, and then assigns each experience a numerical representation. For instance, if you dream of a fire, then you play 6, 46, 69. The numbers do not change, but fluctuate between magic timelessness and mythical cycles that establish polarity, such as the cycles of birth and death and good and evil. For example, dreaming of a blazing fire means losing friends. If the fire is extinguished, then it means poverty. If a female makes the fire without much difficulty, she will have "fine healthy children," if she encounters difficulty, she will meet with shame and dishonor. If you burn yourself, you will have a fever, but a spark denotes money in abundance. Finally, the book is also a form of mythic consciousness because it includes Napoleon Bonaparte's *Oraculum of Fate* and multiple number/letter combinations that derived from an ancient Hebrew

alphabet. Stories and notions of lucky people who can skillfully follow charts and

numerical combinations express some dissociation from the supernatural.

The Latin immigrants incorporated the magic/mythic rituals of policy that they

learned from the African American community into the bolita. The older participants

were all familiar with or owned the dream book, and knew specific number-name

combinations, whether they played bolita on a regular basis or not. These number-name

combinations date back fifty years, so the memories of these numbers reveal the structure

of their daily lexicon. People probably spoke in verbal codes similar to how waiters use

verbal codes in restaurants to expedite service: 86 the order means the customer changed

his or her mind. Moreover, the numbers meant things; they were messages. Some

participants even applied the book's interpretation to their wakeful imaginings and

experiences. This researcher's uncle carried an index card and a pen in his front shirt

pocket his entire adult life to document any strange or superstitious occurrences

throughout his day—black cat crosses his path, e.g. The following excerpts reveal the

magic and mythic value of the numbers, the dream book, and superstitious beliefs:

Everybody had a dream book. If you dreamt about a prostitute, you'd play number

10. If you looked up and seen the Italian flag you'd play 77. And 21 was snake, if

you run across a snake.

(Anonymous Participant)

Let's say, 10 was a good number, 100, whenever those numbers would come out,

hundreds of people would hit. 8, which was death, 'cause you see, they made a

dream book. There used to be a book called the dream book. Somebody told me

you can still buy it. What the dream book does, it converted everything and

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anything that you could dream of to a number. Snake was 8, no death was 8, snake was 21, uh lizards, snails, an accident. Let's say, you were driving down the street and you had an accident with a bicycle. So, you would play car, bicycle, accident, boy or girl. So, you take fifteen cents and do a parley. Or, it could be just something going on in your life.

<div align="right">(Anonymous Participant)</div>

It was a book of numbers and a person would bet the number value based on whatever he dreamed about the night before. So, for example, a nun would be number 55.

<div align="right">(Anonymous Participant)</div>

He wanted to get a cat, to get rid of the rats in the barn, the barn was full of feed. So he said, "Get a couple of cats." Well what do you think, I bring him a black cat, and he had a heart attack, "Get rid of the cat!" So, I left the D. bar, walking, I walked down 19th street, I'll never forget it, to 14th, and I turned him loose, and I walked back to the bar. Well, that was on a Friday night. The worst numbers that my father could ever see come out in bolita was single 1, 10, and 100, that meant that they lost ten, fifteen thousand, in them days, that's like two-hundred fifty thousand today, so what do you think. He said "I knew it, I knew it, you brought that cat!" All week long, the next Saturday, 100, 10, and 1. The next Saturday, 1, 10, 100. Three weeks in a row, not in the history of Bolita, people were cleaning up their business. The buyer doubled, but my daddy was laying off in Miami. He couldn't stand the hit. Sam, everybody was taking money out of their pockets

putting it into the pot. There were four partners, Primo, Sam, my daddy, and

Fillip. And they were draining their pockets,

The real dream book is currently out of print, only a shorter reproduction of the

original version exists. Some younger participants have access to their parents' or

grandparents book, but they do not use verbal codes in their daily talk, nor do the ones I

interviewed use the dream book to play the Florida lottery. They can tell stories about the

numbers, which is an indication that the numbers and the dream book resonate in their

lives and contain salient value. Not all participants, however, believed in the power of the

dream book or used dreams to guide their bets. For some, the bolita was simply a lottery

based on skill, not superstition. Gambling is a rational game when it is stripped away

from magic and mythic identity and becomes an emotionless activity based on statistics

and expertise. The following excerpt reveals this attitude:

> It's not superstitious stuff, it's like going to a Chinese place and opening a fortune
>
> cookie; they give you the lottery. You read your fortune, you turn it over, and they
>
> give you five picks for the lottery. So, people go play. It was just something for
>
> people to play, you understand?

Regardless of whether one believes bolita was based on skill or superstition, the game

and all of its distinct elements presumes a shared hermeneutic horizon, a shared language,

and multiple realities. Gambling can be a mental rational activity that upholds notions of

progress, but it can also contain mythic elements when it is expressed through

superstitions, incantations, and dreams. The "making sense and nonsense" is an

expression of human consciousness that is integral to one's identity (Kramer, 1997, p. 100). The game endured because it was deeply intertwined with the Latin culture and the horizon of a Latin identity.

The Horizon of an Italic Identity

The horizon of Italic identity illuminates the ways in which Italian Americans perceive and interpret their Italic horizon; their vision ranges from ancient customs to local history. According to Gadamer (1975), understanding effective history is part of the hermeneutic problem. Hermeneutic history is not recounting historical events, but acknowledging the way in which the past situates both the researcher and the participants in a new horizon that brings to light endless possibilities and numerous histories. Tradition becomes part of our own world and thus communicates who we are (Gadamer, 1975). In other words, the past becomes "present to us in its general relation to the world" (Gadamer, 1975, p. 390). The Italic identity is the most abstract horizon to describe, but perhaps the most important to a shifting Italian American identity: how far back does one's horizon reach? Does participants' vision include an ancient past? If so, how does this horizon situate itself in the presence of new horizons? I recognized traces of an Italic identity during conversations regarding ingroup membership and self-presentation to outgroup members. The following fifty-eight excerpts bring to light these horizons.

The horizon of an Italic identity is centered on the participants' vistas of ancestry—Sicily, Southern Italy, Northern Italy, or a combination of either. Italy was not a nation-state until 1861, so people who lived in this geographic location only recognized themselves by provinces, which speak different Italic dialects and hold specific family names. Regional identity evolves out of many symbolic interactions and is recognized

and solidified through shared blood, semen, and sacred space (Kramer, 1997). Sacred

space is substantial to cultural identity because people experience emotional, spiritual,

and physical attachments to where they live, work, and play (Kramer, 1997). The idea of

changing the social and cultural landscapes of regions was initially met with opposition

(Di Scala, 1995). Within a couple decades, however, the push for nationhood increased,

and most northern regions were able to unite through negotiations. The southern

provinces vehemently opposed losing their independence and shedding their regional

distinctiveness. In 1861, Garibaldi and his *mille* (thousand army) of red shirts conquered

the Kingdom of Two Sicilies, to force them into the *risorgimento* (unification) of Italy

(Di Scala, 1995). The acceptance of a national identity was a slow process, impeded by

ancient biases and economic obstacles that endure today. Compared to central and

northern regions of Italy, southern Italian and Sicilian way of life was extremely

backward and stagnant. Many considered the distinctions between these regions as high

culture (North) and low culture (South), which, in turn, created a nationalist discourse

that instigated anti-southern and anti-northern biases that carried over to America (Alba,

1985; Guidice, 2000). Northern Italian immigrants were more established in the United

States and therefore, reluctant to unite with the newly arrived Sicilians, whom they had

long considered inferior (Orsi, 1985). Many Italians struggled to disassociate themselves

from the Sicilian immigrants, and in some instances, move out of neighborhoods that

Sicilians populated. As participants explained:

> Just because they were made into one country, doesn't mean they felt that way.

> (Anonymous Participant)

South Italy, especially Sicily was referred to by the Sicilian and the Neapolitans

as the forgotten sons of Italy. All the industry was in the north, the political

situation was in the north, so the south really they were worse off before they

became independent. And a lot of them blamed it on Giuseppe Garibaldi.

(Anonymous Participant)

In the United States, the term *Italian* collapses both Italian and Sicilian cultures into one

category, a practice that only acknowledges the cultural traits of the *higher* of the two

cultures and the traits that Italian and Sicilian immigrants share instead of the ones that

set them apart (Alba & Nee, 2003). Sicilians were considered dirty, diseased, anarchist

who were unwilling to assimilate. They were also accused of introducing the Mafia to the

United States. Since nearly eighty percent of the three million Italians that migrated to the

United States were from the *lower* (southern Italy) and the *lowest* (Sicily) regions of Italy

(Guidice, 2000), one must question how they adjusted to American life and their new

identity. The unification of Italy and Sicily was still less than one hundred years old, and

the hostility ran deep among Italians and Sicilians. The immigrants did not know an

Italian nation nor have a clear understanding of their Sicilian identity; most of them

simply identified with the *domus* (home) of their neighbor *paesi* (Orsi, 1985). Their sense

of both an Italian identity and an emerging Italian American identity manifested in

America and shifted the horizon of their regional selfhood.

The Lowest

Ninety percent of Italians that migrated to Tampa were Sicilians who came from a

cluster of hilltop villages in the province of Agrigento, sixty percent from the town of

Santo Stefano Quisquina (Mormino & Pozzetta, 1998). Although each village expressed

cultural differences, the mountains of the Magazzolo Valley presented them with comparable trials and tribulations: subsistence agricultural condition; extreme poverty and oppression; war; disease; wolves; bandits; powerful landlords who controlled rents, capital, animals, and sharecropping, corrupt clergymen, mafia, and limited access to information and services from the outside world (Mormino & Pozzetta, 1998). These villagers held strong opinions on landholding patterns, social structures, collectivist activities, and fascist movements that determined how they adjusted to each other in Tampa (Mormino & Pozzetta, 1998). They found themselves surrounded by friends and foes from the old country, but more importantly, they found themselves alone in a new country. A united Italic community had a better chance of surviving the social and economic hardships than single individuals (L'Unione Italiana, 2006). Unification, however, was as challenging in America as it had been in Italy; the immigrants imported their distinct values, codes, diverse regional identities, ancestral customs, and prejudices to the new world. Sicilians reluctantly accepted being subsumed into one category (Italian), and the Italians reluctantly accepted the Sicilians. The differences between villages and North and South regions did not evaporate with the existence of a new identity. Cultural tensions, animosity, and dissimilarities are present and exemplified in the next three excerpts:

> There's always been tensions between the Romans and the Italians and the Sicilians. The Sicilians have their own dialect, their own way of doing things. The Romans always thought they were better than the Sicilians, but yet, they go to Sicily to get a lot of their resources. Sicily is rich with resources, farming, sulfur. The Sicilian mountains are rich with sulfur. Where do you think they get the olive

oil? Do you think they grow them in Rome? No, Sicily. They don't grow anything in Rome, except maybe wine. The Romans also go down there and have summer homes.

<div align="right">(Anonymous Participant)</div>

Now there's a movement to split north and south Italy. On the way from New York to Italy, I met a girl from on the plane from Italy. She's going to the same hotel that we were going to and I took care of her luggage, and I got her all the way to the hotel. We're talking in Sicilian of course, and she's looking at me, and said she's from North Italy. She said, "My grandmother kept telling me not to associate with the Sicilians, keep away from the Sicilians." I said, "Now, when you get back home, you tell your grandmother that it was a Sicilian who took care of you." She was shocked, see, that's how the animosity between us, it's still there.

<div align="right">(Anonymous Participant)</div>

I guess another thing that Sicilians do; Sicilians have more Greek and Spanish influence than Italians.

<div align="right">(Anonymous Participant)</div>

Tampa Sicilians confronted multiple horizons of identity and new worlds. In addition to their shifting sense of individuality in American society and in Ybor City's Latin community, they had to rethink their historical world of living with long-standing regional allies and enemies, and finally, accepting an Italian identity. On their horizon lay the vision of land, the dream of owning soil from which they could support their family. They planned to return to Sicily after they earned enough money to attain their dream (Mormino & Pozzetta, 1998), which explains why naturalization rates were lower for

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Sicilians. The image of that land drifted further and further away, fading as time passed. The immigrants took stock of the economic realities of their existence in two different worlds. Added to the list of their oppressors was the new Italian state, for various reasons poverty worsened after the Risorgimento. They realized that life in Sicily was no longer a viable option. America offered them new opportunities and even if they did return, their migration experiences ultimately changed their horizons. The immigrants developed a historical consciousness, which involved a fundamental distance between their historical traditions and the present, which is evident in the participants' speech (Gadamer, 1975).

Speaking and Being Italian

Speaking a standardized language profoundly shifted regional horizons. Individuals gain a sense of identity and personal worth from associating with certain social groups and making comparisons to others (Abrams, O'Connor & Giles, 2002). For some, an Italian identity was a positive experience because it connected them to the more economically, culturally, and technologically progressive regions of Italy, but for others, this connection was defeating, especially when it came to language. The unification of Italy called for an official language, but the newly constructed Italian citizen was not willing or able to dissociate him or herself from local vernacular distinctiveness. Regional dialects are part of a "living language" and convey essential meaning for the people who use them (Gadamer, 1975, p. 436). According to Gadamer (1975), those who are raised in particular languages and cultural traditions see the world in a different way from those who belong to other traditions. Gadamer (1975) explains that language is a medium that our whole experience of the world and, especially, the hermeneutical experience, unfolds. He writes:

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Every word breaks forth as if from a center and is related to a whole through

which alone it is a word. Every word causes the whole of the language to which it

belongs to resonate and the whole worldview that underlies it to appear. Every

word, as an event of a moment, carries with it the unsaid to which it is related by

responding and summoning. (p. 458)

The late teens and early twenties had exposed more Italian and Sicilian people to the

Italian language. In both Italy and America, newspapers, such as the Italian Language

Press, were published in the official language, radio stations avoided regional dialects,

and schools taught children how to read and write in formal Italian. One result of

standardizing a society of different cultures is the loss of regional dialects that resides in

oral tradition. There is a growing sense of alarm that the cultural heritage of their

language will be lost. One participant said:

Italian, the way you speak, you write it. Sicilian you can't.

(Anonymous Participant)

The loss of any linguistic expression encourages monocultures (Kramer, 2003). Bakhtin's

work suggests that heteroglossia will continue to prosper in settings where people from

different cultures interact. Words and sounds fuse together to form new words and

sounds, thus making any unitary language relative. Some of the participants recall what it

was like to experience the Italian language for the first time or hear different Italic

dialects:

When I was about six years old, my father said, "I want you to meet professore

don Giuseppe," or whatever his name was. And my dad started talking to him, and

um, I'm thinking what are they are saying. I said to him later, "Papa, I didn't know

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you speak Chinese." He said, "What'd you mean Chinese?" I said, "I didn't understand what you were telling that man." He said, "We were speaking Italian." I was raised in Sicilian. I thought they were speaking Chinese.

(Anonymous Participant)

Some of the nuns were Italian, but they didn't speak the same Italian as we did.

