

ABSTRACT

THE FOOD PYRAMID: MEXICANS, AGRIBUSINESS, GOVERNMENTS AND COMMUNITIES IN THE MIDWEST MIGRANT STREAM

Katie Sutrina-Haney, Ph.D.
Department of History
Northern Illinois University, 2016
Rosemary Feurer, Director

As recent scholarship and even popular works and documentaries demonstrate, the United States public is largely unaware how our food ends up on our table. While some popular works found in bookstores explore where our food comes from, these works rarely analyze the role of labor and specifically the system of the migrant farmworker stream. Workers in the field make possible the complex process from the growth of produce to the selling of food to consumers. By the 1960s, communities and states in the Midwest reacted to editorialized and documented condemnation of the living and working conditions of migrant farmworkers as seen in films like *Harvest of Shame*, as well as national concerns over the civil rights of minorities. In analyzing the migrant stream of the Midwest before the international and national changes of the North American Free Trade Agreement signed in 1993, this work expands upon a part of the migrant experience that is rarely detailed. While national factors influenced the structure of the migrant stream in the Midwest, this study argues that the crops, communities, and corporations of the Midwest migrant stream also played a distinctive role in the national story of the migrant stream. In analyzing the structure of power in the Midwest migrant stream through the roles of farmworker families, national and state governments,

growers, farmworker unions, agribusinesses, and Catholic organizations, this dissertation enhances our understanding of the Midwest through the lens of gender, resistance, manipulation, agency, communities, and control. Specifically focusing on the Mexican migrant farmworkers who came primarily from Texas, Florida, and Mexico to the Midwest states of Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois, Ohio, Michigan, Minnesota, and Indiana as laborers during the 1960s to 1993, my dissertation explores the importance of gender, governments, agribusinesses, farmers, and migrants in shaping the Midwest migrant stream.

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GOVERNMENTS AND COMMUNITIES IN THE
MIDWEST MIGRANT STREAM

BY

KATIE SUTRINA-HANEY
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INTRODUCTION

In the years after the 1960 *Harvest of Shame* revealed the struggles of migrant farmworkers in the United States, Midwest communities, state governments, farmworkers, growers, unions, and agribusinesses debated and renegotiated the structure of the Midwest migrant stream.¹ The decades from 1960 to 1990 were a critical period in the history of the migrant stream. Although the *Harvest of Shame* focused on the experiences of African American migrants along the East Coast, Midwest state governments and communities realized that migrants lived and worked in similar horrible conditions in their region. This awareness coincided with the advent of the Civil Rights, Chicano, Feminist and United Farm Workers (UFW) movements of the 1960s and 1970s, creating a time period where farmworkers and Midwesterners debated and challenged the power structure of the Midwest stream. During the last half of the twentieth century, individuals within and outside the migrant stream renegotiated power within the home, the Catholic Church, society, and the agricultural system. The migrant agricultural system, or as I call it, the food pyramid, focused power on a decreasing amount of people and was structured so that few could see the pyramid as a whole, but rather seeing only those that held power directly over them. Based on the backs of migrant farmworkers, other groups in the middle of the pyramid: growers, governments, and the public, were largely unaware of their role in the pyramid as a whole, or the role of a few agricultural

¹ Edward R. Murrow, *Harvest of Shame*, directed by Fred W. Friendly, (CBS Report, November 24, 1960), videocassette.

corporations on the top. This food pyramid maintained a power structure that abused farmworkers and left few in the agri-corporations and a handful of government leaders, on top. The Midwest food pyramid at the last half of the twentieth century included the growers who hired farmworkers, state and national governments that developed policies that affected the model of the stream and the rights of migrants, the aid organizations and unions that sought to better farmworkers' lives, and migrant farmworkers themselves; all of which helped to reshape the stream as each group renegotiated their role in the field, the home, and society.

The Midwest migrant stream during the last half of the twentieth century was a unique stream during a unique time. In contrast to the East Coast or the Western stream, Midwest growers did not widely employ migrant workers until the 1960s. By the 1960s, Mexican and Mexican Americans traveling from their homes in Texas, Florida, or Mexico, came to dominate the fields of the Midwest, working in a variety of crops including tomatoes, apples, sugar beets, cucumbers, mushrooms, and much more. For rural Midwest communities largely devoid of Latino residents, the sight of Mexican and Mexican American families traveling up North to work in local fields created a major change to the status quo. While the residents of the upper East Coast had seen African American men working in nearby fields for years and communities in the West Coast regularly saw an influx of additional Mexican Americans during the harvest season, most of the Midwest had neither many Mexican American communities nor a long history of Mexican American migrants. The newly formed Midwest migrant stream was a unique departure from the formation and existence of the West and Eastern streams. While previous scholars like Ernesto Galarza examine the long history of Mexican and Mexican American agricultural workers in the West, and others like Cindy Hahamovitch explore the changing nature of the East coast stream, few scholars have analyzed the Midwest migrant

stream.² The Midwest's distinctive feature as a newer site for Mexican American and Mexican migrant families positions the Midwest stream as a site of important analysis.

The influx of Mexican and Mexican Americans working and living in poverty conditions in the Midwest came when social movements encouraged Midwest locals to act on issues of poverty and minority rights. Midwesterners in 1960 saw the *Harvest of Shame*, which examined the struggles, discrimination, and forces that shaped migrants' lives that were experienced in fields and farm towns or cities across the Midwest, despite the film's association with the Eastern coast. Inspired by the social movements of the period like the Chicano and Feminist Movements and the struggles of the UFW, the Midwestern public and farmworkers themselves were inspired to challenge relationships within the food pyramid, organizations, and family units. Catholic organizations, farmworkers, farmworker unions, the public, growers, and governments negotiated the roles and rights of women and migrants, though they interpreted the issues differently. These various ideas combined to a degree not seen before to create multiple reimaginations of life for farmworkers and society as a whole. Yet the era of activism came to a close as decreasing activism, the Farm Crisis, and the ascendancy of neoliberalism started to enthrall the Midwest and the nation as the 1980s progressed. Though this time of activism in general only lasted two decades, the reverberations of this moment of change reshaped the power dynamics of the stream and society. An investigation of this period offers a unique and important glimpse into the power structure and relationships of the Midwest migrant stream at a time of change that previous scholars of farmworkers and Midwest migrants have largely ignored.

² Ernesto Galarza, *Merchants of Labor: The Mexican Bracero Story: An Account of the Managed Migration of Mexican Farm Workers in California 1942-1960* (San Jose, California: Rosicrucian Press, 1964); Cindy Hahamovitch, *The Fruits of Their Labor: Atlantic Coast Farmworkers and the Making of Migrant Poverty, 1870-1945* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

By the time President Bill Clinton, Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari, and Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney signed NAFTA in 1993, the significant shift in international policies that affected immigration and agriculture brought on by NAFTA, reshaped the Midwest food pyramid. Despite the success of FLOC and the changes created by legislation and aid programs, the Farm Crisis of the 1980s and the apathy of the 1980s, refocused the public on issues other than farmworkers' plight. National and Midwest migrant patterns shifted during the 1980s and after, as growers avoided crops that required farm laborers. In addition, agri-corporations moved to Southern areas and ultimately drew a cheap Latino labor force to a region largely devoid of Latinos, international changes resulted in the immigration of Central American workers to the United States, and the United States government-supported policies ensured growers' employment of foreign workers through the H-2(A) programs. All these changes altered the national and Midwest stream after the 1980s. These shifts allow us to see the 1960s to the 1980s as a time of increased activism and interest. The 1960s to the 1990s resulted in changes, as the time period encouraged or forced the individuals and groups that made up the Midwest food pyramid to action, revealing the power each had and the role each played in shaping the Midwest migrant stream.

To understand the nature of the stream during this time, this dissertation will explore the various groups that influenced the stream: national and state governments, growers, Catholic aid organizations, farmworker unions, and farmworkers themselves. These groups not only influenced the stream, but also interacted with each other and altered the interpersonal dynamics within the stream and within their own groups. The social movements of the era encouraged women and Chicanos to demand change in the Catholic Church, in the home, in unions, and in local communities, sparking debates about minorities' roles in society and the

Church. The UFW inspired activism in Mexican Americans, Chicana nuns and priests, Anglo college students, and more. Yet all these advocates for farmworkers did not desire the same degree of transformation. Some sought mild reforms, while others sought a band-aid approach that privileged agriculture power over empowering farmworkers. Even in the Church groups that sought to assist, there was no unified agreement on what allies should advocate and how they could assist the migrants in the stream. The interplay of these different forces framed Mexican and Mexican American migrants' experience with attempts at reform in the Midwest, and in the Midwest food pyramid.

