THE CONDITIONS THAT HINDER OR FACILITATE CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN ITALIAN FAMILIES

by

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B.A. (Human & Social Development),
The University of British Columbia, 1979.

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF

THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Department of Counselling Psychology

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

June 1989

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Date June 30/89

DE-6 (2/88)
ABSTRACT

This study gathers information about which factors facilitate, and, which factors hinder conflict resolution, in second general Italian Families. The subjects were asked questions using Flanagan's Critical Incident Technique. This structured set of principles is a tool which guides subjects to give important and new information about conflict resolution.

The study was based on research that indicates that the second generation Italian Family experiences conflict and disorganization during acculturation. There is increasing evidence that ethnic values and identification play a significant role in the family life cycle. Re-adjustment to a new culture is a prolonged developmental process which affects all members differently. The "adolescent" family stage seems particularly problematic since in addition to the normal developmental adjustment required, Italians struggle with multiple transitions which exacerbate inter-generational conflict.

Intergeneration conflict was studied by interviewing a total of 10 adults and 10 adolescents; one adult and one adolescent from each family. The
sample was drawn from the Burnaby North High School Enrollment Roster and interviewed in their own homes. These subjects reported a total of 134 incidents -- 29 facilitative and 105 hindering.

The results of the study indicated 14 basic categories. There were 8 categories that reported incidents which facilitated conflict resolution and 6 categories that reported incidents which hinder conflict resolution. Conflict resolution was facilitated when the discussion reached a limit and became closed or when humor was used. Conflict resolution was facilitated by an apology, showing tolerance, compromising and negotiation. Other factors that were facilitative were parental agreement and family closeness. On the other hand conflict resolution was hindered when there was conflicting expectations, lack of understanding, rejection, disagreement, disobedience and disrespect and parental conflict. These findings, to the Italian community, normalizes conflict processes as an understandable and resolvable problem. The information gathered provides a categorical map which can be used to assess the ways conflict is maintained and to strengthen ways in which conflict is reduced.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Background of the Problem

Adolescence can be a difficult and tumultuous developmental process for the individual and for the family. It is in the transition period from one developmental stage to another that families are most likely to encounter difficulties (Minuchin, 1974, Haley 1976). During the adolescent developmental stage both the young adult and the parents must adapt and change to facilitate the resolution of this growth stage. The adolescent must balance freedom with responsibility and establish wider interest and careers (Duvall, 1977), separate from their parents and develop outside relationships as their primary sources of gratification (Solomon, 1973).

Adults must release young adults with appropriate rituals and assistance and maintain a supportive home base (Duvall, 1977). The parents must learn to let go and to increase the flexibility of family boundaries to include the adolescent's independence. They must shift parent-child relationships to allow adolescents to move in and out of the family system. Also, during this time
parents must refocus themselves on midlife marital and career issues, including a shift toward concern about issues that are prevalent for the older generation (Carter & McGoldrick, 1980).

Optimum resolution of the transition from adolescence to adulthood entails separating from the family, achieving emotional maturity, and developing an independent self-identity. Failure to achieve a mature separation may take the form of dependency and attachment, or emotional cut off and reactive flight. Parental over-attachment may also hinder mature development and true autonomy of the children. As children and parents must adapt to changing responsibilities, roles, boundaries and communication during this transition, it can lead to many conflicts as both parent and child may not be changing at the same rate and in the same way. Both are struggling to establish new identities and positions regarding each other and their environment.

In addition to meeting the life task of reorganizing the family to accommodate change, immigrant families must make other major adjustments in terms of their identity and ethnicity. First, second and third
generation immigrants face the task of adapting to a new culture in which they may have to integrate a new system of meanings and patterns of behaviour in interpersonal relationships. When the community has differing values and structures than that of the family, individual family members must respond to opposing cultural contexts in order to develop a sense of identity. This process may be stressful and confusing for individuals and for the family which is being forced to change.

Statement of the problem and purpose of the study

Research indicates that the second generation Italian family experiences conflict and disorganization during acculturation. There is increasing evidence that ethnic values and identification play a significant role in family life and in personal development throughout the life cycle. Re-adjustment to a new culture is a prolonged developmental process which affects all members differently, depending on the life cycle phase they are in at the time of transition. The 'adolescent' family stage seems particularly problematic since in addition to the normal developmental adjustment required at this stage of the family life cycle, Italians
struggle with multiple transitions and conflicts due to migration which exacerbate inter-generational conflict.

The purpose of this exploratory study is to identify the factors which hinder and those factors which facilitate conflict resolution in Italian immigrant families. This information will be gathered using Flanagan's Critical Incident's Technique. This procedure allows subjects to give self reports regarding the significant factors regarding conflict resolution.
Chapter 2

Review of the Related Literature

1. **Cultural Context**

   Ethnicity relates family process to the broader context in which it evolves. Just as individuation requires that we come to terms with our family of origin, coming to terms with our ethnicity is necessary to gain a perspective on the relativity of our belief systems (Sluzki, 1979).

   Sluzki (1979) points out that the definition of family varies for different groups. Different ethnic groups may have variations in their family life cycle, Sluzki (1979). Some of these differences may be due to the emphasis that they place on different transitions such as marriage and death. There may be differences in the continuity of cultural rituals including the changing meanings and feelings about these rituals. Other variations occur in the occupations that may be chosen by a group. Also different ethnic groups differ in what they consider problematic and the viable solutions to those problems. Attitudes towards seeking help also tend to vary in different ethnic groups.
Many factors will influence the ways ethnic patterns evolve in the family. Sluzki (1979) identified several factors: migration, the languages spoken in the home; the race and country of origin; the family place of residence; their socio-economic status, educational achievement and upward mobility of family members; the emotional process in the family; their political and religious ties in the ethnic group; and the family life cycle. In addition, all situational crises; (illness, divorce, job loss, etc . . . ) can compound ethnic identity conflict which causes people to lose a sense of who they are.

In order to explore conflict and conflict resolution the family must be defined with an awareness of their ethnic and cultural differences. A brief introduction to the nature of Italian families is later followed by a more comprehensive study of the Italian immigrant struggle to resolve their conflicts. Italian family patterns and roles will be defined in a general way to give an understanding of the historical and cultural context of the family.
There is no such thing as an Italian nuclear family. The Italian family is a network of four generations, which includes godparents and close family friends. The individual's primary duty in the family is neither to himself nor to the community at large but rather to that network of kin called "family". When interests of the family conflict with the individual or general community interests, the former takes precedence.

Mutual rights and obligations are powerful and binding on all members of the family and allegiance to the family surpasses all other loyalties (Rotanno & McGoldrick, 1982). Separation from one's family is an individual's worst misfortune and tantamount to spiritual death (Rotanno & McGoldrick, 1982).

When Italians came to Canada this cohesiveness and loyalty became even more pronounced. Immigrants sheltered themselves from feelings of exclusion, poverty and fear that their cultural beliefs would be lost by tightening the network of kin and by demanding ultimate authority over children and their beliefs (Campisi, 1948).
Value was placed on the personality traits that would provide a cushion against external instability. Historically the Italians rely on internal resources and on their families. This is thought to have developed because of hostile forces, invading armies, unstable politics and the constant flow of foreigners through Italy and the changing power base (McGoldrick, Pearce, & Giordano, 1982).

Both in Italy or as immigrants in a new land, family honor is highly valued and preserved. In times of crisis, then, the primary coping mechanism is to turn to the family. The major difficulty in the Italian system develops when family and individual values conflict (McGoldrick, Pearce, & Giordano, 1982).

Italians raise their children to be mutually supportive and to contribute to the family. Italian parents would feel like failures if they reared children who were independent, self-sufficient, questioning of family values, and ultimately separating from the family.

Italian family members traditionally have clearly defined roles which determine and maintain family patterns. The father has traditionally been the
undisputed head of the household, often authoritarian and rigid in his rule setting and guidelines for behaviour (McGoldrick, Pearce, & Giordano, 1982; Giordano, 1977; Gambino, 1974). Fathers were out of the home, for business or male-oriented family activities, and therefore had little contact with the other family members (McGoldrick, Pearce, & Giordano, 1982).

The traditional Italian mother's life centers around the home. Her responsibility and primary pleasure is to provide nurturing and emotional sustenance to all family members (McGoldrick, Pearce, & Giordano, 1982; Giordano, 1977; Gambino 1974). Her personal needs take second place to those of her husband and in return she is offered protection and security from all outside pressures or threats (McGoldrick, Pearce, & Giordano, 1982).

The roles of children are markedly differentiated between males and females. The boys are allowed and encouraged to act out as an expression of their manliness (Gambino, 1974, McGoldrick, Pearce, Giordano, 1982). They are also encouraged to participate and achieve in the community (Giordano, 1977). The boys are given guidance and supervision to exemplify a sense of
mastery in interpersonal relations as well as in the sexual domain (McGoldrick, Pearce, Giordano, 1982). The girls on the other hand are trained to be domestic, virtuous and yielding to the will of men, like their mothers (Gambino, 1974).

The extended family plays a central role in all aspects of the family. Respect for and responsibility for older family members is a strong norm in the group (McGoldrick, Pearce, Giordano, 1982). The extended family contributes to family decision making and the ongoing daily functions.