(Anonymous Participant)

The Sicilian language derives from Latin and reflects the influence of many centuries of occupation (Glendening, 1980). Sicilian dialects tend to be somewhat obscure compared to standard Italian. The language contains Arabic, Greek, French, and Spanish words, apocopation of words, changes in vowels and consonants, so the differences between the two languages are clear to the trained ear. The spelling is phonetic and the stress falls on the next to last syllable unless indicted by an accent mark (Glendening, 1980). One participant teaches me the Sicilian word for beautiful, *bedda,* and the Italian word for beautiful, *bella,* and then gives me the words to a Sicilian hymn, Bedda Marti Di Lu Munti, written in Sicilian dialect:

Bedda Marti di La Rocca	Blessed Mother of the Rock
Ca quann' eru picciriddu	when I was a small child
Acchianavu li scaliddi	I climbed the steps
Di lu tempiu Scianirisi	of the temple of Alessandria

Participants of this study fluctuate between speaking Sicilian and speaking Italian depending upon the person with whom they were conversing. Communication accommodation theory explains the social cognitive processes in which individuals mediate between the environment and their behaviors (Hummert, Shaner, & Garstka,

1995). During intergroup communication, the negotiation of interpersonal boundaries "implicates the socio-structural relations between groups as well as the choices individuals make based on the identities that are salient to them in a given context" (Petronio, 1998, p. 571). Participants adjust their speech to others based on a variety of ingroup or outgroup factors (Coupland, 2004), such as the context of communication, the audience, and the act. It was perceived acceptable to speak Italian with outgroup audience members, or in mixed settings, but dialectical tensions occurred among the Sicilians when people chose to speak Italian over Sicilian within ingroup settings:

> I remember when they were conducting the board meetings in Italian and Sicilian. And we had one, Mr. Longo, he was Sicilian, but when he got up to speak, he always spoke Italian, and some of them resented it. My uncle, who was from North Italy, came here, in this room, the general room, a big meeting, and he got up and started speaking Italian, and, uh, he actually left and never came back.

<div align="right">(Anonymous Participant)</div>

Ingroup and Outgroup Communication

Social identity theory posits that self-identity is comprised of two parts: personal identity and social identity (Hecht, 1998; Maoz, 2004; Insko, Schopler, & Sedikides, 1998). Sicilians were uncertain of their position in the emerging Italian American culture. Northern Italians did not trust them and Americans were openly hostile. Even though other immigrants began to consider themselves American, Sicilians continued to identify themselves by villages and customs. Their identity is two-fold, personal for ingroup communication, and social for outgroup communication. Regardless of one's village, individuals share regional similarities or differences, family names, bloodlines, and even

family feuds that transferred over from the old country. They possessed specific knowledge about these regional characteristics that Tampa Natives and Spanish and Cubans people did not. The result of this collective view was a new horizon of ingroup membership. An insider, for example, can make distinctions between people from the same village, or two different regions.

> The reason Lucille and I bonded like sisters is because our grandmothers were from the same town, Santo Stefano di Quisquina.
>
> (Anonymous Participant)
>
> The Calabrese are known for their hard head and the Abruzzi for their soft heart.
>
> (Anonymous Participant)
>
> In the house, I lived in two worlds because my parents were forty kilometers away from each other, and they were two different personalities. Both Sicilian, but you wouldn't think that forty kilometers would make such a difference.
>
> (Anonymous Participant)

Insiders are also aware of family names and descent; therefore, they can question in-group membership. According to participants, some members may not be considered Sicilian or Italian:

> My mother's family were really descendents of the Jews of Spain, 1492. A big contingent of Jews settled in my great grand mother's village. And, uh, they had to change their name to remain in Sicily. And they had to change their religion, so anytime you see a name like Palermo, Messina, Licata, this happened in the 1500's, Queen Isabella and Ferdinand, they decided to take all the money away from the Jews of Sicily.

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(Anonymous Participant)

My sister, she met our friend, who was Italian of Albania descent. The Ottoman Empire when it invaded, uh, Albania, the Christians all left and most of them settled in Sicily. And there's villages in Sicily where they speak nothing but Albanian, we're talking about three hundred years ago. And he's called a Ghigher', which my dad never did consider him Italian. My grandfather said if you had only one bullet in your gun and a Ghigher' was coming or a bear, you shoot the Albanian. So, I'm the only one who married a Sicilian from our village, my brother married a Calabrese.

(Anonymous Participant)

Dick Greco is not a true Italian. Just the way he acts, he's not one of us. His family owned King Hardware on 8th avenue.

(Anonymous Participant)

Moreover, people knew each other from the old country, so concealing identities was extremely difficult, someone was bound to know your family or your village. The following excerpts demonstrate the importance of family names in this communtiy:

If your name is Fortunata or Gioia, they actually outlawed those names, and those were people found on the steps of the convent, and they were just given up, and they named these babies Fortunata, Fortune or Joy. They actually banned by law, you can no longer be given these names because there's a stigma. If you were illegitimate, you were called by the city you were in.

(Anonymous Participant)

When we were kids and beyond me, there was no such thing as a date. You did not have a date. We didn't even know what the word meant. And the youth that used to come up here, the girls would naturally have a chaperone, a mother, aunt, or older sister. And the boys kinda stood together, and if a girl was on that side, and you couldn't ask the girl for dance, you had to ask the chaperone. And then, the first thing out of the chaperone's mouth was, "What's your name?" They wanted to know who you were. If they didn't like your family, they'd say no, and then you'd walk all the way back.

(Anonymous Participant)

Knowing family names is not exclusive to the older participants—younger participants claim that family names are still an important part of ingroup discourse. People in this community frequently communicate through a naming process in which family names function as a marker of ingroup identity and memory. The names have little meaning for people outside this community. The following excerpt is part of a conversation between two participants who use names to situate the events of their story:

G: My mother told me this story. It's *Valenti, Midulla,* and what was the other boy's name? I remember those two because *Midulla's* my last name and *Valenti,* my great grand mother is a *Valenti,* that's how I remember.

P: Well, she was related to my grand mother.

G: Right. Actually, your nana and my nana were related.

P: *Mary Rose,* she was related.

G: *Noto*

P: She was a *Noto*

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G: She passed away. She was an *Albano*. She was *Noto* through marriage. And her son passed away that was my age.

P: *Nick,* my father

G: Who was *half Noto*

P: *Santo Trafficante* and his brothers, and I think *Jimmy Brunno*. I think *Jimmy Lumia*, by this time was already dead.

G: He died, but he had help.

P: And *Primo Lazzara*.

G: Now *Primo Lazzara's* granddaughter is married to Guida.

Naming is a common practice in this community because it allows people to maintain group membership through their talk. Participants mention names that connect them to one another as a form of ingroup identity. This is vital when ethnic space where people interact is no longer a visible sign of their ethnicity.

The horizon of ingroup membership also has to do with how the group presents themselves to the outside world. Participants tended to vary between calling themselves Sicilian or Italian depending on their outgroup audience. They were Sicilian when they talked about their personal traditions, their home, and their family, and Italian when they talked about their national identity or made general statements about their ethnicity. The following excerpt from a Sicilian male illustrates this point:

The Italians or Sicilians, whatever *you* wanna call them, they were working people.

(Anonymous Participant)

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The "you" was directed towards outgroup audience members who may not be able to tell the cultural differences. Kramer (2003) writes, "Once we are dialogized, put into discourse with an Other and so made relative, then who and what we are becomes both revealed and concealed" (p.11). The national Italian identity not only grouped Sicilians into the higher culture, but it also protected them from regional prejudices in America. The Sicilian culture contains within it a strong tendency towards suspicion of outsiders, and with good reason—they suffer a long history of brutal invasions and foreign domination from many cultures and tribes (Alba, 1985; Guidice, 2000). The Sicilians see their plight as that of an "ancient hero fighting, with his little group, the rest of the world" (Barzini, 1964, p. 253). Enduring multiple attacks and wars require fortitude, virtue, and intelligence. According to Barzini (1964):

> Their capacity to grasp situations with lightning speed, invent a way out of intricate tangles, gauge exactly the relative power of contending parties, weave wonderfully complex intrigues, coldly control their smallest act, emotions, and words, but when it's safe abandon themselves to generous enthusiasms, their capacity to do all these things is such that they often bewilder continental Italians (p. 252)

In their struggle against the world, Sicilians proved themselves warriors.

Over the course of fighting many battles, Sicilians learned to conceal their culture and subscribe to proverbs, such as *a chi dici il tuo secreto, doni la tua liberta*—to whom you tell a secret you give your freedom. They also learned to conceal their concealment, which gave them a reputation as underhanded and untrustworthy. This stigma originates from underground tactics of warfare that were carried out with great precision by the

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Sicilian Vespers, a rebel group that massacred four thousand French soldiers and politicians following a violent incident at a church outside Palermo on Easter, March 30, 1282. This historical event is not forgotten and is perhaps the precursor for the Mafia. The origin of the word "mafia" is said to be the acronym for the battle cry of a rebel group, "Morte al Francia Italia Anelia" (Death to the French is Italy's cry), but nobody knows for sure (Barzini, 1964). The word has two meanings, which according to Barzini (1964), should be indicated by lower-case, mafia, and upper case Mafia. The lower case mafia is a moral code that Sicilians are taught from birth—they must help each other, always side with their family and friends, and fight the common enemies (Barzini, 1964). The upper case Mafia is a criminal organization that rules over part of Sicily (Barzini, 1964). The Mafia members, unfortunately, live by the same moral codes as regular citizens, which make the organization culturally complex. In an attempt to break free from the stigma of the Mafia and any Mafia-like characteristics, many Sicilians try to conceal the fact that they are concealing something, which is typically the shame or fear of being associated with the stigma (Barzini, 1964). Suffice to say, the national Italian identity offers some safety, but it cannot cover widespread distrust. According to Gardaphé (1996), suspicious behavior was brought to America through the oral traditions of southern Italian culture. The following excerpts illustrate his point:

> They were very suspicious of everything and everybody. Whenever there was a picnic, we'd go on the bus. My aunt, and her brother had to go, Junior, because they were close in age. Or my grandmother had to go or her grandmother had to go. It wasn't that they didn't trust us, they didn't trust people. This stuff carried over from the old country.

I was very closely guarded, and the only friend I had was P, because her mother

was suspicious like my aunt. That's the truth. And they both very suspicious and

rough, right? And they didn't want, they were very funny about who we hung

around with. And since P was Sicilian and I was Sicilian, it was okay.

<div align="right">(Anonymous Participant)</div>

The Sicilians also considered American laws and customs somewhat rigid and oppressive

(Barzini, 1964). They felt cut off from the wealth and influence of American society, so

they found comfort in clinging to what gave them the most protection: family and their

old way of life (Barzini, 1964). The next excerpt is an example of clinging to old ways of

life and the blurring of the moral codes between average citizens and the *Mafiosi*. The

Sicilian style used in the following excerpt is intended to be different from the Mafia's

code *Cosa Nostra* (our own affair):

My father and his brothers we sold all over west Tampa to all the independent

groceries stores, but they didn't have a salesmen. Their salesman, my dad was

pretty good with the family. He would tell the member of the family that, "Get

these customers for me, and you get five percent." And they worked, instead of a

salesman, they worked it out the *Sicilian style*.

<div align="right">(Anonymous Participant)</div>

Two cultural codes govern Sicilian public behavior: *Omertà*, the sacred code of silence

that warns what can or cannot be spoken about in public; and *bella figura*, the code of

proper social conduct that governs an individual's front stage behavior (Gardaphé, 1996).

Both codes keep the experiences of its members concealed from outsiders (DeSalvo &

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Guinta, 2002). The conspiracy of silence adds extra protection—nobody "hears nothing, sees nothing, tells nothing, and thus betrays nothing" (Barolini, 1985, p. 24). Omertà is an important part of this community—the majority of participants was familiar with the code and claimed to apply it to life. The following two excerpts illustrate how participants talk about the code of silence:

Silence is golden. That's what they said about Dr. Persia, who died at 96. They put it in his yearbook "silence was golden." And that is the way we were raised to be. And you never go side with people outside the family.

(Anonymous Participant)

Santo Trafficante was he was a man of few words. Uh, that's an Italian thing.

(Anonymous Participant)

Bella Figura is a heightened sense of dignity, grounded in the fear of being seen as less than human (Philipsen, 1990). Participants of this study state that decorum and respecting (*rispetto*) your parents is an important part of being Sicilian. Respect is complicated because it also indicates a form of obedience in Italian culture, especially for women and children (Orsi, 1985).

If you talk back to your mother in public, that's malafigura (bad behavior).

(Anonymous Participant)

Then of course, was the strictness of the way we were raised. No make-up, not being allowed to date. The other thing of it is it that my father completely ruled the house, my mother never worked out. Uh, he set the tone for everything. If he didn't want to do something, or didn't want something for supper, my mother never opened her mouth to him.

According to many Italian American female scholars, Italian women have a suppressed sense of self (Bona, 2003; DeSalvo, & Giunta, 2002). Barolini (1985), explains that Italian women have a patriarchal worldview of the world, because their lives are dependent upon a male—father, brother, husband, sons.

Bella figura also contributes to Italians' heightened sensitivity to media stereotypes that portray them as low criminals or *infamia* (total disgrace). Some participants have very strong feelings about the way their culture is depicted, especially for children:

> A lot of this is, uh, a lot of communication, is wrong because a lot of kids get the wrong idea about what some of our culture is about. They get the wrong idea about what it's all about. Right now the defamation league of Florida, whatever, is fighting *Shark Tales* because they say that that's bad for the children to see because it gives the wrong idea about the culture and they should not promote it. It's a new movie that came out, a cartoon or whatever. All the guys that are bad are Italian.

> Why don't they put down something like the astronaut that Italian American woman whose going up in space now, eh? Why don't they do that? Publicize something like that for young people to have as role models, not the Sopranos.

> I think *Growing up Gotti* is a travesty, it's a you know, a glorification of a very small wanna be working class gangster segment of Italian American society. It

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reaches a lot of people and makes them think Italians are like this. Gotti himself, he probably wouldn't have cared because he was shameless.

<div align="right">(Anonymous Participant)</div>

Family secrets are a result of both codes. Much of the Sicilian ancestral customs or home life, *domus*, is private. The *domus* is a complicated network of aunts and uncles, cousins, godparents, bound individuals and shaped their identity (Orsi, 1985). There are no individuals in *domus*, only clan members (Orsi, 1985). Barolini (1985) writes, "Emerging from the powerful fortress called family, Italian Americans are reluctant to share with outsiders, to make their lives accessible and knowable" (p. 24). The *domus* is viewed as the center of their lives and their culture and it affects the ways in which Italians organized their self-presentation, "they talk about the domus with affection, awe, and fear; they also talk about it quite sternly and seriously, because this is what differentiates the good person and community from the bad" (Orsi, 1985, p. 77). Respect for the *domus* demonstrates that one has been successfully taught the right family and community values (Orsi, 1985). The following three excerpts reveal private *domus* behavior and attitudes:

> I don't know how to explain it, you're not allowed to say what goes on in your house, or give out phone numbers.

