

Homemade *Italianità*:
Italian Foodways in Postwar Vancouver

by

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Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

Following the Second World War, there was an increase of Italian immigration to Vancouver. Many Italians found their way to Vancouver through informal social networks established by earlier migrants. Once there, Italians turned to those networks to find work, housing, and familiarity. Italians also continued to produce and consume foods in Vancouver in similar ways to Italy. By looking at Vancouver Italian foodways, this thesis seeks to understand how food contributed to Italian Canadian identity. Postwar Italian immigrants brought established cuisines with them to Vancouver. They then actively sought to maintain those food customs. Nevertheless, in order to continue living in Vancouver Italians adapted their livelihoods, familial gender divisions, and the ways they acquired foods. They cooperated with immigrants from other regions of Italy and accepted foods with *Italianità* (Italianess) when they could not acquire foods from their hometowns. The result was a complicated identity that included social interactions between Italians, as well as a combination of Italian and Canadian foods.

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Introduction

When Artura Cusinato first came to Vancouver in 1958 she did so on the request of her now husband, who immigrated shortly before to avoid twenty-two months of compulsory military service in Italy. He chose Vancouver on the advice of his father, who had spent eight years in North America, before settling in Vancouver to work on the Burrard Street Bridge. His father recommended Vancouver because he was able to find work, and he loved the natural beauty of British Columbia. Artura's English was poor when she first arrived, which made everyday life especially difficult. For certain food products, she could rely on Italian markets like Tosi Foods and Bosa Foods. But even then, the merchants often spoke slightly different dialects of Italian. For other products she could not obtain from the Italian community or produce herself, she had to turn to English speaking shops.¹

One day she went to the store to buy some household products. While there, she noticed a block of yellow floor wax and decided the floors needed waxing. When she got back home she proceeded to unpackaged the block and wax the floors. She noticed that the wax smelled peculiar. It was a yellowish orange colour and had the same consistency of the floor wax she had used back in Italy, but it was quite pungent. Despite this, she proceeded to work it into the floor until it shone. This task ultimately proved disappointing when the whole house began to reek of the wax. When her husband came home from work, he also noticed the smell immediately and asked her where it came from. "It was the floor wax I bought," she exclaimed. Her husband picked up the package of wax and began howling with laughter. "It's cheese," he exclaimed. They

¹ Artura Cusinato, Interviewed by Author, May 27th, 2015, Vancouver.

both had a good laugh over the incident, realizing that she had just waxed the floor with a block of Kraft Velveeta cheese. It took at least a month to get rid of the smell.² While it may be a memory she looks back on with nostalgic humour, this anecdote is indicative of a larger theme in postwar Italian migration. Rapidly commercializing food markets in Canada were offering foodstuffs entirely foreign to Italian immigrants. Furthermore, migration unsettled Italians' ways of life, including the ways they traditionally produced foods. But Italian immigrants in postwar Vancouver were adamant that they still eat the foods they loved in Italy. They navigated available food sources in Vancouver to continue producing foods they ate at home. Many found life in Vancouver difficult, and there were many barriers to living and eating affordably. Nevertheless, they persevered when feeding themselves, with both humour and pride. As they adapted to life in Vancouver, many found creative ways to put food on the table, and were in some ways successful at maintaining the *Italianità* (Italianess) of their cuisine. This thesis seeks to reveal how they fed themselves, how they continued food customs, and how their foodways changed in Vancouver.

My aim is to contribute to two areas of recent scholarship. The first explores Italian immigration in twentieth century North America. In 1981 a collection of essays were published in an attempt to reveal continuities and differences between Little Italies in North America. Editors Robert Harney and Vincenza Scarpaci came to the conclusion that early studies of these communities complicated previous filiopietistic understanding of Italian life in North America. They also concluded that considerably more research

² Ibid.

was necessary to understand these complexities.³ Since then there has been a considerable amount of scholarship focused on different aspects of Italian life in both Canada and America. Historians of Italian migration began to complicate antiquated views of movement from old world to new world, and then sought to understand Italian migration within a larger paradigm shift towards thinking of migrants as part of transnational diasporas.⁴ John Zucchi, in particular, argued that Italians in Toronto were not national immigrants, but instead identified with their hometowns.⁵ This diverse group of identities within Italian migrant communities opened up a new set of questions about Italian identity in North America. Scholars have since explored the complex relationships within the Italian community and situated them within the larger contexts of migration. Zucchi argued it was the informal social networks that assisted Italians through migrations, which created a broader Italian identity in North America, rather than *Italianità* as defense mechanism against discrimination.⁶ Nevertheless, scholars show that

³ Robert F. Harney and J. Vincenza Scarpaci, *Little Italies in North America* (Toronto: The Multicultural Society of Ontario, 1981).

⁴ Franc Sturino charts the shift between temporary and permanent Italian migration to America in Franc Sturino *Forging the Chain: Italian Migration to North America 1880-1930* (Toronto: The Multicultural Society of Ontario, 1990); For discussions of transnationalism see; Donna R. Gabaccia, "Is Everywhere Nowhere? Nomads, Nations, and the Immigrant Paradigm of United States History," *The Journal of American History* 86, no. 3 (1999): 1115-134; Donna Gabaccia, "Nations of Immigrants: Do Words Matter?," *The Pluralist* 5, No. 3 (Fall, 2010): pp. 5-31; Nicholas DeMaria Harney, "Italian Diasporas Share the Neighbourhood (in the English-speaking World)," *Modern Italy* 11, no.1 (2006): 3-7, DOI: 10.1080/13532940500489460.

⁵ John E. Zucchi, "Italian Hometown Settlements and the Development of an Italian community in Toronto, 1875-1935," in *Gathering Place: People and Neighborhoods of Toronto*, edited by Robert F. Harney (Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1985).

⁶ John E. Zucchi, *The Italian Immigrants of the St. John's Ward, 1875-1915* (Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1981); John E. Zucchi, *Italians in*

Italian communities in North America were also shaped by their host cities structural and social contexts, which included forms of discrimination.⁷ In concert, these works present a complicated view of Italian communities in North America, and show the need for further research on Italo-Canadian identity.

The ways this thesis contributes to Italian immigration history are twofold. It seeks to add to the currently limited amount of scholarship that focuses on Italians who immigrated to the Pacific. The majority of scholarship concerning Italian migration focuses on population centers in central and eastern North America. Several scholars have focused on the west coast, though the majority of this scholarship looks at Italians in California.⁸ This thesis will add to this scholarship by focusing solely on the postwar

Toronto: Development of a National Identity, 1975-1935 (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988).

⁷ Franca Iacovetta argues that Italian women and men adapted to work in Canada, though the process of adaptation was not smooth, with many experiencing discrimination in the workplace; Franca Iacovetta, *Such Hardworking People: Italian Immigrants in Postwar Toronto* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill and Queen's University Press, 1992); Jordan Stanger-Ross shows how the Italian communities in postwar Toronto and Philadelphia existed in different ways within their respective cities. He further posits that the "potential connections among people of Italian origins were actualized in distinct fashions" that were shaped by their host cities; Jordan Stanger-Ross, *Staying Italian: Urban Change and Ethnic Life in Postwar Toronto and Philadelphia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 138.

⁸ The main works concerning Italians in California are: Dino Cinel, *From Italy to San Francisco: The Immigrant Experience* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1982); Sebastian Fischera, *Italy on the Pacific: San Francisco's Italian Americans* (New York : Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Community historians have contributed towards the history of Italians in British Columbia, see Lynne Bowen, *Whoever Gives Us Bread* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2011); Anna M. Zampieri Pan, *Presenze Italiane in British Columbia* (Vancouver: Ital Press Publishers, 2009); Raymond Culos, *Vancouver's Society of Italians*, Vol. 1-3 (Vancouver: Cusmano Books, 1998, 2002, 2006); Some recent scholarly works focus on British Columbia, though only Laura Quilici focuses on Italians in Vancouver; Patricia K. Wood, *Nationalism from the Margins: Italian in Alberta and British Columbia* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002); Elio Costa and Gabriele Scardellato, *Lawrence Grassi, From Piedmont to the Rocky Mountains* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015); Laura Quilici, "I Was a

Vancouver Italian community. It will also build on the works by historians who complicate Italian identity in North America. Zucchi, Franca Iacovetta, and Jordan Stanger-Ross each show how Italian communities in Canada developed plural identities that included connections to local hometowns, a larger Italian identity, and specific engagement with Canadian cities. I seek to explore how these identities manifested in the foods Italians produced and consumed in Vancouver.

The second area of scholarship that this thesis engages with is food and migration history. While still a burgeoning field, there have been several important contributions to this area of historical research. Much of the field explores ethnic foodways through the lens of consumption. Americanists have looked to advertisement and magazine publications to understand how they marketed food to Italian Americans or how Italian foods were marketed to other Americans.⁹ In Canada, Iacovetta takes a similar approach to understanding how “gatekeepers,” or Canadians involved in efforts to naturalize newcomers, played a role in shaping immigrant foodways. She argues that, along with “food packages” and social work, publications attempted to Canadianize immigrant foodways.¹⁰ The history of consumerism offers a rich body of documentary evidence,

Strong Lady’: Italian Housewives With Boarders in Vancouver, 1947-61,” (M.A. Thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1995); Alexander Freund, and Laura Quilici, "Exploring Myths in Women's Narratives: Italian and German Immigrant Women in Vancouver, 1947-1961," *The Oral History Review* 23, no. 2 (1996): 19-43.

⁹ Elizabeth Zaroni, “In Italy Everyone Enjoys It—Why Not in America? Italian Americans and Consumption in Transnational Perspective During the Early Twentieth Century,” Danielle Battasti, “Italians Americans, Consumerism, and the Cold War in Transnational Perspective,” and Fabio Parasecoli, “We Are Family: Ethnic Food Marketing and the Consumption of Authenticity in Italian-Themed Chain Restaurants,” in *Making Italian America: Consumer Culture and the Production of Ethnic Identities*, edited by Simone Cinotto (New York: Forham University Press, 2014).

¹⁰ Franca Iacovetta, *Gatekeepers: Reshaping Immigrant Lives in Cold War Canada* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2006).

which allows historians to explore in detail the food that Italians were purchasing, or the form Italian foods took in North American culture. Nevertheless, consumerism only explores a portion of Italian immigrant foodways. The other way we can look at these foodways is by asking how Italians fed themselves. Donna Gabaccia provides an important look at ethnic cuisine in America. She cautiously uses the “melting pot” metaphor to describe the creation of American foodways. The identity of ethnic foods that migrated to North America was fluid, which caused them to change as they appeared in different contexts. These fluid foodways lost their original ethnic identities in some ways and re-established identities as American foods.¹¹ Hasia Diner added to this by arguing that an immigrant’s country of origin was equally as important to shaping ethnic foodways in America.¹² In Canada, scholars have sought to answer this question in two different ways. Marlene Epp and Andrea Eidinger have looked to cookbooks to understand how food, gender, and cultural identities have changed across generations of Mennonite and Jewish immigrants.¹³ Other historians have turned to oral testimony to understand how immigrants fed themselves by negotiating between traditions and their experiences in Canada.¹⁴ I will contribute to the second part of this body of scholarship

¹¹ Donna Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat: Ethnic Foods and the Making of Americans* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

¹² Hasia Diner, *Hungering for America: Italian Irish and Jewish Foodways in the Age of Migration* (Cambridge; Harvard University Press, 2009).

¹³ Marlene Epp, “More than ‘Just’ Recipes: Mennonite Cookbooks in Mid Twentieth-Century North America,” and Andrea Eidinger, “Gefilte Fish and Roast Duck with Orange Slices: A Treasure for My Daughter and the Creation of a Jewish Cultural Orthodoxy in Postwar Montreal,” in *Edible Histories, Cultural Politics: Towards a Canadian Food History* edited by Franca Iacovetta et. all (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 173-88, 189-208.

¹⁴ Megan J. Davies, “Stocking the Root Cellar: Foodscapes in the peace River Region,” and Stacey Zembrzycki, “‘We Didn’t Have a Lot of Money, but we Had Food’: Ukrainians and Their Depression-Era Food Memories,” in *Edible Histories, Cultural*

by seeking to understand how through the process of migration, Italians shaped their food production strategies to suit local food sources and the relationships they formed with other Italians.

This thesis charts the experiences of twelve Italians through the process of migrating to Vancouver from 1954-1975. It then explores how their experiences living and eating in Vancouver shaped their cultural identities. While these migrants arrived over the course of two decades, they were all part of a second wave of Italian migration facilitated by relaxed Canadian immigration laws after the Second World War. Furthermore, their experiences show similar themes of recreating identity through foodways, as a group of first generation immigrants, regardless of when they first arrived in Vancouver. By understanding these immigrants as a group separate from earlier Italian immigrants we can understand how their experiences created *Italianità* in specific ways in Vancouver.

I use the work of Paul Thompson as a basis for collecting and utilizing primarily oral testimony. Thompson's seminal text, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*, presented the oral interview as a powerful historical tool for delving into new areas of inquiry. Especially when considering family history, oral interviews allow the historian to explore the relationships that people formed, which are rarely accessible at length through documentary sources.¹⁵ With this in mind, I have conducted open-ended interviews, individually and in groups, that seek to understand how Vancouver Italian foodways were shaped within familial and community relationships. Informants revealed how they ate on

Politics: Towards a Canadian Food History edited by Franca Iacovetta et. all (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 94-108, 131-139.

¹⁵ Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral: History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

a daily basis, where their food came from, both in Italy and Vancouver, and the roles they enacted within their families in Italy and Vancouver.

These open-ended interviews do not lend themselves to supporting quantitative claims about the Italian community. Instead, they offered a qualitative research method, which allowed the interviewees to inform us about what was important to their cultural identities. Valerie Yow argues that the “in-depth interview enables the researcher to give the subject leeway to answer as he or she chooses, to attribute meanings to the experiences under discussion, and to interject topics. In this way, new hypotheses may be generated.”¹⁶ While interviewing these Italian migrants, I focused on asking them questions about how they acquired and processed foods. The answers I received, however, revealed complex relationships between family members and friends within the Vancouver Italian community. In this sense, this thesis is a form of what Yow considers “family history.” Yow claims that by studying the family the “researcher could see in this social unit how individuals work together or refuse to do so; carry out or change wider societal norms; and create behavioural expectations characteristic of that unit.”¹⁷ This thesis is a combination of these family histories. By comparing the experiences of each, it reveals how cultural identities were formed within the Vancouver Italian community through food production.

Nevertheless, these oral testimonies cannot be understood without considering the relationship between the interviewees and myself. I was very fortunate to find a community that opened up to me with very rich testimony, in part because I was also a

¹⁶ Valerie Yow, *Recording Oral History: A Guide for the Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3rd ed. (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 284-5.

descendant of Italian immigrants. Still, I was in some ways an outsider to the community as I am a fourth generation Italian Canadian and my Italian ancestors lived in Penticton, British Columbia. I was also cognisant of being a male researcher interviewing women about their experiences of gender roles in Italy and Vancouver. Lynn Abrams argues it is a challenge of feminist historians to provide women a place to present their own voice and not “downplay their experiences because they often do not conform to what is publicly presented as significant in mainstream history.”¹⁸ I found similar hesitation from women who initially felt their stories were not worth sharing. Abrams explains that feminist historians aim to create a more inviting interview process for women by reducing the “perceived power imbalance between interviewer and respondent.”¹⁹ Kathryn Anderson and Dana Jack suggest that we must “learn to listen” when interviewing. This includes paying attention to language, emotion, and silences as interviewees recount their experiences. This involves being an active listener, looking for and following up on expressions that could reveal the relationship between women’s experiences and patriarchal forms of communication that attempt to silence their voices.²⁰ As a male interviewer, it was difficult for me to do this without perpetuating the perceived authority of the relationship between the interviewees and myself. Instead I kept my questions focused on these women’s actions and then encouraged them to continue their trains of thought, especially when they expressed concerns about the importance of their expressions. I then sought to interpret the differences between their

¹⁸ Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2016), 71.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 72.

²⁰ Kathryn Anderson and Dana C. Jack, “Learning to Listen: Interview techniques and analyses,” in *The Oral History Reader*, 3rd ed., edited by Robert Perks and Alistair Thompson (New York: Routledge, 2016), 186-7.

actions and the ways they perceived those actions to reveal how their gendered contributions to family continued or changed in Vancouver.

Chapter One examines the importance of food to Italians in Vancouver. First, it traces the journey of several Italians from Italy to Vancouver to show how migration changed how they gained their livelihoods. The chapter then explores the methods Italians used to feed themselves in Vancouver. By doing so, it unpacks their motivations to eat food with *Italianità*. Chapter Two examines the ways that migration unsettled gender roles within Italian families. It charts how first generation women broke out of traditional conceptions of motherhood in Vancouver, and then rationalized their actions within that same identity. It then shows how their daughters negotiated these new versions of motherhood and their experiences outside of their parents' homes.²¹ Chapter Three explores how motivations to eat foods with *Italianità* caused Italians to adapt their food productions strategies to available food sources, which contributed to new foodways in Vancouver. Furthermore, they cooperated with other Italians to make effective use of these sources, which further shaped a Vancouver Italian food identity. Together, the thesis argues that Vancouver Italian foodways are not just a combination of *Italianità* and Canadian experiences, but rather a complex process of adapting foodways that incorporated local Italian hometown identities, changing family dynamics, and a blending of *Italianità* as immigrants cooperated to exploit the food sources available in Vancouver.

²¹ Here, I refer to Italian immigrant women as first generation and women who were born in or grew up in Canada as second-generation women.

