

A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF IMMIGRATION POLICY AND PRACTICE DILEMMAS FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

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Social policy shapes the infrastructure wherein social work is practiced. However, what happens when a particular social policy is seemingly incongruent with the social work code of ethics? How do social work students conceive and resolve potential practice dilemmas that may arise as a consequence? In this study, the authors explored potential practice dilemmas as a result of Proposition 200, an Arizona immigration law that would require social workers employed in the public sector to deny services to undocumented clients. The 6-step analysis found that students recognized various practice dilemmas that the policy would present and conflicts between the policy and social work ethics. Students also identified numerous strategies for resolving the above-mentioned dilemmas.

SOCIAL POLICY PROVIDES a key context in which social work practice occurs (van Wormer, 1997). Social policies (a) lead to structural arrangements within society by which social work services are provided and (b) set limits on social work's role and function in agency settings. Consequently, significant practice dilemmas may arise from various policies and how they are implemented in actual agency practice (Reamer, 1993). For example, the privatization of mental health services has created numerous dilemmas for clinical social workers who must balance the service needs

of clients with organizational demands that often place sharp limits on expenditures (Furman, 2003; Furman, Downey, & Jackson, 2004).

The purpose of this study was to explore potential practice dilemmas that a recent proposed immigration policy may present to social work students. To do so, we questioned social work students about their potential actions regarding a proposed immigration policy in Arizona, which would require social workers to deny services to undocumented persons. Before the presentation of the research method, findings, discussions, and

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implications, we explore immigration policies, trends, and influences and the social service context of providing social work services to Latinos. This exploration provides a rationale for the study and places the research within a wider social-historical context.

Migration Policy and Services to Latinos

The context of immigration to the United States is often misunderstood. Too often, migration is viewed as a voluntary movement of people from one country to another. Subsequently, social policy considerations that do not frame the historical and political roots of the immigration of Latin Americans perpetuate a pattern of blaming the most vulnerable and oppressed populations. A historical-political analysis of the migratory patterns of those who emigrate from Latin America demonstrates that the policy decisions and political forces of the United States are highly implicated in the social forces that lead to migration. For example, from the 1950s through the 1980s, the United States provided fiscal and political backing to repressive governments that systematically violated the human rights of people throughout Central America. In Guatemala, for example, the Central Intelligence Agency was actively involved in the overthrow of the democratically-elected government of Jacob Arbenz. The political changes resulted in the death and disappearance of over 200,000 Guatemalans over the next several decades (May, 2001; Warren, 1994; Wilkinson, 2002) and the creation of social and economic forces that led to the migration of hundreds of thousands of Gua-

temalans to the United States and Mexico. Similarly, American support of oppressive regimes in El Salvador led to mass migration during the 1970s and 1980s (LaFaber, 1991). Millar (2004) aptly explored compelling relationships among various social factors that impact potential migrants:

The pulling effect of U.S. political freedom, economic prosperity and educational advancement are matched by the push of unjust persecution and financial stagnation in the home countries. These perpetuations of the image of the "American Dream" are undermined by the thought of refugees arriving by the thousands who are fleeing violent regimes that are both openly and covertly supported by the United States. (p. 49)

In addition to providing support to repressive regimes, the United States has supported a program of neoliberalism through international fiscal organizations that have caused seismic shifts in the economic structures of Latin American countries (Murillo, 2001). Although a complete exploration of the socioeconomic program of neoliberalism is beyond the scope of this article, Walton's (2004) two-part definition helped clarify the concept:

There are at least two ways in which neoliberalism is commonly used: a narrow usage, that refers to a shift in a subset of policies to a greater reliance on markets; and, a broader usage, that

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implies a wholesale change in the relationship between the state and society, with a more vigorous embrace of the market being part of a generalized withdrawal of state provisioning and action. (p. 166)

Although the overall effectiveness of neoliberal policies is in much debate (Eichengreen, 2004; Munch 2004), what is certain is that large segments of poor populations have been left out of this transformation (Inter-American Development Bank, 1997). For example, numerous health and social service programs for poor, needy, and vulnerable individuals have been cut during the last 2 decades, leaving many without needed social services throughout Latin America. Therefore, many immigrants from Latin America often come to the United States because of limited opportunities to provide support for their families. It is estimated that more than 75% of the populations of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua live in poverty, with nearly 50% living in extreme poverty (Pena-Lopez, 2004). There, economic forces collide with social policy decisions; the synthesis of these forces frame migration to the United States. Because the majority of those who do migrate to the United States are of Mexican origin, a brief history of the migration of Mexicans to the United States is important to explore.

