

Chapter 3 Ethnicity and peer groups

Courtney: You're in the Irish part. I'm in the Italian part...
Danielle: Yeah, we- In school you go by where you're from.

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter I examine the importance of ethnicity to the white female students of Sacred Heart high school. Ethnicity, or “where you’re from”, emerged as a popular topic of conversation both in the sociolinguistic interviews I conducted, and in my casual encounters with students. In particular, the dominant white ethnic groups, the Italians and the Irish, were described and discussed with some considerable passion. The girls’ persistent emphasis during interviews on ethnic division was hard to ignore, and so in this chapter I examine speaker ethnicity before turning, in chapters 4 and 5, to the real time and synchronic analyses of linguistic variables. Ethnicity will be incorporated into the analysis of vowel variables. Further, since Irish and Italian ethnicity in South Philadelphia is partially defined by residence in a particular neighborhood (“where you’re from”), a detailed description of this social opposition in the high school paves the way for an assessment in chapter 5 of its importance beyond the high school, when some students are living away from South Philadelphia.

In the present chapter, section 3.1 provides a general definition of ethnicity, and discusses the history, territory and ideology of ethnic groups in South Philadelphia. In section 3.2, I relate how teenagers at Sacred Heart locate ethnicity in their discussion of peer groups, and then map and describe those groups in section 3.3.

3.1 Ethnicity

3.1.1 What is ethnicity?

Alba (1990:1) refers to ethnicity as “a central theme of the American experience”, yet the meaning of ‘ethnicity’ itself has been contested in the history of the social sciences. Its use in the sense that I am going to outline here did not come about until after the Second World War, and did so in part to avoid the fascist associations that ‘race’ had accumulated (Sollors, 2001:4814). In addition, ‘ethnicity’—unlike ‘race’—allowed ambiguity: it could refer to a characteristic of personal identity that was neither biologically inherent and primordial, nor even linked to place of birth.

Jenkins (2001:4827) has traced the history of the model of ethnicity most widely held by anthropologists today as deriving principally from the post-war, social constructivist approach of Barth (1969)¹. Early anthropological work tended to reinforce the idea of culturally distinct, pre-existing groups and tribes that could be discovered and described. The boundaries between these groups were externally imposed—often defined by researchers on geographic or linguistic grounds—even if these boundaries were not locally meaningful (see Irvine & Gal, 2000). Barth argued that the atomistic nature of these groups should not be taken for granted; that ethnic groups and their relationships to

other ethnic groups are not fixed, but fluid. They are internally complex and can be dynamically manipulated: invented and reinvented through social interaction.

In Barth's schema, objective cultural, linguistic or other differences between groups are not in themselves important: what matters is the actors' perceptions of these differences. The focus of anthropologists' attention should be turned to the social practices and processes of maintaining and changing ethnic boundaries, since ethnicity is defined situationally, and can change over time. Boundaries, and ideologies about those boundaries, are the product of both in-group identification (people in the group are like 'us') and out-group categorization (people in a group are seen as 'them', as 'other'). Thus, ethnicity is a complex repertoire of local beliefs at a given point in time about similarities and differences between groups: bearing in mind that the groups themselves are the product of these beliefs².

The shift, in anthropology, from a view of ethnicity as pre-determined to a view of it as socially constructed, finds a parallel in the sociological study of ethnicity in America. Broadly speaking, sociology has shifted from a view of ethnicity defined by homeland and ancestry to a view of ethnicity as complex, shifting and sociopsychological (Sollors, 2001:4813). In the United States, this shift has occurred in part as a response to changes in the self-perceptions of European ethnic groups³, such as Jews, Italians, Germans, Poles and the Irish, in America. Thanks to generational distance from the homeland, home culture and home language, as well as extensive intermarriage, members of these groups can no longer be neatly defined, whether by social scientists or by the claimants of these ethnicities, on the basis of ancestry alone.

That sociologists still discuss ethnic categories at all for the Irish, the Germans et al demonstrates that one of their early assumptions about ethnicity has not been borne out. Until the 1960s and 1970s, sociologists tended to assume that by the third generation, immigrant ethnics would have fully integrated into the dominant Anglo-Protestant society: that is, that ethnic differences would disappear in the melting pot. And to some extent, differences have indeed disappeared. Veltman (1983) shows that although second generations in the US have usually been bilingual, by the third generation active use of the ethnic language has been reduced to a few words and phrases. Social stratification of ethnic groups by occupation and education has been reduced, so that for these relatively long-established European ethnicities, there is little or no difference in terms of what sociologists call 'life chances', either across ethnic groups, or in comparison with the originally dominant Anglo group (Alba, 1990:7-8). A good deal of ethnic mixing has occurred via marriage, too, which has further contributed to a decline of ethnic differences. Alba (1985) found that in the 1980 US census, of the 99% of non-Hispanic whites who married other non-Hispanic whites, only a quarter married partners from exactly the same ethnic background.

Despite the levelling out of linguistic and economic differences between European ethnic groups in the US, however, individuals in the third, fourth and later generations still use ethnic labels to refer to themselves. One regularly hears them say, for example, "I'm Polish-American" or more usually "I'm Polish". Why? Alba (1990:4) argues that for these generations, ethnicity is a part of their identity, rather than simply a 'structural' consequence of their family history:

In an era when ethnicity is increasingly voluntary among whites, it can continue to play an important social role only insofar as people choose to act in ethnic ways. Such choices hinge on personally meaningful identities.

Researchers carrying out studies in which ethnicity is a relevant local social variable, then, must tread with caution. Firstly, national perspectives on ethnic groups might not make sense at the local level, or at the local level at that particular point in time. Irish ethnicity is probably more important to Irish-Americans in Boston than in Boulder; on the other hand, being Irish-American in Boston today is probably less important than it was a hundred years ago. In the case of locally defined (but non-ethnic) adolescent peer groups, when Eckert (2000) widened her study of Belten High to include other Detroit area schools, she found that the distinction between Jocks and Burnouts was sometimes more and sometimes less meaningful depending on the socioeconomic diversity of the student body.

Secondly, ethnicity, like the adolescent social order, is defined not only by the individual but imposed and/or ratified externally by the community. As Labov (1972b) found on Martha's Vineyard, the macro-level ethnic group term "Indian" (Native American) was claimed by the indigenously-descended people who lived at Gay Head, but as one Anglo-identifying Vineyarder told him with scepticism, "Show me a Gay Head Indian and I'd like to see one" (Labov, 1972b:35). More generally, a mixed-race individual can choose to describe herself as "white", but this could conflict with the community's view of her as black. At the time of writing, there is an ongoing national debate over whether the mixed-race and self-identified black US presidential candidate Barack Obama "counts" as a black American. An African-American acquaintance of

mine argued that Obama and his family had not experienced the "struggle" of being slave-descended, and so could not truly be African-American. While this sort of case-by-case disagreement might not be important in a large-scale study, for example, it could have enormous implications in a small-scale sociolinguistic study.

