

## The Hardships and Outcomes Associated with Immigration

Student Name

Lethbridge College

## The Hardships and Outcomes Associated with Immigration

### Article Summary

In the article “Challenges and barriers to services for immigrant seniors in Canada: ‘you are among others but you feel alone,’” Stewart, Shizha, Makwarimba, Spitzer, Khalema, and Nsaliwa (2011) investigate the diverse impediments encountered in Canada by senior immigrants of Afro-Caribbean, Chinese, Spanish, and former Yugoslavian descent. Specifically, the research objective aimed to address the difficulties, support needs, and public service access of individuals following immigration.

The results of the qualitative study found that immigrant seniors encountered a wealth of difficulties in conjunction with unfulfilled support needs (Stewart et al., 2011). Employment, financial, health, and language impediments were among the challenges individuals experienced. Difficulties with acclimatization and prejudice also posed problems for immigrant seniors. Limited transportation was of additional concern, contributing to reliance on others and social isolation. In general, the expectations of immigrant seniors were not fulfilled upon their arrival. Despite their appreciation for Canadian living standards, individuals received insufficient support, leading to familial conflicts and weakened social support networks.

In regards to the accessibility of public services, immigrant seniors faced frequent barriers (Stewart et al., 2011). Inaccessible programs and services that were not culturally competent fostered discontent among individuals. Extensive waiting times and service provider negativity further contributed to the barriers individuals experienced. Policy makers and service providers stated that influencing factors were inadequate funding, resources, and intersectoral collaboration. Limited immigrant awareness of available resources added to the barriers present.

Stewart et al. (2011) conducted the present study for several reasons based on previous research. First, there was limited research explicitly identifying the challenges of acculturation for seniors, including their support needs and ability to access public services. Secondly, there was an absence of research that analyzed the perceptions of immigrant seniors, policy makers, and service providers in response to such issues. Third, former research examining immigration challenges identified individual concerns, whereas the present study sought to address multiple interdependent challenges related to immigration.

### **Critical Analysis of Journal Article**

To address the challenges new immigrants experienced in Canada, Stewart et al. (2011) used non-scientific evidence, as demonstrated in the use of qualitative research methods. In conjunction with demographic questionnaires, interviews were used to elicit a greater understanding of the perceptions of the non-random sample. Thematic content analysis was then applied to the data to determine the difficulties, support needs, and public service access of immigrant seniors. In contrast to non-scientific evidence, scientific evidence employs random sampling and complies with the scientific method. Through the attainment of empirical evidence via experimentation or observation, hypotheses can be either validated or refuted. Although non-scientific evidence is employed in the present study, credibility is maintained in the quasi-experimental research because it is peer-reviewed by a panel of experts.

The theoretical perspective depicted by Stewart et al. (2011) reflects that of the social-conflict approach, advocating for social policy revisions to eradicate the inequality senior immigrants encounter. According to Stewart et al. (2011), immigration disparities are present at the micro-level, meso-level, and macro-level. In order to effectively address the discrepancies,

intersectoral collaboration is imperative to enhance the resources and supports available for immigrant seniors. Furthermore, their input is integral to facilitate the implementation of culturally appropriate policies, programs, and services.

The research conducted by Stewart et al. (2011) has both strengths and limitations associated with the methods used to obtain data. A strength of the research was its use of qualitative methods; this allowed a greater breadth and depth of knowledge to be obtained from participants by allowing them to openly discuss the barriers they confronted upon arrival to Canada. However, the non-scientific evidence acquired from the qualitative research methods can be seen as one of the limitations, as the research findings are not generalizable to a broader population.

I agree with the conclusions reached in the research, as the challenges stated are comparable to those encountered by my grandparents when immigrating. As stated in the research, the hardships my grandparents faced included employment, financial, and language difficulties. In addition, they experienced acclimatization challenges as well as unfulfilled expectations upon arrival.

### **Application of Critical Thinking**

#### **Applicability of the Sociological Theories and Perspectives**

Analysis of the social-conflict approach and race-conflict approach confirms their relevance to the challenges and outcomes associated with immigration. According to Macionis, Jansson, and Benoit (2013), the social-conflict approach views conflict and change as the product of inequality within society. In particular, the race-conflict approach attributes societal inequality and conflict to the differences in race and ethnicity (Macionis et al., 2013). These

approaches coincide with the perspectives depicted in the research article. Because of the varying ethnicities of immigrants, they are predisposed to inequality according to the social-conflict approach and race-conflict approach. Stewart et al. (2011) maintain that inequality is manifested within society through policies, programs, and services that are not culturally competent and inaccessible. This can, therefore, lead to a multitude of barriers for immigrants as outlined in the research article.

From the perspective of the social-conflict approach, the challenges associated with immigration are rooted in societal inequality, thus allowing it to be viewed as both problematic and functional. Ethnicity can be seen as a source of power used to oppress minorities, as evidenced by allocating low wages to immigrants (Macionis et al., 2013). Consequently, social-conflict theorists may argue that immigration is problematic because it permits those with greater power to exploit immigrants in vulnerable positions. On the contrary, social-conflict theorists could argue that immigration is functional, as the conflict generated from inequality may be necessary to evoke changes, leading to the reduction of prejudice.

### **News Media Article**

In the news media article “Does Canada have an aging crisis?” published in the *Sunday Post*, Douglas Todd (2014) argues that high rates of immigration are not an effective solution in response to the aging Canadian population. As a result of the higher ratio of aging citizens, individuals may contend that young immigrants are necessary to repopulate society. While that may be a temporary solution, Todd (2014) asserts that the issues associated with an aging population would not be resolved from a long term perspective. Opposition to immigration arises from the economic impediments it may impose on society. For example, immigration may

increase government spending, such as on pensions (Todd, 2014). Furthermore, preserving the welfare system may be jeopardized by immigrants because of their potential for limited skill levels and greater dependence on the system (Todd, 2014). In contrast to immigration, Todd (2014) proposes that extended retirement dates may be a plausible solution to the aging population issues.

The immigration issues presented in the news media article are of relevance to the research article and initial research question: ‘Would higher levels of immigration be functional or problematic for Canada?’ The news media article explicitly states that high levels of immigration would not be favorable for Canada because of the fiscal constraints it would impose on society (Todd, 2014). Specifically, high immigration rates would contribute to further government spending on pensions as well as increased dependence on the welfare system (Todd, 2014). These outcomes may reflect the financial difficulties immigrants encounter due to limited employment opportunities and language barriers (Stewart et al., 2011).

## References

Macionis, J. J., Jansson, S. M., & Benoit, C. M. (2013). *Society: The basics* (5<sup>th</sup> Can. ed.).

Toronto, ON: Pearson Canada Inc.

Stewart, M., Shizha, E., Makwarimba, E., Spitzer, D., Khalema, E. N., & Nsaliwa, C. D. (2011).

Challenges and barriers to services for immigrant seniors in Canada: "You are among others but you feel alone." *International Journal of Migration, Health and Social Care*, 7(1), 16-32. doi:10.1108/17479891111176278

Todd, D. (2014, January 26). Does Canada have an aging crisis? *Sunday Post*, p. D1.