PERSPECTIVES ON PORTUGUESE MIGRATION, IDENTITY & RELIGION IN HAMILTON

"IN MY HEART I AM PORTUGUESE": PERSPECTIVES ON PORTUGUESE MIGRATION, IDENTITY AND RELIGION IN HAMILTON, ONTARIO

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ABSTRACT

"IN MY HEART I AM PORTUGUESE": PERSPECTIVES ON PORTUGUESE

MIGRATION, IDENTITY AND RELIGION IN HAMILTON, ONTARIO

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This thesis is an investigation into migration, identity and religion among Portuguese

migrants to Hamilton, Ontario. It is an ethnographic exploration of how Portuguese

migrants identify themselves within the migrant setting and how migration has impacted

their religious beliefs and practices. I focus on the Portuguese religious patron saint

festivals, known as *festas* and the significance of these cultural performances for the

future of a distinct Portuguese identity in Canada. This inquiry has implications for the

study of migration, transnationalism and Portuguese religious traditions, and expands our

understanding of the struggles and successes of Portuguese immigrants within the

particular historical and cultural contexts they have lived their lives.

Dedication

In loving memory of my grandfather, João Ferreira Da Silva. You are the source of my

strength and comfort during both my happiest and toughest moments. I know you are

always watching over me. I miss and love you.

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I would like to thank all of the people who supported me through the entire research

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I would like to offer special thanks to family, especially my parents and grandparents, for

their loving support in all my endeavors, and for their immense courage to leave a life

that they were familiar with to explore new horizons in hopes of giving their children a

"better life." I have tremendous respect, appreciation and love for their sacrifices. I would

most especially like to thank all the participants who were the inspiration from which I

worked. I am honored that you would share your experiences with me and trust in me.

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Introduction

Migration has not always fit well with "the timeless and bounded idea of culture that framed" working anthropological analyses in earlier eras (Brettell 2003: *ix*). However, globalization has rendered obsolete the image of cultures as self-contained, unchanging and homogeneous. Cultures are not static, nor are the actors within any given culture. As globalization has developed, it has changed the landscape of the world and those living within it, giving rise to the need for new ways of studying migration and culture. In the contemporary world cultures can be regarded as transnational, existing within, across and beyond traditional geographic borders and spaces. As people continue to travel and move within a globalized world, the repercussions of migration have changed. The experience of Portuguese migrants in Canada provides one example of this story of change.

Brettell's (2003) edited volume, *Anthropology and Migration: Essays on Transnationalism, Ethnicity and Identity*, begins with the observation that "the Portuguese diaspora is extensive and significant, yet, ironically, it does not hold a central place in the historical and scientific literature on global migrations and Diasporic communities" (*xviii).* As a result, Brettell calls for scholars working within the anthropology of migration in the twenty first century to work more broadly and comparatively across both time and space so that the experience of Portuguese migration can gain a legitimate position within the discipline. She urges researchers not only to discuss the actual migratory event but also to explore the livelihood of migrants, their incorporation into host societies, their resistance to assimilation and their future.

Following Brettell's lead, this thesis explores religion, identity, and transnational systems and processes within the context of the Portuguese migrant community in Hamilton, Ontario. The thesis focuses on three central research questions:

(1) What does it mean to be Portuguese in Canada? How has this identity developed and what implications does it hold?

(2) How do Portuguese migrants regard religion in Canada? How do they practice religion and how do their popular practices, beliefs,[1] and perceptions intersect with those of the official Roman Catholic Church and clergy?

(3) What is the future of "Portuguese-ness" in Canada?

These questions and subsequent analyses derive from an extensive literature review and ethnographic fieldwork, which I conducted from May to September of 2012. My research further aims to valorize, preserve, and share knowledge about the cultural and religious patrimony of Portuguese immigrants in Canada. Therefore, it is my goal to introduce the voices of those whom I interviewed and spoke with and allow them to tell their stories in their words.[2] I am grateful for and humbled by the experience of meeting people in the Portuguese community and hearing their stories. I have made a

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[1] I recognize that the verb "to believe" has been called into question by anthropologists of religion (cf. Pouillon 1982). Some argue that the concept of belief places too much stress on the rational, whereas religion is not so much an intellectual process of subscribing to beliefs but a more intuitive, emotional, contradictory process. I use the word "belief" as an indicator of the values, opinions and practices that my respondents employ.

[2] All names and identifying elements used within this ethnography have been altered to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of those who agreed to partake in my research.

tremendous effort to re-tell their stories with integrity. My purpose in this ethnography has been to act as a narrator, supplementing the voices of my research participants with further elaborations and interpretations. These migrants, now in the later years of their lives, provide a unique perspective on the changes involved in the immigration experience and the changes taking place in the host society with respect to cultural and religious traditions[3].

The first chapter of this ethnography discusses relevant literature that forms a framework for this research, the methods and methodology used during this investigation and the implications of my personal context for this research. The type of research that I carried out has often been referred to as "anthropology at home" and I consider myself to be a "native anthropologist." The second chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the history of Portuguese migration, and delves into a generalized discussion of Portuguese identity[4]. This chapter further introduces the modern day *festa,* or patron saint festival, experience and then explores the origin of

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[3] The word "tradition" has become a debated concept since the publication of Hobsbawn and Ranger's (1983) edited volume "The Invention of Tradition", which argues that many so-called "traditions" seemed to be inauthentic, and fairly recent "inventions". My use of the word tradition falls in line with the more recent, constructivist position, which holds that cultural productions are constantly in flux and therefore everything is always invented and in the process of being reinvented. While I am referring to tradition, I recognize that the tradition may have changed over time but holds an ongoing symbolic significance for the community that creates and performs it.

[4] When discussing a culture, tradition, or practice on a general scale, one risks essentializing those expressions. I recognize that there is variation within the information that I present, and furthermore that self-identified Portuguese migrants may not identify with the general overviews of Portuguese past and identity that I present in this thesis. However, some degree of generalization is necessary in order to generate academic discussion and analysis.

the *festa* to allow for further discussion and analysis of my fieldwork. The third

chapter narrows the scope of discussion by discussing Portuguese immigrants to

Hamilton in particular. This chapter aims to answer the first of the three central

research questions, "What does it mean to be Portuguese in Canada?" The formation

of and processes surrounding this question are analyzed, and I also make an argument

for the existence of a Diasporan community identity. The fourth chapter discusses

Portuguese religion and religious beliefs and practices after the migratory event.

Particular facets of Portuguese religion, such as devotion to saints will be explored. I

also respond to my second central research question, "How do those popular

practices, beliefs, and perceptions intersect with those of the official Roman Catholic

Church and clergy?" The final chapter looks to the future of Portuguese migration,

identity and religion in Canada. It evaluates the current global climate and reveals

tensions between the first and subsequent generations of Portuguese migrants.

Ultimately, this thesis aims to discuss migration, identity and religion in a manner that

is meaningful to Portuguese migrants and their descendants, and within a

contemporary academic arena that takes into consideration the impact of the ever-

globalizing world.

Chapter One

The Anthropology of Christianity

One of the core principles of anthropology has been to view experience through a culturally particular lens, meaning that the explanations derived from the observations of the ethnographer are grounded in rationalizations that are meaningful to the group at hand. However, Christian phenomena within anthropology, such as the *festas* referred to in this thesis have a tendency to be viewed as something already "well known" or outside of a meaningful anthropological framework. Historian G.W.F Hegel (1807) notably quoted, "just because something is 'well-known' it does not follow that it is *known"* [emphasis mine], yet Christian practices have largely been understood as peripheral to more "exotic" cultural traditions as foci for anthropological research, or as phenomena that are of interest primarily because they contrast with secularization or modernity. Cannell (2006) calls attention to the fact that, "the prevailing orthodoxy [within anthropology] for several decades has been a focus on the seeming inevitability of secularization and the advance of global modernity, while Christianity has been identified as, above all, a kind of secondary or contributory aspect of such changes. [Furthermore] there has often been a tendency to assume that Christianity is an 'obvious' or 'known' phenomenon that does not require fresh and constantly renewed examination" (Cannell 2006:3). However, as Cannell demonstrates, that assumption is not correct. The ways in which faith, belief and practice develop and change over the years or over the course of generations is a legitimate and important focus of anthropological research. In response

to the absence of anthropological analyses of Christianity, Cannell suggests that

Christianity functioned as the "repressed" of anthropology over the period of the

formation of the discipline due to various reasons but predominantly because of unease

about the political implications of some types of Christian practices; a blanket suspicion

of all intellectual interest in Christianity; fear that the researcher might be a "closet

evangelist" or "in danger of being converted"; and a disciplinary nervousness about

religious experience in general (2006:3-4). Robbins (2003) further suggests that research

on Christianity has been suppressed because many kinds of Christians are viewed as

threatening to the liberal versions of modernity to which most anthropologists subscribe

(Robbins 2003:193).

With honourable exceptions, anthropology has often explored Christian religious

practice as an "epi-phenomenon of 'real' underlying sociological, political, economic or

other material causes[5]" (Cannell 2006:3). This approach is in line with the secular

analytical approach that has long been favoured in the West's heavily scientific

pedagogy. Theologian John Millbank has critiqued this completely secular approach

claiming, "once there was no 'secular'; the secular as a domain had to be instituted or

imagined" (1990:9). His argument is that the construction of the secular domain arose in

opposition to a religious one, yet the secular was adopted into scientific methods and used

liberally while the religious domain was pushed to the periphery as a competing and/or

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[5] This is not to say that anthropological works that explain religious experiences as part and parcel to socio-economic factors, political reasons, kinship, etc., are incorrect or problematic as a whole. It is simply suggesting that it is incorrect to assume that there is no explanation within the religious domain from which the phenomenon derives from that could wholly satisfy the reasoning for the phenomenon.

inconsequential philosophy.[6] Millbank's argument problematizes theories that define

Christianity through narratives of modernity.

The anthropology of Christianity provides a useful framework for my analysis of

the Portuguese *festas*. I join with other researchers who describe themselves as

anthropologists of Christianity, such as Cannell, Coleman, Robbins, Rutherford and

Whitehouse in "taking the Christianity of [our] informants seriously as a cultural fact and

refusing to marginalize it in [our] accounts of the areas in which [we] work" (Cannell

2006:5). I have implemented this principle as my predominant framework, which has

guided my methodology, analysis and interpretation of my research. Although these

religious *festas* will be analyzed in conjunction with sociological factors, such as

migration, kinship and community identity, the *festas* are, in no way, an "epi-

phenomenon of secular reality" or peripheral to the faith, belief and religious experience

of my participants. Their insights into Christian religious experience are important to

anthropology and critical thinking within the discipline.

Methodology

Anthropological writings are interpretations. "They are, thus, fictions; fictions in

the sense that they are 'something made', 'something fashioned'- the original meaning of

fictio- not that they are false, unfactual, or merely 'as if' thought experiments" (Geertz

1973b: 15). Any ethnography is a construction based on an interpretation of reality and

the anthropologist is both the tool through which that reality is observed, and its

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[6] It is important to note that while anthropology has tended to analyze Christianity within a secular and analytical context, Christian-based assumptions have often underpinned anthropological analyses of non-Christian ideas of belief, religion and ideology (cf. Pouillion 1982).

interpreter. In the case of my own research, both the participants and myself constructed the findings presented in this thesis. To fully demonstrate what this means two larger discussions will follow. The first is a comprehensive overview of the methodology I used with participants. The second discussion explores LeCompte and Schensul's (1999) assertion that "ethnographers are both observers and participants in an open experimental field" (2), and therefore is a reflexive endeavour examining my own impact on the research context.

In order to investigate the traditions, experiences and culture of Portuguese migrants it was necessary to complete an in-depth ethnographic study of the Portuguese immigrant population in Hamilton. The primary method of investigation was participant observation. Over the course of four months, chosen because they marked the peak number of Portuguese festivals occurring in the Hamilton area, I attended *festas*, *festa* preparations, and community based events. The first festival I attended, the *Império de Santa Maria,* took place over the weekend of May 27-28, 2012. The second, the *Império de São.* Miguel, occurred over the weekend of June 3-4, 2012. The third *festa* I attended, the *Império de São.* Pedro took place during the weekend of June 23-24. The last *festa* I attended was the largest and most significant of the *festas* held by St. Mary's Parish[7]. It

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[7] This is excluding the *Festa do Éspirito Santo* that took place before I received clearance from McMaster's Research Ethics Board to commence participant observation. While the *festa* of *Nossa Senhora dos Anjos* is the main *festa* held by St. Mary's Parish in honour of the Virgin Mary whom the church is named after, the *Festa do Éspirito Santo* is the most highly celebrated religious festival within Portuguese culture for both migrants and natives, as the *festas* began in order to honour the Holy Spirit.

was held over three days, August 10th, 11th and 12th and was the festival of Our Lady of Angels or *Nossa Senhora dos Anjos*.

It is important to note that different *festa* organizers and organizations hosted the festivals that I attended. This means that the *festa* performances I encountered may have varied due to particular social networks, special religious or saintly devotions and other inherent social processes of which I may not have been aware. I am referring specifically to factors such as participant turnout, "popularity" of the event, and the demographic profile of the attendees. Generally speaking, a majority of participants who attended one *festa* were also present at the others. The exception was the *festa* of *Nossa Senhora dos Anjos,* which attracted a significantly larger number of participants. This could be explained by the fact that it was the most anticipated and celebrated festival since it is held in honour of the parish itself. Having a chance to speak with representatives from each organization involved in *festa* preparations, I noted that all organizations claimed to be promoting *festas* to raise money "for" the church. However some organizations would specify that their organization was "for" the church, while others simply "contributed to" the church while simultaneously gathering funding for their more community-based activities. However, since the aim of my research is to explore the religious tradition and migratory experience of Portuguese immigrants, and not to evaluate the complex internal relationships among different *festa* organizations, I have not focused on the actual *festa* organizations, but rather turned the lens of my research onto the embodied experience of the *festas* and the meanings they symbolize for those who participated in them.

I chose to conduct semi-structured qualitative interviews because they allow the researcher to gain insight into another person's understandings, experiences and knowledge (Mason 1996). Therefore, interviews were conducted with nine men and ten women, between the ages of 41 and 82, who immigrated to Canada from the Azores between1967 and 1990. One additional interview was conducted with a Portuguese man who had migrated in 2009 and lived in Canada for three years on a work visa. His experience differed from the majority of my respondents as he originated from mainland Portugal rather than the Azores, and would be returning permanently after the expiration of his work visa. His interview was essential in establishing a perception of contemporary Portugal, as he was the most recently migrant and one of the youngest participants; his inclusion provided some diversity to the sample.

Participants were provided with a description of the project and letter of information and consent, which they signed (see Appendix A). In the event that the participant was unable to read the form for himself or herself I verbally discussed what the form said and asked for a verbal agreement which I then recorded in a verbal agreement log.[8] The participants also had the opportunity to choose whether the interview was conducted in English or Portuguese. Since I am a fluent Portuguese speaker, for the majority of participants, the interviews were conducted in Portuguese with some English interspersed. I later translated and transcribed the interviews. In this study, interviews were conducted with a set of guiding questions (see Appendix B). The questions were chosen with the goal of eliciting responses about migration, experience, self-identification

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[8] Many of the participants included in my research only completed schooling up to the elementary level or *"quarta classe"* as was typical in the Azores at that time.

and religious belief. These questions served to orient the interviewee yet were open-ended so that no particular response would be assumed as "correct". I also allowed for the conversation to digress naturally so that emphasis could be placed on what the interviewee felt was important. Interview lengths ranged from one and a half hours to four hours. The lengthy interview time allowed for the interviewee to develop trust in me and to reflect upon his/her personal experiences without feeling pressured. I stopped recruiting participants for interviews when there was a saturation of categories that emerged in the analysis of interviews. Saturation occurs when there is no new information being added from the analysis of new interview material (Charmaz 2002).

