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**An Assessment of MSW Social Work Curricula: Semester-long Courses Specifically
Related to Immigrants and Immigration**

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An Assessment of MSW Social Work Curricula: Semester-long Courses Specifically Related to Immigrants and Immigration

Abstract: Social workers are well positioned to meet the needs of the immigrant population in the United States (U.S.) and social workers across all fields and specializations should both feel competent and have the appropriate skills to work with immigrant clients. In this paper we provide context around the immigrant population in the U.S., discuss social work's role in helping immigrants, and the role of the Master of Social Work degree in helping to prepare social workers to work with immigrants. Using publicly available data on MSW school websites, we analyze the prevalence of courses that specifically focus on immigrants or immigration. We found a lack of semester long immigrant specific courses in that only 12% of programs offered these courses. We also noted the geographic clustering of some programs that offer these courses. We propose that schools do one of the following depending on their current course offerings, faculty expertise, and other resources: ensuring that basic content and case examples about immigrants are included in foundational social work courses, and when feasible or appropriate create elective courses, or create a concentration for those wishing to specialize in social work practice with immigrants.

Introduction

The immigrant population in the U.S. is growing, hitting a record of 46.2 million in late 2021 (Camarota & Zeigler, 2021), making it imperative that social workers across all fields are prepared to work with immigrant clients. Social workers are well positioned to meet the needs of the immigrant populations in the United States (U.S.) due to their role in social service delivery, schools, hospitals, in creating and evaluating social welfare programs, and in advocating at the local, state, and national levels (Held et al., 2018). In this paper we provide context around the immigrant population in the U.S., discuss social work's role in helping immigrants, and the role

of the Master of Social Work degree in helping to prepare social workers to work with immigrants. We then discuss coursework specific to immigrants and immigration issues in schools of social work across the country, and reflect upon the geographic locations of these programs in relation to where immigrant populations reside.

Immigrants in the U.S.

Migration is the movement of people from their native land to another land of which they were not born or do not have citizenship, regardless of length of stay and level of choice (UNESCO, 2017; Valtonen, 2016). According to the United Nations (UN) (2017), about 258 million people in the world live in a country outside of where they were born. As prevalent as international migration is, this paper focuses on migration to the U.S.

The U.S. is recognized as “a nation of immigrants” in spite of a history of anti-immigrant policy (Waters & Pineau, 2016). About 14.2% of the U.S. population are immigrants (Camarota & Zeigler) and another 12% (37.1 million) are their children (Calvo et al., 2015). Immigrants disproportionately experience poverty, limited access to social welfare programs, and a lack of health insurance and quality health care (Waters & Pineau, 2016). The heterogeneity of demographics among immigrants (e.g., age, country of origin, immigration status, race, ethnicity) and the communities they settle into necessitates social work training that accommodates for such heterogeneity. In the U.S., the areas with highest immigrant populations include New York City, NY, Houston, TX, and Los Angeles, CA (Waters & Pineau, 2016). However, newly emerging immigrant communities include Atlanta, GA, Charlotte, NC, and Las Vegas, NV (Waters & Pineau, 2016). Immigrants living in new destinations, low-concentrated immigrant destinations, and rural destinations are more likely to face barriers to healthcare access due to a lack of healthcare infrastructure (Andrade & Viruell-Fuentes, 2011; Stone et al., 2022).

For as many immigrants that live in the U.S., there continues to be an onslaught of anti-immigrant policies and rhetoric by federal and state government systems. During the Trump Administration, the U.S. witnessed attempts to ban immigrant and refugee groups via executive orders (Executive Order No. 13815, 2017), attempts to remove protections of undocumented immigrants (e.g., TPS, DACA) (Karas, 2018), and child-family separations at the southern border (Executive Order No. 13841, 2018). The effects of such policies may lead to significant fear and isolation for undocumented immigrants as well as their documented family and community members. Immigrant scholars have established links between anti-immigrant policies and healthcare access (Blackburn & Sierra, 2021; Philbin et al., 2018), increased stress due to fear of deportation (Ayón & Becerra, 2013), negative mental health outcomes (Becerra, 2020; Vargas et al., 2017), economic instability (Gurrola & Ayon, 2018), and experiencing discrimination at individual and institutional levels (Gurrola & Ayón, 2018).