In the rest of this section, I describe how my own perceptions of ethnicity at Sacred Heart changed from the 'structural' to the sociopsychological, and how I had to overturn my own expectation that ethnic differences in the third and fourth generation would be minimal or non-existent.

3.1.2 The relevance of immigrant heritage for young people

Given that South Philadelphia's Irish and Italian communities currently co-exist in a prospering part of the city, without the fierce competition for jobs, territory and even parishioners that once maintained ethnic boundaries, I asked myself why anyone would need to self-identify as Irish or Italian in South Philadelphia today.

For a teenager in search of a viable local identity, there would seem to be little incentive to look beyond the city, or indeed the neighborhood. South Philadelphians are notoriously proud of their "South Philly" identity, which happens to encompass a mish-mash of specifically Italian cultural components, such as mom-and-pop pizza shops and home-style Italian restaurants; Irish components such as the Mummers' parades; and universal blue-collar symbols such as diners, rowhouses and even the (Italian) movie hero, Rocky Balboa, all of which are claimed to some extent by Irish and Italian residents alike. The district has retained its strong sense of uniqueness despite (or perhaps because of) the migrations to the suburbs. The local newspaper, *The South Philly Review*,

regularly publishes the reminiscences of older residents, highlights local traditions and foods, and even writes the occasional celebration of South Philadelphia speech (such as “Tawk a da Town”, March 2004). While some of these articles are overtly targeted at new residents, my impression was that they are also intended to reinforce local pride in South Philadelphia’s otherness. With such a strongly defined *local* identity, why should students at Sacred Heart want to invest in their *ethnic* identities, too?

Yet it soon became clear to me that the South Philadelphia identity is not monolithic, and that by asking Sacred Heart students questions about "typical South Philly" people, places and practices, I was erasing more specifically local differences. Students regularly volunteered information about their ethnic background, and initially I assumed they were doing this because they knew I was interested in South Philadelphia's history and culture. I responded by asking students if they had grown up speaking Italian, eating Italian food or participating in the Irish tradition of Mummers’ clubs. I anticipated that for many of my teenaged informants, this would be merely an opportunity to talk about their cultural heritage and the practices of their parents or grandparents, and for me, a straightforward part of gathering demographic information. Students also quite often told me about their parents' and grandparents' experiences of growing up Irish or Italian, and about the sometimes violent conflicts that ensued between the two groups.

In my first week at Sacred Heart, Adriana, a teacher, told me about a fight that had taken place outside the school the day before. She supposed that it involved students from an Irish neighborhood (Second Street) and an Italian neighborhood (Sixteenth Street):

It was kids from another school. [...] A trade school. [...] And they came after our kids but we believe probably it has to do with neighborhood rivals. Like from kids that stay on Second Street and kids that stay in Sixteenth Street.

She went on:

It's like a- you know- That rivalry of that neighborhood versus- those two neighborhoods has been going on for- My mom was like, "That went on from when I was younger". My dad was like- My dad was a police officer and now he does nothing, and he was like, "Yeah, I used to help them go beat up the kids from Second Street".

For a while I put away this information, since I understood it as having more to do with the past than the present. No ethnic labels were used, and the dispute was about urban territories, not (at least not explicitly) about ethnic groups. But the street names - Second Street, Thirtieth Street, Sixteenth Street, Eighteenth Street - came up frequently in conjunction with references to Irish and Italian peer groups in the school. (The first two, Second and Thirtieth Streets, are Irish neighborhoods; the latter two are Italian.) While street names, or more frequently "corners", were invoked when talking about gangs such as "1J8" (18th and Johnson) or "1W2" (12th and Wharton), they were also used as shorthand for networks of friends of the same ethnicity. Indeed, they were the only explicitly **non-ethnic** peer labels I ever heard, with the exception of "smart girls" for a group of seniors who were taking AP classes together. Far more frequently heard were "Second Streeters"⁴, "Eighteenth Streeters" or "Thirtieth Streeters", or the more explicitly ethnic "Irish girls" and "Italian girls".

I wasn't prepared⁵ for the extent to which ethnicity shaped the students' perceptions of themselves and others. Almost all the students I interacted with were three or four generations removed from their immigrant ancestors, and only one (Lucia) spoke

Italian fluently. Yet their behavior should not have been totally surprising, since they continue to live their lives in close-knit family- and neighborhood-based networks in which people of the same ethnic background continually interact: on the street, in the stores, at church and school. This lifestyle is typical of urban working-class populations in America's large Midwestern and Eastern cities. Gans (1979:3) remarks that:

...much of the contemporary behavior described as ethnic strikes me as working class behavior, which differs only slightly among various ethnic groups, and then largely because of variations in the structure of opportunities open to people in America...In other words, ethnicity is largely a working-class style.

It follows that if ethnicity is a class-linked phenomenon, people from working-class backgrounds⁶ ought to have strong ethnic identities, as seems to be the case here.

All the same, invoking ethnic differences would seem to provide little immediate benefit to female students within the school environment. As I said earlier, these girls are not competing for jobs, housing or religious advantage with the opposing ethnic group, and they do not need to rely on members of their ethnic group for support in a new and unfamiliar world, as their grandparents and great-grandparents did. The incentives for maintaining the Irish-Italian boundary in school are not obvious, unless we consider the role of ethnicity in the development of what Alba (1990:4), called "personally meaningful identities".

Phinney (2001:4821) remarks that adolescence, being a 'critical period' for identity development⁷, may involve a search for an individual's ethnic identity. The process can lead to "exaggerated claims about their group" and to "constructive and creative actions aimed at confirming the value and legitimacy of one's group". This

happens to be a description of the search for ethnic identity, but it could apply equally well to an adolescent's alignment with peer social categories in high school. Adolescents may identify passionately and partisanly with others who share their taste in music or in extracurricular activities. In other words, if adolescents in general make use of symbolic resources (apparel, music, practices, language, use of social space) to construct identities and signal affiliations, then ethnicity provides another set of symbols available for them to use.

It was Gans (1979) who introduced the term 'symbolic ethnicity' to refer to third-plus generation ethnics' expression of their ethnic identity:

Symbolic ethnicity...does not require functioning groups or networks; feelings of identity can be developed by allegiances to symbolic groups that never meet, or to collectivities that meet only occasionally... [S]ymbolic ethnicity does not need to be a practiced culture, but the latter persists only to supply symbols to the former.

Gans (1979:12)

Gans argues in the excerpt above that it is sufficient to *feel* ethnic, even if one is isolated in time and space from other members of one's ethnic community. Individuals can choose when and how to express their ethnicity symbolically: through occasional attendance at an Irish Catholic church or a Jewish synagogue, through consumption of pierogies or pasta, or through travel to an ancestral country. For the increasing number of people of mixed ethnic heritage in the USA, symbolic ethnicity is also a way of expressing allegiance to multiple ethnic groups. This classical definition of symbolic ethnicity applies to the Sacred Heart students, who may exercise their symbolic allegiance to their ethnic heritage through their participation in Irish traditions such as the

Mummers' Parades mentioned earlier, or Italian traditions such as street serenades (of young women by their fiancés) or the Seven Fishes dinner at Christmastime. At the same time, however, it is clear that identification with Italian and Irish ethnicity is not (as in Gans's definition) an occasional practice involving traditional cultural symbols. Rather, it is a persistent feature of the social landscape of the school, and it is the concept of ethnicity *itself* that provides a symbolic resource for talking about differences that are really expressions of class and gender.

