Gender, Immigrant Families and Kin Support

Ivy Forsythe-Brown, PhD & Associate Professor, Sociology, Department of Behavioral Sciences, University of Michigan, Dearborn

Dr. Ivy Forsythe-Brown (PhD) is an associate professor of sociology at the University of Michigan-Dearborn and a faculty research associate in the Program for Research on Black Americans at the Institute for Social Research (ISR) at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

This talk discusses the connection between kinship relations, social support, and gender roles among U.S. immigrant families of various ethnic backgrounds (e.g., Arab American, Caribbean, and Latino). Kinship relations and social support have been shown to have a considerable impact on the social mobility and well-being of immigrants. Findings from both quantitative and qualitative studies suggest that the frequency of family contact and family closeness tends to be associated with both giving and receiving social support. Additionally, women, younger adults, and unmarried persons are more likely to have beneficial extended family networks. Overall, extended family relations tend to contribute to ethnic identities, alternative streams of financial and non-financial support, and upward mobility, as well as, provide some protection against acculturative stress and discrimination in the host nation. However, negative family interactions and collectivist cultural expectations can lessen these benefits, particularly for female immigrants.

For more information about the Humanities Center, call (313) 577-5471 or visit http://research2.wayne.edu/hum/