Social Work's Role in Working with Immigrants

Though the field of social work served immigrants in the field's infancy (DiNitto & Johnson, 2016), social work practice originally did not take into consideration the racial, cultural, religious, and linguistic diversity among immigrants, even after large arrivals of immigrants from non-European countries in the 1960s and 1970s (Engstrom & Okamura, 2007). Several years into the 21st Century, we witnessed calls for social work to focus on new immigrants and modify practice to consider challenges faced by immigrants from countries such as Mexico, China, and India (Engstrom & Okamura, 2007). Today, social workers may be the first line of helpers connecting immigrants and refugees to community resources (e.g., healthcare, housing, income, and food assistance) at hospitals, community health centers, schools, immigration detention centers, and law offices.

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) calls on social workers to seek and receive education from diverse populations, including immigrants (NASW, 2021). Guidelines for professional social work practice outlined in the Code of Ethics calls on social workers to “enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty” (NASW, 2021, p. 1). Social workers are specifically missioned to advocate for marginalized groups, including immigrants.

Efforts to advocate for immigrants have also been placed in research. At the 2016 Society for Social Work Research conference, the Grand Challenges for Social Work were announced (American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare, 2018). Multiple of the Grand Challenges can be connected to social work practice with immigrants and refugees. First, *Achieving Equal Opportunity and Justice* speaks to the need to integrate Latinx immigrants into U.S. communities (Calvo, et al., 2016). Second, we see disparities in wages for immigrants (Peters & Melzer, 2022), which is in line with *Reduce Extreme Economic Inequality* and the need to *Build Financial Capability for All*. The *Build Financial Capability for All* Grand Challenge focuses on financial knowledge and access to quality affordable financial services, and access to stable employment that offers a living wage (Grand Challenges for Social Work, 2020). These are all areas that can be hard for immigrants due to language barriers, cultural norms, and especially for immigrants without work authorization in the US.

Multiple studies highlight the need for even more specialized training for social workers in working with immigrants (Finno-Velasquez & Dettlaff, 2018; Martinez-Brawley & Zorita, 2011). More specifically they suggest the need to: include content on the immigration system and immigration law into required courses with other social policies; improve cultural responsiveness and reduce bias against immigrants; and address the role of acculturation in

assessments of immigrants and their families (Finno-Velasquez & Dettlaff, 2018). Similarly, Evans and colleagues (2018) call for more training and research around social work practice with unaccompanied minors, a specific subset of immigrants.

MSW Education

The Council of Social Work Education (CSWE) oversees and ensures the quality of social work education in the U.S. Under CSWE governance, the Commission on Educational Policy (COEP) and Commission on Accreditation (COA) develop the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) to guide accredited practices in social work education programs. According to the EPAS, all MSW programs seeking accreditation must have competency-based education infused and incorporated in the curriculum (Council on Social Work Education [CSWE], 2015). This means abiding by competency 3; understanding how multiple and intersecting identities, including immigrant status, shape life experiences of students and intended client populations. Also, the educational policy on diversity calls for the inclusion of immigrant status in students' learning environment (e.g., selection of field education settings and their clientele, educational and social resources; the demographic makeup of its faculty, staff, and student body).

Though guidelines are in place to ensure social work students receive training with working with immigrant groups, there is very little evidence to what extent accredited MSW programs incorporate and infuse immigrant-focused content in their curriculum. In 2009, Martinez-Brawley and Zorita surveyed schools of social work in Mexico border states and found that the only courses related to immigrants were electives and were not required. Martinez-Brawley and Zorita (2011) argue there lies a paucity of immigration content in social work training and recommends social work curricula add content related to legal and economic challenges in the lives of immigrants and content related to advocacy training.

