Cross Cultural Communication Group Paper: Immigration

SWK 624-01 Human Behavior and Human Diversity

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Academic Integrity Pledge: “I have abided by the Academic Integrity Policy on this assignment.”

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**Introduction**

American history, as we have been taught, was founded on the freedom to pursue happiness and new economic opportunities. Some of our “founding fathers” set sail seeking religious freedom and refuge from religious persecution. Since our first formal arrival in the early 1600s, immigration has remained a major part of American growth. Over the course of time, countless individuals have come to America to explore dreams and a hope for a better future for themselves and their families. Needless to say, immigration is what America was built on. In this paper we will discuss major components of immigration such as; myths and facts, the American cultural perspective on immigrants and refugees, impact of immigration on children, obstacles refugees face, sex trafficking, documentation of immigrants, and the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals.

**Immigration Myths and Facts**

Many individuals lack knowledge when it comes to immigration. This lack of education can cause misleading information and myths to form about immigrants who are coming to the United States. This article helps to explain the mis consensus in policy discussion about the condition of the United States immigration system. Author Filisko (2012) mentions how there are two sides to the debate; one being individuals who hold belief that America was built on immigration, and those who believe immigrants are more of a problem to America in its entirety. This type of environment leads to false accusations, which turns into myths, which can get in the way of truly understanding the immigration system and ways it can be fixed (Filisko, 2012). Many people state that immigrants should come to the United States legally. Filisko (2012) states that 99 percent of immigrants who enter the united states come here illegally because there is no way for them to enter legally. The only way immigrants are allowed into America is to get a visa on three conditions; humanitarian grounds, family member petition, or have an employer sponsor the immigrant; all of which is limited quota (Filisko, 2012). One of the most popular myths according to Filisko (2012) is that undocumented immigrants receive public benefits. He explains that this is false and that undocumented immigrants are only limited to emergency medical care and public schooling (Filisko, 2012). Other topics mentioned by the author that have been portrayed as misleading include immigrants assimilating into American society, immigrants taking jobs from American workers, and immigrants not paying taxes (Filisko, 2012). In conclusion Filisko (2012) states that throughout history all immigrants have been met with hesitation, but ultimately justified and welcomed. Immigrants today deserve that same opportunity.

Since 2013 The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, also known as ISIS, has kidnapped, raped and murdered minority religious groups in Iraq and Syria. In January 2017 President Trump issued a widely controversial Executive Order. This executive order was first known as Executive Order 13,769 “Protecting Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States” (Barrow, J., 2018). As part of this order individuals from Iraq, Iran, Sudan, Libya, Somalia, Syria and Yemen were banned entry into the U.S. for 90 days (Barrow, 2018). In section five of this order, President Trump postponed entry for Syrian refugees indefinitely and suspended the Refugee Admissions Program for 120 days (Barrow, 2018). This original order sparked debate immediately in multiple states across the U.S. and many believed this order violated the Establishment Clause of the 1st Amendment (Barrow, 2018). After much discussion the Executive Order was denied, and President Trump withdrew and replaced his original order in March (Barrow, 2018). In the new Order, individuals who are lawful citizens, individuals with valid visas on effective date, or refugees scheduled to travel before effective date were deemed safe from the ban (Barrow, 2018). This order, however, was not effective in the pursuit to stop religious persecution or in helping refugees and immigrants in other countries. Although the first order was repealed and then replaced, questions are still being asked about its legitimacy. In conclusion, Barrow (2018) believes there is still more policy to be discussed in order to stop the severe religious persecution these minority religious groups are facing not only in countries in the middle east, but here in the United States as well.

**The American Cultural Perspective on Refugees**

Many individuals come to America seeking safety from dire conditions in their native lands. When immigrants arrive, they are expected to adjust to the culture and way of the land. Many have difficulty. Leaving persecution to face new forms of persecution was never the plan. In the article, African and Non-African Refugees' Perceptions of Police: A Study of Two American Cities, the perception of African immigrants when it comes to policing services was evaluated. The purpose was to study African and Non-African refugee perceptions of the police. “The negative experiences for African refugees in their home countries might lead them to evaluate American police officers positively” (Chenane, Wu, & Song, 2017). However, as the African refugees continued to live in the United States their positive perspectives began to decline. The study included a comparison of African American experience. When comparing, the language barrier that the African refugees had increased their negative outcomes with the police.

