

These, of course, are problems which permeate the whole field of ethnic study. Yet, if a second edition should be prepared, it would be hoped that the authors attempt to untangle such issues. It would make for a much better book. But even now, this is one of the best ethnic histories of the United States.

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*A CROSS-CULTURAL STUDY OF MINORITY ELDERS IN SAN DIEGO: THE ELDER PHILIPINO* by Roberta Peterson, 46 pp.; *THE ELDER BLACK* by E. Percil Stanford, 63 pp.; *THE ELDER SAMOAN* by Wesley H. Ishikawa, 44 pp.; *THE ELDER JAPANESE* by Karen C. Ishizuka, 61 pp.; *THE ELDER GUAMANIAN* by Wesley H. Ishikawa, 39 pp.; *THE ELDER LATINO* by Ramon Valle & Lydia Mendoza, 103 pp.; *THE ELDER CHINESE* by Eva Cheng, 46 pp. San Diego: The Campanile Press, 1978.

These are seven monographs published by the Center on Aging at San Diego University (The Campanile Press, 1978). Each monograph is the result of a team of researchers investigating an ethnic group. These cross-cultural studies of minority elders in San Diego investigate samples of Blacks, Chinese, Japanese, Latinos, Philipinos, Samoans, and Guamanians aged 50 and over.

With a common methodology, the researchers objectives are:

- To explore and describe the characteristic lifestyles and primary interactional networks of ethnic minority older people.
- To identify perceptions and attitudes of ethnic minority elders toward formal programmatic assistance and analyze the relationship between the characteristic lifestyles and the use and perception of formal assistance.
- To design and test a methodology adopted for appropriateness and effectiveness in obtaining information about ethnic populations, specifically the elders of these populations. (Valle and Mendoza, *LATINO*, p. 1)

The researchers blend traditional methods with modifications--Platica methodology--that are designed to purposively elicit and describe the ethnic populations being investigated. As part of their purposive design, each team of researchers tailored "*The research instruments and contact patterns specifically to the linguistic and situational differentials to be encountered within each ethnic cohort*" (op. cit., p.4). Interviewers were of the same ethnicity as their interviewees. Formal and informal community networks were utilized to gain interviewees; contacts were made through acquaintance networks, social and religious organizations, and other cultural brokers. Interviewer approaches can

be generally characterized as being less structured and less prescriptive than a strict experimentalist would desire; unobtrusive and contextual data were considered legitimate material. Interviewers were not restricted only to closed-ended, pre-selected questions. They could also ask open-ended questions, add observations, and were encouraged to consider subject comfort and rapport as important components in the interview process.

It is difficult to summarize the findings of seven separate monographs--the intergroup variances were often as significant as the intragroup variances, and, it would be too time-consuming to treat each monograph separately. What follows are general patterns that occur--together with a few interesting tidbits. Most minority elders are satisfied with where they live and with the quality of their lives. Most depend on themselves, their families, and friends for help. Most help other people. Most want more contact with their families. Many ethnic minority elders feel that the younger generation should adhere more closely to their own ethnic cultural values--especially to those values that promoted family affinity. Many elders also feel they should get more respect. Concepts of old age vary among the groups. Some see it as a state of mind, an ability to work, a physical or mental condition, or as chronological age.

For a variety of reasons, the minority elder underutilizes government services, e.g., many are afraid to utilize medical facilities because of financial fears, or because of the fear that medical illness will be discovered, or because of alienation from the care providers. Many are proud and hesitant in asking for any kind of help, e.g., only 7.3% of the Latino elders are on welfare, and 1.8% are dependent on their families. Many think the government can and should help, though many are not sure what services need to be developed. Interviewers report different degrees of receptivity in their interactions with interviewees, e.g., Blacks report that their interviewees are relatively open in their interactions (note: the interviewers were Black females--chosen because it was felt that they would promote rapport better than others) while Latinos are often suspicious. It is touching to read how some Samoans wept as they recounted their leaving Samoa and their feelings of loneliness, and perhaps from the relief or gratitude that someone came to hear their story. It is difficult to delineate the reasons why differences in interviewer and interviewee interactions occur--though there are myriads of possible explanations.