The Current Study

Although the CSWE EPAS and the NASW standards for cultural competency indicate social workers should be equipped with cross-cultural skills and knowledge for delivering services to racially and ethnically diverse populations (CSWE, 2015; NASW, 2021), social workers working with immigrants feel they lack adequate training working with immigrants (Bhuyan et al., 2012). Some social workers report they draw upon self-directed and/or on-the-job training to meet the cultural needs of their immigrant clients (Martinez-Brawley & Zorita, 2011). We have yet to identify data regarding the current status of immigration-specific courses in social work education. Without this knowledge, we are left unguided about how to enhance a workforce struggling to meet the intersectional needs of immigrants. This study examines the extent to which accredited MSW programs in the U.S. dedicate entire stand alone courses in social work training programs to working with immigrants.

The following research questions will be addressed in this paper: 1) What is the prevalence of semester-long immigrant-specific courses in master's level social work programs in the U.S? 2) Do MSW programs with certain practice specializations (i.e. clinical, macro, or both) offer immigrant-specific courses? 3) Are there geographical patterns to which MSW programs provide immigrant specific courses? 4) Are immigrants and immigration specifically highlighted in the mission statement of social work programs?

Methodology

This study used a data set from a prior study that examined Latino content in social work master's programs throughout the United States (Rosales et al., 2018). The data set was gathered by reviewing course titles and mission statements from 266 CSWE-accredited or in-candidacy U.S. MSW programs' websites. The data set was established in January 2017 from the CSWE accreditation website (CSWE, 2017).

The programs included in this content analysis had to meet the following criteria: 1) offer an MSW degree; 2) were CSWE-accredited in 2017; and 3) they had to be within the U.S. or the major outlying islands. After omitting three programs without publicly available information about courses, the final sample included 263 MSW programs. In order to answer the research questions in this study, the data set needed to include a variable related to stand alone courses that had content specific to working with immigrants, or on immigration related topics. Therefore, during the training for the team of coders it was discussed that courses relevant to immigrants and immigration were identified by selecting course titles with keywords such as “immigrant”, “immigration”, “migrant” and “refugee” among the course titles provided on each MSW program’s website. Hereafter, these are referred to as “immigrant specific courses.” Additional coding included program location (e.g., Northeast, South, West, Midwest), and practice concentration (e.g., clinical, macro or both¹). Stata 14 was utilized to conduct univariate and bivariate statistics.

In the second set of results, we discuss the geographic location of MSW programs that offer Immigrant courses, and comment on the immigrant population in those geographic areas. In order to do so, The American Community Survey (ACS) data table labeled “Nativity and Citizenship Status in the United States” was downloaded at the county level for the population of the 50 states and Puerto Rico using the 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-year estimates. The researchers added together the population of “not a U.S. citizen” and “U.S. citizen by naturalization” as a proxy for the total immigrant population per county. The percentage was then calculated for each county by dividing the number of immigrants by the total population for that county using Microsoft Excel 2016.

¹ If MSW programs were advertised as advanced generalist, they were coded as “both” because they offered advanced curricula in both clinical and macro topics

Sample Characteristics: MSW Programs

Of the 263 MSW programs included in this study, 181 programs (68.8%) were offered at public colleges or universities, and 82 programs (31.2%) were offered at private colleges or universities. Of the 252 schools that provided information about the focus of their MSW programs, 204 programs (81.0%) offered both macro and clinical specializations, 45 programs (17.9%) offered clinical specializations only, and three programs (1.2%) offered a macro specialization only. MSW programs were spread across the United States; 87 programs (33.1%) were located in the South, 67 in the Midwest (25.5%), 56 in the Northeast (21.3%), 48 in the West (18.3%), and five in U.S. Territories (1.9%).