To understand the arrangement of the Midwest food pyramid, the first chapter examines the role of national and international policies that configured the Midwest migrant stream and the resulting issues that farmworkers faced as they lived transcultural lives in the stream. National and international relations and policies, such as the Bracero Program, influenced who migrated to the United States just as opportunities in the United States and the lack of opportunities in Mexico also encouraged Mexican nationals to find work *al Norte*. In the Midwest, the creation of a pliable, cheap, and transcultural labor force of Mexican and Mexican Americans became the basis of the migrant stream in the last half of the twentieth century. This chapter expands on the insights of Deborah Cohen's *Braceros: Migrant Citizens and Transnational Subjects in the Postwar United States and Mexico* analysis of transnational lives created by the Bracero Program and examines Mexican Americans' similar transcultural experiences as migrants from Latino communities in the South to rural Anglo-dominated communities of the North.³ Extending beyond the Bracero Program's effect on transcultural and family dynamics in Mexico, this chapter will note the international decisions since the

³ Deborah Cohen, *Braceros: Migrant Citizens and Transnational Subjects in the Postwar United States and Mexico* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

1940s that created the migrant stream and shaped the gender dimensions of transcultural migration in the Midwest.

National policies reflected the United States government's effort to placate grower and agri-corporation demands, making migrant farmworkers an exploited group at the bottom of the food pyramid, preventing farmworker's right to unionize, and developing an agricultural model that encouraged the growth of agribusinesses and the subjugation of small growers. Katharine Mapes in *Sweet Tyranny: Migrant Labor, Industrial Agriculture, and Imperial Politics* explores the connection between national government policies and growers, specifically the command of corporate sugar beet companies and their growers.⁴ Midwest growers of the last half of the twentieth century influenced government decisions, but not necessarily as a unified force. Instead, agribusinesses and growers did not exist on the same level of the food pyramid, leading to different ideas about national policy decisions, especially as the public pressured the government to better farmworkers' conditions and agri-corporations consolidated their control over the entire agricultural system. Though public concern forced national regulations and laws to better migrants' conditions in the 1960s and 1970s, regulations and laws regarding farmworkers offered little more than a show for publicity that maintained the food pyramid that relegated farmworkers to the bottom, kept agribusinesses at the top, with growers, pressured by the public, corporations, and the government, in the middle.

Chapter two explores the role of state governments in the reform era that was inaugurated in the 1960s. Midwest state governments were at the forefront of migrants' encounter with governments, caught between national policies and public demands for change. As a result of the limits and approach to agricultural policy at the national level after the New

⁴ Kathleen Mapes, *Sweet Tyranny: Migrant Labor, Industrial Agriculture, and Imperial Politics* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009).

Deal, state agencies framed Midwest migrants' access to public aid and education through agencies' policies and configurations operated to enforce the pyramid. Examining Illinois as a case study of a typical Midwest state, this chapter analyzes how Illinois state agencies' programs, organization, and discrimination, as demonstrated by the language of the people and texts used in Illinois, exemplified farmworker's struggles to survive in the Midwest stream. Mexican American migrants had to navigate policies, programs, and educational institutions designed primarily for settled, English-speaking residents. Even when state legislators altered laws or policies to better migrants' lives, state legislators failed to listen to migrants and resisted attempts to alter the food pyramid. This finding reinforces Dennis Noldin Valdes' *Al Norte: Agricultural Workers in the Great Lakes Region, 1917-1970* which reviews the half-hearted national and state governments' attempts to address concern for migrants.⁵ This overarching examination of farmworkers in the Midwest region focuses solely on laws and policies, but not the effect of these laws and policies on migrants, nor on the role of the public in bringing about these policies. For the many Mexican American migrants working and living in poverty in Midwest fields, state programs largely offered aid that rendered only meager assistance to migrants.

Chapter three examines the relationship of growers and farmworkers as they encountered attempts at reform in the Midwest landscape. The food pyramid placed migrants on the bottom, but also harmed the small and mid-sized growers who made up Midwest agriculture. Growers faced pressure to reduce costs and increase production to increase their meager profits, while at the same time governments developed farmworker regulations that increased labor costs, placing growers in a precarious situation. Though growers saw these

⁵ Dennis Noldin Valdes, *Al Norte: Agricultural Workers in the Great Lakes Region, 1917-1970* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991).

pressures, many refused to see farmworkers' as potential allies, and viewed their position on the bottom of the food pyramid as natural. Growers often decried the system, but defended their employment of migrants at meager wages. The corporatization of agriculture had been occurring throughout the United States, as Cary McWilliams' seminal *Factories in the Fields: The Story of Migratory Farm Labor in California* demonstrates of California agriculture in the early twentieth century.⁶ Yet the Midwest remained significantly less corporatized than California, and even less so in the public's eye. Given the idealized image of farmers in the Midwest, it was more difficult for farmworkers advocates to pressure growers to remedy migrants' conditions, or empower them. The idea of family farmers continued to animate the public imagination in the Midwest, and so when the 1980s Farm Crisis threatened small farmers, attention reverted to the family farm, and not the migrant stream.

Government regulations, unionization, and public pressure to better farmworkers' lives altered growers and migrants' interaction, ultimately influencing how the farm looked; yet many in the public were unaware of this dynamic. Mapes' *Sweet Tyranny* and Jim Norris' *North for the Harvest: Mexican Workers, Growers, and the Sugar Beet Industry* analyze the sometimes paternalistic relationship between sugar beet growers and Mexican American sugar beet workers.⁷ These works, though notable for investigating how growers and locals viewed Mexican American laborers, take place before the 1960s and focus on a specific crop where agribusinesses, rather than growers, mediated farmworker and grower relationships. For the rest of the Midwest, the post-1960 public decried the conditions of migrants, but failed to clearly see the role of Midwest family farms or corporate agribusiness in the food chain. The public

⁶ Cary McWilliams, *Factories in the Field: The Story of Migratory Farm Labor in California* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1969).

⁷ Mapes, *Sweet Tyranny*; Jim Norris, *North for the Harvest: Mexican Workers, Growers, and the Sugar Beet Industry* (St. Paul, Minnesota: Minnesota Historical Society, 2009).

failed to see that the poor conditions of farmworkers stemmed from farmers, agribusinesses, and food corporations' view of labor as an object and not a product of an individual. Instead, some of the public supported aid to farmworkers and the continuation of the family farm without understanding that many family farms had a role in the conditions of migrants in the stream. This interplay framed the way growers interacted with migrants, where migrants lived, what farmers grew, what changes the public supported, where migrant families went, and ultimately the Midwest landscape. As academics studied the role of growers and agribusinesses in the West, South, and to a smaller degree, the Midwest, few if any examine the role of farmworkers in the Farm Crisis of the 1980s and how this event impacted farm laborers on the heels of two decades of social activism. For Midwest growers in the 1960s to the 1990s, public perception of the Farm Crisis and migrants' struggles altered how growers and migrants interacted and thereby reshaped the Midwest landscape.