<div align="right">(Anonymous Participant)</div>

> Well that's the Sicilian way, right? Because nobody in our family wanted to speak out, call attention to themselves.

<div align="right">(Anonymous Participant)</div>

We have our own culture that we perpetuate too. St. Joseph, Santa Lucia, St.

Christopher, but we do it privately at home, in our group.

(Anonymous Participant)

Sicilians have a variety of *domus* traditions, many of which are derived from quasi-religious beliefs. While the vast majority of Sicilian immigrants are Roman Catholics, their religious ideas are a mixture of Catholicism, paganism, and superstition (Guida, 2003). When people have a long history of disempowerment, they tend to believe that some higher power is to blame for their misfortunes and is to thank for their good fortunes. Superstitions and saints became a way for Sicilians to explain one misfortune after another or one invasion after another. "If peasants believed that supernational forces controlled their destiny, then for them no force was greater than their patron saint to bless the land" (Guida, 2003, p. 12). Sicilians idolized and worshiped Catholic saints like pagan gods in an intimate manner. For example, they prayed to Saint Rocco and Saint Paschal for rain and immunity to cholera, but cursed them for any ruin or death (Guida, 2003). Much of the participants' suspicious behavior was a product of religious superstitions imbedded in their regional identity and tied to the agricultural world. Their superstitions, saints, and magic ceremonies helped to ease the uncertainties and anxieties of their rural lifestyle. The following three excerpts describe some of their religious superstitions:

Me and L are superstitious. L, for example, she has an altar. We have our mother's

picture, her son's picture, everybody that died. My nana taught me that too. She

had her mother and father's picture, she would put candles.

(Anonymous Participant)

My mother used to do that (hand gesture). And my Nana Pauline, she'd say *Li Cruci*, when she'd had it with somebody, she made the sign of the cross. And she did, and she meant it.

(Anonymous Participant)

My grandmother would say, "We don't open an umbrella in the house. We don't put shoes on the bed or purse or hat on the bed because somebody will die." They believed in the evil eye, *malocchio*. When my aunt used to do this (hand gesture) to somebody that was the end of it. That that means bad luck going to come to you.

(Anonymous Participant)

Malocchio, the evil eye, means, "Those who see too far go blind. One must not disconnect from one's immediate group" (Barolini, 1985, p. 25). Sicilian faith was an extension of their local identity and the honoring of patron saints were sacred rituals. One participant made a prayer board with all the Sicilian saints and uses whenever it rains:

C: I do this when it's raining and thundering. I take this out, and all the saints. These are all the saints. When it's thundering and lightning, I pray for them.

N: That's a tradition of my wife.

C: My mother told me how to say it. She said get all the saints, and put them there.

N: She does this for every storm.

C: The storm, you know when it's thundering out? Say a little prayer, and, uh, it's suppose to go away.

N: The women had very strong beliefs.

Catholicism is a patriarchal institution, but practicing religion is a distinctly feminine activity in the Italian culture (Guinta, 2002, p. 99). The practices are rooted in the ancient cult of pre-Christian goddesses, which according to Guinta (2002), is why the female saints and the Madonna are so important.

Saint Joseph and Santa Lucia are two celebrated saints in Tampa. Saint Giuseppe (Joseph), Father of Jesus, is celebrated on March 19. The celebration includes the St. Joseph's Table, which features fish, pasta, vegetables, pastries, and other Italian treats. This tradition dates back to the middle ages when there was an exceptionally severe drought in Sicily that resulted in great famine. The peasants prayed to God for rain and to St. Joseph to plead with God on their behalf. They promised that if God caused it to rain, they would have a special feast honoring God and St. Joseph. Some participants believe burying a figurine of St. Joseph, the patron saint for those in need, upside down next to their front door will bring them good luck, especially if they are trying to sell their house.

Saint Lucy of Syracuse, also known as Santa Lucia, is the patron saint of blindness and celebrated saint in Tampa. Two participants explain this celebration:

N: There was a beautiful lady in the town, at the time there ahh the kings and the rich people and the poor people. Santa Lucia, who was a rich too, but there's a guy who come with the horses, the white horses, to the city, and they wanted Santa Lucia.

C: Her name used to be Lucia

N: Lucia. And they call her Lucia, and he wanted to marry Lucia. But she said I'm devote to God. So, I don't know the real story

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C: No *Aspetta,* he was, he said I'm in love with your eyes. I love your eyes. Oh you got beautiful eyes. So what'd she do? She rip her eyes out and put them in a dish. If you're in love with my eyes, here. Understand? So it's a legend, then later on her eyes came back. That's how come they call her Santa Lucia. She went to a cave, she was hiding or whatever and her eyes came back that's why she was devoted to god. We celebrate her on December 13th. We cook cuccia.

(Anonymous Participants)

The celebration of saints is ritualized by going to mass, eating, and socializing:

We celebrate over here in Tampa for St. Lucia, a mass, cook cuccia and the Italian club has a dinner and dance.

(Anonymous Participant)

Other religious rituals include baptism. Baptisms are very important to Sicilian Americans because an unbaptized baby is susceptible to the devil. Godparent are chosen very carefully and provide the clothing the baby wears during the ceremony. Traditional ceremonies include a religious medal to ward off the *malocchio*, the evil eye. It is also typical to have a party celebrating the ceremony.

When a child was born you had the big baptism, the christening was a big thing. It was a Catholic thing, but being Catholic and having the big party, was Italian.

(Anonymous Participant)

Many rituals entail eating, so "being Catholic" is also connected to Sicilian ethnicity and food:

So, in our house, we were the Catholics, we had the ethnic food.

(Anonymous Participant)

Food is linked to Sicilian notions of salvation, birth, death, health, and gender. In Tampa, the lentil is recognized for its health benefits and magical healing powers similar to chicken soup. Lentil soup is a staple dish for many Italian families, including this researcher's family. Moreover, exposure to American and Spanish/Cuban cuisine did not keep Sicilians from maintaining their own ethnic food patterns, especially when it comes to special occasions, favorite dishes, and traditional diets (Park, Paik, OK, & Spindler, 2003). Eating practices and the smell and tastes of certain herbs and vegetables were how people distinguished ingroup membership (Urso (2005). In addition, most participants describe cooking and eating practices as a site of gender roles, ethnic identity, and *domus* (Padolsky, 2005).

We also kept the traditions, if there was a big gathering, the women did all the cooking, served all the men first. Well that's still carried on.

(Anonymous Participant)

If I went to my grandmother's house, my Nana's house, I was uh I knew what she was going to have before I got there. If I went on Friday noon, I would have a very good grade cube of steak with an Italian sauce, not a red or white sauce but an olive oil sauce, rice and a fried potato. An uh, she also had that on Tuesday noon, Tuesday and Friday. Monday and Thursday she'd have pataia, which was white kidney beans and potatoes and everything like that. She was a creature of habit.

(Anonymous Participant)

I've our family spaghetti sauce and meatballs in here. And also, my aunt Jenny's salad recipe. I love the hard-boiled eggs in the sauce. I don't know if that's a

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Sicilian thing, but the family did it. That's the one thing corporate Italian

restaurants never caught on to.

<div align="right">(Anonymous Participant)</div>

Women are the center of family life and community, which is why their roles are crucial

to the Italian culture (Barolini, 1985). The death of a family-centered female can result in

a structural breakdown, especially if there is not another female to take her position. This

is common when a grandmother or elderly relative passes away. Family members no

longer have a place to gather, interact, and perform traditions. This loss is expressed in

the participants' talk about food.

Some claim the Italian *domus* and family is the religion of Italian Americans, or at

least deeply intertwined (Orsi, 1985; Philipsen, 1990), which would explain why the

Sunday meal is so important. Participants recall eating with extended family on Sunday:

And a lot of our values and cultures, come from the way we eat, the way we

gather on Sundays.

<div align="right">(Anonymous Participant)</div>

Growing up we always had spaghetti and meatballs on Sunday. The entire family

would gather at my nana's house every Sunday to eat.

<div align="right">(Anonymous Participant)</div>

The Italian Club: An Extension of the Domus

Although Tampa's Sicilians perceived their horizon of ingroup/outgroup

membership as sharing regional dialects, codes of conduct, notions of *domus*, stigmas,

saints, superstitions, and food, they did not share a closed society. Ybor City life and

geographic location was not conducive to creating little Italies or little Havanas. *Domus-*

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centered Italian societies, for example, in Italian Harlem, formed out of segregated enclaves. In Tampa, only pockets of *domus* existed in schools, churches, and buildings. The next four excerpts reveal how participants created their *domus*:

There were Italians in that school. That was our Italian area.

(Anonymous Participant)

The little Catholic school on 21st and 8th Avenue, that was called Most Holy Name, and it was, listed on my birth certificate, it was the only Italian perish.

(Anonymous Participant)

There was the Italian club. That was our little Italy.

(Anonymous Participant)

The only connection for the Italians is, all the Italians that belonged to the Italian club.

(Anonymous Participant)

A small group of Sicilians and Italians realized that by uniting, the Italian community of Tampa could overcome many of the social and economic challenges that confronted earlier immigrants. *L'Unione Italiana* (The Italian Club) was founded in 1910 as a way to "preserve and honor the culture, traditions and heritage of the Italian Community, and to maintain the historical facility as a functioning memorial to the working class immigrants" (L'Unione Italiana, 2006), and build a *domus*-centered society. *Domus* societies were popular in Italian American communities because it provided immigrants from the same village employment and mutual aid benefits, along with social interactions (Orsi, 1985). It also provided a sense of protection from the outside world. Sicilians had a profound mistrust of governments and clergymen, so many joined for

mutual aids reasons, especially burial services (Orsi, 1985). They were afraid that family would not be able to uphold traditional burial duties or they would not be buried together. The next excerpt discusses immigrant concerns over death rituals:

> And then they really starting sending their relatives over here and before you know it, they had several hundred Italians in this community and their biggest fear when they died they would not be buried with their family in Italy, and, um, so a handful of uh, the intelligenti of this community sat down and decided to have a mutual aid society, cradle to grave.

> (Anonymous Participant)

Communal identity is connected to the living and the dead (McIlwain, 2003; Mumford, 1961). Village life is full of magical and mythical spaces for death rituals (Kramer, 1997, McIlwain, 2003). Moreover, the Italians did not want to shift control of their deceased over to professional services. Their private burial spaces were not to become public spaces that "bear no emotional attachment or responsibility" (McIlwain, p. 152). *L'Unione Italiana* purchased land and transformed it into a Sicilian cemetery—complete with imported cypress tress, marble head stones, rocks, and "venerable shrines that embodied sacred properties and powers" (Mumford, 1961, p. 8). The cradle to grave was a commitment to the past, but also to ease their uncertainty in the present (Orsi, 1985). Mumford (1961) writes,

> The origins of settlement have to do with sacred things, not just physical survival: they relate to a more valuable and meaningful kind of life, with a consciousness that entertains past and future, apprehending the primal mystery of sexual

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generation and the ultimate mystery of death and what may lie beyond death. (p. 9)

People supported the club through the dues and contributions. The club added value to the membership by providing social activities, fellowship, Italian arts and culture, and burial benefits. Some even claim the club was their church, so the building had a spiritual presence in the landscape. The "landscape embodies the voice of ancestors, myths, and histories" (Tall, 1997, p. 19). Italians have an emotional attachment and sense of obligation to the club (Kramer, 1997). This explains why this community expressed a loss of identity and history when separated from Ybor City.

The inside of the building provided many symbolic interactions, events, routines, expectations, and discourses that shaped the horizon of identity (Kramer, 1997). J. C., a sixty-year-old Sicilian American participant, is a lifetime member of the Italian Club. He tells me:

> I'm sixty-nine, so I've seen a lot here. I used to take these stairs four at a time, now I come up in the elevator.

> (Anonymous Participant)

He knows every part of the building and his knowledge is integral to its restoration. During the course of two hours, J.C. provides me with stories about the origins of the club, the changes, the loyalties of the members, the social interactions and rules, entertainment, childhood memories, and the hopes for the future. His stories provide insights to how this community formed a *domus*-centered society within Ybor City. The following eight excerpts are from his interview:

Origins:

It was not called the Italian club, it was the Societá di Mutuo Soccorso, and uh then about 1910, they had a split. And they separated and the older members went, and they kept the name and created the L'Unione Italiana, which incidentally, is a socialist slogan. When I called New York, I mean Washington once, NIAF, and they said, "What organization," and I say "L'Unione Italiana." They say, "Is that a communist club?" he, he. So, then, eh, so these men sat down and organized the mutual aid society, which was really HMO, aswe know it today, except a step further it went from birth to cemetery.

Club changes:

The golden age of the Italian club was under the administration of Filippo Licata. It became at the beginning it became like uh like selective members. But when Licata came, he made it very liberal, everybody could come in, from a few hundred they built it up to three thousand right away. He made it liberal he brought up all the new ideas and things and he built this building. The building, the second building was built right were that building is, it was bought from my great grand father where my mother was born in a little house that was on that lot. The first building was across the street, caddie corner, it was a wooden building and uh and then they built that building and it burn down. It was built in 1911 and burned in 1915. and then they built this building in 1914 can you believe it, it cost them eighty thousand dollars. Furnished. That's furnished. The building cost them about seventy-five thousand. This building today would cost several million.

Loyalties of Members:

> People would actually pay club dues before they went out and bought groceries. They were dedicated. My uncle who is about twenty years older than my dad by marriage he bought an insurance policy making the benefactor the Italian club in case he died and he did die and they got a large sum of money for the club. Plus, they sold bonds. All the Italians bought bonds to build this building. What I am trying to tell you, they were very dedicated Italians.

Social Interaction:

> You thought that era would never end. The social room was packed. This time of day, it would be full. Playing cards, dominos, chess, chess was a big thing then. Chess, a big wooden chess set, I wish we had a set, but they're all gone.

Social Rules:

> Women were not allowed in this area at all. If a women wanted to get her husband she'd stand out in the lobby and send somebody in here to get their uh, little girls wouldn't come in here at all. If my grandfather saw me, he'd chase me out. I used to sit in the windowsill and watch them play and they never saw me. And the ladies were not allowed to be on the board either. That changed after the war, way after the war.

Childhood Memories:

> A lot of family were created right here on this floor. This was just a lovely place. The happiest moments of my life is up here. And especially, even as a teenager, my generation you had to dance with your mom. That was the privilege of

dancing to get up and waltz, the Italian waltz, with your mom. And that was

really something. And the girls danced with their fathers.

Entertainment:

The movie theatre here cost every bit of five cents. It started in the old days with

opera, then vaudeville came in and it got a little rough and then burlesque and the

movies for a nickel, double feature.

Hope for Future:

We must get younger people. The only way this place will survive is we have

young people. We do as many activities as we can.

As one of the oldest club members, J.C.'s is an important voice in the Italian community;

his stories provide an oral history about the people who struggled to create a *domus-*

centered society.