1: Finding *Italianità* in Vancouver Foodways

Rosa Citton immigrated to Vancouver in 1954, when she was five years old. She remembers the journey across Canada by train:

Dad got off the train to go and get some bread, I don't know somewhere, in one of the big cities, and he came back with this bread. And it was, you know the sliced bread, white sliced bread that you go like this and its uhh. We were used to make our own bread of course with a nice crust and all that, and that was what was this bread?... They showed us one time, they showed us uhh corn, in a picture or something (my parents used to tell me that) and uhh so they showed us and we said 'ahh polenta.' You know cause that's what it is, from the corn. So they said 'ya, ya, we'll get some of that' and what it was, it was corn that was creamed... disappointing.²²

Rosa was born in *Vibo Velentia*, a small town in Calabria. Her family owned a piece of land that where her father raised animals and grew vegetables. Rosa remembered their food always came from the farm. Her family came to Canada with a rich food culture. In some ways, they literally brought that food with them:

In those days you were kind of permitted, it wasn't all these rigid rules about bringing in food. And we did bring food: cheese and salami and all that in the suitcases. There was only one store that I remember. We lived on 4th and Commercial. There was only one store that had Italian food. And its still there... It's on Main Street and it's called Tosi... anyways that's the only store we would go to and we would find like pasta and maybe and nothing like cheese and things like that yet.²³

In Vancouver, Rosa never felt that her family abandoned their Italian cuisine. Rather, they actively maintained those food customs:

My mother always pretty well cooked Italian stuff. She never learned how to do any umm, Canadian cuisine of any sort. And they always had a garden. They had two houses here. They moved from one house to a bungalow as they got older but they always had a garden. Dad was an avid gardener.²⁴

²² Rosa Citton, interview by author, personal interview, May 26, 2015, Vancouver.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

Like many other postwar Italian immigrants to Vancouver, Rosa's family fed themselves the way they knew how, and they were good at producing and preparing food. Rosa was proud of their ability to eat well and continued to identify with Italian food.

At first glance it seems obvious that food was important to Italian culture in Vancouver. One only needs to look at the 37 Italian picnic events that happen every summer in Confederation Park. Still, this importance has yet to be explored. I ask a basic question—how did Italians feed themselves in Vancouver? This chapter traces the journey of Italian immigrants from their homes in different parts of Italy to Vancouver. I juxtapose their experiences working and feeding themselves in Vancouver to their previous lives in Italy. By looking closely at food production strategies, we can see that postwar Italian immigrants were motivated to feed themselves affordably but also relied on production strategies they brought from Italy. The success of these strategies became a point of pride among Italians and they linked their cultural identities to the food they ate.

Italians did not leave their identities behind when they emigrated from Italy. Franca Iacovetta argues, “[I]t was not the desire to sever connection with Italy that caused immigrants to move but changes that threatened their customary way of earning a livelihood.”²⁵ Food played a central role their livelihood. Not only did Italians derive culture from how they produced and consumed food but it also represented a financial resource, which was in many cases insufficient. Hasia Diner explores how Italians adapted their foodways earlier in America. She argues that late 19th and early 20th century Italian migrants used higher wages in America to develop Italian cuisine so as to mimic

²⁵ Iacovetta, *Such Hardworking People*, xxiv-xxv.

the cuisine elites were eating in Italy.²⁶ Postwar Italian-Vancouverites also desired to recreate Italian cuisine, however, they were less interested in acquiring more valuable ingredients than maintaining already well-established food customs. Maintaining customary foodways was difficult in Vancouver. The majority of urban Canadians acquired food from consumer markets. Furthermore, those Italians who transitioned from agricultural lives in Italy to urban lives in Vancouver found that land was less accessible and was divided into much smaller parcels. These Italians left an economy where food was one of the major sources of income and arrived to one where food became a necessity that wage labour supported. This shift was part of a longer process of migration, where Italians first started to sojourn to Europe and North America for seasonal work and then increasingly migrated permanently.²⁷ Yet, Italians still relied on the production strategies they employed in Italy to feed themselves in Vancouver.

Most rural or semi-rural Italians relied on local farmers to acquire food. Iacovetta describes how Italians lived in “agro-towns” in Southern Italy, where they engaged in complex semi-subsistence lifestyles. She notes,

Italy’s postwar peasants remained small-scale agricultural producers who relied on simple tools and worked the land as a family productive unit. Their main aim, though they could not always meet it, was to achieve some level of self-

²⁶ In comparison, Irish migrants usually ate more of the same foods because English elites in Ireland were not eating particularly more interesting cuisine. Hasia Diner, *Hungering for America* 113-45.

²⁷ For an overview of the diaspora and the process of temporary and permanent migration, see Donna Gabaccia, “Italian History and Gli Italiani nel Mondo, Part I,” *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 2 no. 1 (1997): 45-66; Donna Gabaccia, “Italian History and Gli Italiani nel Mondo, Part II,” *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 3, no.1 (1998) 73-97.

sufficiency. They possessed the means of production, for even if they did not own the land they managed it.²⁸

Italy had been ravaged by depression, fascism, and collateral damage from military conflict. Economic recession, especially in the south, made it very difficult to earn a living as a wage labourer or artisan. Skilled manufactures were no longer producing clothing or other goods but instead relied mostly on repair services.²⁹ Although peasants also suffered greatly from the postwar economy, the gardens they grew alongside agricultural production acted as security from famine. The relationship between consumers and producers was crucial to the function of these semi-subsistence economies. Italian historian Carol Counihan argues that, “Florantine cuisine had its roots in the longstanding *mezzadria* [or share-cropping] mode of production, which influenced city dwellers as well as peasants due to the close connections between city and country.” Italian peasants acquired most of their food from subsistence gardens and sold excess produce in local markets.³⁰ Villagers, on the other hand, were unable to produce substantial calories from their row houses or apartments, so they had to rely on these local markets to purchase food. Families with the ability to work the land were able to produce their own sustenance for considerably cheaper than purchasing it. They were also able to produce monetary income that supplemented family wages and staple harvests.

The Italians, who I interviewed, believed those who could feed themselves were never impoverished. Those that had access to land, were able to produce the food they

²⁸ Iacovetta, *Such Hardworking People*, 11.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 12.

³⁰ Carol M. Counihan, *Around the Tuscan Table: Food Family and Gender in Twentieth Century Florence* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 18-22.

needed to survive. Those without relied on increasingly scarce sources of income to purchase food. Whether peasant farmers were wealthy or poor, they felt at least some security in their ability to feed themselves. Rosa Citton's family owned a significant parcel of land in the middle of their town, *Vibo Velentia*. Her parents never struggled to put food on the table. She recalled, "Each season there would be something to sell... Dad also had a few animals. Like we had chickens ehh for eggs and things. I remember we had a goat for milk and once a year they would be killing a pig for salsicia and stuff."³¹ Settimo Perizzolo's family was less wealthy, but again they were able to consistently feed themselves. They grew vegetables and corn for polenta to consume. They then sold "the calf, right, and some older cows and we sold the milk."³² His father lost his job after a motorcycle accident, so his mother began washing dishes at the local school to provide income for the family. Between her wages "and the calf that my dad sold and the milk and some of the cows that my dad grew, we survived."³³ Paulina Vinci noticed the difference in poverty between those who had access to land and those who did not. Her father kept goats and pigs on their farm and the ones that "you sell, you got money all year round."³⁴ Their neighbours, who did not have access to farmland, "no gotta bread, they gotta just one quarter of bread, four people... The boy, you know, run away, go behind the bed, he never come out... they come inside and look behind the bed, he's dead."³⁵ Paulina was visibly shaken by this recollection, especially because she knew

³¹ Rosa Citton, interview by author, personal interview, May 26, 2015, Vancouver.

³² Settimo Perizzolo, interview by author, personal interview, February 15, 2016, Burnaby.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Paulina Vinci and Maria D'Averson, interview by author, group interview, June 26, 2015, Vancouver.

³⁵ Ibid.

they could have helped this family if they had known how dire the situation was.

Paulina's family was not particularly wealthy but because of their access to land they could produce food to eat and sell.

Italian immigrants also emigrated with differing amounts of monetary wealth. This depended on how wealthy they were in Italy, but also whether they emigrated alone or as part of a family unit. When Rosa Citton emigrated with her parents in 1954, they sold the land they owned in *Vibo Valentia*, which paid for their voyage and a house in Vancouver.³⁶ Emanuela Rossi also emigrated with her parents:

My grandparents on my dad's side did have a farm but my dad was the youngest of the siblings. He didn't have to go to war or anything because of the fact that he was the youngest son. So basically once he finished his elementary school he went to work right away to help bring money into the home. He did not farm at all.³⁷

As the youngest child, her father did not inherit any of the land her grandparents owned. Without any significant wealth to bring with them to Vancouver, they had to rent a "tiny little house on Kamloops Street," until several years later when they purchased their first property.³⁸ Significant wealth was tied to land ownership in Italy. Historians of Italian migration have noted that those without land tended to struggle financially. The postwar Italian economy was not strong enough for a significant number of Italians to save enough money for investment in Canada.³⁹ Furthermore, larger family units often held

³⁶ Rosa Citton, interview by author, personal interview, May 26, 2015, Vancouver.

³⁷ Emanuela Rossi, interview by author, personal interview, August 18, 2015, Burnaby.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ For an economic analysis of postwar migration see Alessandra Venturini, *Postwar Migration in Southern Europe 1950-2000: An Economic Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Franca Iacovetta argues that a significant number of Italian immigrants from southern Italy were often share-croppers, who only owned a portion of the land they farmed if any; Iacovetta, *Such Hardworking People*, chapter 1;

Italian wealth.⁴⁰ Single migrants, such as Andy Citton, abandoned their families' wealth when they emigrated. "When I left, Italy still had compulsory army and you had to serve twenty four months. And I decided that was not the way I was going to do it. I had nothing; I come from a big family. We were poor farmers."⁴¹ Any wealth his family had was the land they owned and the food they produced. Andy left any inheritance behind in Italy when he emigrated.

Almost all Italian immigrants to Canada relied on informal social support networks in some way. Sociologists John and Leatrice MacDonald first coined the term "chain migration" to describe these networks. They explain, "chain migration can be defined as that movement in which prospective migrants learn of opportunities, are provided with transportation, and have initial accommodation and employment arranged by means of primary social relationships with previous migrants."⁴² Chain migration became the apparatus for Italians to get to Canada and they continued to rely on those systems for comfort, be it social experiences, or familiar foods. John Zucchi argues that these social support systems semi-formalized in Toronto through Italian labour agents known as *padroni*. New immigrants turned to *padroni* to find work, shelter, social interaction, and foods that were familiar to them.⁴³ Lynn Bowen shows that a form of *padroni* did exist in British Columbia in the early 20th century, though they were usually

Dino Cinel shows how Italian migrants at the turn of the twentieth century sent money back to be invested in Land, though many ended up abandoning that land due to poor harvests; Cinel, *From Italy to San Francisco*.

⁴⁰ Venturini, *Postwar Migration in Southern Europe*, Chapter 1.

⁴¹ Andy Citton and Rosa Citton, interview by author, group interview, June 6, 2015, Burnaby.

⁴² John S. MacDonald and Leatrice D MacDonald, "Chain Migration Ethnic Neighborhood Formation and Social Networks". *The Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly*, 42 no.1 (1964): 82–97.

⁴³ Zucchi, *Italians in Toronto*, 48.

family members, or employees who promoted other Italians to work alongside them.⁴⁴ Postwar Italian Immigrants found a more established community in Vancouver and with it more established social networks. Many postwar immigrants chose Vancouver based on the advice of family, either close or distantly related, that lived there. These family members completed the bureaucratic applications, sponsored (took responsibility for) immigrants, and assisted them in starting a life in Canada.

Italians relied on these networks whether they immigrated alone or in a family unit. Paulina Vinci's Aunt and Uncle sponsored her, paying for her voyage to Vancouver and providing her a place to live.⁴⁵ Similarly, Settimo Perizzolo first lived with his brother in North Burnaby, after his brother convinced him to take advantage of better work opportunities in Vancouver. In Italy, Settimo

finished school when I was sixteen and a half. I went to work and I was making three hundred liras an hour. At that time a dollar was five hundred liras so I was working for less than a dollar an hour. My brother came home and he says, 'if you come to Vancouver I can almost promise you five dollars an hour. Six months later I was here.'⁴⁶

Paulina and Settimo were able to immigrate because they had family in Vancouver to support their journey and provide them a place to live. Settimo was also able to find work through his brother. Those who immigrated with a family unit also had to rely on chain migration for the bureaucratic process of immigration. Rosa's family relied on her uncle, who immigrated several years earlier and filled out the paperwork to sponsor them. They did not all arrive at the same time. First, he sponsored her father and helped him find a

⁴⁴ Lynne Bowen, *Whoever Gives Us Bread*, 129.

⁴⁵ Paulina Vinci and Maria D'Averson, interview by author, group interview, June 26, 2015, Vancouver.

⁴⁶ Settimo Perizzolo, interview by author, personal interview, July 18, 2015, Burnaby.

job in road construction. Once her father was settled, Rosa immigrated with her mother under her Uncle's sponsorship.⁴⁷

Even with the support of chain migration, Italians felt their journey to Vancouver was a struggle, whether they were relatively wealthy or poor in Italy. Despite different experiences of financial success, the immigrants I interviewed all recalled some measure of hardship. Rosa's father struggled adjusting to work in Canada. Even though the money they acquired from selling their land in Italy was able to pay for their first house, they were unable to purchase enough land to continue farming:

My dad came here and he worked, he wasn't used to working, he was used to being his own boss, but here he had to work. And he worked in asphalt in the streets and you know did that, which is very hard physically. And he died of pulmonary disease, which, looking back was probably started by his work.⁴⁸

The money they brought with them did not exclude Rosa's father from hard labour. He worked for meagre wages in a physically demanding job, which ultimately affected his health. Emanuela's parents also worked constantly to make ends meet. Unlike Rosa's Family, they did not have any significant savings when they came to Vancouver. They had to find ways to make additional money so they could eventually purchase property:

I think [life in Vancouver] was better but it was very difficult. I remember growing up and all I remember my mom and dad doing was working. Like just working all the time. My dad worked, got a job right away as soon as he landed. My mom then had my brother, after we're, we're, here just a few months. And then, as my brother was just two or three, my mom would work at Pucini's restaurant... And my mom used to go to work at like five at night... And work till one or two in the morning and then take the bus home. And she would do that on the weekends... My dad worked continuously and then he would do odd jobs on the weekends. He would do work for other Italians like digging ditches or whatever it took... My dad then ended up making like cement flowerpots. He got

⁴⁷ Rosa Citton and Andy Citton, interview by author, group interview, February 18, 2016, Burnaby.

⁴⁸ Rosa Citton and Andy Citton, interview by author, group interview, June 6, 2015, Burnaby.

moulds and that's what he would do. He would come home from work and do these. And then my mom would finish them and then me and my brother would have to paint them.⁴⁹

Emanuela's parents were able to purchase property, but they worked incredibly hard to be able to afford it. Both Rosa's and Emanuela's families cooperated to establish themselves in Vancouver. Conversely, single migrants relied more heavily on kinship or the wider social network to find lodging and work in Vancouver. Regardless of how successful they were, many still found work difficult. Andy Citton decided to not work for his brother-in-law because he did not want work to jeopardize their personal relationship. Instead, he chose to work construction in northern British Columbia to maximize the money he could make. "In those days you were working ten hours a day, seven days a week. The only day, on the seventh day you would work half a day. The rest of the half day you just wanted to rest."⁵⁰ Eventually he became a partner in his own construction company. Although he was successful financially, his early work in Vancouver was physically demanding.

In addition to the physical demands of working in Vancouver, Italian immigrants' employment did not afford them the opportunity to produce subsistence food alongside their wage labour. The ways Italians engaged the labour force in Vancouver sharply divided wage earning from food production. In 1951 in Vancouver, scarcely any Italian immigrants found gainful employment in agriculture. Men were typically employed in

⁴⁹ Emanuela Rossi, interview by author, personal interview, August 18, 2015, Burnaby.

⁵⁰ Andy Citton and Rosa Citton, interview by author, group interview, June 6, 2015, Burnaby.

manufacturing, metal fabrication, construction, transportation, and general labour.⁵¹

Women were mostly employed in the service industry, manufacturing, or ambiguously categorized as personal or commercial.⁵² Only 5% of employed men and 1% of women worked as agricultural labourers.⁵³ In 1961, although the total number of employed Italian men and women increased, the percentage of men in agricultural labour dropped to 3% and the number of women in agricultural labour remained at 1%.⁵⁴ A significant number of Italian agricultural labourers in British Columbia likely resided outside of Vancouver.⁵⁵

⁵¹ Percentages were calculated by dividing the number of Italian men in each occupation in British Columbia by the total number of employed Italian men in British Columbia. Italian men were most significantly employed in the following occupations: Manufacturing 19.4%, transportation 15%, general labour 15%, Metal products 10, construction 8% managerial positions 7.5%, and mining 6.5%. Dominion Bureau of Statistics, "Labour Force, 14 Year of Age and Over, By Occupation and Sex, Showing Birthplace, Period of Immigration, and Origin for the Provinces, 1951," in *The Ninth Census of Canada: Labour Force*, vol. 4 (1951), table 13.

⁵² Percentages were calculated by dividing the number of Italian women in each occupation in British Columbia by the total number of employed Italian women in British Columbia. Italian Women were most significantly employed in the following occupations: Service 23%, Personal 23%, Commercial 18%, Manufacturing 9%, professional 8%, clerical 6%. Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Dominion Bureau of Statistics, "Labour Force, 15 Year of Age and Over, By Occupation Division and Sex, Showing Birthplace, Period of Immigration, and Ethnic Group for the Provinces, 1961," in *1961 Census of Canada: Labour Force*, vol. 3 part 1 Catalogue no. 94-515 (1961), table 22.

