Italian Community

Institutional Completeness
Institutional Completeness.

The concept of institutional completeness was developed by Raymond Breton, a professor at the University of Toronto, who specializes in the area of race and ethnic relations.
A question of integration

• In the study of ethnic populations, efforts have been made to explain the **integration** or lack of integration, of immigrant populations.
Why do individuals unite?

• Studies have looked to factors such as:
  1. social background,
  2. motivation to integrate
  3. primary group affiliations.
• Breton suggests that some of the most crucial factor relating to the integration of immigrants are found ... in the social organization of the communities contacted by the immigrant in a new country.
Breton argues:

There are **three types of community** the immigrant could seek out:

1. The community of his/her ethnicity.
2. The native or receiving community.
3. Another ethnic community.
Ethnic communities vary greatly in their social organization.

- Organization-social integration

- The direction of ethnic integration will result from the **forces of attraction positive or negative** from the various communities.
• The degree to which the ethnic community maintains a **highly organized social structure** will determine the degree to which the **immigrant is drawn** into the community
Ends of the continuum

At one end of the continuum there is the community that consists essentially of informal ties:

- low institutional support
- causal interpersonal relationships
- seek out other only for companionship
- solidary = friendships and cliques.
• At the other end of the continuum, there are ethnic communities with more formal structures.
Institutional affiliations

- social services
- legal aid
- religious and spiritual services
- voluntary associations
High degree of institutional completeness.

Ethnic communities may contain:

- welfare systems
- mutual aid societies
- radio stations
- newspapers and periodicals
- commercial services
- churches
- schools
Breton’s Hypothesis

• The degree to which possess high or low levels of organization is referred to by Breton as their degree of institutional completeness.
Institutional completeness

- Institutional completeness is at its extreme when the ethnic community provides all of the services for its members.

- In High IC contexts-Members do not require the services provided by the receiving society.
In Low IC contexts

• The immigrant must seek out the Host society for assistance in areas such as employment, health, education and other social services
Few are totally complete

- There are few ethnic communities that have this **high degree** of institutional completeness.
- Most vary between **low and high** and fall somewhere in the middle of the continuum.
Breton suggests four processes of IC:

• How does institutional completeness affect the social and interpersonal networks of members of ethnic groups?

• 1. IC=Substitution- ethnic institutions rather than those of the dominant culture encapsulate the immigrant's social life.
four processes:
of IC

2. IC=**Extension of Social networks** within the ethnic groups combined with a **pride in their ethnicity**.

3. IC=**New Issues** are raised for public debate that tend to draw people together further around ethnic concerns:

4. IC=**Sub groups emerge** around issues like housing, crime, by laws, educational funding.

- **cliques emerge**, fighting other groups based upon identification with ethnicity.
Three Key Institutions for IC.

• Breton holds that there are three major institutions that ensure the survival of an ethnic group:

  = Religious, welfare agencies, and newspapers.
1. Religious institutions

1. Religious institutions have the greatest affect upon the ethnic community since these unify the people in terms of both ideology and activities.
2. Newspapers

- Newspapers are second since they provide current information about the group both in the new nation and within the country of origin.
3. Welfare organizations

Welfare organizations also play an important role since the immigrant often needs assistance in a new nation.
Three Important Factors in IC

Breton finds there are three factors that contribute to the development of institutional completeness in an ethnic community.

1. The more different the people of an ethnic group are from those of the receiving society, the easier it will be for them to develop their own institutions to satisfy their needs.
Three factors in IC cont..

• 2. When the **activities and cultural practices** are evaluated negatively by the receiving society.

• 3. When the ethnic group has a large amount of resources.

• If a large number of the ethnic community have **few resources** of their own, the ethnic community has less chance of survival. The level of resources (financial, skills etc) is important
Ogmundston (1992)

• This notion is examined by Ogmundston and McLaughlin in a work entitled “Trends in the ethnic origins of Canadian elites” (CRSA 1992 May)

• Reinvestigates the Vertical Mosaic Thesis of Porter and Clement.

• Finds Italian Canadian have “carved out an elite structure”
Summary

• The concept of **Institution Completeness** was first developed by Breton in 1963.