The public's view of migrants' struggles and their role in the food pyramid is further explored in chapter four. Chapter four specifically studies the role of the Catholic Church in creating aid programs and supporting change in the stream. The Catholic Church had a strong tie to the predominately Catholic Mexican American migrant farmworkers in the Midwest. Influenced by changing Catholic Doctrine, Vatican II, as well as the Chicano, Feminist, and UFW Movements, Hispanic and Anglo Catholic individuals and groups created numerous organizations and programs to assist migrants. The types of programs created by Catholic groups exemplified the different groups' perceptions of the food pyramid and how social movements inspired these organizations to create change. Numerous academic works investigate the importance of Catholicism and aid in respect to the United Farm Workers, in particular, Marco G. Prouty's *César Chávez, The Catholic Bishops, and the Farmworkers'*

Struggle for Social Justice.⁸ In contrast to the UFW in California, the Midwest did not have such a well-known union movement, but Midwesterners were still influenced by the UFW. Just as Prouty explains how the UFW inspired Catholics to support the UFW union, the UFW also inspired Catholics and Midwesterners to support the Midwest farmworker union Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) and to better all farmworkers' lives in the Midwest. This chapter will extend Dustin McLochlin's *American Catholicism and Farm Labor Activism: The Farm Labor Aid Committee of Indiana As a Case Study* beyond his focus on one state and the influence of the UFW movement on one aid organization to include the impact of the Chicano and Feminist Movement and the existence of various Catholic organizations that developed programs to change the status quo in the Midwest.⁹

In addition, this chapter draws on the general Midwest environment in which these Catholic groups thrived, including the Chicano and student populations that made up the base of support for programs that demanded change in society. Faced with different ideas about migrant and women's rights, Chicano identity, and labor unions, Catholic organizations, the Midwest public, and migrants negotiated the type of programs created, with some promoting changing gender and power relationships within the Church, society, and the fields, and others focusing solely on minimal aid such as food and clothing for migrants. Similar to Cindy Hahamovitch's *Fruits of Their Labor: Atlantic Coast Farmworkers and the Making of Migrant Poverty, 1870-1945*, which analyzes the state and several progressive groups in the Southern stream during the early 1900s, aid organizations played a significant role in shaping the migrant

⁸ Marco G. Prouty, *César Chávez, The Catholic Bishops, and the Farmworkers' Struggle for Social Justice* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2006).

⁹ Dustin McLochlin, "American Catholicism and Farm Labor Activism: The Farm Labor Aid Committee of Indiana as a Case Study," (Ph.D. dissertation, Bowling Green State University, 2008).

experience.¹⁰ Groups' interpretations of migrants' issues and their own prejudices and opinions shaped the types of programs created. In the Midwest this meant organizations had different opinions regarding the acceptance of Mexican American culture, farmworker rights, and changing the power structure of the Midwest food pyramid. The interplay of gender, religion, and social rights interacted to determine the types of programs Catholic groups created, ultimately influencing farmworkers' survival strategies in the migrant stream as they interacted with different Catholic charities and support organizations.

Chapter five further examines the role of farmworkers, growers, and the public in the food pyramid under the lens of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC). Inspired by the UFW, the Midwest union FLOC sought to alter the migrant stream by forcing corporations to acknowledge their role in the food pyramid through a three party deal with farmworkers and growers. While numerous works study the well known UFW in California, only a few works study FLOC, including W. K. Barger and Ernesto M. Reza's *The Farm Labor Movement in the Midwest: Social Change and Adaptation Among Migrant Farmworkers*, which examines the creation of FLOC and their method of organizing a successful union.¹¹ In understanding the structure of the food pyramid, FLOC empowered migrant farmworkers to better their own lives and their families in the stream. FLOC employed the Midwest stream's family configuration as well as a popular tactic of the UFW, a boycott. Though Barger and Reza's work analyzes FLOC in terms of a social movement and how leaders developed the union, this analysis does not consider the influence of UFW and the overall effect FLOC had on gender relationships because of their family-based organizational structure. FLOC embraced the family

¹⁰ Hahamovitch, *The Fruits of Their Labor*.

¹¹ W.K. Barger and Ernesto M. Reza, *The Farm Labor Movement in the Midwest: Social Change and Adaptation Among Migrant Farmworkers* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1994).

configuration of the Midwest stream just as it embraced the boycott, taking advantage of a massive union base and an era of activism to gain public support to change the stream. FLOC's revolutionary choice to seek a three party deal demonstrated an in-depth understanding of the Midwest food pyramid, while embracing a boycott exemplified their understanding of the public's power in the food pyramid. In addition, FLOC's use of the Midwest stream's family composition empowered men and women in the stream to change the power dynamics of Mexican American families and the Midwest stream. Social movements of the period and FLOC leaders' understanding of the food pyramid shaped FLOC's tactics, which in turn influenced farmworker relationships in their families, in society, and in the field.

The last chapter, six, explores the roles of the Midwest, families, and gender in shaping migrants' experiences in the Midwest. Midwest migrant farmworkers lived between two worlds, attempting to create a home either temporarily or, in the case of farmworkers who out-migrated, permanently in the Midwest. The Midwest was an area with a mixture of urban and rural and Anglo and Mexican American communities. Traveling between the South and the North, migrant communities brought their culture with them, including their traditional familial relationships. Inspired by the social movements of the time, migrants' interactions with certain individuals and groups, and the basic necessities of survival in the Midwest stream, forced migrants to adapt familial roles to survive in the stream. Gender and family roles had to adapt to suit migrants' changing lives in the stream as they moved from one location to another. This chapter expands on Marc Simon Rodriguez' dissertation, and later book, on how militant Chicano activism and ideas moved from Texas to Wisconsin through the migrant stream.¹² *The Tejano Diaspora: Mexican Americanism of Ethnic Politics in Texas and Wisconsin* explores

¹² Marc Simon Rodriguez, *The Tejano Diaspora: Mexican Americanism of Ethnic Politics in Texas and Wisconsin* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

how migrant communities and their locations were critical to the understanding of migrants' actions. Mexican American farmworkers established migrating communities that maintained their own cultural roots and traditions. The social ideas of the time, as well as farmworkers' experiences in their homes in the South and their temporary homes in the North, influenced how migrant families and communities adapted to their circumstances. While Rodriguez studies this interaction in terms of the settled-out migrants' connection to relatives in Texas, this chapter will expand on the experience of the migrants still in the stream in addition to those who left the stream. Family dynamics, the communities in which farmworkers worked and lived, and the maintenance of Mexican American culture shaped migrants' survival strategies and experience in the Midwest, whether temporarily as migrants or permanently as settled-out workers.

The Midwest migrant stream in the last half of the twentieth century defined a significant moment in time. The increase in concern and awareness about the struggles of Mexican and Mexican American farmworkers brought political, government, and religious attention. The social activism of the era encouraged farmworkers and the public to seek reform and for some, radical change in the structure and conditions of the Midwest stream. Yet this concern was not universal, as groups had different interpretations about farmworkers' struggles, unions' roles in the stream, women's rights, Chicano identity, and altering power relationships in the food chain. Before national changes including, but not limited to, NAFTA altered the migrant stream, the farmworkers in the Midwest occupied a significant focus for discussion and debate. In examining the roles of the various groups that made up and influenced the migrant stream within the context of this era of change, this work will expand upon our understanding of a unique space and time.

CHAPTER 1

“WHEN WE ARRIVE...”¹³: GOVERNMENT POLICIES, MIGRANT FAMILIES AND BELONGING IN THE MIDWEST MIGRANT STREAM

“The truth is, that the farm labor system is based on underemployment, unemployment, and poverty at home and abroad. Even more shocking, public policy is directed toward perpetuation of the system.”¹⁴

-...*And the Earth Did Not Devour Him*

“No, this isn’t my house I say and shake my head as if shaking could undo the year I’ve lived here. I don’t belong-I don’t’ ever want to come from here. You have a home, Alicia, and one day you’ll go there, to a town you remember, but me I never had a house, not even a photograph....”¹⁵

-Robert Jerome Glaser

Sitting in the back of a crowded truck as it raced down the highway, Jesús Zamarrón Rocha had high hopes of making decent money, as did the other Bracero workers crouched around him. For years Jesús worked around the country: Arizona, Michigan, Texas, Colorado, and California, in a multitude of crops including corn, lettuce, strawberries, and cotton. Jesús was one of millions of Mexicans that came to work in United States fields under the Bracero Program, a bi-national agreement whereby United States growers contracted Mexican nationals to work in agricultural fields. Jesús’ first trip on that crowded truck was in 1957, twelve years

¹³ Tomás Rivera, *...And the Earth Did Not Devour Him: And Related Readings*, trans. Evangelina Vigil-Piñón, (Evanston, Illinois: McDougal Littell, 1997), 81-87.

¹⁴ Robert Jerome Glaser, “American Farm Bureau’s Position on Six Federal Bills Affecting Migrant Farm Labor,” (M.S., Illinois State University, 1963). Quote made by the Secretary of Labor Arthur Goldberg.