In the next section, I describe the division of the Sacred Heart landscape into groups based on "where you're from": that is, groups based on neighborhood territories that are perceived to be coterminous with Irish and Italian ethnicities. I then describe two iconic ethnic subgroups, before turning to a more general discussion of the intersection of ethnicity with other social factors.

3.2 Ethnicity in the high school setting

3.2.1 "Where you're from"

The concept of "where you're from", frequently invoked in discussions of ethnicity, concerns not ancestral countries (none of the girls were "from" Ireland or Italy) but sections of South Philadelphia, as well as some other factors relating to origin, such as the grade school a girl had attended. "Where you're from" could be used to exclude individuals and groups from the dominant white division of Irish and Italian ethnicities. African-Americans and Asians hailed from unfamiliar neighborhoods and had not attended the same grade schools as the white students, so could not be fit into the scheme of "where

you're from". "Where do they come from?", a girl named Melissa asked in an interview, addressing no-one in particular. "It's as if they're just passing through." Since African-Americans and Asians were not members of the dominant Irish and Italian neighborhood networks, Melissa concluded that they were transitory and thus not placeable in the local social order.

The extent to which non-white students were ignored by the white students in the construction of Irish-Italian contrastiveness was most clearly demonstrated during a controlled discussion of Sacred Heart peer groups during a group session in the second round of fieldwork. A group of five girls who had been seniors in the first round of fieldwork and were still close friends, completed a collaborative "pile sort task" (Matthews, 2006). Photographs of every member of their senior class, copied from their senior yearbook, were placed in a pile on the table. I asked the girls to sort the photographs into groups using any criteria they chose – an exercise that they undertook with loud enthusiasm. Non-white students were immediately sorted into two groups ("Blacks" and "Asians") and thus removed from further consideration. The invisibility of non-white students to these girls was striking:

[Unidentified]:	Where are all the athletes?
Angela:	I have no idea who they are! They're black and I don't know them.

There was no apparent animosity involved in the sidelining of non-white minorities. The white girls simply paid them no attention, and said they had very little interaction with

them. When I asked, in interviews or in the cafeteria, if white girls ever hung out with black or Asian girls, I would be told that “all the black [or Asian] girls hang out together”. Certainly in the cafeteria, African American students tended to cluster in groups on their own tables, and the same was true for the Asian girls, with only one or two exceptions.

Indeed, what happened in the first few minutes of the pile sort task illustrates not only the side-lining of non-whites, but the immediate construction of Irish- and Italian-based groups.

- Suzanne: It would really help me if you, like, sorted them. Into groups. Big groups, small groups.
Julia: Oh, we can do that. Shall we work in teams?
Hayley: All the Asians go together! [laughter]
Julia: All right, I need the Two Streeters!

The next overtly named group was non-ethnic: “smart kids”, and then a group defined by a central figure: “Here, here, we put Georgia here! Here’s Georgia’s group.” Yet by the end of the task, 9 of the 20 groups were defined by race, neighborhood or grade school: all instantiations of ethnicity, or “where you’re from”. While a student may of course claim an Irish or Italian identity on the basis of family history, cuisine and culture, these are rarely relevant in the school-based carving-up of social space. Rather, membership in one of the two opposed ethnic categories is legitimized by a combination of biological heritage, residence in an ethnic neighborhood, attendance at an Irish- or Italian-dominant grade school, past affiliation with a local street corner or park, and present social network. That ethnic group membership at Sacred Heart can be defined on several

parameters means that although white ethnicity is binary (Irish or Italian), within those categories one can be more or less Irish, or more or less Italian.

Danielle, for example, was from an Irish family and grew up on Second Street, but she attended an Italian grade school outside her neighborhood and so had many Italian friends. She claimed, however, that neighborhood residence is the primary determinant of category membership, and thus “if Second Street ever gets into a fight, even though... I don’t even stay there, I’d have to be part of Second Street side”. Certainly it is generally understood at Sacred Heart that at such defining moments -- which include not only participating in fights, but choosing co-riders in one’s prom limo and sharing hotel rooms at the Jersey shore – neighborhood people have to stick together. But at all other times, Danielle’s claim to Irish membership is suspect. In the pile sort task, she was described as “someone who’s popular” but tellingly also as “someone who doesn’t really belong”. The sorters argued about whether to place her in a Second Street group, or whether to create a special group for Second Streeters who don’t actually hang out there.

In a further insight into the workings of the social order, participants in the sorting task made clear distinctions between people who were popular in Irish networks and people who were popular in Italian networks. The dramatic reshuffling of the peer social order, as experienced by the incoming students at a typical suburban high school such as Belten High (Eckert, 1989), is constrained at Sacred Heart by the continuing strength of neighborhood-based ties and the relative social segregation of neighborhood groups. There is no single set of “populars” (Moore, 2003). Nor is there, for that matter, a meaningful

continuum of most school-oriented to least school-oriented students: no Jock-Burnout scale. Instead, the continuum ranges from the most iconically Irish to the most iconically Italian, with everyone else in between.

3.2.2 Social stereotypes

In this section, I focus on the most iconically Irish and Italian students, and describe them using a combination of my own observations, and comments made to me on and off tape.

Irish subgroups comprise the Second Streeters and Thirtieth Streeters. The latter reside in what was once a principally Irish territory, but is now a majority black section of South Philadelphia. They are thus a smaller group than the Second Streeters, with whom they have historically often come into conflict, and who (at least within the school) still regard Thirtieth Streeters with some suspicion. That Thirtieth Streeters are considered a distinct subgroup was made clear by Courtney, an Italian, who said:

Like see, that's where problems come in too, cause I had a um, Thirtieth Street boyfriend. [...] And after a year, you could just tell the personalities were so different. The whole vibe of different corners are so different. You can get along, but I think you stay together too long, any corner is gonna argue. Like I can't- I couldn't- I was with him for too long, and I could not take his personality, his Thirtieth Street personality—

Italian subgroups seemed to be principally internally defined by grade school attendance and/or residence: the pile sort participants identified a St Mary's crowd and a Resurrection⁸ crowd, for instance. However, the social characteristics associated with “being Irish” or “being Italian” were crystallized in popular conceptions of the

oppositional subgroups that seemed most salient to each side: a certain kind of Italian female to the Irish, and “Second Streeters” to the Italians.

3.2.2.1 *Italians*

- Suzanne: Who do you think that like- let’s see- I mean, you- you probably have Italian friends, right?
- Alison: No, I have Italian friends, not dago friends. There’s a difference.
- Mona: There’s a difference.
- Suzanne: What’s the difference?
- Alison: Like dagos are just straight up aaghh... and Italians are like just normal, like us...