• It is a concept that has been operationalized in numerous Canadian studies, particularly following **Official Multiculturalism**

• The concept develops analysis of ethnicity on the level of both **social structure** and culture.
The Italian Family vs. Community

• KEY RESEARCH:
  • Jeremy Bossovain, Clifford Jansen, K. Bagnell
  • Italians are less institutional complete compared to Jewish, largely due to the Italian emphasis on family over larger community.
Italian Canadians

Italians struggled historically in Canada, however, they moved upward economically and politically through formative, maintenance and actualization stages.
Group formation, maintenance and actualization.

• **A. Group formation** occurs as members of the group have come together in Canadian society and found a sense of solidarity.

• **B. Group maintenance** -occurred as each group felt threaten somehow Canadian society.

• **C. Group actualization** -when each group found its way in this culture
Italian Canadians

• Formative period

• Began in the late nineteenth century.

• The first Italian immigrants were mainly with CPR in the 1870’s and 1880s.

• They were often a transient group working for the railway or mining in Ontario bush.
`The Lakehead’

• **Thunder Bay and Fort William** and Port Arthur are two communities.

• The Italians predominate in Fort William. **Descendants** of the rail people, **a tough breed**, many hockey players.

• See The Esposito’s, Angotti Brothers
Kealey (1976) Quote

- Italian were perceived by CPR bosses as "hard working and industrious"

- …reluctant to hire workers from the UK who "come here looking for high wages, a feather bed and a bath tub". (Greg Kealey, Essays in Working Class History, 1976)
In Toronto... Montreal

• However beginning in 1890s, other came to settle in urban areas.

• In Toronto, the first group arrived in the 1880's and 1890's settling in the Ward area bounded by Yonge and University College and Queen they lived in ram-shackled housing.
• The Numbers grew as they formed networks for incoming Italians to pass on information to Italians in Italy and Sicily about housing, and financial aid in case of sickness and death.
Italians in Toronto

• The numbers were about **14,000 in 1913**.

• Gradually worked hard and made their way northward up **Dufferin Street**.

• The same pattern is **found in Hamilton** where a strong group of working class immigrants have laid a foundation for the descendants.
The Italian Canadians

• The Italian community centers around the Italian family.

• In Italy, the family is a source of moral authority and community values.
In the Italian Family

A person's worth is determined by:

1. His/her ability to promote the economic prosperity of the family

2. To preserve the chastity and integrity of women in the family.

3. To preserve group life with family at the center of association and sociability
Industrialization

• The industrial period which can be said to go from 1850 -1950 in Canada but much earlier in the US and Britian, was not kind to the elderly, particularly in the early stages.

• As families moved into cities earning a wage, elderly lived on their own, without the support of younger generations.
Katz's study of Hamilton showed that only 8-10% of families were multigenerational.

Palmore and Whittington in the US studied 26 societies that modernized and found that elderly lost status all these cultures.
See Rocco Perry

• From Sicily, the notorious Canadian gangster…Status..Al Capone..

• One Sociologist Banfield commented on this phenomenon in terms of religio-pragmatism values:
Roman Catholic Majority

• **Roman Catholicism for a majority culture** but combined with pragmatism in economic values.

• *ie. "amoral familialism" (Banfield, 1958) “unrelenting drive to maximize the material short-run advantage of the nuclear family".*
Italian ethnic stereotype

• His comments were hotly debate in the early 60’s as promoting prejudice and ethnic stereotype.

• See Clifford Jansen.