¹⁵ Sandra Cisneros, *The House on Mango Street* (New York: Vintage Contemporaries, 1984), 106-107.

after the end of World War II, despite the fact that the United States and Mexican governments started the Bracero Program to meet U.S. agricultural labor needs during the war. Agricultural interest groups pressured the United States Congress to continue the Bracero Program that allowed Jesús to work as a Bracero. When public pressure and the decreasing need for Braceros resulted in the end of the Bracero Program in 1964, Jesús continued to work in the United States, now illegally crossing the border. The public pressured the United States government to deal with undocumented immigrants and strikebreakers, while agricultural interest groups pressured the government to not interfere significantly with growers' demands for cheap undocumented workers. Shortly before Jesús retired from working in the fields in the 1990s, Jesús, like many undocumented Mexican farmworkers in the United States, had an option to apply to be a United States citizen under the Special Agricultural Worker (SAW) section of the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986. Jesús would continue to live in the United States, finally bringing his family in Mexico across the border. Together as a family, Jesús, his wife, and children adjusted from a life of separation as they all tried to find their place in a new home.¹⁶

The story of Jesús Zamarrón Rocha is not one of a single man, but one of a *family* navigating international and national policies to find work and to maintain family and cultural ties through transculturalism and migrant communities as they struggled to find their place in a constantly changing world. Jesús' story exemplifies the experience of Midwest migrant farmworkers who lived between two worlds as they traveled from their homes in Mexico, Texas, or Florida to their temporary homes in the Midwest fields. In constantly migrating, farmworkers struggled to come to terms with separation from family and/or being outsiders

¹⁶ Jesús Zamarrón Rocha, interview by Violeta Domínguez, November 3, 2003, Item #108, *Bracero History Archive*, accessed May 28, 2014, <http://braceroarchive.org/items/show/108>. This is a narrative based on Jesús Zamarrón Rocha's story within the context of historical events.

because of their poverty or their Mexican culture in predominately Anglo Midwest rural towns. This isolation made migrants feel like Esperanza in *House on Mango Street*, detached from the places where they lived.¹⁷ In the early nineteenth century, Mexican and Mexican American communities developed in large urban areas such as Chicago, Illinois and St. Paul, Minnesota, or in sporadic locales like Davenport, Iowa where railroad work brought a small but noticeable influx of Mexican and Mexican Americans.¹⁸ Yet most small rural areas where farmworkers worked in the mid and late twentieth century lacked the urban or railroad draw that brought early influxes of Mexicans, making migrant workers a culturally isolated group in their temporary Midwest homes. Sometimes these temporary homes became permanent as migrants settled-out of the stream, yet the continued migration of other farmworkers and the existence of a family back in Texas, Florida, or Mexico maintained ex-migrants' ties to their former homes.¹⁹ Unlike the Eastern and Western migrant streams, Midwest migrant farmworkers during the last half of the twentieth century largely faced these issues as family units, with men, women, and children migrating together.²⁰ Like Tomás Rivera's work *...And the Earth Did Not*

¹⁷ Cisneros, *The House on Mango Street*.

¹⁸ Mexican American Community in St. Paul Collection, Minnesota State Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota; Mary Terronez Records, University Iowa Women's Archives, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa; Nicholas De Genova, *Working the Boundaries: Race, Space, and "Illegality" in Mexican Chicago* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005); Nicholas De Genova and Ana Y. Ramos-Zayas, *Latino Crossings: Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and the Politics of Race and Citizenship* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

¹⁹ Marc Simon Rodriguez, *The Tejano Diaspora: Mexican Americanism & Ethnic Politics in Texas and Wisconsin* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011); Sylvia Garcia, interview by Abner Arauza, December 22, 2010, transcript, Lideres Latinos Oral History Project, Minnesota Immigrant Oral Histories, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota, accessed April 17, 2014, <http://collections.mnhs.org/cms/display.php?irn=10872845>.

²⁰ Ronald L. Mize and Alicia C. S. Swords, *Consuming Mexican Labor: From the Bracero Program to NAFTA* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 103, 152, 162-163; Cindy Hahamovitch, *The Fruits of Their Labor: Atlantic Coast Farmworkers and the Making of Migrant Poverty, 1870-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 30, 34, 141; Matt Garcia, *A World of Its Own: Race, Labor, and Citrus in the Making of Greater Los Angeles, 1900-1970* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 36-37; Rick Mines, Jimmy Torres, and Susan Gabbard, *Findings from the National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS) 1989: A Demographic and Employment Profile of Perishable Crop Farm Workers*, prepared by Department of Labor, Office of Program Economics (Washington, DC, 1991); Vicki L. Ruiz, *Cannery Women, Cannery Lives: Mexican Women, Unionization, and the California Food Processing Industry, 1930-1950*. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987).

Devour Him, migrant workers constantly moved, “always arriving” at some new location.²¹

Children felt like outsiders at school, women struggled to get assistance in offices where no one spoke Spanish, and men tried to understand a foreign medical system.²² Struggling to survive and maintain their cultural and familial ties to home in Mexico or the southern United States, migrant farmworkers navigated the changing political and social landscape of the Midwest migrant stream.

Farmworkers struggled to live between two worlds as the United States and Mexican governments’ policies and the cultural changes in society that shaped the structure of the migrant stream affected the lives of migrants. The story of Jesús Zamarrón Rocha and his family exemplified how United States and Mexican societies and governments shaped the migrant experience and family relations, as laws governed Jesús’ ability to cross national borders and as society demanded an end to the exploitive Bracero Program. In the Midwest, governments and societal changes shaped the demographics of the Midwest stream at the end of the twentieth century from a community of migrant families to one where growers avoided families because they preferred male laborers.²³ National and international rules shaped agricultural workers’ lives since before World War I, but the significant changes in the last half of the twentieth century, as Mexican nationals flooded the agricultural fields, social concern for

²¹ Rivera, ...*And the Earth Did Not Devour Him*.

²² Daniel Rothenberg, *With These Hands: The Hidden World of Migrant Farmworkers* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1998), 272-276; Farm Labor Organizing Committee, Organizing Report, January-October 1976, 4:19, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan; José Martínez, interview by Mark DePue, July 31, 2008, transcript, 5, Agriculture in the Modern Era, Agriculture in Illinois, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library & Museum, accessed August 2014, <http://www.illinois.gov/alplm/library/collections/oralhistory/agriculture/Pages/default.aspx>.

²³ Minnesota Department of Health, *Migrant Health Services* (March-April 1969), 10:2, Red River Sugar Beet Grower Records, Northwest Minnesota Historical Center, Livingston Lord Library, Moorhead University, Moorhead, Minnesota; Juan Romero, “Ministry to Farmworkers: Experience in Advocacy,” 8:25, PADRES Collection, University of Notre Dame Archives, Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana.

migrant farmworkers increased, and farmworkers demanded greater rights, brought major changes to the lives of migrant farmworker families.

Antecedentes/Background

The migrants that came to the Midwest in the last half of the twentieth century were characteristically different from farmworkers in other parts of the nation. National and international events and policies developed to create a different labor market in the Midwest. From the mid to late 1800s through the early 1900s, Midwest vegetable and fruit growers relied on locals and transients for harvest.²⁴ People from nearby areas and male hobos, many white and European immigrants, trekked within local circuits or across the country to harvest crops for a few days in the year.²⁵ As farming became more scientific, mechanical, and output driven, fewer farmers could economically maintain their small farms, resulting in fewer growers with larger fields.²⁶ With the advent of scientific and mechanical changes in farming, farmers no longer required constant year-round help, replacing local and hobo labor with large numbers of Mexican and Mexican American migrant families primarily during the harvest.²⁷

Growers came to rely on various racial minorities for labor, employing groups easily exploitable based on national and international events and local agricultural developments. California's massive "factories in the fields" developed in the late 1800s, using a changing supply of immigrant labor that migrated across the Pacific Ocean in addition to the Mexican

²⁴ Jane Adams, *The Transformation of Rural Life: Southern Illinois, 1890-1990* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 109.

²⁵ Frank Tobias Higbie, *Indispensable Outcasts: Hobo Workers and Community in the American Midwest, 1880-1930* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 105.

