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Lindsay Adamski
Providence College

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INTERNATIONAL POLICIES AND THE SOCIAL WORK RESPONSE: THE EXAMPLE OF NAFTA

A project based upon independent investigation, submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Social Work

Lindsay Adamski
Providence College
Providence, Rhode Island
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Lindsay Adamski
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ABSTRACT

The policies made in the United States can have an important impact on the rest of the world and policy makers must consider the effect of U.S. policies not only on the citizens of the United States, but the global community as well. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is an example of a policy of the United States that has changed the economy of Mexico, and in many ways made Mexico more dependent on the United States. This paper looks at the effect NAFTA has had on the economies, jobs, and workers of both Mexico and the United States. After nearly 15 years in effect, it is important to examine if this free trade agreement is meeting its original goals and yielding positive results in both Mexico and the United States. Additionally, it examines the responsibility of social workers in the United States to be aware of international policies, such as NAFTA and the need for the profession to respond to these policies. If United States citizens are prospering at the expense of the poor and marginalized worldwide, social workers need to advocate on behalf of those throughout the world whose voice is not heard in this country and take action against detrimental policies.

Problem Formulation

Today, the world is more interconnected than ever before and the effects of events in one country are felt very deeply throughout others almost immediately. Examples of this international interdependence include the way financial instability triggers global repercussions or when oil, rice or corn prices increase on the global market and the prices at home rise as well (Bradford, 2008, Introduction section, para. 2). The policies made in the United States can have an important impact on the rest of the world and policy makers must consider the effect of U.S. policies not only on the citizens of the United States, but the global community as well (Armstrong, 2006, p. 349).

The North American Free Trade Agreement is an example of a policy of the United States that has changed the economy of Mexico, and in many ways made Mexico more dependent on the United States. NAFTA went into effect on January 1, 1994. The goals of this policy were to fuel economic growth, increase trade and stimulate foreign investment, among others (Audley, 2004, p. 5). Proponents of the policy also believed it would improve the economy of Mexico so as to decrease illegal immigration to the United States (Polaski, 2004, p. 14).

The actual enactment of NAFTA involved phasing out virtually all restrictions on trade and investment between the United States, Mexico, and Canada over 10 years, with a few restrictions phasing out in 15 years (Effects of NAFTA on U.S.-Mexican trade and GDP, 2003, p. ix). This decrease in tariffs was designed to make trade more beneficial to the countries of North America (Effects of NAFTA on U.S.-Mexican trade and GDP, 2003, p. ix). The United States and Mexico have now been under the trade policies of NAFTA for over 14 years, so it is possible to make judgments about its effectiveness (Wise, 2006, p. 34). This paper will focus on the effects of the U.S. free trade policies, specifically the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), on the Mexican economy and people.

Problem Justification

NAFTA has changed the economy of Mexico and the relationship between Mexico and the United States since it went into effect in 1994. At that time, Mexico was a more important trading partner for the United States than Canada, with Mexico buying 9.0 percent of all U.S. exports in 1993, and

importing 6.8 percent of all imports to the U.S. (Effects of NAFTA on U.S.-Mexican trade and GDP, 2003, p. 1). NAFTA has linked Mexico more closely with the United States business cycle, meaning that both economic prosperity, and more importantly, economic recession effect Mexico more than they have in the past.

One way to evaluate the effect of NAFTA is to look at how it has achieved its goals. Specifically in terms of job creation, wages, and immigration rates, NAFTA has not done what its advocates promised. In Mexico, the number of jobs created in manufacturing as a result of exports has barely kept up with the number of agricultural jobs lost due to imports (Polaski, 2004, p. 12). In the Mexican agricultural sector, 1.3 million jobs were lost from 1994-2002 (Polaski, 2004, p. 6). In the manufacturing industry, there has been an increase in 500,000 jobs from 1994-2002 (Polaski, 2004, p. 6). Unfortunately, even this is not a sign of employment increase because already 30 percent of the jobs created in Mexico in the 1990's have been moved to lower-wage Asian countries, such as China (Polaski, 2004, p. 11).

Wages have not increased as a result of NAFTA either. The inequality in Mexico has only increased with NAFTA, not decreased as hoped. The top 10 percent of households have increased their share of the national income, while the other 90 percent have either lost income share or seen no change (Polaski, 2004, p. 13). Many citizens rely on remittances, or money sent home, from the United States, which totaled US$16.6 billion in 2004 (Wise, 2006, p. 36).

Immigration is another area that policy makers expected NAFTA to have an impact. The idea was that NAFTA would improve the economy of Mexico, allowing more citizens to find jobs there, thus decreasing unauthorized immigration to the United States (Papademetriou, 2004, p. 39). However, this has not yet occurred, with an estimated 7 million, or 59 percent of the undocumented immigrants coming from Mexico (Hoefer, Rytina & Baker, 2008, p. 4). It was estimated in 2004 that 26.6 million people in the United States were of Mexican descent, and 10 million of them were immigrants, legal or otherise (Wise, 2006, p. 36).

For the social work profession, international social justice is the next frontier of the work of this profession. Standard 6.01 in the NASW Code of Ethics states that, "social workers should promote the

general welfare of society, from local to global levels, and the development of people, their communities, and their environments" (National Association of Social Workers, 1999). The profession must be active on the global scale. When advocating for and against policies, social workers must consider not only the effect on marginalized groups in the United States, but also the effect on oppressed people world-wide. Social workers in the United States have more power and responsibility in these issues compared with many throughout the world because it is the legislative and executive branches of the United States government that have the most power in the creation of trade policies that effect the rest of the world (Polack, 2004, p. 288). If United States citizens are prospering at the expense of the poor and marginalized world-wide, social workers need to advocate on behalf of those throughout the world whose voice is not heard in this country and take action against detrimental policies.

Outline

I. Introduction
    a. Trade Agreements as Part of the Global Economy
        i. Necessary because not all countries are equally proficient at producing every product their citizens need (Effects of NAFTA on U.S.-Mexican Trade and GDP, 2003, p. 4).
        ii. However, must be careful about the way trade is used and the conditions in which free trade policies are enacted.
    b. What is NAFTA
        i. Important points of the actual policy
            1. Called for the phasing out of virtually all restrictions on trade and investments between the United States, Canada, and Mexico over 10 years, with a few restrictions phasing out in 15 years (Effects of NAFTA on U.S.-Mexican trade and GDP, 2003, p. ix).
            2. U.S. cut tariffs on most Mexican manufactured goods, as well as agricultural tariffs (Polaski, 2004, p. 14).
        ii. Goals of NAFTA (Audley, 2004, p. 5).
            1. Fuel economic growth
            2. Increase trade
            3. Stimulate investment
            4. Create productive partnerships and work for small and medium-sized businesses
            5. Increase GDP
        iii. Politics that influenced the passage of NAFTA
            1. Proponents (Polaski, 2004, p. 14).
                a. Opening trade will increase demand for labor in a country with an excess of labor, like Mexico
                b. Improve the economy in Mexico, which will decrease the incentive to migrate to the United States, thus decreasing immigration from Mexico
            2. Opponents
                a. Will cause jobs from the United States to move to Mexico to take advantage of cheap labor (Effects of NAFTA on U.S.-Mexican trade and GDP, 2003, p. 1).
        iv. General Trade Theory (Polaski, 2004, p. 13).
            1. There will be winners and losers from trade
            2. Losers maybe more numerous than winners in short to medium-term
            3. Often those in society less able to cope due to lack of skills, resources, or mobility are affected the most by these agreements

II. Main Points
    a. Effect of NAFTA on the Mexican Economy
        i. Linked more closely with the United States business cycle (Polaski, 2004, p. 15).
        ii. Jobs (Polaski, 2004, p. 14).
            1. Has not helped Mexico keep up with the demand for jobs

2. Abundance of labor, not enough work for labor force
3. Agriculture (Polaski, 2004, p. 6-15).
    a. Main area of employment, rapidly losing jobs
    b. Agricultural policies benefit commercial farmers, but not subsistence farmers
4. Manufacturing (Polaski, 2004, p. 6-13).
    a. Area of most job creation
        i. In danger because many of these jobs are going to China and other countries with even cheaper labor
    b. Growth in volume of manufactured goods has not led to proportionate increase in jobs
5. Informal Employment sector (Polaski, 2004, p. 24).
    a. Includes domestic work, street vending, personal services and repairs
    b. This accounts for 46 percent of all Mexican jobs

iii. Wages (Polaski, 2004, p. 6-17).
1. Real wages in Mexico lower today than when NAFTA went into effect
2. Inequality in the distribution of wealth is growing
3. Reliance on remittance from the United States

iv. Productivity (Wise, 2006, p. 34), (Polaski, 2004, p. 11-12).
1. "disguised assembly" process: component parts are imported and then processed or reassembled in Mexico
    a. Increase in production does not benefit many Mexicans because such a big part of the process takes place out of the country
2. Increase in productivity does not increase number of jobs because those working are just producing more

b. Effect of NAFTA on the Lives of the Mexican People
i. Rural Family (Polaski, 2004, p. 21-22).
1. Subsistence farmers no longer able to survive
2. Depend on remittances from United States
3. Must also find job in the informal sector to support themselves and their family

ii. 31 percent of the population still lives in poverty (Polaski, 2004).

iii. Uneven consequences for poorest citizens hit the hardest
1. No institutional mechanisms in place to make sure economic change is spread evenly throughout the country

c. Effect of NAFTA on the United States Economy (Polaski, 2004, p. 27-29)
i. Half-million U.S. workers lost jobs
1. Majority in the apparel industry

ii. Widening gap between skilled and unskilled workers, 40 percent of this gap can be attributed to combination of trade and migration

d. Effect of NAFTA on Immigration

i. The annual average number of Mexicans who left their country and established themselves in the United States in 2004 was estimated at 400,000 (Wise, 2006, p. 36).
    1. According to the United Nations, for the period of 2000-2005, this makes Mexico the main source of migration in the world (Wise, 2006, p. 36).
    2. Of the estimated 11.8 million undocumented immigrants in the United States in 2007, 7 million, or 59 percent of the came from Mexico (Hoefer, Rytina & Baker, 2008, p. 4)

e. International Movements in Response to NAFTA
    i. Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras (Bandy, 2004)
        1. Transnational movement organizing workers in the United States, Mexico and Canada, united in their ultimate goal of relieving workers world-wide suffering from repression and unfair work environments
        2. Educated workers on their rights and opportunities to take action to defend those rights
        3. Bringing members on both side of the border together so they can understand each others position and learn from one another

f. Why United States Social Workers Should Be Concerned with These Types of Agreements
    i. NASW Code of Ethics: Standard 6.01, Social workers should promote the general welfare of society, from local to global levels, and the development of people, their communities, and their environments.
        1. Standard 6.04, Social workers should be aware of the impact of the political arena on practice and should advocate for changes in policy and legislation to improve social conditions in order to meet basic human needs and promote social justice.
    ii. Implications for Practice (Polack, 2004)
        1. Participate in grassroots movements aimed at addressing issues of global inequality
        2. Promote educational forums to educate others on issues related to U.S. trade policy and the effect on the quality of life in other countries
    iii. Implications for Policy (Polack, 2004)
        1. Social Workers in the United States have more power and responsibility in terms of global social justice because the legislative and executive branch of U.S. government has had a role in many of the institutions created in response to international trade, such as the World Bank and WTO
        2. Must be aware of the creation of these policies, as well as active in opposing policies that have negative effects for oppressed groups throughout the world
    iv. Implications for Education (Polack, 2004)

1. Social workers need an understanding of our national and local economies are linked to the circumstances of other countries, specifically the global south
2. Undergraduate and Graduate programs should offer stand-alone courses, providing an in-depth look at the history and current situation of key countries affected by U.S. policy, such as Mexico
3. Social Work students must have an understanding of domestic policy issues and how they affect the global social justice issues, view current inequalities between rich and poor in the United States in a global perspective