Results

The results of our study describe the prevalence of immigrant and immigration specific courses in MSW programs. Below we shared the findings in terms of type of college/university (public versus private), specializations, academic standings, and geographic location.

Characteristics of Programs with Immigrant Specific Courses

Results show that the majority of MSW programs (87.8%) do not offer immigrant or immigration-focused courses. Among all MSW programs, a total of 32 programs (12.2%) offered immigration specific courses. The number of immigration specific courses ranged from one to four, with a mean of 1.4 courses and a mode of one course.

Prevalence of immigration specific course content varied both by school and program characteristics. While 17.1% of private colleges or universities provided courses with immigrant specific courses, only 9.9% of public colleges or universities provided courses with immigrant specific courses. Broken down by program specialization, six of the schools (13.3%) with an exclusively clinical orientation included immigrant or immigration-focused courses in the curricula, while no exclusively macro-focused program provided immigrant specific courses.

Among schools offering both clinical and macro specializations (n=26 programs), 12.8% offered immigrant specific courses.

Location of MSW Programs with Immigrant and Immigration Specific Courses

Prevalence of immigrant specific courses also varied based on geographic location. The South was the region in the continental U.S. with the lowest percentage of programs offering immigrant or immigration coursework. Only 4.6% of programs in the South (four of 87) offered immigrant specific courses, in contrast to 25% in the Northeast (14 of 56). In the Midwest, 11.9% of programs (8 of 67) offered immigrant specific courses; similarly, in the West, 12.5% of programs (6 of 48) offered immigrant specific courses. Figure 1 shows the number of MSW programs in each region that offered courses with immigrant and immigrant specific courses.

[Insert Figure 1 About Here]

More specifically, when looking at the list of cities (as opposed to general coding of region) we notice some patterns in where social work programs that offer immigrant specific courses are located. Within each of these areas, we see a high population of immigrant residents, which perhaps influences MSW programs to host these stand alone courses. The most notable include the greater Chicago area, and the mid-Atlantic region of the U.S. In the city of Chicago alone, three universities offered seven different stand alone courses on immigrants. In addition, the state of Illinois overall includes 10 courses across five schools. According to census data, Cook County, IL (which includes Chicago) has a population that is 21.08% foreign born which is higher than the national average. Similarly, we noted a concentration of immigrant specific courses in the area between New England and the Mid-Atlantic States. Five different MSW programs in New York City offer a total of nine immigrant specific courses, and one school about an hour outside of New York City in New Jersey offers an additional course. The state of New York is one quarter immigrants (American Immigration Council, 2020) yet the city of New

York is made up of almost 40% immigrants (Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, 2018). .

There is one additional course in Baltimore, Maryland, and two additional courses in the greater Philadelphia area (one each at two schools). When looking just a little north to New England, we notice a handful of courses in these smaller states. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts offers three immigrant specific courses, one at each of three different schools scattered from Boston to Western Massachusetts. Connecticut offers one additional course.

Inclusion of Immigrants and Immigration Language in Social Work Mission Statements

Most social work programs have a mission statement that guides their work and outlines the ways in which they hope to prepare social workers for the future. While 200 (76%) social work programs highlight an emphasis of working with diverse clients in their mission statement, the majority do not specifically mention immigrant or immigration-related language. Immigrants were mentioned in the mission statements of only six of 263 programs (2.3%). Among the six programs that mentioned immigration in their mission statements, only two of these programs also offered immigrant specific courses. Of the six programs with mission statements mentioning immigration, two were located in the West, two in the Northeast, and one each in the Midwest and in the U.S. Territories region. No MSW program in the South included immigration in a mission statement, even though the South was the U.S. region with the highest representation of MSW programs.

Discussion

The findings from this study are helpful for the social work profession as we reflect upon the needs of our communities, the change in immigrant populations, and how we are preparing social worker students to respond to those needs.