Tampa Sicilians confronted multiple horizons of identity and new worlds. Their

shifting sense of individualism in American society combined with their historical

worldview affects how they adapt to their new environment.

Chiaroscuro

The revealing and concealing of ingroup communication resulted in a dual

identity. Dual identity is the most common theme found in participants' ingroup

discourse. The word Italians use to describe a dual identity is *Chiaroscuro,* which

literally means the juxtaposition of dark and light (Barolini, 1999). The light or the clear,

chiaro, represents the Sicilians and the Italians external adaptation to American culture

and to the Latin community—the revealing. The dark, *scuro,* symbolizes their interior

struggle over concealing their heritage (Kramer, 2003). The balancing of *chiaroscuro* is

what Du Bois refers to as double consciousness. The inner conflict results in new cultural expressions and confusions (Du Bois, 1973; Bona, 2003). Melucci (1996) writes, "To begin, the term identity is conceptually unsatisfactory: it conveys too strongly the idea of the permanence of subject" (p. 85). The individual must maintain permanence through a "continuous constructive identity process" (Melucci, 1996, p. 85). There is no sense of permanence because it is lost in western notions of linear progress (Melucci, 1996). The tension is always present and causes temporal anxiety (Gebser, Ger. 1949/Eng. 1985) and a "schizophrenic situation" (Melucci, 1996, p. 86). Kramer (2003) writes,

It is in that ironic moment of contact with an Other that we realized our sense of 'I' and, at the same time, call that into question. Thus, the world is dialogized, relativized, bringing about both the possibility and the crisis of identity. (p.11)

Participants express *chiaroscuro* when they talked about living in two worlds. Four participants described this state of being:

My mother said two worlds, at home she was Italian and when she left she was, it was a different world.

(Anonymous Participant)

Like my dad says, in the house; you're in Italy, when we cross the threshold to go outside, then your in America. It was two worlds,

(Anonymous Participant)

Even though I went to a public grammar school and I had these friends, like Sharon Kilpatrick, when I came home, then the socializing that I did and the food. Once I hit home, especially when I was younger, that world was sort of, a little modernized, but it was still all the culture was there.

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I felt like I lived in two different worlds, very closely guarded.

In this last excerpt, the participant fluctuates between three identities, while expressing ingroup/outgroup communication and *chiaroscuro*:

> They think we *Italians* have always been *don't talk*, draw the drapes, very *suspicious*. When we went on the outside, we kept our *mouths shut*, we were *Americans on the outside*, but when we came *home*, *we were Sicilians*.

The Italic identity is complex—filled with multiple layers of opposing histories that range from ancient ways of life to local histories. The ways in which participants talk about these histories indicates an Italic element to their shifting Italian American horizon. The horizon of Italic identity is a balance of personal and social identities. The personal identity involves ingroup membership and concealment—dialects, shame, superstitions, and the domus. The social identity involves outgroup membership—language skills, *bella figura*, and behavioral adaptation. Living between the two causes *chiaroscuro*, which affects the vista of their Italian American identity.

The Horizon of an Italian American Identity

The horizon of an Italian American identity is best described using Jean Gebser's (Ger. 1949/Eng. 1985) theory of human consciousness and culture. Gebser's theory asserts that the unfolding of consciousness is nowhere more evident than in expression of cultural identity. He presents five structures of consciousness as ways of being in the world, which are applicable to one's horizons, arguing that "Consciousness is neither

knowledge nor conscience" but must be recognized as a wakeful presence (Ger. 1949/Eng. 1985, p. 42). This presence and the world that is our perception are revealed as relative vis-à-vis different cultures and different perspectives. It is not an evolutionary, biological, or historical process, but a process of mutation, in which consciousness structures do not disappear into a new structure, but instead are retained and expressed according to which structure is most prevalent at the time. Gebser's idea of mutation is "plus mutation," which entails that humans, while constantly gaining new qualities, which allow them to interact with the natural and social environment, do not lose the old qualities in order to adapt. Rather, at any given point in time all forms of conscious awareness are present within human consciousness. While certain characteristics are, at a given period, dominant, other latent characteristics are still present and are evident in cultural experience. As a result, all human endeavors, including the fundamental ways of articulating spatial-temporal expression are discovered within the unfolding of consciousness. Similar to structures, multiple horizons are always present, and continually changing and expanding. Seeing the horizon is not a physical activity, but a conscious understanding that numerous horizons exist and are operative at the same time. Horizon constitutes the limit to understanding. Relative difference, like comparative studies, exposes limitations/horizons enabling one to expand, grow, and learn. When people meet and converse, they expose each other to new horizons, which helps each grow. If they are tolerant and open to the things they each know and have opinions about, they will learn something new. Thus, dialogics exposes us to difference and we grow. In other words, I am not hopelessly trapped in my horizons. I can change. Exposure to texts, novels, textbooks, newspapers, films, and art all expand my horizons.

Horizons are not transparent in the sense that participants have an external view of their own culture (Gebser, Ger. 1949/Eng. 1985). Instead, they function as diaphanous attempts at achieving integral reality—perceiving "the world as truth" (p. 7). Perception of difference is from within, not above or outside, one's cultural system. As participants work through their understanding of being American and being Italian, their perspectives are influenced by both the researcher and their own experiences, which they will come to see in a new light. The researcher and the participants engage each other with set horizons, bound by limitations or prejudices beyond which they may not be able see (Kramer, 2003). During the interview, they share a physical and semantic environment from which they influence each other's worldview (Kramer, 2003). Any change to one's horizon changes the ways in which he or she conceptualizes world (Kramer, 2003). "Whatever lies behind" (past) and "ahead of" (future)" becomes accessible in the new subject-object relationship (Gebser, Ger. 1949/Eng. 1985, p. 7).

The emerging awareness of an Italian American identity manifests in the horizons of the magic Italic origin, the mythic Latin origin, and the mental rational Italian American origin that unfolds with every story, every explanation, and every memory. Hence, "We are shaped and determined not only by today and yesterday, but by tomorrow as well" (Gebser, Ger. 1949/Eng. 1985, p. 7). According to Gebser, all cultural expression presents a unique awareness of space and time. While magical awareness is spaceless and timeless, signaling no differentiation between man and nature, mythic awareness expresses the beginnings of human awareness as separate from nature. The present manifestation of our awareness of space and time is perspectival. The perspectival world, which is mental-rational, signaled a new psychic awareness of space,

objectified or externalized from the psyche out into the world. As well, there begins to be a visualization of time in quantifiable, spatial character (the clock). It is this dominant, perspectival awareness, with its focus on pure rationality, measurement, and intense individualism that expresses itself in a variety of communication modalities characterized in Kramer's theory of dimensional accrual/dissociation.

The theory of dimensional accrual/dissociation (Kramer, 2000) seeks to explain the varieties of cultural expression that exists in the world. Kramer claims that this theory of social interaction/communication "can be used to explain any social behaviour/communication including other theoretical artifacts, even the bewildering array of other conflicting theories of communication…" (p. xiii.). Kramer's theory asserts that the unfolding of consciousness is nowhere more evident than in cultural expression. Thus, the different ways cultures express time, space, and mood provide explanations for the vast diversity in world expression. "Some cultures quantify, or establish a quantifiable type of space and time, while other cultures establish (through their expressions) spaces and times that are qualitatively different" (Kramer, 1997, p. x). Additionally, each culture presents different rationalities or presumptions about time and space, life and death, and good and evil (Kramer, 1997). Insofar as some cultures exhibit a detached or constructed relationship with the natural world, others appear more spiritual or "fluid." As such, there is a severe loss of emotional attachment. Everything, in effect, becomes the same. Because of its dissociative nature, everything is open to manipulation. Perspectival consciousness locates the 'I' making individual identity the centre of concern; further removed from the clan or other objects in our symbolic environment.

Kramer's (1997) suggests that the unfolding of consciousness is an accumulation in dimensionality, but as dimensional expressivity accrues, dissociation from origin increases. Participants express dissociation over elements of their culture they feel is lost or fading away, but there are contradictions in their discourse. One the one hand, if you asked participants if they believed their ethnic group to have fully assimilated into American culture, they said, "Yes, Italians are assimilated." On the other hand, their talk is overflowing with Italian, Sicilian, and Spanish words that fluctuate in a heteroglot nature. Not only does their discourse deny a monoculture, but the loss of ethnicity as well. In other words, Italian American ethnicity is present; it lives within the dialectical tensions of coming to terms with what it is or is not. The following discussion will examine the final horizon of identity by comparing the data to the predictions and claims of the Cross Cultural Adaptation Model, to understand the participants' expression of functional fitness, psychological health, and intercultural personhood.

Functional Fitness: How to Function

The horizon of an Italian American identity is typically connected to being American and their ideas of assimilation. For example, it was common for participants to consider their ethnic difference in terms of the melting-pot attitude:

Well, I think that has to do with America in general, we are becoming more of a melting pot.

(Anonymous Participant)

The success of one's adaptation is determined by how well one copes and adjusts in the host culture (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997; Kim, 2003). As the person gains host communicative competence, he or she is able to function successfully in the host

environment without relying one's ethnic groups for information or socialization (Kim, 2003). Based on the data, how well one functioned in this community was continent upon communication shills—without them Italians could not survive in Ybor City.

The communication competence of the immigrants, however, was more complicated and dynamic than the Cross Cultural Adaptation Model suggests. Their operational capacity to carry out "behaviors externally in accordance with the host cultural patterns" contradicts the notion that adaptation is adapting to the host culture or to one culture (Kim, 1997, p. 342). Their linguistic ability was contingent upon multiple languages: Spanish for working and socializing, English for communication within the host culture, and variations of Italian for developing ingroup relationships. Most participants claim their immigrant relatives were able to speak all three languages, while others remember a fused dialect of Spanish and Italian, and some English. Some participants, however, said they had family members who never learned to speak English, only Spanish, because that was what was required of them in the cigar factories. Language is a crucial function in the adaptation process, but I argue that Kim's model only acknowledges communication competence on a surface level and within the limits of the host culture. It fails to take into consideration the intricate nonverbal and verbal relationship individuals have with language and how it affects their ability to function when it is changed or lost. It also fails to acknowledge how many functions one must acquire. Thus, Tampa Italians needed to function in three languages, but under Kim's model, only the host language, English, is recognized. What happens when people only speak two out of the three languages? What are the consequences of choosing one

language over another? What are the conditions or issues that emerge from each speech act?

The loss of language is among the participants' primary concerns. Some claim to make a conscious effort to incorporate Italian words into their everyday talk, especially when conversing with their children or grandchildren. Others simply use Italian words as a way to express themselves in the only way that makes sense to them. For example, *faccia tosta* implies one is strong or pigheaded, *meschino* means poor thing, and *scuola marcaron* is the colander used to strain the spaghetti. Participants contend that speaking or not speaking affects the way they feel about their heritage or their ability to use it when necessary:

> I think that not speaking Italian does, indeed, affect the way I feel about my heritage. I view it as a barrier to totally embracing the fact that I am an Italian American. I also believe that is why I relate more to being Spanish than Italian. The second language has provided an opportunity for me to communicate with other Spanish-speaking cultures and tends to forge an association as a result.
>
> (Anonymous Participant)
>
> I know there's a huge difference in the language skills of people who go home every night and speak Vietnamese, Chinese, and Spanish as opposed to us who go home and speak English.
>
> (Anonymous Participant)

Both participants view speaking Italian as a sign of being Italian and a connection to community.

According to the Cross Cultural Adaptation Model, long-term communication with ethnic groups will impede one's ability to move forward and upward. The only way a stranger can form new cultural habits and properly function is to dissociate from the group. If this is true, then children of strangers should have little reason to acquire an ingroup membership. One young informant said that he and his friends sometimes engage in contests of identity with other Italian American boys, as a way to prove they are authentically Italian or different in a non-mainstream way. Group identification lies in their ability to speak a dialect, because anyone can learn Italian in school. When Italians study Italian in school, it is not the dialect of their parents and grandparents; therefore, they perceive it as not authentic. Second or third generation Italian Americans, who did not learn the language in the home or in the neighborhood, also want to establish coethnic membership. In the following excerpt, a participant discusses learning Italian in school and hearing it at home:

> I spoke it best when I was in college. I took Italian in college, and of course, my Nana was living so I could hear it when I was around her. It would have been so easy for my parents to do that too. You know, I can understand it. Before I was living with my parents, and they always used it but now I am on my own, I've been out of the house so long now I see them once a week whatever a couple times a week, my dad mostly says nasty stuff. I hate that I really wish I could speak Italian. That's one of the things I'm going to do when I retire.

> (Anonymous Participant)

The fact that third and fourth-generation Italian Americans learn to function with a language they can use to converse with each other, one that is fused with American patois, distinguishes them as an ethnic group.

Thus, participants perceive language as the primary connection to identity. The data indicates a correlation between the loss of language and their sense of dissociation. The perplexing struggle over what is vanishing and the longing for a tribal connection to the language is the impetus for the Italian American Historical Association, Italian American studies, and ultimately intercultural awareness.

The trouble with functional fitness is that it positions the ability to learn or unlearn cultural habits as a problem in need of a solution, and contains "cultural and ideological prejudices about what constitutes good versus bad intercultural communication" (Kramer, 2006, p. 2). It was good to speak English and bad to teach their children Italian. Italians who wanted to show their loyalty to America during World War II refrained from using their native language. Some continued to speak Italian in the privacy of their homes (concealment), while others only spoke the English language. The following three quotations reveal this people approached the language problem:

> What does it mean to be Italian. They tended to assimilate. They wanted to learn the language. We fought the Italians in World War II. We didn't have it as bad as the Japanese but they took my grandfather's shortwave radio out of his house because he was Italian. That was a something they just wouldn't let them keep them.

(Anonymous Participant)

There was a couple of people I worked with over the years that were Italian that

their great grandparents, when they came here they, they totally killed the

language, and when they had children, they don't want to speak Italian in the

house.

<div align="right">(Anonymous Participant)</div>

One of the things that they try to instill in their children. You speak American,

you assimilate, and forget about the Italian culture, except at home. You wanna

practice, at home. That's right, it was a different world when you went to school.

<div align="right">(Anonymous Participant)</div>

The problem with the Italian language, which was synonymous with an enemy during

World War II, was solved through the most effective assimilation practice—do not speak.

Functional fitness also emphasizes a success/fail condition. Participants view their

ability to speak English as their first language as a sign of successful assimilation. They

also view those who speak English as a second language as more likely to struggle and

fail. Participants see Spanish-speaking individuals as examples of this struggle:

So if assimilation means if you're going to do that, your going to try to be

successful in America, if your child's first language is Spanish, you may have a

hard time. Ya know, that was what I saw growing up. And they struggled in some

of the classes that somebody whose first language is English, ya know, they don't

struggle as much.

<div align="right">(Anonymous Participant)</div>

There is no denying that Italians, as a whole culture, have overcome the struggles of

speaking English as a first language. It is rare to find an Italian American who is not

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proficient in English. It was their choice to embrace the host language, but a hostile society made the alternative clear. They had to prove they were worthy of being American, which, ultimately, affects how they view other ethnic groups who do not share their plight.