III. Opposing Points

a. Other Events in the Mexican Economy have had a bigger impact than NAFTA
    i. Restructuring Debt of the 1980's led to privatization and deregulating various state enterprises (Effects of NAFTA on U.S.-Mexican trade and GDP, 2003)
    ii. General policy of liberalizing Mexican economy and opening it to trade with other countries (Effects of NAFTA on U.S.-Mexican trade and GDP, 2003)
        1. Joined General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
    iii. Peso crisis of 1994-1995 affected jobs and wages of Mexican citizens (Polaski, 2004)
        1. At one point at the end of 1995, the value of the peso hit a low of 7.64 per dollar
b. Effect of NAFTA has been little to none for Mexico and the United States (Effects of NAFTA on U.S.-Mexican Trade and GDP, 2003)
    i. A statistical simulation model that accounts for the events unrelated to NAFTA, including the peso crisis of 1994, a harsh Mexican recession in 1995, U.S. economic expansion most of the 1990's, and recessions in the U.S. and Mexico in 2000 and 2001, indicates that 85 percent of the increase in U.S. exports to Mexico between 1993 and 2001 and 91 percent of the increase in U.S. imports to Mexico would have taken place without NAFTA as well
    ii. NAFTA had a small effect on the balance of trade with Mexico, effect for 1999, 2000 and 2001 is .002 percent of the GDP
c. NAFTA has been a positive policy for Mexico
    i. Abolishing tariffs and quotas made Mexico a more profitable place to invest
        1. International investment in Mexico has grown
            a. Much of that new investment is from the United States
            b. Went to Mexico because of higher rate of return, U.S. investors benefited
    ii. Trade creation versus Trade Diversion
        1. Trade creation: displacement of domestic production, results in a net increase of trade

            a. Beneficial even though it hurts some sectors of the population because the price of the import is cheaper than the domestic price
                i. This would not be possible without free trade
    d. United States Social Workers should be concerned with other issues in their own country
        i. Natural Competition between Mexican workers and workers in the United States
            1. Workers in Mexico seen as taking the jobs of U.S. workers, should focus our efforts on helping U.S. citizens
            2. There are workers in the United States in just as bad of conditions as those in Mexico, our top priority should be these individuals

IV. Hypothesis

V. Methodology
    a. Study Design
    b. Sample
        i. Sample Size
        ii. Sample Type
    c. Data Gathering
    d. Data Analysis
    e. Findings

VI. Conclusion
    a. Examination of Results
    b. Implications for social work practice
    c. Implications for social work research
    d. Implications for social work policy

Main Points

The global community is at a historically unique point of interdependence between people and nations of the world. This has resulted in, to some extent, the global integration of societies and economies, among other aspects of life (Midgley, 2007, p. 18). Technological innovations have increased the flow of information around the world, which affects political, cultural and economic exchanges (Midgley, 2007, p. 19). This increased integration of societies has also changed international power relations, increased the movements of populations, and led to the emergence of a global civil society (Midgley, 2007, p. 20). All people participate in this global civil society, not just the policy makers, through their everyday actions and decisions (Midgley, 2007, p. 25). People's lives are now connected to others throughout the world through the clothes they wear, the food they eat and the energy that warms their house (Polack, 2004, p. 281). Some of the negative effects of this global economy have led to low wages, high unemployment, gender and ethnic oppression, and disenabling governments to protect their domestic markets (Midgley, 2007, p. 31). It is for this reason that the social work profession, as a value-based profession working to empower the poor and disenfranchised, must be aware of not only policies affecting their community or their country, but rather how United States policies affect people throughout the world. Social injustice is not contained in one part of the world, nor is it caused by just one factor. Rather, social workers must be aware of this shift to a more global economy and the role of the profession in advocating for global social justice.

One area through which the United States has a big effect on the global community is through trade. Trade in itself is valuable to a country because not all countries are equally proficient at producing all products. It depends on national resources, education and skill level of the workforce, and the amount and quality of their capital (Congressional Budget Office, 2003, p. 4). Without any sort of trade, each country would have to make everything it needed, and this would be nearly impossible in most places. Effectively utilizing trade, countries can focus on making what they are best at, and exchanging those goods for other products. As a result of this, the total world output increases (Congressional Budget Office, 2003, p. 4). Trade does have benefits for each country, however problems occur when the trade

policies do not mutually benefit each country or all members of society. General trade theory states that there will be winners and losers from trade. Losses may be big, and the people who lose the most may be the least able to cope with this adjustment, due to "insufficient skills, meager savings and limited mobility" (Polaski, 2004, p. 13). Those harmed by trade agreements may be more numerous than those benefiting in the short to medium term (Polaski, 2004, p. 13). Social workers need to understand the far-reaching effects of international trade and advocate for the interests of those who have the most to lose from trade agreements.

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is a trade policy that has been in effect for over 14 years still and is being discussed today on its value to the United States, Canada and Mexico. It is one of the first major trade agreements between advanced, industrialized countries, United States and Canada, and a large developing one, Mexico (Congressional Budget Office, 2003, p. 1). The negotiations were started under the former Bush administration and took effect under the democratic presidency of Bill Clinton (Phelps, 2001, p. 23). NAFTA took effect on January 1, 1994 and called for the phasing out of virtually all restrictions on trade and investments between the United States, Canada, and Mexico over ten years, with a few restrictions completely phasing out in 15 years (Congressional Budget Office, 2003, p. ix). The United States cut tariffs on most Mexican manufactured goods, most noticeably on textiles and apparel, followed by footwear, chemicals, and transportation equipment (Polaski, 2004, p. 14). Canada and the United States had their own trade agreement that took effect 5 years earlier and were well on their way to reducing barriers to trade and investment between the two countries (Congressional Budget Office, 2003, p. 1). However, Mexico was a more important trading partner for the United States, with Mexico buying 9.0 percent of all U.S. exports in 1993 and importing 6.8 percent of all imports to the U.S. at that time (Congressional Budget Office, 2003, p. 1).

The goals of NAFTA were related to economic growth, while proponents and opponents of the policy argued based on other effects it might have. The stated goals were to fuel economic growth and dynamic trade, to stimulate investment and provide greater job opportunities in North America (Audley, 2004, p. 7). The agreement would open North American countries, particularly Mexico, to new markets,

while providing protections from the stress associated with being part of the global market (Audley, 2004, p. 7). When determining whether an international policy is good or bad, it is important to recognize the goals lawmakers were trying to achieve before understanding its effects.

Proponents thought NAFTA would be positive for both Mexico and the United States. Mexico is a country with an excess of labor and economic theory suggests that opening trade will increase the demand for labor (Polaski, 2004, p. 14). NAFTA was seen as "a product of enlightened public policy, guided by generally recognized, scientifically established principles of economics" (Rupert, 1995, p. 664). It had the consensus of support among economists, which gave the argument intellectual weight (Rupert, 1995, p. 665). Those who supported NAFTA tended to be college educated and live in a household with an income of $75,000 or more, according to a New York Times/CBS news poll conducted before the congressional vote (Rupert, 1995, p. 669). The debate fell along socioeconomic lines, which also affected the way it was portrayed in the media.

Proponents also stated it would bolster the Mexican economy and improve employment opportunities in Mexico. This would lead to a reduction of unauthorized immigration to the United States because those likely to migrate would instead find jobs in Mexico (Papademetriou, 2004, p. 39). U.S. attorney general at the time, Janet Reno said the "best chance to reduce illegal immigration is sustained, robust Mexican economic growth" (Papademetriou, 2004, p. 43). Not only was NAFTA seen as an opportunity to positively effect the U.S. and Mexican economies, but also lead to gradual reform of the corrupt political system. The Washington Post called it, "an opportunity not only to promote economic prosperity but democracy, freedom and political stability" (Washington Post National Weekly Edition, 8-14 November 1993: 27, as cited in Rupert, 1995, p. 667). Proponents also promised benefits for workers in all of North America. Clinton promised government and labor could work together to ensure all worker's rights were protected (Phelps, 2001, p. 23). He denied that labor interests and the free market are inherent opposites. He wanted to find common ground where business, farmers, workers, environmentalists, and government could work together on this policy (Phelps, 2001, p. 27). Those in

favor of NAFTA saw it as an opportunity to fix not just economic problems, but political and societal problems in Mexico as well.

Opponents felt NAFTA would not be positive for Mexico or the United States. Many were concerned businesses would be attracted to the low wage labor in Mexico and transfer jobs from the United States south to Mexico. Ross Perot predicted "a giant sucking sound" of jobs moving to Mexico (Congressional Budget Office, 2003, p. 1). The majority of opponents were blue-collared workers and union members (Rupert, 1995, p. 669). The union AFL-CIO opposed it on the likelihood of exploitation of low-wage workers around the world. They also felt that these Mexican workers would not be able to afford their own products, let alone more expensive American imports, therefore making trade with Mexico not beneficial to United States workers (Rupert, 1995, p. 674). The United Auto Workers argued that NAFTA would allow employers to take advantage of the poverty in debt-burdened Latin America and undermine the wages and working conditions in the United States (Rupert, 1995, p. 675). Others were afraid it would stimulate more unwanted immigration from Mexico. The Mexican economy would be destabilized as it tried to compete in the free market, dislocating many workers and farmers (Wasem, 2007, p. 13). Once these farmers lost their jobs and were uprooted, they would be forced to seek new employment opportunities and would migrate to the United States (Wasem, 2007, p. 14). Those opposed to NAFTA felt the positive effects would only be felt by large corporations, while the workers in the United States and Mexico suffered.

Effect of NAFTA on Mexico

NAFTA has changed the relationship between Mexico and the United States. While Mexico is typically considered a case of successful economic integration, its economic situation before NAFTA was not equal to the United States. Mexico has been successful exporting manufactured goods and is Latin America's number one exporter (Wise, 2006, p. 34). However, NAFTA has linked the Mexican economy more closely with the United States business cycle, which has come to play a dominant role in the Mexican economy (Polaski, 2004, p 15). When judging whether an international trade policy has had a positive or negative effect on a country's economy, one must look at jobs, wages, and productivity.

When looking at these three areas in Mexico, one recognizes that the implementation of NAFTA has not been positive for the country as a whole.

NAFTA has not helped Mexico keep up with the demand for jobs. Mexico continues to have a low rate of growth in jobs and a structural inability to create sufficient formal jobs to improve standards of living for workers and their families (Wise, 2007, p. 663). The jobs created in manufacturing as a result of exports are barely enough to keep up with the number of jobs lost due to imports (Polaski, 2004, p. 12). While productivity, or how much workers actually produce during a given work session, has increased since NAFTA, it has not translated to an increase in the number of jobs (Polaski, 2004, p. 12). It seems those working are just producing more, which does not benefit a majority of workers in the country.

As previously stated, Mexico is a country with an abundance of labor. High population and birth rates in the mid 1970's led to an increase of workers in the workforces throughout the 1990's (Polaski, 2004, p. 14). The Mexican labor force grew from 32.3 million immediately before NAFTA to 40.2 million in 2002 (Polaski, 2004, p. 14). This means there needed to be creation of nearly a million jobs each year to keep up with the growth of the labor force. The effect of NAFTA on the available jobs in the labor force depended on which tariffs were eliminated. This affected the balance of trade between Mexico and the United States, which led to a loss of jobs (Polaski, 2004, p. 14).

The agricultural sector has been hit very hard since NAFTA went into effect. This is the area that most Mexicans still work. At the end of 1993, 8.1 million Mexican workers were employed in the agricultural sector. By the end of 2002, there were only 6.8 million employed in the same type of work (Polaski, 2004, p. 20). This represents a loss of nearly 1.3 million jobs (Audley, 2004, p. 6). Mexico reduced its agricultural tariffs for the United States more than for any of its other trading partners as a result of the NAFTA negotiations. This led to a trade deficit with the United States in terms of agricultural products, causing a loss of jobs (Polaski, 2004, p. 17). Thus NAFTA can be seen as the most significant factor in the loss of agricultural jobs (Polaski, 2004, p. 20).