Italian family roles are clearly defined and established. Their complimentarity severs and maintains the family. It is only when changes occur that the family structure begins to shake, crack and break apart. For the immigrant family there are multiple changes which challenge the family so greatly that it becomes a fight for survival. The following sections will explore the changes and stresses that the immigrant Italian family must endure.

2. **Conflict**

Conflict and conflict resolution in Italian families can be explored at the historical/sociological
level, at a family dynamic level, and at an intrapsychic level. The historical/sociological perspective describes the acculturation process as the process of the Italians as a group, adopting the cultural traits or social patterns of another group. The family dynamic level articulates the changing roles, and therefore the changing structure of the family. Included in this are the stresses and problems these families face. It is difficult to separate intrapsychic and family dynamics as they are inter-related and interdependent. Interpersonal problems are explored at the family dynamic level and in the intrapsychic level. The intrapsychic area focuses on the psychological processes experienced by the individual.

**Historical/sociological level**

The Italian immigrant family in Canada will undergo some gradual and some drastic changes. This process of acculturation has been described by Campisi (1948) in three stages. Although the stages are delineated it is essential to understand that acculturation is a continuous process that has no definite time.

The first stage is the Initial-Contact Stage (Campisi 1948), the first decade where both parents are
of Italian birth. There is a strong attempt made to perpetuate an Italian way of life in the transplanted household. In this stage, the Old World family is still fairly intact but pressures from within and outside the family are beginning to disrupt and disorganize, although imperceptibly, the traditional Old World patterns. Campisi (1948) listed nine pressures:

1. The very act of physical separation from the parental family and village culture.
2. The necessity to work and operate with somewhat strange and foreign body of household tools, equipment, gadgets, furniture, cooking utensils, and other physical objects.
3. Adjustment of the physical environment, including the climate, urban ecological conditions.
4. The birth of children and the increasing contact with American medical practice regarding child care.
5. The necessity to work for wages at unfamiliar tasks.
6. The attendance of Italian children in parochial and public schools.
7. Increased period of isolation from the Old World.
8. The acceptance of work by the housewife outside the home for wages.


Still, the first generation family in this phase is a highly integrated one, as in the Old World. The demands of the Canadian community are not seriously felt in the insulated unit of the Italian family or commune, and the children are still too young to articulate their newly acquired needs and wishes.

The second generation Italian family in Canada is typically entering the Conflict Stage (Campisi, 1948). In this stage the family experiences the most profound changes and is torn from its Old World foundations. This stage is characterized by the conflict between two ways of life, one Canadian and the other Italian, and by the incompatibility of the parents and the children. This phase is generally apparent during the second decade of living in Canada, specifically when the children express their acquired Canadian expectations and attempt to have their needs met in the family situation and when the parents in turn, attempt to reinforce the Old World patterns. There are conflicts in various family situations which threaten to destroy
whatever stability the family had maintained through the first period. It is a period of great frustration and misunderstanding for both parents and children. It is the parents who have the most to lose, for their complete acceptance of the Canadian way of living means the destruction of the Old World ideal. Without their pure culture and social system to support its position, the traditional family pattern, already weakened, begins to change dramatically: the father loses his importance, the daughter's acquire unheard of independence, and generally the children force the parents into a more Canadian way of life.

Adjustment for the second generation adolescent/young adult commonly takes three forms. The first is a complete abandonment of the Old World way of life. The individual changes his/her Italian name, moves away from the neighbourhood or community and has little to do with his/her foreign born parents. The ideal is to become acculturated as quickly as possible. Irving Child (1943) calls this type of adjustment the 'Rebel'. Taking this stance the rebel gains distinctive rewards for affiliation with the North American group in the community. S/he continues to encounter prejudice
against Italians but for survival s/he makes him/herself out to be an exception and not really a member of the Italian group. This person then loses affiliation rewards from the Italian group and the attempt made to transcend his/her 'Italianess', seems satisfactory . . . at least for the time being.

The next, and most common mode of adjusting is that the individual feels a strong need to become Canadianized and tries to shape the structure and functions of the family in accordance with his/her newly acquired way of life. The parental way of life is not entirely repudiated although there is some degree of rejection.

Although this individual or family will likely move out of the Italian neighbourhood, intimate communication is maintained within the parental household as well as with the relatives. A bond of affection and understanding is maintained in this situation. Child (1943) explains that this type of adjustment does not gain the successful pursuit of one set of goals relating to nationality but rather escapes the anxieties which are associated with those goals. By lessening the distinctiveness of the conflicting goals and the
strength of their desire for each of them, and by the cultivation of indifference to the barriers that stand in the way of their achievement, s/he gains the reward of not having his/her life disturbed on the surface. This person escapes anxiety and conflict which is more rewarding to him/her than the loss of other potential gains.

The third way for a person to adjust in the second generation family is to take his/her orientation inward toward an Italian way of life. This individual or family remains in the Italian neighbourhood and stays close to the parental home. Interaction with non-Italians is at a minimum, and his/her interests are tied with the Italian community. Child (1943) points out that this person gains the reward of secure status as a member of the Italian group. These rewards come from social situations and may be associated with a lower status than rewards from an other stance. However, for the type of person who chooses this way of living, these rewards may well be more complete and satisfactory because acceptance by the Italian group is more thorough than acceptance by the Canadian group. Although this status is sometimes frustrating s/he has an affiliation
group within which s/he can express hostility toward non-Italians at large in a supported group.

**Family Dynamic Level**

At the family dynamic level the conflicts are more specific and individual. Any situation that erodes the Italian father's authority is likely to have a pronounced negative impact on him. The changing role of women in our culture naturally places great strain on a traditional Italian man (McGoldrick, Pearce, Giordano, 1982). When children reject the values painstakingly taught by the father, he experiences another great stress. Some studies indicate that the father experiences the greatest psychological stress of all family members (McGoldrick, Pearce, Giordano, 1982). When children question and challenge parental values the father experiences this as disrespect and defiance, an utterly intolerable insult to the father's self image. Also when the children mature, gain their independence and attempt to separate from their families, the father experiences severe feelings of depression, abandonment and worthlessness (McGoldrick, Pearce, Giordano, 1982). The independence of female children is especially threatening. The father reacts and expresses his
feelings by angry outbursts, and conflict over control of the young adult's decisions. Some situations result in the child being paralyzed, ostracized from the family or in perpetual conflict with the family while suffering from extreme guilt (Gambino, 1974).

Italian fathers may lose their high status and their power in decision making, however, what is actually the product of shifting cultural values is experienced as a loss of self esteem on the part of the father. As he begins to share his power with his wife, the father notes the discrepancies in attitude between himself and his father's time and experiences it as personal failure to command the proper respect. Thus, he may exhibit an increase in defensiveness and insecurity regarding his 'maleness'. Often this is manifested clinically as depression (McGoldrick, Pearce, Giordano, 1982).

Some immigrant families, in their forced surrender of power, feel sabotaged by both outside and inside pressure. As their morale diminishes, they may become obstinate and resentful. Some fathers attempt to regain lost control by withholding affection. This makes
children look upon their fathers with disdain (Giordano, 1977).

The status of women in Italian families is confusing and paradoxical. Women assume subordinate, nonerotic roles that leave them waiting upon men, including their sons. They are constantly fulfilling their motherly duties, like taking care of the children, the cooking, cleaning and ironing (Giordano, 1977). In this role they are both exalted and demeaned. Often the women came from families whose fathers were absent and therefore families which had no real closeness with a father. So, when a woman married, her husband remained a stranger who usually failed to meet her dependency needs (Giordano, 1977). Intimacy in Italian marriages is not a priority or expectation. The mutual support and complimentarity of the roles of husband and wife are their obligations to the immediate and extended family (McGoldrick, Pearce, Giordano, 1982). A consequence of this is that children do not have models within their extended families for resolving conflicts and marital issues through negotiation and role flexibility.

Mothers, who were constantly present and available in the home, developed powerful relationships with the
children. Often mothers, fulfilling their role to serve and spoil men, tended to infantalize their sons and bind them close to her (Giordano, 1977). Eldest daughters also had a special position vis-à-vis the mother. Often the eldest daughter was chosen to serve the mother's needs: to hear everyday complaints, worries and even sexual dissatisfaction (Giordano, 1977). In a distorted way, daughters became substitute husbands and also acted out the unexpressed anger of the passive aggressive mother. This enabled the mother to remain the idealized madonna in the eyes of sons and husbands (Giordano, 1977).

Some mothers aligned children on their side of the battlefield against the father who remained alone and condemned (Giordano, 1977). Thus in the family with the mother as the centralized parent figure and absent 'head' or authority figure, it was the mother who held a great deal of the power. For Italian children, the contradictions in the family and the repression imposed by the family structure, left them with no apparent way of resolving it.

Mothers tended to act as a buffer between fathers and children and neither parent showed much interest in
their children's personal problems. This was not a lack of concern on caring, but rather, the priority of concern for the family as a unit. Children socialized to American values may experience this as a rejection of their individual needs (McGoldrick, Pearce, Giordano, 1982).

Within the family there is intense need for love and affection. Competition among children centers around fear that parental affection will be withdrawn. Parents are rigid and giving of conditional love (Rolle, 1980). The conflicts between the value of family and education have made adolescence extremely difficult for Italian families. Children, especially girls, are confused by the conflicting signals given to her by parents: "get an education . . . but don't change", "grow . . . but remain within the image of the 'houseplant' Italian girl" (Gambino, 1974). In short, children must maintain the difficult balance of conflicts which is the second generation's lifestyle.