The history of Mexican immigration to the United States is actually a history of United States immigration to Mexico (Takaki, 1993), as much of the western part of the United States was originally Mexican territory. After the

Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1948, which Mexico was largely forced to sign, Mexican nationals in new United States territories become largely marginalized. Later, Mexican immigration to the United States increased dramatically in the early 1900s because of the need for inexpensive labor and the Mexican revolution. In 1924, the National Origins Act was passed and although it did not address immigration from the Western hemisphere there was much pressure to do so (Zolberg, 2006). Despite its hands-off approach, the National Origins Act put parameters on Mexican immigration, including a literacy test, a \$10.00 application fee, and an \$8.00 head tax. Many Mexicans ignored the new requirements. In response, in May 1924, the U.S. Congress passed legislation creating the U.S. Border Patrol to enforce the new rules.

During the Depression, not only was immigration severely curtailed but many immigrants, mostly Mexicans living in the Southwest, were forced to leave the United States. The Depression was in full swing and the country needed a scapegoat; many blamed the high unemployment and economic discord on Mexican immigrants who they believed had stolen jobs from U.S. citizens. It was reasoned that if Mexican immigrants were deported, their jobs would be freed up for White Americans and the Depression would end (Acuna, 2000). Although the U.S. census shows a drop in the Mexican population of almost a quarter million people during the 1930s, the actual number, because of the undercount represented by the undocumented, was probably closer to the 458,000 estimated by the Mexican government to have come

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back to the country from 1930 to 1937 (Aguirre & Turner, 1998; Meier & Feliciano, 1999).

Mexican immigration was purposely accelerated in the 1940s, partly to replace U.S. residents who went to Europe to fight World War II. The Bracero program enacted in 1942 was a direct response to the U.S. need for wartime labor. The Bracero program was a guest-worker agreement between the United States and Mexico. Although meant to make up for World War II labor shortages, the agreement was continued until 1964. Over 500,000 Braceros legally entered the United States during the 20-year program. However, during the 1950s another U.S. government-sponsored program had a greater affect on Mexican immigration and that was "Operation Wet-back," the Border Patrol military-style operation that deported almost that same 500,000 that the Bracero program allowed to legally enter (Acuna, 2000).

Mexican immigration, both with and without the proper documentation, has continued unabated since. There have been numerous legal and extralegal attempts to halt the flow but a series of economic shocks in Mexico, coupled with the relative increased prosperity in the United States, has led to more and more people making the journey north. But Mexico is not the sole provider of U.S. Latino (im)migrants. Cuba and Puerto Rico have also contributed large numbers.

Unlike Mexican immigrants, large numbers of Cuban "refugees" were welcomed with open arms following the Communist takeover of that country. In fact, those Cubans were thought of in such a positive light that they are commonly referred to as the Golden Wave of Cuban immigration. They were light

skinned, wealthy, and stridently anticommunist, and they were welcomed with resettlement programs, bilingual education, and low-interest government loans. This was not only in stark contrast to the Mexican immigration of the past, but also to the next large wave of Cuban immigration, the "Mariel" Cubans who came in 1980. The Marielitos were dark skinned, poor, and thought to be mostly criminals and crazy, a claim that was generally proven to be false. Until recently, Cuban immigrants tended to stay in the Miami area but there are now Cuban enclaves in Chicago, Los Angeles, and other areas outside of Florida. Puerto Rican migrations cannot technically be seen as immigration because Puerto Ricans became citizens in 1917 with the passage of the Jones Act (Zolberg, 2006). The bulk of the Puerto Ricans went to the New York and East Coast area around 1954, the year they were granted Commonwealth status. They set up enclaves in New York City as well as in Rhode Island and Connecticut. Like the Cubans, Puerto Ricans have since moved to Chicago and other areas of the country.