Opening the Mexican markets to U.S. agricultural products has been detrimental to the Mexican agricultural industry. The import of subsidized U.S. crops, such as corn, has depressed agricultural prices in Mexico (Polaski, 2004, p. 12). Corn is a labor-intensive, staple crop in Mexico. However, Mexican farmers produce it far less efficiently than their U.S. counterparts (Papademetriou, 2004, p. 51). Additionally, U.S. corn farmers receive much more financial support from their government. In 2000, corn producers in the United States received $10.1 billion in payments from the United States government. This is nearly ten times the Mexican annual agricultural budget (Hill, 2007, why immigration has spiked section, para. 1). Mexican subsidies for corn farmers do exist, but they tend to go to large scale operations, rather than small farmers. The richest farmers and agribusinesses in Mexico pay neither income tax, nor irrigation costs (Hill, 2007, why immigration has spiked section, para. 4). Corn, as a vital Mexican crop, is just an example of how opening Mexican markets to less-restricted trade with the United States for agriculture has disproportionally hurt the poorest citizens by affecting subsistence farmers and rural families.

An area of the workforce that has increased the number of jobs is the manufacturing industry, or the maquilas. However, the strong growth in volume of manufactured goods has not had a proportionate growth in the number of jobs created (Polaski, 2004, p. 16). There was an increase of 500,000 jobs in manufacturing from 1994-2002 (Audley, 2004, p. 6). Unfortunately, these jobs tend to pay low wages, be unstable, and unsafe. The wages paid to maquila workers on average allows them to meet less than half their basic needs, which are considered food, clothing, shelter, health care and a small savings (Bandy, 2004, p. 424). Already 30 percent of the jobs created in this industry have been moved to lower-wage Asian countries, such as China (Polaski, 2004, p. 11). As other developing countries negotiate free trade agreements with the United States, the value of Mexico's market access advantages will erode, as U.S. and other countries utilize to even cheaper labor markets for manufacturing (Polaski, 2004, p. 17).

The process of "disguised assembly" has also limited the gains for Mexico from the manufacturing industry. In this manufacturing process the parts are assembled in another country, imported to Mexico for final assembly and then exported again to avoid tariffs (Wise, 2006, p. 34). In the

maquilas, 97 percent of the components are imported and only 3 percent are produced locally in Mexico (Polaski, 2004, p. 16). The profits from these exports do not benefit Mexicans as much because Mexican workers are only a small part of the production scheme (Wise, 2006, p. 35). There is no integration of these manufacturing plants into the domestic economy (Wise, 2007, p. 660). Disguised assembly also leaves little need for a skilled workforce because this assembly model has few requirements for scientific or technical knowledge (Wise, 2006, p. 38). In 2000, the percentage of higher skilled jobs in the manufacturing industry was 9.9 percent (Polaski, 2004, p. 17). Net profits are transferred abroad while jobs are subsidized by the Mexican economy (Wise, 2007, p. 662). This manufacturing system is one method of using the reduced tariffs enacted with NAFTA to benefit large companies outside Mexico and not the Mexican people.

Wages and the distribution of wealth are another aspect of the Mexican economy that has not improved since NAFTA went into effect. Wages are lower for most Mexicans today than when NAFTA took effect (Audley, 2004, p. 6). They are lower in all areas of the economy, including highly educated workers in the manufacturing sector and workers with graduate and post-graduate degrees (Polaski, 2004, p. 24). The ratio between the earnings of Mexican maquila workers and U.S. factory workers in 1:11 (Wise, 2007, p. 662). Increase in productivity has not lead to an increase in wages (Audley, 2004, p. 6). The government policy has been to hold down the minimum wage over the past two decades. Part of the reason for doing this is to increase global competitiveness (Polaski, 2004, p. 25). As the world moves toward a global economy, workers in developing countries like Mexico are the ones who do not benefit from opening the markets to international forces, as their governments try to keep business in the country by not imposing strict wage and labor standards on them.

The distribution of wealth in Mexico has only become more uneven. Inequalities have risen since NAFTA went into effect (Polaski, 2004, p. 13). The top ten percent of households have increased their share of national income, while the other 90 percent have either lost income share or seen no change (Polaski, 2004, p. 13). Thirty-one percent of the population is living in poverty, which is still higher than in the late 1970's (Polaski, 2004, p. 26). This uneven distribution of wealth is a concern of social

workers, not only because it puts poor and disadvantaged groups at even more of an economic disadvantage, but also because it undermines social stability and political cohesion. Highly unequal societies are less effective at reducing poverty and do so at a much slower rate (Polaski, 2004, p. 26).

Another concern in the area of wages is the reliance on remittance from the United States. Money sent home from Mexicans living in the United States has become a source of currency for the country and a crucial part of the foundation of the macro economic balance (Wise, 2006, p. 39). In 2004 remittances received by Mexico amounted to U.S. $16.6 billion. This is the highest rate worldwide (Wise, 2006, p. 36). These remittances help cover social costs and infrastructure previously supported by public investment. They also aid the subsistence of many Mexican households (Wise, 2006, p. 40). The fact that many households are relying on money sent home from the United States for survival, rather than earning a sufficient living at their jobs points to a problem with the job market in Mexico, which should be considered when judging the economic outcomes after NAFTA.

As social workers assess the affect of trade policies like NAFTA, they must consider how the economic realities described above affect the quality of life of individuals. Recognizing the failure of NAFTA to improve the economic situation of most Mexicans, social workers must realize these types of policies do not have positive outcomes for individuals and families in the middle to lower class and go against the core values of social work practice. In particular, workers and rural families have been most negatively affected by NAFTA.

The movement to a global economy, by opening international trade with policies such as NAFTA, has led to more economic insecurity for workers throughout North America. This has led to more temporary employment, declining state services, and deregulation of the labor market (Bandy, 2004, p. 424). In particular, Mexican workers are provided little protection by labor unions. Employers use the practice of protection contracts with corrupt or nonexistent labor unions (Polaski, 2004, p. 26). Mexican labor laws only allow one union to contract with an employer (Polaski, 2004, p. 26). By using a false union, the employer is the only one who benefits. The workers rights are not represented and they do not have anyone to go to for the services typically provided by a union. Many of these false unions are tied to

the Partido Revolucionario Institucional, which has governed Mexico for over 70 years and only recently lost hold of the presidency (Phelps, 2001, p. 31). These unions agree with government policy first and foremost without regard to the needs of the workers.

As previously stated, Mexico is a country with a large workforce in need of jobs and NAFTA has led to an increase in production in Mexico. With the increase in manufacturing jobs, there has not been a subsequent movement for workers rights, but rather an exploitation of workers to provide cheap labor. Masses of powerless workers have been pitted against each other in the "race to the bottom" with regard to wages and working conditions (Polack, 2004, p. 285). Companies are looking for workers who are cheap and docile (Wise, 2007, p. 660). Corporate and political leaders in both Mexico and the United States have either exported jobs or threatened to do so, as a way to force workers to accept poor wages and conditions (Bandy, 2004, p. 424). One study by Kate Bronfenbrenner found that a majority of companies threatened to close if unions won. Fifteen percent of the time these companies did close at least part of their operations if they faced collective bargaining, a rate at least 3 times as high as pre-NAFTA levels (Bandy, 2004, p. 424). Rather than provide fair wages and acceptable working conditions, companies have the ability to leave any situation and resume operating costs in another country with less stringent labor laws, without serious consequences for their business (Polack, 2004, p. 285). The government of Mexico is compliant partially out of fear that if foreign companies are pressured to comply with strict environmental or labor standards, they will simply choose to locate in another developing country (Phelps, 2001, p. 31). The Mexican government is now in the practice of interpreting labor laws in the loosest possible way, even excusing unfair labor practices publicly (Phelps, 2001, p. 32). It is important to recognize how opening the Mexican market to the influence of United States companies through policies such as NAFTA has led to abuses in the workforce and the negative impact it has had on the Mexican working class. If this type of worker exploitation was occurring in the United States, social workers would be advocating for the needs of those workers. NAFTA is an agreement with the United States and therefore, United States social workers should still be advocating against these policies based on the unfair labor practices and exploitation occurring the Mexico.

Rural families are another group negatively affected by NAFTA. Typically these families were small farmers before NAFTA. After NAFTA, they were forced to mix cultivating basic crops with day labor and off farm employment to make ends meet (Polaski, 2004, p. 21). These families before NAFTA were already one of the most vulnerable population groups. NAFTA liberalized the Mexican economy without putting into place the proper structures for assisting these vulnerable citizens adjust to the shock of trading with two of the biggest economies in the world (Audley, 2004, p. 7). There was a need for social safety nets and trade adjustment assistance for these rural families when NAFTA went into effect, yet instead they have taken the brunt of adjusting to NAFTA without government support (Polaski, 2004, p. 12). This is a population group that already suffered from low standards of living and did not have the option of alternative economic activity (Polaski, 2004, p. 21). Subsistence farmers who lost their jobs had the alternatives of either working in the informal sector, living in urban shantytowns or illegal migration to the United States, none of which is a positive alternative to their life pre-NAFTA (Polaski, 2004, p. 23).

Effect of NAFTA on the United States

NAFTA has not impacted the United States as much as the other two North American countries. One reason is the U.S. economy is much bigger and less dependent on trade due to a large domestic market (Polaski, 2004, p. 26). One third of the U.S. total trade is with NAFTA partners (Polaski, 2004, p. 26). Finally, the tariff reductions were smaller for the United States than those of other countries (Polaski, 2004, p. 27). These negotiations had more of an impact on the Mexican economy and people, however there still was an impact in the U.S., especially in terms of workers in the United States.

It is difficult to calculate exactly how NAFTA has affected jobs in the U.S. One method of studying the impact of NAFTA on jobs states there has been a net loss of 766,000 jobs in the United States (Polaski, 2004, p. 27). This figure was reached by estimating the number of manufacturing jobs supported by a given level of exports and multiplying that by the growth in exports to Canada and Mexico. The same formula is used to determine manufacturing jobs lost due to imports (Polaski, 2004, p. 27). Regardless of what trade models and theories say, it is known that half a million workers lost their

jobs as a result of NAFTA (Polaski, 2004, p. 28). Half of the lost jobs were due to a production shift to Mexico (Polaski, 2004, p. 28). The U.S. manufacturers keep the high-skilled part of the process in the United States and send the low skilled operation abroad. The industries that lost jobs include apparel, electronics, automobiles and parts and fabricated metals (Polaski, 2004, p. 28).

Partially as a result of NAFTA, low-skilled workers in the United States are at more of a disadvantage. In terms of income, the gap between the rich and the poor has widened in the U.S. as well. The richest quintile (top 20 percent) has increased their share or the national income from 44 percent to 50 percent since the early 1980's. The rest of the population has seen their share of the national income decrease (Polaski, 2004, p. 29). The gap between high-skilled and low-skilled workers has increased due to trade (Polaski, 2004, p. 13). Sending low-skilled jobs overseas has raised skilled wages, but depressed unskilled wages in the United States (Polaski, 2004, p. 29). Trade with Mexico and opening the markets to global influence is negatively affecting the workers of the United States. However, the needs of Mexican workers and U.S. workers need not be seen as opposites, as will be shown in exploring organizational responses to NAFTA.

Immigration

The first level of migration due to NAFTA is within Mexico. Due to the lack of opportunity for small farmers after NAFTA, many were forced to give up their farms and move to the cities. In 1970, 41.3 percent of the population lived in rural areas (Papademetriou, 2004, p. 46). In 2000, only 25.4 percent of the population was still living in the rural regions. Migrants are moving to the metropolitan areas of Mexico (Papademetriou, 2004, p. 47). When there are no opportunities left in Mexico, that is when people are migrating to the United States (Papademetriou, 2004, p. 47).