In calling this group simply “Italians”, I am avoiding the most pervasive label used by Irish girls: “dago”. This racial epithet came up frequently in interviews and in casual conversations. Derived from the name *Diego* as a derogatory racial term for Hispanics, it is applied in the school by the Irish (and occasionally by Italians themselves) to a subgroup of Italian girls best described, as here, as “Italian princesses”. Although I found the use of “dago” shocking, neither Irish nor Italian girls seemed particularly aware of how offensive this word was to outsiders. That the Irish girls do understand it to be at best impolite was made clear when I asked Abby and Kaitlyn in their second interview if they’d had Italian friends in high school:

Abby: Like I made friends with a lot of them. But you still get that like [makes disgusted sound].

Kaitlyn: “You dago.”

Abby: Yeah, dago. I call them all the time.

Kaitlyn: Yeah. Like I have a really bad habit of like doing it up at school.

Abby: So do I.

Kaitlyn: But like I would do it with like girls I know. And like I know one of these days someone’s gonna be like, “Wow, I’m a dago.”

Abby: Oh, well I have- The lady I work with at the- The younger lady I work with is like real Italian. Like she’s from- like she’s like one of them like I’m not gonna say rich, but she’s like got- her like her-family’s-got-money kind of Italian. And they call her ‘dago’ all the time and she gets so mad. So I’m just like waiting for me to like slip ‘dago’ [laughs].

In this excerpt, Kaitlyn defends the term as something she “would use with girls I know”. In particular social contexts then, ‘dago’ can be used by the girls teasingly rather than offensively. In fact, Italians generally responded with shrugs if I asked them how they felt about Irish girls using this word, and when asked how they might respond, they were at a loss:

Mia: Well, if they try to act Italian we call them ‘medagons’⁹... What do we normally call them? There's a word that we call them.

Chelsea: Tommy said-

Mia: Harps!

Chelsea: Oh yeah. Harps.

Suzanne: Harps?

Chelsea: Yeah. Um. I forget. Tommy said something like 'mick'. I don't know. Is that-?

Suzanne: A mick?

Mia: A mick? Yeah, I've heard that.

Chelsea: Oh yeah, maybe. A mick.
Mia: A mick. I think I've heard of that.
Chelsea: Mi- I don't know what it means, though.

In general, it seemed that ethnic slurs like these had been bleached of their original force, or even, with the exception of “dago”, faded from use among these young people. Even the less offensive expected terms were missing from the discussions of ethnicity. Some South Philadelphia Italian women, for example, use the term ‘South Philly Lily’—often with affectionate bemusement—to refer to girls and women of what seems to be the same subset of the Italian community as the ‘princesses’ (Gillian Sankoff, p.c.), but I never heard this term used by the teenaged Sacred Heart girls. The stereotype of the kind of Italian girl who was particularly ridiculed by the Irish was someone who is excessively feminine, excessively made-up, excessively showy with her money (recall Abby’s comment: “her-family’s-got-money kind of Italian”):

Sarah: Well, sometimes like, you have the Italian princesses. They are dagos.
Melanie: The stuck-up ones who wear the too much lip liner, and put their--
Sarah: And all the gold jewelry and all the perfect bags and everything perfect.
Melanie: And their mothers go tanning and they look like they were in a toaster.¹⁰

Because of the appearance and behavior of these girls, for the Irish the label “Italian” has come to index prissiness, competition for male attention, and an exaggerated preoccupation with one’s appearance. Mona said the Italians “think their poop don’t

stink”, while her friend Alison claimed that “they get each others’ boyfriends”. Melanie said that they always have to have the latest outfit, while Abby, Kaitlyn and Stacey rolled around laughing as they demonstrated for me how Italians self-consciously pose for photographs, with puffed out breasts and pouting lips. In my own observations at the school, and in the surrounding streets, it was certainly hard to miss the classic Italian walk: chest out, rear out, one forearm raised to accommodate a purse over the wrist, and small, dainty steps. Of course, I observed girls in both ethnic groups wearing lipstick or lip gloss (though not necessarily in school: this was certainly more characteristic of Italian students); I saw girls from both Irish and Italian backgrounds who sported expensive Coach-style handbags and who went to the tanning salon and nail parlor. The concept of excess is key, however, and Italian girls were more consistently made-up and styled than their Irish counterparts. The Italian girls themselves rarely made observations about the Irish girls, noting merely that the Irish are “so into that they’re Irish”: something we will see confirmed in a later section.

3.2.2.2 *Second Streeters*

Second Street was more frequently mentioned than any other South Philadelphia neighborhood. Unlike ‘dago’, however, it was a label used with pride by Second Streeters themselves. To call yourself a Second Streeter is to identify oneself with a peer group tradition of informality, lack of interest in one’s appearance, and a straightforward approach to the world. In the exchange below, Abby and Kaitlyn explicitly contrast their frankness and independence with the prissiness and helplessness of the Italians. Boys

admire them, they argue, for they are all that Italians are not.

- Kaitlyn: Even like the boys that like came are like, “Irish girls are so much easier than like--”
- Abby: Yeah. They know it’s a lot easier. Cause we’re so much more laid-back. Like, we don’t care.
- Kaitlyn: Yeah. Like, they’re like, “Youse are all easy-going.” He’s like, “The dagos, we have to be like, Oh my god, like you wanna do this, go here, you can’t do this for yourself.” He’s like, “Youse, like, girls like sports and everything!”
- Abby: Yeah! Or when we like- burp and stuff...

Second Streeters in the school did pay less attention to their looks. Tubes of lipgloss made fewer appearances at their cafeteria tables than at those of the Italians, and their hair was more likely to look unbrushed. Second Street girls often just looked more ungainly: they sat with arms and legs akimbo, and lumbered down the hallways. Their demeanour revealed a surprising lack of self-consciousness, and contrasted starkly with the tripping demeanour of the Italians.

Many Second Street girls play competitive sports, although relatively few of them play for the school. The center of adolescent life on Second Street is an indoor basketball court that also serves as a community hall. Abby played for a neighborhood basketball team there, but even those who do not play can be found hanging around inside on the benches, or sitting on the steps outside. I went one evening to watch her team play, as it included three or four of the girls I had interviewed. Adults spend time at the hall too, watching the games or socializing with each other. Second Street social life, as in much of Philadelphia’s older neighborhoods, is multigenerational, densely networked and public. Unlike Italian neighborhoods, however, it provides many additional opportunities for socializing through its clusters of neighborhood bars and its Mummers clubs. Over

and over again, Second Streeters told me, “The good thing about Second Street is there’s a bar on every corner.” Since everyone knows everyone, an underage Second Street drinker can regularly frequent these bars, often with the knowledge and blessing of their parents, particularly if the barman is a friend or relative, or better yet, a teacher.

Danielle: It’s a sin. Like, we really are. We do. We all drink and I know the teachers think we don’t, but we do.
Courtney: Yes they do! What, are you nuts? Go talk to Mr. Conerney.
Danielle: Mr. Conerney works at a bar. He don’t care. He’s Irish.