Proposition 200

As discussed, immigration policy that has targeted Latin Americans has historically been predicated on the logic of fear and blame and has largely ignored both the social forces that contribute to migration as well as the positive role that immigrants play in the economic and social fabric of the United States. As stated by Kearney and Beserra (2004):

Whereas states construct national identities and bordering policies in their own interests, migrants cross those bor-

ders and enter other spaces to acquire forms of value and/or minimize the loss of such forms of value. (p. 104)

The recently enacted law in Arizona, Proposition 200, represents just such a social policy. Proposition 200 is an Arizona ballot initiative that passed by a wide margin in the November 2004 election. Proposition 200 requires all public employees to check the legal status of individuals prior to providing any services regarded as public benefits. If services are provided to undocumented people through failure to check immigration status, the provider of such services is subject to a fine and/or jail time. In addition, Proposition 200 requires proof of citizenship on voter registration and requires proof of identification at the voting booth. An injunction barring the implementation of Proposition 200 was denied on December 22, 2004, by a federal judge in Tucson who ruled that the proposition is not unconstitutional and should immediately become law. The law has the potential to leave city, county, state, and federal employees in Arizona in a complex web of uncertainty regarding delivery of services to undocumented individuals.

Proposition 200 is especially relevant to Latino immigrants. Latinos are not only one of the largest ethnic minority populations in the United States, but also one of the poorest. Poverty, linguistic isolation, substance abuse, and urbanization, when combined with discrimination and mental health issues greatly impact the various Latino communities (Carrasquillo, 1991; Colon, 1996). This populations' multiple psychosocial problems point to a significant service need for the Latino population.

Ambiguities in the law and how it intersects with federal laws, such as the Violence Against Woman Act, are complex (Dobash & Dobash, 1992). Social workers who encounter women who have been victims of violence should consult with an immigration lawyer to ascertain a woman's legal rights and the potential implications for her and her family.

Method

We chose an exploratory, qualitative research design for several reasons. We sought to develop a method that would first and foremost allow for a safe and confidential environment for students to present the complexities and paradoxes of their decision-making processes regarding ethical dilemmas from proposed immigration policy. Students were asked to write anonymous narratives in response to a particular social work practice scenario and reflect on the meaning of the case. This method was selected over face-to-face interviews to minimize social desirability bias, because some of the participants' responses might be controversial and face-to-face interviews with a faculty member might lead to selective responses. In the university in which this research was conducted, classroom research is exempt from institutional review board approval. Data were collected in the fall of 2004.

During a class session, students were presented the following scenario and asked to respond to it. Students were informed that they were free to not respond and that responding or not responding to the scenario would not impact their grade. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, students were instructed not to place their names or other identifying material on their responses.

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Scenario

Students were presented the following instructions and scenario:

Please read the following scenario. After reading, please write a brief narrative explaining what you would do and why. Pretend that you provide services to battered women and their children. You are typically underfunded and overcrowded. Many of your clients are undocumented workers. A new state law is passed that requires you to do two things: NOT to provide services to undocumented immigrants and TO REPORT such individuals to federal immigration officials. Failure to report can result in both jail time and a significant fine. Sonita and her children arrive shortly after the new law is passed. She has been beaten, her children have been threatened, they have no relatives, no income, and no place else to go. Would you provide services? Why or why not? Would you report them; why or why not?

The sample for this study consisted of bachelors-level and masters-level social work students. Fifty-one foundation MSW students in two sections of Advanced Social Policy Analysis, and 27 BSW students in one section of undergraduate Human Behavior in the Social Environment II were selected for the study. All students participated in the study. This sample of social work students was selected for the following reasons: First, social

work students were chosen because social work code of ethics charge social workers to service the most vulnerable populations, including undocumented peoples. Second, many social workers are involved in direct service delivery for Latino immigrants, including job training, child welfare, educational services, drug and alcohol services, and mental health services. Proposition 200 may then create significant practice dilemmas for social workers who feel caught between their professional mandate to service and maintain the confidentiality of vulnerable populations and a law that requires them to report undocumented clients.

The philosophical grounding for the method has multiple roots. First, the study was approached inductively, using grounded theory as a means of approaching the data. Babbie (2001) defined *grounded theory* as "attempting to derive theories from an analysis of the patterns, themes, and common categories discovered in observational data" (p. 284). Second, we recognized the central role that we would play in the interpretation of the data. Adopting a postmodern position regarding the role of subjectivity in the analysis of data, qualitative researchers investigating sensitive or controversial information should provide readers with relevant information about themselves (Patton, 2001). Indeed, the value of openness and transparency has become associated with best practices in qualitative research (Constas, 1992; Creswell, 1998).