⁵⁵ In 1951, 24,448 Italians resided in British Columbia of which 6,563 (27%) resided in Vancouver and Burnaby; 1951 Census pop char. Dominion Bureau of Statistics, "Population by (a) Official Language and Sex, and (b) Mother Tongue and Sex, for Counties and Census Division, 1951," in *The Ninth Census of Canada: Population*, vol. 1 (1951), Table 56; Dominion Bureau of Statistics, "Population and Housing Characteristics by Census Tracts: Vancouver," in *1961 Census of Canada*, Series CT, Catalogue 95-537, table 1; In 1961 38,399 Italians resided in British Columbia of which 12,941(34%) resided in Vancouver or Burnaby; 1961 census tables 35-36. Dominion Bureau of Statistics, "Population and Housing Characteristics by Census Tracts: Vancouver," in *1961 Census of Canada: Population*, vol. 1 part 2, Catalogue 92-545, table 35-36.

Nonetheless, Italians in Vancouver did produce food for economic purposes.

Evalina Andreola remembers the scavenging she and her husband did to supplement their income. “When he was not working as a daytime longshoreman, we went down ah Richmond, ah Delta, we went down there and collect lotta vegetable. So we went in there and got all the vegetable and then went in store to get the rest of the, the food.”⁵⁶

Evalina’s husband also grew a garden and bought food products in bulk together with other Italians. She used the food they collected or grew to feed the single male Italian immigrants she boarded, which further supplemented her husbands income. Evalina felt that their scavenging efforts significantly contributed to their financial success, “So I never say I like this, I can’t have it. No, like uh the clothes, If we needed something, we go get it.”⁵⁷ For Paulina, her food production strategies staved off hunger as her and her husband struggled to make ends meet. When her and her husband first rented an apartment, they could barely afford to heat it:

I stay, rent uh the apartment, you know... the cold up the stairs is like, ah, you be outside with the snow it was so cold. I buy a load of the wood because no money. I put, I got a little stove, *all antica*, with big funnel. I open the stove and it make smoke all over the place. They passa the police outside, they say, ‘Fire Fire, go call the firemen,’ and I say, ‘no no fire, it’s the wood.’ I laugh now but that time, no stove. I have to go across the street to my auntie to boil the pot to cook a little bit of pasta.⁵⁸

When they had little money for food, Paulina scavenged discarded vegetables from local grocers or collected greens from the railway or other urban spaces. She also made use of community gardening space. Even though her family did not have their own property to

⁵⁶ Evalina Andreola and Sandra Gange, interview by author, group interview, July 20, 2015, Vancouver.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Paulina Vinci and Maria D’Averson, interview by author, group interview, June 26, 2015, Vancouver.

grow a garden, she found space to produce affordable food. “I doing everything from scratch, I grow veggie, I make my own bread I make my own pasta, I make my own vegetable. I make you know to grown up the family.”⁵⁹ Although they struggled to earn enough money to get by, they never experienced the famine Paulina remembered in Italy; her daughter Maria remembers, “we were poor but never hungry” in Vancouver.⁶⁰

There were three ways that Italians continued to produce food in Vancouver: The first was to collect food, whether that meant scavenging in urban spaces or foraging in natural settings. The second was to grow food in gardens. And the third was to purchase food in bulk, individually, or as part of a group, and preserve it. All three of these food production strategies had economic implications. Scavenged food was free, although labour intensive. Growing food, using agricultural techniques Italians brought to Vancouver, greatly reduced the cost of vegetables. And savvy purchasing strategies made commercial food sources affordable. But affordability was not the sole reason for producing food in Vancouver. Unlike the Italian immigrants of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, described by Diner, postwar Italian immigrants in Vancouver were proud of the cuisine they had eaten in Italy. By producing foods, they could control the type of cuisine they put on the table in Canada. Food in Vancouver became a source of pride and identity for these Italian immigrants, which complicated efforts to make food affordable.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

Paulina and her husband struggled to find financial stability when she first came to Vancouver: “I come here and I got nothing, I gotta start all over.”⁶¹ Her husband worked for CN Rail at a meagre wage, and she worked in the service industry. Nevertheless, however dire their financial situation was, Paulina always found a way to produce food. One way she put food on the table was by scavenging it from urban spaces. She knew “from Italy, I [make] everything [at] home. I go to the dump [train tracks] I got eh dandelion you know the dandelion. I collect the dandelion I wash, I cook, I fry with a little bit of onion.”⁶² She also scavenged food scraps from local grocers to supplement the dishes she made: “I go to Chinatown and collect all the leftover vegetable... The lettuce outside is-a-rotten, inside is ok. And me I peel all the rotten one, I cook I make a soup with pork bone.”⁶³ These strategies reflect the difficulty of succeeding in Vancouver; Paulina and her husband struggled to make ends meet for most of their lives. Nonetheless, Paulina found pride in her ability to put food on the table. Her Calabrese diet consisted mostly of vegetables, some animal or fish meat, and dairy products she produced on her father’s farm. Even though the ingredients she procured in Vancouver were of lesser quality, she was still able to cook those ingredients to make a cuisine similar to her Italian fare. “Eggplant I make like finger, I fill it up with basil, garlic, cheese.” She would get cheese ends from neighbors, buy them cheaply or scavenge them from stores. “Sometimes I got a piece here, I gotta piece there, grind em all up together.”⁶⁴ Her ability to cook a myriad of vegetable based dishes allowed her to turn

⁶¹ Paulina Vinci and Maria D’Averson, interview by author, group interview, June 26, 2015, Vancouver.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

these ingredients into fare that was not only passable, but that she identified with Italian cuisine, and her family found delicious.

Scavenging tended to be a gendered activity. In Vancouver, women scavenged food as part of larger cost cutting strategies. As with Italian families in Toronto, women worked as family financial managers, which meant they were also in charge of purchasing food for daily consumption.⁶⁵ By scavenging for food, women could save considerable money and still feed their families. Evalina collected vegetables in Richmond. Although her husband accompanied her, she always led these expeditions to scavenge food. Emanuela's mom also found ways to produce food affordably. She

made a lot of her own jam. We would go out and pick strawberries [from nearby green spaces] and come home and you know make jars and jars of jam... So basically it was, your basic staples she would buy, and then anything over and above that she would just try and make herself.⁶⁶

Women scavenged for food when they could to save money on daily expenses, so they could afford to purchase the foods they could not produce. Rosa recalls, "In those days [Rosa's mother] send me to Commercial Drive, to the butcher, to buy a few a bones you know left from pig bones or beef bones, and that's how you do your sauce, it's a cheap way to do the sauce."⁶⁷ By collecting vegetables, she was able to purchase select ingredients to produce flavour. Scavenging was a creative way women saved the money so they could purchase the ingredients they needed to make the dishes their families liked to eat.

⁶⁵ Iacovetta, *Such Hardworking People*, 90.

⁶⁶ Emanuela Rossi, interview by author, personal interview, August 18, 2015, Burnaby.

⁶⁷ Rosa Citton, interview by author, personal interview, May 26, 2015, Vancouver.

Although none of these scavenging activities were illegal, they were undesirable forms of food production. Italians only employed some scavenging techniques as a necessary measure to prevent poverty. Paulina was the only person I interviewed who collected discarded produce from grocers. She did so to ensure there was always something to eat. It was her ability to turn any ingredient into palatable cuisine that kept her children from noticing how close they were to poverty. Other forms of scavenging were employed more often. Evalina, Emanuela's mother, and Settimo all collected ingredients from various public land. In most cases they picked vegetables, berries, or mushrooms. These forms of scavenging were less required to stave off poverty and more a replication of collecting wild foods near their homes in Italy. While the reasons for scavenging varied, these women's willingness to turn to scavenging efforts shows the lengths they went to ensure their families were well fed. As families were able to afford other sources of food, women reduced their scavenging activities.

Gardening was another a way that Italians were able to produce vegetables affordably. The limited availability of arable land in Vancouver pushed Italians to take an economic approach to gardening. Settimo, for example, grew plants that provided him the most yields.

We don't grow potato, for example, right? Cause in my garden I grow plant twice a year. So I grow lettuce in my patch, right? And that will plant, from April till July I grow my lettuce. I take out the last and plant Radicchio and I eat Radicchio from October until December.⁶⁸

Potatoes took the entire growing season to mature, so by growing vegetables that mature in different parts of the season, Settimo was able to maximize his yield and also the

⁶⁸ Settimo Perizzolo, interview by author, personal interview, Feb 15, 2016, Burnaby.

diversity produce in his garden. The growing season in Vancouver was also shorter than in many parts of Italy. Settimo explained, “From mid February to mid March we buy our vegetable. After that it’s all home grown.”⁶⁹ In Italy, he was able to grow plants with longer maturation periods because there was more time to produce them, but in Vancouver, he had to choose which vegetables to grow. Certain foods were also more easily obtained cheaply in Vancouver. Evalina’s husband “would go to the farm and get like the free potatoes, you know how they pick them all up and the ones that kind of come off the sides, they’d let him pick up sacks of them for free.”⁷⁰ With a shorter growing season, it was prudent to grow choice vegetables during the season and look for cheap produce elsewhere.

Gardens were also a place for Italian immigrants to produce foods they could not acquire readily in Vancouver. Anna remembered not being able to find Italian produce in Canadian markets:

You went to shop; you didn’t find what you wanted. There was no fennels, and I love fennels. There was no zucchini. No, no melanzana, no uhh, you know, all of theses, you know, that we would call exotic, uhh, vegetables you didn’t have. Even the peppers you didn’t find.⁷¹

Italian immigrants often brought seeds with them when they first came to Vancouver.

When Evalina first arrived:

Right away, we bought a house and that [] he start with a garden. He got [seeds] from friends. And uhh, some times we went in the store, you buy the little pouches. And for the salad, for the radicchio we went to Bosa because it came

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Evalina Andreola and Sandra Gange, interview by author, group interview, July 20, 2015, Vancouver.

⁷¹ Anna Teranna, interview by author, personal interview, May 25, 2015, Vancouver.

from Italy. And then we start with that, ya, and after we letting go seeds outside [keeping them over]”⁷² They are still getting seeds from Italy.⁷³

Italians continued to bring seeds from Italy to grow the produce they wanted. “Generally when you go back to visit Italy, you always come back with a little bit of seeds.”⁷⁴

Italians sought seeds from Italy partly because they knew how to care for Italian vegetables. Bortolo Rinaldo “knew how to garden... I went with what I was doing there. Some new stuff but even today we go with the radicchio, insalata, pomodori, basil, no parsley no, we no plant potato because we don’t have enough ground.”⁷⁵ Not only was gardened produce affordable, but it also provided Italians a way to produce vegetables from Italy they wanted to eat and knew how to care for.

Finally, Italians in Vancouver employed purchasing strategies to acquire the commercially available food they wanted affordably. Lucia and Bortolo Rinaldo bought their poultry from a local farm in Surrey. Lucia recalls, “We used to go buy chicken. We bring it home and he kill it and we clean it and we put it in the freezer... One day he come home with 75 quail and I have to clean it, ohh!”⁷⁶ Bortolo Rinaldo would purchase live chickens, or quail and bring them home where he would slaughter them and leave them to Lucia to process and freeze, dividing the acquisition and preparation of these foods along gendered lines. They were able to acquire them cheaply as they bought them live and in large numbers. Furthermore, quail, which they ate in Italy, was a less common

⁷² Evalina Andreola and Sandra Gange, interview by author, group interview, July 20, 2015, Vancouver.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Settimo Perizzolo, interview by author, personal interview, Feb 15, 2016, Burnaby.

⁷⁵ Bortolo Rinaldo and Lucia Rinaldo, interview by author, group interview, July 29, 2015, Burnaby.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

source of meat in Canadian markets. By purchasing them in bulk, they could continue to eat quail affordably. Italians also relied on informal social networks to improve their purchasing power. Evalina's husband would go to local farms and buy vegetables

on sale, and sometime instead of pay twenty dollar, ah can, he can pay ten. So he come more, you know you can go and buy more and uhh because he like to go and when we go in the club people ask him 'you got potato? You got broccoli? You got pepper? You got everything, grapes?' and uhh he buy on sale and selling for good price and everybody go crazy to buy.⁷⁷

Evalina's husband was able to purchase vegetables from farms affordably because he parceled the orders out to sell to others. Other Italians further used these group-purchasing strategies to acquire food products from Italy affordably. When Bosa foods started importing Italian products in greater quantities, "they would come in and buy everything by the case, or by the big wheel [for cheese], you know and they would buy enough for the families, to share with their families, and in order to get a better price and they would share."⁷⁸ By ordering in bulk, Italians could get certain foods from Italy that were unavailable in Canada, such as Italian cheeses and olive oil. They then combined these ingredients with foods produced or acquired in Canada to recreate Italian flavours.

These food production strategies afforded Italians some control over the foods available to them. Women searched out vegetables in urban spaces to save money. Men and women grew gardens, which allowed them to produce the vegetables they ate in Italy. Finally, by cooperating to purchase in bulk, Italians were able to make the foods they wanted. In some cases, they were even able to import certain foods from Italy affordably. More importantly, the strategies they employed mostly produced ingredients,

⁷⁷ Evalina Andreola and Sandra Gange, interview by author, group interview, July 20, 2015, Vancouver.

⁷⁸ Bosa Foods Employee (pseudonym), interview by author, personal interview, November 2, 2015, Vancouver.

which allowed them to recreate cuisine to their tastes. For example, Evalina preserved any leftover peppers her husband did not sell. When she first returned to Italy, seven years after immigrating, she learned some new recipes from her relatives:

They say ‘try this recipe, try this recipe with the pepper,’ the red pepper. I bring over and still after 40 years 45, doing the red pepper or yellow, or orange pepper... I still cooking, I still doing it, and every month when a club, something in the club, over 50, they make sandwiches, and I bring the pepper and people go crazy over it, to put inside with the meat.⁷⁹

People across the Italian community sought out Evalina’s *pepperoni* [pickled bell peppers] because they could not make or buy ones that so closely resembled the peppers they remembered eating in Italy. Alternatively, Settimo made salami from scratch:

Because I know where the meat comes from. I know there’s no uhh hormones, there’s none of that stuff. And its good stuff, even though it’s bad for you.... did you ever read the label on a salami that you buy... Bo but even the salami, they add milk, they add powder milk, they add a whole bunch of stuff because that way they don’t shrink as much and they stay happy because that’s what they need. Well we don’t care about that stuff here.⁸⁰

Italians sought out the peppers Evalina preserved and the salami Settimo cured because they found those food products to be better than the ones they could produce themselves. This suggests that *Italianità* was an important aspect of the foods they ate in Vancouver, shaping some of the decisions they made about food production. It also suggests that the community bonded over Italian tastes created in Vancouver, which began to coalesce as Italians included foods, originating in different parts of Italy, into their diet.

In some ways, Italian foodways in postwar Vancouver reinforces earlier arguments about why and how Italians produced food in North America. The Italian immigrants

⁷⁹ Evalina Andreola and Sandra Gange, interview by author, group interview, July 20, 2015, Vancouver.

⁸⁰ Settimo Perizzolo, interview by author, personal interview, February 15, 2016, Burnaby.

discussed here support Diner's argument that Italians who migrated to America wished to improve their cuisine, if we consider this argument to include their desire to adequately feed themselves foods that they enjoyed. It also supports her argument that migrants' countries of origin influenced their foodways in destination countries as much as the environment they lived in.⁸¹ But, unlike Diner's observations about earlier Italian migrants, Italians in postwar Vancouver often had well developed cuisines, regardless of how well they were able to put food on the table. In Vancouver, Italians employed strategies that produced ingredients, which ranged from rotten to quality imports. It was their memories of eating in Italy, which shaped the foods they prepared in Vancouver, rather than the quality of ingredients they could obtain. The ways they produced these foods were very similar to the Italian immigrants Gabaccia discusses in Madison and New York, who adapted to local environments to produce food affordably.⁸² By adapting to food sources in Vancouver, they were successful in maintaining a form of the cuisine they ate in Italy.

Producing foods with *Italianità* was not the only way Italians found success through migration. In Vancouver, they found work and if they were able to save enough, purchased property. Nevertheless, they often refrained from identifying with their work. Italians often had to worked hard their entire lives to find financial stability. In order to supplement their hard earned wages, they relied on their knowledge of food production. They gained access to land so they could grow food, whether by purchasing property or taking advantage of community green space. They scavenged food to ensure their families ate enough. They also collaborated to purchase commercially available food

⁸¹ Hasia Diner, *Hungering For America*.

⁸² Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat*, 52.

strategically and affordably. Most importantly, Italians executed these strategies successfully. Italian women were able to produce meals that their families recognized and appreciated with scavenged ingredients. Italians were able to create gardens full of produce that resembled Italy. And by turning to other Italians in Vancouver, they were able to share foods they produced, increasing the variety of Italian foods available. From when they first arrived in Canada, Italians began identifying with the foods they produced. Not only did they express agency over their diet by producing food, they were proud of their efforts and the *Italianità* of their cuisine in Vancouver.

2: Still *Mamma*: First and Second Generation Italian Women's Changing Gender Roles in Vancouver

As a history of food ways, this is also a history of families and of gender. Italian women, who migrated to Vancouver after the Second World War occupied new roles within their families. Postwar migration to Vancouver created a whole new set of circumstances, which unsettled the way gender norms were performed. Many women were able to contribute to their families by producing, preserving, and preparing food. They were able to assert some level of control over their family's well being by continually providing nourishing meals. Some women offered domestic services by boarding single male Italian migrants, where they contributed to their families financially, but also became surrogate mothers to their boarders.⁸³ Furthermore, in 1951 women made up approximately 1/5 of the Italian labour supply in Vancouver. The majority of these women worked in clerical positions, manufacturing factories, and the service industry.⁸⁴ These women's actions did not fit within traditional Italian gender roles, yet these women and others in the Italian Vancouverite community still rationalized their actions within an identity of "motherhood" derived from Italy. This chapter seeks to trace their experiences migrating to, living, and raising children in

⁸³ Laura Quilici, "I Was a Strong Lady': Italian Housewives With Boarders in Vancouver, 1947-61," (M.A. Thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1995); Evalina Andreola and Sandra Gange, interview by author, group interview, July 20, 2015, Vancouver; Lucia Rinaldo and Bortolo Rinaldo, interview by author, group interview, July 29, 2015, Burnaby.

