

'Not All Borders are the Same' *Immigration and the Racialization of the 'Mexican Menace' in the Midwest*

Maria Teresa Tatto, Virginia Lundstrom-Ndibongo, Brenda E. Newman, Sally E. Nogle, Loukia K. Sarroub, James M. Weiler

Occasional Paper No. 72

November 2000

ABSTRACT

The present report originated in a MSU policy analysis class taught during 1996. The professor and students agreed to construct a class that represented a grounded experience in policy analysis touching upon a current and relevant issue. We began exploring the policies surrounding the education of migrant children in Michigan.

Our goal was to learn about the policies related to the education of migrant workers' children and to develop an understanding of the issue's complexities. We knew our work would be limited by time, financial, and political constraints. These constraints limited our work to an exploratory inquiry supported by literature reviews and informational interviews with key individuals in selected Michigan sites.

We chose this "invisible" policy issue for several reasons. Migrant education offered us the opportunity to examine current reform tendencies to provide access to quality education for all children, the preparation of teachers to support select populations, the organization of schools to accommodate these children in response to vague policy mandates, and power issues affecting the different constituencies and stakeholders. Thanks to the support of the Julian Samora Research Institute, the Michigan Department of Education, and various individuals, we held face-to-face interviews with policymakers, teachers, and migrant children and their families.

Our purpose was to begin a critical and constructive dialogue among the parties involved in the development and implementation of this policy.