Mothers train girls in the traditional skills and character traits. The daughters perceive this effort as an oppression that stifles their enjoyment of life, of their dating and their self-fulfillment in education and
the pursuit of individual interests (Gambino, 1974). Following tradition, mothers supervise their children's lives well after they become adults. Frequently, Italian women say their adults status was never accepted by their parents, even after success in career and marriage, until they produce children themselves (Gambino, 1974; McGoldrick, Pearce, & Giordano, 1982). Also, because the girls learn "the old ways", their conflict is only partially with their parents, the remaining conflict is within themselves, including all the special guilt and agony of self conflict (Gambino, 1974).

The rebellion of daughters against their mothers, having old world values and new world form, make it extremely difficult for girls to resolve their identity. There are no points of leverage, no understanding or insight into the "momism" model of the Italian female (Gambino, 1974), therefore, teenage girls don't have a role model which they can relate to or aspire to.

Behaviour such as living outside the family home, going on dates, informality in public places and quarrelling with the family elders is considered ways of a "puttane"\(^1\) (Gambino, 1974). Therefore, in trying to

\(^1\)slut
meet the developmental stages encouraged in the new world, girls experience the fruitless agony of ill-understood anger against their families, alternating with confusing guilt and anger towards themselves. It is a search for identity crippled by lack of knowledge of cultural roots and an absence of appreciation of one's unique psychology (Gambino, 1974).

Male children tend to enjoy a form of adulation, yet they are not allowed to separate easily from either the mother's or father's control. There is often a lack of understanding of both the fathers and the sons to understand each other's values, which can lead to a breakdown in communication. Sons sometimes resent their father's control and build up a wall of resentment. Poor self concept is the result of ethnic jokes, poor language, discrimination, and shameful feelings of inadequacy, particularly over the parent's poor use of the English language (Giordano, 1977). A hierarchical reversal occurs as children act as translators and interpreters of the culture. This further confuses immigrant children by giving them an inordinate amount of power in the family while
maintaining that the father is the head of the household.

Tension is generated for the young male because the Italian ideals for the "male role" are confusing and obscure in their origins. Males tend to outwardly reject the style of the ideal while at the same time they have little insight (Gambino, 1974). In their search for identity they are greatly bewildered by the incongruities between their ill understood gut values and many of the values they perceive in the larger society (Gambino, 1974).

Another conflict imposed on children by Italian tradition are strictly defined roles for each sex, including a sense of shame about sex (guilt to preserve chastity), damage which is pervasive because of the old world social rationale for these roles has been greatly altered in the present (Gambino, 1974).

There appears to be no mechanism in the family for the child to express or resolve these conflicts. In some cases, the children are not able to articulate their struggle but seem to be paralyzed and stifled in the Italian tradition. Parents are not aware of their children's dilemma as their own acculturation and
identity struggle seems to be a priority. Frustration and disappointment appears to be an undercurrent in family life. With the family having no outlet to express or resolve inter-generational conflicts, feelings (anger, revenge, shame, guilt) may become somatized. Giordano (1977) lists these: first order: stuttering, constipation, bed-wetting; second order: depression, aggressive acts towards the community, and volcanic quarrels with attempts at restitution.

**Intrapsychic Level**

Conflicts also occur at the intrapsychic level. Self identity develops out of a gradual integration of a personal-subjective inner identity, shaped and formed within the personality structure, and an objective public identity that develops out of a historical continuity and is shaped and formed by contemporary communal and social interaction (Jacobson, 1972). Personal and group identity are thus interdependent (Jacobson, 1972). Personal identity is made possible only in the context of group affiliation. Ethnicity is a powerful influence in determining identity. A sense of belonging and of ones historical continuity is a basic psychological need. When immigrant children
repress, block, cutoff, deny, reject or abandon their families and social background they begin a process of splitting their identities (McGoldrick, Pearce, & Giordano, 1982; Giordano, 1977; Jacobson, 1972). This forms two differing identities; a personal identity and a public identity. Giordano (1974) describes splitting as an extreme means of defense that occurs in immigrant children. Part of the intrapsychic self is devoted to the family and other part is developed and used in the greater society. This "splitting" or using of different parts of oneself to deal with different environments leads to serious internal tensions.

When children receive negative or distorted images of their ethnic background or learn values from the larger society that conflicts with their family, they develop a sense of inferiority and self hate that can lead to aggressive behaviour and discrimination towards other ethnic groups.

Another study refutes the splitting identity hypothesis by showing that psychological stresses experienced by the adolescent occur in subcultural ethnic configurations with their own variable stress systems and that these cultural contexts structure the
largely inseparable currents of personal and social identity (Stein, 1971). The immigrant child faces great internal and external struggles without the resources to resolve and understand their predicament. In some cases, individuals can recognize their struggle, however, they are caught in a double bind. If they are to resolve their own identity crisis then they will directly challenge and must defiantly oppose their families. This is very difficult given the psychological bonds and enmeshed boundaries in Italian families. If the individuals do not resolve their own identity they still remain in conflict with the family.

**Conflict and Conflict Resolution**

Conflict and conflict resolution have been studied on various analytical levels ranging from personality, interpersonal and intergroup. Theories of conflict resolution have ranged from mathematical formulas, to programmed rules, to process models and recently to contextual models. It is not in the scope of this paper to present a full review of the conflict resolution literature so I have chosen one model that applies itself to studying families. In particular, the model chosen has more emphasis on content, context and the
interpretation of sequences of conflict events, therefore, it is particularly adaptable because cultural meanings are considered.

Dwyer (1976) argues that conflict and conflict resolution can not be satisfactorily understood using either a predominantly intuitive methodology or an essentially unidimensional framework which assumes that formalized acts of resolution necessarily establish endings to conflict situations. The conflict resolution process may be simple and programmed in which rules specify the outcome, or, they may be less programmed and more disruptive conflicts, in which resolution involves the imposition of a deliberate strategy of conflict reduction (Filley, 1975). This concept of conflict resolution is based on the assumption that conflicts are considered as an extended sequence of conflict interactions. Dwyer (1976) argues that even extended conflict sequences tend to be idiosyncratically bounded; there is no clear explanation of why a particular sequence includes or excludes particular interactive events. Dwyer (1976) says the ascertaining of meaningful boundaries appears best to be achieved through an understanding of how social unity is provided
through processes of a psychological, cognitive and/or symbolic sort. Processes involving thought and emotion must be considered, for it is precisely through these mechanisms that disputes are linked to ensuing events (Dwyer 1976). Cultural conceptualizations of conflict must also be examined, for crucial distinctions are made in any cultural system between what we might provisionally gloss as "conflict" or "normal" situations (Dwyer 1976). In the sense that these representations provide a framework within which individuals develop their attitudes and categorize their experience, these cultural conceptualizations affect thought and emotion and so also ultimately affect the structure of any particular interactional sequence.

In order that conflict be properly analyzed as an interactive process, conflict should be understood not merely as behavioral responses to behavior, but as behavioral responses to behavior interpreted (Dwyer, 1976). The interpretation of behavior is thus central to the conflict process - as also, is a process of generalization by which particularized and unique experiences come to be interpreted by disputants and/or
outsiders as evidence of broader and more ongoing interactive tendencies (Dwyer 1976).

Generalization, as a conscious and cognitive process, tends to be marked during and after disputing (Dwyer, 1976). Disputes consist of unexpected and unsettling behavior which clashes with prior expectations. As such, they tend to stimulate thought in a new vein. This has behavioral implications. Since disputes involve strong and lingering emotions, the effect of disputing on later interactions also tend to be lingering and strong.

Dwyer (1976) uses the term "redefinition" to characterize these changes and behavioral adjustments. Through redefinition, a relationship is reformulated with respect to its rights, duties, and expectations, after a dispute has taken place. It is important to note that an extended period of redefinition follows most interpersonal disputes. Most interpersonal conflicts tend to precipitate a lingering state of ambiguity in interpersonal relations. This ambiguity occurs because many rights, duties, and expectations within a relationship remain initially untested after a dispute (Dwyer 1976).
Since redefining of conflict relationships is generally extended and complex, Dwyer (1976) suggests a unit which is called the conflict chain of events and it is used to analyze the most crucial aspects of how a relationship is redefined during or after a dispute. A conflict chain of events consists of:

... (1) an analytic composite of the disputants' previous interactions as defined in terms of the distribution of rights, duties and expectations;
(2) the immediate dispute sequence;
(3) the subsequent interactions through which rights, duties, and expectations are initially reassessed.

Since the skeletal structure of a relationship consists behaviorally of rights, duties, and expectations, this furnishes Dwyer's 1976 model for representing the major changes which take place in a relationship. A disputant's explanations of motivations and feelings must be considered in order to understand the conflict and resolution of that interaction in that relationship.
The extent to and speed with which relationships change during a period of redefinition and the ease with which subsequent interactions between disputants takes place depend, in part, on cultural beliefs about the meaning of conflict. If disputants believe that conflict behavior provides deep and lasting insights into the self, such behavior will generate marked re-evaluations of character (Dwyer 1976). On the other hand, if conflict is viewed as revealing atypical or temporary aberrations in otherwise more meaningful behavior, then disputing is likely to have a more limiting effect (Dwyer 1976).