Previous research has demonstrated a relationship between the inclusion of entire stand alone courses specific to immigrant populations/immigration and increased knowledge of social

work students in working with immigrant populations (Bhuyan et al., 2012; Martinez-Brawley & Zorita, 2011). In addition, infusion of content when compared to standalone coursework produced less favorable outcomes in the knowledge acquisition of students who took social work practice with immigrants as a course (Bhuyan et al., 2012). As such, our study examines the prevalence of stand alone immigrant specific courses in Master of Social Work programs throughout the United States. Our results show that only 32 programs (12.2%) offered immigrant specific courses, which is low given that 13.7% of the U.S. population are immigrants (Budiman, 2020) and another 12% are their children (Calvo et al., 2015).

This study examined the geographic location of stand alone immigrant specific MSW courses with the hypothesis that areas with a higher immigrant population may have more incentive and resources to offer immigrant-focused courses. The results show that there are concentrations of these courses in New York and Chicago, which are traditional immigrant destinations with higher percentages of immigrants. However, according to the Census data used in this study, some of the highest counties in terms of immigrant population, such as Miami-Dade County where immigrants consist of 52.23% of the population, have no stand alone immigrant specific MSW courses, noted on their websites. In fact, of the ten MSW programs in Florida, none advertised an MSW course specific to immigrants. As a second example, 38.07% of the population of Santa Clara County in California is made up of immigrant individuals, but no MSW programs in that county list a stand alone immigrant specific MSW course. There is one immigrant specific course offered at an MSW program in neighboring Berkeley, CA (Alameda County with 31.69% immigrants). These two counties have one of two MSW immigrant specific courses in the whole state of California; the other being in Los Angeles, which has an immigrant population of 34.54%. Additionally, the relative lack of specific programming for immigrants in programs along the southern United States border (four of 87

MSW programs) illustrates potential gaps in knowledge for social work students in areas typically associated with Hispanic people, the largest group of immigrants in the US. As established through previous research, specific Hispanic-based social work content is lacking within the majority of social work programs (Rosales et al., 2018). Overall, these analyses do show that many MSW programs with immigrant specific courses are located in areas with higher than the national average of immigrants. Unfortunately, the results also show that some areas with high immigrant rates do not offer immigrant specific courses.

As the conduit for knowledge and experience in social work to MSW students, it is important for instructors to comprehensively understand the multifaceted implications of changing immigration patterns and future social work service (Bhuyan et al., 2012; Held et al., 2017). This need for a more immigrant specific courses necessitates an increased acquisition of research and teaching skills to impart competency on the future practitioner. This is not only done to reflect the potential changes within the client population of future practitioners, but the ever changing landscape of diversity among the student population within the academic classroom (CSWE, 2015). This subtle, but necessary addition to MSW curricula, provide a more effective set of tools for practice with all immigrant communities.

Less than five percent of MSW programs mentioned the role of social workers with immigrants in their mission statements. Given the number of immigrants in the U.S. today, MSW programs should consider where their graduates end up practicing, who they serve, and if making immigrant-focused content part of the mission statement would be appropriate. Including immigrant-focused content on mission statements and having immigrant-focused courses would help to address the need for social workers to prepare them to adequately work with immigrants (Evans, et al., 2018; Finno-Velasquez, & Dettlaff, 2018; Martinez-Brawley, & Zorita, 2009). Schools of social work who mention other types of diverse groups in their mission statement,

such as those with a disability, in poverty, or racial/ethnic minorities should consider adding immigrants. Social workers practicing with immigrants and those living in immigrant families, which make 25% of the population in the U.S. today (Calvo et al., 2015), need to understand how the immigration experience intersects with racist, elitist, and ableist experiences to negatively impact immigration people's experiences in the US.