I used a grounded theory approach to analyze my respondents' ideas and feelings about migration, life in Canada, and their religious tradition (Bernard 1988). Thus I allowed the data to form the foundation of my theory and the analysis of this data generated the concepts I constructed (Charmaz 2002). Some of the main themes that emerged from this analysis include 1) balancing the identity of being Portuguese and Canadian, 2) negotiating a tension between official Roman Catholic doctrine and the long standing popular tradition of religious *festas*, and 3) uncertainty concerning the persistence of Portuguese cultural and religious identity within Canada. My qualitative materials expand our understanding of Portuguese migrants in an increasingly transnational world, and give these people a voice documenting their struggles and successes within the particular historical and cultural contexts where they have lived their lives.

While it is relatively easy to discuss the interview process in a systematic manner, the actual process of participant observation is a delicate, but crucial, process that is not always easily managed. The dynamic between the researcher and those being researched is under constant negotiation during the process. Ethnographic researchers have an established and easily identifiable power; however it is naïve to view the balance of power in ethnographic fieldwork as being entirely one-sided. Our research relies heavily on the good will and continued participation of our "subjects." Indeed, anthropologists need to present themselves as agreeable people with whom entering into a relationship would be mutually satisfactory. Thus, the ability to gain access to a culture or phenomenon, or "get on" in the research arena requires the anthropologist to submit to their hosts. Tonkin (2005) explores the significance of *persuasiveness* in research encounters and elegantly demonstrates the unique power balance that exists:

> Most of us have been nervously aware how easy it is to wrong foot an interview, or even a brief introduction, where to put off another can have important consequences. Of course, too, in a multilateral process, in which interlocutors simultaneously appraise one another, and whose opinions can continue to change, self-interest can be significant. Even humble gatekeepers have power over researchers, who therefore seek their good will… It is not the anthropologist alone who is engaged in both self-presentation and in trying to suss out the other, while he or she tries hard to learn, to get access, to 'get on' in the research arena. Liking, hostility, boredom and uncertainty arise on both sides (Tonkin 2005:57).

My own research would have been extremely difficult to conduct had I not formed good relations with my initial contacts and also made a good first impression. Because my hosts accepted my self-representation and the manner in which I conducted my research, an entire social network was opened to me. This allowed me access to *festa* organizers,

participation in the *festas* and access to preparatory events, as well as invitations to events that were not open to the public. No amount of researcher power could replace my respondents' power of invitation, acceptance and inclusion. To be accepted and included has great implications for the research being conducted. It allows for a unique perspective on lived reality that is less superficial than an outsider could experience. The benefit is twofold, "being with people in their everyday lives gives a great deal of experience to ethnographers, but it also enmeshes them into responsibilities and obligations to their participants" (Madden 2010: 77).

However, inclusion is not necessarily granted when conducting research, and my own research hung in jeopardy during its initial phase. My first attempt at contacting *festa* organizers for permission to research their events was not well received. As chance would have it, another researcher was attempting to conduct an investigation of the *festas* occurring at St. Mary's parish and had already conducted some interviews before I began my research. When I first met some of the organizers and requested to conduct my research they rebuffed my request, saying that they had already spoken to a researcher and had nothing more to say. I was curious about why my request was received so negatively. After some general discussion I discovered that the previous researcher was probing into sensitive material about the *festa* organizing groups that the organizers were neither comfortable sharing nor making public. Once I discovered that this was the cause of their unease, I was able to explain my research project more clearly and emphasize that my research aimed to explore personal experience, tradition and the continuity of the *festas*. Had the organizers refused to listen to my request and not accepted my research

and myself as a researcher, I would not have been privy to the wealth of information that informs my analysis. My research depended on the judgments my respondents made about my initial impression, my persuasiveness and the good will of my interlocutors. Eventually, it became clear that our relationship would be mutually beneficial. I would be able to conduct my research and hence complete the requirements for my degree, and the *festa* organizers would receive my thesis in return as a record of their community for posterity. I hope it will honour their long-standing religious tradition, and serve as an *aide mémoire* and as a token of gratitude, and remembrance and for their pioneering endeavours within Canada for the benefit of future generations.

"Does Being Portuguese Get Me 'In'? Confronting the Unique Position of the "Native" Anthropologist

> Acknowledging the fact that the ethnographer is the primary tool of research and an active participant in the ethnographic fieldwork also means that properly confronting the influence of the ethnographer on research and representation is an unavoidable precondition of a reliable ethnographic account (Madden 2010: 23).

This point leads me to discuss the context of my research. It is not a study reminiscent of the fieldwork of the early part of the twentieth century when anthropologists would travel to exotic locales and live among the locals for extended periods of time. This is anthropology conducted at "home"; a familiar setting that must be regarded in a new light (Madden 2010). Rather than worrying about learning local customs or taboos, there are different challenges to be faced in this sort of arena. One must be aware of the knowledge that he/she already possesses and, how this knowledge was acquired, while critically analyzing if the knowledge at hand actually fits into the socio-cultural dynamic of the

group in question. It is an odd position that is not quite emic or truly etic. Researchers in this position are often viewed as at risk for what Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe as "going native," or becoming so immersed in the culture that the researcher allows their own cultural presumptions to inform themself rather than concentrating on the data they have collected. For the purpose of this research, I did have to negotiate the lines of my own belonging in regards to the group at hand. Like my participants I have a Portuguese background, and am immersed in much of the same cultural and religious tradition as these men and women. Although it was my parents who migrated from Portugal and I was born in Canada, Portuguese was my first language and the environment in which I was raised familiarized me with Portuguese practices and the religious festivals. Furthermore, I spent significant time in the Azores as a child where I would participate in the *festas* that took place there. However, the subjective and reflexive elements of my research were not a problem to be overcome but a productive force I had to learn to confront. Madden (2010) discusses the advantage of having both an emic and etic perspective in the following way: "being close allows for the ethnographic authority of 'being there' to be parlayed into the text (the emic perspective), while remaining 'not too close' allows for the authority of the critical expert to be present in the text (the etic perspective)" (79).

While I initially felt, prior to my research, that I was very much an insider, I quickly realized that I was also an outsider. Narayan (1993) asks the question, "How native is a native anthropologist?" She argues that having "roots" in a culture does not necessarily equate to being a "native". Furthermore, being a "native" would not

necessarily create an authentic account of the culture or phenomenon under observation. While I share a common heritage with those who took part in my research there are some subtle differences that separate me as an "outsider." First, I am not a resident of Hamilton. This first difference is not of huge importance since many people who attend the *festas* live in different parts of the city and even in other cities like Oakville, Mississauga and Kingston, so the group I encountered at the *festas* is not necessarily a localized ethnic enclave. What mattered more was that I am not a parishioner of St. Mary's Church and have not attended *festas* there in the past. This meant that I was unrecognizable within the community and a virtual stranger. Another significant difference was the fact that I came into this scenario as an educated researcher. A significant number of my informants did not receive formal education past the elementary level. Cabral (1989) noticed that this disparity in educational levels also played a role in his initial encounters with his informants in rural Portugal. Rather than being viewed as an insider he was regarded as an extension of an institution or even the government.

Instead of focusing on whether one is an "insider" or "outsider," Narayan proposes that anthropologists should focus their research on the *multiplex of identities* that exist within a culture in relation to certain contexts. By enacting "hybridity" and adopting a narrative voice, the researcher can enact the dual personal and ethnographic self we all embody and present the most authentic account of his or her research (Narayan 1993: 681). This issue became extremely relevant to me as essentially I am a Portuguese immigrant studying Portuguese immigrants. Following Narayan's proposition I enacted an inverse research process where I renamed and reframed all my prior knowledge and

constantly challenged the innate "knowledge" which I possessed. Narayan posits that this inverse process is the key to conducting anthropology "at home" (Narayan 1993:678)

A Brief Pause for Reflexivity

The thesis that I have written is an ethnographic account. Therefore, it is constructed from interpretations of reality, as I perceive them. This implies that I am the tool of perception and as such it is important to be reflexive about myself and, therefore, how I came to perceive what I have written. I have attempted to contain the element of subjectivity in my observations and interpretations, but recognize that complete objectivity is impossible (Geertz 1973b, Rosaldo 1989 "Grief and a Headhunter's Rage). As Geertz advises, I have tried to include my own sentiments as crucial to key understandings of the interactions I have observed. However, I must admit my own naivety about my initial ethnographic encounters. After completing the robust ethics process and years of learning about power relations between anthropologists and their participants, I thought it best to enter into the field as anonymously as possible. As mentioned above, my research took place in an area that was not unfamiliar to my family or myself. I wanted to avoid using my family as a way of gaining access to my research participants, as that might have had ethical implications. The ideal scenario in my mind was that I would enter the scene and be welcomed as a fellow Portuguese, unconnected to my familial origin, and be accepted as the "McMaster Student Researcher." I thought this scenario would be possible since I had not been to a *festa* since I was a young child, and I hoped that no one would recognize me. But it was not so. People were not interested *where* I came from, but *who* I came from. When introducing myself to people at festas*, I*

would begin my speech explaining that I was a researcher from McMaster interested in

the *festas* and that I was also of Portuguese descent. The first question that would be

elicited in response was, "Which part of the Azores are you from?" I would then proceed

to tell them that I was born in Canada, but both my parents were born in São Miguel.

Immediately after that, the question would follow, "Who are your parents?" The response

to this question was either received joyously as my respondent knew or knew of my

family, or was followed by a line of questioning such as, "Who are your grandparents?"

or "Did you have a [family member] that lived in [different part of the Azores]?" The

rationale behind this questioning was to acquire a sense of familiarity with my familial

descent. It was in a way a sort of tacit acceptance test. Once that familiarity was

satisfactorily established the rest of our interactions would proceed normally. It was naïve

of me to assume that I could escape my family name or heritage when entering the

Portuguese community. Part of the diaspora and migration mentality (to be discussed

further in Chapter Three) revolves around the search for familiarity and family

connections in the new locale.

  Once I finally established an initial network of contacts I was almost always

introduced as "a filha de José é Gabriela do Oakville" [The daughter of Joe and Gabriela

from Oakville]. The almost ritual process of questioning that I described above was

repeated in my meetings if the person I was being introduced to did not recognize my

family name. It was my familial network that gave me credibility and trustworthiness.

This is not to suggest that my parents are of special standing within the community, since

they are not. But it was important for the community to know that I was an "insider" in a

way, and to know *who* I came from. To better explain the importance of familial descent I will share a short encounter that both surprised me and made me realize the truth about the importance of being connected through kinship ties to the Portuguese community.

I had been introduced to a lovely couple that wanted to participate in an interview for my research. Naturally I was introduced as the daughter of my parents by one of my former interviewees. It was eventually determined that the couple was from the same area as my parents and they were quite excited to try and determine some relational link due to our shared geographical background. After my initial encounter with the couple, we exchanged numbers, spoke on the phone a few times to determine a convenient time and place of meeting and ultimately decided we would conduct the interview at their home one evening. This couple welcomed me into their home, graciously offered me an assortment of refreshments and snacks, and opened up to me about their private lives, intimate moments and emotional memories. I felt that there was a connection between us; that they trusted *me* and felt secure in my research. About an hour into the interview the woman stopped talking, looked at me and said, "*Meninha* [little girl], what is your name again?" I was shocked! The whole time I had been imagining that I was the important factor in this trusting relationship, but the basis was really our shared [imagined?] past and sense of kinship; the fact that I was in some way cognate with them. It was a humbling moment that made me realize the importance of being Portuguese and existing within an identified (if only perceived) social network of belonging.

Now that I have established the context for my research and outlined my methodology, we move forward in Chapter Two to the historical background of *festas* in Portugal and a description of contemporary *festas* in Hamilton.

Chapter Two

History of Portuguese Migration

Portugal's past is synonymous with exploration and colonization. There exists a long tradition of voyaging, so it is not unusual that Portuguese migration has been a significant historical process in both the past and present. Portugal's vast and extensive history of migration began as a colonial empire whose exploration and reach touched distant locations such as Angola, São Tomé, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Brazil and North America. Actual ties between Canada and Portugal date back to the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries "when Portuguese explorers and fishermen set foot on the eastern coast of Newfoundland" (Brettell 2003:128). While this history is important, Portuguese immigration in significant proportions is a post World War II phenomenon. The time period of migration pertinent to my research commences in the 1950s and continues until the present day. My focus is restricted in scope to North American migration; most specifically to Ontario, Canada.

The first wave of Portuguese migration was often regarded as an international labour flow that changed according to the demand for labour within the international market (Baganha 2003: 1). As of 1953 census data showed that there were fewer than 4,000 people of Portuguese origin in Canada; most of them having arrived in response to advertisements in local Portuguese newspapers calling for agricultural workers willing to travel to Canada (Anderson and Higgs 1976:27). This was a period when Canada was

short of manual laborers and was encouraging foreign migration to supplement the labour force. According to Hawkins (1988) "900 Portuguese from the Azores and the mainland were recruited for farm, railway and trade work in 1954 and1955 and by 1957 2,000 farm laborers, 1,000 rail workers and 50 trades workers had arrived" (Brettell 2003:*xiv*). This influx created a foothold for the Portuguese who could then take advantage of the 1952 Immigration Act, which allowed for migrants to nominate and sponsor their relatives as new entrants to Canada.

Immigrants to the United States and Canada in the mid-1950s and 1960s were often looking for a renewed sense of stability; many of the Portuguese seized this opportunity in search of a "better life," leaving for the lure of Canada's booming construction industry, as well as housekeeping, cleaning, and factory job opportunities (Anderson and Higgs 1976, Alpalhão and da Rosa 1979; Noivo 1997). The majority of immigrants gravitated towards the cities such as Toronto and its surrounding areas including Hamilton, Kingston and Cambridge, as the industrial development taking place in these urban areas led to profitable job opportunities. Many of these migrants would send money home to their families with hopes of also saving enough to one day bring the family to Canada as well.

Many of my conversations with current Portuguese migrants about their migration stories began in a very similar fashion. Like many others, Jacinta remembers that when she first came to Canada at the age of 17 "*I came over as a visitor, but I didn't come to visit Canada. I came to bring back money.*" Another one of my respondents, Lucinda, recalls the immense responsibility she faced upon her migration to Canada:

"I was born in Rabo de Peixe, São Miguel and then I came to Canada. I was there till 16 years and I came to Canada when I was 17. My uncle made the application for me to come because my brother was off to the military and my father was sick and there was nobody to support our house. You know, back in that time the ladies didn't work in Portugal. They were not allowed to work except for in the house. Well some of them were but they would take the rich women, not the poor women to get a job. So that's why I came here to support my family. Because my father was sick my uncle made the application for him first but he never wanted to come here… he was nervous because he was so sick, you know? So I decided to come here. I supported my family all by myself at 17 years old. In 1971 I went to work, I was cleaning my uncle's restaurant. Then in April I started cleaning at St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto for 6 years and then I came to Hamilton where I found a factory job doing piecework. It was tough, I remember crying so much."

