



Lost Voices of Ohio Non-Majority Residents

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Research Question:

What are the first-hand accounts of elder immigrants and minority Ohioans and their views of later life? Do experiences of discrimination play a role in their views of aging and later life?

Introduction:

The state of Ohio has seen an increase of 50,000 people from foreign countries. This increase adds to the already 11.7 million immigrants living in the United States today. In 2000, roughly 17% of the entire foreign-born population in Ohio was age 65 and older (Research, 2003). This growth in minority populations will influence long-term care services provided by the state in the ways of: cultural practices, expectations of care in later life, personal attitudes about aging, and other aspects of growing older will influence what types of services are desired, needed and utilized by these growing groups. The perspectives of foreign-born elders who have immigrated to the U.S. in the last 20 years is also lacking

In addition, comparatively, little research has been conducted on understanding the lives of African Americans as opposed to White elders. In addition. While there have been national studies exploring utilization and preferences for various aspects of the aging network, there have been few studies to examine the first-hand accounts of under-represented elders, including African American and immigrants, especially within the state of Ohio.



Methods:

Nineteen participants were recruited via flyer and word-of-mouth through religious organizations, churches, families, community centers, and senior centers. All agreed to take part in an oral face-to-face interview, which lasted around 1 hour each. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. Participants were interviewed at a location of their choice (e.g., their home, community center). They were paid \$50 for their participation. I chose to look at a smaller subset, which included two African American women, and two Ukrainian born women. I looked at women only as to account for lurking variables a gender bias may present. I looked for references to discrimination within the transcripts then considered the time period to add social context.

Results:

There was a difference in experiences of discrimination experienced by the two racial groups. In the case of the two African American women who were born in Ohio, the means of their discrimination came from a deep rooted racial bias already present in the United States. The Brown v. the Board of Education decision helped end segregated schools in Ohio. While Ohio did not officially have separate institutions for whites and African Americans, individual school districts sometimes intentionally or unintentionally permitted segregation to occur. Participant 009 cited that though "color means nothing", she still had fears about being a senior and going out alone, specifically at night. In many cities, African Americans and whites resided in their own communities. The recent media outbreak on gun violence as made an impact on her feeling of safety in her area; Cincinnati. As for the European immigrant women, their reason for coming to the United States was opportunity not present in their country of origin. Both women had family or friends already living in Ohio. At the time of both women's exist out of Eastern Europe, Anti-Semitism was prevalent and a driving force for the move. 016 recalls the growing up in 1970's Kiev, Ukraine and not feeling like she belonged because her family was Jewish. 016 came to Cincinnati for better job placement. English proved to be a discriminatory barrier felt by both women. 016 cited that she felt like she had to work harder than the other workers to prove herself to her employer because she was an immigrant and spoke little English.

Discussion:

There are missing voices of minority and immigrant elders in Ohio needed for further investigation aimed at better understanding these groups lives, and how discrimination has impacted their views. The growth in non-majority populations will ultimately impact long-term care services provided by the state in several ways: cultural practices, expectations of care in later life, personal attitudes about aging, and other aspects of growing older will influence what types of services are desired, needed and utilized by these growing groups.

References:

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