The first author (R. F.) of the article, who conducted the primary data analysis, has spent many years working and traveling in

Latin America. He has strong concerns about the demonization of immigrants and Latinos, in particular, in the United States. He sees the migrant experience in the United States as being one of the key factors that has led to our strong economic and global standing.

The second author (C. L.) recently moved to Arizona from the Great Plains. Prior to this move, immigration was not a salient practice concern and was only a peripheral subject discussed in course content. However, immigration policy is a central practice and pedagogical concern in the current environment. As a Chicano scholar, the second author believes that the United States is largely a nation of immigrants. In the Southwest, the intermingling of Chicanos and Mexicans would conceivably be an environment more tolerant of wide-latitude immigration policy. That is not the case, however. In fact, immigration policy in Arizona is hotly debated and has life and death implications. The second author is in favor of an open-border policy that would permit workers to cross and return on a regular basis. The Patriot Act and the perceived threat to national security, however, work to mitigate the possibility of such a policy ever being enacted (American Civil Liberties Union, 2006).

The fourth author (N. J. N.) believes that immigration policy is an important practice concern for social workers. As a doctoral student, her research interest is in Mexico-to-U.S. transmigrants. Furthermore, as a racial-ethnic minority, her experiences with racism and prejudice have shaped her world view and influenced her strong orientation for social justice. The fourth author's opinion about

United States's immigration policies is that they are stringent and can be biased against citizens of developing countries.

Data Analysis

After the data were collected, they were typed into a word-processing program. Copies of the data were printed for subsequent coding. The data were analyzed through thematic analysis methods using five successive stages designed to minimize errors in coding. The first stage consisted of the data being read without the intent to specifically code. Thoughts and impressions that occurred to us were noted on the margins of the page. The second stage moved to open coding, where codes were assigned to the data with as much specificity as possible. The third stage of coding, done 1 week later, used the same process. This was done to ensure that the initially developed codes were congruent with the data. A week between coding is a useful method in helping a researcher analyzing data to assess his or her original coding scheme. This distancing is viewed as an important method in this process. During this phase, we found congruence and consistency between the two coding outcomes approximately 92% of the time. Areas of inconsistency were analyzed and codes were ascribed that best characterized the codes. The fourth stage of coding sought to make connections between the codes and develop themes on a higher level of abstraction. The fifth stage sought to look for alternative explanations in the data, whereby the researchers actively sought to find evidence that ran counter to patterns or themes that were found in the previous coding.

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Padgett (1998) referred to this process as *negative case analysis* and conceptualized this as an essential phase of the data analysis phase.

Results

In presenting results, several options are available to qualitative researchers. We believe that although it is the responsibility of researchers to carefully analyze data and then develop theory (i.e., themes and relationships among the themes), we also believe in presenting thick descriptions and allowing the data to speak for itself. It should be noted that there was a great deal of crossover between categories. Responses were categorized to best illustrate emerging themes. For some categories, we present several responses to provide the richness and diversity of response. In other categories, we provide only one example, as this example may be typical or may be an outlier. This distinction is noted when applicable. The themes found include the following: decisions regarding reporting and providing service, ethical issues, and the use of creative solutions.

Decisions Regarding Reporting and Service

One of the key issues respondents explored was the decision regarding to report and/or service undocumented clients. Although these might seem like two separate areas, in practice they are highly intertwined, as the following passages indicate. The largest category of responses included those who indicated that they would provide service and would not report. Nearly two thirds of responses fit into this category.

Serve and Not Report

- I am having a dilemma. I would be very secretive about this and try to help them. I would not report them because of their situation. Hopefully, the man abusing them is in another country and reporting them would send them back to abuse. My heart is telling me to assist them. I just have to find a way to help.
- I would provide immediate service until something or somewhere else outside the agency could be located. If I had to temporarily put them up somewhere if I could, I would. NO, I would not report them. The family needs help. They have sought out assistance, and I will be there to help them and not turn them in like criminals. Yes, it would mean sacrificing my job and the possibility of arrest.

Serve and Report (Nearly 20% of the responses fit into this category.)

- The only service I would provide would be a referral, if that. I would advise her of the new laws, as well. Yes, I would report her. I would like to think that were her and her children taken into custody, they would then receive services. Being under the protection of the INS [Immigration and Naturalization Service] would be better than their present situation.
- I would want to provide services and I would find a way to do so, but I would have to report them cuz [because] I wouldn't be willing to do jail time.