The Critical Incident Technique

The research used for this study is the Critical Incident Technique developed by John Flanagan (1954). Flanagan found the critical incident procedure effective in obtaining information from individuals regarding success or failure of people's performance.

The method essentially is a procedure for collecting observations of human behavior in such a way as to facilitate their potential usefulness in solving practical problems and developing broad psychological principles (Flanagan 1954). Flanagan's technique is a
flexible set of principles which must be modified and adapted to meet the specific situation.

Flanagan (1954) defines an "incident" as any observable human activity that is sufficiently complete in itself to permit inferences and predictions to be made about the person who is performing the act. The incident is "critical" if it makes a significant contribution to the event involved. In this study the event is conflict resolution. To be critical an incident must occur in a situation where the purpose or intent of the act seems fairly clear to the observer and where its consequences are sufficiently definite to leave little doubt concerning its effects.

This study gathers information about which factors facilitate, and, which factors hinder conflict resolution, in second generation Italian families, by asking subjects questions using Flanagan's structured set of principles, called the Critical Incident Technique. This technique is able to guide and facilitate subjects to give important and new information about conflict resolution.

The procedure used involves a system of collecting incidents of special significance which lead to the
success or failure of carrying out a specific task. Only simple judgments are required of the observer. Only reports from qualified observers are included and all observations are evaluated by the observer in terms of an agreed upon statement of purpose of the activity (Flanagan 1954). The observers are asked systematic questions to make sure that the information given meets specific criteria. Data are then analyzed and the "critical requirements" are defined. Flanagan (1954) defines a "critical requirement" as those conditions identified by observers in significant number of instances as making a difference between the success or failure in carrying out an important task.

History and Development of the Critical Incident Technique

The critical incident technique developed as an outgrowth of studies in the aviation Psychology Program of the United States Air Forces in World War II. This Psychology Program was established in the summer of 1941 to develop procedures for the selection and classification of air crews.

The first study, using this method, was the analysis of the specific reasons for failure in learning
to fly that were reported by pilot candidates in 1941. Although the study provided observations of particular behaviors and was found to be useful, it also indicated a need for better procedures for obtaining a representative sample of factual incidents regarding pilot performance.

In the winter of 1943-1944 a second study was done which emphasized the importance of factual reports on performance made by competent observers. The information collected still did not provide a complete record of all the important events but was nonetheless found to be of considerable value. The systematic tabulations that were prepared provided the basis of important recommendations which went on to change the Air Force selection and training procedures.

In 1944, the first large scale, systematic effort to gather specific incidents of effective or ineffective behavior with respect to a designated activity took place addressing the problem of combat leadership. The subjects were asked to report incidents observed by them that involved behavior which was especially helpful or inadequate in accomplishing an assigned mission. When
analyzed, these data provided an objective and factual definition of effective combat leadership.

During the next few years many studies were carried out that provided data as a basis for planning research on the design of instruments and controls and the arrangement of these within the cockpit. Also a discussion of the theoretical basis of procedures for obtaining the critical requirements of a particular activity was written (in late Spring 1946).

At the end of World War II some of the research psychologists who had participated in the Aviation Psychology Program established the American Institute for Research. The first two studies undertaken by the institute in the spring of 1947 involved more formally developing and naming the Critical Incident Technique. The technique began to be used for Naval Research, Aeronautics Administration, and in 1949 was used for the first time in an industrial situation for General Motors. The procedure developed and was later used to identify critical requirements for dentists. As the instrument became more widely used it was applied to other areas including developing a functional description of emotional immaturity and personality.
In its present form the critical incident technique is essentially a procedure for gathering important facts concerning behavior in a defined situation. It is not a rigid set of rules, rather it is a flexible set of principles which must be modified and adapted to meet the specific situation at hand. The first of the essential elements of the technique are that only simple types of judgments are required of the observer, reports from only qualified observers are included and all observations are evaluated by the observer in terms of an agreed upon statement of purpose of the activity. The accuracy and the objectivity of the judgments depend on the precision with which a characteristic has been defined and the competence of the observer in interpreting this definition with relation to the incident observed. The next essential step consists of the classification of the critical incidents. This step is usually inductive and relatively subjective. Once a classification system has been developed for any given type of critical incidents, a fairly satisfactory degree of objectivity can be achieved in placing the incidents in the defined categories. The next essential step refers to inferences regarding practical procedures for
improving performance based on the observed incidents. We are rarely able to deduce or predict with a high degree of confidence the effects of specific selection, training, or operating procedures on future behaviors of the type observed. The incidents must be studied in the light of relevant established principles of human behavior and of the known facts regarding background factors and conditions operating in the specific situation. From this total picture hypotheses are formulated.

Critical Incidents Procedure and Data Collection

Flanagan (1954) suggested that in order to collect relevant and important data, each study would require a flexible set of rules which should be modified and adapted to meet the specific purpose of the research question involved.

The critical incident technique involves 5 main steps. These procedures are: General Aims, Plans and Specifications, Collecting the Data, Analyzing the Data and Interpreting and Reporting.

The general aim of an activity should be a brief and general statement of the objectives of the study. The description of an activity should specify exactly
what is necessary to do and not to do if participation in the activity is to be judged successful or effective.

Plans and specifications must be specific to insure objectivity for the observations being made and reported. Precise instructions must be given to the observers and the group being studied must be specified. The rules should be clear and specific. The specifications will need to be established and made explicit before collecting the data. The situation observed must include information about the place, the persons, the conditions and the activities. The next step is to decide whether or not a specific behavior which is observed is relevant to the general aim of the activity. Also the extent of the effect on the general aim must be considered. An incident is considered critical if it makes a "significant" contribution, either positively or negatively, to the general aim of the activity. Another specification regarding observations are the persons to make the observations. Wherever possible, the observers should be selected on the basis of their familiarity with the activity. Included in this is giving the observers a review of the nature of the general aim of the activity and a study of
the specifications and definitions for the judgments they will be required to make.

The next step is collecting the data. A necessary condition for this phase is that the behaviors or results observed be recorded while the facts are still fresh in the mind of the observer. Incidents reported that are fairly recent generally contain more comprehensive and more precise details. There are four procedures that are used for collecting recalled data in the form of critical incidents. They are Interviews, Group Interviews, Questionnaires and Record Forms. The procedure used in this study is the Interview Method.

The interview method involves using trained personnel to explain to observers precisely what data are desired and to record the incidents making sure that all of the necessary details are supplied. Flanagan (1954) advises that certain actions should be taken when actually doing the interview. It is essential that sponsorship of the study is articulated to the observer. Generally all that needs to be said is that someone known and respected has suggested the interview. The purpose of the study can be explained by giving a brief statement; "we wish to learn ...", or "If parents are to
be more effective, we need to be able to tell them the things they do that are effective and ineffective". The next statements should point out to the observers that they are a member of a group that is in an unusually good position to observe and report on this activity, ensuring the observers realize the anonymity of the data. In addition to the data being confidential it should also be stated that the data reported cannot harm other people. The most crucial part of the data collection procedures are the questions asked. The questions should briefly refer to the general aim. It should state that an incident, actual behavior, or what the person did is desired. The question should specify the type of behavior which is relevant and the level of importance it must reach to be reported. To ensure accurate information, most recent observations should be asked for. After the main question has been stated, asking leading questions should be avoided.

To ensure objectivity using the Critical Incident Technique, the characteristics of the desired incidents must be well defined. Several independent observers are asked to make observations and interpret the incident observed. When observers reports overlap, the
subjective data becomes more objective. After this the
data is summarized to identify the critical requirements
so that inferences can be drawn from them.

Planagan (1954) outlines the important areas of
data analysis:
The Frame of Reference – The uses are the most important
consideration in deciding upon which classification each
incident falls within. The preferred categories are
those believed most valuable in using the statement of
requirements.
The Category Formation – Others review the tentative
categories to minimize subjectivity. The procedure for
the formation of categories is as follows.

First, sort out a small sample of incidents into
piles related to the frame of reference selected. Then
briefly define these tentative categories and add other
incidents to them. The next step is to redefine and
develop new categories. This process continues until
all of the incidents are classified. Large categories
are subdivided and incidents that describe similar
behaviour are put in the same group. After this the
definitions for all the categories and major headings
are reexamined in terms of the actual incidents classified under.

The General Behavior - The optimal balance between generality vs. specificity must be determined. This can be gaged by what the findings will be used for. The categories should be reviewed to maintain that balance.

Flanagan (1954) offers these guidelines to develop the critical requirements at the desired level of generality/specificity:

- The Headings and requirements must be clear-cut, logically organized and discernable with an easily remembered structure.
- The Titles require meanings in themselves without detailed definitions, explanation or differentiation.
- Headings for major areas and requirements should be homogeneous, parallel in content and structure and neutral. The headings must be all of same type and importance. Also, the Headings should facilitate the findings to be easily applied and maximally useful. The list of headings needs to be comprehensive; covering all incidents having
significant frequencies when reporting emphasize not only limitations but the value of the results.

Each of the four steps in the Critical Technique; [determination of the general aim, the specifications of the observers, groups to be observed and observations to be made, the data collection, and the data analysis] must be examined for any bias that could have been introduced. This should be ascertained before going on to interpret the results.