Unauthorized immigration to the United States has risen sharply since 1994, despite increasing border enforcement efforts (Papademetriou, 2004, p. 39). NAFTA only addressed the migration of professionals in 63 occupation categories while ignoring the issue of low-skill labor migration (Papademetriou, 2004, p. 40). However, just because immigration is not specifically written into the

agreement does not mean migration from Mexico has not been affected by NAFTA. One trend is Mexican states that did not have a history of sending migrants began sending them in large numbers (Papademetriou, 2004, p. 49). In 2000, 96.2 percent of the country's municipalities reported some form of association with international migration (Wise, 2007, p. 667). In one survey of rural communities, migration increased 95 percent (Papademetriou, 2004, p. 51). Migration is affecting all of Mexico, as a large portion of the population is heading to the United States.

The patterns of Mexican migration have changed as well. A decline in apprehensions reflects primarily a decline in circular crossings (Papademetriou, 2004, p. 50). Crossing the border illegally has become much more difficult and costly. Border enforcement is concentrated in high traffic areas (Papademetriou, 2004, p. 51). If a person makes it to the United States, they often postpone trips home because they fear border security (Papademetriou, 2004, p. 50). All of these changes in migration affect both the United States and Mexican people and economy. Additionally, policy makers must reflect why such changes are occurring and what should be done in response to these new patterns.

In the United States, immigrants can be classified into 4 categories: unauthorized, legal permanent residents, temporary immigrants, and naturalized citizens. Mexico tends to be the country with the most migrants in each category. Unauthorized immigrants refer to those who either entered the country without inspection or were admitted temporarily and stayed beyond the date they were required to leave (Hoefer, Rytina & Baker, 2008, p. 1). In January 2007, there were an estimated 11.8 million unauthorized immigrants in the United States (Hoefer, Rytina & Baker, 2008, p. 1). It is estimated that 59 percent, or 7 million of these unauthorized immigrants are from Mexico (Hoefer, Rytina & Baker, 2008, p. 1). This figure is up from an estimated 2 million unauthorized Mexican immigrants in 1990 (Papademetriou, 2004, p. 49). It is estimated that unauthorized immigration has more than doubled between 1990 and 2000, with most growth after 1994 (Papademetriou, 2004, p. 40). Mexico was not willing to jeopardize its economic relationship with the United States by insisting on a broader dialogue on immigration during NAFTA negotiations (Papademetriou, 2004, p. 42). However, the increase in

unauthorized immigration has negative effects on both the United States and Mexico and puts those illegally crossing at risk.

Legal Permanent Residents, LPRs or green card holders, legally enter the country and confer certain rights and responsibilities. They may live and work permanently in the United States, own property, attend public schools and universities, and join certain branches of the government (Jefferys & Monger, 2008, p. 1). In 2007, 1,052,415 people became legal permanent residents of the United States (Jefferys & Monger, 2008, p. 1). The leading country of birth for new legal permanent residents was Mexico, with 14 percent (Jefferys & Monger, 2008, p. 1). Priority for LPR status is given to those with a close family relationship to a United States citizen or LPR, those who have needed job skills, are from countries with relatively low levels of migration to the U.S. or have refugee or asylee status (Jefferys & Monger, 2008, p. 1). Legal migration has just as much of an effect on Mexico and the United States, though it is in a different way than unauthorized migrations.

Temporary migration is typically for workers in the United States. H-1 visas are for professional specialty workers and nurses (Wasem, 2007, p. 5). H-2 visas are for seasonal workers, guest workers and agricultural workers (Wasem, 2007, p. 5). Employers of H-2 nonimmigrant workers must conduct a search for available workers in the United States and determine that hiring foreign workers will not adversely affect wages and conditions of similarly employed U.S. workers (Wasem, 2007, p. 5). The goal of this labor certification from the Department of Labor is to protect workers from exploitation and prevent domestic work from being done by foreign workers for substandard wages (Wasem, 2007, p. 5). Employers of H-1 nonimmigrant workers must go through a similar process of showing U.S. workers will not be adversely affected in wage or treatment because of a foreign worker doing the job. They must also show the employee will be paid just wages. This labor attestation is not as stringent as the labor certification (Wasem, 2007, p. 5). When NAFTA went into effect, refusal rates of Mexicans attempting to enter the United States exceeded 30 percent of applications based on the fear that the applicant would seek unauthorized employment in the United States (Papademetriou, 2004, p. 42). Due to the fact that

many Mexicans are hired for seasonal work, it is important to understand the process employers are supposed to go through and the rights of non-immigrants on an H visa in the U.S.

Naturalized citizens are foreign citizens who become citizens of the United States (Rytina & Caldera, 2008, p. 1). They enjoy nearly all the same rights and responsibilities of native born citizens. They have the right to vote, the right to apply for a U.S. passport to travel overseas and receive government protections while abroad (Rytina & Caldera, 2008, p. 1). In 2007, 660,477 people became naturalized citizens of the United States (Rytina & Caldera, 2008, p. 1). The leading country of birth was Mexico, with 122,258, or 19 percent of all naturalized citizens in 2007 (Rytina & Caldera, 2008, p. 1). The requirements to become a naturalized citizen include being at least 18 years of age, granted legal permanent resident status, residing in the United States continuously for at least 5 years (Rytina & Caldera, 2008, p. 1). In order to pass the citizenship exam, applicants must be able to speak, read and write English, have knowledge of U.S. history and government, and demonstrate good moral character (Rytina & Caldera, 2008, p. 1). Each applicant over the age of 18 must file an N-400 form and then attend an interview with a USCIS officer (Rytina & Caldera, 2008, p. 2). As shown by these statistics migration by Mexicans to the United States represents a large portion of new immigrants and naturalized citizens. Through trade and migration, the people of the United States and Mexico are increasingly in regular contact with one another and must understand the implications of these connections.

For the country of Mexico in general, migration takes a toll on its workforce. For Mexican people, migration also comes with risks of maltreatment both during migration and after settling in the United States. Mexico bears the cost of training workers and then loses them to U.S. jobs (Wise, 2006, p. 35). The widening divide between the two countries makes even a low paying job in the United States better than one in Mexico, even when by U.S. standards it is considered unfair wages or working conditions (Wise, 2007, p. 671). When looking at the education level of those who migrate to the United States, 38.9 percent of the Mexican born population age 15 and older living in the United States has higher than a high school diploma (Wise, 2007, p. 667). When looking at all people of Mexican origin in the U.S., this figure rises to 53.4 percent (Wise, 2007, p. 667). On the contrary, in Mexico, the average

percent of the population with a high school diploma or higher is 27.8 percent (Wise, 2007, p. 667). More qualified workers are leaving the country than are remaining, which clearly has a big effect on the economy and development of a society (Wise, 2007, p. 667).

Many jobs available to Mexican workers in the United States are those not willing to be done by U.S. workers. They have low qualification levels, low wages, limited or no fringe benefits, unstable, no union protection, and at risk for abuse by employers. Many are jobs in fields such as cleaning, domestic service, construction, or agriculture (Wise, 2007, p. 669). Three out of every four agricultural workers in the United States was born in Mexico (Wise, 2007, p. 671). Mexican workers earn tend to lower wages than both the native population and other migrant groups (Wise, 2007, p. 669). Between 1996 and 2004, the participation of U.S. manufacturing workers fell by 18 percent, while participation of Mexican workers increased by 13.9 percent (Wise, 2007, p. 670). Mexicans are replacing native, better paid, more experienced, unionized workers, with the intent of reducing costs to increase profits and global competitiveness (Wise, 2007, p. 671).

The United States does benefit in some ways from Mexican immigrants. For one thing, immigrants who establish themselves in the U.S. spend a significant part of their income there, which benefits the U.S. economy (Wise, 2006, p. 40). In 2003, Mexican consumers residing in the United States contributed nearly $395 billion to the U.S. economy (Wise, 2006, p. 40). Their contributions exceed their benefits, as many immigrants are not entitled to social programs, like social security or Medicaid (Wise, 2006, p. 40). Contrary to popular belief, there has not been established any correlation between the flow of Mexican migrants and the unemployment rate in the U.S. (Wise, 2006, p. 40). Mexican migrants do contribute to the U.S. economy in multiple ways. The real issues when considering trade policies and immigration are the provisions provided for handling migration in the receiving country and the treatment of workers when the arrive in the foreign country. NAFTA has not addressed issues relating to trade and migration, specifically the high migration rate from Mexico to the United States. Thus far NAFTA has also not improved international labor standards as hoped. Both of these issues affect the lives of people in

Mexico and the United States and are leading to injustice and exploitation of Mexicans working in both countries.

Organizational Responses to NAFTA

The North American Agreement on Labor Cooperation (NAALC) was a side agreement added to NAFTA. This was created to be the body that would oversee basic labor standards in Canada, Mexico, and the United States (Phelps, 2001, p. 24). It is sometimes considered a Trojan horse which diverts attempts at reform into a bureaucratic process of complaint, review and report (Phelps, 2001, p. 24). It was created to reduce NAFTA opposition and prevent labor atrocities predicted by opponents that would hurt future free trade agreements (Phelps, 2001, p. 24). Each NAFTA country has the opportunity to scrutinize the labor regulations of the other two countries and question or penalize the lack of enforcement (Phelps, 2001, p. 24). The NAALC is designed to promote cooperative resolution of dispute using publicity and transparency to encourage each country to enforce its own labor laws (Phelps, 2001, p. 24).

There are 11 labor principles the NAALC is called to enforce. The majority of the standards are protected by low level enforcement and do not involve any penalty for non-compliance (Phelps, 2001, p. 28). After receiving a complaint, a report is gathered, and the National Administrative Offices (NAO) of other countries and sometimes labor ministries consult (Phelps, 2001, p. 29). There are two higher levels of enforcement, however neither has ever been utilized (Phelps, 2001, p. 29). As of early 2000, 22 cases had been filed since the NAALC's inception in 1994 (Phelps, 2001, p. 30). Most of these cases were against Mexico and they involved the right to organize (Phelps, 2001, p. 30).

Thus far the NAALC has been unable to really improve conditions for many workers who have utilized the complaint process (Phelps, 2001, p. 24). One issue is the inherent conflict of interest, as complaints are decided by affiliates of the Department of Labor in each country (Phelps, 2001, p. 30). As one analysis puts it, "it leaves enforcement to the very governments so hungry for free trade-trade that they understand translates into low wages, minimal social benefits, little taxation, and in general the best interest of large corporations" (Phelps, 2001, p. 34). The idea behind the creation of the NAALC was

positive, however, the connection with the organization in the Department of Labor of each country severely limits the ability of the NAALC to really stand up for the rights of North American workers.

An international organization not connected to the governments of each country is the Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras (CJM). CJM is a transnational movement network, which means it is a collaboration of movement organizations in at least 2 countries that exchange information and experience, provide mutual support, share a partially organized social base and engage in joint strategic campaigns (Bandy, 2004, p. 411). CJM was started in 1989 and since then has brought together 120 religious, labor, women's and community organizations from Mexico, the United States and Canada (Bandy, 2004, p. 411). This makes it one of the largest and most influential transnational movements in North America. The organization's primary functions are to mobilize workers into an international movement for labor rights and articulate diverse movement interests into a common framework for grievance and action (Bandy, 2004, p. 411).

CJM was started because U.S. and Canadian workers feared job loss and economic dislocation and Mexican maquila workers were reporting more workplace abuses (Bandy, 2004, p. 414). Maquila workers reported wages below subsistence levels, poor health, lack of safety with equipment, injuries due to overwork and sexual harassment and assaults (Bandy, 2004, p. 414). When these workers attempted to organize, they were opposed by corporate and state institutions (Bandy, 2004, p. 414). Their opposition went so far as to sponsor anti-union campaigns such as mass firings, libel, intimidation, spying, sexual threats, protection contracts, union election rigging, physical coercion and imprisonment (Bandy, 2004, p. 414).

Some of the successes of CJM include supporting unionization in the maquilas, limiting repressive abuses against workers, promoting environment remediation, and mostly educating and mobilizing workers to participate in transnational labor campaigns (Bandy, 2004, p. 412). Their goals are to socialize workers into a culture of international solidarity (Bandy, 2004, p. 412). In 1991, CJM created a document of "Standard Conduct" in the maquilas. This document borrowed from the U.N. Declaration on Human Rights, the International Labor Office, and existing U.S. and Mexican law (Bandy, 2004, p.