• Leadership in the Toronto Italian Ethnic Group, by Clifford J. Jansen
  International Migration Review © 1969
2. Father Andrew Greeley

- Has to do with their majority status. Greeley’s position is rooted in Durkheimian thought. **Roman Catholicism is the State religion in Italy.**
They are not a minority and therefore they do not follow Catholicism in the same way as do the French Canadian and the Irish Catholic
GROUP MAINTENANCE:

- During the Second World War about 500 were rounded up and interned in Toronto.
- Internment Camps for War criminals and threats to authority.
Italians

• Were seen as Blacks
• The term “wop” was popularized during this time.
• Expected to do the jobs the Anglo majority would not do.
Italian as Scapegoats

• During the early years of the twentieth century, Italian were scapegoats-used to explain business downturns, crime, etc.
Ogmunston decline of Br. Elites (May, 1992)

• As Kobayshi reminds us “human beings share not only systems of production, values and ideas, and political apparatuses, they ground as common ground, upon which their coming together and moving apart, and the conditions under which they do so, constitute the history of common life.”
Maintenance=Survival

- Interned individuals were sympathetic to Mussolini and Fascism.
- Fascism was an alternative to depression.
- Times were very difficult for the Italian community until following the war when the "enemy alien" designation had been lifted in 1947.
Group Actualization

The Influx of Italians in Toronto

As of 1941, Toronto was still over $\frac{3}{4}$ British.

But between 1951 and 1981, the number of Italians increased tenfold.
Group Actualization.

Actualization. by 1960s

- Most immigration from Italy occurs after WW2.
- Tripled since WW2.
- See *Toronto Star* 1996
1990s..

“Most of the Italian Canadian population are now in their most **productive years** and this combined with the foundation they developed during the **most difficult period** has escalated their social standing in Canada” (Toronto Star, 1996)
The author claimed that, "more recent neighbourhoods of choice in bedroom communities like Woodbridge "symbolize a collective distancing” from their humble beginnings...
1998

• The group has only recently received **an apology** from the Canadian government for the **Internment** along with some **financial remuneration**.
St Clair & Dufferin: Little Italy

• During the post-war period, St Clair case “suggests that multiculturalism is reflected and reproduced by the urban landscape”

• Reflects Herberg’s: Three generational hypothesis.
North up Dufferin

• As a result, the group has moved northward to suburbs like North York.

• The Toronto Star 1996) did a large tribute to the Italians ".
50’s & 60’s

- In the 1950's, the Italian community began to grow such that protests by unionists, politicians and the general public were made to stem the tide of immigration.

- Through the 1960's, the Italian community was largely responsible for building the infra-structure of Toronto.
• By the 1970s, one of every ten Torontonians was Italian origin whereas the British population had fallen to just over half.

• Beginning in the late 1960s 300,000 Italian residents comprise 8% of the region’s population.
See Video: The Newcomers: Italian

- They are part of the visible minority population which now comprised half of Toronto’s population.
- Only the Jewish and Portuguese communities reflect more residential segregation than the Italians.
Italian Family

• Has been researched by a number of scholars including Frank Sturino and Jeramy Boissevain
Scardellato & Scarci,

• *A Monument for Italian Canadian Immigrants: Regional Migration from Italy to Canada*, G. Scardellato and Manuela Scarci, eds., Department of Italian Studies, University of Toronto (Toronto: 1999)
Jeremy Boissevain

• “The Italians of Montreal, Social Adjustment in a Plural Society”

• by Jeremy Boissevain (1975)
Italian immigration to Canada was primarily drawn from this rural sector as economic dislocation reduced the agricultural population to 19 percent.
The fact that it was foremost a rural-to-urban movement is fundamental in understanding the nature of the Italian-Canadian family, whose structure and values have been grounded in a relatively recent peasant-based past.
This was no less true of Italy’s industrial working class, much of which was only a generation removed from the countryside, so that the bonds of paese, neighbourhood, and kinship were often as alive in the city as in rural areas.
Modified Extended Family

• A concept of Eugene Litwak (1960)
• Nuclear families clustered together by a patriarchal authority
• Grandfather remains in charge of sons who have their own nuclear families
• Ties are strong—wedding, births, deaths all coordinated by the RC church
Family Structure-

- **Modified extended** – see Eugene Litwak (1960)

- **MEF** = Combinations of Nuclear families but a cooperative form based upon reciprocal rights and obligations.
Family Size

- MEF is patriarchal combined with certain matriarchal authority.
- 1931: 3.71 per family
- 1981: 2.49 per family
From Endogamy/
Towards Exogamy

• In Toronto by 1980, endogamy had decreased from **91 percent** among Italian immigrants; to **64 percent** for the second generation; and **29 percent** for the third.
• **Roles**- extension of peasant past in Italy
• -father provider-in return for material support the husband held exclusive rights to wife sexual services.