Lucinda's recollection is typical of the journey that many Portuguese migrants faced in leaving Portugal and settling in Canada. Lucinda's uncle preceded her arrival in search of work to help his family back in Portugal and was able to nominate Lucinda as a new entrant so she could do the same for her nuclear family.

This was a trend that continued to grow. By 1960 there were 22,434 Portuguese immigrants in Canada; a decade later the number had risen to almost 85,000. By 1980 the official figure was over 150,000, although other estimates that included illegal immigrants put the figure at over 200,000 (Anderson 1974; Anderson and Higgs 1976; Giles 2002). By 1991, Statistics Canada reported that there were close to 250,000

Canadians claiming Portuguese ancestry (Statistics Canada 1991). The number of

Portuguese in Canada has continued to grow to present day. In Ontario alone, there are

over 282 865 Portuguese people, although this number has ceased to rise significantly in

the past decade.

Situating the Geographic and Religious Landscape of the Portuguese

Over a fifteen year period, beginning in 1957, approximately 70% of the

Portuguese migrants arriving in Canada were from the Azores (Brettell 2003: 129). This

majority has continued to present day. This explains why all my participants except for

one were of Azorean background. Therefore, for the purpose of this research when I refer

to "Portuguese identity" or "Portuguese-ness" I am strictly referring to Azorean-

Portuguese people. The Azores Islands include nine separate islands located in the

Atlantic Ocean, between Nova Scotia and Portugal (see figure 1). They are a series of

volcanic islands discovered during the Portuguese expansion movement of the 14th

century. The vast majority of participants included in this research originate from São

Miguel, which is the largest and most densely populated island of the Azorean

archipelago.

It is important to make the distinction between different parts of Portugal for

several reasons. First, Portugal is comprised of three separate geographic bodies:

mainland Portugal which is connected to Europe, the Azores Islands which are located in

the Atlantic Ocean, and the Madeira Islands which are located off the coast of Africa.

These three locales are separated by large geographic distances. Second, the sea

surrounds the Azores and at their closest point the islands are still 1,600 km from

mainland Portugal. Due to their geographical location the Azores have historically been isolated from Portugal and its power and influences. Therefore, the Azorean people shaped and constructed their own cultural and religious identities that differ from those of mainland Portugal in significant ways. While all three geographic components of the country define themselves as Portuguese, it is not useful to imagine Portugal as a homogenous body.

The community that I interacted with migrated from the Azores Islands, with the exception of one person who migrated from continental Portugal. As a result, this ethnography is representative of a particular community with a particular shared history. Just as Portugal cannot be imagined as a homogenous body, neither can the Roman Catholicism practiced by Portuguese people be interpreted as the homogenous. "European religious systems are intricately patterned and highly elaborated; they have emerged over the course of the centuries in response to an infinite variety of social, economic, political and cultural circumstances" (Brandes 1990:185). One of the major influences shaping religious faith and practices among Azoreans is the geographic composition of their habitat. Due to the active volcanic nature of the islands there is an extensive history of eruptions, both small and large scale, as well as regular earthquakes.

The result is a remembered history fraught with frequent tragedies. Co-existing and coping with these natural catastrophes over the centuries created a unique way of living with and experiencing religion among Azoreans. Salvador (1981) notes, "the constant presence of the sea, isolation from the rest of the world, active volcanoes, earthquakes, humidity, and changes in the atmospheric pressure are considered by

Azoreans as factors that contribute to [their] unique character" (23). The *festas* and

fraternal organizations (cf. Salvador 1981) and related traditions of pilgrimages

(*romerìas)* and vows to saints (*promessas)* emerged as precautionary practices among

Azoreans to ensure their safety and that of their loved ones in such a perilous terrain.

Figure 1: Map featuring Portugal and its two archipelagos
http://tourism-culture-society.blogspot.com/2010_11_26_archive.html

Outside of the practices mentioned above, the Catholic faith in general has been a long enduring, foundational aspect of national identity in Portugal. In surveys at the end of the twentieth century, Portugal was ranked as one of the highest countries (along with Ireland and Italy) for perceiving religion as socially relevant (Lambert 1999:327). The majority of Portuguese identify themselves as Roman Catholics. "For three centuries the Church served as the State's accomplice in overseas expansion, and state wealth was matched only by Church wealth" (Brettell 2003:75). This statement demonstrates how the Church was interwoven with conceptions of Portuguese nationalism and identity for a long historical period and explains why religion is so centrally perceived. Blanshard (1962:189) cites an old English saying: "where the English settle, they first build a punch house, the Dutch a fort, the Portuguese a church." The intertwining of state and church is a factor that has great historical depth and consequence for the centrality of religion in Portugal and Portuguese identity today.

"Anthropological and sociological approaches to Christianity have long tended to become mired in a highly teleological reading of the foundational anthropologists, and in particular certain kinds of readings of Weber"[9](Cannell 2006:2). This is why it is important to return to the fact that Portugal's religious nature stems also from documented belief. The religious beliefs and traditions discussed in this thesis are particular to Azoreans. Although my research fits into larger discussions of the anthropology of Christianity, the history of Azorean migration and the *festa* tradition are

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[9] Weber's understanding of Christianity was tied to his analyses of the processes of rationalization, secularization and "disenchantment" that he associated with the rise of capitalism and modernity.

unique. Anthropologists studying Christianity recognize that it is not sufficient for anthropologists to assume they know in advance "what the Christian experience is"; and that each experience must be encountered and analyzed on its own terms (Cannell 2006). Therefore my thesis thus speaks to the general by way of analyzing the particular. My contribution to the anthropology of Christianity explores the particular condition of Portuguese migrants in Hamilton and their *festa* performances.

Up to this point I have been staging the geographical and religious climate of Portugal so it becomes important here to briefly discuss the Salazar regime from 1932-1974 that greatly impacted the values, traditions and perceptions of many of the participants with whom I worked. The Fascist dictator, António d'Oliveira Salazar, is remembered in Portugal's collective past with ambiguity. Some remember Salazar for forging a strong cultural identity for the Portuguese and the purist sentiments on which his *Estado Novo* (New State) were founded (Corkill and Pina Almeida 2009). Others remember Salazar through a lens of oppression, poverty, lack of opportunity, and forced military enrollment. When speaking with some of my respondents about migration to Canada, the Salazar regime was central to the narrative. Rosa recalled how her husband, João, was forced to join the army before they could migrate to Canada.

Rosa: Yeah, some people were lucky and Salazar's government didn't catch them but [my husband] had to go to the army. He was lucky though because he missed the war. So, he came home, you know? And then they gave him license to come to Canada, thank God.

*João: Yes, I had to go but after 36 months you're **free**- and not just free from the army.*

Rosa and João's anecdote reveals the stress that the Salazar regime placed on residents of

Portugal and the negative climate it created. Frequently, the end of the Salazar regime

was referenced by my respondents, but never in as forthright a way as actually saying,

"When the Salazar regime was over." Instead there was the use of a more coded

language. Respondents would say things like, *"But things were different back then, you*

know? Before the 25th of April." The 25th of April in question is when the *Estado Novo*

and the Salazar regime collapsed on April 25th of 1974 after the Carnation Revolution

(Meneses 2009). While reminiscing about the hardships they endured back home,

respondents would also say things such as, "*Well, I'm sure it's different now, you know?*

After the 25th of April." Salazar's regime created a significant push factor for the

Portuguese wanting to leave the Azores and find a better life in Canada for themselves

and, to provide a better life for their children than they had growing up.

The Salazar regime greatly influenced perceptions of Portuguese identity and

memory, but it also prejudiced perceptions of religion. Under the Salazar regime the

Church was an extension of the dictatorial hand and priests held a superior social status in

relation to the predominantly rural, peasant class that populated the Azores (Brettell

2003:94). This situation created significant tensions between the Church and the people

which will be explored at greater length in Chapter Four. However, Salazar's goal was to

create a Catholic Social Order, a regime that tied education, marriage, legislation and

tradition irrevocably to religion (Meneses 2009). Salazar's vision has had a profound role

in constructing the centrality of religion to Portuguese identity and influenced how

Portuguese people view certain aspects of religion; particularly the *festas* and their relationship with the Church.

At this point, I will turn from the Portuguese "homeland" society to describe the *festa* tradition as it has taken shape in Canada, the "hostland" society where migrants from the Azores have settled.

Welcome to the Festa

It's a warm Saturday evening in June and I arrive at St. Mary's parish in central Hamilton, nervous with the anticipation of my first foray into the field. Mass is coming to an end inside the church but activity in the *praça* (church square) is just beginning. Portuguese flags, banners and lights decorate the square, vendors are set up and people are socializing with one another (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Picture of arches to enter the *festa,* decorated and lighted. The arches are recreations of similar arches found in São Miguel, Azores

A DJ is checking his microphone and speakers; a crew is setting up the stage for a live

band and performance later in the evening. There is a small group of men already

drinking beer in the licensed house on the property, talking animatedly. A food tent with

typical Portuguese cuisine is close by. On the side of the square that backs onto the

church there is a small tent set up with "Portuguese pride" paraphernalia – t-shirts,

bumper stickers, key chains, CDs and other small items (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Picture of booth set up at the *festa* selling nostalgic items and Portuguese pride items

Fragrance from a tent filled with decadent Portuguese desserts sweetens the air; a bazaar booth selling a traditional Portuguese game beckons the attendees by displaying the prizes they could win on illuminated shelves. And in the midst of it all is the main attraction: a canopied tent, decorated in white, adorned with flowers and illuminated, housing beautiful figurines of the Holy family (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Picture of the religious shrine decorated at the *festa*

This is the scene one encounters when entering a Portuguese religious *festa*[10] at St. Mary's in Hamilton. It is a shrine amid sociality; a celebration of the religious and the sanctified sense of community. The *festa* is a highly decorated and animated event that takes place over the course of two days. One must ask what propels the Portuguese migrants who left their homes to continue this elaborate tradition in Canada? What significance do the *festas* hold that has enabled them to endure since their arrival in the early 1950s?

The Origin of the Religious Festa

The origin of the celebrated Portuguese religious *festas* has been a point of contention among historians. (Mello 2010:18). However there are two popular accounts of how the *festas* began. Since the *festa do Éspirito Santo* is claimed to be the first of the *festas* ever celebrated, stories about its origins are said to account for the creation of all religious *festas* practiced today. According to one account, *festas* emerged among the noble and wealthy ruling class, while the other situates the origins of the *festa* among the poorer classes. The first narrative suggests that the Holy Spirit festival (one of the main *festas* still performed today) is closely associated with the family of the donatory captain of the island of São Miguel. Some historians propose:

> The first manifestation took place in the city and began as a promise that the
> Count and Countess of Ribeira Grande made in 1664 to the Holy Spirit, in
> Vila Franca do Campo, so that the countess could bear a male son. This son

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[10] I use the term religious *festa* because the word *festa* in Portuguese translates as "party". The word can be used to refer to a birthday, anniversary or celebration. The *festas* I am referring to in this ethnography are of a religious nature.

was finally born in 1665. In order to honour the promise, the donatory captain organized a festivity in Ponta Delgada in 1666 (Mello 2010:21).

The result was the beginning of the Holy Spirit brotherhood (Irmandade do Éspirito Santo).

A second story was introduced to me through conversation with my respondents. In the early stages of my fieldwork, I spent much time discussing the symbolic elements used throughout the *festas*. Two of the most popular recurring symbols were a white dove and a decorated silver crown.

Figure 5: A Picture taken from a historical museum in São Miguel displaying one of the crowns of the Holy Spirit used during festas.

I asked Eduardo and Catarina to explain these symbols to me and that is how I encountered the second, more popular *festa* origin story:

Eduardo: Okay, I'm going to explain. The dove is the symbol of the Holy Spirit that came down upon the apostles, so it represents the spirit of Jesus who came down as a dove, as the Holy Spirit above the apostles. And the crown is a symbol for Queen Isabella when she was crowned. It is a tradition of Saint Isabella, so this is why we carry the tradition of the crowns.

Figure 6: A large crown and dove situated in Ponta Delgada in preparation for the festival of the Holy Spirit

Catarina: I don't know if you ever heard this story but back home, a long time ago Queen Isabella was one of the queens that liked to give to the poor. And she would bring a bag of bread to the poor but her husband did not like this. He would ask her, "What are you bringing out there?" And she said, "Roses." And he said, "No, no. I don't believe you, let me see." And when she dropped the bag that held all the food that she had stolen for the poor, do you know what was in there? It had roses! It was a miracle! And that is why she is Saint Isabella.

Eduardo: You know everything has a meaning. Everything is good. And we like it, if we didn't like it we would let it die, you know? But that is the tradition that was born to us and we carry it on.

After examining both accounts of the origin of the religious *festas* one can see that a tension is present, between the nobility of the past and the Church on the one hand, and the common people and popular belief on the other hand. I will discuss this tension further in Chapter Four. The practice and importance of the *festas* is tied in large part to the Portuguese identity that has been maintained in Canada. The *festas* have helped create and retain a sense of "Portuguese-ness" for migrants in their new setting. The migration experience and Portuguese identity will be discussed at length in the next chapter.

Chapter Three

My ethnographic research took place in Hamilton, Ontario. Hamilton is a densely populated and industrialized region at the west end of Lake Ontario, known as the Golden Horseshoe (Bailey 1991, Weaver 1982). Hamilton has largely been characterized as a "steel town" owing to the presence of two large steel companies, Stelco and Dofasco. Due to the highly industrialized nature of Hamilton, and the "expansionist approach" to immigration policy (Weaver 1982: 169) many migrants were attracted to settle there because of the job opportunities that industrialization provided. Since the late twentieth century, Hamilton has continued to develop as a public health and education sector, being home to the well regarded McMaster Children's Hospital and McMaster University, ultimately shedding its former perception as a "steel town" into a "contemporary city" (Weaver 1982: 191). Despite the changes in Hamilton's labour economy, it continues to attract migrants. According to the 2006 Canadian Census, more than 20 percent of the local Hamilton population was not born in Canada. This is the third highest such proportion in Canada after Toronto at 49%, and Vancouver at 39% (Statistics Canada 2006).

"The Portuguese Part of Town": Ethnic Community or Diaspora?

> The Portuguese have emigrated to Canada for a variety of reasons- to
> join family already in Canada, to provide better educational
> opportunities for their children, to escape military conscription, to
> find 'adventure'- best summed up as the search for '*a better way of
> life'* (Brettell 2003: 130).