415). It calls for corporate adherence to all federal environmental, health, and safety regulations, fair wages, reasonable hours, and corporate responsibility to workers and their communities (Bandy, 2004, p. 415).

Another beneficial activity of CJM is allowing activists and workers in U.S. and Canada to meet their counterparts in Mexico. These meeting typically take place in community spaces in the workers neighborhoods where they may discuss their work experiences and common effort for labor rights (Bandy, 2004, p. 417). This is an effort to overcome prejudices and distrust, replacing U.S. racism and nationalism with multicultural understandings (Bandy, 2004, p. 417). Here workers and organizers can recognize shared dilemmas and identify with one another, shifting from a nationalistic perspective to an international labor movement (Bandy, 2004, p. 418). One account of these meetings describe a powerful U.S. union leader who went to Mexico with the idea that "Mexicans were taking jobs from U.S. workers, that [they] had little intelligence, that [they] could not be organized." After visiting Mexican factories and speaking with some of the workers, he realized that they were not enemies, but workers as well (Bandy, 2004, p. 418). The disempowered U.S. worker actually has more in common with a sweatshop worker in Mexico than he or she does with a corporate chief executive officer in the United States (Polack, 2004, p. 287). A transnational movement network, like CJM is valuable for shifting perspectives of workers and organizers from a national focus to an international focus. This worldview is important for social workers to understand as a model for practice in response to international policies such as NAFTA.

Social Work Responsibilities in Regard to International Agreements Such as NAFTA

The profession of social work must adjust its mindset to keep up with this global worldview. Social workers must consider the key components of social work, like social justice and ending exploitation as they relate to this new economic system (Polack, 2004, p. 281). A global orientation helps social workers make connections between issues, like trade and immigration, which are sometimes regarded as purely domestic, and the larger picture, such as oppression, injustice, and lack of opportunity in another country (Polack, 2004, p. 287). A genuine commitment to influencing the system that creates

social problems mandates social workers use their unique perspective to assist in the fight for social change (Phelps, 2001, p. 38).

Involvement in global social change fits right in with the mission and history of the profession. Social work has a history of reformist, humanitarian tradition, creating community projects and social action programs (Mohan, 2005, p. 246). The profession cannot lose this radical perspective for a focus only on treating clients, without an understanding of systems pressures causing their isolation and struggle (Mohan, 2005, p. 246). An emphasis solely on localism rather than the international struggle for equality and justice will cause the profession to lose much in terms of legitimacy as a vehicle for international social change (Mohan, 2005, p. 247). Social work must put understanding international policies and working to challenge the injustices created by these policies as a priority in practice, policy, and education.

The NASW Code of Ethics clearly states the obligation of social workers to be politically aware, on both the local and global level. Standard 6.01 calls social workers to "work to promote the general welfare of society, from local to global levels" and advocate for social justice and the chance for all people to meet their basic needs (National Association of Social Workers, 1999). Standard 6.04a calls social workers to engage in social and political action to ensure all people are able to realize their right to equal access to resources they need to develop fully. It also states, "social workers should be aware of the impact of the political arena on practice and should advocate for changes in policy and legislation to improve social conditions in order to meet basic human needs and promote social justice" (National Association of Social Workers, 1999). Both of these standards would implore social workers to be aware of policies, such as NAFTA, their effect on the lives of clients, and take action against policies that negatively affect an individual's right to develop fully. Besides the National Association of Social Workers, there are international social work organizations, such as the International Federation of Social Workers, the International Association of Schools of Social Work and the Inter-University Consortium for International Social Development encouraging social workers to look beyond national borders in their work (Gammonley, Rotabi & Gamble, 2007, p. 116).

In terms of changes to social work practice, social workers must be aware of and involved in campaigns and organizations working for global social justice. Social workers can promote educational forums, programs, speakers, and discussion aimed at raising awareness of issues and plight of those affected by U.S. policy in a negative way (Polack, 2004, p. 288). The profession must have a focus on international development as a way to eradicate poverty (Phelps, 2001, p. 234). There must be a movement from emphasizing "the adjustment of the individual to society to an emphasis on changing society to meet the individual needs, including the goals of eradicating poverty and eliminating unemployment" (Phelps, 2001, p. 35). Perspectives regarding practice must shift to include a responsibility of social workers to understand policies contributing to worldwide inequalities and taking action when they can in response to such policies.

Another change to practice would be more involvement with labor groups, both nationally and internationally. As a profession, social workers must recognize labor's role in protecting workers and promoting a public safety net (Phelps, 2001, p. 36). A natural alliance should exist between social work and labor, as the working class makes up a majority of social workers' clients and unions remain the only form of representation that exists for working people (Phelps, 2001, p. 36). Adding social work placements at labor sites would be another practice adjustment that could help further this relationship. Finally, social workers should engage in grassroots efforts to organize workers, both in the United States and abroad. As seen when discussing NAFTA, many of the negative consequences of free trade policies directly affect workers. Social work and labor unions are both trying to help these workers, they would both be more effective if they worked together in advocacy and direct service.

In terms of policy, social workers have a responsibility to be aware of and advocate for fair and just foreign policies, especially in relation to trade and immigration. Social workers in the United States are in a unique position of power relative to workers in other parts of the world, because U.S. federal, legislative, and executive institutions have been central to creating international institutions, such as the World Bank and IMF, which have a big effect on trade and migration policies (Polack, 2004, p. 288). Social workers therefore have an obligation to examine these agencies, as well as policies dealing with

these issues and advocate on behalf of those around the world who will be affected by the policies, but do not have a voice in United States politics. Again, an alliance with labor groups would help to put pressure on lawmakers to combat exploitation of workers when discussing free trade agreements (Phelps, 2001, p. 36). Social workers should also strengthen international efforts to work together and promote global social welfare. Adopting this viewpoint will broaden the scope of social policy to encompass more cultures and societies (Midgley, 2007, p. 33).

Social work education must also be adjusted to encompass a more global perspective. One option is to offer stand-alone electives offering a more in depth look at issues and circumstance in key countries, such as Mexico. These types of courses could focus on the history of the country, with an emphasis on past and current exploitations of the people (Polack, 2004, p. 287). This would give students an understanding of important domestic policy issues, while familiarizing them with global social justice issues (Polack, 2004, p. 288). These courses would also give students an understanding of current inequalities between the rich and the poor in the United States as part of a larger global trend (Polack, 2004, p. 288). Education should also explore how other cultures and societies define, interpret, and promote social welfare and social justice (Phelps, 2001, p. 33).

Another method to increase the global awareness of social work students is to encourage their participation in study abroad courses and international social work placements. In these abroad experiences, students are able to see first-hand a lifestyle completely different than their own. Students can see the results of different access to food, health care, housing and education in another country, and how that influences the life of individuals, families and societies (Gammonley, Rotabi & Gamble, 2007, p. 124). Through this experience social work students also recognize the cultural values that affect service delivery and acceptance of services in another country (Gammonley, Rotabi & Gamble, 2007, p. 125). One of the most valuable aspects of this experience is an opportunity to hear from the people of the host country and their perspectives on social problems and ideas for social change. This exemplifies the social work value of the importance of human relationships, and engaging in people as partners in the helping process (Gammonley, Rotabi & Gamble, 2007, p. 127). Oftentimes hosts say the best gift visitors

can bring is to listen to their stories, and take back to their home country what they have learned from the first hand experience (Gammonley, Rotabi & Gamble, 2007, p. 129). Another benefit of these trips is to help the student achieve competence as an international traveler. The student must adjust to lifestyles, customs, and practices different from their own. Development of this skill will serve them not only when it comes to international work, but also culturally competent practice in the United States. Abroad programs are a great way for social work students to expand their perspective and get a first hand understanding of what global social justice means and why it is worth fighting for.

Opposing Points

When considering the effects of NAFTA on both the U.S. and Mexican economy, the facts and statistics show another side to this story. Some have argued NAFTA has been positive for Mexico and the United States, for various reasons. Others state that the fuss made over NAFTA is disproportionate to the actual effect it has had, which is minimal. Additionally, there are other events that impacted the Mexican economy more than NAFTA and may be responsible for some of the negative effects attributed to NAFTA. While some have claimed NAFTA has affected migration, others argue trade policies should not deal with migration issues. Finally it is argued that social workers should not be concerned with these policies. There enough social policy changes that need to be made within the United States and U.S. foreign policy should be concerned with U.S. interests first.

When it comes to an issue as complex as free trade agreements, it is important to consider all aspects of United States trade. The first aspect is whether the policy leads to trade creation or trade diversion. Trade creation is when trade leads to a displacement of a domestic product, which results in a net increase of trade (Congressional Budget Office, 2003, p. 5). While this may hurt some sectors of the population, it is actually beneficial for the country as a whole because the price of the import is actually cheaper than the domestic price. Getting this price would not be possible without trade (Congressional Budget Office, 2003, p. 5). The other option is trade diversion. This is a displacement of imports from another country that does not lead to an increase in trade, but diverts preexisting trade habits from one country to another. This is less likely to benefit the majority, because the product is already being imported, it is only the country of origin that is changing (Congressional Budget Office, 2003, p. 5). Even though NAFTA has led to trade creation, which hurt some sectors of the United States population, as previously discussed, that trade has benefited the country overall. It is the overall effect of trade that we should be concerned about, rather than individual sectors of the population.

Another aspect of trade that is sometimes not considered is the difference between trade balances with individual countries and trade balances with the entire world. Regardless of permissive trade policies or barriers to trade, each country will have a deficit with some countries and a surplus with others

(Congressional Budget Office, 2003, p. 7). The reason for this is each country produces different products and has a need for different products. For example, one country may produce something that the U.S. needs a lot of, while the U.S. may not produce anything that country needs. In this case, the U.S. would have a trade deficit with this country. The opposite is true as well, if the U.S. produces something another country bought a lot of, but that country did not produce much the U.S. needed, the United States would have a trade surplus with that country (Congressional Budget Office, 2003, p. 7). The most important aspect of trade habits to look at is a country's overall balance of trade with the world. If NAFTA did cause the United States to have a trade deficit with Mexico, this deficit would be offset by a change in trade patterns with other countries, making the United States overall trade balance with the world the same (Congressional Budget Office, 2003, p. 7). Therefore, to look only at trade with one country and declare a trade deficit as a problem does not take into account the complex trade relationship the United States has with the entire world. Global trading patterns may offset this one deficit.

Additionally, the global economy functions much like the domestic economy. It satisfies the needs of consumers worldwide, while rewarding the producers who do this best. When equilibrium is achieved, everyone benefits from optimized and balanced prices (Midgley, 2007, p. 23). Free trade agreements are one way of creating this mutually beneficial global economy. This global economy has also led to mass employment throughout the world. Production of goods has been moved to low-income countries, which brings jobs as well as a higher standard of living due to the influx of work (Midgley, 2007, p. 23). Free trade agreements encourage competition and growth throughout the world. They also contain provisions that "safeguard investors from discrimination, increase regulatory transparency, combat corruptive practices, and protect and enforce intellectual property rights" (Markheim, 2008, p. 3). Free trade agreements make sure the rights of producers and consumers are respected through transparent dispute resolution and attribution mechanisms (Markheim, 2008, p. 3). This is a positive aspect of free trade agreements, since the standard of living increases throughout the world as everyone is part of a beneficial global economy.

Overall, free trade agreements benefit the world. Countries that can produce goods at the lowest price are able to sell them overseas, while the countries purchasing these goods get the best price available. As more goods are bought and trade is increased, more jobs are created in the producing countries. NAFTA has had an important role in increasing trade between the United States and Mexico. If the United States reopens NAFTA negotiations or pulls back from market access commitments, it is fair to expect trade partners to do the same and make protectionist demands of their own (Markheim, 2008, p. 3). This would be a step backwards for free trade and would not be beneficial in general to the world economy.

