Recruiting Challenges and Students’ Involvement in a Project to Understand Civic Engagement of Aging Asian Immigrants in Edmonton

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Background
An understanding of civic engagement in aging immigrant populations is of clear importance to support broad active aging and social integration goals.[1]

Civic engagement involves civic and political activities intended to benefit the public.[2-3]

Among older adults, civic engagement has been linked to the promotion of self-esteem, wellbeing, life meaning and satisfaction. [4-5]

A range of socio-demographic and contextual factors shape civic engagement experiences among older adults.[6]

Research on specific perceptions and experiences of aging immigrants engaged in civic participation is extremely limited.

Asian immigrant groups from China, India, and Philippines are targeted for this study due to their representation in Canada’s immigrant population, diversity in language, and civic participation infrastructure in their countries of origins.

Theoretical Framework
Draws on the Civic Voluntarism Model and on Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice, the theoretical framework of this study is shown in Figure 1 below.

Methodology
Mixed methods research will be conducted in Edmonton, Alberta.

- In-depth interviews with 50 aging immigrants aged 55 and over, born outside of Canada, and of Chinese, Indian, or Filipino origin;
- Twelve focus group discussions with immigrant (10) and Canadian-born older adults (2), and
- A survey of aging immigrants.

Sampling: Availability sampling & Snowballing

Timeline

Recruiting Challenges (??)
- Lacking of students with research experiences and speaking multiple languages;
- Newly established connections with ethnic groups and communities since the principle investigator is new to Edmonton;

Involvement of students
- A PhD student in social work was hired as the project coordinator, fluent in English and Mandarin;
- Seven students who speak different languages were provided opportunities to be involved in this project as research assistants, among them:
  - Four with master degree or study in graduate program; Other three are undergraduate students in social work or sociology;
  - Two Hindi-speaking, one Panjabi-speaking; two Mandarin and/or Cantonese speaking, and two Tagalog speaking,
  - Three are working within/with ethnic communities (Chinese, Indian, and Filipino), and other four are students studying in the universities.

- Students have been involved in: Research ethic application, literature review, training on research skills (e.g. personal interview, focus group, and data analysis), participants recruitment ;
- Students will be involved in participants recruitment, data collection, and analysis, knowledge translation activities;
- Multiple roles of students: Research assistant, cultural broker, and community connector.

References