Recommendations

Competence in service delivery is a defining ethical value within the field of social work (NASW, 2021). As such, it is pertinent for social workers to have knowledge and training which will allow them to practice, effectively, with a wide array of ethnic and cultural groups. Consequently, it is the duty of social workers in academia to provide this expertise with an eye to potential demographic changes and shifts. The projected arrival of immigrant populations in the near and distant future (Frey, 2018; Department of Homeland Security, 2018; Pew Research Center, 2015), necessitates a more nuanced focus in preparing future social workers to the contextual, cultural, economic, structural, and mental health related implications of such a demographic shift (Danso, 2016). We propose that schools of social work consider their specific context and possibly 1) increase the number of elective courses on social work practice with immigrants 2) create certificate programs and concentrations available for those who wish to specialize in this area or 3) ensure that content on social work practice with immigrants is infused into required classes so that all social work students can benefit from the content.

Courses and specializations provide a tool for social work programs to focus content and training on specific social issues that diverse groups face when they immigrate to the United States (Danso, 2016; Martinez-Brawley & Zorita, 2011). The diverse groups of ethnic and racial immigrants that seek residence in the United States necessitates both a broad and specific curriculum which understands immigrant experiences as a whole, while also appropriately

illustrating the contextual differences which may affect each group. For example, working with highly skilled immigrants coming to the U.S. may vary from working with unaccompanied youth separated from their families at the border, which varies from working with Muslim refugees fleeing religious persecution.

We recommend that more schools of social work offer elective courses around working with immigrants so that students with an interest in immigrant-focused content can acquire more in-depth knowledge about the topic. This is especially true in geographic areas that have higher immigrant populations. In these areas, social workers across all disciplines are more likely to encounter immigrants in their day-to-day work. If a school of social work does not have a faculty member on staff who would be qualified to teach these courses, it may be possible to hire a local MSW from an immigrant-serving organization as an adjunct faculty member. Schools may also develop community partnerships with immigrant-serving organizations and seek consultation from community leaders to involve them in curriculum and course development; ideally paying them for their expertise and time. Hiring experienced immigrant-serving social workers as the professor may also help to ensure that content and skills taught are up to date and relevant for MSW students. Coupled with this, it's important to continue to offer continuing education courses on the topic, as immigrant populations in the U.S. are often changing. For example, in 2021 we saw huge numbers of Afghan parolees come to the US, followed by Ukrainians in 2022, and conflict in Palestine in 2023.

For schools of social work with the resources, faculty expertise, and those that are located among large immigrant populations, we suggest the creation of a formal specialization. These actions would require a mandatory number of credits in specific immigrant based course work. Specializations would provide a more nuanced understanding than what is covered within the diversity course, allowing for more specific knowledge regarding the intersection of immigration

with certain social phenomena or localized and specific immigrant groups (Martinez-Brawley & Zorita, 2011).

Martinez-Brawley and Zorita (2009) discuss the differences between required courses and electives so program directors should consider the positive and negative aspects before making a decision about how to proceed. Regardless of whether a school offers electives or a concentration, continuous coverage of immigrant and immigration social work related issues should be covered within the mandatory curriculum in order to ensure all students have exposure to content around immigrant clients. We suggest including content in required courses such as diversity, human behavior, practice courses, research or policy courses (CSWE, 2015). Guest speakers working with immigrants and refugees in the local community may be able to aid classroom lectures when faculty do not feel prepared.

Immigrant-focused courses and intersectionality

When thinking about numbers, it is interesting to note that there are 44.8 million immigrants in the U.S. (Budiman, 2020) and 46.8 million people who identify as Black (Tamir, 2021). Almost every social work course discussed the nuances of working with Black Americans and the systems of oppression in our society; do as many social work courses discuss immigrants? (We are unable to answer this question with the current data set).