Besides not benefitting world trade, renegotiating NAFTA would be a bad idea because NAFTA has been advantageous to all countries involved. Each day all three NAFTA countries, the United States, Mexico and Canada, conduct nearly $2.2 billion in trilateral trade (Office of the United States Trade Representative, 2006, p. 1). The total two-way trade between Mexico and the United States grew from $81 billion in calendar year 1993 to $231 billion in 2002 (Williams, 2004, p. 14). In terms of just agriculture, two-way trade between the United States and Mexico has increased 149 percent since 1993, reaching $15.8 billion in 2004 (FAS Backgrounder, 2005, p. 1). The countries tend to export different commodities, so both consumers and producers benefit from the complimentary goods and greater access to agricultural market (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2007, p. 2). NAFTA has had positive results for both the United States and Mexico.

Mexico experienced many gains as a result of NAFTA. In 1998 Mexico replaced Japan as the second largest trading partner of the United States (Phelps, 2001, p. 26). Mexico's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew 40 percent from 1993 to 2005 (Office of the United States Trade Representative, 2006, p. 1). Twenty percent of Mexico's GDP is now attributable to trade made possible by NAFTA provisions (Williams, 2004, p. 15). Before NAFTA, Mexico had a trade deficit, after NAFTA it became a $37 billion surplus (Williams, 2004, p. 14). This trade surplus shows how NAFTA gave Mexican producers the opportunity to sell goods to the United States in a way they had not been able to do in the past.

Besides the benefits from trade itself, abolishing tariffs and quotas through NAFTA made Mexico a more profitable place to invest (Congressional Budget Office, 2003, p. x). Market-seeking companies increased investment to take advantage of the increased market size (Feils & Rahman, 2008, p. 150). The intense promotional campaign for NAFTA may have led some managers to consider establishing plants there who otherwise would not have done so (Larudee, 2007, p. 543). The United States Trade Commission reports that several U.S. apparel companies stated the "duty-free and quota-free benefits under NAFTA had the most significant effect on their decision to assemble garments in Mexico" (USITC, 1997, p. 6-25, as cited in Larudee, 2007, p. 545).

Specifically, the United States' investment in the development of Mexico has increased. NAFTA led to a strong cooperative relationship between the two countries due to the importance of the goods they are trading (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2007, p. 3). U.S. investors went to Mexico because they benefited from a higher rate of return (Congressional Budget Office, 2003, p. 4). For example, in 2003, the stock of U.S. direct investment in the Mexican processed food industry totaled $1.7 billion (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2007, p. 3). The United States government, private sector, and university community have invested nearly $20 million in more than 120 projects to address the issues affecting agriculture and agribusiness in Mexico (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2007, p. 3). Additionally, the USDA's national agriculture statistics service is working with Mexican government agencies to increase the usefulness of Mexico's agriculture statistics program. This improvement of technology has led to an increase in access to critical price and production data for Mexican farmers and better-informed decisions at the policy level (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2007, p. 4). The USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service allocated nearly $100 million for 2005-2008 to cooperate with Mexican agencies to control plant and animal pests and diseases (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2007, p. 4). As shown by these investments, the United States government does not just participate in free trade with Mexico, but has also helped create policies and initiatives to invest in Mexico's future and encourage development there.

Another positive result of NAFTA is that it has helped the Mexican economy become more competitive throughout the world. Free trade agreements in general tend to accelerate the economic transition to manufacturing and competitive sectors as resources are allotted more efficiently (Williams, 2004, p. 15). The Mexican economy has shifted slightly toward greater formal sector employment after NAFTA (Papademetriou, 2004, p. 53). This leads one to believe that Mexico's economic performance would have been much worse if NAFTA had not been enacted. NAFTA has benefited both the agricultural and manufacturing sectors of the economy.

In terms of agriculture, Mexico has benefited from a closer economic relationship with the United States. Agricultural exports to the United States have expanded by nearly 10 percent per year, nearly twice as fast as they did before NAFTA (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2007, p. 2). Despite the increased competition from U.S. agricultural products, the dollar value of Mexico's total agricultural production in 2001 was 50 percent higher than in 1993 as production of key products rose (Williams, 2004, p. 14). This increased output shows Mexican agricultural exporters did benefit from trade due to NAFTA.

Besides increasing agricultural trade, U.S. has helped Mexico to create jobs that are not agriculturally based, but that are more stable and generate more income. Agricultural jobs make up about 22 percent of Mexico's labor forces, but generate only 4.4 percent of Mexico's GDP (Williams, 2004, p. 15). Eighty percent of producers are involved in the least profitable crops (Williams, 2004, p. 15). In addition, 50 percent of farmers work on less than 5 hectares (1 hectare = 2.471 acres) and earn less than one third of their income from agriculture. Economic transition away from agriculture is inevitable for many small-scale farmers, due to the need to generate more income and compete in a global economy (Williams, 2004, p. 15). The United States has been working with Mexican producers, processors, and researchers to explore crop diversification and rural development to provide alternative employment opportunities for subsistence farmers (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2007, p. 4). United States universities are working with Mexican universities to develop agricultural extension services and post-secondary agricultural education, with an emphasis on rural poverty amelioration (U.S. Department of

Agriculture, 2007, p. 4). NAFTA generated jobs and lowered consumer prices to help farmers reduce their dependence on agriculture (Williams, 2004, p. 15). The goal of future policies should also be to reduce dependence on agriculture, as the instability and insufficiency of this job in today's economy has been shown.

As far as the manufacturing industry goes, NAFTA has been beneficial for workers and factories as well. The Rules of Origin requirements in the agreement have created a barrier for competitors from non-NAFTA countries, giving Mexico an advantage (Feils & Rahman, 2008, p. 149). Products earn preferential treatment if they originate from a NAFTA country (Chase, 2008, p. 508). For example, automobiles must contain a minimum of 62.5 percent materials produced in a NAFTA country to qualify for preferential treatment (Chase, 2008, p. 508). This has increased the incentive for investment from the United States. Additionally, NAFTA has encouraged manufacturing plants to use a greater proportion of Mexican intermediate goods, which means increased profits benefit more Mexicans (Truett & Truett, 2007, p. 380).

The provisions of NAFTA were actually favorable to the maquilas. The company's domestic sales were allowed to increase by 5 percent annually, from 50 percent of its prior year export production in 1993 to 100 percent in 2001 (Truett & Truett, 2007, p. 375). NAFTA has been responsible for increased employment in the maquila industries since 1994 (Mollick and Wvalle-Vásquez, 2006 and Carrada-Bravo, 1998, as cited in Truett & Truett, 2007, p. 375). Employment more than doubled from 547,000 jobs in December 1993 to 1,339,000 jobs in October 2000 (Larudee, 2007, p. 539). Not only are more people employed, but there has also been a positive increase in the ratio of Mexican wages to U.S. wages (Truett & Truett, 2007, p. 377). This increase in wages may be due in part to the increased demand on the products of the maquilas which led to pressure to increase wages (Truett & Truett, 2007, p. 377).

NAFTA has helped Mexico to update its job market, increase trade and increase employment and wages in the maquila sector. Last but not least, 62 percent of Mexicans support NAFTA (Diep, 2008, p. 10). This all shows how NAFTA has been beneficial for Mexico as a whole. For those who may have lost out initially, such as subsistence farmers, the Mexican and United States government are working to

create better paying and more stable jobs that fit with the global economy. Therefore, in terms of Mexico, it has been shown NAFTA is a favorable policy.

NAFTA has been positive for the United States as well. The U.S. has benefited from NAFTA in terms of GDP, jobs created, and its own agriculture and manufacturing industries. The real GDP from 1993 to 2005 grew 48 percent (Office of the United States Trade Representative, 2006, p.1). U.S. exports to NAFTA countries have risen 157 percent, while imports have increased 231 percent in the past 15 years (Diep, 2008, p. 9). Mexico has become the largest market for U.S. products (FAS Backgrounder, 2005, p. 1). The positive increase in GDP, as well as an increased relationship with Mexico can be attributed in some way to NAFTA.

Despite the claims of the opponents of NAFTA, employment has increased, partially due to NAFTA. In general, U.S. employment rose from 112.2 million in December 1993 to 134.8 million people employed in February 2006 (Office of the United States Trade Representative, 2006, p. 1). The average unemployment rate was 5.1 percent from 1994-2005, compared with 7.1 percent from 1982-1993 (Office of the United States Trade Representative, 2006, p. 1). The U.S. Trade Representative estimates a total of 914,000 jobs have been created specifically due to NAFTA (Polaski, 2004, p. 27). This figure is found by estimating the number of jobs supported by a given number of exports, then multiplying that figure by the growth in exports to Canada and Mexico (Polaski, 2004, p. 27). When looking at other estimates of the number of jobs lost due to imports from NAFTA, one cannot be certain that the imported goods would have been produced in the United States in the absence of trade, meaning those jobs technically were not lost for United States workers (Polaski, 2004, p. 27). More than 57 million Americans are employed by firms engaged in international trade (Markheim, 2008, p. 2). This figure represents nearly 40 percent of all non-farm jobs (Markheim, 2008, p. 2). Despite what is often depicted, NAFTA has helped employment in the United States.

NAFTA has been positive for the United States in the agriculture and manufacturing industries due to increased exports. U.S. agricultural exports to Mexico have grown about 8 percent per year since NAFTA went into effect (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2007, p. 2). In 1993, $3.6 billion of U.S.

agricultural products were exported, compared with $7.9 billion in 2003 and $8.5 billion in 2004 (FAS Backgrounder, 2005, p. 1). Sales of corn increased fifteen-fold in value between 1993 and 2004 (FAS Backgrounder, 2005, p. 2). For exports of merchandise, those to NAFTA partners grew more rapidly, at 133 percent, than exports to the rest of the world, which increased by 77 percent (Office of the United States Trade Representative, 2006, p. 1). Regions along the international border especially benefited from NAFTA, due to their proximity to the foreign market (Logan, 2008, p. 676). The increase in these exports has benefited both industries.

In terms of employment in the manufacturing sector, NAFTA actually helped keep and improve manufacturing jobs in the United States. Manufacturing employment actually increased by 1.42 percent from 1994-2000 (Logan, 2008, p. 677). NAFTA may have slowed the loss of U.S. manufacturing jobs that had started to occur before NAFTA (Logan, 2008, p. 677). Trade liberalization increased manufacturing growth in the United States at a statistically significant 1 percent level according to a study by Logan (2008, p. 683). Not only has NAFTA been positively associated with more U.S. manufacturing jobs, it has also increased wages in the United States. Total compensation to U.S. workers due to NAFTA and CUFTA (the free trade agreement the U.S. had with Canada before NAFTA) has been nearly $10 billion through 2001 (Polaski, 2004, p. 27). The average real compensation of workers grew at an annual rate of 2.3 percent from 1993 to 2005, as opposed to just .4 percent from 1987 to 1993 (Office of the United States Trade Representative, 2006, p. 1). Additionally, the jobs created by NAFTA paid 13-16 percent more than the jobs lost due to increased trade with Mexico (Phelps, 2001, p. 26). Finally, NAFTA has led to improvements in technology which often leads to better jobs, increased wages, and the ability to compete in the global market (Markheim, 2008, p. 2).

Only 39 percent of Americans believe NAFTA has been bad for the United States (Diep, 2008, p. 10). Overall, NAFTA has benefited the U.S. Jobs have been created in the manufacturing sector and those jobs are better paying than the ones that may have been lost due to imports. NAFTA has also increased the amount the United States sells to other countries, particularly to Mexico and Canada. Finally, NAFTA has strengthened political relationships between the United States and allies throughout

the globe, due to increased interaction and more free trade policies that were signed as a result of the success of NAFTA (Markheim, 2008, p. 1).