The ethnographic component of my research was predominantly conducted in what is considered the Portuguese district of Hamilton, or Jamestown. This is a substantial Portuguese community concentrated in the downtown core of Hamilton around Barton Street and James Street North (See figure 7). While Jamestown was historically the epicenter for newly arriving Portuguese immigrants, today it can be considered more of a symbolic center. Many people of Portuguese heritage still inhabit Jamestown but the population has continued to spread and disperse into other areas and pockets of the city such as the Hamilton Mountain[11] and surrounding conglomerates like Stoney Creek.[12]

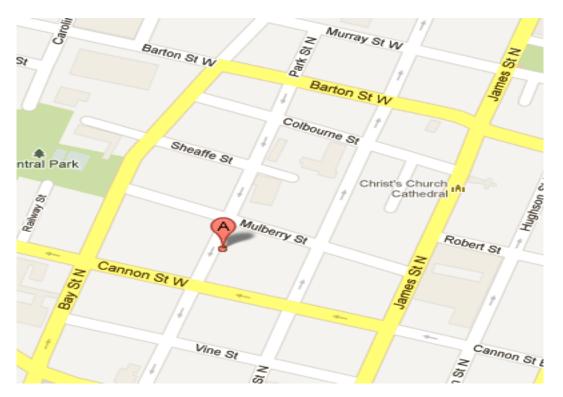**Figure 7: The "Portuguese District" in Hamilton, Ontario. Marker "A" represents the location of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church.**

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[11] Hamilton Mountain refers to the residential development that has rapidly progressed on the Hamilton escarpment.
[12] Hamilton includes six municipalities consisting of Ancaster, Dundas, Flamborough, Glanbrook and Stoney Creek (City of Hamilton Act, 1999)

There is not one homogenous Portuguese community in Hamilton, but rather several networks of interconnected social spheres, varying in certain aspects of membership and ethnic symbolism. The participants I interviewed felt that they belonged to Hamilton, although various parts of Hamilton. This chapter will portray the Portuguese community in Hamilton as described by members of the city's Portuguese population.

The majority of the participants belong to St. Mary's Portuguese Church, despite living in other parish districts. Portuguese restaurants, bakeries, ethnic grocery stores and Portuguese migrant shop owners characterize the Jamestown area. This area is also where the Portuguese parish of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church is located.

Figure 8: The signage demonstrating the dual cultures present at St. Mary's

St. Mary's was first erected in 1838 as St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception. In 1859 it was severely damaged by a fire and had to be demolished. One year later, in 1860, the present structure of St. Mary's was built (Jackman 2008). Since then the church has served as a pole of attraction for migrants, acting at various points in history as the ethnic church for various migrant enclaves, for example the Irish and the Italians (see Migliore 1991).Since approximately the late 1950s to early 1960s, St. Mary's Parish has served as the Roman Catholic Church of Portuguese migrants; it is a place where they have come to gather, worship and endure as a community since the first waves of migration.

The Portuguese community in Hamilton definitely satisfies the conditions for being identified as a migrant community. While Portuguese immigrants have often been overshadowed by other immigrant groups in Canada, their numbers are significant and a fundamental part of the immigrant mosaic of southwestern Ontario. According to Statistics Canada data from 2006, of the 410,850 Portuguese living in Canada, 69% of them live in Ontario, largely in clustered groups around Hamilton, Toronto, Kingston and Cambridge (Statistics Canada 2006). However, I would like to propose that Portuguese migrants qualify as a diaspora community, not simply an ethnic enclave. Using a diaspora framework is essential to understand the formation and expression of identity among Portuguese migrants living in Canada.

Figure 9: Photograph of St. Mary's exterior at time of fieldwork.

Diaspora is a term that has undergone much criticism since the 1980s when its usage became widespread and commonly interchangeable with terms such as immigrant community or ethnic community. Many scholars, including Butler (2001), Clifford (1994), Cohen (1996) and Safran (1991) have engaged in detailed and on-going discussions that attempt to both define and distinguish the term diaspora from simple migration. Most scholars agree that in order to be classified as a diaspora, the dispersed population must satisfy three basic features. First, the dispersed population must inhabit at least two destinations, rather than moving from the homeland to a single new destination. This type of dispersal is a necessary precondition for the formation of social links between the various populations in diaspora (Butler 2001). The second condition is some existing relationship to an actual or imagined homeland (Safran 1999, Butler 2001). The last condition is a self-awareness of the group's identity (Butler 2001). There is a fourth feature that is less universally agreed upon but is often included in these three main features, which is, in order to be defined as a diaspora, the dispersal must exist over at least two generations (Butler 2001). Diasporas are considered multi-generational because "they combine the individual migration experience with the collective history of group dispersal and regenesis of communities abroad" which takes time to negotiate and develop (Butler 2001:192).

Despite this comprehensive short-list of "what is necessary to be considered a diaspora," confirming diaspora identity is not as simple as checking off the boxes. Different scholars place differing emphases on certain features. Safran's (1999) work on diaspora, asserts that the two most important and distinguishable features of a diaspora

are the idealization of a return to the homeland and an on-going socio-economic and

political relationship with the homeland. Other scholars are less concerned with *who*

qualifies as a diaspora and instead focus on *how* to study a diaspora. One suggested model

proposes that in order to create a comprehensive and effective study of diaspora the

researcher must focus on:

    (1) the reasons for, and conditions of the dispersal

    (2) the relationship with the homeland

    (3) the relationship with the hostland

    (4) inter-relationships within communities of the diaspora (Butler 2001:195).

The aim of this framework is to facilitate comparative study of diaspora communities. To

further complicate the matter, at its simplest, diaspora can be defined as the dispersal of

people from their original homeland (Butler 2001). After an overview of different

diaspora paradigms it is still difficult to clarify the difference between migration and

diaspora. Butler (2001) attempts to illustrate the different reasons a population would

disperse from its homeland. These include, but are not limited to, state-eradication or

exile, forced and voluntary exile and less traumatic reasons such as labor migration.

Butler's explanation of migration dispersal momentarily provides some clarity to the

diaspora versus migration question. She suggests, "this form of definitive separation from

the homeland is the cumulative result of individual initiatives… typically the result of

intolerable economic conditions" (2001: 199). However, Butler then confuses the issue by

continuing, "and it may take the group an extended period of time to develop a diasporan

identity" (Butler 2001: 202). How then, is one supposed to clearly differentiate a diaspora from migration if migration can develop into a diaspora?

It is important to note at this point that there is an inherent problem in attempting to develop an essentialist definition of diaspora. As Safran (1999) notes in his work *Comparing Diasporas*, it is problematic to construct an "ideal" type of diaspora. In the past, many scholars have used the "Jewish case" (see Cohen 1997) as an "ideal" or strong model of diaspora. However, rigidity in the definition of diaspora may actually negate the lived experiences and realities of those we are studying. Butler (2001) elaborates on this issue when she discusses "the problem of the ethnographic approach to defining diasporas." She argues that we cannot offer a fixed definition of diaspora because "it anchors the work of the diasporan scholar in the observation of groups, rather than in the dynamic social processes of diasporization from which those groups are created" (Butler 2001:192-193). Ultimately, Butler is arguing that the term diaspora should be used as a framework for analysis of the complex social processes and co-existing identities within diasporan studies, rather than being inflicted on groups of people as another ethnic label.

My intention is to use diaspora as a framework of analysis for community formation and thereby identity formation with reference to the Portuguese community in Hamilton. While I do not intend to employ the rigid, essentialist definition of diaspora advocated by some scholars, neither am I suggesting the "free-standing" diaspora model that Marienstras (1989) has formulated. Marienstras' definition of diaspora holds that diasporan identity can exist without any myth of return and indeed without any reference to the homeland. What I appreciate about Marienstras' model is that its flexibility allows

for inclusion based on a defined sense of "being different" from the majority population in a hostland. Marienstras' model also allows migration and diaspora to be seen as more of a continuum, rather than dichotomous states of being. Furthermore, I maintain that it is possible for communities that were identifiable as diasporas at one point in history to cease to maintain a diasporan identity due to assimilating processes and the generational gap from the migratory experience. Conversely, individual acts of migration can eventually develop to become a diaspora. Clifford draws attention to this point in his essay *Diaspora* when he states, "at different times in their history, societies may wax and wane in diasporism" (Clifford 1994:306) re-affirming that ethnic groups may enter into and depart from a state of diaspora. My own conceptualization of the Portuguese community in Hamilton as a diaspora is heavily influenced by Clifford's (1994) general notions of diaspora.

Clifford proposes a "diacritical approach" to defining diaspora. He suggests that rather than locating essential features in order to qualify a group as a diaspora, one should focus on "diaspora borders" or what the diasporan group defines itself against (Clifford 1994:307). While migrants and members of diasporas may both initially define themselves against the majority population in similar ways, Clifford further differentiates between the two processes. Clifford claims, "Diasporic populations do not come from elsewhere in the same way that 'immigrants' do" (1994:307). He further states that, "immigrants may experience loss and nostalgia, but only en route to a whole new home in a new place," whereas people in diaspora cannot be assimilated because they "maintain

important allegiances and practical connections to a homeland or dispersed community located elsewhere" (Clifford 1994:307).

All the people I encountered during fieldwork demonstrated allegiance to their homeland through small (or sometimes large) material culture items such as Portuguese flags throughout their home, traditional Portuguese style figurines and other material culture objects. However, the most important demonstration of allegiance among my respondents manifested itself in strong emotional bonds to Portugal and Portuguese identity. I propose that this strong emotional consciousness of Portuguese identity, despite long-term residence in Canada, qualifies the Portuguese community of Hamilton as a diaspora. Their conscious effort to maintain a sense of "Portuguese-ness" in their hostland setting has allowed them to create and maintain a strong social network that spreads from Hamilton to other communities in Ontario, Canada, the United States and even back to the Azores. Through ethnic associations, shops, restaurants and churches, the Portuguese in Canada have been able to re-create their culture in diverse locations. Ghosh (1989) argues that when determining whether or not a group constitutes a diaspora it is not so much an orientation to roots in a specific place and a desire to return that should be taken into consideration as the ability to recreate a culture in a new setting that is dissimilar to the homeland.

One of the largest public expressions of Portuguese culture both in Portugal and in Canada involves religious festivals or *festas*. The maintenance and endurance of the Portuguese *festas* acts as a catalyst for the ongoing construction of Portuguese identity in Canada and ultimately promotes a diasporan community. It is not surprising that the

festas held by the church are a large component of maintenance of identity, as the Portuguese Catholic Church has performed, and continues to perform, a vital role in the integration process of foreign immigrants. Other scholars have noted that other ethnic churches in North America facilitate the same function. (cf. Dolan 1975; Krickus 1976; Miller and Marzik 1977). The role of *Festas* will be discussed in much greater detail in subsequent chapters, however, I wish to return to the emotional consciousness of Portuguese identity in a Canadian setting.

Many scholars of diaspora maintain that a critical component of diasporan experience is the longing to return home (Butler 2001, Safran 1999). However, I do not entirely agree with this assertion. My own research suggests that the situation is more complex. In my view, for many people in diaspora, return is an ideal which may be longed for but is recognized as unattainable. Many of the Portuguese-Canadians I interviewed had already accepted the pragmatic reality that return is not feasible. While all of my informants expressed a significant love and attachment to their homeland, none of them explicitly said they would ever permanently return home. In fact, six out of the nineteen interviewees specifically stated they would not return to the Azores permanently if given the chance. This somewhat surprising statement was not one that I provoked with any single question but usually appeared during discussion of Portuguese-Canadian identity. While their reluctance to return home might seem like evidence for the full integration of these individuals into Canadian society, their position did not stem from political or economic factors, but rather from a deeply felt social and emotional cause. Of all the informants who said they would not return to the Azores, each one stated, again

without prompting, that it was because their family unit is now "stuck" or established in Canada. In other words, their roots in Canada block their route home (cf. Clifford 1997). This is why I suggest that a longing for the homeland cannot be considered equivalent to longing for a *return* to the homeland. Furthermore, this distinction is the basis for my reasoning in suggesting that emotions must weigh predominantly in the definition of a community as a diaspora. It is not simply the concepts of homeland versus hostland that must be taken into consideration. Instead it must be recognized that the home that people remember in their hearts- their "heartland"- does not coincide with the home in their place of residence. It is this dissonance that creates the foundation of a diaspora. These people live in diaspora by enacting the memories of their "heartland" in the new geographical and cultural setting.

To demonstrate the emotional consciousness to which I am referring, I would like to introduce Maria José, a 60 year old woman, now retired, who has lived in Canada for the past 45 years, and indeed for the majority of her life. We sat in her home casually talking over coffee. We discussed her reasons for migrating, her life in the Azores and her experience of Canada. The tone was light, positive, amicable and usually filled with laughter. Even while she discussed the hardships she has experienced such as losing her husband and bouts of ill health, the mood was casual and I could tell Maria José had learned to laugh through life's difficult periods long ago. It was not until I asked her, "What does it mean to you to be Portuguese and living in Canada?" that I saw a break in her demeanor. Her answer is transcribed as follows:

Maria José: It means…Well, I speak for me only. (Pauses). I like being in Canada. I like the country. I am Canadian by paper because I paid to be Canadian, because I liked being in the country and also so I don't have any complications if I'd like to leave- you just show the Canadian passport and done! (chuckles). But…in my heart (long pause and she gestures to her heart), in my heart there is a piece- a piece shut off, that when I speak of Portugal or when I see the Portuguese flag, when I see Portuguese programs on the TV, there comes forward this little box that is shut off in my heart…and it opens…and that is when the tears come. [E isso é quando às lágrimas vem]

Maria José is visibly crying as she finishes speaking.

Me: I'm sorry Maria. I hope I haven't upset you too much. Can I get you a tissue?

*Maria José: No, no. I'm sorry. You get emotional remembering, you know? I am Canadian because I like the country… but in my heart, I am Portuguese. **I am Portuguese**. I like being in Canada. Canada is my country- but my homeland [minha patria] (places hand over her heart) is Portugal.*

As this dialogue demonstrates, Maria José is a woman who is clearly torn between two countries, two homes and two hearts. She recognizes and identifies herself as Canadian but at the same time she *feels* she is Portuguese. She is someone who has lived and worked for the majority of her life in Canada while continuing to live out her Portuguese values, traditions and culture in parallel. Maria José is also one of my respondents who stated explicitly that she would not return to the Azores. I continue using her own words to explain why:

Maria José: I am Portuguese because I was raised in Portugal. At the time I went for my Canadian papers, if I wanted, I could have kept both nationalities but I only have one, that is Canadian. I do not have Portuguese papers because when I left, I left everything there. So now to do it it is more complicated. You have to go to the Portuguese consul in Toronto, you know? So? But in my heart, I am Portuguese. I'm in retirement now, because I'm already of age! But I always worked in this country [Canada]. But if I were to move to an old folks home- I like Portugal very much- but if I have to move to one over there [Azores] I would not want to. Because here I have my daughters, my grandchildren. What would I do there with just that compadre [godfather] that I have there?

Another example that demonstrates the rationale for not returning to the homeland comes from my discussion with Rosa and João. Rosa and João are a married couple that have lived in Canada for 43 years. They migrated from the Azores in their early twenties and built their life in Canada. Both of them acquired jobs, they purchased a home and began a family. While they are now many years removed from the migratory event, when I asked them about their perceptions of selfhood it became evident that the idea of return is a natural outcome from this line of discussion.

Me: So do you consider yourselves Canadian or Portuguese?