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Several of these responses indicated strong ambivalence and that the respondents were conflicted. The following passage is a powerful example of this conflict. "I would provide any service I could. I would then be obligated to report them. I would provide services until I was told what to do. I would help any way I could for as long as I could. Then refer any way I could."

Refer to Another Provider. Another theme in the data revealed that respondents would attempt to meet their professional obligations by referring clients to outside agencies and thereby providing services to their clients.

- I would not provide services, but I would make sure she is stabilized and refer her to a church that could help her.
- I would speak to my supervisor about the case. If my supervisor says it is my call, I would help Sonita by referring her to an agency that could help her. Because I would not want to see this young lady and her children on the 5:00 news.

Ethical Issues Identified

Students were able to recognize numerous ethical dilemmas and practice conflicts that social workers would face working under this law. These respondents indicated that their value for human life was more important rather than following a law that they felt could jeopardize the safety of their clients.

Life: "I would definitely provide services to her and her family. I feel that life is worth more to me than the consequences of a law.

Everyone deserves to feel safe, no matter their immigration status. I would not report them."

The Ethics of Service

- I would definitely provide services without taking into consideration the family's immigration status. As a social worker and a human being not providing services would go against my ethics. I would not report them knowing that I would have to pay the consequences.
- I would provide the services anyway because of humanitarian reasons in life or death situations.

One Versus Many: "Yes, I would provide services for Sonita and her family. First, I would write down all her information and see (not ask) if she is undocumented or not. If I can't figure this out, I would get my supervisor's advice on what to do. If it is a law to not provide services and the agency I am at can get a violation of the law, then I would not provide services because then we can lose the agency I work at (and future victims).

The Law Versus Ethical Mandates. Many of the respondents additionally expressed being torn between the law that would mandate them to report undocumented workers versus social work ethics that mandate services to all vulnerable populations.

- I'm not sure what I would do. My first instinct is to provide services. I cannot imagine turning someone away who is in such desperate need of help. This law seems to bind our hands.

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- I would provide services and I would not report based upon a moral and ethical stand. People are the highest order. Because it is lawful doesn't make it right.
- Yes, I would provide services because it would be unethical, not to mention immoral not to. No, I would not report them. This would be my active protest against the law.
- I cannot select which laws I will respect.
- No, I would not report if I do not know whether a person is undocumented. That is a piece of personal information and my code of ethics requires that I protect their privacy.
- The law says I have to [report]. I would obey the law. However, I would try to find any services I could to help them in the meantime. I would not want to put myself in an ugly situation. I have a family to think about myself.

Confidentiality. Several respondents reported feeling that social work confidentiality precludes them from reporting undocumented individuals, despite the law. "Due to the confidentiality of domestic violence issues, ethical standard would not allow me to report them to immigration."

Behavior Outside the Law. A very few number of respondents even reported that they would not only break the law to protect their clients but also engage in further protective behavior outside the scope of the law. "I would provide all services that she needs. I would not turn her into immigration and I would not tell anyone she is not a legal resident. As a matter of fact, I would say that she is documented and probably get her fake papers in order to protect her and her children."

Self-Preservation. In direct contrast, some respondents reported that despite being torn between ethics and the law, they would reluctantly choose to follow the law and deny services to undocumented people. "This would be a difficult scenario because the NASW Code of Ethics [National Association of Social Workers, 1996] and my own personal values would lead me to provide services. At the same time, if I go to jail, I cannot help other women and children or be available for my own family. This is certainly an ethical dilemma I hope I am never in but tend to think I would have to find a safe place for this woman and child."

Creative Solutions

Don't Ask, Don't Tell. An important strategy that many of the respondents explored was to explicitly not ask about immigration status.

- I would assume Sonita is a legal citizen and provide all services available. I would post a sign in the lobby instructing clients that the agency does not want to know their immigration status, and clients should not divulge their status. If you don't know or don't ask, you don't have to tell.
- I would provide services to her without knowing if she is undocumented. The main reason would be that my interpretation of the NASW Code of Ethics does not require me to consider immigration status as a factor in delivering services. My agency's job is not to identify the legality of people. That's the INS's job.