⁸⁴ Census data for Vancouver is taken from data regarding British Columbia. For women workers, the occupations reported do not suggest differences between Vancouver and other Italian population centers in the province; Dominion Bureau of Statistics, "Labour Force, 14 Year of Age and Over, By Occupation and Sex, Showing Birthplace, Period of Immigration, and Origin for the Provinces, 1951," in *The Ninth Census of Canada: Labour Force*, vol. 4 (1951), table 13.

Vancouver to understand how they redefined motherhood around their actions. Italian women, who migrated to Vancouver after the Second World War, grew up in families with shifting gender divisions. Migration further unsettled traditional family, work, and social structures, which created new opportunities for women to “perform” their role as mother. In Canada, they experienced different employment opportunities, but the informal migration networks, which supported migration, also maintained community expectations of women’s responsibility to care for their husbands and children. Thus, women redefined their roles within their families, yet still identified those roles within an identity of motherhood.

Scholars of twentieth century Italian history have described two versions of the “ideal mother”. Fascist campaigns to equate motherhood with national obligations, as well as postwar reconstruction of the Italian family equally translated ideas of “womanhood” to “motherhood”. Sociologist Lesley Caldwell argues Fascist films encouraged peasant women to devote themselves to producing children.⁸⁵ The films promoted the image of an ideal “peasant mother,” who solely reared children in beautiful country settings, which overlooked women’s responsibilities to food production and agricultural labour.⁸⁶ Rebecca West shows us how post war Italian domestic manuals instructed middle class women to create domestic settings to nurture their children.⁸⁷ While these manuals admitted that women’s roles in family structures were changing,

⁸⁵ Lesley Caldwell, “Mardi d’Italia: Film and Fascist Concern with Motherhood,” in *Women and Italy: Essays on Gender, Culture, and History* edited by Shirley W. Vinall and Zygmunt G. Baranski (London: Macmillan, 1991), 44.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 45.

⁸⁷ Rebecca West, “‘what’ as Ideal and ‘Who’ as Real: Portraits of Wives and Mothers in Italian Postwar Domestic Manuals, Fiction, and Film,” in *Women in Italy, 1945-1960* edited by Penelope Morris (Palgrave Macmillan. 31 March 2016), 23.

they defended strict gender divisions within Italian households. The manuals cautioned young women against disobeying the advice of their mothers-in-laws, stating “the underlying message is that the peace of a smoothly running household and of happy cohabitation is centered on the dynamics between women, rather than on the relationship between husband and wife.”⁸⁸ The goal of this message was to encourage women growing up in postwar Italy to maintain traditional divisions of labour by learning from the previous generation of women. This relationship the manuals refer to, between genetic or surrogate mothers and daughters, would become an important generational conduit for changing gender identities in Vancouver. Both versions of motherhood—fascist ideals of peasant motherhood and postwar domestic manuals that instructed middle class women on how to run a household—focused solely on women’s responsibility to bear and raise children.

Fascist and post war public commentary used male emigration to reinforce women’s responsibility to home and family, in what Roland Barthes describes as the process of mythification.⁸⁹ Linda Reeder writes, “In some respects, male migration from Sicily appeared to reinforce traditional patterns of female behaviour, encouraging rural women to have many children and discouraging them from seeking agricultural wage work.”⁹⁰ Luisa Tasca claims that fascist ideals included women’s labour on family farms,

⁸⁸ Ibid., 25.

⁸⁹ Roland Barthes provides a theoretical framework to understand how these examples added to the mythic portrayal of motherhood. Barthes argues the process of mythification requires actual events to be removed from their historical contexts, so they may be re-employed in different discursive spaces; Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, translated by Annette Lavers (London: J Cape, 1972).

⁹⁰ Ibid.

as long as their efforts contributed to the wellbeing of their children.⁹¹ The fascist “ideal mother” worked tirelessly to provide her family with nourishment, in order to ensure a future generation of peasants, rather than contributing to their families financially.

But as men left for work sojourns, women took the opportunity to “participate in property market[s],” and “[m]igrant money also encouraged rural women to purchase mass-produced goods, enabling them to provide visual evidence of their upward mobility.”⁹² Before the depression in North America and Fascist policy cut off emigration in the 1930s, migration had created these opportunities for women. During the Second World War, similar situations arose when men were sent to war. Although the economy in industrial parts of northern Italy improved after the war, in many rural parts of Italy, work sojourns or emigration were the only options for financial security.⁹³ Women worked and participated in familial decisions, whether men left or stayed at home. Fascist policy had expanded its definition of peasant motherhood to include these contributions, but redefined them as contributions to child-care. Fascist policy also defined the spaces, where women contributed to families, as domestic.

Postwar domestic manuals, on the other hand, presented an image of ideal motherhood that was closely tied to the success of middle-class Italian families. These manuals omitted ways in which women contributed to family security, because their definition of ideal motherhood only applied to Italians that broke out of poverty. They

⁹¹ Luisa Tasca, “The ‘Average Housewife’ in Post-World War II Italy,” *Journal of Women’s History* 16 no. 2 (2004), 94

⁹² Linda Reeder, “When the Men Left Sutura: Sicilian Women and Mass Migration, 1880-1920,” in *Women, Gender, and Transnational Lives: Italian Workers of the World*, edited by Donna Gabaccia and Franca Iacovetta (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 46.

⁹³ Iacovetta, *Such Hardworking People*, 6-7.

instead linked the concept of “ideal mother” to financial success, arguing that in middle class families, mothers were not required to contribute to the family financially and could instead focus on providing their children with a household that nurtured them.

Nevertheless, by cautioning women not to disobey the instructions of women from the previous generation, the manuals reveal that women in urban households were pushing the boundaries of motherhood, whether negotiating familial decisions, or finding work in factories or urban shops. In either case, these presentations of the “ideal mother” show that women were blurring gender divisions in Italy before migrating to Vancouver.

Those divisions continually shifted as Italian families immigrated to Vancouver. Nevertheless, Italians still understood women’s actions within the identity of motherhood. Laura Quilici has provided a case study of Italian women in Vancouver who decided to take in renters to supplement familial income that traces the shifting identity of motherhood through chain migration. She argues post war Italian immigrants looked to domestic labour for income because they believed it was “natural for mothers to stay home so that they could care for their children” and to protect their “honor” as loyal wives. Furthermore, she argues that, “the difficulties of learning English made it impossible for Italian women to find jobs, and that Italian male newcomers to the city needed the domestic services of married Italian women.”⁹⁴ By taking in boarders, women were able to make monetary contributions to their families. Quilici then goes on to show how the process of taking in boarders required women to reshape how they identified as women. “The women did this by expanding their notion of ‘motherhood’ to include their

⁹⁴ Laura Quilici, “‘I Was a Strong Lady,’” 79-80.

boarders.”⁹⁵ They provided meals to roomers and non-roomers alike, washing laundry, and acting as a maternal voice of reason against drinking and partying.⁹⁶ A major reason why single boarders looked to married Italian women was their ability to provide a household familiar to them. Some of the women Quilici interviewed cooked for upwards of 25 people at a time, making use of gardened vegetables and food prepared in an Italian fashion.⁹⁷ They built a mother/son relationship with their boarders, which created a familiar identity their husbands approved of and boarders could rationalize. Within the domestic space these women occupied, they made use of food production, among other domestic skills, creating a maternal relationship that lent them authority over their homes, family, and others in the community.

Some of the women interviewed here had similar experiences. Evalina used her boarding service and then childcare service to establish herself as a community matriarch. She took in boarders within her first year in Vancouver.

Nine months later my son was born and when he was just a little baby we bought the house, and umm, we fix a little bit and we start ohh room and board with guy to make some money extra because my husband was working in the dock, longshoreman, and he was not very much money coming in so I, we rent a few I keep-a-the guy. First it was room and board, first it was two, and later on it was four, and my husband was five, and I have a kid.⁹⁸

Evalina decided to take in boarders to contribute to her family financially while being able caring for her son full time. As Quilici found with other women, who kept boarders, Evalina worked extremely hard. She provided laundry service for her boarders and

⁹⁵ Ibid., 83.

⁹⁶ Ibid., chapter 3.

⁹⁷ Ibid., chapter 2.

⁹⁸ Evalina Andreola and Sandra Gange, interview by author, group interview, July 20, 2015, Vancouver.

waited on them throughout the day, while caring full time for her first child. “I cook and clean, everything I did for them... They come home dirty. Hooooo if you see the washing machine, it was sticky sometimes.”⁹⁹ One of the ways she formed a maternal relationship with her boarders was through cooking. She made use of the vegetables her husband cultivated to provide meals that were delicious and that her boarders recognized. She also catered to their schedule. “When they come home tired, they take a shower and I cook that time I have to cook around 6:30 because sometime they stop uhh at bar or something for a beer.”¹⁰⁰ Unlike women who ran larger boarding houses or cooked large meals for various male immigrants, Evalina cooked either group or individual meals for her boarders. Others in the community coveted her rooming service because of this intimate experience.

Evalina considered herself a mother first and a boarding house manager second. When she had more children, Evalina found it difficult to provide the same level of service for boarders so she stopped taking in new immigrants. Instead, she began babysitting other children in the neighborhood.

When Sandra born, two [boarders] already left and I have just-a-two and uhh when the third born, five year later, ehh I have just one room and board, just-a-one guy...I start babysitting, babysit all the kids around the block... that way I got some money coming in and we start buying up one house, another house, to fix it, keep a few year, rent it. That way we have some money. When the kids grow up, they got some money from us to buy his own house.¹⁰¹

She became a surrogate mother for these children, in a similar way to the boarders she took in; a relationship she continued to foster after they reached school age. Her daughter, Sandra, remembered the bread snacks she provided to neighborhood children, “We called

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

it crunchy bread ... my dad doesn't like bread that's a day old, so she would take it and throw it in the oven and leave it there and it would get, it would just start to get crunchier, almost like croutons." Sandra was adamant that every child in the neighborhood had tried this bread snack at least once.¹⁰² Evalina needed to work extremely hard in order to contribute to her family financially, though she used her position as a boarding house manager and nanny to combine child-care with financial contributions.

Maternal figures also helped other Italian female immigrants develop the skills they were expected to have within family spaces. Lucia, for example, did not have the same knowledge of cooking as many women her age. When she left Italy she "was seventeen years old, and, I didn't know where I was going. You know, in Calabria, those days, the girls they were staying inside the house and not going anywhere. We didn't have any freedom."¹⁰³ Immigrating to Vancouver was her opportunity to create a new life, which her father's farm in Italy did not offer. Nevertheless, she felt just as lost in Vancouver as she did back home. She did not know very much English and when she married she lacked the cooking skills expected of her. Nevertheless, Lucia persevered. She turned to her husband's rooming house landlady, who acted as a surrogate mother-in-law and taught her how to cook.

I didn't know how to cook or nothing, so I used to call the lady where he was living, boarding. And I remember I made one time, Brodo, soup, and I cook it the way we [calabrese] do. They cook it in the broth. I cook the pasta in water, then put it in the broth. But because I didn't know, I didn't measure. I just put enough pasta for two, for three people, because his brother was there too... I got ahhh embarrassed because his brother there, I went in the room and I start to cry. But then I learn, I start to make something, I call this lady... That's the way I learn.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Lucia Rinaldo and Bortolo Rinaldo, interview by author, group interview, July 29, 2015, Burnaby.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

By relying on other women in the community, Lucia was able to develop the domestic skills she felt required to perform. The food she cooked at home was also influenced by the cuisine her teacher prepared. Lucia did work when she first arrived and continued to work for a short time after she married. Nevertheless, she was still expected to cook, clean and care for her children. Her husband's landlady became a role model and teacher that helped her navigate those responsibilities.

Many of the Italian women's experiences discussed here are not easily explained using Quilici's argument that women shied away from work outside the home. For example, Lucia, Anna Terrana, and Paulina worked outside the home in Vancouver. Furthermore, Lucia's difficulty learning English did not hinder her from working at a mattress factory before she had children.¹⁰⁵ These examples complicate but do not discredit Quilici's analysis. Instead, we can explore how women's role as "mother" expanded to include their experiences and choices concerning work, family, and food production in Vancouver. These women first experienced a blurring of gender divisions in Italy as they watched their mothers contribute to their family financially or helped manage family wealth. Some of the women interviewed for this thesis also worked within familial spaces in Italy. Then, as they migrated to Vancouver, they further broke out of these conceptual and spatial boundaries of motherhood either by choice or necessity, working outside of family spaces. Even still, the way they spoke about their experiences and choices suggests that they understood themselves as mothers and lingering perceptions of motherhood from Italy influenced how these women rationalized their experiences in Vancouver.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

It is important to understand how these women learned from their mothers in Italy. Linda Reeder claims idealized images of women, which appealed to antiquated nationalism or traditional gender norms, “rarely reflected the realities of women’s experiences” in the early twentieth century. The myth of motherhood ignores the ways mass emigration changed how women contributed to their families by managing property, family, and food.¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless, gendered boundaries in rural and semi-rural Italy were constantly being negotiated within definitions of motherhood. Daughters had less access to education than sons and their work opportunities did not reach far beyond the social limits of family structures. Young women helped with fieldwork, obtained jobs in domestic service, or learned textile skills that they applied to cottage industries or in garment factories.¹⁰⁷ Financial necessity blurred the lines between domestic and other labour, but daughters were still influenced by the notion that they would someday become mothers.

Scholars have noted that despite the limitations, there were a number of positive elements of the maternal role. Iacovetta argues that within private spheres, women had considerable power over their children. They also confided in other women and formed female kinship groups where they gossiped and shared advice.¹⁰⁸ The women interviewed for this thesis grew up within these female kinship networks. They experienced changing familial responsibilities as young women and observed the roles their mothers performed.

¹⁰⁶ Reeder, “When the Men Left Sutera,” 46.

¹⁰⁷ Iacovetta, *Such Hardworking People*, 82.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 85-6.

Artura grew up in a small village in Northern Italy. During the Second World War her father joined the military, which kept him away from home. While he was away, her mother managed the family finances. Artura remembered:

When my father was in Germany during the war, my mother was working, and she was the only one in town that put away all the money my father sent home. So when my father came home, he found all the money, and they bought the old municipality, the house, which was a municipality there, he bought that one and from there he start he open up the store you know he open up because he was a butcher since he was young.¹⁰⁹

Her mother worked as well, but Artura claimed that her mother's income went towards daily expenses including food and other household needs. Even though both of her parents were contributing to the family income, and her mother made the decisions about those finances, their income was still divided along gendered lines. Her wages were to support her children, and his wages were saved for later investment. Artura's opportunities in Italy were likewise defined by ideas of motherhood. Her father was a livestock broker, but he hired people to work in the stables because "never want us in the family to work, me to work in that kind of th-th-th-the *nella stalla*, where the cow live."¹¹⁰ She did make textiles at home: "I used to do very fine sweater, jacket, you know even pull-over, something like that."¹¹¹ Artura was proud of her cottage industry, yet it was still a form of labour her father found acceptable. She remained at home until she followed her fiancé to Canada, a decision she had no part in making.

¹⁰⁹ Artura Cuisinato, interview by author, personal interview, May 27, 2015, Vancouver.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Artura Cuisinato, interview by author, personal interview, Feb 17, 2016, Vancouver.

Evalina grew up in a house of sharply defined gender roles. Her father was an army chef, yet he rarely cooked at home. She remembered her father cooking, when her mother was pregnant, as a distinctive break from everyday routine, “When my mamma got kids, my dad cook for one week. He said, ‘you stay in bed and I cook.’ So he bring the broth, so he cook.”¹¹² She saw his cooking as a contribution to the family, well above his familial responsibilities. Evalina’s parents also prevented her from continuing her schooling, though she did have the opportunity to work outside of her family farm in the winter to earn personal income. Still, her opportunities were bound within her extended family. When she was sixteen years old she began caring for other children in the family to receive extra money.

My cousin have four kids, and she put on a restaurant so I went and taking care of the kids. I went when they do a big thing in the village like a festival, I went and served ah in the osteria, in the restaurant. When somebody get married I went to cook with the chef, serve the people. I went and work everywhere, because I like it and I got some money.¹¹³

Even though her wage labour allowed her to leave the family farm, she was still under the supervision of other women in the family. She helped her brother harvest tobacco from their family farm after her father passed away, although her main responsibilities within the family were still to provide domestic service: “I was stay home to do that and help my mom in the kitchen, helping doing sewing, cleaning do that, and after a while everything was settle down I got him, I came here and got married.”¹¹⁴ All of Evalina’s work

¹¹² Evalina Andreola and Sandra Gange, interview by author, group interview, July 20, 2015, Vancouver.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

opportunities were in some way related to caring for her family, which was part of preparing her for motherhood.

Paulina Vinci, on the other hand, did not have the same familial social infrastructure growing up in Calabria. Her mother passed away, from illness, when Paulina was ten years old. As a result, she was the only family her father had on their farm in Calabria,

I never have a chance to go to school because my mamma is die young, my father is take me to work, and I have no chance to go to school. Just grade three ... When I was on farm I stay night and day. My father work lot ... I told my father when I come to the farm I'm alone, dark, no light ... My father make me stay there night and day, no mamma, no sister, no brother, no people, I didn't want to stay there.¹¹⁵

Her father either did not want to or was unequipped to care for her socially. Instead, he often left her in the fields to work as a field hand. Paulina was caught between the absence of parental guidance and her father's expectation that she fill her mother's domestic responsibilities. "At that time I start to cook... Somebody married from my friend and I go there say 'I can come in the kitchen to help' and I look what she done. I wash the dish and I look there so I can find out, I can be more better."¹¹⁶ Without the presence of a female role-model, Paulina was given more independence within family boundaries, but she was still expected to develop skills necessary for motherhood.