**Reliability and Validity**

Anderson and Nilsson (1964) did a study on the method of the Critical Incident Technique with respect to the reliability and validity of the procedure. In order to study the reliability and validity of the procedure Anderson and Nilsson applied the Critical Incident technique to analyzing the job of store managers in a Swedish grocery company. About 1800 incidents were collected by interviews and questionnaires. From this study they studied reliability and validity of the following aspects of the Critical Incident Technique: Analysis: Saturation and Comprehensiveness, Reliability of the Collecting Procedure, Control of Categorization, Analysis of
Contents of Training Literature, The Importance of the Subcategories.

Analysis: Saturation and Comprehensiveness refers to whether or not the collection of data has sufficiently included all types of the behavioral units that the method is expected to cover. Anderson and Nilsson (1964) took 5% of the reported incidents by each subject and grouped these incidents together. The next 5% of the incidents of each subjects were then grouped together. This procedure continued until 20 groups of incidents were formed. The incidents were then classified. When 2/3 were classified, 95% of the total subcategories had appeared. It was found that the subcategories increased rapidly until 2/3 of the data were collected. A small percentage, 5%, of the subcategories emerged after the 2/3 point. This process determines whether the data collection had stopped too early or whether it had been sufficient. It was probably then that the data collection had not been stopped too early and was sufficient to identify the essential points of the job.

The Reliability of the Collecting Procedure is whether, and to what extent, the number of incidents and
their distribution in subcategories were affected by the methods of collection and by the interviewers. There was a significant difference between the number of critical incidents provided by the interview and the questionnaire, as tested by the Kolmogorov-Smirnov two-sample test. The rank correlation between the sizes of the categories from each method was .85 (Anderson & Nilsson, 1964, p. 400). That indicates that there was a strong correlation between the size of the categories between the interview and the questionnaire methods.

There were no great differences in the number of incidents per interview between the interviewers who interviewed the subjects. The "Kruskal-Wallace one-way analysis of variance by ranks" was applied and showed that the structures of the materials obtained by the interviewers are very similar as shown by the coefficients of concordance (W) and the average correlations ($r_{sav}$), especially between interviewers A, B and C (Anderson & Nilsson, 1964, p. 400).

Control of Categorization has been regarded as subjective and difficult since different people may categorize or group incidents together in different ways. Andersson and Nilsson (1964) demonstrated that
the Critical Incident Technique category system was plausible and not too subjective by conducting an experiment. Twenty-four psychology students, working in pairs, were required to sort two sets of 100 incidents, that had been randomly chosen from each area, into subcategories (that had headings). There were 2 different groups of incidents from each area and each group that had to be classified independently, twice. These students had a tendency to place the incidents in the same category indicating that agreement in the categories is high.

Analysis of Contents of Training Literature refers to whether the Critical Incident Procedure succeeds in including all the important aspects of work: That is, whether or not the data that has been collected is valid. The training literature was examined to explore whether or not the important content would be revealed that had not shown up in the data analysis. Anderson and Nilsson concluded that this analysis didn't reveal any new aspects. This demonstrates that the critical incident technique had been thorough and that the content was valid.
The importance of subcategories examines whether or not the incidents are really critical and important to the work at hand. To determine the importance of the subcategories a rating form was constructed in which the 86 subcategories were rated on a 6 point scale. The average reliability coefficient calculated was .83 (Andersson & Nilsson, 1964, p. 402). Based on the studies of these five aspects, the Critical Incident is both reliable and valid.

The results of Andersson and Nilsson's comprehensive research on the reliability and the validity of the critical incident technique conclude that this method of data collection is both reliable and valid.
Chapter 3

Methodology

Subjects

A total of 9 adults and 8 adolescents; one adult and one adolescent from each of the families with one exception, participated in the study. The sample was comprised of second generation Italian families, with children between the ages of 13-19 years old living at home.

The sample was drawn from the Burnaby North High School Enrollment Roster since the Burnaby district has a large Italian population. The school enrollment roster identified families who had teenage children. Out of the roster the Italian families were easily identified by their family names. Every fourth Italian name was chosen to form a list of sixty-five Italian families. These 65 families were sent letters of initial contact (see Appendix) written in both English and Italian. Follow up phone calls were made to discuss participation in the study. The subjects were informed that the study would explore the area of intergeneration conflict and conflict resolution in Italian families. The subjects were told that about an hour of their time
would be required for interviews. They were also given a choice as to where the interviews would take place. The interviews could be done in their own home or in a neutral area (Burnaby North counselling office). It was explained to the subjects that participation in the study is voluntary and that the interviews would be tape recorded. Subjects were also reassured that the information collected would remain confidential.

Out of 65 families approached only 10 families agreed to participate in the study. The final 10 families used in the study were the only subjects that volunteered. The volunteers were gathered only through great determination and a great deal of effort. In some cases multiple phone calls were made before the family would agree to participate. In other cases, the family only volunteered after a process of persuasion on the phone.

It was very difficult to recruit volunteers. Most of the families approached seemed very defensive and threatened. There was a great number of parents who adamantly proclaimed that there was absolutely no conflict between themselves and their teenage children. Others stated that they didn't have the time to meet or
that they simply were not interested in taking part in the study.

Background of the Subjects

The families interviewed had originated from Italy. Families from Northern and Southern districts of Italy participated. All of the families presently resided in Burnaby and had lived in Canada for a minimum of 5 years. All of the adolescents attended Burnaby North Secondary School. Each family was a two parent family and there were not any divorced or remarried spouses. All of the subjects spoke both Italian and English.

The subjects ranged from 13 years of age to 51 years of age. The range of adult occupations included a business person, a restaurant owner, an artist, a carpenter/contractor, a marble worker, factory worker, salesperson, homemaker and a janitor.
Interview participation (gender)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incidents Reported By</th>
<th>Mother/ Son</th>
<th>Mother/ Daughter</th>
<th>Father/ Son</th>
<th>Father/ Daughter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = 10

Interview Preparation

A multicultural liaison and counsellor for Burnaby North Senior Secondary School, Ivan Quattrocchi, was consulted and interviewed. The intention of this meeting was to develop an awareness of the issues faced between Italian parents and their adolescent children. The nature of this research was explained to Ivan and any questions he had were answered. Then he was asked to draw from his own experience, as a counsellor, some generalizations about conflict resolution. Ivan was asked to comment on what seems to facilitate conflict resolution and what factors seemed to hinder conflict resolution. Following is the information that Ivan provided through his experience in working with Italian families.
It was identified that one of the main factors that hindered conflict resolution was the parental role and the values associated with this. The fathers are traditionally authoritarian who believe that children should, without question, respect the ideas of their parents and listen or do whatever is asked of them. The relationship between parent and child is unequal and not based on mutual respect. Parents do not talk to their children as equals and the communication between parent and child is not reciprocal. Parents are possessive and feel an ownership over the children, no matter what their age is.

Parents tend to demand compliance through control and an authority stance. The parents take on a position of "I am the boss ... so do as I say." The children, who are experts in Canadian values and who have a much greater command of the English language don't experience their parents as the "boss". They are often put in the position of translating or helping their parents understand Canadian culture. This discrepancy leads to the children resenting their parents for using this stance which further exacerbates conflict.
Another factor that increases conflict is that the parents do not create a team in parenting. The father is the authority figure but often out of the home. The mother handles the day to day running of the house and there is little discussion between them on how to parent. Children learn quickly the "divide and conquer" method of getting what they want as well as effectively undermining their parents authority. These factors contribute to conflict in the family.

Other factors that hinder conflict resolution in Italian families is that they do not as a rule seek help outside the family. Italians have a tradition of dealing with problems within the family unit and do not share their problems as it is perceived as negative for a family to be in conflict. When problems develop the Italian family seems to get more rigid. There is a fear of letting go and parents exercise even more control in hopes to solve the problem. This, in turn, discourages the child who by this time has lost all trust in his parents, and becomes his parents' enemy. It becomes a fight for survival full of hate and rejection. Children reject parents by not using the language, failing at
school, presenting themselves as "macho" and being aggressive and non-compliant.

The factors that were identified as resolving conflict focused on the relationship between the parent and the child. Becoming closer to one another, relating more, building trust and becoming friends were identified as important changes. This could be achieved by the parents reducing their work load. Less focus on "getting ahead" and financial success could be reframed to "getting ahead" in the family life by spending more time with their children on outings or in the home.

Another major factor that is identified as facilitating conflict resolution is the use of communication skills. Included in this is the breaking down of the language barrier (Italian vs. English) and also, parents learning listening skills. In addition, conflict is decreased when parents learn parenting skills.

The Critical Incident Interview

The Critical Incident technique was selected to help subjects identify from their own experience, which conditions facilitate and which conditions hinder conflict resolution.
Data were collected using individual interviews with the adult and the adolescent of each family. The following describes the interview and research methodology. The interviewer began each interview by meeting the subject and trying to establish rapport, talking informally about something unrelated to the research. After a few minutes the interviewer reminded the subject about the nature of the research stating, "I'm investigating which factors facilitate conflict resolution in Italian families and which conditions hinder conflict resolution. I'll be asking you some questions because you, as Italian parents, can identify most accurately these conditions." The interviewer then began with the following standard preamble.

Immigrant parents sometimes have difficulties with their teenage children. A common experience is that adults maintain traditional values while their growing children learn different values in the Canadian culture. This situation may create conflict or understanding between parent and child. By sharing your experiences in parenting you can
help identify the facilitating and hindering factors influencing conflict resolution in Italian families.