Rosa: To be honest with you I would have liked to go have Canadian citizenship but he [her husband] *never wanted to go because he is scared of the speaking part. Because people scare you, they say they going to ask you so many questions and then you don't pass. So you go year by year…and it's a shame. But now I just have to pay some money and get it because I still don't have it. But I consider myself Canadian because my roots*

are in here; my kids. I like [the Azores] *but I don't think I'll go back, I got my kids here, you know? But I am proud to be Portuguese. Oh, I am proud to be Portuguese! I would never say I would change my Portuguese to be Canadian. I would never change my patrimony [o meu património]. I would never change because I love to be Portuguese. I love my life, my family back there, you know? It's emotional to talk about.*

At this point in the interview Rosa begins to cry. As I look to her husband João, I realize that although he has been fairly quiet while Rosa spoke he is also wiping away tears.

João: I still have my older brother there, 69 years old.

Rosa: It's just me, you know? I'm a person who is very emotional when talking about my country and family (pauses and she begins to cry more heavily). *Sometimes I'm embarrassed to be like this…I'm sorry, but talking about back home and family* (sort of laughs as she sniffles and finishes wiping her tears*). I'm sorry about that, but it's part of the meeting, right?*

Maria José, Rosa and João demonstrate the deep emotionality that is evoked when discussing their Portuguese heritage, identity and homeland. Tears are shed remembering their homeland, their sacrifices and perhaps in sad acknowledgment that their place of birth will not be their place of residence again The rationale for remaining in Canada rather than returning to the Azores provided in the scenarios above is connected to pragmatic matters such as having their family roots block their route back to the homeland. The possibility of a return home would have to be a comprehensive, multi-generational extraction that is highly unattainable. Therefore, for people like Maria José, Rosa and João, their homeland is out of reach; not because there is no desire to return, but

because the conditions of return are unfavorable. Brettell (2003) similarly noted in her fieldwork with Portuguese migrants to Toronto that those who remained in Canada "admitted to becoming too accustomed to the amenities of Canadian life and also found it too difficult to extricate their children who came to speak English better than Portuguese" (130). Many Portuguese migrants are caught in an emotional duality of attempting to be both Portuguese and Canadian. Oftentimes when I would discuss with people whether they felt they were Canadian or Portuguese their answer would be similar to these words spoken by one of my respondents, *"Well, I can say two things, you know? See, my heart is in Portugal… but my life is here, so how should I call myself? I am Portuguese in my heart but my heart is in Canada."* The Portuguese and Canadian expressions of identity compete but neither identity is complete without the other. The experiences of overlapping borders and transnational processes have facilitated the creation and endurance of transnational identities in late 20th century life (Clifford 1994:304). "The concept of transnationalism has transformed how we understand the process of immigrant incorporation by offering an alternative model to the older assimilation model" (Brettell 2003:x). In this current climate, migrants are able to identify as hybrids or multi-faceted personae.

Much of the argument for the Portuguese community in Hamilton being a diaspora implies that Portuguese identity in Canada is something fixed that endures or is maintained unchanged from their life in the Azores. However, the Portuguese-Canadian identity is in a sense under constant "reconstruction" as it negotiates the new values, traditions, social norms and customs within Canada. When I spoke to another of my

respondents, Gloria, about whether she felt she was Portuguese or Canadian, her answer was a definite "both".

Gloria: Both. When I go there [to the Azores] I don't remember I'm Canadian, when I'm here I don't remember that I'm Portuguese! Well of course I do, but you know what I mean?

Gloria's answer demonstrates how depending on the setting, a certain identity is expressed more than the other. The same truth could be extrapolated for different social settings. Perhaps Gloria feels more Portuguese at church or during the *festas* when other members of the Portuguese community surround her. This prove that identities are fabrications, both invented and constructed; therefore there exists a conscious acceptance or rejection of "Portuguese-ness" that undergoes negotiation at various stages of a person's life and perhaps even during daily interactions.

Research by Napolitano (2002) recognizes that the learning process involved in migration is not only about gains but also about losses; this applies to one's construction of self as well. While many of the Portuguese I spoke with continue to identify themselves as Portuguese, there is a sense of loss when considering current culture and society in Portugal itself. The fact that they have migrated has meant that migrants have typically lost the opportunity to develop and grow their Portuguese identity, as they would have done if they were actually living in Portugal. It has been observed by researchers of migration that the migration process is a conservative force and that it preserves the traditional social structure as remembered at the time of migration, rather

than as it has evolved over time in the home country (Dunn and Dunn 1967, Gonzalez 1969, Levine 1966, Olwig 2013).

The preserved idea of "Portuguese-ness" does not necessarily mesh with current ideas of Portuguese identity as expressed in Portugal itself. I derive this conclusion largely from an on-going relationship with a recent migrant from mainland Portugal. Rather than conducting a single interview with Leandro, we met various times for long discussions. Our relationship provided me with much contextual information and a better understanding of contemporary life in Portugal. Once we discussed what it meant to be a Portuguese person living in Canada; his response follows:

Leandro: Well, from what I've already seen and from my experience, I think that it is not a unique reality. I think that a big part of the Canadian-Portuguese community is stuck as a group who migrated not recently but 20 or 30 years ago. What am I talking about? More specifically. I think that this reality of the community has differences from the Portuguese that I know who live in Brazil or other places of Europe who have migrated as well and seem to move past being Portuguese and truly find incorporation. I also feel there is a big division in people who migrated from the mainland and those who migrated from the Azores. I find that people from the mainland maintain a larger tie to Portugal and what is currently happening there than those in the Azores, who just remember things "antiguamente" [back then].

Unfortunately, Leandro was the only respondent I encountered who wanted to participate in my study that was not originally from the Azores. It would have been useful to compare and contrast his opinions to other Portuguese from the mainland.

However, his insights are useful to consider because they speak to the studies of migration that view migration as a conservative force.

Much of the discussion of Portuguese identity in this has chapter focused on migrant identity, but that is merely a part of the equation. Religion also plays a significant part in forming a sense of "Portuguese-ness". In the following Chapter one explore the religious dimensions of Portuguese identity in Hamilton.

Chapter Four

This chapter discusses two broad themes. The first theme concerns how Portuguese migrants regard religion in Canada after the migratory event. This discussion covers the forms, beliefs and practices that constitute Portuguese religious practice in Canada. An analysis of devotions to saints, or the "Cult of Saints" is included in this discussion. The second theme of this chapter is to explore a topic that has undergone much anthropological study and discussion, which is the division or tension between the Church and lay people, between official Roman Catholicism and "popular" or "folk" religion. My concern within this theme is not with institutional Church history, as there exists extensive literature on the subject. My focus is on how the institutional Church affects the experience, belief and practice of the people who identify themselves as Catholic, yet practice traditions that have been long held as contradictory and unsupported by official orthodoxy (cf. Pina-Cabral 1986, Riegelhaupt 1973). This topic has most often been studied in the context of European Roman Catholicism. However, there is also work on North American Catholicism (cf. Orsi 1985). My goal is to evaluate whether or not the tension between official and popular Catholicism transcends European boundaries and continues to occur in diasporic spaces. Scholars such as Badone (1990), Brettell (1990), Riegelhaupt (1973) and Behar (1990) have done extensive research on anticlerical attitudes in European contexts ranging from Brittany to northwestern Portugal and parts of Spain. This chapter will use their work as a basis for discussing the reality of anticlericalism and negotiations between popular religion and official Church perspectives in the context of Hamilton's Portuguese community. In particular, I reflect

on the question of how lay Portuguese practices, religious forms, beliefs, and perceptions affect the relationships between lay people and the official Roman Catholic Church and clergy. I use the *festas* as a lens through which to analyze these issues. The *festas* are a legitimate point of departure because they have long been recognized as material events that symbolize the divide between the Church and popular belief (Pina-Cabral 1986, Cabral 1989, Regielhaupt 1973, Brettell 1990).

Migrant Religion in Canada

There is considerable debate surrounding the question of whether there is an increase or decrease in immigrant religious participation surrounding the migratory event (Connor 2008:243). Some scholars maintain that the act of migration is a "theologizing" experience, which actually heightens immigrant religious participation, and that the religious factor reinforces ethnic identity and is strengthened by the migratory event (Connor 2008). Csordas (2009) has argued that there is a process of religious resurgence and re-enchantment among immigrants facilitated by transnational processes including the development of travel and communication technologies. The opposing view posits that the uprooting involved in migration and resettlement actually disrupts and decreases immigrant religious participation (Connor 2008, Yang & Ebaugh 2001). This debate is particularly relevant to the situation of Portuguese migrants to Canada since religion has played a central role in daily life in Portugal (Gemzoe 2009, Pina-Cabral 1986). The question then becomes what happens to this foundational relationship when immigrants migrate to Canada?

Canada has the reputation of being welcoming toward immigrants, accompanied by the image of a cultural mosaic. However, in the late twentieth century and twenty-first century the vast majority of Canadians appear to have rejected organized religion, in favour of a fragmented or "un-focused" orientation toward meaning (Bibby 1979). Some scholars have even argued that Canada is in a state of "post-modernity" which is characterized by the disqualification of "great narratives, great religions and great ideologies" (Lambert 1999:307). Two principal, residual effects from this state include decline or adaptation and reinterpretation of previous religious beliefs. Lambert (1999) has gone so far as to argue that there are four principal religious trends currently at play in Western religious evolution which are: (1) a decline in Christianity's popularity (2) a redefining of Christianity (3) an expansion of analogous beliefs and (4) a shift toward relativism (Lambert 1999:327). If Lambert's early postulations are correct, how would the predominantly secular context of Canadian society affect Portuguese immigrants and their religious traditions? Would these first generation immigrants and their children continue to find meaning through reference to Roman Catholic beliefs and practices known from their past in Portugal? Or would such practices appear irrelevant in Canada?

In contrast to Bibby (1979) and Lambert's (1999) secularizing vision of the twenty-first century, Bramadat and Seljak (2005) have found that:

> While the power of religion (especially Christianity) in Canada has changed significantly in the past 30 years, it remains an important mode of identification for the majority of Canadians; religious communities provide a vital context in which the concerns of minority groups are expressed. Moreover, while many people expected religion to wither on the proverbial vine as its foundations were exposed to the bright light of modern technocratic rationality,

> this has simply not happened, and it is now impossible to deny that religion is alive and well and influencing public life around the world (*vii- viii).*

Bramadat and Seljak's statement holds true for my findings regarding Portuguese migrants in Hamilton. After in-depth discussions with various informants, analysis of the interviews showed that first generation Portuguese migrants continue to find meaning in their faith, traditional practices and beliefs while in their new Canadian setting.[13] There has been a definite relationship between their religious and ethnic identity that influences how they proceed with their lives in Canada. The majority of respondents acknowledged that they still attend mass regularly. Many told me that they believed if they missed mass for any reason (excluding serious illness) that they "would not have a good week". This response speaks again to the centrality that religion plays in their daily lives. Another example of Portuguese religious tradition that has migrated to Canada is a particular devotion to saints that has sometimes been referred to within academic literature as the cult of saints.

Devotion to Saints

As I walked into the home of Lucinda and José Carlos I immediately recognized the presence of figurines and statues of saints known as *santinhos* dispersed throughout the house. As I continued to meet respondents in their homes throughout the course of my fieldwork I noted the presence of these *santinhos* was a characteristic of a traditional Portuguese household. When I commented on the particularly extensive collection in

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[13] This statement is in reference to first generation migrants who left the Azores and have settled in Canada. Chapter Five will continue this discussion with reference to subsequent generations who are removed from the actual migratory event.

Lucinda and José Carlos' home, I received a response that signified the true importance of the presence of the *santinhos* within the homes of Portuguese people:

> *S: What a large collection* [of santinhos] *you have!*
>
> *Lucinda: Oh yes, we have many!*
>
> *José Carlos: --I think we are missing some!*
>
> *Lucinda: José, don't joke! Oh yes, I have St. John here and all these. When I got married I had Nossa Senhora de Piadade and the Sacred Heart of Jesus. We like having them. Maria's daughter[14] doesn't have any in her home. She doesn't want any but she goes to our church. Why wouldn't she want them?*

Lucinda was clearly proud of her vast collection of *santinhos* and could not understand why someone who frequents the Portuguese church would not want to include the *santinhos* in their own home. In Lucinda's mind the figurines were an extension of living the traditional Portuguese religious lifestyle; a lifestyle that she noted the second generation was not necessarily continuing. To Lucinda and José Carlos, the figurines represented more than mere decoration. As I continued to note the presence of the *santinhos,* I realized many of the respondents I spoke with shared Lucinda and José Carlos' perspective.

The collections I encountered ranged in size and frequency. Some collections were as simple as a cross above the entrance to the house or the image of Mary with Jesus or a saint above each bed, while others were so large that they would take up entire rooms

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[14] A shared acquaintance's daughter whom I met during the course of my fieldwork through Lucinda's introduction.

complete with lighting, pedestals and backdrops. Opinions varied when I asked if the saintly figurines themselves possessed any sort of healing or spiritual power, but all agreed that it was important to own them and have them in one's home. Discussion about the statues would often prompt discussion about an incident that had taken place in which the informant felt divine intervention came into play. Jessica is a second generation migrant in her early 30s with three young children. Her parents were the first generation to migrate to Canada and while Jessica was born in Canada, she still describes her upbringing as traditionally Portuguese. While her home reflected her Canadian upbringing, there were still hints of her Portuguese heritage. One of the largest indicators of Portuguese heritage was the number of saintly figurines in her home. While we talked about the figurines, how she acquired them and why she kept them, we crossed an invisible line into extremely emotional and spiritual territory.

> *Me: So, do you believe that praying to these santinhos has an effect? Like*
> *if someone is sick do you believe that praying to these saints can help*
> *towards a healing or bring peace or something like that?*
> *J: I do. Definitely. There was a couple incidents I can tell you. First, my*
> *daughter, the little one, she was a year and a half at the time I think. I had*
> *the Espirito Santo [statues and flags] here [in preparation for the festas]*
> *so the whole room was set up. I had the first Sunday of St. Michael the*
> *Archangel. It was the first time that I had put my kids names – because you*
> *put their names and then when they call you up you go take one of those*
> *tickets if it has 1,2,3,4,5 or 6 on it that tells you which Sunday you have for*

the next year. So it was my daughter's name that was called and she got the first Sunday so you bring that crown of the Holy Spirit home for the whole year. Well she was in the garage with my husband and I already had the Espirito Santo here and we had already been praying and stuff. Well we have stairs that lead to my basement and there was no spindles [no railing] there. (Jessica pauses as tears come to her eyes recalling the event). *She had fallen 8 feet… she had fallen 8 feet and I honestly have no idea how my husband had the courage to pick her up at the bottom because she was face down (*starts to cry)*… and when he brought her up…. He said "She fell, she fell"… and she didn't have one mark one her. But I took her to the hospital to check her out and she was fine, and like, she hit solid concrete. Not a spot on her, so things like that like I believe. I do believe. And in the same year I was really really sick and had surgery- a total hysterectomy and I went to the hospital and everything and I didn't know what was the matter with me. I had a 25lb tumor in my ovary. And until they opened me up they didn't know what was going to happen... and it could have been cancerous and waiting for those test results for two weeks… but it wasn't. And I had the Espirito Santo here through all of that so I believe in stuff like that, you know? Yeah, you have to believe and you have to be a strong believer… because I think if I didn't… that could have been the biggest tragedy in my garage.*

In Jessica's accounts of these near-tragic events in her life, there is a strong inference that divine power resulted in their positive outcomes. Jessica's narrative places a strong emphasis on the fact that the crown and figurine of the Holy Spirit were physically present in her home during the events.