Boundaries between formal and informal labour that were blurred in Italy, became sharper as Italians moved from rural or semi-rural environments in Italy to an urban environment in Vancouver. Where gardens were a source of income for many peasant

¹¹⁵ Paulina Vinci and Maria D'Averson, interview by author, group interview, June 26, 2015, Vancouver.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

families in Italy, they became almost entirely sources of food for families in Vancouver. Family units also became smaller and were replaced by the informal social networks of migration. These networks assisted Italians in procuring employment, but it was much less common in Vancouver than Italy for migrants to work for extended family members, instead working with them for Canadian employers. Although these divisions between private and public roles solidified, women continued to blur gender divisions between them. Migration unsettled the contours of motherhood as it was defined in Italy, which opened up opportunities for women to redefine roles within their families. Nonetheless, people in the Italian community still rationalized these new roles within a definition of motherhood. Carla De Tona best explains how gender identities followed the diaspora of Italian women by looking at Italian women's experiences in postwar Ireland. She writes,

[A]s *women* they are empowered in the liminality of the differing gender normatives that they come to experience. Discrepancies among differing sets of gender norms of the migrant group and of the country of destination create a space in which to negotiate women's emancipation while new modes of gender identification lap—and often clash—with their role as mothers and its collective implications.¹¹⁷

By exploring the different experience women had in Vancouver, we can see how their actions clashed with, and then were re-rationalized as values of motherhood.

Not all Italian women worked within the formal labour market, or in semi-formal labour such as boarding services, in Vancouver. Rosa's mother, for example, fits within Quilici's argument that language barriers and lasting Italian gender divisions prevented

¹¹⁷ Carla De Tona, "Mothering Contradictory Diasporas: Negotiation of Traditional Motherhood Roles among Italian Migrant Women in Ireland," in *Intimacy and Italian Migration Gender and Domestic Lives in a Mobile World* edited by Loretta Baldassar and Donna Gabaccia (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011), 103.

women from seeking work outside the home. She did not work because of her inability to speak English and because their family's financial stability enabled her to retain a traditional maternal role. Her father decided to emigrate shortly after the Second World War, due to economic tensions with other family members in Calabria. He, Rosa's mother, and ten-year-old Rosa immigrated together following Rosa's uncle. Still, Rosa admired her mother's resilience, braving the journey and navigating life in Vancouver.

This little woman who didn't even, never hardly ever went out of her vibo, out of her town and somehow she did have some help to get to the Naples, everybody would have been leaving Italy by Naples when you went, you know, either to Australia or wherever. Somebody helped her to get there. But on the ship I'm wondering she wouldn't know anything because she never went out of her town; she doesn't know how to read or write, doesn't know uhh-any-uhh-to speak Italian like the real language it was always dialect. And two of my grandmothers did that. My mom's mother did the same thing a little while later, you know I-its amazing how these women, the courage they had.¹¹⁸

Other women in Rosa's family joined them within a few years of their trip to Vancouver. Her mother engaged with other women who were family or friends to create a kinship network where she could socialize in her own dialect. She never had to improve her language skills to find work because her husband earned enough for them to get by. Rosa's father spoke formal Italian from his time in the military, which helped him interact with other Italians in Vancouver. Furthermore, the work he obtained, through his brother, did not require him to speak English.¹¹⁹ They sold the farm they owned in Italy, which was sufficient to pay for their journey, as well as their first house at East 4th and Commercial Drive. Her mother's language barrier, however, created opportunities for Rosa. Rosa's mother shopped for groceries, but "always with us, with my brother or

¹¹⁸ Rosa Citton and Andy Citton, interview by author, group interview, June 6, 2015, Burnaby.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

sister or I, she wouldn't go alone because she wouldn't be able to read, you know, the prices of things, stuff like that.”¹²⁰ Often, she would send Rosa by herself to do the shopping. Rosa eventually found work at Oliveri's, a shop on Commercial drive she would often buy Italian food products from. While her mother never improved her language skills, or worked outside of their home, she still found ways to socialize in Vancouver by relying on female kinship networks, and her relationship with Rosa provide Rosa with opportunities outside their family spaces.

Anna Terrana, on the other hand, had both language skills and education before she migrated to Vancouver. In Vancouver she had a successful career, even becoming a Minister of Parliament. Yet she still measured at least part of her success on how she was able to care and cook for her son. Before Anna left for Vancouver, she received a university education in Italy and worked for Deloitte Italia. She convinced her fiancée to marry her so she could immigrate with him to Britain.

[He] decided to go to England to continue his studies and become an engineer... So he went, and there he found a job, but umm so we married in twenty-one days. He came back, because he didn't want to get married [yet] (laughs) he came back and ended up getting married.¹²¹

Her husband was a citizen of the commonwealth, and she could immigrate with him as his wife. Even though he was not ready to get married, Anna was able to convince him to marry her so she could take advantage of work abroad. Unfortunately, they were both turned away at the British border, so they decided to try to immigrate to Canada, “in September we went to Milan, to the Consul General who says ‘OHH you both speak

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Anna Terrana, interview by author, personal interview, May 25, 2015, Vancouver.

English you must go to Vancouver, my home town.”¹²² In Vancouver, Anna’s husband was abusive, which ultimately led to their divorce. She, however, continued to raise her son, while becoming an active member of the Italian community in Vancouver and nationally. She was later elected the Member of Parliament for Vancouver East from 1993-1997.¹²³

Despite her professional success, Anna compared herself to the values of domestic motherhood she perceived. She did not learn how to produce food in Italy, so

When I came here I was really desperate, apart from the fact that I could not cook. So I was going out with money in the pocket I you know I didn’t know how to cook, I didn’t know where to start from, it’s a terrible feeling... My mother really tried, poor thing, she had a very stubborn daughter. That’s why I was trying to find some stuff. There were some delicatessens but not, they didn’t have all of the stuff they have here now.¹²⁴

Anna felt lost without her mother to continue helping her develop domestic skills in Vancouver. Furthermore, even though she did learn to cook, Anna still considered herself a poor cook compared to other Italian women in Vancouver. As Anna only had a son, she felt that her responsibility was to feed him, but not to also teach him how to produce and prepare food. She “always said if I had a daughter I would never let her go through this like me.”¹²⁵ Even though she was successful financially, she felt that her lack of cooking skills hindered her from being an effective parent.

Paulina’s experience of migration caused her to break out of traditional boundaries of motherhood. Her early years in Vancouver in some ways reflected the experiences other women had within family groups in Italy. She immigrated in 1951 at

122 Ibid.

123 Ibid.

124 Ibid.

125 Ibid.

the age of twenty-one. Her aunt and uncle sponsored her and paid for her journey, though they also took advantage of her debt to them. They forced her to work as a domestic servant in their house. Paulina remembers, “I cook, I clean the house, I watch the baby, I take uhhh everything that she say, I clean.”¹²⁶ Her aunt and uncle abused her verbally and threatened to send her back to Italy if she did not continue to provide them with domestic labour. Paulina said her aunt and uncle were “Due bevevano, due bevevano” (both alcoholics).¹²⁷ She was scared of her aunt rather than seeing her as a maternal figure to look up to or learn from:

One day my auntie go shopping bring uh they back, bring uh they grocery, put on the floor ehh the baby, the last baby go with the hands and knee. And me, I iron the clothes. And the baby go take uhh they bar of soap. But me I no see the baby picking up the soap. A lot of kids, I love all the family. My auntie no was so mad to me, she say ‘you want to kill my baby. I’ll go to the police. I send you back home because you wanna kill my family. You wanna kill my family.’ I was so scared I go to bed, I catch flavour [fever] I shake, because I say I don’t wanna kill nobody, I no wanna kill a fly, because I’m grown up with no mother, I love everybody in my country, everybody love me.¹²⁸

Her relationship with her aunt did not conform to the idea that young women relied on other women to replace their own mothers as maternal role models. “My husband, he was the boyfriend at the time he say, ‘get outta from there.’ you know see, I’m so skinny you know, I cry, I no sleeping, no mamma, no father here. It was a very, very difficult life.”¹²⁹ Paulina did have family she could rely on but she did not see her aunt or uncle as part of that support network.

¹²⁶ Paulina Vinci and Maria D’Averson, interview by author, group interview, June 26, 2015, Vancouver.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

Her experience with her aunt and uncle reveals the changing dynamics of family in the Vancouver Italian community. Despite their threats, Paulina escaped this relationship by staying with her other Aunt and then eventually her soon to be husband. In response, her aunt and uncle took legal action against her. She said, they “take me to the court, make me pay all the-the fare for coming here, and me uh I don’t know how to speak nothing, English, nothing.”¹³⁰ The British Columbia courts found in favour of her aunt and uncle. They did not recognize a monetary value for the domestic labour she had provided for almost an entire year. Instead, they ordered her to pay the total amount of the voyage and room and board while staying with them. She had to “pay five dollar a month, for so many years.”¹³¹ Her extended family in Vancouver sympathized with her desire to leave her aunt and uncle even though her domestic role in their house conformed to traditional Italian family structures. Her family, however, required her to get married, or they would have to send her back to Italy. She lived with her other aunt for “three month... Three month I live with my aunt, I got married, six month I come here in Vancouver and I married... my sister and brother of my father, you know, make me the wedding.” Her daughter, Maria asserted, “my father was a god send because without him she would have been returned back to Italy.”¹³² While Paulina freed herself from indentured domestic service, her family still required her occupy a role of wife and then mother.

Nonetheless, Paulina performed roles that blurred gender divisions within her family. Burdened with punitive fees, Paulina and her husband struggled to earn enough

130 Ibid.

131 Ibid.

132 Ibid.

money to pay off their debts and care for their children. Her husband worked for the Canadian National Railroad for meager wages. Paulina worked a host of different jobs in a cannery, providing laundry services, and as a cook for White Spot Restaurant. Under such difficult circumstances, Paulina prided herself in her ability to feed her family. She found creative ways to produce food out of scraps that she gathered from urban green space or out of discarded produce at local grocers. The threat of poverty pushed her towards these sources of food, but her cooking skills produced nourishing food that her family savoured. She became a financial provider for her family as well as a nutritional provider. Her daughter, Maria, remembers how her father was, “impressed with how economical she was and, with very little money, my father was not making much money either.”¹³³ He lauded her ability to care for him and the family on such a small budget. Paulina identified all of these roles, however, with nurturing her family. She was proud of her ability to put food on the table, but whenever she talked about cooking, she pressed the importance of food to raising her family. “I make beans, I make ehh zucchini, I make the corn, That ahh grow up the family... I do everything from scratch, I make my own bread, I make my own pasta, I make my own vegetable, I make to uhh you know grown up the family.”¹³⁴ Although Paulina pushed the boundaries of her familial role, she still rationalized her efforts within a maternal identity.

“Motherhood” expanded to incorporate all the actions these five women performed. In Vancouver, Italian mothers worked inside and outside the home. They also occupied different roles within multiple relationships. The fluidity of “motherhood” allowed women to reshaped gender norms, which included formal wage labour and

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

reimagined the contribution of domestic labour, such as food production, within families. Nonetheless, identifying women's performances with maternalism reinforced certain perceptions about women's roles in Italian Canadian families. In many ways, these women rationalized their actions by considering how those actions contributed to their success as mothers. Quilici shows how women positioned themselves in maternal roles to satisfy their husbands' concerns about them working boarding single male immigrants.¹³⁵ The women interviewed here also identified their work and food production with raising their children and caring for their family. While women successfully used maternal identities to justify different ways that they contributed to family units, they also reinforced perceptions that women were destined to occupy a maternal role in some ways. The result was that some second generation Italian Canadian women were given freedom to pursue work and high-school education, but were nevertheless restrained from post secondary education and protected from social interactions outside of their homes that their parents' saw as undesirable. As second generation women matured, they established roles within their own families by negotiating between their experiences outside of their parents' home with the roles they observed their mothers performing.

The kitchen became a site where daughters' experiences outside their homes clashed with their mothers' performed roles. Historians of food and migration have increasingly looked to cookbooks to understand the relationship between mothers and daughters in ethnic communities. They have found that women published cookbooks to bring visibility to their familial contributions as well as instruct their daughters how to

¹³⁵ Quilici, "Strong Ladies", 83.

maintain cultural identity and gender roles.¹³⁶ Italian women in Vancouver did not publish culinary education in the same way, though they still instructed their daughters through food production. In the kitchen, they performed tasks, which their daughters observed and replicated. Sonia Cancian provides a closer look at this relationship between Italian mothers and daughters in Montreal. She shows how second generation Italian women observed their mothers performing the daily tasks of preparing meals for the family. As second generation women became adults, they rejected the drastic gender divisions of their parents' households, but still adopted some of their mother's identities as caregivers and cooks. Cancian argues that daughters saw their mothers as strong role models and good teachers, which contributed to them maintaining certain gendered divisions.¹³⁷

The second-generation Italian Canadian women interviewed here also looked to their mothers as role models. Maria drew confidence from watching her mother, Paulina Vinci occupy a matriarchal role within their family. Paulina was a matriarch of the house, delegating household chores around preserving and preparing food. Maria remembered, "the whole family was always involved," with her mother coordinating tasks for cooking or preserving the foods she grew in their garden.¹³⁸ Paulina worked as well, which meant she could not always be home to cook meals at dinnertime. "She would kind of prepare things like say ok put the chicken in at a certain time and roast it or all that. You know

¹³⁶ Marlene Epp, "More than 'Just' Recipes," and Andrea Eidinger, "Gefilte Fish and Roast Duck with Orange Slices."

¹³⁷ Sonia Cancian, "Tutti a Tavola! Feeding the Family in Two Generations of Italian Immigrant Households in Montreal," in *Edible Histories, Cultural Politics: Towards a Canadian Food History* edited by Franca Iacovetta et. al (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 208-223.

¹³⁸ Paulina Vinci and Maria D'Averson, interview by author, group interview, June 26, 2015, Vancouver.

start up making pasta sauce so we could have our dinner in the evening.”¹³⁹ Maria prized her mother’s ability to work and run a household so effectively. She never remembered feeling poor when she was young because her mother was always able to provide them with delicious food, regardless of the ingredients’ quality. Maria recalled that her father “really wasn’t a cook. He’d help watch us as she cooked so he did his part and helped with the cleanup but umm it’s just amazing how she as a single person could cook all of that food.”¹⁴⁰

Nevertheless, the authoritative role Paulina performed did not remove the stigma from second-generation Italian women socializing unsupervised outside of the home. In fact, her mother used that same authority to restrict Maria’s experiences with other Canadians. Maria remembered:

We were always a little more sheltered like always eating at home and then go out, see your friends, but never for a meal outside the home, we would be always eating at home ... We were always kept busy at home ... My mother was fearful us of meeting the wrong people¹⁴¹

Maria socialized with friends at school and wished to take part in the same activities they did, but her mother needed her to help at home. Paulina did not trust Maria to socialize on her own outside of her supervision, which Maria resented in some ways. “I guess I felt too sheltered at times, a lot of times, we would have friends come to our house over me going to their house too.”¹⁴² Maria negotiated with her mother, who compromised by allowing Maria to socialize with her friends more if she brought them home, which her friends willingly accepted, thoroughly enjoying Paulina’s cooking.

139 Ibid.

140 Ibid.

141 Ibid.

142 Ibid.

Sandra was also given very limited opportunities to perform activities her parents saw unfit for women. She remembered,

“Fishing, I went. I wasn’t supposed to, because I was a girl, but I loved going fishing with my dad. He would bring my brother and all the boys in the neighborhood and I always begged to go, but I was supposed to stay home because I was a girl. But, on occasion, I was allowed to go.”¹⁴³

Like Maria, Sandra negotiated with her parents to gain some access to the activities she wanted to participate in. Sandra was also barred from unsupervised socialization. She “never went to a school dance. Times changed by the time my sister got a little older but definitely it was you stay home to cook and clean and wash dishes, still hate that.”¹⁴⁴

Furthermore, her parents prevented her from attending university. She said, “my counselors at school were upset with me because I had phenomenal grades, but I said ‘no I’m not going’ and the real reason was that I was told girls don’t need to go to university.”¹⁴⁵ Sandra instead took full advantage of the opportunities she was presented. She found her first job at sixteen years old and moved out of her parents home when she was eighteen. She continued working until she gave birth to her second child and chose to stay home. Sandra claimed this was not because it was her duty as a mother, but because it was the best financial decision based on her and her husband’s jobs at the time.

Furthermore, even though she did not return to work, she instead become a leader within the Italian community, serving on the board of directors for the Trevisani Nel Mondo and the Vancouver Italian Cultural Centre. Sandra also establish a similar role to her mother at home. She performed the majority of cooking responsibilities for her family. Her

¹⁴³ Evalina Andreola and Sandra Gange, interview by author, group interview, July 20, 2015, Vancouver.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

husband helped cook from time to time, but Sandra did not rely on his culinary skills. Her husband could “open packages and reheat. Does that answer that for you? He makes Kraft macaroni and cheese, he can cook pre-bought pizzas and things like that.”¹⁴⁶ Sandra thoroughly enjoyed cooking, so she continued to be her family’s primary cook. Furthermore, she ensured both her son and daughter had equal access to further education, which they both pursued.

Emanuela Rossi developed a matriarchal authority in protest to the gender roles she observed her parents performing. Growing up, she recognized the inequality between her father and mother.

My mom pretty much ran the household. Be it from, it didn’t matter, inside or outside, if something broke, my mom would fix it. My dad would basically go to work, come home, do his work at home, and occasionally help out in the garden but it was pretty much my mom who took care of everything.¹⁴⁷

Yet, she also respected her mother’s authority over her and her brother. “Whatever needed to be done, we just had to do it. And of course having a mother who was very particular it probably was never done the right way.”¹⁴⁸ Her mother was the one who delegated tasks to her and her brother. While she recognized how hard her father worked to provide financially, she overwhelmingly described her mother’s efforts for instilling “a great work ethic into both of us and you just did, you don’t complain you just did. Well we probably complained.”¹⁴⁹ She also noticed the authority her mother had in family decisions. Her mother was in a car accident and refused to drive after. She convinced her

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Emanuela Rossi, interview by author, personal interview, August 18, 2015, Burnaby.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

husband to move closer to the grocery stores she frequented so she could walk to them instead. Emanuela developed confidence from watching her mother and used her confidence to establish different divisions of labour with her husband.