In the article, When Hate Comes to Town: Community Response to Violence Against Immigrants written by Gordana Rabrenovic the discussion was how some small town in the U.S. confronted violence against immigrants. In the article it was mentioned that the fear of terrorism due to 9/11 attacks helps fuel hatred towards immigrants in small towns. As a result, white supremacist groups in these towns boosted their membership by using such fear. However, other citizens decided to take a different outlook, and decided to push back against xenophobic violence. In order to overcome the violence and fear, these small communities decided to create community support services for the at-risk immigrants. The positive collaborations of citizens in the small communities were successful.

**Impact of Immigration on Children**

Immigrant children face a unique set of difficulties when coming to America, especially when it comes to learning English in the classroom. More specifically, bilingual programs lack robust support nationwide “and do not offer the breadth and depth of courses that immigrant-origin students need to get into a meaningful college track.” (Suárez-Orozco, M., & Suárez-Orozco, C., 2015). The author of the article, *Children of Immigration*, explains that in consequence of lack of nationwide support, bilingual programs face implementation challenges including inadequate resources, uncertified personnel, and poor administrative support, all contributing to diminished college opportunities (Suárez-Orozco, M., & Suárez-Orozco, C., 2015). In addition to not having access to adequate bilingual programs, students learning English may also face barriers when it comes to standardized tests. The author of this article found that most tests assume the test taker has knowledge of mainstream culture and “fail to recognize culture of origin and content knowledge.” (Suárez-Orozco, M., & Suárez-Orozco, C., 2015) This can lead to underestimates of student abilities and competencies. (Suárez-Orozco, M., & Suárez-Orozco, C., 2015)

In another article by Marcel M. Suarez Orozco, Marcel discusses the education levels of immigrants. He first gives statistics proving that immigrants with college degrees have overwhelmingly contributed to the field of science and engineering (Suárez-Orozco, M. M., 2001). Then he goes on to explain that another portion of immigrants are not as educated and may lack skills (Suárez-Orozco, M. M., 2001). These particular immigrants “tend to settle in areas of deep poverty and racial segregation” (Suárez-Orozco, M. M., 2001). These environments are usually poor urban settings that force immigrant children into the position of either acculturating to the negative facets of this culture such as violence and drugs or adhering to their personal values and world views. (Suárez-Orozco, M. M., 2001) In addition to this acculturation, some immigrant children are faced with psychological harms such as shame, self-doubt and self-hatred because they feel they are rejected by American culture and undeserving of “the American Dream” (Suárez-Orozco, M. M., 2001).

**Vietnamese and East Timorese Refugees and Depression**

Culture is critically important to take into consideration when Vietnamese and East Timorese are presenting with possible depression. A social worker should gain appropriate knowledge about clinically treating a person who is from a different culture; this will benefit the client and social worker relationship. Treating depression among many cultures carries its own stigmas; however, the important part is to understand the stigma a certain culture carries about mental illness (Kokanovic, R., May, C., Dowrick, C., Furler, J., Newton, D., & Gunn, J. 2010). One important factor for a social worker is to understand that Vietnamese and E. Timorese have escaped from their homeland due to “trauma, war and persecution”(Kokanovic, R. et al. 2010). Social workers must be willing to hear their stories of escape and not rush to the present with refugees (Kokanovic, R. et al. 2010).

A second part is that they are being placed in a different country which has changed the family dynamics. The change in family dynamics is an important aspect because Vietnamese and E. Timorese live closely and the entire family care for the elderly in their village (Kokanovic, R. et al. 2010). What this means is that when refugees are placed in new locations with the family not being in the same vicinity; therefore, it becomes one family member caring for the elderly (Kokanovic, R. et al. 2010). Social workers should be aware of this because a person may come in to digest their frustration; they just want to be heard. Kokanovic, R. et al. (2010) reported, the Vietnamese and E. Timorese use metaphors to indicate their stress and do not like the psychological terms used, such as depression; it is better to use the words sadness, worry , tension, and stress.