Functioning sets up a right/wrong dichotomy, those who adapt are good and right, and those who cannot or will not are deviant and wrong. This dichotomy pits ethnic groups against one another and causes deeply held resentments, prejudices, and even violence. The participants have strong feelings about how their culture and other cultures adapted to English, which is revealed in the following four excerpts:

> I know all my friends growing up, ya know, in Palmetto Beach. I was the only Italian left in the neighborhood that wasn't seventy-five. There was all Cubans and Puerto Ricans. A lot of people from the boat lift and their parents all taught them to, not only did they have their culture at home, but because that was the neighborhood they grew up in, they spoke Spanish on the bus, they spoke Spanish at school, ya know, they kept the culture going all day. They kept their culture alive, around them the whole day.

> (Anonymous Participant)

> Everywhere you go you speak Spanish. You go to Fiesta Plaza you speak Spanish. You don't hear Italian, and yet, there are a lot of Italian people around. They keep their culture around them everyday. That's the difference between us and them.

> (Anonymous Participant)

I think the philosophy of the Italian American too is a little bit different from the Spanish. We don't go around saying we want our kids to learn Italian. The Italian philosophy is that they came to America their children are to learn English and strive to do the best and get an education. And they instill that education in you from the very beginning when you're this small. Va'Stu'ia, Va' Stu'ia, go study, go study, you do the dishes later

(Anonymous Participant)

We didn't speak Italian on the playground. I never spoke Italian on the playground. I spoke Spanish because that's what you heard. But the Italians say, "You're in America now, you speak English, you learn and you go and get an education and do the best you can."

(Anonymous Participant)

Sicilian immigrants of the first migration wave did not trust religious or government organizations, including schools. Most did not allow their children to attend school because their horizon was limited by fear and ignorance. As their worldview changed, so did their willingness to function in American society. They learned that speaking English and getting an education was the right way to achieve assimilation and success. A functionalist would say they have learned to minimize their maladjustments to the cultural system, to maximize operational fitness (Kramer, 2003). Functionalism places culture as a whole system with functional parts and seeks ways to guide and predict communication (Lim, 2002). Human communication, however, is not limited to parts in a bigger system. Function is a worldview that is passed down through oral traditions and

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manifest in the prejudices of future generations, as an expression of being able to function in their ancestors language or not.

Functional Fitness: How to Fit

At the core of Kim's (2002) model "is the goal of achieving an overall person-environment 'fit' for maximization of one's social life chances" (p. 260). We establish how well ethnic and racial groups fit into our society by observing and rating them according to a cultural profile that we consider a valid measurement of successful adaptation (Alba & Nee, 2003). This profile, unfortunately, presents a fixed identity, which, over time, brings forth issues pertaining to ethnocentrism, racism, and cultural relativism (Alba & Nee, 2003). Hence, "fitting" is more complicated than functioning because it is not always something one can observe or measure.

The Cross Cultural Adaptation Model falls short in explaining the reasons why adaptation practices cannot guarantee full integration into American society. For example, why do psychologically healthy and functionally fit Italian Americans describe themselves as bi-cultural, or not completely American? Or do why so many third and fourth generation Italian Americans struggle to hold on to their identity or want to learn how to speak Italian? Participants contend they never used the term "Italian American" to define themselves. Growing up, they were only Italian, just as the Irish American kid on the playground was only "Irish." One participant said that everyone used his or her ethnic label to set up difference, "It was the first thing you asked, and you had better know where you stood. I am Italian. I am an Italian Latin from Ybor." Fitting implies there is a right way to fit. It also suggests sameness, as when objects or people "fit together" as in "Italian American." Similar to many ethnic groups in this country who carry a

hyphenated label, the Italian American classification did not evolve from within their community (Clapps Herman, 2002). Nor did the notion of them being "working class people" (Clapps Herman, 2002). One participant explained that everyone worked long hard hours; it was expected, so asking people what he or she did for a living, as a way to get to know them, was strange. The only thing people wanted to know was "Who are you" and "What is your family like?" These labels did not harmoniously "fit together" in the minds of Italians. Thus, learning to speak the appropriate words, "I am Italian American" required expanding their horizons, which is both limited by fears of losing their Italic identity and open to endless possibilities in American culture. Some participants claim the combined label never dissolved in their mind, they simply see it as another identity on their horizon. The following two excerpts illustrate this attitude:

I have felt that I have two identities, American and Italian.

(Anonymous Participant)

I am more of a mixture Italian and American heritage, not solely one or the other.

(Anonymous Participant)

Not all participants experience a dual identity—some experience their identity in the manner predicted by the Cross Cultural Adaptation Model. The following excerpt illustrates an example of a successful "person-environment fit":

I feel mostly American now. When I was a kid I felt, it felt stronger, now its like more like I'm an American. As a kid more so when nana was living, you felt special, your ethnic group was a little different. But now my kids don't feel that way. I don't feel that way anymore. I'm proud of where my family came from,

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don't get me wrong, but I don't feel like it was as important as it was as I was a
kid. It's not as big a thing.

(Anonymous Participant)

Fitting implies that only one identity is applicable at a time, preferably the one that
matches the host culture.

The majority of participants perceive their Italian horizon different from (not
fitting) their American horizon. Their ideas of assimilation are dependent upon one which
horizon is most prevalent in their lives. Participants, who claim to "never shed" their
habits, "not really American" or "haven't assimilated," even ones born in the United
States, are expressing a conscious understanding that other horizons are operant. The
following three excerpts illustrate this understanding:

I've never been assimilated then because I *never shed my habits*. Me and Lucille
have never shed our culture. We speak Italian and have our superstitions.

(Anonymous Participant, Italics Added)

We're American but *we're not really American*. We don't speak American, right?
Americans speak from England, English. Some words are, when we talk we don't
really talk American.

(Anonymous Participant, Italics Added)

The people here in Tampa *haven't assimilated* because there's so many of us here
and we stayed here, generation after generation. And a lot of our values and
cultures, the way we eat, the way we gather on Sundays. Even the way we
decorate our house, the language, the Catholic.

(Anonymous Participant, Italics Added)

Their perception of fitting also involves race. The "white question" is still relevant among Italian Americans today because naturalization and whiteness did not guarantee them a fixed Italian American identity (Guglielmo, 2003). Their development of a "white consciousness" varies from one individual to another and from one region of the United States to another. A third-generation male participant exhibits the white question in his talk:

Who's the Italian here? He's not Italian, he's a white guy.

(Anonymous Participant)

Intercultural adaptation cannot work its effects on people who cannot discard their physical traits or who do not see whiteness on their horizon of identity. One could argue that Italian Americans look white, talk white, act white; therefore, must be white. In addition, the majority of Italian Americans perceive themselves as white and does not want to be classified with those who are not. In the state of New York, their whiteness is contested—some college or job applications list Italian Americans as minority groups (dark white), which provides individuals with an alternative to the square check box for white (no identity). Something as simple as a box labeled Italian American on a piece of paper can have an enormous effect on one's worldview and perception of possibilities. According to adaptation theory, this should not be happening—they have assimilated. Fitness, however, is only as good as one's perception. Thus, the horizons of identity cannot be right or wrong, nor can they be measured outside human experience.

Fitting into the Assimilation Narrative

For a long time, the assimilation narrative defined Italian American ethnicity, now that discourse has become a way for them to talk about their identity. These begs the

question of whether participants actually believe a real loss of identity has occurred or simply repeat the assimilation narrative that is told to them and now part of their horizon. Talking about it underscores their discursive position as assimilated or not and so it ironically preserves them as different, as a population for which the entire issue of assimilation is relevant. Human understanding contains a linguistic element in that language is the place where facts are complied and logic is applied in order to make knowledge. The narrative shares a truth; therefore, exercises it through specific theories and social practices that prescribe roles, rules, and action regarding adaptation. The regularity of its practice validates a field of knowledge about migration, which drives public policy, social structures, and intercultural communication research. In other words, the research findings say immigrants are a particular way, and therefore they must interact accordingly.

Assimilation is the classic story from which mass migration is told. The plot includes a sequence of generalized events with little variation—immigrant uproots, immigrant arrives, immigrant works hard, immigrant overcomes obstacles, and immigrant succeeds. The story is told from the perspective of the host culture and the style and language used to set up the elements of the narrative are based on social Darwinism, notions of whiteness, and the mythical first white settler, American Adam. The characters in the story are what fiction writers refer to as flat characters—two dimensional characters who do not undergo substantial emotional change, and possess only one or two dominant traits—as opposed to round characters—fully fleshed out characters who undergo substantial emotional change, and possess multiple traits. The moral of the story is success; characters that deviate from a prescribed path will fail. An

excellent portrayal of the assimilation narrative is located in *The Uprooted*, by Oscar Handlin (1952). This study is widely cited as an authority on early southern and eastern European migration. Handlin presents an accurate account of mass migration during the mid 1800's to early 1900's, but the subjects of his study are flat, possessing one or two dominant traits, nothing more. We do not get to know them as human beings, just their surface characteristics. Handlin does not account for the nuances or individual distinctions of the immigrants—all the dimensions of real human beings. Flat characters are interchangeable because they can easily fit into the narrative or be substituted with a character of similar socio-economic and cultural background without substantively changing the narrative. Many immigrant groups, unfortunately, have accepted this flat character as a true embodiment of their ancestors. This is not unusual. In America, everyone wants his or her ancestor to be like the American Adam, the first white American settler. Lewis (1955) writes:

> An individual emancipated from history, happily bereft of ancestry, untouched and undefiled by the usual inheritances of family and race; an individual standing alone, self-reliant and self-propelling, ready to confront whatever awaited him with the aid of his own unique and inherent resources. (p. 5)

The Italians have their own version of this—the peasant who came from nothing without a language, endured hard labor, and was willing to adapt. This is an inaccurate account, because some died never knowing how to speak English and some were reluctant to adapt. More often than not, Italian Americans tell their migration story from the assimilation narrative because they only know how their relatives fit into the grand narrative; relatives did not always disclose their trials and tribulations. One participant

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said his mother "wouldn't talk about that period of her life." If all we have is a history of Italian migration told from above, "we miss even more the voice of the very protagonist of immigration, of their narrations, 'from below'" (Serra, 2003, p. 27). Italian Americans may only be able to talk about their history in the abstract or as flat characters, which, in turn, becomes a prominent theme in the horizon of their identity and discourse. The following is an example of a flat story:

> The struggles to come here, the stories they told and passed on, and succeeding. They worked hard to have a better life to pass on to their kids.
>
> (Anonymous Participant)

The participant discusses his family in a vague, abstract manner. His description lacks characters, emotion, and motivation. All we get from flat characters is that they did what they had to do to survive. We do not know why or how they made their decision. The next excerpt is an example of a rounder story:

> The conditions were horrible. I asked my grand father, "What did you have when you got there?" "What did you have for lunch?" He said the night before he would boil a couple of sweet potatoes and he took them in his pocket and he would go to work in the fields and that's what he ate, sweet potatoes. Can you imagine? It was miserable. All they seen was alligators and uh uh mosquitoes.
>
> (Anonymous Participant)

The participant identifies a character and describes him in more detail—his resourcefulness, his appetite, and his stamina to work in unfit conditions. The story, however, is not completely round. When is comes to migration stories, the majority of participants fall somewhere in between the flat and round descriptions.

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Problems occur when the assimilation narrative, from which Italian American identity is defined and experienced, is the point of reference from which participants begin to talk about their identity. Using the flat or round characters spills over into everything they discuss. Participants were more likely to generalize and use flat characters when they viewed their assimilation patterns as fitting into the grand narrative. Narratives that use flat characters are focusing more on the success story, the plot, instead of the actual people involved. It shows a lack of or lower level of curiosity about individual lives. One can argue that a low level of curiosity will carry over to their approach to cultural traditions. For example, they may perceive traditions as slipping through the cracks of life, watered down, or forgotten. The following three excerpts express this attitude:

> I mean some of the stuff is going to slip through the cracks, ya know? I don't know how to make suggo as well as nana made. That's something that has to slip through the cracks and uh, but you have to take the parts, the parts you can and the things you think are important.
>
> (Anonymous Participant)
>
> We try to keep it alive with foods and stuff, but it's, its going to be watered down. My kids, they're hardly even going to care, Probably. It's unfortunate, very unfortunate.
>
> (Anonymous Participant)
>
> I always talk about the stories to my kids, but the older I get, the more distant it gets in my mind.
>
> (Anonymous Participant)

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In this situation, participants' attitudes support the Cross Cultural Adaptation model, they express shedding their cultural habits as inevitable.

Not all participants, however, claim to have abandoned their cultural heritage; instead, they find ways to transcend the magic experiences of their ancestors through "symbolic ethnicity" (Gardaphé, 1996). Some are curious enough to travel to Italy while others learn to speak Italian, cook Italian food, and adorn their homes with Italian cultural symbols (Barolini, 1999; Groeller, 2003). Similar to the previous generation, they attempt to recreate their culture and their ethnicity through various symbols, traditions, and discourses that resemble old-world signs. Round characters appear when participants are discussing upholding traditions; they are less likely to generalize about immigrants back then and now. The following seven excerpts regarding religion, family, food, social gatherings, and family stories illustrates this idea:

Religions Practices:

The traditions that we uphold are mostly religious based, Roman Catholic, attending Mass every Sunday, observing the Church's seasonal calendar, Lent, Ordinary time, Advent, etc., prayer before meals and at bedtime.

(Anonymous Participant)

Family Comes First:

Family comes first, heritage. Passing on traditions, mostly family comes first and we always have a family day and we always try to do things together on Sunday.

(Anonymous Participant)

Blood always comes first.

(Anonymous Participant)

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Eating Traditions:

> Trying to eat together, and even during the week, we try to sit down and eat
> together at dinner time. Can't eat together at lunch he's going to school or
> something like that, but we always try to sit down and eat dinner together.
>
> <div align="right">(Anonymous Participant)</div>
>
> You hold on to your traditions. Growing up we always had spaghetti and
> meatballs on Sunday.
>
> <div align="right">(Anonymous Participant)</div>

Social Gatherings:

> I took D. to a lot of these Italian festivals and they did show a lot of the culture,
> like making wine and things like that. He had a great time so that's the thing I've
> been teaching him. And I tell him stories of how when I was little I used to go to
> my uncles and we used to make the wine and you know, we used to stomp the
> grapes. How they used to grow the vegetables and things like that. And he got
> pretty interested because he wanted to grow vegetables in the back yard.
>
> <div align="right">(Anonymous Participant)</div>

Family Stories:

> I tell him stories about things that I'm, ya know, involved in, like nana Pauline
> and how she used to cook and all the different sauces and cakes. And my mom
> tells him a lot of stories, she's a living story. He feels Italian everyday of his life.
>
> <div align="right">(Anonymous Participant)</div>

Italian American organizations are also trying to produce a sense of cultural awareness
that many Italian Americans do not fully appreciate or understand. For example, the

brutal images and stories of the traveling exhibit, *Una Storia Segreta: When Italian Americans were Enemy Aliens*, tell another migration story, one that "includes many failures and betrayals and a deep sense of loss counted to the last drop" (Serra, 2003, p. 41). It is an attempt to increase the curiosity about Italian American heritage and develop the people who bear that title into round characters. In reality, no one really fits into the grand assimilation narrative. Individuals inevitably disappear into the contours of the story.