²⁶ Shane Hamilton, *Trucking Country: The Road to America's Wal-Mart Economy* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2008), 170.

²⁷ Sister Mary Eloise Thomas, "A Study of the Causes and Consequences of The Economic Status of Migratory Farm Workers in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin, 1940-1958" (Ph.D. dissertation, Notre Dame, 1960).

and Mexican Americans living and immigrating to the West.²⁸ By the 1920s, Mexican and Mexican Americans came to dominate California's agricultural labor.²⁹ These laborers traveled short distances within California or from their homes in Texas to work in California and the Western migrant stream.³⁰ The dominance of Mexican and Mexican American males in California agriculture continued the practice of employing male workers while wives and mothers of farmworkers stayed home or worked in local canning industries.³¹ In contrast, the migrant stream along the East coast started with immigrant families, evolving into a primarily male work force. Italian women and children labored in the fruit and vegetable fields of the East Coast in the late 1800s and early 1900s.³² By the mid-1900s, African American males traveling without their families replaced Italian families as the primary labor force of the East Coast migrant stream.³³ Though the Midwest migrant stream initially relied on transient male laborers in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, growers came to rely on Mexican families by the mid-twentieth century. Unlike the West and East migrant streams, Midwest growers, with their increasingly large fruit and vegetable fields, saw Mexican and Mexican American families from Mexico, Texas, and even Florida as a viable labor supply. Though

²⁸ Mark Reisler, *By the Sweat of Their Brow: Mexican Immigrant Labor in the United States, 1900-1940* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1976); Cletus E. Daniel, *Bitter Harvest: A History of California Farmworkers, 1870-1941* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), 21-66; Carey McWilliams, *Factories in the Field: The Story of Migratory Farm Labor in California* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1969), 49.

²⁹ Reisler, *By the Sweat of Their Brow*; Daniel, *Bitter Harvest*, 67.

³⁰ Garcia, *A World of Its Own*, 36-37; Mines, Torres, and Gabbard, *Findings from the National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS) 1989*.

³¹ Ruiz, *Cannery Women, Cannery Lives*; Roger Daniels, *Guarding the Golden Door: American Immigration Policy and Immigrants Since 1882* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2004). United States restrictions on Japanese and Chinese immigration meant that immigrants, and therefore workers in the fields, were male.

³² Hahamovitch, *The Fruits of Their Labor*.

³³ *Ibid.*

single men might strike or walk, Mexican and Mexican American families provided Midwest growers a large labor force unwilling to leave a job that could provide for their family.³⁴

The earliest massive employment of Mexican and Mexican Americans in Midwest fields characterized the developing transcultural identity of migrant farmworkers and the role of national and international politics. Seeking a cheap labor force for the labor-intensive sugar beet fields, Michigan and Minnesota sugar beet refineries had employed Mexican nationals and Mexican Americans from Texas and Florida to work in growers' fields since the 1920s.³⁵ Mexicans became a viable labor force after the Mexican Revolution destabilized the country, sending large numbers of Mexicans into United States fields looking for work.³⁶ The United States government encouraged even more immigration during World War I to alleviate the labor shortage created by agricultural workers entering the remunerative war industry.³⁷ In addition, mechanization decreased farm employment opportunities in Texas, also encouraging large numbers of Mexicans and Mexican Americans to seek work elsewhere to survive.³⁸ All these factors combined to make Mexican and Mexican Americans from Texas and Mexico the main labor source for sugar beet growers in the Midwest, beginning what would become the Midwest migrant stream. Expanding vegetable and fruit fields in the Midwest eventually

³⁴ Mize and Swords, *Consuming Mexican Labor*, 103; Carol Zabin, "U.S.-Mexico Economic Integration: Labor Relations and the Organization of Work in California and Baja California Agriculture," *Economic Geography* 73, no. 3 (July 1997): 349-350.

³⁵ Dennis Nodin Valdes, *Al Norte: Agricultural Workers in the Great Lakes Region, 1917-1970* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991), 190-192; Kathleen Mapes, *Sweet Tyranny: Migrant Labor, Industrial Agriculture, and Imperial Politics* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009); Jim Norris, *North for the Harvest: Mexican Workers, Growers, and the Sugar Beet Industry* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2009).

³⁶ Michael J. Gonzalez, *The Mexican Revolution, 1910-1940* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002); Deborah Cohen, *Braceros: Migrant Citizens and Transnational Subjects in the Postwar United States and Mexico*, (Chapel Hill: North Carolina Press, 2011).

³⁷ Philip L. Martin, *Importing Poverty?: Immigration and the Changing Face of Rural America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 23; Reisler, *By the Sweat of Their Brow*, 24-42.

³⁸ Frank Bardacke, *Trampling Out the Vintage: Cesar Chavez and the Two Souls of the United Farm Workers* (New York: Verso, 2011), 105; Valdes, *Al Norte*, 37, 45-46.

opened more opportunities for Mexican and Mexican American migrant farmworker families traveling up North. By the time World War II came to an end, the Midwest migrant stream that would continue for the next half a century, was developing.

For the farmworkers who migrated up the Midwest stream, constant migration created a sense of isolation from Midwestern locals as they developed a transcultural migrant community. Deborah Boehm describes transcultural migrants as seeing "...themselves as belonging to, divided between, and outside of two nation-states: here and there," they "...use decidedly spatial terms to depict movement and their 'place' in the world-territorial locales as well as symbolic spaces of membership and exclusion."³⁹ For many immigrants, transculturalism occurred when men left their families to work in another country, integrating themselves into the new country and culture, while still remaining tied to their family and country. This connection could aptly characterize the Mexican men, women, and children who traveled to the United States to work in the Midwest fields, but transculturalism can also describe migration within the United States. For Texas and Florida Mexican and Mexican Americans traveling up the Midwest stream, migration created cultural connections. Migrant farmworkers generally grew up with homes in largely Mexican and Mexican American areas but migrated to small rural Midwest areas usually devoid of Mexican American culture. Though living and even settling out in the Midwest, many still maintained ties through kinship and the remaining migrant community to their former homes in Mexico, Texas, or Florida.

Though the developing communities of Mexican Americans in the Midwest led to what Marc Simon Rodriguez describes as a "Tejano diaspora," or the dispersion of Texas Mexican American population and culture with a shared identity around the nation, this "Tejano

³⁹ Deborah A. Boehm, *Intimate Migrations: Gender, Family, and Illegality among Transnational Mexicans* (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 5-6.

diaspora” cannot elucidate the experiences of all Midwest migrant stream farmworkers.⁴⁰ While Texas culture migrated with farmworkers as they traveled the Midwest, Mexican Americans from Florida and Mexican nationals and indigenous Mexicans in the Midwest migrant stream created a complex web of various, but similar, cultural identities from the Midwest migrant stream.⁴¹ Though not sharing a singular identity or culture, all migrant farmworkers struggled to find a place or sense of belonging while using their home cultures and family connections in Florida, Texas, and Mexico to maintain important ties to their base. Migrants lived between multiple worlds, living between their home base with friends, their main school, extended family, and a language and culture they understood and belonged to, and the current rural community in which they worked. Unlike most traditional transcultural immigrants, migrants did not live in two permanent worlds, but moved constantly, rarely creating strong ties with the rural Midwest unless their family out-migrated. The Midwest migrant stream and the culture and experience of migrant farmworkers must be seen as a transcultural experience with one fixed point and the others constantly moving. In understanding the changes in the Midwest migrant stream through the policies of United States and Mexican government and cultural changes of the last half of the twentieth century, it is also important to understand the effects of these changes on migrants’ sense of belonging, their transcultural identity, as policies and culture shifted their rights and ability to mitigate and live between two worlds.

From the *Grapes of Wrath* to *Harvest of Shame*

⁴⁰ Rodriguez, *The Tejano Diaspora*.

⁴¹ David G Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of Ethnicity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Batriz Castillo, interview by Terry Shoptaugh, July 21, 1992, transcript, 19, Red River Valley Sugar Beet Growers Association, Northwest Minnesota Historical Center, Livingston Lord Library, Moorhead University, Moorhead, Minnesota.