However, another school of thought is that NAFTA has actually had very little effect on trade between the United States and Mexico. Some argue that the praise and criticism of NAFTA have been disproportionate to its actual effects (Diep, 2008, p. 9). NAFTA had a small effect on the balance of trade between the United States and Mexico. For 1999, 2000 and 2001, NAFTA affected .002 percent of the United States GDP (Congressional Budget Office, 2003, p. xiii). The United States GDP increased just .04 percent due to NAFTA, while Mexico's GDP increased .8 percent (Diep, 2008, p. 9). To put this in perspective, this is probably a few billion dollars or less, with the total United States GDP in fiscal year 2008 at $14,515 billion (Executive Office of the President, 2008). Without NAFTA, U.S. exports to and imports from Mexico would have grown almost as much as they did with NAFTA and would have fluctuated in almost the same way (Congressional Budget Office, 2003, p. 17). Some investment from the United States has gone to Mexico (Congressional Budget Office, 2003, p. 4). This reduces investment in the United States, raising U.S. interest rates and reducing the country's GDP (Congressional Budget Office, 2003, p. 4). However, the amount being invested is so small compared with the size of the United States markets that it is almost unnoticeable (Congressional Budget Office, 2003, p. 4). Any rise in interest rates due to this outflow would attract an inflow from another country to replace what has been lost (Congressional Budget Office, 2003, p. 4). When renegotiating NAFTA, much of the future of the policy "depends on the political clout of its supporters or detractors, rather than on the substance of unbiased and thorough economic analyses" (Diep, 2008, p. 10).

When attempting to study jobs created or lost by NAFTA, it is nearly impossible to actually determine the effect, if any on the job market of the United States. According to trade theory, in full employment economies, which is ideally the United States, job composition will shift as a result of free trade agreements, but there will be no net change in total employment (Polaski, 2004, p. 27). The disruptions in jobs will be small, since the overall change in exports and imports for each country was small as well (Congressional Budget Office, 2003, p. 19). For example, in the United States, jobs were

lost in some regions of the country, but gained in others (Logan, 2008, p. 679). The south has received approximately 43 percent of total foreign direct investment in the United States since the late 1970's (Logan, 2008, p. 680). This means that jobs in other regions have not grown as much, or have been lost, but for the United States overall the net loss has been zero.

In fact, many of the changes in trade between the United States and Mexico have been determined primarily by factors other than the agreement itself (Congressional Budget Office, 2003, p. 17). The Congressional Budget Office has created a statistical model that accounts for events unrelated to NAFTA, including the peso crisis of 1994, a harsh Mexican recession in 1995, the U.S. economic expansion most of the 1990's, and recessions in Mexico and the United States in 2000 and 2001 (Congressional Budget Office, 2003, p. xii-xiii). According to this model, 85 percent of the increase in U.S. exports to Mexico between 1993 and 2001 and 91 percent of the increase in imports from Mexico would have taken place without NAFTA as well (Congressional Budget Office, 2003, p. xii-xiii).

The timing of NAFTA's implementation coincides with many other economic events in both the United States and Mexico. The United States was just beginning an economic boom and in Mexico the devaluation of the peso occurred one year later (Larudee, 2007, p. 556). Both of these events affected the two economies more than the actual policy (Larudee, 2007, p. 556). Mexico was also undergoing a program of economic liberalization that extended back to the mid-1980's (Congressional Budget Office, 2003, p. x). Quotas were already being relaxed at this point which made the effect of NAFTA's changes much smaller (Larudee, 2007, p. 557).

Before NAFTA was created, Mexico was taking steps that would continue to affect trade and the economy even after NAFTA went into effect. In 1986, Mexico joined the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which lowered the average tariff rate from 27 percent in 1982 to 12 percent in 1993 (Congressional Budget Office, 2003, p. x). As a result of this, Mexico's exports to all countries grew between 1985 and 1993 (Williams, 2004, p. 14). Employment growth along the U.S.-Mexico border was actually due to Mexico joining the GATT (Logan, 2008, p. 680). American firms relocated in border cities like El Paso Laredo, and San Diego in order to reduce transportation costs of exports and

complementary manufacturing activities (Hanson, 1995, as cited in Logan, 2008, p. 680). Restructuring of the Mexican debt led to a series of privatization and deregulation of various state enterprises (Congressional Budget Office, 2003, p. x, Polaski, 2004, p. 18). Former President, Miguel de Madrid introduced a policy of privatization and holding direct investment from foreign countries (Fuchs, 2001, p. 1804). Inflation-reducing programs were created and brought down inflation from 187.8 percent in 1987 to 6.4 percent when NAFTA went into effect (Congressional Budget Office, 2003, p. x).

However, one event in Mexican history that had the biggest effect on the Mexican economy and all aspects of life in Mexico was the peso crisis of 1994. From 1991 to 1994 there were huge amounts of capital flowing into the country. Abruptly in late 1994-1995, these changed to outflows (Polaski, 2004, p. 18). Mexico had begun negotiations on NAFTA, which did increase investor's confidence in Mexican products and investments (Polaski, 2004, p. 18). Although NAFTA negotiations had begun, and the crisis occurred shortly after NAFTA went into effect, none of the research on this crisis blames NAFTA for what took place. Rather, financial liberalization eliminated capital and exchange controls, allowing much greater capital mobility (Polaski, 2004, p. 18). Additionally, the value of the Mexican peso was too high in relation to other currencies, making it easy for rich Mexicans to obtain foreign currencies, especially the United States dollar (Fuchs, 2001, p. 1805). Bankers' confidence in Mexican economic growth grew (Polaski, 2004, p. 18). All the above-mentioned factors combined to make investment in Mexico very attractive while the rest of the developed world was heading into an economic recession (Polaski, 2004, p. 18).

Mexico maintained a relatively fixed exchange rate, known as a parity band, where the value of the Mexican peso was pegged to the United States dollar (Polaski, 2004, p. 18). In 1994, the United States Federal Reserve Board raised interest rates for the first time since the recession of the 1990's (Polaski, 2004, p. 19). The capital coming into Mexico dropped sharply over the next three months to less than one-fifth its previous levels (Polaski, 2004, p. 19). To deal with this, the Mexican government rolled over its existing debt. It shifted public debt out of pesos and into dollar based securities, thereby agreeing to assume the exchange rate risk if the rate of exchange of peso to dollar became unstable

(Polaski, 2004, p. 19). Previously investors assumed this risk. The Mexican government also kept international exchanges out of domestic funds (Polaski, 2004, p. 19). These strategies prevented a collapse until the end of 1994, when investors began to realize that the government was going to run out of money (Polaski, 2004, p. 19). Once they realized this, investors pulled out their money. The Bank of Mexico was eventually forced to allow the peso to float and within 10 days the value of the peso had depreciated 55 percent (Polaski, 2004, p. 19). It hit a low of 7.64 pesos per dollar by the end of 1995 (Polaski, 2004, p. 19).

Up until this point, success of the Mexican government had been built on world interest rates, a factor over which they had no control (Polaski, 2004, p. 19). One obvious effect of the peso crisis was the immediate devaluation of the peso (Polaski, 2004, p. 50). Another was a decrease in GDP. The Mexican GDP shrank 6.2 percent in 1996 from what it was the previous year (Polaski, 2004, p. 50). Urban unemployment went from 3.6 percent in 1994 to 6.3 percent in 1995 (Polaski, 2004, p. 50). There was a large movement of jobs from the formal sector to the informal employment sector. Real wages in Mexico dropped severely relative to those in the United States (Polaski, 2004, p. 50). Wages gradually recovered after the crisis, but not enough to return to previous levels (Polaski, 2004, p. 24). Finally, confidence in the Mexican economy was badly shaken (Polaski, 2004, p. 50). When one recognizes the severity of this peso crisis, which occurred shortly after NAFTA went into effect yet was unrelated, it is easy to see the negative effect of other events besides NAFTA at this time.

The Mexican business cycle in general would have had the same effect on trade regardless of NAFTA. The Mexican trade balance is negatively correlated with the Mexican business cycle (Congressional Budget Office, 2003, p. 13). Exports from the United States to Mexico tend to increase when Mexico undergoes economic expansion (Congressional Budget Office, 2003, p. 13). The balance of trade changes accordingly. The recession of 1995 was marked by a 9.7 percent drop in seasonally adjusted real GDP (Congressional Budget Office, 2003, p. 14). This coincides with a substantial decline in the U.S. balance of trade with Mexico on year after NAFTA (Congressional Budget Office, 2003, p. 14). Due to this recession and the peso crisis, there was a severe financial crisis in Mexico shortly after

NAFTA went into effect (Congressional Budget Office, 2003, p. 14). This led people to assume NAFTA was responsible, but that conclusion is incorrect. The are many other events that occurred in Mexico around 1994, such as the peso crisis and a recession, which had a negative effect on the economy that has mistakenly been attributed to NAFTA.

Besides overestimating the impact of NAFTA, in the debate over this policy both proponents and opponents bring up immigration. This is a hot issue in the United States right now and people are looking to all avenues to make changes. Unfortunately, NAFTA has not been in effect long enough to properly judge its effect on immigration. Additionally, trade policies cannot solve immigration problems in the United States, nor should they be used to do so. The International Migration Commission, in a 1990 report, stated that a free trade agreement with a country like Mexico would stimulate migration in the short to medium term, and then lead to a decrease in migration in decades, even generations later (Wasem, 2007, p. 14). Philip Martin, chair of the Comparative Immigration and Integration Program at the University of California-Davis proposed the migration hump theory. This theory predicts that migration would initially increase in the years immediately following NAFTA and eventually diminish (Wasem, 2007, p. 14). According to his theory, migration levels will be pretty much the same as they would have been without NAFTA after 15 years and after 30 years be much lower (Wasem, 2007, p. 15). In 2008, only 14 years after the policy went into effect, it is impossible to judge whether NAFTA has had a positive or negative impact on immigration.

The forces influencing people to migrate have not changed much, even with any anticipated economic progress after NAFTA. The decision of whether or not to migrate has been shaped largely by structural general migration forces and unavailability of jobs in one's home country, specifically Mexico (Papademetriou, 2004, p. 52). The past two decades of economic restructuring in Mexico has led to an increase in migration to the United States. After the peso crisis and the slow economic recovery after, many Mexicans lost their faith in the Mexican economy and turned to migration as their best chance at survival and progress (Papademetriou, 2004, p. 47). For example, a 10 percent devaluation of the peso led to an increase in migration of 15 percent in one traditional migrant-sending village in Mexico

(Papademetriou, 2004, p. 47). These structural problems causing migration have not sufficiently been addressed in Mexico and cannot be dealt with through free trade agreements alone.

On the United States' side, there has been a big push for immigration reform in the in the past few years. However, it has been established that significant migration policy changes will happen outside the context of trade agreements (Papademetriou, 2004, p. 54). On July 21, 2003 the United States Senate passed a nonbinding resolution stating, "trade agreements are not the appropriate vehicle for enacting immigration-related laws or modifying current immigration policy" and that "future trade agreements to which the United States is party…should not contain immigration-related provisions" (Papademetriou, 2004, p. 54). Besides establishing poor policy, loading free trade agreements with immigration-related provisions will make them politically unappealing in less developed countries and more difficult to pass (Papademetriou, 2004, p. 55). Immigration reform must happen soon in the United States, but it is outside the realm of free trade agreements to make these policy changes.

Finally, United States social workers should not be involved in international policies. The social injustice and poverty in the United States are serious problems all social workers should be concerned about. It was estimated that 12 percent of the United States population had lived below the poverty line in the past 12 months, according to the U.S. census in 2007(Bishaw, & Semega, 2008, p. 20). In some areas of the country the poverty is even worse. For example, in Mississippi, 20.6 percent of the state lived below the poverty line in that same census (Bishaw, & Semega, 2008, p. 20). With poverty levels so high, this means children and families are not able to provide for their basic needs for food, clothing, shelter, and healthcare. These extraordinarily high poverty levels are cause for concern for United States social workers.