Generational Fitness

A lack of curiosity is, in part, a symptom of generational differences. Generational differences occur over time, as each generation moves further away from their ancestor culture and closer to the host culture. As a component of functional fitness, it is natural to shed cultural traits until fitting into the host culture is no longer an issue. Italian American generational differences, however, reveal a dialectical tension that is integral to their assimilated status. Similar to other ethnic groups, dialectical tension occurs when the next generation constructs their identity outside old world traditions (Barolini, 1999). Third and fourth-generation participants have less connection to regional identity, the magic identity that was greater than nationhood for their relatives. They have even less connection to Italy. Participants convey a deep concern over the growing distance between generations, and lack of interest in the community:

> I feel that the younger generation is not getting a true taste of growing up Italian. The longer we are in this country, I think the further we are getting removed from our roots. We are increasingly more "Americanized."
>
> (Anonymous Participant)

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Once the old timers die off it's not going to be anymore, there's not going to be

any Italian community. It's not. Those eighty year olds, the few that are left, they

grew up different than we have. You know, they grew up the majority of them

Ybor City, west Tampa, everybody knew everybody. You know. It isn't like that

now.

<div align="right">(Anonymous Participant)</div>

The Italian club has a dinner and dance. When they were living at home the boys

would go but now they say mom we're busy. You lose a lot of stuff when family

change—divorce, move away. My granddaughter says, "Nana, when I turn 16 I'm

going to get the car and come see you everyday." I say,"Yeah uh huh. (laughs).

You better take it easy on the car," I said, you know?

<div align="right">(Anonymous Participant)</div>

Here in Tampa, we have L'Unione Siciliana. They're trying to cultivate more

young people to join, but they're not interested. No, they're not.

<div align="right">(Anonymous Participant)</div>

The younger participants express a sense of guilt and loss for not being more involved in

their community or not feeling a connection to their roots. The next three excerpts reveal

this attitude:

Well, I was a part of the Italian club about five years ago, but it's tough because

all it was were older adults, Joe Capitano, you know.

<div align="right">(Anonymous Participant)</div>

No, I'm not involved. I had once thought about it. I'm on hospital staff, this, that,

you know, but then on the weekend look what I got. What'd we do yesterday,

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yesterday we were I was at a basketball game for an hour and a half. Jane was in

Tarpon Springs for half the day. I just, you know, and it's a shame. I used to help

out with St. Joseph's and take the day off. Al Noto donates the proceeds to the

McDonald training center. They do a big thing too, they cook sauce and all this. I

do that and donate to a lot of things but for me, it's easier if I can just write a

check. It's a terrible thing but it's reality.

(Anonymous Participant)

I know that it exists, but I don't really relate to it or feel like I am a part of it.

(Anonymous Participant)

Participants talk about the dangers of extinction. It was not only a matter of watered

down traditions or disinterested younger generations, but also the breakdown of the

village mentality, family codes, and ethnic space. As the immigrants and their children

became "Americanized," they learned to be self-sufficient and alone. They no longer

needed the oppressive immigrant life that kept them restricted to the boundaries of Ybor

City and their ethnic identity. Their growing awareness of outwardness, individualism,

and isolation made it easy for them to adopt an assimilated status and lifestyle. Over time,

the village consciousness came to be seen as an old-fashioned mindset, and family was

reduced to the nuclear unit. Some participants believe the decrease of family size is

responsible for this change:

See like my family they had was one or two children once they came to the

United States so there's barely any of us left. Once these families started having

one or two children and they only had one or two children or didn't get married at

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all, ya know, my family's kinda dying out and ya know there's not as many of

us around to keep that going.

<div align="right">(Anonymous Participant)</div>

Some participants feel emotional distance is crucial to preserving ethnicity and

companilismo:

When I think of Italian, I think of my family you know, uh, it's just so different

today. We don't the values like it was when we were little kids, the closeness, the

family closeness, its not there anymore. It's not like it was when we were little

kids. We used to go to Nana's house you know and we had that real close

relationship with all our cousins, and I don't see my cousins hardly anymore,

maybe once a year at the most.

<div align="right">(Anonymous Participant)</div>

Also, we are busier in our own lives, and don't seem to spend as much time with

our extended family as we did when we were growing up.

<div align="right">(Anonymous Participant)</div>

Others participants believe spatial distance is to blame for their cultural breakdown:
We're separated by distances, it's not locally it's people from a career standpoint

moving away. Look what happened to my sister. She had to move away from the

family. It's the one thing she hated. She hated all those years, the ten years she

was away because her husband's job. Years ago that would have never happened.

that would have never happened, you stayed with your family.

<div align="right">(Anonymous Participant)</div>

Similar to many cultures, Italian American culture places family in the center. Changes in

family dynamics can result in a change in the culture.

Finally, some participants view the loss of Ybor City as the contributing factor to the breakdown of their culture. Remnants of the old neighborhood exist in places, such as buildings, bakeries, streets, coffee shops, and the Italian Club, but they exist largely as symbols of cultural experience and identity that is recreated out of a nostalgic past. For the most part, these ethnic places uphold certain types of cultural expression, but the specific mood created out of their original purpose is no longer obtainable or necessary. For example, the Italian cemetery is no longer a vital part of this community's death ritual. Most of these places do not exist in space and time, only in memory, but participants have spatial markers that allow them to reconstruct the past and the present. The following two excerpts are examples of how participants use them:

The Spoto's started a grocery store on 7th avenue and built a building, then they probably torn down when they moved the grocery store down the street. They finished the building around 1914, 1915. My grandfather he put the tiles, he was a master mason, but he was running the business too. They started a wholesale business in 1905 and it became very successful and between 1913 to 1915 they moved over to 15th and 9th avenue. And they went here and they made this an office building and upstairs was 23 offices one of them a clinic, that's were my sister was born.

(Anonymous Participant)

On the right, right about where the interstate is there, beyond there, on the other side of this street, on that corner, was that ah the guy that had thirteen children. On this side was my grandfather's two-story home. Both of them are nice two-story homes. And it was right there those were, my nana, planted those palm trees,

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she loved palm trees. She had a beautiful yard. Urban Renewal took most of this. See see on the right. The uh…I think we'll go to Palmetto Beach now, and show you where I grew up.

<p align="right">(Anonymous Participant)</p>

The Italian American culture has been reduced to a few visible signs—food, Mafia, religious symbols. Shrinking ethnic spaces, family size, traditions, and language are inherent problems of assimilation and surface in the participants' talk.

Overall, adaptation is a narrative, a knowledge system that human being must fit into (Foucault, 1972). The immigrant inevitably disappears in the assimilation narrative, which dissociates them from their culture. Accordingly, when questioning grand narratives, one must not aim to reconstitute them based on what they say but instead look for the mislaid past from which they originated. A researcher should go beneath the surface in order to rediscover what caused the myth to become the truth (Barthes, 1972), and how round characters become flat.

Psychologically Healthy

The Cross Cultural Adaptation Model suggests that identity transformation is part of a psychologically healthy state of being—"a state in which the individual's cognitive, affective, and operational tendencies work in harmony"—during the integration process (Kim, 2001, p. 187). Entering a new culture can cause anxiety, or "internal stress that promotes the qualitative transformation toward growth—a greater maturity and psychic integration as well as an increased capacity to cope with varied environmental challenges" (Kim, 2001, p. 67). During this process, strangers undergo "psychological ups and downs until they achieve an increased internal integration—a sense of inner

cohesiveness and confidence" (p. 64). This claim does not completely support the data in this study.

Both the data and the research provided in this study indicate that Italian Americans undergo many psychological difficulties and lack inner cohesiveness and confidence. They carry several ethnic labels and an "assimilated status" that shapes the ways in which Italian Americans have come to understand themselves (both positively and negatively) within American society. Their labels do not harmoniously intertwine with their past or their present, which is the root of their problem. They are confused. Who are they outside the labels? In addition, there is nothing passive, normal, easy, or blissful about trying to assimilate. The participants in this study communicate feeling unhappy about ethnic discrimination, angry over *mala figura* (bad face) in the media, and shame for being associated with the Mafia. A closer examination of the discourse reveals the psychological challenges Tampa Italian Americans endure.

The common thread between all three horizons of identity is discrimination. The Latin community, as a whole, feels discriminated against the Anglo community, the Sicilian immigrants and their children feel discriminated against American citizens and Northern Italians, and the Italian American community feels stigmatized by negative stereotypes. These feelings did not disappear with the immigrant generation or with the passing of time. Discrimination is here and now; it is part of the participants' daily reality and integral to how they express their identity. One participant explains, "I think being Italian American you almost have to have a tougher skin…But you get used to it when you're Italian." Participants share discrimination stories that are passed down through oral

tradition or experienced first-hand. Some participants view discrimination as "the" reason for assimilating:

> Ya know, they say that we've assimilated as a culture, much more than the others, but if we're to accept being treated as such, you have to have a tough skin, why would you, it it you'd probably more likely want to blend in if your going to be called out and made fun of and poked jokes at, sometimes its best, some people would not want to deal within it.
>
> (Anonymous Participant)
>
> I can understand their reasoning because if you look at the immigrants today, I'm sure that their parents are trying to teach their kids the same. They try to speak more American and the prejudism that their going through now is similar.
>
> (Anonymous Participant)

The fact that Italian Americans believe their assimilation patterns are a result of discrimination warrants further investigation into their "psychological health."

Family names are an important part of "being Italian." Family names connect Italic individuals to regional identities, but they also prevent them from concealing the stigma of their heritage. In Italy, stigmas pertain to village or clan identity, scared space, or rituals. In America, stigmas pertain to media images and organized crime. These stigmas hold no real emotional attachment to participants, unlike the stigma of one's town, religion, or an orphan's last name. The majority of participants believe that in America, they are discriminated against for simply having an Italian surname. The following four participants discuss their discrimination experiences:

My family name? You know the fights, what do you think I quit school for? From

elementary school, I was constantly in fights.

<div align="right">(Anonymous Participant)</div>

I remember when I got out of school in 1947 and tried to get a job teaching.

Because my name ended in a vowel they told me, and I knew there was a position

open, but the principle was Anglo Saxon an she says to me I'm sorry we don't

have any openings and I knew there was an opening, because I had heard about it

and she interviewed me but she wouldn't give, we had what's it called, there was

ostracization. What do you call it? What do you call it when there's uh, when you

segregate? Like blackball, blackball because our name ended in a vowel. They

thought that we were all connected with the wrong crowd.

<div align="right">(Anonymous Participant)</div>

Jobs weren't open to us. when I graduated from Jefferson in 1960, I went to apply

at the telephone company with my Anglo girlfriends. My last name was S, half of

them were stupider than me and yet they all got hired.

<div align="right">(Anonymous Participant)</div>

There was a lot of prejudice here in Tampa, a lot of prejudice. If your name was

Italian, a lot of people changed their name. They couldn't get ahead. These people

realize, at the time, a person had to have a good education to get ahead. Not only

because of their name but they had to surmount their name, and to do that they

had to get a good education.

<div align="right">(Anonymous Participant)</div>

One participant said she was compared to a character on the TV series *The Sopranos:*

I was once called a mafia princess because of my family name. They think I'm

like Summer Soprano, what's her name? Meadow? I don't watch it.

<div align="right">(Anonymous Participant)</div>

Another said his last name gives people the impression that his business is a front for the

Mafia:

I have people come to my office, say Mr. S, I want to see you. This man came in

and said he needed to get rid of his wife. I almost threw him out by his collar.

My business was always a "front," for either to make money or political

contributions, never to do an honest day's work.

<div align="right">(Anonymous Participant)</div>

Italian Americans were never considered model minorities, even though they

mastered white customs (Asante, 2000) and carried a fully assimilated status (Lisella,

2002). This could be, in part, because the negative stereotypes regarding organized crime,

backward urban villagers, or sexual predators prevent them from being completely

accepted in some social or political realms of the United States. Their unique history has

turned into an "occasion of scandal and mark of shame" (Serra, 2003, p. 30). Participants

are very sensitive about the way their culture is portrayed in the media. Some of them are

involved in the National Italian American Association's ban against ethnic defamation in

films and commercials. The next three sets of excerpts are dialogues between six

different people discussing stereotypes in the media:

P: Hollywood has done a lot to discredit Italian Americans.

G: That's why Marlon Brando denied the award for his part as Vitto Corleone.

P: Well, he made the movie though.

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G: Yeah, he made the movie but he turned down the award he said because of the way he was depict the Sicilians and the Indians in the motion picture industry. But et he did make the movie.

<div align="right">(Anonymous Participants)</div>

M: A lot of this is uh, a lot of communication and all that is wrong because a lot of kids get the wrong idea about what some of our culture is about. Why don't they publicize something for the children to have as role models.

T: Cause it doesn't sell papers, it doesn't sell books, and it doesn't sell movies.

<div align="right">(Anonymous Participants)</div>

N: If you look all the Sicilians here in Tampa, I don't know about other places, some people put a bad name with the mafia. Once you put a label it's difficult to take it off. But the Italian people a lot of the people are religious people they go to mass they take communion, they believe in God they they believe in the law and they live by the law. The people here are working people and mostly they some have a good life and some don't, but very few Italians are really poor. You put a stamp

C: Forget about it.

<div align="right">(Anonymous Participants)</div>

In 2005, a sensational book was published about Tampa's criminal element—the Mafia.[3] The author of the book retrieved the majority of his data from newspaper archives, court hearings, and other public documents, not from the actual community about which he was writing. Some of his material, such as the Tampa Tribune Newspaper, is a biased source of information, which begs the question, if something is

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[3] Due to the nature of the book, I choose not to publicize it by offering its title here or citing it.

printed, is it true? The book tells the story of Tampa's underworld and its alleged members. These members are now dead, but their relatives live to face the embarrassment of *mala figura*. Many participants are unhappy about the shame this book brought to their community, especially when not all that is written is true or complete. The next four excerpts demonstrate how participants perceive the book and their community:

> We know who's clean. I didn't think, growing up, that this stuff was out of the ordinary, but here comes this guy and his book and mushroomed the whole thing. I thought that it was unfair to me. The Sicilians who didn't have anything do with it were branded as well. That's all we're known for.
>
> (Anonymous Participant)
>
> As for the book, it's all Italian people. I don't see any of the city council that I knew from the 60's in that book.
>
> (Anonymous Participant)
>
> Officer R, not in that book. All the names are Italian. Our heritage is in the media. I read that book and N said they got it wrong. They always get it wrong, because they don't really know.
>
> (Anonymous Participant)
>
> I remember that undercover officer R. C. He used to harass my cousin because she was dating one of those B. boys who was always in trouble. Both my cousin and my uncle said that C. was as crooked as they come. And he paints that guy out to be a saint in his book. That he was trying to bring down the law, the mob didn't kill him, some punks did.