In their conclusions, most of the researchers recommend:

- a) The utilization of local talent, e.g., paraprofessionals and community organizations, for the delivery of services, and research.
- b) Use of bilingual and bicultural community service providers.
- c) Greater utilization of government programs by ethnic populations.
- d) Utilization and development of cultural brokers to help make programs better known and to encourage the

use of government programs. e) More accurate counts of minorities (all monographs record undercounts by official census reports). Undercounts have detrimental consequences on the allocation of funds and resources to minority communities. f) Involvement of minority groups and individuals in the planning, implementation and analysis of research and programs that affect them. g) Funding and training of scholars and researchers in ethnic studies.

### Critique

Unless the same studies are done in the same area, with different samples, interviewers, and researchers, it is difficult to see how the methodology used in these studies can be tested for validity and reliability. If one were to use the same methodology elsewhere, it would be reasonable to expect different results from studying ethnic cohorts in other parts of the country--the demand characteristics of San Diego can skew responses. The authors of these monographs hope that others will try their methodology, however, they do not elaborate on the criteria by which their methodology should be measured. It seems that they will be basing their criteria on the self-report of others, in terms of efficacy of statistical measures.

Another disadvantage of this methodology is that it entails extra thinking and work; the researcher cannot enter the community with his or her statistical tools and survey techniques and assume that they will be universally applicable. In order to use the methods espoused in these monographs, one would have to know intimately the unique psychosocial and cultural dynamics of the ethnic group and then develop approaches that would optimize the responses and analysis of the feelings and thoughts of the respondents.

The category N/A (Not Applicable) is used frequently; but with different efficiency in these monographs. It would be helpful to the reader to be told if the N/A responses were given by particular individuals or whether these responses were distributed with equal frequency throughout the groups being investigated. One cannot help but question why the pre-trial interviews did not deal more effectively with this problem. One particular monograph should have offered better explanations for the large number and nature of many of its N/A responses. Along with better explanations, perhaps they could have broken down this category into more specific categories. This same monograph occasionally--and disconcertingly--separated its figures from its categories, e.g., each respondent had four choices: alone, with family, with friends, or with organized groups. The highest percentage (53.5 percent) indicated that they spent their time alone, while 15.8 percent, 17.8 percent and 12.9 percent respectively, chose the aforementioned categories. Perhaps they could have kept their figures next to their categories (as they usually did), e.g., with family (15.8%), with friends (17.8%).

While each monograph is designed to be a separate entity, for the sake of comparison, it would have been helpful to the reader if a compendium of all the tables in the monographs had been presented, along with similar regional and national statistics if available.

Since community organizations and "word-of-mouth" sources are used to get interviewees, an obvious question is raised: Are there significant numbers of ethnic minority elders who are not part of the community networks and would their responses be different?

Though they vary in the quality and quantity of their presentations, all these monographs are very readable, and they have simple and concise tables.

Compared to the conventional approaches and techniques we usually use, what the researchers of these monographs advocate probably gives us a better picture of the thoughts and feelings of the respondents. The use of open-ended questions, and unobtrusive and contextual measures, reveal information that may not have been apparent if more "objective" and clinical approaches had been used. Examples abound: those who interview ethnic minority elders frequently comment on how pride plays a significant role in the psychology and interactions of the interviewees. Service deliverers will have to deal with this aspect of ethnic and human behavior if they are to reach the populations who need their services. From reading these monographs, one discovers such information as the effects of written consent forms. In some cases the forms elicit suspicion and in other cases suspicion is allayed. We read also that it is rude to ask the age of such ethnic minority elders as the Latinos and Japanese. Instead, it is suggested that the place of birth be asked first and then the date of birth. We find that the date of birth is not necessarily in terms of calendar dates. Instead, it may be marked by significant events in the history of the ethnic groups.

A particularly appealing approach taken by the researchers is the egalitarianism and respect which the professionals show to the participants in their studies. Community members and interviewers are frequently involved in "professional" and administrative decisions.

It is gratifying to read that these researchers are not engaging in the practice so characteristic of so many researchers: stereotyping and overgeneralization. In recent years, our social science researchers are finally doing what they have been taught, hopefully, in school: a sample does not constitute a universe. Until recently, race and ethnic research has been functionally defined as Black and white research. Researchers have become aware that there are differences not only among Blacks but also among non-white ethnic groups. Research such as these San Diego studies can contribute to the social sciences by pointing out that knowing one's subject matter both descriptively and statistically is very important.