Since the First World War, the United States government increasingly influenced the creation of an agricultural system based on public pressure and agricultural interests that abused Mexican and Mexican Americans and shaped the migrant communities of the Midwest. The government eased border regulations to allow Mexicans to work in the fields during the First World War, but the federal government also helped to construct an agricultural labor structure in the Midwest. During the Great Depression and the New Deal, the United States government not only created the Agricultural Adjustment Act which regulated the amount of crops grown to increase their cost in the market, but also aided the Anglo “Okies” while deporting large numbers of Mexican and Mexican Americans throughout the nation based on the argument that they took jobs from United States citizens.⁴² Public pressure prompted the United States and Mexican government to encourage or force Mexicans to repatriate to Mexico.⁴³ Without the large numbers of minority farmworkers, growers in California employed “Okies,” farmers that lost their land because of the Depression. The struggles of the Okies became the subject of public concern as the photographs of Dorothea Lange and the novel *The Grapes of Wrath* narrated the poverty of the Okies, but hidden in this narrative the United States government also racially discriminated against some migrants.⁴⁴ Camps established to house farmworkers segregated and discriminated against housing non-Anglos.⁴⁵ In addition, pressure from agricultural interest groups resulted in the exclusion of farmworkers from the National Labor Relations Act that gave almost every other worker in the nation the right to

⁴² Linda C. Majka and Theo J. Majka, *Farm Workers, Agribusiness, and the State* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982), 108; Hahamovitch, *The Fruits of Their Labor*, 147, 151.

⁴³ Mapes, *Sweet Tyranny*, 141-142, 221; Valdes, *Al Norte*, 31.

⁴⁴ Majka and Majka, *Farm Workers, Agribusiness, and the State*, 108; Bardacke, *Trampling Out the Vintage*, 48; Valdes, *Al Norte*, 188.

⁴⁵ Majka and Majka, *Farm Workers, Agribusiness, and the State*, 112; Devra Weber, *Dark Sweat, White Gold: California Farm Workers, Cotton, and the New Deal* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 135.

unionize.⁴⁶ These decisions started shaping the triangular pyramid of power, whereby the few corporate and government leaders had extensive power based solely on the labor of the many migrant farmworkers in the nation. The different ways the United States government treated Mexican farmworkers versus others set the precedent for how the United States government viewed and reacted to the Mexican American farmworkers, negotiating with public and agricultural pressure groups, usually to the detriment of farm laborers.

The repatriation of Mexicans during the Depression and their subsequent employment in World War II encapsulated the United States government's contrasting views of farmworkers and the influence of agricultural interests in shaping the Midwest stream. During the Depression, the United States government expanded the right to unionize to all workers except for agricultural workers.⁴⁷ During World War II, the United States and Mexican government created the Mexican Farm Labor Program, popularly known as the Bracero Program, which was named for the rough Spanish term for "one who works with their arms," or hand laborers.⁴⁸ The Bracero Program allowed farmers to contract Mexican nationals to work in United States fields.⁴⁹ Under the terms of the program, a grower could not employ Braceros unless a labor shortage existed and their employment did not decrease U.S. citizens' wages.⁵⁰ Neither happened. Instead, the Bracero Program offered cheap labor for United States growers. While the Mexican government tried to establish certain rights for Braceros, their inability to

⁴⁶ Hahamovitch, *The Fruits of Their Labor*, 138. President Roosevelt exempted agricultural labor from the NLRA, though the wording of who performed "agriculture labor" in contrast to cannery work, which was included under NLRA, remained unclear for a while longer. Other workers exempted from the NLRA included domestic laborers.

⁴⁷ Hahamovitch, *The Fruits of Their Labor*, 138.

⁴⁸ Robert Joe Stout, *Why Immigrants Come to America: Braceros, Indocumentados, and the Migra* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2008), 2.

⁴⁹ Mize and Swords, *Consuming Mexican Labor*, xxii.

⁵⁰ Ernesto Galarza, *Merchants of Labor: The Mexican Bracero Story, an Account of the Managed Migration of Mexican Farm Workers in California, 1942-1960* (Charlotte: McNally & Loftin, Publishers, 1964), 16.

ensure basic conditions or rights exemplified the United States government's acceptance of deplorable working and living conditions for international and national migrant farmworkers. Preferred by the United States public that did not want a permanent Mexican labor force and by the Mexican government who wanted technologically adept farmers, the importation of male Braceros created a long-term imprint on the developing migrant farmworkers who travelled to the Midwest.⁵¹ Immigration to the United States for agricultural work became a male journey initially to the Western migrant stream. Families continued to be the backbone of the Midwest migrant stream, yet the male-dominated Bracero Program started a chain migration that, while initially not influencing the Midwest, compounded with future changes in the Midwest to create a male labor force.

The ultimate effect of repatriation during the Depression and the government's choice to exclude farmworkers from the right to unionize was to frustrate a generation of migrant farmworker children raised in between the Midwest and their homes in Texas, Florida, and Mexico. For the migrants raised in the Midwest stream during and after World War II, their lack of rights and discrimination were graphically apparent as they traveled to the Midwest. Jose Martinez felt frustrated growing up in Texas and the Michigan fields. In Texas, Jose had friends in his predominate Mexican neighborhood and school.⁵² He belonged. In Michigan, he was always aware of his different status, aware that he and his family struggled in a nearby field and lived in horrible housing while growers' children went to the same school with every opportunity and few concerns.⁵³ Other migrants described similar feelings as Martinez, feeling detached from the Midwest where they worked. The future farmworker union leader, Baldemar

⁵¹ Cohen, *Braceros*; Ana Elizabeth Rosas, "Breaking the Silence: Mexican Children and Women's Confrontation of Bracero Family Separation, 1942-1964," *Gender & History* 23:2 (August 2011).

⁵² Rothenberg, *With These Hands*, 272-276.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

Velasquez, described similar feelings. Working as a migrant in Ohio, he felt a disjunction between his life in the Midwest community and ideals of “equality” and “justice for all” taught in Ohio schools.⁵⁴ Though some migrant children felt making friends in a school where they only briefly attended was useless, many also described prejudice as well as cultural and class differences as reasons for why they felt like outsiders in Midwest towns.

For many migrant farmworker children raised on the roads, the Midwest fields were a place of contradictions. In their homes in Florida, Texas, or Mexico, they had communities that spoke their language, shared their culture, and understood their struggles to survive. In the Midwest, they felt the sting of discrimination, injustice, and the feeling of being different in schools and cities where local children viewed them as unwanted temporary visitors. Even when local Midwest communities offered assistance or aid to migrant children in the form of broken toys for Christmas, migrant children understood it was because they were different.⁵⁵ In other streams, women and children felt the sting of separation from husbands and fathers, where men traveled to support their families; but, in the Midwest stream, children experienced injustice and discrimination in their travels up North. Living in two worlds, but never permanently being part of one, migrant children in the mid-twentieth century Midwest stream understood they deserved more, and understood that they had to fight for it.

“Arms” to Aid

The Bracero Program came to a close in the 1960s during a time of social movements and activism, when documentaries, books, and televisions aired the struggles of migrant farmworkers in the nation. When it aired in 1960, *Harvest of Shame* made Midwesterners

⁵⁴ Ibid, 268.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 291.

aware of the abuse and horrible living and working conditions of farmworkers.⁵⁶ Viewers came to understand the reality, not only of the African American workers on the East coast portrayed in *Harvest of Shame*, but of migrant farmworkers everywhere as farmworkers protested and unionized in the 1960s and 1970s as a result of this media attention. The United Farm Workers (UFW) in California also gained more significant support around the nation from college students, religious groups, and politicians.⁵⁷ Only a few years before the UFW, Michael Harrington's book *The Other America* offered a glimpse of poverty in the United States, including migrant farmworkers, just as minorities demanded rights.⁵⁸ Faced with these realities, the Midwest public demanded the national government assist migrant farmworkers; but while the United States government negotiated the demands of agricultural interest groups and the public, migrant farmworkers campaigned for rights through their migrating and transcultural communities.

Mounting pressure forced the United States government to address migrant farmworker conditions, but government programs brokered between public, farmworker, and grower interests, illustrating how the national government understood the "migrant problem." During the 1930s, the United States government ignored the harsh reality that under the expanding new agricultural system farmworkers could not eventually own their own farm as historically occurred.⁵⁹ By the 1960s, ignoring the issue became nearly impossible as the public watched *Harvest of Shame*, read *The Other America*, and watched footage of the UFW boycott on the news. The public became aware, at least partially, of the agricultural power structure that was

⁵⁶ Norris, *North for the Harvest*, 148.