I'm going to go to my grave and this whole generation, they haven't figured it out

yet [who's connected]. My father, my life, and they haven't figured it out yet.

They don't have a clue, that's how stupid they are. If it wasn't that people   told

them stuff, they wouldn't know squat. The older I get, this book convinced me.

Italian Americans in Tampa experience stress over years of discrimination and *mala*

figura. Kim (2003) contends that intense stress can "reverse the process at any time, and

strangers may indeed 'regress' toward reaffirming and reidentifying with their ethnic

origins" (p. 191). Kim's model describes enculturation, acculturation, and deculturation as

independent variables, not intersecting phases, therefore, making her theory more of an

evolutionary process than a hermeneutic experience. Participants do not regress or

progress in a linear fashion, but instead fluctuate between what they perceive as Italian

and American in a "process that consists of the revision of the anticipations of

understanding in light of a better more cogent understanding of the whole" (Dostal, 2002,

p. 47). It may not always be happy and harmonious, but it does not have to be.

Understanding is never finished; their worldview will continue to change.

Mafia Stories

Individuals' speech activities in this community differentiate them from the

greater community. Coser (1992) explains "what makes recent memories hang together is

not that they are contiguous in time: it is rather that they are part of a totality of thoughts

common to a group, the group of people who have a relationship" (p.52). The similarity

of memories among individuals is a sign that these individuals share a community of

interests, experiences, and language. Their mafia stories help group members achieve symbolic convergence and coordinate activities toward common goals, as well as enable them to live with their shame by naturalizing it. Thus, stories about the Mafia are prevalent in the participants' talk, and the characters are larger than life. Mafia stories emerged twenty-three times in the data, indicating their relevance to the horizon of Italian American identity. Participants believe these stories to be a natural part of their upbringing, their Italian American identity, and their culture. Even though only a small percentage of Italians were involved in organized crime, no Italians can escape the stigma of somehow being "connected." The gangster image represents a past which many Italians have never known, except as a media fiction. The next excerpt demonstrates their guilt by association:

> I heard more about the mafia when I was growing up, as being a little Italian kid.
> You know, if you'd be out and go to a friends house or something, the crackers
> would say "You're Italian, you guys must be part of the mafia."

(Anonymous Participant)

The mafia, in some way or another, affects the participants—they each had a tale or two to tell. Relatives presented some of the stories to participants, while others are childhood memories or personal experiences. Tampa's Italian Community is relatively small, so people know who is connected and who is not. The stories are a function of ingroup membership. As participants inform me, they are from the inside:

> And it was about 4th or 5th grade, the, uh some of the kids told me at school they
> couldn't play with me anymore because "your daddy's in the Mafia." I went home
> and asked him, what's the mafia? He told me don't pay no attention to them. They

never explained it or talked to you. However, I knew that my daddy ran, he was in

partners with Jimmy Bruno, Jimmy Lumia, my daddy was very close with the

Lumias.

(Anonymous Participant)

M. P., her father was killed, they beat him. G. M. that was my grandfather's

brother in-law. In 1931, he had bars, he had whorehouses in Ybor City and there

was one building that had his name on top, M. I don't know if it's still there. But

anyway, what happened was his brother, his brother in-law's wife was cheating

on him with a guy named D. B. that was the head of the mafia at that time. He

was before Santo Trafficante. This guy was his partner. Lucille's got stories

about him. We're from the inside.

(Anonymous Participant)

Fitting or not fitting into the host environment could be involuntary, deliberate, or

contingent on many variables. Frustrated in their attempts to achieve functional fitness,

many find ways to manage or fuse their adaptation experiences through various cultural

expressions, such as storytelling. Mafia stories become a part of their cultural heritage,

ultimately affecting future stories and future lives of Tampa's Italian Americans. Some of

the stories describe the way things were. Tampa, according to participants, was an

untamed city, a Wild West, which was conducive to organized crime. The following

excerpt is a personal memory, in which the participant recounts his experience growing

up around gangsters

My dad's buddy had a pool hall and in the back room. The back room, a small

room, looked like something out of Hollywood. The only thing in there was a

round salted table with one porcelain lamp, green on top, white on the bottom, hang bulb, and all these chairs. And as a kid I couldn't see the top of the table cause of my age. And they would come in and they had this big thick door and this was during the prohibition, and everything was locked up and they would go in there and have a game going. And they all come in dressed real nice, people didn't dress nice in those days unless you had a way of making money. Come in take off their coat and they all had shoulder holsters. And during the game, they would take the shoulder holster off and put it on the chair. And I thought they were cowboys (laughing). In my mind, I thought they were cowboys. That's the kind of world it was and they belong to one of the families who ran the number racket going. And there was actually kill each other for control or if you went into their territory. It was a business to them.

(Anonymous Participant)

Similarly, the next excerpt is a story presented to the participant by family members:

One time a guy that was running extortion tried to shake my grandfather, who was very successful, they tried to shake him down for so much a week. And my grandfather was very loving to his family, but otherwise, he was the meanest son of a bitch in the valley. And uh, he uh, they sent him a note about how he was going to do this and he threw it in the trash can and did it again. And finally, the third time they sent him a picture of a grave and said this is going to be you if you don't pay up! So he went to the guy's boss and told him that it wasn't going to be him in the grave it was going to be this other guy in grave if anybody messed with him. Supposedly, the guy tore up the picture and said that the younger guy didn't

know how to run a business. That may or may not be true but that was what I was

told.

<div align="right">(Anonymous Participant)</div>

Unfortunately, the victims of organized crime extended well beyond the Wild West days.

Younger Italian Americans can participate by telling stories that occurred in the recent

past. The next two excerpts are from a second and a third-generation participant:

> You had to have your friends who had connections that you were donating to so
> you were on their good list. People who sold jukeboxes, pool tables they would
> send the police and they would wipe out your business, chase people out. Then
> the people who sent the police would try to buy your business at rock bottom
> price, so you had to be on top of all that. Okay. That's the way it was. You had to
> have connections or you were out.

<div align="right">(Anonymous Participant)</div>

> Even when I was a teenager, I'm not going to mention any names, but there was
> somebody that was involved with the county commission and my father tells me
> that I have to buy insurance from him. His insurance cost me over a thousand
> dollars more each year but because of who he was I had to buy it.

<div align="right">(Anonymous Participant)</div>

Gardaphé (1996) argues that mob narratives are a resistance to assimilation and

sameness. They occur when people feel powerless in a society that recognizes

technology, notions of progress, and hyper-rational ideas of functioning more than

individual difference. When identity becomes homogenous, people suffer feelings of

loneliness and alienation. Moreover, Tampa's media sensationalizes and celebrates its

<div align="center">231</div>

criminal history, which renders people in the community powerless and without voice. The Italians do not write books or publish articles about the Mafia. The community is too small, one would inevitably write about someone they knew—this researcher included. Instead, they retain power by "knowing" who really did what to whom. These stories are kept underground. It is common to hear someone in this community say, "I can write a book about the stuff I know." Italian Americans hold on to their stories, even though it brings them shame because it keeps them talking, it gives them a shared cause and a shared existence that is crucial to ingroup identity.

Intercultural Personhood

Intercultural personhood is the final stage in the formation of an intercultural identity. Self-development is contingent upon many adaptation-facilitating or impeding variables, such as the individual's predisposition, the host environment, and communication activities (Kim, 2001, p. 263). This stage of adaptation is described as a dual process of acculturation and deculturation in which "the 'old' person breaks up and a 'new' person emerges at a higher level of integration" (Kim, 2001, p. 184). In contrast to Gebser's discussion of consciousness, Kim (2002) presents integration as a plus/minus mutation. Tampa's Italian Americans face many impeding variables, such as discrimination, negative stereotypes, and dual identities. Guidice (2003) argues that contemporary Italian Americans inherit the same identity problems as their ancestors— double consciousness, role confusions, and dissociation. Participants reveal double consciousness every time they discuss having a dual identity, a vague identity, or a shifting identity. They oscillate between being Italian and being American. One participant was not even sure how to describe his identity, "What does it mean to be

Italian today? It's a tough question. I don't really know how to answer that." Role

confusion occurs when the "goals of one's heritage, one's personal goals, and the goals of

the new culture all seem to be irrevocably at odds with each other" (Groeller, 2003, p.

126). For example, participants acknowledge that going back to Italy was the dream of

their ancestors and some feel that is still something they should aspire to, even though

they realize that going back does not have the same meaning for them. Regardless, they

express a sense of dissociation and longing to reconnect with their Italic origin.

Participants talk about "going back" in the following four excerpts:

> Um, by and large being Italian has been primarily going back, you tend to do that
>
> more as you get older. You search your roots because you're leaving it behind.
>
> (Anonymous Participant)
>
> A lot of Italians, I think their dream when they were younger was to come here
>
> and be successful and then go back there, retire in Italy. But a lot of them go back
>
> and it's not the same. They get used to being here in America and then they can't
>
> go back. Dr. B. did retire there but it took him a lot of years to go back. Like my
>
> friend Vincent, he misses America, he has roots here too. He goes back and forth.
>
> (Anonymous Participant)
>
> My mother came here at eighteen, eighteen years old and could never go back.
>
> She got married, had children and started educating her children. She never got a
>
> chance to go back.
>
> (Anonymous Participant)
>
> I'm an engineer, so I see, ya know, engineers that go, like Chinese engineers, that
>
> ya know, their goal is to like every two years, to go back to China for a month.

And my husband works with Indian engineers and their goal is to every year go back to India for a month. Ya know, Italians have never afforded themselves the luxury of going back to Italy for a month and reconnecting with their family. It was more of a one-way ticket when we said we're going to come here and make it, as opposed to coming here to make it and then going back, that's my home. I wish I had the time to go back for a month.

(Anonymous Participant)

Now the Hispanic, you see that all of them have flags of Cuba, flags of Puerto Rico, flags of Brazil, all the kids speak Spanish in the playground. The Hispanic they say "oh, I wanna go back to Cuba, that's my land, that's my patria." In other words, go back. Someday we're going to go back and that perpetuates their culture, which is not bad.

(Anonymous Participant)

Murphy and Eposito (2003) believe that assimilation "can take a high toll on the soul of a culture" (p. 37). Thus, the primary issues involving Italian American ethnic identity, including discrimination, *mala figura*, and double consciousness, along with their long-standing "assimilated status," correlate with the concept of adaptation. The leading adaptation model not only appears to disregard the "intrinsic worth" of this ethnic group's unique values, beliefs, and practices, but it also does not provide answers to the knowledge gap concerning their horizon of Italian American identity. The data reveals the adaptation process—functional fitness, psychological health, and intercultural personhood—can only be loosely applied to peoples' lives. First, second, third, and

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fourth-generation participants can be all three components simultaneously or none at all. It all depends on their worldview, their horizons that move when they move.

All the participants in this study are American citizens, even the ones who were not born in the United States. Their bloodline or generational status ranges between immigrant to fourth generation, with the majority of them being second and third generation Italian Americans. As citizens of the United States, they functionally fit within American society, and appear to have no problems with communication competence. The fact that these people are experiencing identity issues sharply contrasts the Cross Cultural Adaptation Model in that Italian Americans should no longer see themselves as Italian American, but as just American or intercultural persons. It also contradicts their assimilation status that suggests they have lost their culture, so trying to find it would be a moot point. They find it every time they discuss losing it. Finally, there is nothing easy or passive about four generations of people trying to cope with the struggles of adaptation, which includes de-ethnicization, dissociation, and dehumanization. These conditions contradict any notion of a stress free or psychologically healthy adaptation process.

Thus, ethnic consciousness engages people through multiple languages, identities, customs, and communities that are prevalent at one time. The emergent awareness of an Italian American identity manifests in many horizons and illuminates the ways in which Italian Americans interpret their ethnic status in and against the assimilated narrative. On the one hand, participants perceive their identity as fading with unspoken languages, growing distances between family members, breakdown of family units and community, and traditions slipping through the cracks of life. On the other, shared mafia stories,

stigmas, discrimination, and struggles to reconstruct their culture are forcing them to

rethink their Italian American ethnicity and the idea that they are not living in a melting

pot, but perhaps at the intersecting horizons of three identities.

Chapter VI: Summary and Conclusion

America, as a society, is culturally myopic to the diverse people that live within

its borders. The majority of Americans are oblivious to the fact that Italian America is

facing an identity crisis. Italians did not have a strong sense of nationhood upon entering

the United States; instead, their sense of self derives from regional identities based on

villages, bloodlines, family names, and dialects—I am Calabrase, I come from Consenza,

My name is Carravetta. They were neither Italian nor American, but within a hundred

years they established an Italian American identity and an assimilated status—a relatively

short amount of time for a people who survived centuries of war, invasions, and political

and social chaos (Bona, 2003; Verdicchio, 1997). What appeared to be a harmonious

union and a logical assumption is now unraveling in the minds of many Italian Americans

who experience dissociation (Kramer, 1997), cultural schizophrenia (Carnevale, 2003),

and self-hatred (Barolini, 1999). Research findings regarding these conditions of Italian

American identity and ethnicity are supported in this dissertation.

Dissociation

This study proposes that Italian American identity is a result of assimilated

dissociation. The discourse surrounding assimilation and adaptation contains certain

qualities, discursive practices, and scientific boundaries that make it a produced

knowledge, both of which shape intercultural communication and the language from

which Italian American people structure and interpret their world (Foucault, 1972). This

discourse is filled with words and ideas that position a success/fail condition while

perpetuating notions of whiteness, exclusion, and erasure of identity. As previously

established, Kramer's conceptualization of dissociation provides a framework for

understanding the development of assimilation discourse. The Dimensional

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Accrual/Dissociation theory holds that each culture presents different rationalities about time, space, and mood. Accordingly, the various ways of communicating these rationalities have profound consequences on human being's relationship with nature. Some cultures exhibit a detached and ambivalent relationship with nature while others express a more fluid connection to the natural world. Kramer argues that cultural expression is retained and articulated according to which consciousness structure is present at the time. The current consciousness structure of western civilization expresses increasing dissociation, fragmentation, and conflict with nature. The perception of assimilation problems and solutions tends to be idiosyncratic to the given culture. For example, one way that western civilization tackles assimilation problems is vis-à-vis the use of reliable instruments as a data collection means to increase understanding and knowledge for predicting effective communication. Kramer argues that there must be shared meaning before increased knowledge can occur. Therefore, while effective, the reliable instrument presents a single reality that is grounded in the perspective of the dominant culture, ultimately disregarding the reality of the other and the consequences of dissociation. As a result, Italian Americans are caught between assimilation and exclusion (Guinta, 2002). Assimilation resonates in their language, which gives the impression that they have severed their ethnic ties to the Italian culture. When they do show signs of ethnicity in their language, it is not always recognized; therefore, they perceive themselves to be culturally invisible (Guinta, 2002). Difference is even more poignant in a society that tends to place ethnicity on dualities of black and white skin color and flat and round human beings. The Americanization of Italian identity is seen as both a loss and a gain. The gain is defined as progress, education, advancement, wealth,

and speaking English. The loss is defined as having no identity. This research demonstrates that participants are experiencing an identity crisis that pertains to the loss of their language, traditions, and community.