Maria José's account of her religious devotion also revolved around devotion to a particular statuette in her home. The saint appeared in her home in different sized figurines, Mass cards with the picture of the saint on it and drawings:

Maria José: I am very devoted. I like Saint Philomena; I have her statue in my room. I have many things that adore St. Philomena.

Me: Why Saint Philomena?

Maria José: Saint Philomena is the patron saint for suffering because she was martyred because she suffered much. She was very young; I think 13 when she died. She wanted to belong to Jesus. She didn't want to marry or want a man, but her parents wanted her to marry a king or son of a king or something but she didn't want to and she suffered much because of this king. In the end she was tied around the neck to an anchor and thrown into the water and our lord performed a miracle. She survived. So it's Saint Philomena who is martyred for people who suffer and as I suffered much during the time when I was pregnant with my older daughter, I asked Saint Philomena very much that if she turned out okay and if I was okay and that if it was a girl, I would name her Philomena. When my daughter came out she was very black but the doctors did what they do and she was okay, so my oldest daughter is Philomena and thank God she is grown now. All this is why I am very devoted to Saint Philomena. I like very much Saint Philomena. I like Nossa

Senhora da Fatima, I like Senhor Santo Cristo and you know but I have a special devotion for Saint Philomena because when I endure something hard Saint Philomena helps me.

The narratives recounted by Jessica and Maria José suggest a popular belief among my respondents that owning figurines and statues can bring physical aid in times of duress or need.

On another occasion, I sat speaking with Gabriel and Susana, parents to four children who are all grown now with children of their own. Gabriel and Susana are retired and enjoy the role of being grandparents. While their paid employment may have ended, they explain that there is much spiritual work that they do on behalf of their children and grandchildren. Gabriel and Susana explained to me the importance of prayer, and more specifically praying to individual saints for particular afflictions. Susana recalled a time when she was told that one of her children had an incidence of cancer. Susana found out from another of her children almost a year after the incident had occurred. She explained to me that her first reaction was one of fear for the well being of her child. Later, she felt complete and utter anger at the fact that her children had withheld this information from her. As she reasoned, "*It is part of being a mother that we can specially ask of saints and pray to them for healing. It is our duty as a parent and a special position that is given to us to pray for our children.*"

While a significant number of respondents owned figurines, the pattern of devotion to images was not uniform. There is a gradation of devotion to the figurines and belief in what the figurines can actually *do*. This became clear to me after speaking

casually with a married couple, Rosa and João, in their home. This couple was born in

São Miguel where devotion to Senhor Santo Cristo is very popular. It is common for

Portuguese people to own replica statues of this particular image of Jesus Christ.

Figure 10. Picture of decorated shrine including religious figurines in a respondent's home

This image is said to perform miracles. The original statue at the shrine of Senhor

Santo Cristo in São Miguel has a following of believers who proclaim that the statue's

nails grow and must be maintained by the nuns who are in charge of the shrine. This story

suggests that the statue is seen as being physically alive and containing the actual

presence of God.

After speaking to Rosa and João I realized that devotion to images and *santinhos* is not superficial. There may be deeper processes at play when people attend the *festas* and festival processions. As we sat talking I began to question Rosa and João about the meaning of the *festa* processions. Below is the response I received:

> *João: I will tell you the truth. I'm not one that…. Like I see a procession and I think "That is the people who have done that. Those are just images, but we are thanking God.' That is the way that our Bible talks, it says not to glorify the images. Like we are seeing that that is, let's say Nossa Senhora there, but we have to remember that She is more than that. Look, the priests say it's for us to venerate the images, not to [worship] the images. It's those up* **there** [gesturing upwards toward the ceiling*] that we have to adore (worship). See, I was raised hearing that the nails of Senhor Santo Cristo grow. That's not nice to say that to young children. The Bible says do not make statues in my image!*

> *Rosa: Well, what João means is you do not know the way Jesus is. I have a faith and I picture Him myself but we don't know. He (João) is right in one way. People make movies and things that are so stupid about how He (Jesus) looks and stuff. We should not do that. It is no good if you have to see to believe. But, João, you don't know if the nuns see that his nails grow. Or that maybe they have so much faith that they see things that we don't. What I believe is that for those who have faith God makes miracles. He knows what is good for us and maybe we are blind and don't see it.*

Figure 11: Shrine of Senhor Santo Cristo in São Miguel. This shrine is actually encased behind a gridded wall for protection from tourists. This picture was taken through one of the grid openings.

This discussion with João brings to light a popular tension within Catholic worship. Christian (1981) observed the cult of saints, which includes patron saint festivals, has "have historically been a major point of contention between people and their priests" (82). João is basically saying that priests (in this case representing official Church orthodoxy) and the Bible teach that it is not the statue itself that has actual power but the divine persona it represents. However, my discussion with Maria José and Jessica hints that the presence of the statues themselves may be a significant factor in working miracles or having protective powers. Father Pai, the presiding priest at St. Mary's during the time of

my fieldwork comments on this issue. In this case, the discussion of devotion to saints revolves around the *festa* procession where images of the Holy Family are paraded around the streets circling the church (See Figure12).

Figure 12: Statues in the image of the Holy Family used during a *festa* procession

Father Pai explains:

The procession is an expression of faith, if it's not a signal of faith there is no point in having it. It is not the same as a parade. Here parishioners say it's a parade but the processions start in the Catholic Church as an expression of faith. We believe that the images represent their divine counterparts and make us remember Our Lady and Our

*Father. We **do not** worship the images but it is a symbol, like a photograph of our parent who has already passed away and we remember them. So these images signify our procession of faith, and we need respect them, but not adore them.*

What is brought to light during these discussions is an uneasy balance between the sacred and the profane. Maria José and Jessica see the sacred and profane as complexly intertwined; yet Faither Pai and João believe they are completely separate realms. Brettell (1990) notes this disparity as one of the four structural oppositions between popular religion and official religion.

The discussion surrounding devotion to saints and *santinhos* offers a preliminary glimpse into the divide between popular belief and officially sanctioned Catholic Church dogma. The Portuguese people adhere to a Roman Catholic faith but also participate in practices that the Catholic Church does not necessarily recognize. The largest expression of this tension is arguably the religious *festa.*

Tensions Between the Church and the People

Brettell recalls an interview she conducted in the 1980s with a Portuguese priest in Toronto. When they discussed his task of celebrating the festival of the Holy Spirit in his parish, he told her that he felt these festivals were "an unfortunate aspect of Portuguese religiosity, but one that the people demanded" (Brettell 1990:56). His perspective stemmed from his seminary training in which emphasis was placed upon an individual's relationship to God and to the Church. Therefore, the kind of religion that the priest was advocating was individual and spiritual, not the communal and public celebration that the Feast of the Holy Spirit represented.

The response that Brettell elicited from the priest is not uncommon. It is a sentiment that has been widely encountered and explored by those who study official Church orthodoxy and "popular" religion. Riegelhaupt (1973) explains that this priest's type of objection derives from current understandings of Catholicism; the Church's thinking about "modern Catholicism" is that it is "designed for individual salvation and it does not see itself as the institution through which communal identity should be expressed and celebrated" (1973:849). This philosophy is the basis for what many scholars have found to be an inherent tension when studying religious faith, experience and practice. They have observed a "confrontation between people's religion and institutional religion – a structural opposition that is centuries old and forms the basis for the definitions of popular or folk religions" (Brettell 1990:53). The Portuguese tradition of religious festivals has often been explored in the context of this tension between the Church and the people, and also understood as a dynamic interplay between anticlerical sentiments and elaborate displays of "unorthodox" devotion. However, manifestations of religious practice (embodying both belief and behavior) are neither totally of the orthodox institution (represented by its priests) nor totally of the people. They are more often than not an accommodation between the two (Brettell 1990:55-56). My assessment of Portuguese religious festivals will rely heavily on comparative literature stemming from scholars such as Brettell (1990, 2003), Riegelhaupt (1973, 1982, 1984), Behar (1990) and Brandes (1990) who have explored similar phenomenon in various European (largely mainland rural Portugal) or migrant settings. I will use their work as a basis to compare or contrast my own findings during my fieldwork at St. Mary's parish.

First, one should clarify what is meant by "folk" or "popular" religion versus official church religion. The two definitions I provide are from Badone's (1990) edited volume, *Religious Orthodoxy & Popular Faith in European Society.* Italian historian Gabriele De Rosa (1977) defined popular religion as "any social situation where a conflict of dialectic emerges between official religious models proposed by the ecclesiastical hierarchy and "unofficial forms" [of participation]" (Brettell 1990:55). Peter William's (1980) definition of folk religion involves an implicit tension between religion that is practiced by the masses and religion that is sanctioned by the church. It may be viewed as a "dialectic between two opposed forces which those who are caught between them attempt to reconcile into an uneasy equilibrium" (Williams 1980: 60). I employ both of these definitions as a framework for exploring the Catholicism of Portuguese migrants' lived realities; more specifically how priests and parishioners negotiate the practice of religion in their community.

Behar reminds us, "religious cultures are obviously not static and need to be seen in a contextual, comparative and relational light, set squarely and fully within the milieu of a particular time and place" (1990:78). Therefore, at this time it becomes important to introduce the characters at play during the time of my fieldwork. Father Janeiro was parish priest of St.Mary's Church for 22 years. His many years of service helped shape the atmosphere of the Portuguese community in Hamilton. After his retirement a young priest arrived to take over the parish. This new priest was only in leadership for a short period of time. Due to a highly publicized and controversial scandal, this priest was

unable to continue to act as the head of the church.[15] It was in this time of public crisis

that Father Pai, the current priest, was recruited to serve as the head priest at St. Mary's.

At the time of my research, Father Pai had only been serving at St. Mary's for a few

months. This is important to note because he did not have a long history with the

congregation. Relationships and dynamics between the priest, Church and people were

still in the formative stages. Nonetheless, St. Mary's parish and those I spoke with there,

either as parishioners or participants in the *festa,* have a long history with the Church and

the various priests that have served the parish. The rituals and traditions have endured and

the current priest, despite a short-term occupancy, has already had the chance to deal with

a number of patron saint festivals and the different *festa* organizers and organizations.

Now that the context has been provided, the tension between "official" Catholicism and

"Portuguese Catholicism" and the avenues it exposes itself through will be explored.

Behar argues that the relationship between the priest and his parishioners (in this

case in Santa María, Spain) "is one rooted in struggle- a struggle for the Church; for the

ownership of the Church" (1990:77). In regards to my research, I found that this struggle

most often represented itself in defining the role of the priest and his role in relation to

conducting the *festas.* Here is an excerpt of my interview with Maria José (a *festa*

participant) that discusses the subject at hand.

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[15] While it is important for me to introduce the scandal at St. Mary's because it establishes part of the context for my study, the aim of this thesis is not to explore the issue or in any way make judgments about the scandal. Speaking with many of my informants provoked varied responses to the situation. The only definitive conclusion that I can assert about the controversy is that it left many people feeling hurt and saddened, either because they felt the Church had wronged them, or because they felt that misguided people had wronged the Church.

Me: What are your opinions on the role of the priest?

Maria José: The priest for me, when he is on the altar, he represents

Jesus Christ. If he speaks well and knows what he is doing and if he

touches your heart I can be there for two hours- no problems- listening

to that priest.

Me: So, his role is only in the church?

Maria José: No. He is the priest inside and outside the church because

he is a priest. We are to respect him because he is a priest. For me, a

priest is Christ on earth and we are to have respect. Inside the church

even more so because the priest is doing what Christ demanded. We are

to have respect and give attention, not daydream so that we don't know

where we are anymore. To me a priest is a sacred person.

Me: So then are the priests an important part of the festas?

Maria José: Oh yeah! Yeah! Yeah! The priest is important for the

festas. The priest is who commands in the church; it is the priest who

tells who is what and what is not. We have to volunteer in the church

and we have to do what the priest wants because it is the priest who

commands, both what we like or what we don't like. It is the priest who

commands from the door of the church to all inside; it is he who

commands. He is the superior inside; he is the "big boss" inside there.

That's it. We can't say to the priest 'do it like this', he is the one who

has to say 'you are not doing it right, do it like this 'or 'how do you

think I should do it' and then we can say meekly, 'Oh, Senhor Padre, if

it pleases you can it be like this and this?' and the dialogue that

follows, you know? And so the priest is the center, he commands...

inside the church. Outside of the church he commands his house. In

mine he won't! Nor the people on the street, you know? But the priest in

the church is the center; the head, he is the one who should command.

Maria José's answer suggests that the priest has an integral role within the church and in

carrying out the *festas*, however, his role has boundaries. This sentiment is similar to what

Behar found when discussing the role of the priest with people in Spain. She found that

the priests' "task" is to attend to "their business"; in this sense, anything that pertains to

activity within the church or surrounding the church, for example to provide the

sacraments, lead the flock to the *festas* and say mass. But Behar also noted the priest was

to conduct this leadership, "with a minimum of interference in the other domains of social

life. Today, more than ever, people resent any intrusion of the priest in their private lives

or in activities of the community" (Behar 1990:91). One of the *festa* organizers that I

spoke with confirmed this response:

For religious festas you need a priest. When it comes time to do the work

that the Irmandade[16] (organization) does, we don't need him to do our

work. But when we go to church, you need him. **Inside the church***, the*

priest is always needed. He is not the 'commissão' *[festa commission] but*

he is the head of everything. He is the one who commands in the church

---

[16] The *Irmandade* organizations are also found in Portugal where they have a long history of preparing and organizing the *festas.*

> *and symbolizes our Catholicism and our people. We cannot do things*
>
> *without talking to him because he is the head of the Church and*
>
> *everything.*

Both of my respondents' answer spoke to the need for the priest when conducting the *festas*. This varies from responses elicited by Behar and Brettell. In my research, respondents seemed to place the priest at the centre of religious activity, rather than creating a struggle for power. However, speaking with Father Pai provided a very different perspective:

> *Me: Can you describe the relationship between the festa itself and the festa*
>
> *organizations with the church, or more specifically yourself as a priest?*
>
> *Father Pai: So you mean the festa committees? Do they have a good*
>
> *relationship with the church and the priest?*
>
> *Me: Yes.*
>
> *Father Pai: Well in some cases yes. And here in Hamilton, so far, I can't*
>
> *say no. I can't say no. But I know that in other places, and here I don't*
>
> *know the future, the relationship is not always that good. It's not always*
>
> *healthy. Because see the priest always asks that the priority be the religious*
>
> *part: the church, the procession, and these communities tend to go more*
>
> *with the profane. And then, you know, they want the priest to run the mass-*
>
> *the faster the better, the shorter the better and their emphasis is more on the*
>
> *outside things. So it's difficult. It's difficult because see in these committees,*
>
> *let me say… you see people that usually don't come to church so they don't*

come to church on Sunday. They don't care about the religious things but they want to be involved in the feast, the festas, but what interests them is the music and the festas, so I'm talking in a general manner. So for your question, short and sweet, there is not always good relationships between the organizations and the priests because the tendency of these people is for the festas profane and the festas outside and these people do not go to church. And they want to command the priest. They want the priest to do as they wish and they want to be at the front, they want the priest to submit to them because they bring the money, and we need the money because the people does not give sufficiently if there were no festas. So, do you see the problem? At times the priest gives in to many things because the church needs them but the one who suffers more is the priest. They want the priest to do as they wish otherwise they keep the money in their hand. People think that they are giving donations to the church who is doing the festa, but the money stays in their hands and then they play with the priest: "do as we say" and "do as we told you". So there is not always good relationships and its as you say in English a pain in the neck. Those who come to mass do not always know this. Sometimes they come to the priest to bring peace to two groups who are fighting but it is because of this in some Portuguese churches, that young priests do not want these feasts anymore because they don't want to be bossed by these people. They want to know even better than the priest. So it is very difficult as a priest to work in the immigration

community and these are the things I myself am getting tired of. When I left

my previous parish it was due to health reasons but at the same time I

thought, 'Now I'm going to be free! I'm not going to be a pastor anymore. I

will still be a priest till I die- this is what I asked God- but I will not be a

pastor with the responsibility of the parish', but I am not [free yet]. You

know, I am happy here with the people that come to church but other things,

you know, the feasts, processions, committees… this has been very difficult.