**Montagnard Refugees and**  **Home Placement**

Home is where the heart is. This is a familiar and widely used phrase used among diverse populations. It seems to ring true through many cultures. Etsuko Kinefuchi (2010) explains the importance of finding “home space” for Montagnard refugee families so they can begin to feel “social and emotional” bonds, gain a sense of self, and to be able to take part in their family traditions. With that said, refugees tend to lose some of their cultural practices because of the mainstream cultural ways. Refugees need to learn ways of speaking to the mainstream community in order to adapt successfully (Kinefuchi, E. 2010). According to Kinefuchi (2010) the Montagnard men interviewed felt their homes were in multiple locations which are their homeland in Vietnam, the Montagnard settler society and the “U.S. mainstream community.”

As a social worker it is important to understand that Montagnard refugees continue to consider their homeland in Vietnam part of their them. Kinefuchi (2010) reported that on an emotional level most refugee men in the study considered the persons of Montagnard commune in Vietnam in their hearts and minds not the actual country of Vietnam. A social worker should be aware of the Montagnards’ mindset and worldview.

Another area of importance is connecting refugees with middle-class Americans, so they can gain optimal opportunities for success. Kinefuchi (2010) suggests that two Montagnard refugees had more opportunity in America because they had access to communicate with middle-class Americans. The advantage the few refugees had were that they could speak English and are educated which led them to networking with middle-class Americans (Kinefuchi, E. 2010). What this means is that social workers should address the locations refugees are placed as well as giving them opportunities to learn how to speak English and have education to obtain proper networks.

**Immigration and International Sex Trafficking**

International sex trafficking into the United States is a growing problem that receives a lack of attention. According to Macy and Johns (2011) sex trafficking is the “fastest growing form of international human trafficking, and the United States is a frequent trafficking destination”. Individuals who have survived international sex trafficking often come to the attention of human service providers when seeking services for the abuses they have suffered. Therefore, it is important for these human service providers to become aware of risk factors and needed aftercare services.

Some individual risk factors for trafficking include young age, unemployment, prior victimization, physical, and mental health problems (Macy & Johns, 2011). Additionally, individuals who live in countries where there is serious poverty, gender inequality, police and political corruption, high crime, and/or war and conflict are also at higher risk (Macy & Johns, 2011). These risk factors can help professionals more accurately identify the populations that perpetrators may be targeting.

It is important for human service providers to become aware of the aftercare resources available for survivors. Trafficking perpetrators may subject their victims to poor nutrition, dangerous working conditions, and increased exposure to infectious disease. Sex trafficking survivors often times sustain physical injuries and suffer long-term psychological consequences. These mental health effects can include depression, anxiety, panic attacks, posttraumatic stress disorder, suicidal ideation, and suicide. Substance abuse is also a serious problem for survivors long after they are rescued.

There is an array of aftercare services that are available to survivors. Survivors should initially be offered basic necessitates including food, clothing, shoes, and toiletries such as soap and feminine hygiene products. They should also have safe and secure housing (both immediate and long-term), physical health care services, mental health care services, legal and immigration advocacy, and life skills and job training (Macy & Johns, 2011). The range of services that survivors should receive include components to address immediate and crisis needs, ongoing needs, and long-term needs.

The prevalence, risk factors, and aftercare needs of survivors have been addressed within the first article. However, one of the major aspects that is missing above is the recruitment process. There are four general recruitment strategies that traffickers use to lure women into the sex industry. The first strategy is when seemingly legitimate organizations lure women in by offering access to a better life in another, richer, nation through employment, modeling, and marriage (Hodge & Lietz, 2007). The second strategy is to recruit women who are engaged in prostitution in their country of origin (Hodge & Lietz, 2007). These recruiters promise much higher earnings for doing similar work in wealthier nations. The third strategy is kidnapping which is simply enslaving women against their will (Hodge & Lietz, 2007). The fourth strategy is when recruiters purchase girls or young women from families through promising them that she will have a better life in a richer nation (Hodge & Lietz, 2007).

