

Naina Patel (ed.), *Minority Elderly Care in Europe: Country Profiles*. (Book Review)

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Naina Patel (ed.), *Minority Elderly Care in Europe: Country Profiles* Leeds: Policy Research Institute on Ageing and Ethnicity, 2003, 232 pp. n.p. (ISBN 0-9537-6423-0)

In the foreword to this book one can read that this is 'a milestone in the establishment of a sound knowledge base aimed at determining practical responses to the needs of Europe's growing minority ethnic elderly population'. This is true since, as far as information on ethnic minority elders goes, this book does indeed provide a unique first glance into the enormous variation that exists in what we know about elders from ethnic minority groups in Europe and the kinds of health and social care services that are available to them; a topic that an upcoming special issue of *Ageing and Society* will also address.

This reference book, which is the first publication to be produced by the European Commission's Fifth Framework Research Project on Minority Elderly Care (MEC), is a compilation of 'practitioner-friendly' information on ethnic minority elders in ten European countries (the United Kingdom, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Finland, Hungary, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Switzerland). As the subtitle suggests, the information presented is organised according to country and gives us some insight into what different European societies are doing to meet the health and social care needs of the growing number of elders from ethnic minority groups who have now become a population to reckon with as far as elderly care planning and provision is concerned. Ranging from topics such as demographic trends, societal context and immigration history, socio-economic status, housing, health, family structure, health and social care system descriptions, and availability of services, this book gives us an idea--albeit concise--of the situation in each of the countries in question. Thus, as a first attempt to 'generate knowledge to provide practical policy responses on how best to meet the health and social care needs of minority elders', this hook offers a substantial insight into the issues at hand from a European perspective.

The Policy Research Institute on Ageing and Ethnicity's (PRIAE) efforts to gather this vast amount of useful information into a single reference tool is commendable. The book is empirically rich enough for researchers in the field to use (at least for the purpose of becoming acquainted with how a European perspective on the subject might appear). It is also accessible enough for practitioners to understand that they need information on a broad range of issues when trying to plan and provide high quality and user-friendly care for ethnic minority elders. As a researcher who has tried on several occasions to gain insight into how different European countries are meeting the health and social care needs of this particular population, the book is a much-welcomed addition to the body of ethno-gerontological knowledge that we have only recently started to systematically gather in this part of the world. Thus, I hope that the editor of this book does indeed try, as she promises in the introductory chapter, to keep this publication updated in the future. On that same note, it would most certainly be useful if the next edition were not limited in scope to the countries that have participated in the MEC project and if a directory of researchers for each country were added to facilitate the kind of research collaboration that we need in order to contribute to established (and most often North-American-based) theoretical and conceptual frameworks within ethno-gerontology. If European research on ethnic minority elders is to expand the 'ethno-gerontological imagination', we need cross-national endeavours such as the MEC project, and publications such as this book, which allow us to gain comprehensive knowledge about what is currently being done by and for these elders in different European societies and what remains to be accomplished if their care needs are to be met in the future.

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