In many ways, Second Streeters resemble Burnouts (Eckert, 1989). They mostly come from blue collar families, they have friendships that cross age-groups and that are rooted in local network ties, and they spend more time hanging out in their neighborhood than at the mall or the movie theater. Yet unlike the suburban Burnouts, this urban peer group does not reject the school’s authority, but embraces it in order to replicate Second Street within the school environment. During my two years at Sacred Heart, the presidents of the sophomore, junior and senior classes were all Second Street girls. The networking skills they develop on Second Street are effectively employed to win power.

They tend to be popular with both boys and girls. They are also popular with teachers, not least because they are used to cultivating adult contacts (such as the local barman, or their basketball coach) and to interacting with adults respectfully yet confidently. In their opinion, the Italians are either overly deferential or childishly rebellious. One Italian I got to know had to go to correctional summer school every year: not for any serious infraction, but because she’d run up dozens of demerits for answering back, being late or violating the dress code. Second Streeters, meanwhile, gain some

control over the system by working with it. Kerry, a class president, explained how she made herself known to everyone before using her high profile to exert some influence on the administration:

My sister was a senior when I came here, um, when I was a freshman. So, like, I don't want to say it like, paved the way but it made me like, like um get more involved. Like, knowing teachers more, they're like, "Oh you're little Deborah O'Shea." That's my sister's name. "You're little Deborah O'Shea" and stuff like that. And that got me to know the staff more. And like, girls help their little sister, like "This is my sister". That's pretty much how I started out. But then I evolved into so much more, I guess. [laughs] [...] But like I- I just, like, think Student Government is a good way to get your point across. Or maybe the best.

Yet Second Streeters expend little energy on other school-based activities. School yearbook, school newspaper, cheerleading, sports, language clubs --- none of these pay the dividends of involvement with school government, such as access to popular teachers, and power over school-internal processes, rather than the school's external reputation. None of them plan to live away from Second Street for longer than is necessary, so they spend their time in the high school honing the skills that will increase their standing in the neighborhood. Second Streeters anticipate that their ties to Second Street will always be stronger than their ties to any institution.

3.2.3 Ethnicity, social class and gender

Ethnicity is relevant in a community only insofar as community members are engaged in the construction and reproduction of ideologies of difference. In their discussion of linguistic and disciplinary boundaries Susan Gal and Judith Irvine (Gal & Irvine, 1995;

Irvine & Gal, 2000) propose three semiotic processes for boundary-making: *erasure*, *recursivity* and *iconicity*. These processes describe how ideologies about *linguistic* differences are a part of beliefs about *social* differences between groups, but we will turn to the relationship between linguistic and ethnic boundaries later in this chapter. For the moment, I will use them to outline a general scheme for Sacred Heart students' construction of ethnic difference, and turn to a discussion of linguistic correlates of ethnicity later in this section.

3.2.3.1 *Erasure*

Erasure is the process by which certain people, groups or linguistic features are made invisible, because they do not fit the ideological scheme (Gal & Irvine, 1995:974). In the case of white Sacred Heart students, the local social world is divided into two contrastive ethnic categories labeled "Irish" and "Italian". In order for this binary opposition to work at all, white students must effectively erase from their conception of the peer social order any non-white peer groups, as well as minority white ethnic labels such as German, Armenian and Polish. Gal and Irvine (1995:974) note that:

Facts that are inconsistent with the ideological scheme may go unnoticed or get explained away. So, for example, a social group, or a language, may be imagined as homogenous, its internal variation disregarded.

The homogenization of variation within the white population was frequently demonstrated in interviews, when girls would describe themselves as eg. "Half-Irish, half-Polish" but stress that they lived in the Irish part of town and had Irish friends. Similarly,

on the demographic questionnaires, the girls were asked to describe their ethnic background in detail, but then state the label they would be most likely to use when talking to others. No-one picked “Polish”. As for non-white students, they were, as we have seen, completely excluded from the white ethnic schema.

3.2.3.2 *Recursivity*

Recursivity “involves the projection of an opposition, salient at some level of relationship, onto some other level” (Gal & Irvine, 1995:974). One of the most striking aspects of Sacred Heart students’ construction of ethnicity is the projection of a male-female opposition onto a female population. Bucholtz (1995:364) notes that “any performance of ethnicity is always linked to gender”, and this may well be true at Sacred Heart. Irish girls, in the local ideological scheme, display stereotypically masculine characteristics such as toughness and non-conformity. In the following excerpt, we see the Irish girls through the critical eyes of two Italian girls:

Natalie: Was [the fight] girls or boys?
Monica: Boys. And the Second Street girls were in it too.
Natalie: See! Like that, like that they wanted to fight. We would like never really like-
Monica: We don’t do that. They’re like-
Natalie: We wouldn’t act like that. Like, I don’t know. [...]
Monica: They act like they’re tough, they’re hard.
Natalie: Yeah.
Monica: They think we’re scared of them.

Italian girls display more stereotypically feminine characteristics such as self-consciousness and flirtatiousness. The opposition between male and female is projected

to a further level in the Irish girls' subdivision of the Italian girls into "regular" Italians and "dagos", with the latter being scorned as excessively girly and prissy by the Irish girls, who find them ridiculous. For example, Alison told me, in a disparaging tone, that "Italian girls drink wine coolers and stuff like that."¹¹ It was Natalie, an Italian, however, who made the most explicitly gendered contrast between Irish girls and Italian girls:

We just act like girls and we don't act like men and try to like fight everybody all the time.

In turn, the gendered characteristics that Sacred Heart students attribute to members of their own and the opposing group are proxies for a social class opposition. There is a real, though relatively small, economic disparity between the Irish and the Italians. Property in the Second Street neighborhood is on average cheaper than property in Italian neighborhoods. Italians dominate the new and expensive Packer Park neighborhood, while Irish families still linger in the poor, African-American dominated Thirtieth Street neighborhood. This socioeconomic imbalance may account for the much greater frequency of critical Irish comments about Italians, rather than vice versa. Yet Irish girls were unsure about whether the Italians really were richer than them, or perhaps unwilling to concede that they could be:

Melanie: And they have like that skin all wrinkly from the tanning salon and the lip lining up to here with the-the fake bags –
Sarah: No. They're real bags – well, they say they're real but they're really fake.

All the same, there is clearly an additional projection of cultural class-based differences on to the Irish-Italian dichotomy, with Irish girls associated with working class culture, and the Italians with middle class culture. Irish girls drink beer, for example, while Italian girls drink wine coolers. Irish girls fight; Italian girls maintain a middle-class sense of what is ‘proper’ female behavior. Furthermore, the Irish girls’ sense of socioeconomic inferiority, and by extension, relative powerlessness, may account for their greater pre-occupation with ethnicity in the first place. Natalie complained:

We’re all Italian but we don’t show it, like “Oh, we’re Italian.” Like the Irish people are so into that they’re Irish.