⁵⁷ Bardacke, *Trampling Out the Vintage*.

⁵⁸ Michael Harrington, *The Other America: Poverty in the United States* (New York: Macmillan, 1969).

⁵⁹ Philip L. Martin and David A. Martin, *The Endless Quest: Helping America's Farm Workers* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 14.

built on the backs of farmworkers. Forced to address reality, some in Congress sought to create better child labor laws, control crew leaders, and possibly give farmworkers the right to organize.⁶⁰ However, powerful agricultural interest groups convinced government officials and Congress that relief programs to ameliorate migrants' problems was the "best" solution.⁶¹ Instead of major changes, The United States government created four main aid programs for migrant farmworkers: Migrant Education, Migrant Health, the Job Training Partnership Act, and Migrant Head Start.⁶² Initially called the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) program, the Job Training and Partnership Act (JTPA) replaced the CETA in 1982, though performing essentially the same function under a different structure.⁶³ While the JTPA provided education to help migrant workers leave the stream through assistance in finding employment, Head Start offered early childcare for migrant children before they entered school, Migrant Education tried to close the gap in migrant children's uneven education, and Migrant Health provided medical services.⁶⁴ To complicate matters, each program had its own definition of a migrant farmworker, its own qualifications for receiving aid, its own way of determining the number of farmworkers and therefore the need for aid in a given area, and different financial means.⁶⁵ Since the government's four specific migrant programs were separate entities, and local organizations that received funding to enact these efforts rarely communicated, migrants received sporadic assistance. Many towns and cities did not even have

⁶⁰ Martin and Martin, *The Endless Quest*, 22.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid, 29.

⁶³ Ibid, 57.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 53, 57.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 31-50.

all four major aid programs, making the national government's reaction to the "farmworker problem" uneven and limited.⁶⁶

The federal government's temporary solutions to the problems of the migrant stream resulted in farmworkers and their allies seeking different, more empowering routes to better their lives while the public debated the "farmworker problem." The UFW established boycott offices around the nation, eventually gaining the support of various religious organizations and denominations in the United States.⁶⁷ Like the rest of the nation, Midwestern churches and the public developed support networks for the UFW and statewide approaches to the "migrant problem," to the anger of some Midwest locals.⁶⁸ Debates on various private and government efforts and organizations characterized the viewpoints about the role of religion, unions, and national government in farmworkers' lives. Growers wrote angry letters to churches that supported farmworker boycotts, local newspapers contained letters demanding the support of farmworker rights, and growers and farmworkers alike marched on streets with their supporters as each side demanded to be heard.⁶⁹ Many in the public were concerned about the horrific conditions of farmworkers though some would debate to what degree the United States government should help farm laborers and how far farmworkers themselves should go in bettering their own lives.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 30-50, 93.

⁶⁷ UFW, Michigan Boycott Collection, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

⁶⁸ Ibid; DeKalb County Migrant Ministry Collection, Regional History Center, Founders Memorial Library, DeKalb, Illinois; Michigan Farmworker Ministry Collection, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

⁶⁹ Eillen Ogintz, "Hardships Pulling Farm Belt Together," *Chicago Tribune*, March 11, 1985; Eric Harrison, "Farm Workers' Long Trek to Camden Reflects the Passion of a 5-Year Strike," 5:14, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan; Letter to Pat Whelan from Frank I. Meinen, September 19, 1973, 1:15, UFW Wisconsin-Milwaukee Boycott Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan; Patricia Ann Pogre, Letters, migrant workers, 2:54, Wisconsin State Employment Service: Farm Placement, Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin.

Angered by their difficult life growing up in the Midwest stream, Midwest migrant children began to demand Midwest communities and growers provide better living and working conditions, as well as assistance, as the 1960s and 1970s progressed. In Ohio and Wisconsin, migrant farmworker unions, Obreros Unidos and the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC), developed from Midwest migrants' frustration.⁷⁰ In addition, migrants that settled-out in the Midwest created pockets of Mexican culture in rural Midwest areas and established organizations to assist migrants and former migrants by demanding better state government responses to migrants' needs.⁷¹ One newspaper writer credited Latino and labor groups' constant persistence for over ten years and their use of the United States courts as the reason why the Department of Labor and the Occupation Safety and Health Advisory (OSHA) stopped bending to grower pressure and enforced laws that made safe drinking water available to workers.⁷² With their new-found allies, migrants and settled-out migrants endeavored to better farmworkers and Mexican Americans' lives despite the resounding contestation from some local Midwest towns.

The efforts of settled-out Mexican and Mexican Americans in the Midwest often evinced the continued influence and role of migrant communities and transculturalism. For farmworkers migrating between Texas and Wisconsin, the "Tejano diaspora" connected the burgeoning activism of Tejanos in Crystal City, Texas with the frustration of former Texas migrants in Wisconsin. Many of the ex-farmworkers that lived in Wisconsin came from Crystal

⁷⁰ Valdes, *Al Norte*, 190-192; W.K. Barger and Ernesto M. Reza, *The Farm Labor Movement in the Midwest: Social Change and Adaptation among Migrant Farmworkers* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994), 55.

⁷¹ United Migrant Opportunity Service Inc., 1965-1985, 20th Anniversary Album, 1985, 1-9, United Migrant Opportunity Services, Inc., Milwaukee Area Research Center, UW- Milwaukee, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

⁷² Dick Meister, "The 20th Century Comes to the Farm," *Christian Science Monitor*, July 2, 1987, 23:5, Michigan Farm Worker Ministry Coalition Collection, Walter P. Reuther Library, Detroit, Michigan.

City and still had family or knew migrants who continued to work in the stream.⁷³ When local Mexican Americans fought for political representation in Crystal City and developed La Raza Unida, Wisconsin residents learned from this new activism.⁷⁴ Wisconsin-settled migrants took part in the formation of La Raza Unida and developed their own efforts to improve Mexican American and migrants' lives, specifically demanding representation in the United Migrant Opportunity Movement (UMOS).⁷⁵ Even as migrant farmworkers settled-out of the stream to establish pockets of Mexican American culture in rural Midwest areas, the families and communities that bound migrants' old homes in the South with the fields of the North remained. For Sylvia Garcia and her mother, family maintained ties between Texas, Mexico, and Minnesota.⁷⁶ Sylvia used her family ties to maintain culturally traditional foods, getting her family in Texas to mail chili peppers and jalapeños because she could not find them in Minnesota.⁷⁷ Sylvia worked to provide her mother medical treatment in Minnesota when her mother came up north. Transmitting ideas, as migrants and former migrants actively worked to produce change in the South and North, farmworkers continued to live between two worlds.

Power from Field to Table

Resistance to laws and regulations to better farmworkers' lives and the resulting effect on migrants occurred because of the changing nature of agriculture in the United States and the national government's role in this change. Though the government's agricultural policies during the Depression attempted to control the market and limit production of goods, the

⁷³ Rodriguez, *The Tejano Diaspora*.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Sylvia Garcia, interview by Abner Arauza, 29, 47.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

decisions of Ezra Taft Benson, former Farm Bureau President and the head of the Department of Agriculture from 1953 until 1961, did the opposite.⁷⁸ Benson promoted an open market for agriculture and encouraged advancements in agricultural technology that would eliminate some farm laborers' jobs.⁷⁹ Benson's philosophies and subsequent policies had repercussions on farming and farmworkers long after he left the Department of Agriculture. Using taxpayers' money, Benson encouraged corporate power and the "get big or get out" mentality of agriculture in addition to government financial support of mechanization, processed foods, and chemical and genetic changes to crops. All these approaches affected farmworkers in the Midwest and the nation, as mechanization and genetic engineering decreased the need for farm labor and the use of chemicals made farm work more dangerous.⁸⁰ In addition, the increasing power of corporations, aided by government financing of agricultural research and the greater number of processed foods made by corporations, meant farmworkers and growers had less power to negotiate pay as more growers sold crops to large corporations.⁸¹ These fewer and larger growers also faced economic hardship in the Farm Crisis of the 1980s, harming both growers and the farmworkers who depended on them.⁸² In the Midwest and throughout the nation, the actions of the Department of Agriculture affected the lives of migrants in the farmworker stream.