• **Diluted as wife works**-but her primary sphere of influence home and children.
• It is still the case that a man's closest relationship is with another man and not his wife....still find distinctive worlds for men and women.
Female Chastity

- Fathers and sons equally responsible for protecting the *honour of daughters* and sisters respectively.
Socialization Practices:

• Children expected to show gratitude for sacrifices of parents-show respect.
• Differential treatment for sons and daughters.

• Traditionally up to 1960's daughters were discouraged from pursuing post-secondary education.
• Education for sons was encouraged but not for individual fulfillment but to bring **honor** to the family.

• These patterns are changing.
Kinship Patterns

• Strong kinship ties to a large familial circle.

• **1-Primary**- loyalty is to nuclear family. Famiglia

• **2-Secondary**- is familiari- wider grouping family circle
• 2. familiari- is all relatives up to second cousin-up to this group one cannot intermarry and substantial obligations exist
Kinship

• The third level is relatives up to the fourth cousin which one is expected to recognize but obligations are fewer.

• Although change Italians continue to emphasize kinship.
comparaggio,

- Whereby close friends or patrons could be brought into the family circle of familiari.
- The church sanctified the relationship through the recognition of godparents at baptism, sponsorship at first communion and confirmation, and the call for witnesses at marriage.
Family/Society:

- Not as institutionally complete - degree to which ethnic group develops parallel institutions.
- Study by)-Italian emphasis is on family.
- In Montreal, Boissevain found that annually 2400 births, 550 weddings and 3000 other occasions.
- Family-kin-community
Summary

• The Italian has experienced prejudice and discrimination and in spite of this, the community has a strong work ethic and has as Evelyn Kallen maintains in her work called “Ethnicity and Successful Enterpreneurship” has carved out elite status within an occupational niche.
Summary

• Thus in spite of the success of British and Jewish at the top of the social strata in Canada, third ethnic groups are making headway.
Canada’s Ethnic Groups

• The distinctive character of ethnic groups in Canada can only be fully understood by examining:
  1. the degree of institutional completeness,
  2. organizational style
  3. the role of the state.
I.C Concept and Research

• An important essay dealing with the concept of institutional completeness is:

• "Institutional Completeness, Ethnic Organizational Style and the Role of the State: the Jewish, Italian and Greek Communities of Montreal"  M. Michael Rosenberg and Jack Jedwab (CJSA, 29(3) 1992)
Since Canada allows ethnic groups to flourish, while at the same time it possesses a large welfare state, each ethnic community in Canada develops a unique organizational style and relationship with the State.
Immigrant Transplantation is difficult

- When an immigrant is transplanted in a new country he is forced to develop new patterns of interpersonal relations.
- He or she must develop new friendships and affiliations in the process of meeting immediate needs.
Host society is needed

• The new immigrant must find work, learn a new language, develop social contacts, find a doctor, find schools for children.

• The choice he/she makes will be related to the degree to which his/her ethnic community is institutionally complete
• The choices he/she makes will be made from either the

• A. ethnic community
• B. receiving community
• C. another ethnic community.
IC among Quebec Minorities

- This paper attempts to extend Breton's notion of institutional completeness by examining the relationship between the organizational styles of the Jewish, Greek and Italian communities of Montreal and the policies of the Quebec state.
Rosenberg and Jedwab

• The authors argue that the concept of organizational style compliments Breton's institutional completeness.
Organizational style

• While institutional completeness refers to the degree of institutional development, organizational style refers to the specific type or direction of institutional development of an ethnic community.
Organizational Style-cultural

- The **cultural** rather than structural character of an ethnic group is emphasized by the concept `organizational style'.

- It is the reason the **Jewish community in Toronto**, for example, differs from the Jewish community of Montreal but is also dramatically distinct from the other ethnic communities.
Wally Seccombe & D.W. Livingstone

• 'Down To Earth People'
• Beyond Class Reductionism and Postmodernism
• Written by: Wally Seccombe & D.W. Livingstone