Strategies of Circumvention. Beyond the previously discussed don't-ask-don't-tell sce-

nario were respondents who stated that they would find a way of providing services secretly and would otherwise circumvent the law.

- Well, it all depends on the type of services that I provide; if I worked at a domestic violence program or shelter, I would take the chance and provide services. I would never report anyone to INS under any circumstances. If I did not work for a domestic violence program or shelter, I would secretly find a way to get help for these clients and do whatever I could to help them.
- I would provide services because the safety of the mother and her child is more important. I would explain to the client the requirement of me to report. I would report, but I would delay the report until after the client was no longer in my care at the agency. If I was unable to delay the report, then I would not report at all and I would risk the fine or jail time.

Discussion

Several important observations emerge from the results of data analysis. First, it is clear that both bachelors- and masters-level students identified the difficulties that a law such as Proposition 200 might bring to service providers and to undocumented individuals. Participants overwhelmingly reported feeling that Proposition 200 may lead to practice dilemmas. The majority of respondents indicated that they would adopt varied strategies (e.g., referrals to outside agencies, not asking immigration status, and even breaking the law) to resolve the practice dilemma brought on by this potential law. Others indicated that

they would follow the law and not provide services to undocumented people despite their ethical concerns regarding the proposed law. Although we respect the quandaries that such students face, we are concerned that this cohort of students may not be sufficiently educated in, or aligned with, the ethics of the profession. Although it is certainly understandable that social workers would not want to place themselves and their agencies at risk, we wonder if the results of this study might indicate a diminution of the social advocacy orientation of social work students and perhaps the profession in general. Even within the responses of students who would provide services to the client, a relatively few students responded to macrolevel concerns. Social justice and community organization interventions were notably missing from the data.

However, all findings and conclusions presented in this study are limited by a small and potentially unrepresentative sample. The respondents of the study were well versed on the tenets of Proposition 200. Therefore, the presented scenario may have seemed more relevant to this group than to others who may not be as informed about Proposition 200. However, this study provides valuable insight into the practice dilemmas that social workers may face as a consequence of Proposition 200 and the dilemmas students perceive.

Conclusion

Immigration policy has substantial implications for social work practice because it affects social service provision to immigrants by determining immigrant eligibility for social services and framing the major areas of need among immigrants (Padilla, 1997). It is

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therefore vital to consider the implications of a highly restrictive immigrant policy, such as Proposition 200, on social work delivery. The results of this study indicate that immigration policy that restricts services to undocumented people can burden social workers with significant practice dilemmas. Social workers may be caught between following the law and denying services to undocumented clients and the Code of Ethics (National Association of Social Workers, 1996), which mandates the provision of services to all vulnerable populations. Subsequently, social workers may be forced to adopt lawful and unlawful strategies to mediate between the law and their professional ethics. The adoption of such strategies as well as the burden of the practice dilemmas issued by such immigration policy can cause stress, distress, and may lower the job satisfaction levels of social workers. The results of this article, then, elucidate that immigration policy can significantly create practice dilemmas for social service providers. The profession of social work should then begin to seriously consider the role of immigration policy and its effect on social service delivery through critical assessment of immigration policy as well as lobbying for or against proposed immigration laws that may negatively affect service delivery to clients. The vital role of immigration policy on social work service provision to immigrants may be further underscored in social work curriculum to ensure that future social workers are equipped to meet the challenges of servicing the burgeoning population of immigrants and migrants without the dilemma created by compromising social work ethics.

Postscript

In the process of this research study, Proposition 200 was made into law and the second author (C. L. L.) received a telephone call from a masters-level student relating the following story:

An undocumented woman with three children who are United States citizens and had been receiving services from the state of Arizona for their medical conditions was told that the office of child support enforcement would have to sign off on her case before services to the children could be reauthorized. This woman had fled Mexico and an abusive husband to live here in the United States, close to family. The child support enforcement office would not sign off on her case because she was undocumented, even though the chances of getting any contributions from the husband were nil. Therefore, services to the children could not be reauthorized because of their mother's status because verification of income is a prerequisite. When my student asked the worker to whom she spoke what alternatives she might provide to this mother and her children, the worker said, "Maybe you should send her back to Mexico." This response is certainly crass and appears unfeeling, but it also relays the frustration of seemingly hopeless predicaments in which service providers find themselves. This real-time response is also clearly vastly different from the responses that the students gave.

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