Father Pai's answer does not present the same picture that discussion with the lay

respondents provided. While he initially describes the encounters with the Hamilton

Portuguese community as good, he remains skeptical, and as the discussion progresses

his sentiments align themselves with the feelings expressed by the priest Brettell

interviewed (see quotation at the beginning of this section). The significance of this

variation in responses however, may be perceived as positive. It could allude to the fact

that the popular anticlericalism described in the past is slowly fading into a more

negotiated power structure. Referring to mainland Portugal, Regielhaupt (1973) found

that the underlying cause of complaints and accusations towards priests stemmed from a

fundamental questioning of the priest's privileged position to mediate between man and

God and to have exclusive responsibility for ritual performance (226). I argue that the

context of an ethnic church in a migratory setting allows for the power dynamic to be

distributed more evenly[17] so that there are fewer anticlerical attitudes and less tension. I

further suggest that because this tension exists within a migratory setting, the priest, as

---

[17] I am not suggesting an equal power relationship, which is why there is a still a struggle and discrepancy between the respondents' answers.

representative of the Church, concedes to the *festas* more willingly as he also understands the need for Portuguese community and social life. The *festas* function as both an expression of faith and as a basis on which to form a cohesive community.

When speaking with participants about the function of the *festa* their answers were definitely twofold. First, they would describe the importance of the *festa* to their religious faith, but they would also move on to a discussion of sociality and community. Continued conversation with Rosa and João demonstrated the dual importance of a *festa.*

> *Me: What is the purpose of a festa?*
>
> *Rosa: Like I told you, its to communicate with people: to call people to our tradition, to our faith, to our church and to, how do you say, build up the church?[18] Like the more you spend, whether it's time or money, the more you make for the church. The more people see the tradition the more people hear the word of God, so it's very important.*
>
> *João: Yeah, you're right. But it's a reason too because all those festivals we celebrate here, those days we also celebrate back home. We even have a festa Nossa Senhora dos Anjos back home.*
>
> *Rosa: Because we've been raised like that. It's our tradition. Back home every village has a saint. So that's the reason why we do festas here,*

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[18] What João is referring to when he says, "build up the church", is the fact that the *festas* and organizing committees such as the *commissão* and *irmandade* donate significantly to the church from the proceeds of the *festas.* Without the festival donations Father Pai admitted St. Mary's would have a hard time maintaining its structure and services.

because we were raised like that and then we want to bring it over here so

we feel good and do how our parents did, like our background.

João: Yeah, see, that's why. We have faith and we want to continue our

faith, our religion, our customs. Everything we have here we have back

home. And plus if you don't have festas, you have nothing, what kind of life

do you have then? You know what I mean? At least we go to the festival, we

enjoy the festival. If we go even for a dinner of the Espirito Santo,

sometimes people come from Toronto that we haven't seen in such a long

time. He could be my neighbor back home and then we see them here. If we

don't have the festa, we don't see eachother. It's important for everything,

for the friends-

Rosa: It brings the friends, the people, the peace most importantly. The

reason is we become happy to see our people, like we live together. We

always thank God for those things. First of all, it's God. When we're happy

and we eat there we still thank God for having a good time. We see people

that have faith and everything and it is good.

Rosa and João's explanation of the *festa* inextricably links the importance of religion and community. One part could not be fulfilled without the other. *Festas* act as an important mechanism for creating a sense of belonging (Orsi 1985, Swiderski 1987).

Rosa and João's explanation could also be viewed in terms of mixing the sacred and profane aspects of the *festa.* The manner in which the Portuguese people practice the *festa* tradition intertwines the sacred and profane realms and

has been another highlighted as another reason for anticlerical tensions in previous literature. Father Pai attests to this blurring.

> *Father Pai: Well in the Portuguese churches here in Canada, we have the festas in the first place to show the faith of the people and at the same time to continue our Portuguese culture. We brought from over there [the Azores] our festas, and so it started all this here in Canada principally when the first immigrants were thinking of their homeland, and praying for health from the natal land. So there are both the religious and profane parts helping each other.*

Brettell (1990) suggests that most priests prefer to see a divide between the sacred and profane, so that only appropriate religious behavior takes place within the physical walls of the church. However, Father Pai understands that the *festas* community orientation benefits the church as well, and may contain religious aspects. Brettell observes that not all priests object to the *festas* as some participate in them freely, but this is a rare occurrence (Brettell 1990: 60). In the case of Hamilton and St. Mary's parish there seems to be an understanding that the *festas* are mutually beneficial to the religious faith and to the ethnic continuity of the Portuguese migrant community.

All of the respondents that I spoke with identified the Sunday of the *festa* weekend as the most important day of the *festa,* although all respondents also stated that a *festa* could not be a *festa* without the whole weekend. The "whole weekend" involves the part of the *festa* that includes dancing, music, auctions, raffles and other forms of public

entertainment [known as the *arraial]*. In the view of my respondents, the *festas* serve to define and reinforce community identity; an identity that places religion at its center.

As one can see from the various points of view expressed above, it is difficult to elicit comments about tensions and problems within a community, particularly when people are aware of the fact that their opinions will be made public. This does not mean that I hold the opinions expressed above as untrue. It is possible that opinions could perhaps have been polarized or muted depending on the circumstances. I conclude that there does exist some tension between the Church and popular practice in the *festas*. I also conclude that these tensions are not as apparent as they were in the communities described by Brettell (1990, 2003), Riegelhaupt (1973, 1984), Behar (1990) and Brandes (1990). This difference may be due to the migrant setting where my own research was conducted; where participants may have felt it was better to promote harmony concerning traditions that facilitated their ethnic identity, rather than disagree about those traditions and risk losing them. Alternatively, this difference could be due to changing religious attitudes. Father Pai himself highlights the fact that in Canada, both the religious and profane parts of the *festas* are "helping each other." Globalizing processes and developing communication and travel technologies have highlighted the *festas* as an important part of Portuguese identity, and their role in maintaining this identity has in turn decreased the tension between the clergy and lay people regarding *festa* practices that focus more on entertainment than religion. Further research should be conducted on this topic to determine whether this observation indicates a growing trend or simply an isolated case. Regardless, it is important to note that in the case of Portuguese migrants in Hamilton, the

festas may be considered less a point of contention between the people and the Church

than a practice in negotiation.

Chapter Five

This last chapter asks an important question about the continuity of the *festas* and the ethnic identity of Portuguese migrants in Canada. All direct participants in my research were first generation migrants who made the transition from the Azores to Canada directly. Only one direct participant and interviewee was a second-generation migrant. While I had wished to speak to more second generation Portuguese, there was a lack of interest among this group in responding to my interview requests. Just before completing an interview with a first generation migrant Portuguese couple, their daughter phoned. They asked their daughter while I was present if she would like to discuss the *festas* with me. Her answer was essentially to question what she could say to me, as she did not go to the festivals anymore. During my attempts to approach people from younger generations at the *festas* I noticed there was a definite trend for younger children, often second generation migrants who attended with their parents, to "hang out" in the parking lot beside the church square where the festival was taking place. In a sense they were on the "fringes" of what was actually taking place. It could be interpreted that they did not feel at home being in the church square, or that they preferred to participate on their own terms and in different ways. Unfortunately, this is all reasonable speculation as no one from this younger group of people chose to speak to me. While I did have the chance to interact with some second and third generation migrants, it was usually through the avenue of their parents and our encounters did not last for an extended period of time. This leads me to the next theme that many of the migrants I spoke with expressed concerns over and speculated about amongst themselves.

"It all depends on the new generation": The Question of Cultural and Religious Continuity Among Portuguese Immigrants

In my conversations and interviews with people from St. Mary's parish, one of the major themes that people consistently returned to was the future of the *festas*. This was a primary concern for the people with whom I spoke and a question to which I was given no definitive answer. To illustrate the type of replies I would receive when I asked if the *festas* would continue in Canada, I return to the words of Maria José.

> *Me: So what do you think the future holds for the festas then?*
>
> *Maria José: It all depends on the new generation. It all depends. Because the way I see it, until now everything is very well… but I don't see many people come to church- I don't see people coming! In the old days you would see many coming to church, but now… I don't see that. Will the festas continue for another 20 or 30 years? Or even just 5 or 6 years? I don't know. There are many people missing from our Portuguese Church. If the festas will continue… I just don't know.*

Maria José's response echoes the sentiments and concerns of many Portuguese migrants with whom I spoke with. What they are expressing is an anxiety, a perceived risk that Portuguese identity and religious traditions within Canada will not continue as future generations remain here.

Figure 13: Children dressed in folkloric attire while walking in one of the *festa* processions.

Much literature on immigration focuses on the multiple difficulties that

immigrants have to face (Berry 1992). Immigrants are tasked with learning a new

language, obtaining a new job or profession as well as facing changes to their lifestyle,

social networks and perhaps even family dynamics or cultural values. "Change of this

complexity and magnitude often has a profound impact. Many effects are related to a

sense of *loss*" (Fernandes 2005:10). Closely related is the issue of *fear of loss*. The

historian Araujo (1996) identifies the fear of loss as a significant part of Portuguese

culture, tracing it to shared historical experience. She describes how the Portuguese have

internalized an awareness of having lost their empire and argues that "this historical

trauma is an undercurrent in the everyday life of a Portuguese person as evidenced in the common fear that investments and belongings can be lost at any time" (Araujo 1996, Fernandes 2005). Further perpetuating this fear of loss was the 50 years of fascism endured by the Portuguese people in the 20th century under the Salazar regime between 1932 and 1974. As Araujo (1996) explains, these fears can play into the stress of being an immigrant. The fears that have developed as a result of the traumatic history of Portugal can generate high levels of stress for the immigrant who is unfamiliar with the new environment. Moreover, the fear of loss is difficult to bear when one has left everything behind including possessions, family and friends. Another major challenge that immigrants face is generational conflicts. Falicov (2003) describes how the children in immigrant families are socialized in two cultures, thereby blurring the lines of their self-identification.

As noted in Chapter Three, Safran proposes that most European ethnics in North America cannot be classified as members of a diaspora after the lapse of two or three generations. To quote his argument, "Displaced ethnic groups who no longer attend a homeland-oriented church, have no clear idea of the homeland's past and retain no more than a predilection for the cuisine of their ethnicity are not a diaspora" (Safran 1999: 262). Safran's observation relates directly to the generational conflicts that Falicov describes and the concerns of Maria José, which were also described in Chapter One. She has witnessed a great decline in the number of Portuguese people attending the Portuguese church and religious festivals and she is part of a dwindling number of first generation migrants who maintain Portuguese cultural and religious values. Many in her

generation feel there is insufficient commitment from the second and third generations to these values. What we are witnessing, as Safran predicts, is the struggle to maintain a diaspora consciousness. More specifically, people like Maria José are voicing the concern that the Portuguese *festas*, representative of Portuguese diasporan identity and values, will not endure.

At this point, however, I would like to question Safran's projection. As discussed in Chapter Four, scholarly debate continues to question whether migration disrupts or increases religious participation. Safran projects the likelihood of cultural and religious loss and discontinuity post migration. However, it is important to consider the present global condition and the impact it will have on this assumed process of secularization and cultural homogenization. The globalization of religion, Christianity in particular, is not a new phenomenon. In premodern globalization, Christianity spread via the power of a church that was the dominant institution of its time and later through colonial empires that were the dominant powers of their period (Csordas 2009). But the globalization that is taking place today takes advantage of all the available technologies of travel and communication. These technologies allow for the open flow of religious phenomena, symbols, ideas, practices, moods and motivations (Csordas 2009). Because of the ever-increasing mediatization, it is more feasible than ever before to create an imagined collective community; one that transcends traditional geographic borders and exists within new imagined worlds. Appadurai (1996) notes that as mass mediation becomes increasingly dominated by electronic media (and thus delinked from the capacity to read and write), as such media increasingly link producers and audiences across national

boundaries, and as these audiences themselves start new conversations between those who move and those who stay behind, we find a growing number of diasporic public spheres, or what he refers to as, "communities of sentiment": groups that begin to imagine and feel things together, although they may be geographically separated (1996:4). Globalization and the widely available communication and travel technologies allow for an open dialogue between diasporic peoples and their places of origin. They are no longer isolated from the happenings of their homeland, and indeed people living in Hamilton have the ability to turn on the TV and watch a religious *festa* that is taking place in Portugal, or immerse themselves in relevant culture and news. This means that second and third generation immigrants are able to connect with the homeland where their parents and grandparents lived, and absorb values, traditions and knowledge (albeit virtually) that are now endowed with immediacy through travel or technology such as the Internet. This new potential of technology to connect communities across geographical boundaries is a significant factor to consider in the question of whether Portuguese identity will be maintained in Canada.

Still the question remains as to whether the subsequent generations will want to continue the identities, beliefs and traditions of their ancestors. Perhaps the very characteristics that makes up "Portuguese-ness" will change as identities are not static. However, many parents that I spoke with expressed fears that despite the fact that they have managed to bring up their children in a "better life," those children may have become alienated from their parents' worldviews and traditional Portuguese values. When

I asked Miguel if the *festas* will continue to be important for those who are born in Canada with a Portuguese heritage, this was his response,

> *Miguel: It is very important! We need to maintain this so we can give our children our origin and so that our children can maintain what is **ours**. Without this we would become weak because we don't carry on what's ours, do you understand? So for me, I think it is something good because if the children have the same ideas as their parents then they continue the tradition that we had in the Azores.*

The focus in Miguel's answer is on what is **"ours."** The meaning here extends beyond his own and his wife's property. It extends to a communal "ours." Many elderly Portuguese Canadians employ the use of the term *nossa gente,* meaning "us" in the sense of an entire community or people. This term suggests a commonality that includes all Portuguese as members of a real and imagined community. When Miguel is speaking of his children carrying on what is "ours," he is voicing a prayer to all subsequent generations to carry on the Portuguese tradition.

Father Pai recognizes on an ecclesiastical level that there are some deterrents to the continuation of the Portuguese identity and religious traditions.