The primacy of ethnicity for Irish girls was apparent in their choice of screen names. Screen names (aliases used for instant messaging, blog comments, social networking sites such as MySpace, and other modes of internet communication) provide the individual with an opportunity either to fully disguise their own name (eg. *LonelyGirl*, or to incorporate their name into another, invented alias (eg. *Martin134geek*). Screen names are highly individual and customizable, and thus constitute another symbolic resource for Sacred Heart students to use in expressing their alignment with peer groups.

I made a habit of collecting instant messenger screen names, since IM-ing the girls proved to be a more successful method of communicating than phoning or e-mailing when setting up times to meet. Of the 39 screen-names I collected, 14 were from self-identified Italian girls, and 17 from self-identified Irish. As many as 12 of the 17 Irish girls incorporated an ethnic marker, usually a variation on “Two Street”, such as *mary2st*, or combination of *Irish* and a name or noun, such as *IrishStar*. Only 2 of the Italian girls,

however, opted to incorporate ethnic markers like *bella* into their screen-names. There are no equivalents of the Irish screen-names: no *maria18st*, or *ItalianGirl*, although these would have been just as easily created.

Ethnicity	N IM names	N ethnic names	% ethnic names
Irish	17	12	71
Italian	14	02	14
Other	08	--	--
Total	39	14	36

Table 3.1 Instant messenger screen names, by ethnicity

In addition, Irish girls considered themselves to be in a numerical minority in the school:

- Lynne: We're actually strange. We're like the Irish people in the school. There's not a lot of us...
- Claire: Yeah, it's a lot of Italians.

The Irish girls' perception of themselves as minority group was reinforced by the wider local conceptualization of South Philadelphia as 'Italian'; this is presumably because of the more numerous, visible indicators of Italian culture in the neighborhood, such as the Italian market and the many Italian restaurants, and perhaps because of Rocky, its most famous fictional—and Italian—son. Furthermore, the physical marginalization of the Irish to the edges of South Philadelphia, and the dwindling of their territory in the 30th Street neighborhood, have led to the increased iconic status of Second Street as a rallying point: an Irish island in a perceived sea of Italians. This leads us neatly to Irvine and Gal's third semiotic process: iconicity.

3.2.3.3 *Iconicity*

Iconicity, in Gal and Irvine's scheme, describes the relationship between a linguistic sign and social groups or images with which it is linked. "Linguistic practices that *index* social groups or activities appear to be *iconic* representations of them—as if a linguistic feature somehow depicted or displayed a group's inherent nature or essence" (Gal & Irvine, 1995:973). Irvine and Gal (2000:40) give as an example the click phonemes of Bantu languages. Early European observers compared them to animal and bird sounds, thereby suggesting that clicks were iconic of the subhuman or bestial nature of the Bantu speakers themselves.

At Sacred Heart, there was no overt discussion of any linguistic features associated with Irish or Italian ethnicity¹², and thus no iconic representations of the two groups in the original sense proposed by Gal and Irvine. Other, non-linguistic practices appeared instead to be iconic representations of the "essence" of Italian-ness or Irishness, particularly where these coincided with the recursive projection of gender already mentioned. The Italian girls' heavy application of lipgloss, for example, was interpreted by the Irish girls as representative of Italians' essential superficiality and girliness. The Irish girls' involvement in sports was interpreted by the Italians as representative of their general competitiveness and their aggressive nature. 'Second Street', as mentioned above, is an icon of Irishness; to describe oneself as "from Second Street" or as a "Second Streeter" is not simply to make statement about where one lives. It is a statement of allegiance to an ethnic group, and with it to all the cultural practices of the group. The street, too, is considered to embody in its physical properties some of the essential components of Irishness. It was regularly described as having "a bar on every corner":

something that points directly to the Irish view of the bar as a welcoming and hospitable place for friends and visitors alike, or to Irish dissolution and lax morals, depending on one's orientation. It was a place where everyone knew everyone else (several times girls explained to me the concept of the "Second Street cousin", or child of a family friend), which points either to the value the Irish place on strong social networks, or to in-breeding and overfamiliarity, again depending on your orientation. Thus, if a student chose to say she was from Second Street—rather than from, say, 'Pennsport' or 'Third and Mifflin'--she was implying that she was *like* Second Street in some important way, and the same would be true if the Second Street label had been applied to her by someone else.

All three semiotic processes—erasure, recursivity and iconicity—serve to reinforce in the school the boundary between Italian and Irish ethnic groups, as well as local ideologies about the contrasts between these groups. Long-held local ideologies of ethnic difference, that a generation or two ago were rooted in much more clearly defined occupational, linguistic and territorial differences, have been re-fashioned in the adolescent setting of the high school to account for subtler differences between peer groups.

3.2.4 Ethnicity and linguistic difference

The processes of ethnic differentiation described by Irvine and Gal were, as I explained earlier, intended to account for the role of linguistic differences in creating and perpetuating ethnic boundaries. For the third- and fourth-generation (or more) students at Sacred Heart, language is not available for this purpose, since non-English speaking

ancestors are typically four or more generations in the past. Indeed, Irish immigrants to the US would have been bilingual in English from the mid-19th century onwards, due to the imposition of English as the language of instruction in schools (T. Labov, 1998: 370). I did not encounter any overtly expressed beliefs about the way Italian or Irish girls talk, either. The fact that there are no ideologies of *linguistic* difference between the two groups does not mean that linguistic differences do not exist, however.

The persistence of linguistic differences between formerly segregated groups who live in close proximity to one another is known from studies of dialectology, where long-vanished ancient political boundaries survive as isoglosses (Hall, 2005). Fought (2002:452) underlines the importance of ideological difference in the maintenance of linguistic boundaries:

Even where, on the surface, extensive inter-ethnic contact and integration might seem to be the norm, the study of linguistic variation reveals the underlying preservation and expression of identities divided along the lines of ethnicity.

Where this situation has been studied in sociolinguistics, and where ethnicity has been shown to play an important, continuing role in linguistic differences (such as Dubois & Horvath, 1999; Fought, 2003; Mendoza-Denton, 2007) the speech community has usually been undergoing language shift from an L1 to L2 English. This process, at least for the Sacred Heart generation in South Philadelphia, is largely complete. The girls have at most very limited access to contemporary models of English as L2 that contain interference features from an L1. These models can serve, in e.g. the Chicano English or Cajun English-speaking community, as a pole in the oppositions being constructed by

young people, but not in the community under investigation here. Do Sacred Heart students, therefore, sound alike regardless of ethnicity? Or have ethnic boundaries allowed linguistic differences to persist, long after community language shift has occurred? These questions will be taken up in Chapter 5. In the next section, we turn to a description of the major social networks in the junior and senior class at Sacred Heart: networks that are almost entirely defined by ethnic affiliation.

3.3 Social networks in the school

Figure 3.1 shows social network connections for 64 Sacred Heart students who were seniors, juniors and sophomores at the time of first interview¹³. One node, Katy, was a recent graduate of Sacred Heart¹⁴. Not all of the speakers represented in the diagram were interviewed on tape; they appear because I had regular interactions with them in the cafeteria or during extra-curricular activities, and got to know them and their friends.