Begin by thinking of an enduring kind of conflict. Think back to a time when something happened that either helped you or hindered you in resolving a conflict between you and your child. What I'm interested in is concrete events rather than opinions or theories.

The interview then proceeded with open-ended questions designed to elicit a specific criterion and context by the subjects.

**Interview**

Think of the last time you had a conflict with your child. Did your behavior help or hinder the resolution of this conflict? ...

What were the general circumstances leading up to this incident?

Tell me exactly what was said and done during this
incident (that helped/hindered the resolution of conflict) ... 

Why was this so critical in helping/hindering the resolution of conflict? 
(What exactly happened that was so helpful in this incident...) 
(What was the impact)

Procedure

The subjects who agreed to participate were telephoned and interview times were arranged. The interviews took place in the subjects' residences. The interviewer interviewed the parents and the adolescents back-to-back to ensure that the subjects didn't share their experiences and feelings with each other before the interview.

Before the interview began the subjects were asked to sign a consent form (Appendix). The subjects were reminded that the interview would take about an hour. In addition, the subjects were given a brief introduction and then the interviewer went on to ask
them the interview questions. Each interview was tape-recorded.

After the interview, the tapes were reviewed and each critical incident was transcribed onto index cards. When all of the incidents were recorded the researcher began sorting the cards and looking for incidents which had a common meaning. The sorted incidents formed categories in many different ways. Tentative categories were formed and then a few days later the categories were reviewed to ensure that all of the incidents were clearly being represented by the categories and that all incidents specifically belonged in a particular category. Over time, this sorting formed basic categories.

The tentative basic categories were then reviewed by a research assistant who provided feedback about the categorization. Using this information some categories were redefined which reformed another set of basic categories. This process was continued until each category was distinct and clearly different from the other categories. Each incident fit only into one category, with minimal overlays. A heading title was chosen for each category. The headings chosen convey
the meaning of the incidents in that category. The headings are simple, clear logical. When this was completed the categories that facilitated conflict resolution and the categories which hindered conflict resolution emerged. Now the basic categories were ready to be tested by an independent rater.

Preparing the Cards for the Independent Raters

In order to prepare the cards for the independent raters a rough estimate of the stratified sample of the events was established. Each category was rated as either a minimally reported sample, a medium reported sample or a heavily reported sample. If a category had a minimally reported sample then one event was taken to represent that category. In a medium reported category two events were taken to represent that category. Finally, if a category was heavily reported then three events were taken to represent that category. The following shows the number of events from each category:
### Stratified Sample: Events from Each Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Total Incidents</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Med</th>
<th>Heavy</th>
<th>Stratified Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Closed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Min.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental Agreement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Min.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Min.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apology</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Min.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolerance</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Med.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compromise &amp; Negotiation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Med.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Understanding</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Heavy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reinforcing Family Closeness</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Med.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>13/29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflicting Expectations</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Heavy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Understanding</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Min.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rejection</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Med.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagreements</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Heavy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disobedience &amp; Disrespect</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Heavy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental Conflict</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Med.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>14/105</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>27/134</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The clearest incidents in each category were chosen to represent that category. The chosen stratified sample of incidents was re-written on a card. The revised card contained one or two sentences that revealed the key nature of the event. This revision was made to clarify the event by removing the extraneous information which some incidents contained. The event was summarized and written so that the first phrase described what led up to the incident and the last phrase stated the key concept of the event.

Independent Rating

The raters were given a brief summary of the information in the 27 cards as an introduction. They were told that the cards were instances of factors which either facilitate or hinder conflict resolution. It was explained that the cards had been sorted and categorized and that each category had a heading. The raters were asked to place the cards in the appropriate categories. There are 14 different categories which each had a heading.

As the "Heading" cards were lined up, a verbal description of the meaning of each of the heading categories was given. To prevent confusion, the rater
was informed about the format of the incident. They were told that the first phrase indicated what led up to the event and that the last phrase contained the actual incident. The raters were then left to place the random cards into the appropriate categories.

Both raters placed the cards in the appropriate categories 100% of the time. Both raters commented that placing the cards appropriately was performed with ease.
Chapter 4

Results

In this critical incident study on what facilitates or what hinders conflict resolution in Italian families the 20 subjects, 10 adults and 10 adolescents, reported a total of 134 incidents - 29 facilitative and 105 hindering. There was one adult and one adolescent from the same family who both reported that there was no conflict between them and therefore could report no incidents. There was also one adolescent who agreed to participate in the interview but avoided the interview three times. The first time, she left the house while I was setting up the tape recorder; the second time, after agreeing to the time and place of the interview, she did not show up; and, the third time, she agreed to participate over the phone but remained quiet and did not report any incidents. The actual number of subjects who cooperated were 9 adults and 8 adolescents; 17 in total. The average number of incidents reported per subject was approximately 8.

Basic Categories

Fourteen basic categories were identified. There were eight categories that reported incidents which
facilitated conflict resolution and six categories that reported incidents which hinder conflict resolution. These categories are listed below.

Basic Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilitative</th>
<th>Hindering</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Discussion Closed</td>
<td>1. Conflicting Expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Parental Agreement</td>
<td>2. Lack of Understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Humor</td>
<td>3. Rejection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Apology</td>
<td>4. Disagreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Tolerance</td>
<td>5. Disobedience &amp; Disrespect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>negotiation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Greater understanding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Reinforcing family rapport</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were four categories that consisted of one incident only. In the facilitative incidents the three categories which consisted of one incident were: discussion closed, parental agreement, and humor. In the hindering incidents that one incident category was, lack of understanding. The incidents that formed these categories were clear, well formed and distinct. These incidents would not be appropriate for any of the
existing categories and because they were very different from the others, demanded their own category.

In total there were 134 incidents reported. Seventy-eight % or 105 of the 134 were reported as factors which hindered conflict resolution. Approximately 22% or 29 out of 134 incidents were reported as factors that facilitated conflict resolution. The frequencies for each category are presented below.
### Proportional Frequency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incident</th>
<th>Number of incidents reported</th>
<th>Proportional Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Closed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.746</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental Agreement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.746</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Parental Conflict</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.97</td>
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\[ n = 134 \]
Conflicting Expectations

This category covers the different expectations held by the child and adult in terms of values, siblings, sex roles and dating. Conflicting expectations consist of ongoing events which remind the child and the adult just how different they are. Both the adult and the child hold the belief that they are correct. When an issue arises it polarizes the beliefs and the child and adult are pushed apart and in conflict to defend their position. This category includes the adults having conflicting expectations for different siblings and the child perceiving this as unjust. There may be different expectations for male and female children and also in the same sex. Conflicts arose in this category because the child would not comply with the sex role expectation that the parent holds. There were a few examples in which parents expected the female child to participate in household chores and duties rather than participating in activities out of the home. Also the parents held very different expectations over dating. There was a range of behavior in this area. Some parents were angry that a teenager of the opposite sex would phone their child, some parents believed in
chaperons and struggled with letting their daughter go out unsupervised and some parents just would not allow dating. Another area in which parents and children had different expectations was the amount of time spent with peers. Parents and children had different beliefs about money, boundaries, work ethic, and duty to the family.

Categories That Hindered Conflict Resolution

Lack of Understanding

In this category there is only one incident. It clearly states that the child perceives a lack of interest, involvement and communication by the parent. In this incident the child indicated that the father doesn't know or understand this.

Rejection

Children and adults feel hurt, devalued and abandoned by the action of the other in this category. By the child refusing to use the parent's traditional language, the parents feel as if they are being rejected. Also when children refuse advice or help that parents are extending, parents experience this as a rejection. It also makes the parents feel inadequate in their parenting role. When the child refuses what the parent is offering there is a rejection of the adult
identity, a sort of abandonment of everything they believe in.

Disagreement

Disagreement between the child and the parent was widely reported. This covers active instances of arguments and clear disagreements about decisions and acceptable behavior. The disagreement may be an argument about a decision made by the parent. For example one conflict centered around the parents forcing their daughter to participate in a ski weekend, even though the daughter had wanted to stay in the city. Another area of disagreement is when the parent doesn't agree with the child's behavior. Examples of this are when the child is at a friend's house and the parent wants them at home.

Disobedience and Disrespect

This involves a deliberate behavior by the child acted out against the wishes of the parent. This may be demonstrated in the form of non-compliance with simple demands, or violating agreements. The issues centred around chores, curfews, routines and studying. Disobedience and disrespect was also exhibited by lying. The children lied to their parents to avoid dealing with
other issues. For example, one girl lied about her report card to avoid the issue of fallen grades. Another child lied when confronted about smoking. Another mode of being disobedient or disrespectful is by the child talking back to the parent. This included children swearing at their parents, or making their parents feel guilty that they were victimizing the child or simply complaining about the parent. Some acts were particularly disrespectful from the family's point of view. Disgracing the family by drinking alcohol in the community and being out of the family home against the parents wishes were experienced as serious acts of disobedience. When the children personally acted against the parents, by laughing at them, by closing a door on them while they were speaking or swearing directly at them this was an unheard of way to disobey and to disrespect the authority and the boundaries of the expected relationship within the family.