Emanuela learned to cook by watching her mother. “It’s not like my mom would sit there and teach me because my mom would say ‘ok let’s, k I want you to do this,’ then I would start to do it and she say, ‘no you’re doing it wrong and here let me do it.’”¹⁵⁰ To this day, she lauds her mother’s cooking ability as a bastion of her Italian identity. She also became the family cook. She noticed it was “kind of funny because I took a bit of [her mother’s domestic responsibilities] also.” She explained that part of her accepting the role as cook came from a desire to control the kitchen. But she still ensured that her husband contributed to domestic chores. She delegated her husband tasks such as cleaning, or other chores in the house or garden. As kids, her brother did not learn to cook in the same way as she did. Emanuela also made sure to her son “knew how to cook and he knew how to you know, do whatever.”¹⁵¹ She commanded the same respect from her children that her mother did, ensuring her children participated equally at home.

Italian women’s experiences in postwar Vancouver were, in some ways, a continuation of shifting gender roles in postwar Italy. Yet the roles women performed in Vancouver did not adhere to the definition of “ideal motherhood” being presented in Italy. Expanding boundaries of domestic spaces in Italy set a precedent for fluid definitions of motherhood as Italians immigrated to Vancouver. In Vancouver, women worked inside and outside family spaces, contributing to family incomes. Food production became a place where women established an authority that their daughters

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

respected and learned from. Whether providing for their family, or feeding hungry male boarders, first generation Italian women produced meals that nourished Italian Canadians physically and culturally. Their actions pushed the boundaries of “motherhood” by contributing to families in ways that were not directly caring for children. Yet they still rationalized their actions within an identity of “motherhood”. As Quilici argues, they established themselves as surrogate mothers to male boarders to create an environment that their husbands were comfortable with.¹⁵² Women also worked formal labour outside of family spaces. Nevertheless, they measured the success of their work and other contributions by how they were able to care for their family. While they shifted gender roles within Italian Vancouverite families, it also reinforced them in certain ways. As these first generation Italian immigrant women understood their actions within the identity of motherhood, they reinforced ideas that women were destined to become mothers above all else, which affected the opportunities their daughters had growing up in Vancouver.

Nevertheless, second generation women negotiated between their experiences outside of family spaces and the gender roles they saw their parents performing. They negotiated with their parents to come to compromises about activities they wished to participate in. Furthermore, as adults they built on their mother’s authority to establish more equitable gender divisions within their own families. Most importantly, they ensured their children were given equal opportunities and shared equally in family responsibilities. Cancian similarly shows how second-generation Italian women in Montreal looked to their mothers as role models, then accepted or rejected portions of

¹⁵² Quilici, “Strong Ladies,” 83.

those roles as they matured. But Cancian describes first generation Italian women performing gender roles that were normal for both Italians and North Americans.¹⁵³ As I have shown here, it is important to understand how first generation Italian women's roles in Vancouver Italian families changed as part of a process of shifting gender divisions that began in Italy. They adapted these gender roles to changing needs in Vancouver. Therefore, second generation women were not simply negotiating between experiences in Canada and perceptions from Italy, but instead were continuing negotiate gender roles that already included transnational experiences

¹⁵³ Cancian, "Tutti a Tavola," 212.

3: Changing *Italianità* in Vancouver foodways

When Settimo Perizzolo arrived in Canada he first lived with his brother and his brother's wife. He said that later his parents

wanted me to go back to Italy. And my older brother and my older brothers, two or three of them, said 'hang on, you guys come and try over there first, then if you guys don't like it then we will see what's going to happen. So umm, they helped me and I bought my house. We lived together from '80 to '82, and then [Settimo's wife] and I got married so we bought another house across the street.¹⁵⁴

Like many other Italian immigrants, Settimo relied on a kinship network to help him get started in Vancouver. He also produced food with his brothers, hunting moose in Northern British Columbia. Hunting was an activity they did in Italy, and the large game in Canada was an appealing option for sourcing affordable meat. Settimo even tried to make salami once with moose that he hunted: "My brother and I tried to do salami with moose meat and add porks and actually do salami. It didn't work out. We never made them again. Moose has a particular taste for itself or at least we didn't like it. It tastes nothing like a salami should."¹⁵⁵ Even though the meat he hunted was capable of making edible salami, it was incapable of producing the tastes Settimo desired. Instead he carefully selected pigs best suited for making salami from local farms. Settimo had attempted to use a Canadian activity and food source to make something that was quintessentially Italian. Even though his efforts failed, they highlight a larger theme of Italians negotiating between *Italianità* and experiences in Canada.

A major facet of Italian cuisine, across Italy, was a sense of localism. Italians grew or purchased foods very close to where they lived. They also constantly adapted

¹⁵⁴ Settimo Perizzolo, interview by author, personal interview, Feb 15, 2016, Burnaby.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

their foodways to the local resources available to them. Carol Counihan argues, while people in twentieth century Florence “claimed affinity with the cooking of their ancestors, they also improvised constantly, and their meals and cuisine were always evolving.” Italians turned towards local food sources to cope with postwar economic hardship. When times were tough, they adapted their cuisine using local ingredients. For example, coffee was replaced with roasted barley or chicory from nearby farms.¹⁵⁶ When they arrived in Vancouver, Italian immigrants continued this practice. Chapter one showed how Italians succeeded in producing Italian food in Vancouver. Unlike in Italy, where foods were identified by locality, in Vancouver Italians began to recognize foods as belonging to a larger identity of *Italianità*. When they could not produce or acquire foods that they ate in their specific Italian localities, immigrants accepted foods that were in anyway connected to Italy. Italians then negotiated between their desire for Italian cuisine, and the practicality of feeding themselves in Vancouver. This chapter will chart the different ways Italians produced *Italianità* in Vancouver, and the effects their strategies had on Vancouver Italian foodways.

Italians did not bring an Italian national cuisine with them to Canada. They instead brought localized experiences of food, which they attempted to continue after immigrating. Yet, the process of migration made it next to impossible for Italians to transplant foodways in their entirety. Instead, they attempted to continue producing and preparing foods the way they knew how, using the resources available to them in their destination countries. Anthropologist Sydney Mintz theorizes how migrant groups create creolized foods wherever they are living. He argues that, “cuisine is a product of place

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

not nation.”¹⁵⁷ Cuisines are instead built existentially and continue to shift with people’s experiences of their environment and relationships with other people. A cuisine requires people to be involved in and experts on the foods they are producing and consuming. Furthermore, they continually identify with those changing cuisines.¹⁵⁸ Thus, we can look at Italian foodways in North America as a combination of expertise in producing and preparing foods—which immigrants shared amongst themselves—and the foods that were available to them, locally or through other means.

The cuisine Italians established in Vancouver was part of a larger process of migration. Donna Gabaccia shows that the identity of ethnic food in North America is not a departure from rigid traditions but instead the continuation of a constant negotiation between people and places. She encourages historians of migration to understand the ways in which “production, exchange, marketing, and consumption of food have generated new identities- for foods and eaters alike.”¹⁵⁹ Gabaccia’s argument is focused on revealing the way ethnic foods informed and became part of a larger American cuisine. But her argument also applies to the way Italians produced, shared and consumed foods in Vancouver. As in other North American centres of Italian immigration, chain migration, which is the process of immigrating through already established social networks, provided the network that encouraged immigrants to cooperate when producing food. They created foods that were sometimes regionally Italian, sometimes Vancouver, and sometimes Italian Canadian. Importantly, their cooperation was focused

¹⁵⁷ Sidney W. Mintz, *Tasting Food, Tasting freedom: Excursions into Eating, Culture, and the Past* (Boston: beacon Press, 1996), 96.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Gabaccia, *We are What We Eat*, 5.

on engaging with local food sources or if local sources were unavailable, seeking the foods they wanted elsewhere.

Chapter one showed how Italians in postwar Vancouver successfully produced foods they were proud of. When they could they produced those foods locally. They used techniques they learned in Italy to help acquire the foods they wanted affordably. Nevertheless, in order to make the most of those food sources, they also adapted the methods they used to acquire and store those foods. Furthermore, Italian migrants did not just make use of those local foods. When Vancouver failed to provide the ingredients they wanted, Italians travelled greater distances to acquire them. By adapting their strategies to exploit the resources available to them, Italians were able to continue producing the foods they identified with. However, those foods became a combination of their desire to eat foods with *Italianità* and their adaptation to food sources available.

One of the food products Italians acquired locally was meat, which was an important aspect of Italian cuisine in North America. Hasia Diner argues that meat became a marker of affluence among Italian immigrants in late nineteenth and early twentieth century New York. She claims that in “Italy few from the lower classes ate it more than three times a year. In America meat appeared regularly on their menus. The steadier their incomes, the more meat they ate.”¹⁶⁰ Donna Gabaccia argues that Italians in New York went to great lengths to produce meat affordably, keeping “chickens, goats, and an occasional pig in tenement kitchens and basements.”¹⁶¹ Italian immigrants in early twentieth century Vancouver also increased the amount of meat in their diet. Andy Citton remembers first eating at an Italian restaurant in Vancouver that was established by

¹⁶⁰ Hasia Diner, *Hungering for America*, 56.

¹⁶¹ Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat*, 52.

earlier immigrants: “It would be a bigger input of probably meat, than, back home is short. Not short because we didn’t have it but short because there was no money to pay for it.”¹⁶² Italian restaurants in Vancouver provided hearty meals for single working Italian immigrants with disposable income; much in the same way women ran boarding houses with rich meals. Postwar Italian immigrant families, especially from northern Italy, continued to eat meat in Vancouver. Yet, in order to put meat on the table affordably, they had to change the way they acquired it.

Italians used a combination of their skill in processing animals and adapted their methods of acquiring and storing meat to make it affordable. Unlike vegetables, which could be grown in anything from window pots to full gardens, meat was difficult to cultivate in Vancouver. Postwar Italian immigrants differed on the amount of meat they ate—Artura, for example, was not much of a meat eater, instead favouring mainly meals with vegetables and pasta or bread—but those who did favour meat changed the way they purchased and stored it from their practices in Italy in order to keep it affordable. Postwar Italian immigrants grew up before household refrigeration was widely available. Settimo recalled that in Italy

we never killed our own cows. Back in the day, when I was a kid, that wasn’t uhh, sorry, that wasn’t part of what we did. Right? So, you sold your cow, and you bought your meat. The thing about raising your own beef to then make kill and make your own meat and deep freezer. It started coming around in our town about early 70s. That’s when people started getting deep freezers and putting away their own stuff. Before then, like in our household, I believe that my brother bought the first fridge in 1970. Like we didn’t have a fridge before that. So you actually made what you ate that day, or the next couple of days.¹⁶³

¹⁶² Andy Citton and Rosa Citton, interview by author, group interview, June 6, 2015, Burnaby.

¹⁶³ Settimo Perizzolo, interview by author, personal interview, Feb 15, 2016, Burnaby.

Settimo's family was able to store their meat in livestock, or in the money they made from selling that livestock. They then purchased meat, as they needed to. In Vancouver, Italians had access to deep freezers. One of Evalina and her husband's first purchases was a deep freezer to store food. Refrigeration allowed Italians to purchase meat in bulk, like they did with other food products. They could then freeze the meat to eat throughout the year. Bortolo Rinaldo recalled how this differed from how his family ate in Italy—"Ya we, you know, we were no used to in Italy to have so much food you know. Here we tried to have lots all the time. Ya but that was the cheaper way. You buy quail cheap and then you clean it, it was a lot of work to do but you know."¹⁶⁴ Nevertheless, being able to store meat products was only part of what made them affordable.

Some Italians also learned how to process farm animals in Italy. In Vancouver, this allowed them to purchase either live, or at least whole animals, affordably and then process them at home. Paulina bought chickens that the University of British Columbia was selling because they had more stock than they needed for research.

I gotta sell the chicken at the university, I buy forty chicken at a time. It costing twenty-five cents each. Big chicken, roast chicken... That with the chemical they throw away, but that they got left over they sell that twenty-five cents... I kill, I put to the sink, I gotta two sink like that in the basement. I boil the water, I take all the feather, I put to fresh water and I go to work. The second day I clean them more good. I put in fresh water. The third day I clean everything. My husband say 'where you putta these chicken now?' I gotta go buy a fridge, a freezer. I go buy a big freezer. It was twenty five, thirty dollar. I still gotta that big freezer.¹⁶⁵

As she did with vegetables, Paulina found resourceful ways to ensure her family had enough protein. She was able to take advantage of this unlikely resource because she

¹⁶⁴ Bortolo Rinaldo and Lucia Rinaldo, interview by author, group interview, July 29, 2015, Burnaby.

¹⁶⁵ Paulina Vinci and Maria D'Averson, interview by author, group interview, June 26, 2015, Vancouver.

knew how to slaughter, pluck, and butcher chickens from her father's farm in Italy. Furthermore, the money she saved helped them purchase a freezer so she could continue purchasing meat in bulk. Italians used their knowledge of how to process animals to help them adapt their strategies to make the most of the resources available to them, resulting in foodways that incorporated Italian food customs and local experiences in Vancouver.

Freezers also aided Italians in scavenging efforts. Scholars have shown that many Italians were accustomed to scavenging for food to prevent starvation in war torn countries. Even after the war, many Europeans found they had to scavenge foods to get by.¹⁶⁶ Chapter one shows how Italians continued these practices in Vancouver. Paulina staved off poverty by finding creative ways to obtain food from urban sources. Evalina also collected vegetables from nearby public land. Those scavenging efforts produced vegetables that were either consumed immediately, or preserved using traditional canning. Settimo, on the other hand, found a way to scavenge pigeons, which needed to be frozen in order to keep. He recalled hearing about another Italian collecting grain from empty train cars to feed the chickens Italians kept in back yards:

My older brother kept telling me this story of him, we just arrived to Canada. Who went inside the empty train cars, to clean them from the grain, and take home the grain for chicken or this or that. And he told me a story of another guy who wait for the pigeon to go inside the car. They close the door, they went inside the car and pick up all the pigeon. And I said to my brother, 'why don't we do it too?' So we took home three sack of pigeon. We must have got a hundred, hundred and fifty pigeon. We killed them and then we cleaned them.¹⁶⁷

The ways Settimo and this other Italian engaged with the train yard shows the intersection of old and new strategies. The Italian Settimo's brother spoke of collected

¹⁶⁶ Franca Iacovetta, *Gatekeepers*, 148; Counihan, *Around the Tuscan Table*, 49-50.

¹⁶⁷ Settimo Perizzolo, interview by author, personal interview, Feb 15, 2016, Burnaby.

grain to feed chickens he kept at home, which differed little from practices in Italy. He found where grain could be collected in Vancouver and then exploited that resource. Settimo, on the other hand, collected a large number of pigeons in the same location because he had the capacity to store them long term, which he was unable to do in Italy. Settimo ate pigeons in Italy, though he could not buy them readily in Canada. While he did not make collecting pigeons a regular production strategy, he was attracted to the opportunity to find foods that were Italian.

One of the most glaring differences between Italian foodways in Italy and Vancouver was the distances Italian immigrants travelled to seek out familiar food sources. Counihan argues that, even though Tuscans bought food products, such as coffee, from outside of Tuscany, their primary mechanism for finding foods they could not afford was to substitute local ingredients.¹⁶⁸ Pier Paolo Viazzo and Dionigi Albera also argue that local ecology shaped family structures and ways of life in northern Italy.¹⁶⁹ In Vancouver, Italians looked first to local resources when seeking certain foods. Nevertheless, they held conceptions about which foods they wanted to consume. In some cases, Italians either ordered from or travelled to places distant from Vancouver to acquire these foods, rather than making do with local substitutes. British Columbia contains nodal communities separated by large distances. The closest significant Italian community to Vancouver in 1950 was Powell River, which was 170km away and separated by ocean. A comparable distance in Italy would be the distance between

¹⁶⁸ Counihan, *Around the Tuscan Table*, 22.

¹⁶⁹ Pier Paolo Viazzo and Dionigi Albera, "The Peasant Family in Northern Italy, 1750-1930: A Reassessment," *Journal of Family History* 15 no. 4 (1990): 461-82.

Bologna and Milan, which bookended many different villages.¹⁷⁰ Many foraging opportunities existed in Vancouver's hinterlands. As with purchasing and scavenging locally, being able to store larger quantities of food made long foraging trips practical. Italians went even further to acquire grapes from vineyards in Washington or California for home winemaking. Unlike in Italy, Italians extended the distances they were willing to go to obtain ingredients because they felt those ingredients allowed them to produce *Italianità*.

Italian men in postwar Vancouver foraged for mushrooms as they had done in Italy. As with other food production strategies, they turned to locally available mushrooms when they were available. Settimo, for example, only harvested the mushrooms that he learned to pick in Italy, which happened to be available in urban parks.

There's only one type of mushroom that I know, that I trust myself picking, and that's chiodini. Because, by the time my brothers immigrated to Canada, my dad couldn't walk anymore. So he couldn't walk me to teach me, which ones to pick. So I never knew which ones to pick... Chiodini, you can pick them up anywhere, down at Deer Lake, behind Boundary, so there's a few places. But I know how to pick them. Anything else you have to drive up to Squamish, people go to Boston Bar, you have to go to Whistler. But I never learned. And [his wife] doesn't like mushrooms. For me to eat mushrooms I have to wait for her to go away to go out, then I can make mushrooms.¹⁷¹

¹⁷⁰ Distances are taken from Google Maps, although modern routes may be slightly different than those in 1950, the approximate distances are useful for understanding different conceptions of Italian lives in Vancouver and Italy. Some useful distances to consider are: South to North Italy = 1,170km; South of Italy to North of France = 2500 km; Italy to Vancouver = 10,000km; Toronto to Vancouver = 3,500km; Vancouver to trail = 628km; Vancouver to Kitimat = 1,400km; Vancouver to Kamloops = 354km; Vancouver to Powell River = 170km (similar from Bologna to Milan).