The final issue that remains is entrapment of victims. The four main themes that keep victims entrapped are fear, lack of knowledge about alternatives, isolation, and physical and psychological confinement (Logan et al., 2009). Perpetrators place fear into victims through sexual punishment, physical punishment, and/or threats to harm family members (Logan et al., 2009). Additionally, immigrant victims have fears of being deported, being jailed, losing their children, and they fear law enforcement involvement (Logan et al., 2009). Victims may have a lack of knowledge about alternatives which could keep them entrapped. They may not know their rights, they may have poor language skills, and they may not know the institutions to go to for help (Logan et al., 2009). Isolation is the third most frequent reason for entrapment. Victims are in unfamiliar places, surrounded by strangers, and often times do not know how to speak the language of individuals around them. They become dependent on the trafficker for survival. The last reason for entrapment is physical and psychological confinement. Traffickers control the victim’s money, passports, visas, or other identifying documents (Logan et al., 2009). They also use debt bondage, drugs, and alcohol addiction to keep victims entrapped (Logan et al., 2009).

The social work profession is unique in its commitment to social justice on behalf of the vulnerable and oppressed. The victims who are enslaved in the sex trade represent some of the most oppressed individuals in the world (Logan et al., 2009). Social workers must not ignore these victims but instead use this knowledge to eliminate the issue and change the lives of those suffering.

**Documented versus Undocumented Immigrants**

Over the recent years, the United States has accepted well over 600,000 legal immigrants annually. According to the current law, all legal immigrants are either refugees or family members (including spouse, parent and children) of a citizen or resident . Some immigrants may receive their visas based off of their occupation and skills. Therefore, the children and spouses are granted visas as well. For those that do not wish to wait in queue or who cannot enter the United States legally, they are considered undocumented immigrants. The term undocumented is defined as any “foreign-based persons whose mere presence in the United States is in violation of the law or who have violated a condition a lawful entry.” (Chiswick, 2008).

**DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals)**

Implemented in June of 2012, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, also known as DACA, was established to provide protection from deportation against eligible immigrants who came to the United States as a child. Under the current law, the requirements for DACA are as follows: “Entered the United States before the age of 16, have continuously resided in the United States since June 15, 2007 and up to the present time, and were physically present on June 15, 2012 and at the time of application, are currently in school, have graduated from high school or earned a GED, or are honorably discharged veterans of the US armed forces (including the Coast Guard), have not been convicted of a felony, significant misdemeanor, or three or more misdemeanors; or otherwise pose a threat to public safety or national security, or entered the country illegally or overstayed their visa prior to June 15, 2012”. (Mittelstadt, 2012). The program expires after two years, in which immigrants who are eligible will have to renew. If an immigrant is applying for DACA for the first time, they would have to provide documentation such as birth certificate, passport, Consular or National ID, school ID, proof that they were physically present in the United States on 06/15/2012, proof that they have established residence in the United States for five years, proof they are in school, have a high school diploma/GED, or was honorably discharged from the military, proof that they entered before the age of 16, and proof that they are not ineligible due to a criminal conviction or a threat to national security and public safety. Immigrants are eligible for renewals if they are now over the age of 31 and cannot age out of the program. However, they must provide proof that they have graduated or are studying at a different school or program.

**Conclusion**

Over the years immigration has went from being what America was built on to becoming something Americans have a negative attitudes towards. From myths that have been created due to misstatements, the impact it has on children, the process of becoming a legal citizen, to being trafficked through false promises of a better future; immigration has become a widespread social justice issue. Many immigrants are facing oppression based on their race, ethnicity, and religion; while trying to assimilate as best they can to the American culture. Many immigrants face problems like mental health related issues as well as complications with housing, work, financial assistants, etc. As Social Workers it is important to become more culturally aware of immigrants’ ethnicity, race, and religion. We also should practice empathy with these individuals, educate others, advocate for immigrants and refugees, as well as find appropriate resources for those who are in the United States currently.

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