As such, issues specific to immigrant populations could be tied to the various lessons which are taught throughout the semester. Many schools touch on working with immigrants in their diversity courses. However, diversity courses do not always cover the intersectionalities that many immigrants belong to such as being both immigrant and elderly; immigrant and in foster care; immigrant and black in America, etc. Using critical social work and anti-oppressive social work as a framework in courses focused on working with diverse populations can help guide the integration of intersectionality (Mattsson, 2014). Beyond the diversity course, content

around immigrants and refugees can be included in clinical and macro practice classes as examples and opportunities for conversation among the general MSW study body. Therefore, for schools that do not have the resources to develop specialized tracks or courses we recommend working to get content (a reading, a case study, a classroom activity, etc) into all courses that highlight the intersectionality of immigrants within course content. For example, a policy class can cover policies related to skilled immigrants, refugees and undocumented immigrants. A research class can cover the nuances of interpretation and translation in research. A substance abuse course can focus on the cultural aspects of use. This is important because immigrants do not solely access service providers and agencies who specialize in working with immigrants, but access community resources of all sorts including clinics, hospitals, and schools.

As an evolving process, the need for increased focus on immigrant specific courses in MSW programs would necessitate additional research. Information regarding the specifics of different immigrant groups would allow for the more careful crafting of relevant and comprehensive curricula. In addition, the most up to date research would allow for a more robust experience for MSW students as they are able to understand the application of their knowledge to the current issues and context of immigrant populations. Such research could include, for example, the results of a curriculum based exposure on the comfort of newly graduating social workers in treating immigrant populations or evaluating immigrant based social policy.

Strengths and Limitations

Our study has various strengths. First, we are examining the content offered by social work programs. It is imperative that we periodically reflect upon available courses and critically assess if they are able to meet the needs of social work students, and the changing needs of people seeking help from social workers across the country. In today's society, more and more social workers will interact with immigrant clients and we need to ensure their preparedness.

Second, our study uses national data to provide a snapshot of the national scope of social work education on immigration. Third, as we mentioned how social work practice with immigrants relates to multiple grand challenges, we are highlighting the grandiose importance of more education for social workers in this arena and are attempting to bridge the grand challenges.

Notwithstanding these strengths, there are limitations within this study that need to be considered. First, due to the way the data were collected, we could only assess whether the course titles mentioned immigrants, immigration, migrants, or refugees. There may have been courses that did not include these key terms in the title, yet had one or multiple sessions that concentrated on immigrants such as diversity courses and courses on specific populations. Secondly, the dataset was limited to publicly available course titles. There may be courses provided that are not presented publicly. Third, although there were courses that concentrated on topics of diversity (e.g. race, ethnicity, Latinx, Black, and Asian populations) not all immigrants are ethnoracial minoritized individuals nor are all ethnoracial minoritized individuals immigrants. Fourth, we did not code for global and international social work courses, which are becoming more common. While they often concentrate on issues in other countries, it is possible that they also include content on immigrants in the US. Fifth, we did not account for the size of the MSW programs. Larger programs likely have more resources and more ability to host specialized courses due to the sheer number of students who could fill the seats in the course. Finally, coverage of how different areas of social work intersect with immigrants and immigration social work related issues may already be covered in other practice courses through the use of readings, case studies, and discussions.

Conclusion

As immigration continues to transform various aspects of the U.S. and global society, the social work profession's preparedness to better serve immigrants has become ever more

important. However, the findings of the present study reveal that working with immigrants is not prevalent in social work curriculum across the nation. It is also notable that the engagement of immigration in the curriculum was not necessarily matched with the geography of where immigrants reside. Therefore, our results call for more ways to better prepare social workers to work with immigrants. For example, the expansion of specializations, courses, and course content in social work with immigrant communities may help to meet the needs for social workers to be prepared to work with immigrant populations. Moreover, acknowledgment of the importance of immigration in curriculum, including school program mission statements, could be crucial to creating a culturally responsive education environment and perhaps increase the number of immigrants working towards an MSW themselves. Additionally, an inclusive mission statement can help to build and nurture the competence to work with immigrants. As advocates for marginalized groups, the social work profession holds the potential to better serve newcomers.

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Figure 1.