**Parental Conflict**

In this category the parental relationship is affected by the parent-child conflict. Tension, disagreement and conflict occurs between the spouses because of the child's actions. In some cases one
parent would take on the role of a mediator between the other parent to help resolve the ongoing issue with the child. Sometimes the parent supported the other parent by appealing to the child to resolve the issue by taking certain actions. In these cases the parent doing the mediating felt strained and stuck in the middle which created stress and anxiety. One parent explained that if the child is in conflict with his father, then he gets angry and expresses this anger towards her. Another mother felt that when she supported her husband, the male son would be angry at her and this too created anxiety for the mother. Another mother reported that when her husband is angry with the children he will not talk to them and therefore the children approach the mother. She feels a great deal of pressure dealing with her husband and the children. These instances affect the parental relationship in a negative way.

**Categories that Facilitated Conflict Resolution**

There were 8 different categories that facilitated conflict resolution. The following is a description of the categories which were identified as facilitating conflict resolution.
Discussion Closed

In this category the parent reaches a limit of his anger and the child realizes that no further discussion will be tolerated. When the parent becomes that angry the child fears what may happen next and cannot do anything but to back down. As there is not further discussion the conflict reaches an end. The conflict is resolved for the parent as the issue becomes out of bounds and can no longer be challenged by the child. The child accepts this as a limit.

Parental Agreement

This category involves the parents resolving a conflict by discussing the situation with their spouse. This activity gives the spouse a release of tension. The frustration of dealing with the child is reduced through understanding and support by the spouse. Also, by discussing the conflict the parent feels that he is not alone and the spouse reinforces the parent's position.

Humor

Humor also involves a release of tension. This category is different from the previous category in that the humor releases the tension during the conflict, not
after. It involves the child deliberately using humor to deflect and diffuse the parent's anger. When the parent is in the heat of a serious and intense moment of anger, and the child uses humor, the parent is given a moment in which to reflect and experience the situation with a different perspective.

Apology

This category involves an active and deliberate action to acknowledge a mistake by the parent. When the parent apologizes and recognizes the misunderstanding, it communicates regret to the child and a willingness to make up. One child says that even though she was unjustly punished, she could forgive her parents as they took responsibility for the mistake. The Apologizing category includes a parent who has acted wrongfully towards the child, or blaming them for something they didn't do. It may involve a situation where a parent takes their frustration out on the child, and, realizing they have done this, apologize.

Tolerance

The tolerance category involves parents tolerating certain actions which may be defiant and that they generally disagree upon. Both the parents and the
children acknowledge that the child has disobeyed the rules, however no one talks about the event or confronts the behavior. There is no discussion about the event, however implicitly the parents are angry and the child knows he's being let off the hook. The tolerance category includes children lying to their parents about smoking and not being confronted. It also includes incidents where the child tells the parents he is going babysitting but actually goes out with his friends.

**Compromise and Negotiation**

The sixth category which facilitates conflict resolution is that the parties negotiate or compromise over an issue. Both the parent and the child gain some of what they wanted and they reach a satisfactory agreement on the issue. Included in this category are negotiating curfew times, giving in after withholding a privilege, and the child exchanging a chore in order to be allowed a privilege.

**Greater Understanding**

The greater understanding category suggests that one or both parties learn or experience something which helps them to understand the other person. This category consists of the parent making an active effort
to listen or the parent communicating to the point where the child feels understood. It also includes the parent experiencing the child's behavior in a different context after counselling and developing some insight. Some examples of this are a child being able to vent her anger through talking to her mother, a mother explaining her thoughts and feelings to her daughter about her reaction to something the child had done, and the parent going to the child's room when the child is crying and simply talking to him.

**Reinforcing Family Closeness**

This category involves events which reinforce family closeness through intimacy and rapport. This includes the parent showing a particular interest in the child and also spending time with the family. Engaging in family activities, such as ski trips, attending church or recreation are all included in this category. Also physical touch and physical proximity reinforces emotional closeness between parent and child.

**Reliability of the Categorization**

The independent raters or "judges" were willing volunteers. One judge is a 26 year old counselling psychology student and the other judge is a 28 year old
woman who has a B.A. in Sociology. Both judges participated in the categorization rating in their own homes independent of one another.

The raters were asked to place 27 cards into 14 different categories which all had a self explanatory heading. The raters read the card, then looked over the headings and then decided which category the incident belonged in. Both raters placed 100% of the cards in the appropriate categories. In addition, the judges both stated that they were able to categorize the cards easily.

**Participation Rate**

Participation rate is one indication of the soundness of a category. It indicates the extent to which different people report the same kind of event as a facilitation or hindrance and is analogous to the use of inter-subjective agreement by independent observers to achieve objectivity.

The participation rate for the percentage of subjects represented in each basic category is reported in the following table. The percentage of subjects that responded to each category seems low. Only 4 categories had over 47% of the subjects represented. These
categories are in the hindrance factors, Conflicting Expectations, Disagreement, Disobedience and Disrespect and in the facilitative factors, greater understanding.

There was a low participation rate in some categories. These categories were maintained because of the distinctness and clarity of the category. Also, the responses could not fit into other categories indicating that a separate and individual category was necessary.
### Percentage Proportion of Subjects Represented in Each Basic Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Category</th>
<th>% Proportion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>for each basic category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hindering</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Conflicting expectations</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Lack of Understanding</td>
<td>1/17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Rejection</td>
<td>4/17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Disagreement</td>
<td>8/17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Disobedience &amp; Disrespect</td>
<td>12/17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Parental Conflict</td>
<td>4/17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Facilitating</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Discussion Closed</td>
<td>1/17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Parental Agreement</td>
<td>1/17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Humor</td>
<td>1/17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Apology</td>
<td>2/17</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Tolerance</td>
<td>3/17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Compromise &amp; Negotiation</td>
<td>4/17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Greater Understanding</td>
<td>8/17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Reinforcing Family Intimacy &amp; Closeness</td>
<td>4/17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Expert Evaluation of Categories

The description of the categories was reported to an expert who is currently working with Italian families. Ivan Quattrocchi commented that the categories form an approximated picture of the kind of interaction that would usually take place in an Italian-Canadian home. In his opinion the categories were valid. Ivan commented that the categories were comprehensive and he could not think of anything else that should be included.

Ivan felt that this information would be useful for counsellors. Since Italians would typically not be forthcoming with self-disclosure and information about family problems, the counsellor could identify the conflict areas that typical Italian families experience. This would put the family at ease and normalize their experience. It may help to support parents rather than having parents feel ashamed and defensive. Also the results offer positive alternatives that are proven successful in facilitating conflict resolution. These skills could be taught to parents in counselling or in parent groups.
Chapter 5

Discussion

The results indicate that the incidents reported in this study could be reliably grouped into 14 categories. Of these categories, eight indicate factors that facilitate conflict resolution while six indicate factors that hinder conflict resolution. These are the results of the study. Conflict between parents and children in Italian families was moved towards resolution when the discussion reached a limit and became closed or when humor was used. An apology, showing tolerance, or compromising and negotiating also facilitated conflict resolution. Parental agreement and family closeness were other factors that facilitated conflict resolution.

Conflict resolution, in Italian families, was hindered when there was conflicting expectations, lack of understanding, rejection, disagreement, disobedience and disrespect between parent and child. Parental conflict was an additional factor that hindered conflict resolution.
Limitations of the Study

Two considerations limit the generalizability of the results. The size of the sample is small. Of the large number of Italian parents who were approached, most were defensive and unwilling to participate, while a small number reluctantly volunteered. The families who did participate may or may not reflect the conflict resolution process in Italian-Canadian families. Further, the sample was drawn from the Burnaby North Secondary School Roster which includes only families living in Burnaby who have children attending that particular school. Burnaby has a large Italian population but is only one small area of Vancouver in which large numbers of Italians reside.

The data were collected using an interview method of self report and therefore may indicate certain biases. One can only report what they are aware of. This may exclude important information that can not be reported as the subject does not have that information available to him/her. Also, the self report interview method cannot account for individual differences in reporting incidents.
The data collection is focused on developing a category system, not with determining the validity of each category. Further research could be conducted in order to ascertain each category's validity.

Theoretical Implications

The results of this study facilitate the study of conflict resolution in Italian-Canadian families by identifying 14 basic categories of what helps or hinders conflict resolution. The findings of the study are in agreement with the related literature.

The categories that hindered conflict resolution are identified as conflicting expectations, lack of understanding, rejection, disagreement, disobedience and disrespect between parent and child and parental conflict. Conflicting expectations has been identified by Bernard (1957); Rapoport (1960); Mack and Snyder (1957); Coser (1956); Berelson and Steiner (1964); Deutsch (1965); and is generally accepted as a factor which evokes conflict. The lack of understanding category is supported by early work of Bernard (1957) who classified it as a verbal or conceptual misunderstanding between parties and goal or value incompatibility. Rapoport (1960) described the
disagreement category as a disagreement between the parties about "what is" (facts) or "what ought to be" (values). Rapoport (1960) also identified the area of disobedience and disrespect. The literature cites this category as verbal interaction in which parties direct arguments at each other with the use of various techniques of persuasion such as brainwashing, explaining away the opponent's beliefs and removing threats associated in the opponents mind with adopting one's own outlook. Boulding (1962) and others (Deutsch, 1965) label this category as a competitive process. The competitive process is characterized by an increased sensitivity to differences and threats while minimizing the awareness of similarities, which leads to a suspicious, hostile attitude and it increases the readiness to exploit the other's needs while increasing the readiness to respond negatively to others' requests.