> Father Pai: *See, as a priest I work for the Portuguese community and I deal with them, which is not always easy, because being a priest for the Portuguese people I am involved with them but being a priest here in Canada I have my colleague priests and so its difficult to you know, work on the Portuguese camp but at the same time live with priests who are*

not Portuguese; the bishop isn't either. Also, the schools are not Portuguese either nor the teachers, so it's a bit difficult. Also, it's a bit complicated working in the Portuguese community because the younger generation, like you are more Canadian. So, you speak Portuguese, but you think more in the manner of Canadians because you were born here, you live here. So, here at the parish, the ones who frequent church more often are those who are older. But then when you see younger people it becomes a little more difficult because I spend a lot of time with older people. In my house I spend more time with those who are older, so it's always Portuguese: speaking Portuguese, eating Portuguese, thinking Portuguese. So then when the younger people need me I maybe don't have what they wanted me to give them because I am agreeing with their parents or grandparents. So its not easy, Stephanie. So, in my case, as a priest, I am Portuguese, I think of myself as Portuguese, I feel Portuguese as well but working for the Portuguese in the Portuguese parish, my superiors are not Portuguese and not all we do is for the Portuguese church, so it's a little different. So, I need to serve the Portuguese people, I need to preserve my culture and at the same time I realize that there are some things that the church here commands us to do but we cannot apply to the Portuguese because it doesn't work-because the mentality is different.

Father Pai's comments provide great insight into the many challenges

facing the future of the Portuguese church and traditions in Canada. He points

out first of all that the Portuguese community must contend with the institutional

structure of the Roman Catholic Church in the Canadian context, which does not

always correspond with Roman Catholicism in the Portuguese context. Some

things cannot translate, "*because it doesn't work,"* suggests that the priest feels

there are distinct responsibilities to each tradition that do not necessarily come

together. The priest is forced to act as a mediator between both these standing

traditions and finds himself displaced in both arenas despite the fact that he

identifies as Portuguese. Another issue Father Pai raises is that the schools are

not Portuguese and do not promote traditional Portuguese values and practices.

He notes that there is a different manner of thinking and acting that corresponds

to a Canadian upbringing versus a Portuguese upbringing. When Father Pai

admits he feels sometimes inadequate to serve the younger generations his

answer indirectly admits that there is a disconnect between the Portuguese

church and second and third generation migrants. If the younger generations do

not feel a connection to the priest or the church the Portuguese religious

traditions such as the *festas* are consequently "at risk." This situation also

reflects the fears that Maria José expressed at the beginning of the chapter when

she states there are many people missing from the Portuguese church.

Riegelhaupt suggests, "that low church attendance may have little to do with the

strength of religious beliefs; or may measure something completely different

from what it is presumed to be measuring" (1982:68). Non-attendance may actually represent a form of protest against a religion that is not being practiced the way the people want it to be. Therefore, non-participation does not necessarily equate to secularization. If subsequent generations feel a disconnect or lack of meaning from the church-going experience they are less likely to attend the mass. This does not necessarily translate into a decline of religious belief. Furthermore, Freeman (1978) asserts that, "what must be recognized in many cases is, rather, a withdrawal of willingness to recognize the church as an acceptable arena for the exercise of faith, at least at a given moment" (20). This provides hope for the continuation of the *festas* as the *festas* are a practice that is viewed as both a religious service and a community service. If younger generations do not subscribe to the Portuguese church, they may still subscribe to a Portuguese identity and place value in the continuation of Portuguese traditions.

While speaking with Antonio, I asked whether he felt the *festas* were more important for first generation migrants or if they continued to be as important for second and third generation migrants. He replied,

Oh, it's a little bit more for the older people who came from Portugal because it's the tradition they don't want to let it die, but its also good for some of the young people born here. Like I got a son and he's not too thrilled about festivals they way we do it. He says, basically you know, "what is this for?" But some of the kids are more mature and they say, "well that's my parents' tradition" and

they'll like it and they'll go to the festas and now they're involved. You know?

*It's more for the **real** Portuguese.*

Antonio's answer speaks again to the self-identification of "Portuguese-ness". His assertion that the *festas* are for the "real Portuguese" suggests that subsequent generations may continue the traditions of the first waves of Portuguese migrants if they connect to their Portuguese heritage. It again becomes important to consider the increasingly "borderless" world that globalization and technology has created.

> Father Pai: *Now, us here, we do this to maintain the Portuguese traditions, in a manner of remembering the faith of years before, but in my experience as a priest, these festas do not increase faith. I do not see more young people at mass because of the festa. They come to the festa, but they are not in the church, they are outside and they do not come back to church unless it is for another festa, so [the festa] is not missed by the church. What would be missed is the people who come to church, but the people who come to church are the ones who do the festas. These festas are to show the faith of the people, so I would say that the church can be without the festa, because many Portuguese people who go to church every Sunday no longer go to the festas because they do not need the festa to grow their faith. They have their faith in God, in the church, in Our Lady, so they do not need these processions through the streets.*

I don't see a future in the Portuguese church, because there are already less Portuguese priests and ones who are younger do not feel very much for the processions, so it's a worry that the people have. You have to walk behind the people to do the festas. Is that the role of the priest? To walk behind the people to do the festas? Or are we supposed to bring the people to the church. But how can we do this then without the processions? It's faith that is supposed to happen in the church; the procession on the street does not say anything religious because a large part of the people who participate in the procession does not go to the Portuguese church. So this is the problem. You saw there on the day of the festa, the church was full, but this was on the day of the festa. And like I said here in Hamilton there is still a large procession but in other places the people don't come. And many say, 'Oh the Portuguese priests don't want to do the festas', but we don't want to do it because there isn't people coming to church and it doesn't say anything to younger people. If it doesn't speak to younger people who lack faith, then? As well as here in Canada they don't use these things, you don't see other churches doing processions so it doesn't do anything. Also, young people are not living the Portuguese culture and the tradition because it does not say anything to them because they were raised in a different way. Many of us are no longer coming here from Portugal. So, some people may still like it but the festa is not just for one small group, it's meant for all of us.

Part of the equation of whether the *festas* will continue is dependent on funding. The Portuguese Department of Tourism began to provide subsidies for the *festas* in Portugal in the 1970s (Brettell 2003:92). This funding plays a role in the continuation of the festivals in the Azores, as the summer [high peak festival] months are recognized as being filled with tourists who wish to observe the elaborate spectacle of the *festas*. However, the *festa* practices in Hamilton are largely run on community donations. Speaking with two of the *festa* organizers, I asked how food and money were acquired for the festivals and their answer was a story of community.

> *Antonio: Well, you know, people just give. When you do good for the church, good comes to you. One of the bakers, sometimes we take 1000 buns for the festival, he says he wants no money, that its for the church. And people like that you know, they deserve good things-*
>
> *Esther: -And may God bless and recompense them because if it wasn't for them helping the community our church would go nowhere.*
>
> *Antonio: If we didn't have this help, the church profit would be nothing, but with that help we can give the church a good sized donation. The fact that the festas take place, it shows real community.*

While the tone of this discussion about the future of the *festas* may seem negative at present, I cannot definitively predict the course of Portuguese identity and tradition within Canada. The outcome will be the product of very complex social processes. What I know for certain is that the first generation Portuguese migrants wish to impart their identity and traditions to future generations so that they may live in a world of rich religious rituals and cultural values. When I asked Mariana if she thinks the *festas* will disappear she replied very solemnly,

> *We're afraid of that. We are very afraid of that. Sometimes there are lots of young kids at the festas but there should be more. We wish and hope that it won't die that easy. I have faith that God is always going to have somebody to continue our traditions… but we are very afraid of that.*

Conclusion

The main contribution of this ethnography is to recognize in anthropological terms the lives and experiences of Portuguese migrants in a rapidly globalizing world. This ethnography has discussed current literature and understandings of migration, identity and religion, in particular the tradition of the *festas.* As the flow of movement of people, technology, and information has increased, the need to reflect on these processes also increases. This research has provided a historical context for discussion and analyzed current findings in respect to the contemporary world. Including the words of my respondents has created a multivocal text that allows the reader to grasp the participants' understandings and situate these understandings in the context of the broader academic literature. Writing of the patron saints' festivals in the Italian immigrant community in Hamilton, Migliore (2006) observes that *festas* are both historical and current. The *festa* "not only tells us something about the past and people's current feelings and attachments, but also their desires for the future… it is one of the means by which the immigrant generation has mapped out a terrain of 'belongingness' within their new sociocultural environment and created a way to celebrate their cultural identity with their children" (Migliore 2006:67). The same analysis applies to Portuguese *festas,* in both of these immigrant communities in Hamilton, as in other North American cities, the *festa* is a key ongoing symbol of ethnic, cultural and religious heritage.

Further research would prove useful to gain a more comprehensive and comparative understanding of migrants who have been forced to navigate a "borderless" world. It would also be useful to investigate the process of immigration in Portugal as it

has moved from being a sending country for immigrants to a receiving one. Much work remains to be done on the unknown future of "Portugueseness" in Canada, the continuance of the *festas* and the implications of globalization for migrants' traditions and identities. Bax (1985) called for more studies by ethnographers of European society on the conditions and forces that not only generate but also perpetuate popular religious practices and folk beliefs. While research on these topics has steadily increased, I believe it is increasingly relevant to study what generates, perpetuates, or dissuades the continuance of popular religious practices and beliefs in present day migrant and diasporan settings. It would also be useful to develop comparative studies so that this research could continue discussion on a more generalized level.

The experiences, identities and religious traditions of the Portuguese community members that I encountered are stories of valor. They demonstrate courage, perseverance and faith. As a second-generation migrant myself, I am honored to have shared these realities and hope that I have done justice to all those who placed their trust in me with their recollections, beliefs and hopes.

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Appendix A

Project Description and Consent Form

DATE: _____

LETTER OF INFORMATION / CONSENT

A Study about Changing Religious Expressions Among Portuguese Immigrants:
Perspectives on *Festas* in Hamilton

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Why am I doing this research?

The goal of this study is to understand the religious experience of Portuguese immigrants in Hamilton. I am asking participants to discuss a range of issues that reflect on your migration experience, your religious beliefs and practices and **your involvement in *festas***. I will ask questions regarding these topics in the hope of learning about Portuguese identity and faith in the migrant community. I am doing this research for my Master's thesis in Anthropology.

What will happen during the study?
You are being asked to participate in an interview. You will be asked to talk about your life experiences and personal beliefs. You may be asked **about your religious beliefs and about why you migrated to Canada.** For Example, questions may include, "Do you attend mass?" or "Are *festas* important?". I will also ask you some background information like your age, occupation and level of education. These are personal topics and you do not have to answer **any** questions you find uncomfortable. This interview will be tape-recorded with your permission and summarized, and will contribute to my Master's thesis research. This research will be shared widely within the academic community. In addition to using the information I learn from you for my Master's thesis, I may also use it later in my doctoral studies, and in scholarly publications or conference presentations. This interview can continue for as long as you would like to talk with me, but it is anticipated that the interview will take about 45 minutes to an hour to complete.

Potential Harms: Will anything bad happen during the study?
The risks associated with participation in this study are minimal. You may feel uncomfortable talking about personal beliefs or memories of life experiences. But you do not need to answer ANY question that makes you uncomfortable or that you do not want to answer. Also, you may stop participating at any time either during the discussion or any time up until August 2013 when I will complete my M.A. thesis.

Potential Benefits: What good will this do?
I hope that what is learned as a result of this study will help us to better understand change and continuity in religion in the Portuguese community, such as changes in the practices, forms and beliefs about the *festas*. My thesis will promote a better understanding in the academic community of Portuguese migrants' experience of religion. This research will also help to record and preserve Portuguese heritage in Canada.

Confidentiality: Who will know what I said or did in the study?
Anything that you say or do in the study will not be told to anyone else. Also, anything you tell me about yourself will be kept confidential. Your privacy will be respected. I will not be publishing your name or any personal information. Instead I will create a pseudonym (alternate name) so that you are non-recognizable. However, we are often identifiable through the stories we tell. If you wish to be recognized you may let me know and I will use your real name.

The information obtained from the interviews will be summarized. I will use direct quotes but will not attribute them to you directly unless you wish them to be. The interview files will be stored electronically and password protected and hard copies will be kept in a locked cabinet. Once the study is complete, an archive of the data, without identifying information, will be maintained. All records of my observations, tapes of individual

interviews and conversations will be kept private and will only be available to myself, my supervisor and supervisory committee.

Participation and Withdrawal:

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It is your choice to be part of the study or not. If you decide to participate, you can decide to stop at any time, even after signing the consent form or part-way through the study. If you decide to stop participating, there will be no consequences to you. In cases of withdrawal, any data you have provided to that point will be destroyed unless I have already submitted my thesis in August 2013. If you do not want to answer some of the questions you do not have to, but you can still be in the study.

Information About the Study Results
You may obtain information about the study after August 2013 by requesting it from the investigator or McMaster University. A copy of my research results will be available online through the McMaster University website.

Questions about the Study

If you have questions or need more information about the study itself, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor.

This study has been reviewed by the McMaster University Research Ethics Board and has received ethics clearance.
If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a participant or about the way the study is conducted, please contact:

> McMaster Research Ethics Secretariat
> Telephone: (905) 525-9140 ext. 23142
> c/o Research Office for Administrative Development and Support
> E-mail: ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca

CONSENT

- I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Stephanie Da Silva of McMaster University.

- I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my involvement in this study and to receive additional details I requested.
- I understand that if I agree to participate in this study, I may withdraw from the study at any time or up until approximately *August 2013*
- I have been given a copy of this form.
- I agree to participate in the study.

Signature: _____

Name of Participant (Printed) _____

1. I agree that the interview can be audio recorded.
… Yes.
… No.

2. …Yes, I would like to receive a summary of the study's results.
Please send them to this email address

_____

or to this mailing address:

_____

_____

_____

… No, I do not want to receive a summary of the study's results.

3. I agree to be contacted about a follow-up interview, and understand that I can always decline the request.
... Yes. Please contact me at: _____
... No.

Appendix B

Guiding Interview Questions- Semi Structured Interview Format

Questions Pertaining to Migration

- When did you migrate to Canada? Why?

- Have you maintained ties to your home land? (ie) TV,internet, trips, etc

- How has your experience of Canada been?

- Do you consider yourself Canadian or Portuguese?

- What does it mean to be Portuguese living in Canada?

Demographic Questions

- Where were you born?

- Did you work in Portugal? What was the nature of your work?

- Do you work here? What is the nature of your work?

- What is the highest level of education you attained?

Questions of a Religious Nature

- Do you attend mass? If so, how regularly?

- Do you belong to a parish? Is it Portuguese?

- Do you belong to any church affiliated organizations? If so, which ones?

- Do you consider yourself to be religious? What does that mean to you?

- Do you feel you have a personal relationship with God?

- What are your views on the role of the priest?

- Do you feel any special connection (devotion) to any saints and/or the Virgin Mary?

- How do you practice religion?

- Do you (or have you) ever attended or participated in All Souls Day?

- Would you prefer to be buried here or in Portugal?

- Has your religious life changed since you migrated? If so, how?

- Do you own "santinhos"? (little religious figurines or statuettes)

- Describe the importance of prayer
  - In your opinion, do men and women have different religious roles?
  - Do you pray when people are ill? If so, what impact do you believe this has?
  - Does prayer/ attending mass have an impact on one's sins?
  - Do you attend *festas?* (religious festivals organized by the community)
  - Are *festas* important? Why?
  - Are priests important to the celebration of the *festa?*
  - What is the purpose of *festas*?