

Italian-American Students and Their Perspective on Ethnicity Issues: A Research Anthology

Chiara Morucci (March 13, 2012)



Editor Nancy Ziehler presents at Calandra Institute a Research Anthology on "Italian-American Students in New York City, 1975-2000." The book is based on 10 research papers on Italian-American students in the New York City area, and focuses on how Italian-American students negotiated their ethnicity in a period where issues of gender and race were very urgent in the United States.

On February 24th, at the John D. Calandra Italian-American Institute, Dean Anthony Tamburri presented the Research Anthology "[Italian-American Students in New York City, 1975-2000](#) [2]."

The volume was written by past and present Calandra Institute personnel and Scholars, and by Faculty members from various [CUNY](#) [3] Colleges. "I am delighted this book is finally published. It was a long consuming project of four years and we faced lots of challenges first of all analyzing old photocopies," Tamburri said.

Dr Nancy Ziehler, editor of the Anthology, described the book as "a window into the past of how Italian American student negotiated his or her ethnicity during a time when issues of ethnicity, gender and race were being raced at a numerous levels and various venues across the country."



The book is based on 10 research reports that analyze the experiences of Italian-American students in high school, undergraduate and graduate courses from 1975 to 2000 in New York City. The ten chapters of the book are divided in three parts.

The first part focuses on the topic of race and ethnicity: Italian-American students expressed a need to be seen and researched as ethnic rather than racial group members.

The second part analyzes demographic and psycho-educational profiles of students enrolled in CUNY as well as it explores career variables and the family-versus-career dilemma among Italian-American female law students.

The third part is a recent investigation on the main causes of high school dropout among Italian-American teens in NYC, and on what has been done to solve the problem.

Dr Maria Grace LaRusso, Assistant for Specialized Counseling at CUNY and Holy Cross High School, underlined that ethnicity is fundamental for Italian-American students, as the reports of Krase and Fucillo underlined. In a survey of 290 students, 45.9% identified themselves as Italian, 35.2% as Italian-American, 11.3% as American Italian while only 5.2% identified themselves as Americans.

“For female and male students being ‘Italian’ is a major component of their ethnic identity” said LaRusso.

The anthology is a must read for those who want to deepen their knowledge of Italian-American students issues. It is the first case of multicultural counseling literature that focuses on Italian-American students. It is important to underline that the [John D. Calandra Institute](#) [4] was born as a supporting institution for student groups at CUNY fighting for Italian-American rights. These groups were born as an Italian-American version of the civil rights movement, when Italian-Americans realized that they shared many of the issues voiced by other oppressed ethnic groups.

“Italian-American Students in New York City, 1975-2000” gives an important contribution to the general discourse on ethnicity in the US, and it helps raising awareness of certain aspects and characteristics of the Italian-American culture, and of the issues faced by Italian-American students and their families, in the past and in the present.

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