



## **How Italian are You? Let Your Voice be Heard in a New Research Project**

R. I. (August 01, 2013)



How to help a visiting research scholar at the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute of Queens College, City University of New York, to investigate the status of Italian American identity within the greater New York area.

Dr. Rosemary Serra, a leading research sociologist from the University of Trieste in Italy, has come to New York as a visiting research scholar at the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute of Queens College, City University of New York, to investigate the status of Italian American identity within the greater New York area.

The tool used to gather the data is a self-administered questionnaire, designed by Dr. Serra who hope to receive responses from hundreds of young Italian Americans falling within the age ranges 18-34. Serra asks the important questions that have been avoided, ignored, or forgotten as Italian Americans quickly assimilated into American culture. Yet, as she says, they have managed to maintain a unique identity. Determining just what that is will be the focus of her research.



"Gathering and interpreting this information," she says, "is crucial for the future of the Italian American community. I want to see what changes have occurred in the ways people identify with their Italian background and heritages."

Indeed, never has such an ambitious project been launched, especially by an Italian scholar, who has independently funded her work. Dr. Serra has also sought and received some support from within the Italian American community, and she is continually looking for the funds to help elaborate her project. "I'd like to take this project to other major cities to obtain comparative data, but that would require thousands of dollars. For now I will start with the New York area and see if we can create a model for the rest of the country from my work here."

Through the understanding of factors that influence Italian American identity and the ways in which they affect individuals' daily lives, the sociologist plans to analyze her subjects' self-representations and self-perceptions of representations suggested by others of the Italian American community. She also hopes to determine the meaning that Italian heritage has in the daily lives of the younger generations and how it affects their values, behaviors, attitudes, beliefs, and images of Italy and Italians.

Dr. Serra plans to produce a clear picture that will help clarify, define and better understand how to maintain and develop the feeling of belonging to the Italian American culture, how to improve the interaction between Italy and Italian Americans based on knowledge rather than on stereotypes and, lastly, how to provide culturally relevant services that can better reach and meet the requirements and needs of the younger generations.

Dr. Serra will be providing questionnaires beginning now and through September. Volunteering for this research is a way to express your connection to your culture and offer suggestions about what needs to be done for the future of Italian American identity. Upon completion of her analyses, Dr. Serra will publish the results of her work in articles and eventually in book form.

Interested volunteers can contribute to this ground-breaking and relevant research project through your voluntary participation. Please contact Dr. Rosemary Serra, by email [none;text-underline:none">rosemaryserra@libero.it](mailto:rosemaryserra@libero.it) [2] or by telephone (212) 951-0704.

Upon receipt of your email or call, Dr. Serra will provide you with a survey questionnaire that can be completed online or in person in a location of your choice.

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