WHEN OBAMA BECAME PRESIDENT:
MEANINGS OF AGING IN A TIME OF PARADIGM SHIFTS

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Why Study Aging?

- Demographics
- Societal Resource...or resource drain?
- Developmental Potential
How do we age?

- Biological Aging
- Cognitive Aging
- Successful aging
- Productive aging
- Conscious aging
Ageism

- Can we like our older selves?

“*You can’t teach an old dog new tricks*”

 or

“*Aged to Perfection*”
The Purpose of Our Study

- To provide insight into the lived experience of a diverse number of older adults who are living through challenging times
- To improve services and learning opportunities for the increasing and diverse number of older adults in Broward County and those who serve them
- To challenge ageism
- To provide a voice for a marginalized population
- To provide potential information for action to better serve this diverse population in Broward County
- To document the experience of growing older at a unique time in US history.
Our Partners

- NSU’s Lifelong Learning Institute
- Senior Volunteer Services
- Senior Bridge/Rona Bartelstone & Associates
- Jewish Family Services
Our Co-P.I.’s

- Yulia Watters, M. S., L.M.F.T.
  Graduate student, Family Therapy
  Academic Unit: Department of Family Therapy

- Kathalynn Beck, M.A., M.S.
  Graduate student, Health Education
  Academic Unit: Fischler School of Education and Human Services
Yulia

- Personal and Professional Background
- Interest in the Present Study
- Overview of the Personal Journal
Kathalynn

- Personal and Professional Background: Presently a professor of health and wellness at Marymount University; Retired Special Agent with the FBI with a specialty in personality profiling; Married with 3 grown children.

- Interest in the Present Study: While taking Gerontology Courses at NOVA, I became very interested in both aging "Baby Boomers" as well as understanding our elderly parents.

- Overview of the Journal: I started keeping a journal during the Gerontology Courses; this has now evolved to include my own reflections based on my own aging experience and that of the interview subjects.

- One of the things that I am finding interesting is that I can relate to the subjects so easily despite the fact that they are decades older than I am. Granted, I am a "Boomer," but the natural progression through the interviewee's childhood, education, career, and family truly resonates on a certain level despite one's generation. The other thing that I am experiencing is the overall importance of prioritizing family and relationships throughout the lifespan.
Methodology

- The voices, stories, and experiences of older adults are not heard within the statistical data that favors medical research of this population (Bengston, Gans, Putney, & Silverstein, 2009; Estes, 2001).
Qualitative Research Design

A Phenomenological Inquiry

- What is the experience of aging in a time of economic crisis?
Sampling

- 10-12 older adults 55+
- Interview sample is purposive
- Selection is by the agency heads, Ed Aqua, John Gargotta, Rona Bartlestone, and Susan Panzer
Data Collection

- Each interview is audio-recorded and transcribed
- The P.I. and 2 co-P.I.’s are each coding the interviews separately (triangulation)
- 7 interviews have been completed thus far
Some Preliminary Categories

- Pride
- Independence
- Resilience
- Adaptation
Interview Questions

- “Now that you have reached this point in time, what is your experience of aging?”
- “What do you think about the current economic climate?”
- “How are you experiencing the current climate of economic crisis?”
- “In what ways are you being personally affected?”
- “In what ways do you notice your peers being affected?”
- “Describe any life experiences that may have prepared you for this time of life.”
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