The connecting lines between students represent network density, not multiplexity. The line directions, as indicated by arrows, are an outcome of the software settings, and are not meaningful in interpreting the diagram. Lines were drawn between speakers if any one or more of the following applied: a) co-interviewee, b) named as a friend - even if non-reciprocal - verbally or on demographic survey sheet, c) sat together at lunch, d) team-mates on a sports team. I ignored familial relationships, such as cousins, on the grounds that some speakers were explicitly positive about their cousins, while others were explicitly negative and rejected contact with their cousins in school.

Naturally, the picture can only represent a partial view of the Sacred Heart social networks as they were made available to me. Some speakers appear isolated merely

because I never got to know their friends. Others appear in isolation or on the edge of networks because the majority of their friends were not students at Sacred Heart, but neighborhood or grade school friends, or friends of their boyfriend.

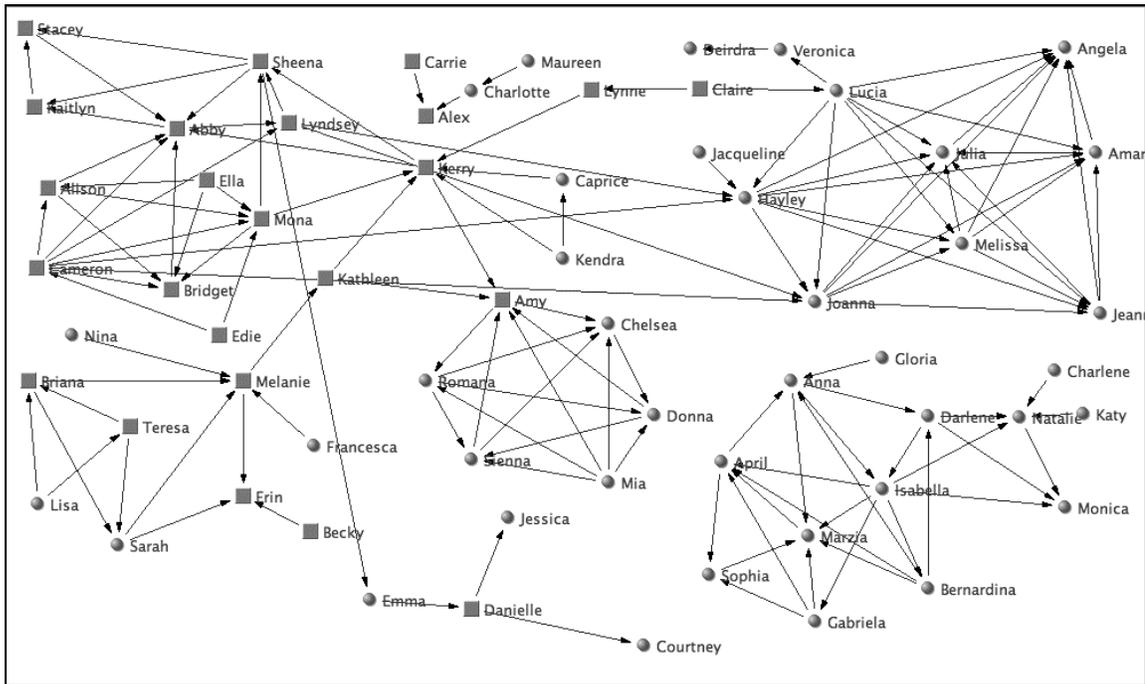


Figure 3.1 Known social network connections at Sacred Heart, 2005, for 64 students. (Second Streeters = square nodes; all others = round nodes).

Nonetheless, if we abstract from individuals in the network, a general picture emerges of three distinctly different kinds of friendship group. The first kind is based on "where you're from", and to highlight this, I have given the members of the Second Street (Irish) community nodes that are square. I designated as a "Second Streeter" any girl who lived in the neighborhood and/or spent most of her out-of-school time there, or who self-identified as a Second Streeter. Thus not all Irish girls are represented as Second Streeters, and not all Second Streeters are Irish, although the members of this latter

subcategory include only one or two girls. All other speakers, including Italians, neutrals (to be discussed below) and the Irish Thirtieth Streeters, are represented by round nodes.

The Second Streeters dominate the left side of the diagram, with certain central figures, such as Abby, Kerry and Melanie providing the principal links to the other social groups. The only Second Streeter not directly connected to another Second Streeter is Danielle, who is also the girl referred to in the pile sort task as someone who "doesn't really belong", because she doesn't hang out in her own neighborhood. Abby and Kerry, a senior and junior respectively, are members of the school council and are well-liked beyond Second Street; Melanie is a junior from Southwest Philadelphia who socializes on Second Street because her own neighborhood is crime-ridden and home to few Sacred Heart students.

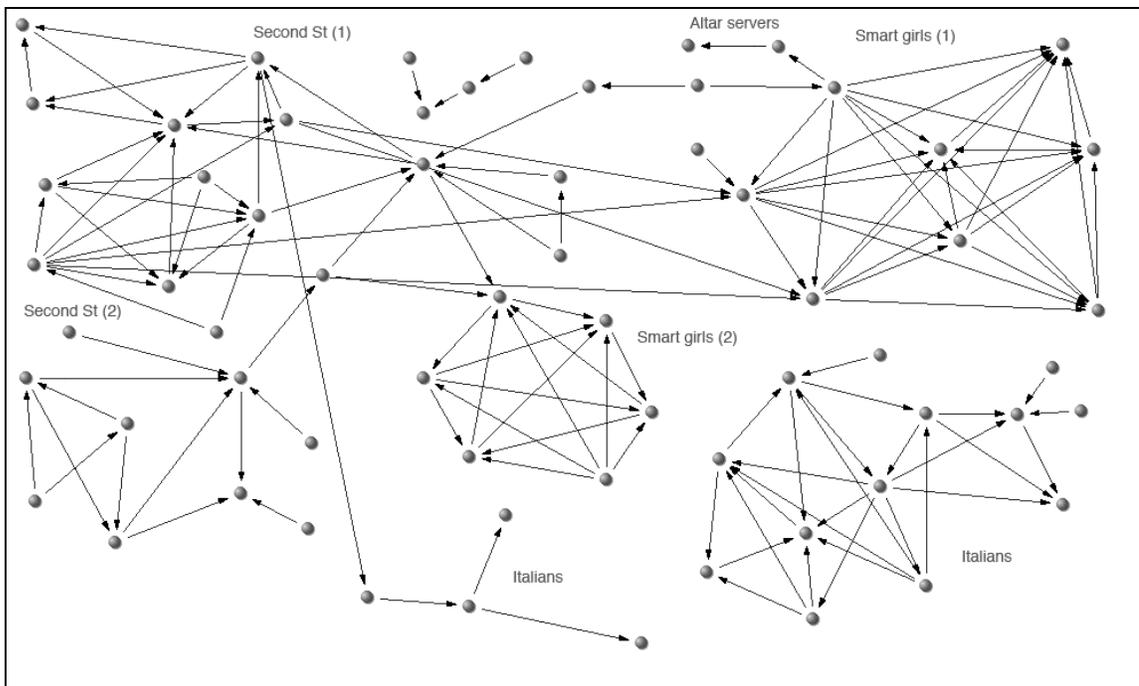


Figure 3.2 Principal peer groups observed at Sacred Heart.