## Discussion

This series of monographs contributes to the development of new survey and interviewing methods. Information is utilized from anthropology, sociology, social work, ethnology, and other fields. It humanizes social scientific approaches, e.g., community members are viewed as consultants and participants capable of taking on roles and functions traditionally reserved for academicians, professionals, and administrators. Traditionally, ethnic communities have been areas of exploitation for social scientists: research was often used for control purposes. Universities used these communities to train students, and professionals worked to develop credentials and then they left. The researchers in these studies reflect a growing breed of social scientists involved in ethnic research: they are innovative, concerned for their fellow beings, have a greater awareness of environmental parameters, and advocate for meaningful changes.

As one reads of the pride and self-reliance that is characteristic of so many ethnic minority elders, one can fervently hope that valuable individual psychological assets are not being sacrificed to greater states of dependency. While one can fully endorse the attempts of professionals and administrators to remove barriers and meet as many of the wants and needs of the people as possible, along with the need to develop indigenous systems, serious consideration should be given to encourage these populations to express and advocate for themselves. The concept of the minority elder as simply the consumer of services is unidimensional, detrimental, and demeaning. These monographs clearly show that many elders do not endorse the concept of old age as a time to sit back and play checkers. Most prefer to be active. By using cultural brokers, socio-technocrats, and organizations to interpret and meet the needs of the minority elder. We may merely further the ends of the technocrats other than meet the needs of the people.

These studies bring many issues to mind. These studies clearly show that minority elders are not exploiting public coffers. On the contrary, they are underutilizing services to which they have a right and for which they paid in earlier years. One also wonders in reading these monographs the role ethnicity plays in the responses given and the function of such variables as degree of acculturation, group size, class, and degree of group cohesiveness.

Such research as this does not merely describe the needs, wants, and dynamics of certain ethnic groups. What we are also getting are expressions of psychology and the human condition. Social scientists and administrators can learn that the responses gathered in this project are responses which, to varying degrees, reflect all population. The study of minority groups can increase the alternatives our society has available to it. The plight of the elderly is a concern about which we frequently hear. The study on Samoans shows that they consider it an honor to have an elder live with them. If we wish to foster such an attitude in other groups, perhaps an

understanding of the dynamics of Samoan culture may give us some idea on which variables to manipulate in order to have people honor their elders. Another example: our society is undergoing tremendous changes in this era, the study of ethnic groups can give us some alternative views on how people, with varying degrees of dependency on national social, political, and economic systems, can and have dealt with the lack of certain resources--such as fossil fuels. The study of minorities can increase the alternatives available to us and contribute to our national life.

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RUSSELL W. FRIDLEY. *HISTORIC RESOURCES IN MINNESOTA: A REPORT ON THEIR EXTENT, LOCATION, AND NEED FOR PRESERVATION*. Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, MN, 1979. 172 pp.

It is extremely difficult to review in any kind of a literary way a book which makes no pretense at being a literary work. *Historic Resources* is a report and a resource listing of what does exist. In addition to "what is" there are well thought out recommendations for what should be. The report deals with five broad areas of concern--Historical Organization and Museum Artifacts, Newspapers, Manuscripts, Historic Structures, and Archaeological Sites--which are and have been influenced by the work of the Minnesota Historical Society. In each of the sections there is a broad outline rationale for the existence of the sub-division. In addition there is a brief description of the current research in progress in each of the five areas.

There will be little disagreement on description and historical background materials on the part of users of this resource volume. However, there may be room for discussion and dissension when one arrives at the section which outlines conclusions and recommendations. A series of eight recommendations for future action will certainly raise some questions. To cite one example, there is room for discussion in the case of recommendation number six. "The proliferation of small museums and historical collections should be discouraged in the interest of preserving the states existing resources." One must be very careful to explain the full text of the recommendation in order to avoid the denigration of those efforts which have already taken place at the local or organizational level. Secondly, the state may not be willing to take on the responsibility for preserving records or artifacts from scores of organizations which do not have a vital place in a state-wide institution. By so broadly stating the recommendation, there is an implication that everything is of equal worth to the Historical Society.