The rejection category could be analogous to separation as a result of the conflict. The ending is marked by the withdrawal of one or both parties without an immediate resolution of the conflict (Peterson 1983).

The category called parental conflict was not identified in the literature. Parental conflict
hindered conflict resolution as communication and closeness in the parental system was lacking. Also, the children tend to use these situations as an opportunity to gain what they want and may play the parents against each other furthering the conflict.

The categories that facilitated conflict resolution: discussion reaches a limit and becomes closed, humor, apology, showing tolerance, compromising and negotiating, parental agreement, family closeness concur with the conflict literature.

When using Dwyer's (1976) model, the facilitative factors gave the parent and child the opportunity to redefine the relationship in a way that encouraged a mutually positive way of interacting. Other studies have stated the instrumental mechanisms for resolving family conflicts. Blood (1960) listed the following: increased facilities for family living, priority systems for the use of limited facilities, enlargement of areas of autonomy and safety valves for reducing tension between family members. Two of the factors identified in this study fit into Blood's (1960) mechanisms for resolving family conflict. Parental Agreement and Humor are factors that could be categorized as a safety valve
for reducing tension between family members. Blood (1960) says that the catharsis of "unloading" one's difficulties helps to break the vicious circle of attack and retaliation which is present in families with a history of conflict. When parents unload by sharing their feelings and frustrations about the child it reduces the tension. Similarly, tension and anxiety are reduced when humor is used in a stressful conflict situation.

In this study, the category, discussion closed supports and is analogous to the accommodation category listed by Dwyer (1976). Accommodation is the recognition of a failure to agree and therefore the discussion is closed. Also supporting this notion are Lawrence and Lorsch's (1967) category of forcing, Burke (1970) and Fogg (1985). Coming to the conclusion that further attempts to influence the other are not worth the conflict, denotes a certain degree of cooperation.

The tolerance category in this study is similar to the act of concession cited by Filley (1975), that is, one person decides to drop the conflict by dropping their demands; others to proceed while stepping aside (Patchen, 1970; Fogg, 1985).
The category of compromise or negotiation is supported heavily throughout the conflict resolution literature (Burke, 1970; Filley, 1975; Peterson, 1983; Fogg, 1985; and others). When parents and children compromise or negotiate both participants de-escalate the conflict by a small amount encouraging cooperation. The parent wins and the child wins and they both experience a mutually satisfying solution to the conflict as well as experiencing a positive change in the rights, duties and expectations of the relationship.

Listening skills, and communication are identified in various ways including co-operation and problem solving communication (Deutsch & Krause, 1982; Deutsch 1965; Alexander, 1973; Gottman, 1979; Robin, 1981; and others). In this study the category of greater understanding supports the already existing literature as a factor facilitating conflict resolution. Communication allows individuals to feel heard, respected and understood. This opens up many options, solutions and alternatives to resolve conflict. It also encourages a redefinition following a conflict (Dwyer, 1982; Patchen, 1970).
The category of apology is not directly supported in the literature, however Deutsch (1965) addresses perceptions as a cooperative process where there is an increased sensitivity to similarities and common interests while minimizing the salience of differences and also, the other's actions are then perceived as conciliatory.

Family closeness was a category which facilitated conflict resolution. Closeness or a feeling of trust increases the willingness to respond hopefully to the others needs and requests (Deutsch, 1965). Peterson (1983) and Fogg (1985) refer to affection, intimacy and trust as being facilitative during the resolution process.

The Parental Agreement category was not cited in the literature. Parental Agreement indicates that the parents are taking an active interest in the child and increasing their own communication. Parents communicating with each other is instrumental in venting their feelings and receiving feedback from the spouse which supports their position. This is particularly important in Italian families because parents, when their children are in conflict with them, experience
this as a personal failure and a blow to their self esteem.

When considering all categories, meta-categories emerge. The three obvious categories formed are 1) feelings and perceptions, 2) behavior (conflict), 3) conflict resolution. Each category falls distinctly into one of the meta categories as follows:

1) Feelings and Perceptions
   1. conflicting expectations or values
   2. lack of understanding
   3. rejection

2) Behavior (conflict)
   1. disagreement
   2. disobedience and disrespect
   3. parental disagreement

3) Conflict Resolution
   1. discussion reached a limit and then closed
   2. humor
   3. apology
   4. showing tolerance
   5. listening skills and communication
   6. greater understanding
   7. compromising and negotiation
8. parental agreement and family closeness

The categories move from an intrapsychic struggle to an interpersonal interaction. The evidence of the categories supports Dwyer's (1982) concept of conflict resolution. The categories indicate a process which is occurring in the relationship and therefore to some extent defines the relationship. Conflict in relationships has many meanings and each conflict sequence influences the definition of the relationship. Dwyer (1982) postulates that in considering interpersonal conflict one must examine previous interactions as defined in terms of the distribution of rights, duties and expectations. During conflict processes, feelings and motivations must also be considered and will affect how the person interprets the interaction. After the conflict there is a redefining of the relationship between the persons and their rights, duties and expectations to one another. Interpersonal relationships are not static but are in constant motion. Relationships change and evolve as persons interact with one another. It is crucial to understand that interpersonal relationships are greatly influenced by the way in which conflict is resolved.
The results identify processes or categories of conflict resolution in Italian families and depending on which factors are used, will influence the redefinition of a relationship after a conflict.

**Practical Implications**

The study has identified conflict processes in Italian families which hinder conflict resolution and factors which are facilitative. To the Italian community this information normalizes conflict processes as an understandable and resolvable problem. The information gathered also provides a categorical map which can be used to assess the ways conflict is maintained and to strengthen ways in which conflict is reduced.

Practitioners can generate useful information for clients of Italian family background. When considering the factors which hinder conflict resolution they inherently contain the solution to avoid the conflict. For example, the category of conflicting expectations leads the practitioner to learn to negotiating expectations between parent and child is very productive. The category of lack of understanding directs the practitioner to clarify the parent position
and values to the child and vice versa to encourage each individual to have a greater understanding and more information available to him/her. When considering the factors which facilitate conflict resolution practitioners may use the categories to give their clients information and alternatives which will increase their problem solving and conflict resolution skills. For example where there is a lack of humor then the practitioner could inspire the cultivation of humor.

**Implications for Further Research**

Further studies are required to confirm the findings from this study using a larger sample. Now that a category system has been identified future research could be conducted in order to determine the validity and potency of each category. The categories appear to be sequential, moving from an individual's feelings and perceptions to some behavior which then may involve some further action involving another individual in order to seek resolution. This has far reaching implications for practitioners who could use this information or "model" as a tool in therapy or in workshops.
Also the study raises some critical questions. How do parents set livable expectations in upsetting circumstances? How do parents maintain understanding when misunderstanding threatens? How can parents maintain respect when the family structure changes? How do parents allow tolerance when it is at the expense of their own self worth? How can parents create greater understanding when language is such a barrier? How can counsellors foster compromise and negotiation in parents when old values enforce that the elders rule and make the decisions? How can counsellors encourage communication between parent and child when the parent regards expression by the child as talking back and disrespectful? How can counsellors teach parents that rejection by their children is an act of self preservation and identity teaching?

Future research may be directed towards providing counsellors with more information regarding conflict resolution in Italian families. It may also be a building block to explore parenting in Italian Canadian families.
Summary

This study examined factors which hinder and factors which facilitate conflict resolution in Italian families. A total of 9 adults and 8 adolescents, one adult and one adolescent from each family, were studied. Interviews were conducted using Flanagan's Critical Incident Technique. The results indicate that the incidents reported in this study could be reliably grouped into 14 categories. Of these categories 6 were hindering factors and 8 were facilitative factors. Reliability was tested using 2 judges who grouped the categories and were in 100% agreement. Out of this evolved a categorical map which is useful when considering the maintaining of conflict or the resolution of conflict in Canadian-Italian families.
REFERENCES


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Patchen, M. (1970). Models of cooperation and


APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 3
Consent Form

Research Project: Factors which facilitate or hinder inter-generational conflict in Italian immigrant families.

Project Supervisor: Dr. Larry Cochran

Researcher: Patrizia DiDiomete, University of British Columbia,

This project is intended to identify the kinds of events that affect conflict situations between parent and child. From the conflict situations that people describe, a comprehensive set of categories will be developed that indicate which factors help or hinder the resolution of conflict in Italian Immigrant families.

This interview will last about an hour. You will be asked to describe events that have helped or hindered you in resolving conflict situations. This interview will be tape recorded and later, the events you describe will be extracted and the tapes erased. Confidentiality will be maintained by restricting access to research material, by number coding, and by the eventual erasure of the tapes. Some event descriptions will probably be published in research reports.

You have the right to withdraw from this interview or refuse to answer any questions, with no consequences of any kind. You may ask any questions to clarify procedures now or during the interview.

Name: ____________________________
Adolescent Consent Form

Research Project: Factors which facilitate or hinder inter-generational conflict in Italian immigrant families.

Project Supervisor: Dr. Larry Cochran

Researcher: Patrizia DiDiomete, University of British Columbia,

This project is intended to identify the kinds of events that affect conflict situations between parent and child. From the conflict situations that people describe, a comprehensive set of categories will be developed that indicate which factors help or hinder the resolution of conflict in Italian Immigrant families.

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