The standardization of one culture's language into another may appear as mere adaptation, but in reality, it can serve as a form of dissociation and, ultimately, extinction (D'Alfonso, 2006). The data reveals that participants are concerned over knowing how to speak more Spanish than Italian and the breakdown of the Italian language from one generation to the next. The presence of Italian blood is not enough to make them feel Italian. Hence, feeling Italian is related to speaking Italian. This situation is magnified when they travel to Italy and are mocked by the Italians for not being able to speak what they claim is their native tongue. Their sense of being Italian is called into question. They are neither Italian in Italy nor in America. Moreover, the standardization of the Italian language contributes to dialectical tension over authenticity. Anyone can learn to speak Italian in school, but speaking a regional dialect is real. Finally, participants express resentment for ethnic groups that have not shed their language, but instead keep their culture "alive" everyday.

This study examined how participants maintain their ethnic identity through social interaction and ethnic practices. Participants are concerned with preserving their cultural heritage because they perceive their identity as fading with unspoken languages, growing distances between family members, breakdown of family units and community, and traditions slipping through the cracks of life. They cling to the Italian American club and the Sons of Italy for socializing and community support. Italian Americans have come to rely on cultural institutions to "do the job of preserving, disseminating, and promoting"

ethnic heritages (Candeloro, 1989, p. 2). Participants hold on to their traditions, but not all experience being Italian in the same way. Some Italian American parents and grandparents to make an effort to offset Americanization by exposing children to aspects of the culture through traditions, story telling, and ritual. For some Italian Americans, practicing Italian customs in America is not the same as being in Italy or at least speaking like someone from Italy. For others, being Italic has nothing to do with the amount of time they lived or spent in Italy. What makes them Italian is expressed through social networks, religion, cuisine, and bloodline. This indicates that the concept of Italianità and Italian culture is changing from generation to generation, but not dead. The participants of Tampa live in a very tight existence. It is not as tight as it was fifty years ago, but the data indicates that first, second, and even third-generation participants do not have to work very hard at maintaining their culture. The language, food, and strict codes of conduct are all around them, but they have difficulty seeing it because they view their culture from the assimilation lens. Even though they have created new forms of Italianità, they are searching for their identity. Their oral histories passed down to family expresses dissociation and longing for a distant past.

The Italian community is based on a highly selective collective memory grounded in the cultural, social, and economic stories of older relatives or immigrants from the early 1900's to 1960. People draw composite pictures from stories told about their ancestors migration and share them to find commonalities in the experiences. The Italian language is not an external sign of their Italianità. As one participant said, "You don't hear Italian, and yet there are a lot of Italian people around." Overtime, their ethnicity has been reduced to a few identifiable signs—food, religious practices, moral codes, and

stories. Everyone has a family story to tell, which, in turn, keeps the community talking and keeps their ethnicity alive. This sharing creates a new form of ingroup membership. Common stories in this community involve living in Ybor City during the good years, the bolita, the Mafia, and the cigars. As Latins, the participants tell stories of kinship, customs, and social interaction that offer a common heritage with no class or ethnic barriers. The nostalgia for Ybor City is reinforced through mediated communication, including newspapers, museums, celebrations, food, memoirs, and the revival of old Ybor City. Part of what they feel is the loss of, longing for their ethnic neighborhood and their shrinking ethnic spaces. Participants have spatial markers that allow them to reconstruct the past and the present. Ethnic spaces exist largely as symbols of cultural experience and identity that is recreated out of a nostalgic past. As Italians, they tell stories about their Italic identity, which includes the Mafia, discrimination, and struggle to come to America. Reconstructing their culture is forcing them to rethink their Italian American ethnicity and the vision of melting into non-existence.

Cultural Schizophrenia

This study seeks to understand how Italian Americans speak of themselves as different from others. One condition that emerged from the data was describing themselves as bi-cultural, not completely American, Italian, or neither. They talk about assimilation as if it is part of their identity. Italian Americans have internalized the assimilation narrative and tend to hold a rather flat image of themselves. This image is then the source of conflict in regard to who they are. Many buy into the belief that they are assimilated people, and have no other options if they want to be American. When they achieve an American identity, it is presumed that their success is a result of their

ability to shed their culture, become invisible or white. Thus, assimilation practices correlates with the breakdown of Italian American ethnic identity and expression (Goeller, 2003). They asserted themselves into the assimilation narrative, now they are trying to recover what they lost.

The literature suggests that when Italians tried to compile their Italic traits into a new American identity, they experienced a dual identity based on *chiaroscuro* between their old and new world values (Barolini, 1985). The balance of the two is always present and causes a "schizophrenic situation" (Melucci, 1996, p. 86). Dual identity is the most common theme found in the participants' discourse. They fluctuate between being Sicilian, Italian, and American. They discuss living in two worlds—a public world of *bella figura* and *omertà*, and a private world of suspicious behavior, unspoken languages, and family shame. For example, many Italians speak Italian in the privacy of their home, but then spoke English or Spanish in public. Codes of conduct keep the experience of the group members concealed from outsiders (DeSalvo, L. & Guinta, E. 2002). Revealing and concealing added to a dual identity and a dual reality (Kramer, 2003). Through agency, they are learning to live in one world, in which they can talk about both. Italian Americans in Tampa are in the midst of a transformation, going from an environment of assimilation to an environment of "going back" and reclaiming their Italic identity.

Self-Hatred

This study examined how Italian Americans in Tampa define themselves discursively in everyday talk, in the media, and in cultural images. Research indicates that Italian Americans internalize a complicated self-deprecation and self-hatred over their deculturation (Baroloni, 1999). Italian Americans are accused of easily disguising or

shedding their ethnic identity, to fit into white America (Guinta, 2002). This was

achieved, however, at the cost of gaining an assimilated identity (Guinta, 2002). They

tried desperately to be what America said they should be, but then realized that America

did not fully welcome them—they were dirty, uneducated peasants from Italy (Goeller,

2003). Italians express shame and doubt about their heritage, and therefore strive for a

respectable American middle class identity. Italian Americans experience additional

shame from not being born in Italy. Italians from Italy do not claim kinship with Italian

Americans because their family deserted the country. Italians refer to these families as

"abandoners" and individuals who come to Italy looking for their family as "bastards"

(Guinta, 2002). There is also guilt over not paying enough attention to parents or

grandparents when they were alive or embarrassment over strange food, strange names,

and strange religious practices. For example, memoirs of Italians Americans describe

shame in the smells and tastes of their food—even though media representations

contradict this claim (Guinta, 2002). The Italians of Tampa express shame over the

breakdown of language and traditions. They also feel guilty for not keeping up the dream

of "going back" or visiting Italy. Shame also stems from embarrassing stereotypes of

Italian immigrants, their association with the Mafia, and their bad public image, and most

importantly, not wanting to draw attention to themselves by speaking out against acts of

discrimination. Overall, many Italians hate themselves for downplaying their Italian

culture and giving into assimilation (Candeloro, 1989).

<center>Adaptation is Never Complete</center>

The leading adaptation theory in intercultural communication research, the Cross

Cultural Adaptation Model, suggests that happiness is increased with certainty that is

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obtained through predictability. It is the responsibility of the immigrants and their offspring to be predictable, to functionally fit into the host society. Fitness is a one-way change, and not the responsibility of the host culture—as reflected in current debates over immigration. Once this change has occurred, individuals are expected to remain in a static, permanent state of being, which should bring happiness and the ability to undergo an intercultural transformation. This profile, unfortunately, presents a fixed identity— fixed in society, fixed in scholarship, and fixed in the minds of Italian Americans. The problem with Italian American identity is, on the one hand, that is in constant flux, while on the other, that it is bound to a permanent assimilation myth. The Cross Cultural Adaptation theory presents a fallacy in that human identity is never complete, but constantly evolving and churning with each new horizon (Kramer, 2003). In addition, the target culture is multifarious and unstable, making adaptation a difficult goal to arrive at, if they arrive at all (Kramer, 2003). According to Kramer (2003) people who cannot fully adapt to a new environment will instead mimic the host culture as a way to appropriately fit in.

In Tampa, the host environment was changed as a result of diverse cultures entering the system. Integration patterns reveal multiple cultures and multiple influences that were operant at the same time. The Italians learned to mimic the Latin community, which learned to mimic the Anglo community and each other. The immigrants survived by helping each other, influencing each other, which, in turn, extended their awareness of themselves and their group identification. Many claim to live in a state of in-between, never considering themselves fully Italian, Latin, or American, while at the same time trying to retain their Italic heritage and their Latin membership. For many individuals the

sense of struggle they feel is the result of being of both cultural worlds, while living in a mental-rational world. In the mental-rational world, it is not logical or even possible to be both American and Italian. The premise that one must have a rational connection to identity is exactly why alternative ways of exploring intercultural communication are necessary. Thus, it is important to understand how assimilation arguments become claims, what makes them valid, and how they come to represent knowledge within intercultural communication. The adaptation perspective of intercultural relations and the methods most frequently used to solve communication issues are linked to ideologies of positivism and functionalism (Kramer, 2003). We must also question why social scientists feel as if there is nothing new or interesting to say about a particular people once they acquire an assimilated status. Kim and Gudykunst are convinced that our ethnic and racial realities do not exhibit negative effects of assimilation. They view adaptation as a problem in need of a solution, one that can only be achieved through a systematic process of adaptation. This study demonstrates that people live with a different realities that is worthy of academic attention.

New Horizons of Identities

This dissertation examined Italian Americans in Tampa and the practice of intercultural communication utilizing Gadamer's (1975) Theory of Hermeneutics and Kramer's (2003) Cultural Fusion Theory. It is critical to examine intercultural communication from these perspectives, because the work of Gadamer and Kramer attend to the consequences of contemporary ways of experiencing, comprehending, and communicating reality. In addition, intercultural communication literature suggests that individuals are trying to approach and manage their identity, while the Theory of

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Hermeneutics demonstrates that identity is never without contradictions, multiple realities, and infinite possibilities. In other words, what one envisions on the vista of identity is dialogical and fusing. There is nothing stagnant or fixed about how humans experience the world or their identity from within. Thus, not only is it impossible for Italian Americans to see themselves an unchanging assimilated human beings, but this study illustrates that they express otherwise. I claim that Italian American identity is not complete, but in the midst of an identity crisis based on numerous influences and endless opportunites. This is nowhere more evident than in the fact that, after decades of being ethnically reduced to a small number of characteristics, Italian Americans are discussing how to dismantle the assimilation narrative by decentering integration ideologies and replacing it with a story of multiculturalism and cultural fusion.

Cultural fusion is a seamless intersection of several worlds, several horizons. Many participants are in pursuit of their culture and interested in creating a strong sense of Italian American community, which resonates in their living language and their communication practices. Moreover, multiple realities and shifting identities exist in any given situation for the participants and are revealed in the participants' speech: I am Latin, I am Italian or Sicilian, I am American. The data also illustrates how language (both verbal and non-verbal) brings the participant's world into existence; their identity is invented, reinvented, and fused in every sentence and every interaction. Tracing a language complete with theory, reflections, original sounds, and human content makes it possible to start a story or study from below. One of the main problems surrounding cross cultural adaptation research is that it typically starts from above, looking for general

findings, while missing the array of possible language configurations and cultural frameworks that influence the adaptation process.

<p style="text-align: center">Strengths, Limitations, and Future Research</p>

The overall assessment of this dissertation results in two major strengths and weaknesses. First, this study furthers intercultural communication research by examining the communicative practices that occur within assimilation practices. As previously mentioned, the conceptualization of assimilation is based on western ideologies of how to fit into the host environment. This dissertation posits that one size fits all solutions are causing added tensions between ethnic groups and dissociation from cultural identity. Ignoring the dialectical tensions that occur while trying to assimilate results in a lose-lose situation for both Italian Americans citizens and American society. America needs to broaden its horizons of difference to understand the lived experiences of people that make up its society.

Second, this dissertation illustrates how Italian Americans are subject to older forms of assimilation that are resurfacing in the new culture of adaptation. Undoubtedly, as their modes of expression changes, so must theories. This study argues that some of the current forms of intercultural theory have political and cultural implications for ethnic groups. I argue that adaptation research looks for the wrong thing; it seeks to predict outcomes that lead to mutually acceptable societal behavior instead of people's interpretations of reality. I suggest that a more critical examination of the ways in which Italian Americans negotiate this process be explored.

In addition to these strengths, two limitations warrant attention. First, by focusing on discourse and social practices as the primary means for understanding the identity, this

study assumes a qualitative perspective of the results. Quantitative methodologies, including triangulation methods, could be applied to the general themes discovered in the data, to increase external validity. I believe, however, that the nature of the phenomenon is best suited for qualitative measures, because it requires a unique interpretation of the data. With that said, hermeneutics is only one alternative to explore qualitative data. Many find it difficult to use because it does not present a specific methodology, but instead an explanation of human comprehension and an alternative context of knowledge.

The second limitation involves the participants of this study. Although four generations represents a broad range of people in this community, the missing elements in the study and the other Latin groups that live in the the environment—Cubans, Afro Cubans, and Spaniards. It is important to include the perspectives of the people who affect the participant's horizons. Only then can we understand what the process actually means to them. Equally important, are the verbal and nonverbal nuances (*Italianità)* of the Italian dialects that can only be expressed through living language (Gadamer 1975). I suggest that a more critical examination of Italian and Spanish words and speech patterns be included for future research. This requires fluency in both languages.

By bringing the work of Eric Kramer and Hans-Georg Gadamer together, this dissertation has provided a theoretical analysis about Italian Americans, which is atypical in communication research. It is important to understand the cultural complexity associated with assimilation. The inquiry of cultural assimilation has inspired research interests across the social sciences for decades. Much research challenges the ways western society uses the term assimilation to know a particular culture. Scholars question who determines when, how, or if it is even possible for one to assimilate (Tamburri,

1998). Is it the individual who makes these decisions or is it the dominant culture that decides? (Tamburri, 1998). Intercultural research lacks investigation of ethnic groups that have already "assimilated," but there is much to learn about an assimilated status. These issues present numerous cultural concerns, such as identity and theories used to determine cultural adaptation. Research regarding Italian Americans and the effects of negative stereotypes, cultural products, and organized crime is plentiful, but the dialogue concerning the de-ethnicizing effect of assimilation on Italian American culture is limited. Before there can be any understanding of their assimilated status, Italian Americans must define themselves in relation to Italy, to other Americans and to American society (Candeloro, 1989). In conclusion, this study demonstrates that understanding various forms of assimilation perspectives and knowledge can lead to the discovery of culturally sensitive indicators that will further enhance intercultural communication research.

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