¹⁷¹ Settimo Perizzolo, interview by author, personal interview, July 18, 2015, Burnaby.

He was able to collect the small amount of mushrooms he wanted to eat locally, and because his wife did not like mushrooms he did not seek to learn how to pick others. Comparatively, Andy Citton knew how to pick “[Chanterelle] are more plentiful [in British Columbia. Porcini you do find, but not as easy as chanterelle.”¹⁷² Neither Chantarelle or Porcini grew near Vancouver, but Andy experienced different ecologies as he travelled to rural British Columbia for work. He understood that

mountains are the same all over the world. There is a certain type of mushroom grows everywhere in the world... You get to know what mushroom is under certain vegetation. And you can go many part of the world if you know there is a certain amount of moisture. Certain types of trees will have that if its not on this spot its on another spot... Here, In Vancouver we go up to near hope, uhh skagit valley, and that is a good spot for chanterelles, but uhh Pemberton is good for porcini mushrooms.¹⁷³

Rather than learning how to pick mushrooms close by, or purchasing mushrooms, Andy made yearly trips to these locations hours outside of Vancouver to harvest them. His wife Rosa remembered, “One year he did about this much, the two tables full of mushrooms... He goes every year and we freeze them and we do them like risotto or we eat them just the mushrooms too.”¹⁷⁴ British Columbia provided the mushrooms Italians sought, some were available near Vancouver and some only grew in other regions of the province. Both Settimo and Andy picked mushrooms based on their knowledge from Italy and their desire to eat them, rather than how locally they could find them.

Italians also purchased foods from distant locations because they conveyed *Italianità*. Rosa’s family lived on west 4th and Commercial Drive, close to a plethora of

¹⁷² Andy Citton and Rosa Citton, interview by author, group interview, June 6, 2015, Burnaby.

¹⁷³ Andy Citton and Rosa Citton, interview by author, group interview, February 18, 2016, Burnaby.

¹⁷⁴ Rosa Citton, interview by author, personal interview, May 26, 2015, Burnaby.

grocers that had connections to local farms, yet, her father ordered vegetables from an Italian family in Kelowna each year.

I remember dad ordering from Kelowna, things like pepper and tomatoes and fruit and you do your jars, everybody did that, you do jars of fruit. The peppers he used to do them with Acido [vinegar]... I remember he would write the letters in Italian. There was somebody there, I don't know who it would be but there was an address and every year he would, uhh, fifty pounds of this and fifty pounds of that and then the peaches, mom used to do them in the jars.¹⁷⁵

Rosa's father could have sourced local tomatoes and peppers to preserve but he wanted vegetables he considered Italian. He turned to the Italian community in Vancouver to source these vegetables: "Somebody gave him the address, and every year he would write to them and let them know what he required."¹⁷⁶ Special ordering vegetables and fruit from Kelowna was not the most cost effective way to source fresh produce. Nevertheless, Rosa's father believed these would be the best vegetables to preserve or make into sauces that he wanted to eat.

Italianità especially shaped the way Italians sourced grapes for making wine.

Many Italians made wine at home in Vancouver, a tradition their families continued for generations in Italy. They also made it because Italian wine was largely unavailable in Vancouver. California's wine industry was just emerging after the end of the Second World War, but in British Columbia, it was all but non-existent.¹⁷⁷ Nevertheless, there was significant production of grapes in British Columbia. My great grandfather, Nicola—or Nicholas, as his name was changed to when he arrived in North America—Biagioni, began growing grapes in the Okanagan Valley in the 1920's. He produced wine for the

¹⁷⁵ Andy Citton and Rosa Citton, interview by author, group interview, February 18, 2016, Burnaby.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ For a history of Italian wine in California, see Simone Cinotto, *Soft Soil, Black Grapes: The Birth of Italian Winemaking in California* (New York: NYU Press, 2012).

Italians he employed in his orchards and sold the grapes to others. A brochure he would include with these grapes also included crude instructions on how to make wine.¹⁷⁸ Lynne Bowen illustrates how prewar Italian immigrants throughout British Columbia made wine in their homes. These home wine makers tended to take a casual approach to the fermentation process, using whatever grapes they could find and often ending up with poor quality wine.¹⁷⁹ Many postwar Italian immigrants made wine, though they also took an interest in improving its quality, as they became more experienced vintners.

Postwar Italian winemakers did not like the wine that came from B.C.'s grapes. The soil in the Okanagan Valley was too acidic to grow a grape that would create a wine with "strength" they were looking for.¹⁸⁰ This is an issue that still plagues B.C.'s wine industry today with many wineries importing grapes from south of the border to mix with their locally produced grapes. Italians in Vancouver also turned to America to find grapes that suited their needs. Many postwar immigrants first made wine by purchasing grapes from Italian importers Bosa Foods or Spagnols.¹⁸¹ Yet some Italian home wine makers eventually tired of importers' lack of selection. Settimo first sourced grapes from Bosa, but when he wanted to make better wine, he started relying what he called "Italvino." "It's a group of Italian men," he explained "it's a group of people who formed this group and there's one guy in charge and he pre ordered all the stuff for his member and friends.

¹⁷⁸ Yvonne Biagioni, interview by author, personal interview, August 13, 2015, Penticton; Nicholas Biagioni, "Selected Grape Recipes," Vineyard Brochure, personal collection of Yvonne Biagioni, Penticton.

¹⁷⁹ Lynne Bowen, *Whoever Gives us Bread*, 120-2.

¹⁸⁰ D.V. Fisher and J. Vielvoye, "Grape Growing in British Columbia," *Canada Department of Agriculture* (1968).

¹⁸¹ Andy Citton and Rosa Citton, interview by author, group interview, February June 6, 2015, Burnaby; Settimo Perizzolo, interview by author, personal interview, September 13, 2015, Burnaby.

So we put the orders in and he orders it from uhh Washington or California.”¹⁸² Some Italians even went as far as scheduling vacations around trips to vineyards.

This generation doesn't do wine like the old people did they just let it, didn't know what they were doing. This generation is well informed. And they know exactly the grapes that they want, where they're from, where to buy them. They go to the Napa to make sure, you know, or they go in the Washington, because Washington has a very good grape thing too.¹⁸³

Italian Vancouverites travelled further and further from home to find grapes that could make the wines they wanted.

Italians traveled as far as they practically could to find grapes they liked in North America, which was a departure from the intensely local winemaking cultures in Italy. Fabio Parasecoli describes the “hundreds and hundreds of local varieties of grapes” Italians grew and identified with in different regions of Italy.¹⁸⁴ Settimo's parents grew all of the grapes they needed for wine in between their other crops. He remembered his parent's farm in Treviso: “We have vineyard, every, every 50 feet. Right? We used to have, what do you call it? The vines. So my dad used to grow grapes to make wine. They never sold any of their grapes, only growing them for consumption.”¹⁸⁵ Settimo first learned to make wine in Italy “because all my brothers immigrated to Canada, I was left behind with my dad learning how to make wine. It's something that you grow up

¹⁸² Settimo Perizzolo, interview by author, personal interview, September 13, 2015, Burnaby.

¹⁸³ Rosa Citton, interview by author, personal interview, May 26, 2015, Burnaby.

¹⁸⁴ Fabio Parasecoli, *Food Culture in Italy* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2004), 75-82.

¹⁸⁵ Settimo Perizzolo, interview by author, personal interview, February 15, 2016, Burnaby.

with.”¹⁸⁶ He learned to make a very specific type of wine from local grapes. In Vancouver, however, Settimo had to experiment with different grapes, yeasts and techniques in order to produce the taste he was looking for, rather than making wine defined by his family’s local grapes. He discovered a variety of grapes growing in western North America. Here “you got moscato, you got merlot. You got riesling, gewurztraminer, merlot.”¹⁸⁷ When he first started making wine in Vancouver, “the amount of wine I throw away” was significant.¹⁸⁸ He was not content with wine that was drinkable, instead putting considerable effort and time into honing his winemaking skills. Settimo continued to experiment with new grapes until he could make wine he liked to drink. He was proud of his wine, calling it “my tradition.” Yet the wines he produced were a combination of this continued tradition, his tastes, and North American grapes he traveled much further distances to acquire than he ever did in Italy.

Distance was not the only way Italians reshaped their foodways in Vancouver. They also divided the food production strategies along gendered lines. As chapter two discussed, gender divisions changed in Italian families as they adjusted to life in Vancouver. Although there are examples of these lines blurring, the general perceptions was women produced food to feed their families every day. Men, on the other hand, produced food that accentuated the *Italianità* of their diet. Paulina scavenged food to ensure her family never went hungry. Anna Teranna and Lucia Rinaldo learned how to cook to make sure their families were well fed. Conversely, men made wine, produced salami, and went on extended trips to forage for mushrooms or hunt and fish. These

¹⁸⁶ Settimo Perizzolo, interview by author, personal interview, July 18, 2015, Burnaby.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

activities, while they produced foods their families consumed, were less important to daily survival. In some cases, men did not grow gardens. Emanuela remembered,

He didn't like to [garden] so no, well he would, he would you know in the spring when it was time to put the manure in and turn the soil, then he would kind of do that, but she was the one who was always watering and she would grow fabulous beans, and you know for your minestrone and like whatever, you would be surprised what came out of her garden. I think he [knew how to garden] he just didn't enjoy it.¹⁸⁹

Her father did not have the same responsibility as her mother to ensure the family could afford to eat. She gardened because she needed to feed her family, which was part of her identity as an Italian mother. But she also had the authority to convince her father to help with the manual labour of tilling the soil for a garden each spring. Although men contributed in many ways to food production strategies, in the experiences presented here, the onus was on women to provide daily food.

The spaces of food production were also divided in some ways by gender. Many Italian families had dedicated spaces to different food productions. Lara Pascali claims many Italian homes in Canada and the United States contained two kitchens. She argues that Italian families finished basements, complete with kitchens, to create separate spaces that could handle large family functions and regular use. Italian women then maintained the main floor kitchen as a clean and proper space to use only during formal occasions.¹⁹⁰ Although this configuration of formal and informal space was less prevalent in Vancouver, houses did have different spaces dedicated to food production. Settimo's wife, for example, used their upstairs kitchen to cook daily meals and even prepare large

¹⁸⁹ Emanuela Rossi, interview by author, personal interview, July 20, 2015, Burnaby.

¹⁹⁰ While Pascali's discussion about gendered activities neglects the complexities of Italian family dynamics, she correctly shows how infrastructure was divided. Lara Pascali, Lara Pascali "Two Stoves, Two Refrigerators, Due Cucine: The Italian immigrant home with two kitchens," *Gender, Place & Culture* 13, no. 6 (2006): 685-695.

family banquets that would then be consumed in their larger basement room. In the basement, Settimo had a winemaking room and a second kitchen that he used to cook polenta for community events and to boil water or soak casings when making salami. He said, “This is our basement right, so [his wife] uses the drying room. This is our party room, this is my salami room, this is my afternoon nap room.”¹⁹¹ Andy Citton had a separate winemaking room and kitchen, complete with pizza oven in a garage at the back of their lot. He also had a purpose built wine cellar in the basement.¹⁹² These spaces paralleled gendered food production strategies. Men made wine and cured salami to accentuate their diet, whereas women often preserved foods grown or collected to use in daily meals.

These Vancouver Italian foodways were not just a combination of personal experiences of food in Italy and Canadian foodscapes. The Vancouver Italians’ motivations to maintain food customs caused them seek out foods that exhibited *Italianità* even if those foods were not connected to their local Italian food cultures. Unlike larger centres of Italian migration where there were significant groups of immigrants from the same region, the small Italian community in Vancouver caused Italians to socialize with immigrants from different parts of Italy. In order to produce or acquire Italian foods, immigrants often turned to other Italians in Vancouver. They shared knowledge of food production, shared seeds to grow foods, or cooperated to purchase food affordably. By cooperating with other immigrants in

¹⁹¹ Settimo Perizzolo, interview by author, personal interview, July 18, 2015, Burnaby.

¹⁹² Andy Citton and Rosa Citton, interview by author, group interview, June 6, 2015, Burnaby.

Vancouver, Italians socialized over their foodways, which increasingly became a reflection of an *Italianità* that incorporated aspects from different parts of Italy.

The ways Italians foraged for mushrooms illustrates continuing efforts to adapt their production strategies to maintain food customs, as well as how Italians learned from each other. Andy taught other Italians how to pick mushrooms. He would “always take people, every year there’s always someone who is interested in picking mushrooms. Ya, every year, not necessarily the same people but there’s always a group that we go with.” Partly, Andy went picking with other Italians for company and security in the wilderness. But he also taught Italians who had never picked mushrooms before. Mushroom picking was an activity that Italians from different regions participated in, but even those who picked them in Italy only knew how to pick the mushrooms that were close to where they lived. Bortolo only picked the mushrooms he could find around the farm he lived on. “I knew the Chiodini, because the other ones, you have to go where there is mountains, bush, whatever. Like where my father-in-law come from you can find more mushroom there. They go up in the mountain.”¹⁹³ Bortolo and enjoyed picking and both him and Lucia enjoyed eating mushrooms so he learned to pick different varieties from his father-in-law in Vancouver: “You learn it from others, you go with somebody else... For chanterelle and pine mushroom, we go out, where is that? Boston Bar... It is almost three hundred [km] to go out there.”¹⁹⁴ Bortolo traveled much further in Canada to continue picking mushrooms, but he also included mushrooms from different parts of Italy.

¹⁹³ Bortolo Rinaldo and Lucia Rinaldo, interview by author, group interview, July 29, 2015, Burnaby.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

Italian Vancouverite gardens also illustrate tensions between maintaining and adapting foodways. There are no comprehensive records of how many Italians gardened in Vancouver.¹⁹⁵ Nevertheless, The Italians interviewed here suggest that a majority of Italians grew gardens in some form. Gardens were a source of affordable vegetables, but they also replicated a part of their lives in Italy. Paulina and her husband's first home was a small apartment near Chinatown. They did not have any space to grow their own garden. Nevertheless, "The city was offering pieces of land to grow your own vegetables."¹⁹⁶ Paulina grew a garden in one of these community spaces until they could afford to move to a single detached house with a yard. Paulina found ways to make use of her gardening skills to continue to produce food in Vancouver, even when resources were difficult to come by. Artura and her husband were also motivated to upgrade their garden when they could afford to do so to increase their yields. They lived in three different houses since they immigrated to Vancouver. Each house had a progressively larger garden. The last house they moved to had a green space behind it that "also [had] a large garden. That is, the property is belong to the city. But we ask them, there is an easement

¹⁹⁵ Housing statistics in the 1951 and 1961 census do not break down dwelling attributes by the inhabitants' country of origin. These census reports do, however, show a significant number of immigrants living in detached single dwelling homes. It is realistic to infer that a majority of the Italian community gardened in some way, which is corroborated by the experiences of the Italians interviewed here. Dominion Bureau of Statistics, "Labour Force, 14 Year of Age and Over, By Occupation and Sex, Showing Birthplace, Period of Immigration, and Origin for the Provinces, 1951," in *The Ninth Census of Canada: Labour Force*, vol. 4 (1951), table 13; Dominion Bureau of Statistics, "Labour Force, 15 Year of Age and Over, By Occupation Division and Sex, Showing Birthplace, Period of Immigration, and Ethnic Group for the Provinces, 1961," in *1961 Census of Canada: Labour Force*, vol. 3 part 1 Catalogue no. 94-515 (1961), table 22.

¹⁹⁶ Paulina Vinci and Maria D'Averson, interview by author, group interview, June 26, 2015, Vancouver.

that you cannot see from the street, so every year we clean it up, you can grow peas.”¹⁹⁷

As they were able to afford it, Artura and her husband increased the size of their gardens to yield more vegetables each year.

To Settimo, his garden was part of a larger desire to recreate the atmosphere of his home in Treviso. The last house he moved to, in Burnaby, he chose because it had a large yard and backed on to a community park.

The one thing I hated about Vancouver was having all the houses stuck against the other ones... [In Italy] there used to be twelve families, right, so find another group of house, you have to walk about two hundred meters... To me it was such a big difference that, I couldn't live even when I ended up in Burnaby the neighbours could see inside the yard. I always liked the open spaces, big spaces, so when we saw this property I just, I didn't look anywhere else.¹⁹⁸

In Italy, fields where his family grew different foods surrounded his home. He recreated those spaces in Canada, spending a significant amount of time gardening in his backyard. These gardens continued methods of food production and recreated spaces Italians were familiar with.

Nevertheless, the characteristics of those gardens were determined by how Italian immigrants acquired seeds. Evalina and her husband “went and get [seeds] from friend. And sometime we went in the store, you buy the little pouch in the store for the salad, for the radicchio. The radicchio we went a Bosa because they come from Italy. And then we start with that.”¹⁹⁹ Some Italians found it difficult to grow the foods they wanted using seeds bought in Canadian stores. The seeds Paulina bought in Canada did not grow plants

¹⁹⁷ Artura Cuisinato, interview by author, personal interview, May 27, 2015, Vancouver.

¹⁹⁸ Settimo Perizzolo, interview by author, personal interview, February 15, 2016, Burnaby.

¹⁹⁹ Evalina Andreola and Sandra Gange, interview by author, group interview, July 20, 2015, Vancouver.

she found acceptable: “I can’t trust the plant from the store... Outside the plant is red but inside the plant is green... That’s why I keep all of my seeds to plant by a year later.”²⁰⁰ Many immigrants coveted seeds from Italy and sought them wherever they could, often bringing them from Italy. Emanuela’s parents brought seeds from Italy “before you were allowed to import seeds. So you would go to Italy and you would stuff the seeds in your shoes with your socks and you would illegally import them, cause that’s what all the Italians were doing.”²⁰¹ Paulina also used seeds from Italy, which she then maintained by keeping them over from year to year. Her daughter, Maria recalled, “There would be certain tomatoes that [Paulina] would like, so she would then dry them and take the seeds out and plant them and make her own little plants and then plant them in the spring.”²⁰² By bringing seeds in from Italy and keeping back some from the crop each year, Italians were able to continue growing foods they were familiar with.