In Figure 3.2, the node clusters are labeled loosely by peer group. In the upper left-hand corner are the senior Second Streeters (Cohort 1), while the junior Second Streeters (Cohort 2) are in the lower left-hand corner. Girls in these clusters spend time together at school, mostly grew up in the Second Street neighborhood, went to the same grade schools, and hang out in the same community centers and bars (thanks to a permissive neighborhood culture in which everyone seems to be related to a bartender) and in each others' houses. The most iconically Irish network in the school, they are described in more detail in the next section.

On the other side of the ethnic divide, the Italians in this diagram are clustered in two groups. A small group of Italians appears in the lower central region of the diagram, but these are individuals with weak connections to each other. They each mentioned having other friends in their interviews, but these were students whom I never met or got to know. As a result, they look more like social isolates than they actually are. But their in-group ties are less interesting in any case than their outgroup ties to the Irish.

In contrast, the Italian cluster in the lower right is a tightly connected group of junior and senior Italians whom I could not directly connect to any other peer groups, although there must certainly have been some points of contact. In the middle of the diagram, for example, is a group of "smart" juniors who took honors and AP classes together, and since the majority of these are Italian, it's possible that they are linked to the other, more exclusively Italian group. This latter group was usually very open and friendly in the cafeteria, but very unwilling to be interviewed on tape. Members of the group seemed to be perpetually experiencing some kind of personal drama, whether with

boyfriends or with other girls, and I was never sure, when I showed up, whether I'd find them laughing loudly together, or sunk into uncooperative gloom. They were visually quite distinctive with their heavy make-up and darker skin (and fondness for tanning salons), and they seemed to me to best represent the "typical" Italian girls described by Sacred Heart students, as I relate in the next section.

Not quite beyond the ethnic divide, but less engaged in maintaining ethnic boundaries were the "neutral" groups. These included the junior "smart girls", who had formed a close friendship group based on shared classes and, to some extent, college aspirations. In the top right hand corner, the senior "smart" girls were more ethnically mixed than their junior counterparts, and for them, too, ethnicity and neighborhood background were clearly secondary to the ties they'd formed through their time together in the classroom.

At the top of the diagram is a fragment of a cluster based on a shared non-curricular activity. Deirdra and Veronica were volunteer altar servers at the school's Catholic masses, and were introduced to me by the school priest. Both girls had quite separate, if rather small, groups of friends (whom I did not meet), but knew each other well from years of serving together. The altar server group, which comprised about a half dozen male and female students, particularly struck me as a collection of individuals who would normally not have interacted with each other.

There were undoubtedly many other such activity-based clusters, but they were rarely mentioned by students. The girls who carried out the pile-sort task alluded to only one: "Weird band/music people". I have only represented a few such ties here, where they seemed to go beyond shared participation in a school-based group and be more like

friendship ties. The link between Hayley, Joanna and some of the sports-playing Second Streeters is one of these.

3.4 Summary

Irish and Italian heritage is a major talking point for white students at Sacred Heart, whose friendship groups reflect the shared ethnic background of members. Long-standing neighborhood- and grade school-based friendships are maintained in the high school because of a persistent ideology of difference. Thus graduates of Irish grade schools are more likely to socialize with other Irish students than with Italian students, despite the fact that both sides interact daily with one another at their present school. That it is ethnicity, and not simply grade school history, that motivates this divide, is apparent in the alignment of students from non-South Philadelphia grade schools to one major group or another. Melanie, for example, has gravitated to an Irish friendship network, even though she is only half-Irish, and went to a grade school in South West Philadelphia, where, she told me, “it isn’t like South Philly with the groups”.

In the next two chapters, I will draw samples of students for linguistic analysis, using the broad social categories (Cohort, SES and Ethnicity) that I described in Chapter 2 to create balance. Intersecting influences of social class, ethnicity and peer groups will be considered, and illuminated with selected individual cases from the panel of 22 speakers for stable variable analysis in Chapter 4. In the Chapter 5 vowel analysis, brief sketches of each panelist will be given. The sketches will include the panelists’ post-high school transitions, so that any changes in vowel production can be examined with reference to speakers’ social trajectories.

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- ¹ In fact, this approach can be traced back further still, to the work of Max Weber ([1922], 1968), who argued that ethnicity is determined by group members' "subjective belief in their common descent", rather than any biological relationship. See Alba (1990:16) for a discussion.
- ² I have described this model of ethnicity with reference to Barth (1969) because his ideas are essentially congruent with current assumptions in anthropology about ethnicity. But for an outline of some criticisms of Barth, see Jenkins (2001:4825-4826).
- ³ In this section, I use "European ethnic groups" to refer to those who participated in the major waves of immigration in the 19th to early 20th century: principally those from northern and western Europe (e.g. the Irish, Scandinavians and Germans) and later from southern and eastern Europe (e.g. the Poles, Greeks, Italians, Armenians and Russians), as well as Jews from both eastern and western Europe. I do not include in this definition more recent arrivals such as Bosnians and Albanians, or non-European immigrants such as Asians and Africans.
- ⁴ Or much less commonly, "Two Streeters".
- ⁵ As a white European who grew up in white, working- to middle-class Britain, ethnicity was undoubtedly a concept I found unfamiliar anyway.
- ⁶ Here I am somewhat conflating "working class" with "urban", since many girls are from families of working-class origin that have been upwardly socially mobile for the last generation or two. However, they are still embedded in some of the traditionally working class behaviors of the inner city, and their families have not chosen to move to the more affluent suburbs of New Jersey.
- ⁷ Eckert (2004:362) argues that 'identity work' is not limited to the adolescent life stage; the processes of identity formation and identity shift are simply more intense.
- ⁸ The names of these schools are pseudonymous.
- ⁹ 'Medagon' has its source in the phonetic approximation of *American* by Italian L1 speakers of English in the first immigrant generation, and has been passed on with this pronunciation to subsequent generations.
- ¹⁰ Jacqueline, an Italian girl who styled herself as a cynical observer, commented that "a skirt hiked up to the rear end", regularly applied make-up, styled hair and a tan were characteristic of Sacred Heart girls in general. Among Italians, however, the coolest girls were "the most tan ones. I'm serious."
- ¹¹ Drinking wine, rather than beer, carries the implication of pretentiousness and a claim to non-working class identity.
- ¹² Two students (one Italian, one Irish), on two separate occasions, gave an impersonation of an Italian woman. Both used rapid intonational rises and falls, and affrication and devoicing of alveolar stops. The effect was one of prissiness, not dissimilar to the stereotype of the speech of gay men. However, these linguistic features fall out of the scope of this dissertation.

¹³ The social network diagrams in this section were created using Agna v.2.1 (www.geocities.com/imbenta/agna), a free downloadable application for social network analysis and sociometry.

¹⁴ Other alumnae whom I talked to or interviewed are not represented here.