Not only is the poverty rate high in the U.S., the budget crises throughout the country are also very serious. There are 31 states in the country that are in a budget deficit right now (Brewster, 2008). However, the deficit in Rhode Island is the highest, at $367 million (Brewster, 2008). This has led to cutting families from benefits of the state public healthcare system, decreasing the age at which youth in foster care age out of the system and no longer receive state support and reducing aid to public colleges

and universities, among other serious cuts. Additionally, positions in state-run social service agencies, such as the Department of Children, Youth and Families, have been vacated and are not being filled. This means fewer jobs in the state, but it also means those relying on these state services must wait longer to receive the service they need (Brewster, 2008). Overall, the fiscal and policy reforms needed for the state to serve the needs of its citizens are enough to keep all social workers involved in social policy busy for a long time. These reforms are necessary before United States social workers begin getting involved in policies affecting other countries.

Additionally, United States foreign policy should be concerned with U.S. interests first and foremost. According to the Sharon Statement in 1960, which launched the modern grassroots conservative movement, the criteria to judge American foreign policy is, "Does it serve the just interest of the United States?" (Devine & Keene, 2000, p. 2). Secondary to this goal are democracy, human rights and international goodwill (Devine & Keene, 2000, p. 2). Pat Buchanan, voice of the Republican nativist wing, states, "our security rests on U.S. power and will, not whether [developing nations] are ruled by tyrants" (The isolationist temptation, 2006, p. 1). This ideology asserts the importance of U.S. interests over the rests of the world's when judging international policies.

Especially at the point the United States is at right now, with the war in Iraq and the recession, national security and economic growth are the top priority. Defense spending and economic stimulus for the United States should be the focus, not development programs for other countries (Holmes, 1995, p. 11). State and local leaders in the United States in 2008 were less likely to say that the United States should be the most assertive of leading nations among state and local leaders than they were in 1993. This proportion fell from 78 percent to 54 percent (Stop the world, 2005, p. 1). Most United States government leaders, as well as the general population, recognize that the United States is one of the most free and prosperous societies. However, this does not lead to the conclusion that the United States must then impose this example on other countries, if they do not want that and our budget does not allow for that (Devine & Keene, 2000, p. 3). It is in the best interest of the United States to keep the country's priorities and spending within national borders, especially in tough economic and security times.

The citizens of the United States have shown an unfavorable opinion of United States' intervention throughout the world. According to a Pew Research Center poll in October 2008, 42 percent of Americans agree the United States "should mind its own business internationally and let other countries get along the best they can on their own" (The isolationist temptation, 2006, p. 1). This figure has jumped 12 points in 3 years to its highest level since the mid-1970's, after Vietnam (The isolationist temptation, 2006, p. 1). The four ways in which United States citizens would like to disengage from the world are to fight fewer wars, trade less freely, allow fewer foreigners into the country and provide less foreign aid (The isolationist temptation, 2006, p. 1). United States citizens are losing their confidence in free trade as well. The percent of Americans who think trade benefits the United States has fallen from 78 percent in 2002 to 59 percent in 2008 (Wooing the World, 2008, p. 3). Additionally, the proportion of Americans who see foreign trade more as an opportunity for growth than as a threat to the domestic economy fell from 56 percent in 2000 to 45 percent last year (The isolationist temptation, 2006, p.2).

Not only do United States citizens not want to stretch their resources throughout the world, but also the rest of the world does not have a favorable view of intervention from the United States. According to a Pew Research Center annual survey of the global opinion of America, 26 out of the 33 countries polled now have a less favorable view of the United States than they did in 2002 (Wooing the World, 2008, p. 1). Most foreigners think that United States foreign policy fails to take into account the interests of the other country (Wooing the World, 2008, p. 1). Additionally, other countries have a right to determine how their countries should be governed. The resources of the United States to spend on this are limited (Devine & Keene, 2000, p. 4). Restraining from intervening in every global event is not a sign of weakness, but a positive recognition of this country's priorities (Devine & Keene, 2000, p. 6).

The situation in the United States today is at a dangerous point. Poverty, unemployment and state budget crises are leading to fewer benefits for American families. Additionally, threats overseas have Americans concerned about opening borders or providing aid throughout the world. Many United States citizens are content to worry about their own country and let others do the same. At the same time, negative impressions of the United States are leading to a rejection of Americans and their aid abroad

anyway. Social workers in the United States therefore have a responsibility to their fellow Americans to provide help in this country above anything else.

Hypothesis

Reliance on other nations for goods and services is becoming more prevalent with the increase in globalization. Undergraduate social work curriculum has not been updated to reflect these changes and as a result, BSW social work graduates are not fully aware of the international policies that will affect their work and how to best serve the clients that are affected by these policies. With the example of NAFTA, many social workers are dealing with clients affected by economic repercussions of NAFTA. The following social work education module on NAFTA and its effects has been designed to educate undergraduate social work students on the actual policy as well as the implications NAFTA has for individuals and communities in the United States and Mexico.

Methodology

Sample

A convenience sample of approximately 150 online library resources was used to procure information about NAFTA. The materials were found in scholarly journals, government websites, newspaper reports, and documentaries.

Data Gathering

The materials in the sample were read and watched for the designing of the educational module. The module was designed for the undergraduate social work student with little or no knowledge of NAFTA. Each reading was judged on its relevance to the social work profession, the variation of the information presented and the manner in which it was presented. The most important was the level of interest to the social work profession of each article. Some articles are written from a strictly economic perspective, which is often difficult for social work students to connect with their work. The articles chosen gave more of an overview of the policy and its effects, specifically on the populations social workers tend to work with. Another aspect was the variation among the articles. Each article and

documentary was chosen together in order to provide the most complete picture of NAFTA and the social work response to students. Some articles were more specifically focused on the policy and its effects, others focused on social work and organizational responses and some focused on the personal stories of those affected by NAFTA. The goal was to represent each of these aspects of the research. Additionally, some articles were written based on scholarly research, while others were based on personal experience of those in Mexico affected by NAFTA. A comparable mix of each style was chosen.

The readings and documentaries were then synthesized into an educational module. A PowerPoint presentation was created with the basic facts. A list of accompanying readings and videos was also compiled. The cover letter was created to explain the purpose of the module as well as the materials it includes.

Data Analysis

The module was then given to social work professors at a small, liberal arts college who could possibly implement it in their class. These are professors who teach Introduction to Social Work, Social Policy, Theory Practice, and International Human Services. Along with the materials they received a survey regarding the effectiveness and usefulness of the module. The survey had four Likert scale questions. These professors were also asked where they could implement this module in their curriculum and how easy it would be for them to do so. The module was also shown to social work students in the International Human Services class and a Theory Practice class. The students were then given a survey on the effectiveness and clarity of the module. The survey had four questions with a Likert scale and available space for comments.

Findings

Three professors evaluated the module. All gave scores of 9 and 10 on questions 1 and 3, indicating the module was clear and easy to use and social work students would have a working knowledge of NAFTA after using the module. Two of the responses also indicated they found the module easy to utilize in their courses and useful to undergraduate students. The other professor commented on the difficulty of using the module in an Introduction class due to time constraints. She

pointed out that there are many global social justice issues that deserve equal attention and she would have difficulty in devoting so much time to only one issue. The other two professors said they would use the module in sections of the courses relating to global policies or globalization.

Twenty-nine students evaluated the educational module. When asked whether the module was clear and easy to use, the mean score was 9.41. In terms of whether students would have a working knowledge of NAFTA after using this module, the mean response was 8.76. When asked if the module kept their interest, the mean score was 8.34. Judging if they could see how NAFTA relates to their work after using this module, the mean response was 8.69. The students commented on ways to make the presentation more interesting and effective for students, such as limiting the amount of information on the slides, adding more visuals, and providing time for discussion. Many social work students commented on the lack of education they have received on international social policies and international social work.

The limitations of this study are that the sample was very small and students and professors surveyed were only from one college. The responses of the professors and students included cannot be seen as representative of the entire population of social work professors and students. However, their responses suggest that the information in this educational module is important for professors to use in their courses. All the resources they need including readings and a documentary is provided, however professors are constrained by a limited amount of time to cover all material. For students, the module provides an effective introduction to NAFTA and its effect on their work. It also supplements the curriculum with information on a policy that they have not yet learned about. Many students commented on the lack of previous education on NAFTA or other international policies. If used in an introductory course this module would also provide students with a foundation of knowledge about international policies and the impact they have on social work as they begin their journey into the social work professional.

Conclusion

The preamble of the NASW Code of Ethics states “The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic needs of all people, with particular

attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty" (National Association of Social Workers, 1999). If the profession is committed to this mission, it must pay attention to events taking place outside the borders of the United States. Globalization has led to an interdependence between nations for goods and services and social workers need to be aware of the negative effects this has had on people throughout the world. They must also be aware of the international policies supported by the United States, like NAFTA, which are contributing to these conditions. Awareness and activism on these global issues will keep the profession at the forefront of social justice advocacy and true to its stated mission.

One of the first steps that can be taken to raise social work's international awareness is educating current social work students about international policies and their effect on clients throughout the world and in the United States. Educational modules, like the one created in this study, can be easily utilized in social work courses, from an Introduction to Social Work course to a Capstone course. However, social work professors are in the difficult position of having an abundance of material and a limited amount of time to cover all of it. If an introduction to international policies, such as NAFTA, is to be included in the curriculum, one must also consider what material will be given less attention. This is a difficult decision, but it is important for social work educators to consider if the curriculum is to be up to date and relevant in today's world.

Regardless of where educational modules about international policies fit in the curriculum, they are an important part of the future of social work. The world will only continue to become more globally interconnected, through travel, collaboration, and policies. As shown through the examination of NAFTA and its effects on Mexico and the United States, the policies made in the U.S. have global ramifications. Social workers must acknowledge this shift from a national to an international mindset and be prepared to deal with the changing field. One of the methods of dealing with this shift is education of future and current social workers. While not all social workers will be dealing directly with international policies, as part of generalist practice they must have a basic knowledge of how these policies affect the work of

social workers. Through this education social work will continue to stay true to its stated mission and up to date on the issues that are currently facing clients.

In addition to a shift in focus in social work education, a similar shift must occur in social work research. For many years the profession has looked at both individual therapy and systems level change as the way to improve the lives of clients. These practices have been tested in the field and evaluated through social work research. However the studies done by American social workers have been based mostly in the United States. Now that social workers must also pay attention to what is happening globally, more research must be done in this field. Social workers need to study the effectiveness of international advocacy campaigns and other aspects in which the nation's policies affect the rest of the world. Particularly in relation to NAFTA, more research is needed into effective trade agreement models between developed and developing countries that do not further oppress the vulnerable working class. As the profession increasingly relies on quantitative data to show effectiveness of its work, more research relating to international policies and global social justice will increase the attention to and legitimacy of this field.

NAFTA and other international policies also affect social policy. Social workers now need to be active not just on a local and national scale, but on the global scale as well. Social workers need to advocate for policies that benefit the poor and disenfranchised, as opposed to putting disadvantaged groups in an even more vulnerable position, as NAFTA has done. International social policy must promote fair labor practices throughout the world and not allow businesses to flourish at the expense of the workers and society as a whole. This is a level of advocacy that has not been fully explored by social work and will need to be in the near future.

In terms of practice, NAFTA and other international policies obviously affect macro level work. Advocates and community organizers must be active in opposing policies that will negatively affect clients. Social workers must be heard in the political realm as these decisions are being made. However, international policies also affect meso and micro social workers. NAFTA has contributed to the outsourcing of many factory jobs. As blue-collar workers lose their jobs, their families are affected. The

loss of this income will either force other family members to enter the workforce or cause these families to rely on welfare, food stamps and other forms of government support to survive. If those supports aren't available the family may turn to other means, legal or not, to survive. The loss of a job causes strain on the individual in all aspects of their life. Social workers are the first ones to work with these clients, whether it is in the Department of Health and Human Services, through individual and family counseling or non-profit organizations. NAFTA and other international polices have an effect on all areas of social work practice. With proper awareness and training on these issues, social workers will continue to be at the forefront of the struggle for social justice and the resource for individuals, groups and families negatively affected by these policies.

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