Immigrants were proud of being able to grow any type of Italian produce in Vancouver. If they could not bring seeds from their hometown, they sought other seeds from Italy. Rosa, who emigrated from Calabria, remembered bringing tomatoes from her husband’s home in Veneto. “His family had these beautiful tomatoes and they were not available here.” Italians also relied on the community in Vancouver to acquire seeds they were not able to bring. Emanuela saw her parents sharing seeds with other Italian families.

They would give each other seeds and they would give each other the, the Radicchio right, and that’s kind of what they did, because they wanted to have

²⁰⁰ Paulina Vinci and Maria D’Averson, interview by author, group interview, June 26, 2015, Vancouver.

²⁰¹ Emanuela Rossi, interview by author, personal interview, July 20, 2015, Burnaby.

²⁰² Paulina Vinci and Maria D’Averson, interview by author, group interview, June 26, 2015, Vancouver.

something of home right? And way back when you weren't allowed to have this kind of stuff or they just didn't have it... Everyone just kind of shared them. Like I think as far as 'oh you know what kind of Radicchio do you have or what kind of tomatoes do you have, do you have these ones?'²⁰³

Although Italians were able to bring some seeds from home, often times there were other types of seeds they were missing. By relying on other Italians in Vancouver, they were able to create a complete version of the gardens they had back home. Nevertheless, those gardens often included vegetable from other places in Italy. Bortolo, for example, had Radicchio from Veneto growing next to a fig tree from the south. Sharing seeds in Vancouver created gardens that became mosaics of *Italianità*. Those mosaics also represented ways in which the Italian community came together to maintain Italian foodways in Vancouver.

Italians also shared the foods they produced or acquired. When food production strategies were successful, Italians produced more ingredients than they needed. Andy often picked more mushrooms each year than his family consumed, so “We give lots [of mushrooms] away, but I freeze some, but we also give them away a lot.”²⁰⁴ Other Italians made use of these shared ingredients whether they had used them in Italy or not. Evalina never made risotto with mushrooms before arriving in Vancouver. In Italy, “It was no mushrooms then, because we were very far from the mountain, you know. My mamma she could make it [with] peas, [with] something different. But you learn little bit at a time [with] different stuff.”²⁰⁵ Risotto was prevalent throughout Italy, though it varied greatly from region to region. In Vancouver, she made risotto that was a combination of her

²⁰³ Emanuela Rossi, interview by author, personal interview, July 20, 2015, Burnaby.

²⁰⁴ Andy Citton and Rosa Citton, interview by author, group interview, February 18, 2016, Burnaby.

²⁰⁵ Evalina Andreola and Sandra Gange, interview by author, group interview, July 20, 2015, Vancouver.

cooking method, which she learned in Calabria, and ingredients that other Italians shared with her. In addition to ingredients, Italians also shared prepared food. As discussed in chapter one, Italians from across the community in Vancouver coveted Evalina's pickled bell peppers. They turned to her because she prepared them the best. She recalled, "Some people say 'how you can do it, give me the recipe.' I give it, and they say, 'but they are no come the same.' Because they do it maybe fast, maybe cook it too much. And I do it like how supposed to do it." Evalina was a skilled cook, so she produced better peppers than other Italians were able to, yet because they went to Evalina, her version of this cuisine spread throughout the Italian community. Through sharing ingredients and prepared foods, the Italians began to combine foodways to create a cuisine that represented the Vancouver Italian community.

Italians adapted their food production strategies to take advantage of available food sources in Vancouver. As Counihan showed in Tuscany, Italians in Vancouver produced ingredients however they could to make foods they recognized. As Chapter one discussed, they also strategized how to produce food affordably. Nevertheless, as they adapted those strategies to Vancouver, Italians began to choose food sources that allowed them to produce the best "Italian" foods they could. So as to produce ingredients for Italian cuisine affordably, they had to adapt their food production strategies to best suit the resources Vancouver had to offer. Adapting to local sources and infrastructure, such as freezing large quantities of food, was not a departure from the ways people adapted to local food sources in Italy. A larger difference between foodways in Italy and Vancouver was the strong desire to produce foods with *Italianità*, a desire that resulted from being outside of Italy. In Vancouver, Italians were willing to travel distances significantly

farther than they ever would in Italy to obtain foods they saw as Italian. Italian families also divided food production strategies and dedicated spaces along gendered lines in ways that were unique to Vancouver. As with other familial responsibilities, men and women redefined the ways they contributed to food production in Vancouver. This process of negotiating between tradition and Canadian foodscapes show how foods with *Italianità* came from creolized foodways. Yet, even that *Italianità* was in a way creolized. In order to produce or acquire foods with *Italianità*, Italians in Vancouver cooperated by sharing knowledge, seeds, ingredients, and prepared foods. Through these cooperative efforts, Italian immigrants began including foods that were connected to different parts of Italy. As such, creolized Italian foods in Vancouver should not be seen as just a combination of singularly Italian and Canadian foodways, but instead as a complex relationship between various local foodways in Italy and the Italian community's cooperative engagement with food sources in Canada.

Conclusion

As part of the research conducted for this project, I interviewed a number of Italians who immigrated to Vancouver within the last ten years. Many of them had very quickly become involved with the already established Italian community. One of the things they recognized about the Italian food they experienced in Vancouver was how similar it was to their parents' cuisine in Italy. In Vancouver Italians are still making

their own wine, they make their own prociutto and fromaggio and all that stuff in house. That's something else we don't do in Italy anymore. Like wine and salami, it's super cheap... You can't find it so that's why they start making this stuff right? But, for us, the younger generation we come from Italy directly. Like my dad stopped making wine thirty years ago.²⁰⁶

As Italian immigrants only experienced Italian foodways when they returned to visit, the foodways they sought to maintain were a snapshot of Italy when they originally emigrated. And they were successful at maintaining those foodways in some ways. New immigrants noticed, "The language and the food, was like 30 years ago, 40 years ago. So, when I immigrate here, it's just the same mentality, and the food reflects that too."²⁰⁷ Yet they also noticed ways that Vancouver Italian foodways had changed. Wine in Italy, for example, "is so cheap, so available, and it's super good. You just buy it and that."²⁰⁸ In Vancouver, because Italians could not find affordable wine they liked, they continued to make it at home. Italians also made wine, "to enjoy and tradition. In Italy you don't have to do the tradition, because you are in Italy. When you are here, the tradition is ahh, important, you are losing it so you want to keep it. You want to keep some tradition."²⁰⁹ Nevertheless, as chapter three illustrated, Italians experimented with new grapes and

²⁰⁶ Recent immigrants, interview by author, group interview, July 22, 2015, Burnaby.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

methods in order to produce tastes they liked. Those tastes did not necessarily reflect Italian wines. One recent immigrant explained, “when I come here, and I drink that wine, It’s good for them because they’re used to it. But it’s not even close to what it tastes like” in Italy.²¹⁰ To these recent immigrants, Vancouver Italian foodways were both incredibly familiar and foreign at the same time. This thesis has unpacked these complexities in Vancouver Italian foodways.

Chapter one followed Italians from their lives in Italy, through the process of immigration to Vancouver. It showed how living and working in Vancouver sharpened the division between income and food. Unlike in Italy, where the lines between producing food for nourishment and livelihood was blurred, in Vancouver, where few Italians worked in agriculture, it was rare for them to make a living producing food. Yet Italians still continued to produce foods in several different ways. They collected foods from urban and natural sources, they grew foods in gardens of various sizes, and they strategized food purchasing from creative sources. Even though these food production strategies did not earn Italians money, they still played a role in their financial security. Italians were also motivated to produce foods for other reasons. Here, I built on the arguments of Hasia Diner, who revealed that turn of the century Italian immigrants sought to greatly improve their cuisine to mimic wealthy Italian classes.²¹¹ Italian cuisine similarly shaped postwar Italian immigrants’ foodways in Vancouver, however, their motivations were not to improve their cuisine, but affordably recreate it using the resources available to them. The strategies they employed, and the foods those strategies produced were emblematic of their lives in Italy. Furthermore, many Italians were skilled

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Diner, *Hungering for America*.

in food production and preparation. The foods they were able to produce in Vancouver became a point of pride and identity for them, in a city where they had to struggle to succeed.

The ways Italians fed themselves in postwar Italy and Vancouver were part of a larger process of changing gender roles within family units. Chapter two shifted towards understanding how immigration to Vancouver shaped Italian women's familial responsibilities and identity. It argued that ideas of "motherhood", brought from Italy, expanded to incorporate women's work and food production in Vancouver. It built on a previous study by Laura Quilici, which explored how Italian women boarded single Italian male immigrants as a way to contribute to their families financially while continuing traditionally gendered activities.²¹² While some of the women I interviewed had similar experiences to those Quilici presents, many worked formal labour and broke out of traditionally gendered spaces. Nevertheless, they still understood their actions as contributing towards maternal identities. In most cases, whether these women worked or not, they were responsible for putting food on the table every day. They measured their success as mothers against their ability to feed their families. But their contributions also shifted their position within family and community relationships. Women who kept boarders became matriarchal figures for single male immigrants. Similarly, women who were in charge of feeding their family gained respect from their husbands and authority over familial decisions. They blurred the lines between traditional gendered divides of food and income, which expanded the definition of "mother" in Vancouver.

²¹² Quilici, "I was a Strong Lady."

First generation Italian immigrant women then performed these shifting identities as their daughters grew up in Vancouver. Second generation women benefitted in certain ways from their mothers' shifting gender performances. Nevertheless, by identifying their actions with motherhood, these women reinforced certain expectations about women's roles within their families. Second generation women were allowed to move out of their parents' homes and find work, but they were still restricted from pursuing post secondary education and protected from social interactions their parents found inappropriate. But second generation Italian women pushed these boundaries as their mothers did before them. They negotiated between the identities their mothers performed and their experiences outside of their parents' home to continue blurring the gendered divisions within second-generation Italian families.

Chapter three then explored how the motivations illustrated in chapter one and changing gender roles explored in chapter two impacted Vancouver Italian foodways. It showed, as recent Italian immigrants noticed, that in order to maintain Italian food customs affordably, postwar immigrants had to adapt their food production strategies to exploit the food sources available to them. Where it was possible, they took advantage of local food sources, as they had adapted to local food sources in Italy. Yet unlike Italy, Italian immigrants also sought foods that evoked *Italianità*. When local sources failed to produce Italian foods, immigrants traveled much further from their homes than they ever did in Italy to acquire the foods they wanted. Whether from local or distant sources, the foods Italians produced in Vancouver blended Italian and Canadian influences. Strategies and spaces dedicated to food production were also divided along gendered lines, where women mostly produced food to ensure their family had food on a daily basis and men

produced foods because they wanted to have *Italianità*. Nevertheless, women played an integral role in transmitting culture through food. They fed their families, immigrant boarders, and others in the community. On a daily basis, they contributed to an ever-changing Italian cuisine in Vancouver as well as passed that cuisine on to their children. Vancouver Italian foodways cannot be understood simply as a negotiation between Italian and Canadian influences. Italians often cooperated in order to acquire foods they saw as Italian. In many cases, they settled for any form of Italian food when they could not acquire foods from their local Italian homes. The result was a complex foodway that involved influences from different parts of Italy, and the cooperative efforts of the Vancouver Italian community to engage with Canadian food sources.

These complex foodways contribute to our understanding of Italian identities in Canada. Historians of Italian immigration have shown how Italian communities in North America have, over time, created a national Italian identity that represents the community as a whole. John Zucchi made an important contribution to help explain how Italians began to identify with national *Italianità*. He disputes Caroline Ware's argument that Italians exhibited a national identity in defence of racist depictions of Italians.²¹³ Instead, Zucchi suggests that, in Toronto, an Italian national identity arose because Italian immigrants, who brought local hometown identities with them, lived in close proximity to other Italians. They expanded their "loyalties" to include other Italians as they recognized themselves as a collective "other".²¹⁴ This suggests that *Italianità* was a malleable identity, which shifted to meet the needs of the Italian community. Stanger-Ross shows this as well, especially when looking at marriage records in postwar Toronto

²¹³ Zucchi, *Italians in Toronto*, 8.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 197.

and Philadelphia. He noticed that Italians who married soon after postwar immigration opened up tended to marry other Italians from their home region. Over time, marriages between Italians from different regions increased, as well as Italians marrying non-Italians.²¹⁵ Yet, he shows that proximity is not necessary to create *Italianità*. Stanger-Ross argued showed that *Italianità* expanded to meet the needs of the two Italian communities in Toronto and Philadelphia as they moved in different ways through each city.²¹⁶

I have shown a similar relationship between foodways and expanding identities. When Italians first arrived in Vancouver, they brought with them hometown cuisines, which they attempted to recreate as affordably as they could. Nevertheless, in many cases it was difficult to recreate those local cuisines on their own. Chain migration set up social networks that allowed Italians to find others who were recreating similar foodways. If Italians could not recreate their own local foods, they settled for the next best thing, which were other Italian foods. As they made use of these food networks, Italians expanded their cuisine to encompass a larger *Italianità*. Nevertheless, Zucchi and Stanger-Ross overlook how Italian immigrants procured and produced food, which was an essential part of their identity. My analysis of Italian foodways demonstrates that “metropolitan” is an insufficient geographic frame for understanding how networks of Italian immigrants influenced their individual and collective identities. I show how their relationship to food caused them to seek out relationships with other Italians, and other places in British Columbia, Washington, and California. They formed *Italianità* through the cuisine they produced as well as the relationships they formed in Vancouver, but the

²¹⁵ Stanger-Ross, *Staying Italian*, chapter 4.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 97.

distances they travelled and the compromises they made shows how malleable that *Italianità* needed to be.

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Appendix A: Biographies

Anna Teranna: Anna was born in Torino, Italy. She came to Vancouver with her husband in 1966. They had one son, which they raised for several years before Anna divorced him. She then continue to raise her son while becoming a prominent women in the Italian and wider Vancouver community. She was elected Minister of Parliament for Vancouver East 1993-1997.

Andy Citton: Andy grew up in Veneto. He immigrated to Vancouver by himself in 1966. He spent much of his early years in Canada working in northern British Columbia where he lived in camps or hotels. He met and married his wife, Rosa in Vancouver and they purchased a house in Vancouver and then Burnaby where they live today. Andy runs a construction company that he started with two partners.

Artura Cusinato: Artura was born in Galliera, Veneto. She immigrated with her husband in 1958. They purchased a house in Vancouver, and then moved to Burnaby. Both of them grew large gardens at each house. Artura became involved with the Vancouver Italian Cultural Centre, where she has sat on the executive board.

Bortolo Rinaldo: Bortolo was born in Chiararo Treviso. He immigrated to Vancouver by himself in 1958. He originally stayed in a rooming house, until he met his wife, Lucia. They then bought a house in Vancouver, and then eventually moved to Burnaby with their children, where they live today. Bortolo first worked in a furniture factory, then started an asphalt company, which he is still running.

Emanuela Rossi: Emanuela was born in Castelfranco, Veneto. She immigrated to Vancouver as a young girl with her family in 1966. She went to school in Vancouver and moved out of her parents' home when she married her husband. They purchased a house in Burnaby, where they live today.

Evalina Andreola: Evalina was born in Bessica, Treviso. She immigrated with her husband in 1963. They purchased a house in Vancouver within their first year in Vancouver. Evalina began providing rooming service for several single Italian male immigrants to supplement her husband's income. By boarding other immigrants, she was able to contribute to her family financially while also raising her children. After her second child was born, she stopped boarding immigrants and instead started babysitting local children.

Lucia Rinaldo: Lucia was born in Calabria. She immigrated to Vancouver with her family in 1958. In Vancouver, she worked in a mattress factory, where she did not need strong English skills. She met her husband, Bortolo in Vancouver, and left work when they had children.

Maria D'Averson: Maria was born in Vancouver. She is Paulina Vinci's daughter. Paulina was protective of Maria as she grew up in Vancouver. Maria was allowed to socialize with friends she made at school, but Paulina made every effort to keep her at home. Now, Maria lives with her husband next door to Paulina so they can care for her as she ages.

Paulina Vinci: Paulina Vinci grew up in San Nicola, Calabria, Italy. She immigrated to Vancouver alone, under the sponsorship of her aunt and uncle in 1951. In Vancouver, they abused Paulina, forcing her to perform unpaid domestic labour. Although she was able to free herself from this relationship, they successfully sued her for the cost of her journey and room and board for the time she lived with them. The British Columbian courts did not recognize a monetary value for the labour she provided them. Afterwards, Paulina married her then boyfriend and they had two children, one of whom is Maria D'Averson.

Rosa Citton: Rosa was born in Vibo Valenzia, Calabria. She immigrated to Vancouver as a young girl with her mother and father in 1954. She went to school in Vancouver and then worked at Olivieri's on Commercial Drive. She then worked as a receptionist for the first female Italian doctor in Vancouver. She met her husband, Andy in Vancouver and eventually left work when they had children.

Sandra Gange: Sandra Gange was born in Vancouver. She is Evalina Andreola's daughter. She experienced a Canadian education while growing up in an Italian Canadian household. Her parents allowed her to seek work once she was sixteen, and she moved out of her parents' house when she graduated from high school. Nevertheless, her parents prevented her from seeking a post secondary education because she was a girl. Sandra still became a leader in the Italian community, serving as an executive member of the Trevisani Nel Mondo and the Vancouver Italian Cultural Centre.

Settimo Perizzolo: Settimo grew up in a small town in rural Treviso. He immigrated on the advice of his brother in 1975. Once in Vancouver, Settimo worked in construction with his brother before starting his own construction company, which he still runs today. He married a Canadian born Italian woman in Vancouver and they had three children.