⁷⁸ Hamilton, *Trucking Country*, 167, 170; Richard B. Craig, *The Bracero Program: Interest Groups and Foreign Policy*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971), 161-162.

⁷⁹ Hamilton, *Trucking Country*, 115-119.

⁸⁰ Martin, *Importing Poverty?*, 150-152.

⁸¹ Sister Thomas More Bertels, "A Nun Speaks Out Against the FLOC Boycott," 11:22, National Association of Religious Women, University of Notre Dame Archives, Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana; Susan Sechler and Jim Hightower, "Big Business Down on the Farm," 16:1, National Association of Religious Women, University of Notre Dame Archives, Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana.

⁸² William Adams, "Natural Virtue: Symbol and Imagination in the American Farm Crisis," *The Georgia Review* 39: 4 (Winter 1985).

By the 1970s, government officials, growers, agribusinesses, and even farmworkers themselves conjectured that mechanization would eliminate the need for farmworkers, especially because of the unionization of farmworkers.⁸³ Federal policy makers used this argument as a reason to provide temporary solutions to the problems in the migrant stream, the federal government also facilitated and underwrote efforts to mechanize. The Department of Agriculture, frequently through their Land Grant Colleges, worked with corporations to create machines as well as genetically alter fruits and vegetables to suit mechanical picking.⁸⁴ In contrast to the UFW, which tried to restrict advancing mechanization, Midwest's FLOC insisted that the corporations that benefitted from tax-supported research and farmworkers' hard work should either train and hire displaced farmworkers as machine operators or pay to retrain workers for new employment.⁸⁵ Accepting machines as a means to alleviate the work, FLOC sought only to force corporations to pay for the impact mechanization had on migrants' lives since corporations helped create a system based on migrant farm labor.

Despite Benson and agricultural corporations' emphasis on mechanization, growers and corporations never eliminated hand labor. Yet the implications of mechanization were far-reaching. In 1960, it took approximately 45,000 workers to harvest 168,000 acres of tomatoes.⁸⁶ In 1990, it took only 5,500 workers to harvest 330,000 acres of tomatoes, which produced four

⁸³ Brian Wiersema, "Rural Poverty Gets Attention," *Southern Illinoian*, November 26, 1971, 8; Dee Car, "Velasquez Sees FLOC Victories Coming Slowly," *Crescent-News*, June 29, 1982, 9:121, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan; Baldemar Velasquez and D.Y. Robinson, *The Farmworker Struggle: A Debate Letter*, Revised, December 1980, 11:11, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

⁸⁴ Sechler and Hightower, "Big Business Down on the Farm;" Velasquez and Robinson, *The Farmworker Struggle: A Debate by Letter*; "Agribusiness Turns to Mechanization Farmworkers Laid off by Machines," *The Call*, March 13, 1978, 18:10, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

⁸⁵ Martin, *Importing Poverty?*, 152; Car, "Velasquez Sees FLOC Victories Coming Slowly."

⁸⁶ Majka and Majka, *Farm Workers, Agribusiness, and the State*, 168.

times the number of tomatoes as in 1960.⁸⁷ The level of mechanization in the tomato fields was unusual, as scientists could not successfully mechanize most crops. Instead, small improvements rather than total mechanization affected farmworkers' lives. Dwarf trees and vines decreased the need for ladders and extra personnel needed to pick fruit and vegetables on tall plants and trees.⁸⁸ Precision planting and better herbicides decreased the need for laborers to thin crops; and conveyor belts in the fields changed harvesting methods, again decreasing the need for workers.⁸⁹ These changes resulted not only in a decrease in the amount of laborers needed, but altered gendered employment practices. Conveyor belts allowed for women and the elderly to work in the fields, as conveyors eliminated the need to carry heavy bags to the end of the rows.⁹⁰ At the same time, pre-harvest work, which traditionally employed men, women, and children, required fewer laborers because of improvements as growers and farmworkers considered operating mechanical equipment masculine work.⁹¹ FLOC leaders specifically argued that operating machines was a primarily masculine job that gave men the ability to provide for their families as individual workers.⁹² Farmworkers would grapple with the issue in which the need to provide for their families set women and men as potential adversaries. Though mechanization did not replace the need for migrant farm laborers, technology in addition to biological improvements ultimately shifted the number of farmworkers in the fields.

⁸⁷ Ibid; Martin, *Importing Poverty?*, 82; Nix v. Hedden, 149 U.S. 304 (1893). It should also be noted that when looking at statistics on vegetables or fruit, tomatoes may be counted as vegetables, despite biologically considered fruit. The U.S. Supreme Court in 1893 declared tomatoes as vegetables based on common perception. Therefore, in regards to tariff and therefore at least some commercial purposes, tomatoes are vegetables.

⁸⁸ Majka and Majka, *Farm Workers, Agribusiness, and the State*, 169; Martin, *Importing Poverty?*, 35; Martin and Martin, *The Endless Quest*, 169.

⁸⁹ Martin, *Importing Poverty?*, 150-152.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ FLOC, Resolutions, no date, 11:11, Farm Labor Organizing Committee, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan; Carr, "Velasquez Sees FLOC Victories Coming Slowly;" Velasquez and Robinson, *The Farmworker Struggle: A Debate Letter*.

⁹² Ibid.

The United States government's policies regarding foreign workers also changed as agricultural advancements and labor change in the 1970s and 1980s started to shift the gendered configuration of farm work. Instead of eliminating the need for hand labor, the H-2 program after World War II, which allowed foreign nationals to work in the primarily East Coast fields of the United States, sought to appease growers' demands for cheap labor. President Carter limited the H-2 program and tried to limit the effect on citizen farmworkers' wages during his presidency from 1977 to 1981.⁹³ Later, President Ronald Reagan reduced regulation for the H-2 and expanded the program, now called H-2(A), to numerous industries with agricultural labor under IRCA in 1986.⁹⁴ Presidential decisions and court rulings made the H-2(A) program increasingly more compliant to growers' demands: low minimum wages, American nationals had only a month advantage for preferential hiring, and if an American citizen refused a job that paid only the minimum, as most did, they surrendered their right to first bids.⁹⁵ Though initially used in the Southern United States, H-2(A) workers became common throughout the nation, including the Midwest, by the end of the twentieth century. The expanding nature of H-2(A) not only offered cheap, deportable labor, but the foreignness and predominately male demographic of H-2(A) workers rarely drew sympathetic reformers in the United States. These H-2(A) workers coupled with undocumented workers to create a large influx of cheap labor in the United States. Sometimes the influx of undocumented workers came from growers' inflated demands for workers, as happened in 1987 Washington where a radio advertisement heard all the way to Chicago and Mexico promised jobs and even legal

⁹³ Garry G. Geffert, "H-2(A) Guestworkers Program: A Legacy of Importing Agricultural Labor," in *The Human Cost of Food: Farmworkers, Lives, Labor, and Advocacy*, eds. Charles D. Thompson, Jr. and Melinda F. Wiggins (Austin, TX: Austin University of Texas Press, 2002), 117; Mize and Swords, *Consuming Mexican Labor*, 93.

⁹⁴ Geffert, "H-2(A) Guestworkers Program," 118; Mize and Swords, *Consuming Mexican Labor*, 91-93.

⁹⁵ Geffert, "H-2(A) Guestworkers Program," 118-119, 122, 132.

status for apple-picking workers.⁹⁶ In reality, weather and inflated labor demands left thousands of abandoned United States migrants and undocumented immigrants in Washington without money or work.⁹⁷ Living between two worlds, men like Heriberto Morales left his family in La Cienega, Mexico to work in Harvard, Illinois for eight months in a year, sharing a trailer with other male migrants.⁹⁸ Like other parts of the Midwest, the number of men like Morales increased as entire cities in Mexico migrated to the United States to work. Growers, corporations, and the United States government's preference for foreign males dated back to the Bracero Program and continued with the implementation of the H-2(A) program. The male predominance of H-2(A) workers, coupled with the changing demographics in the Midwest migrant stream, only increased the changing gendered configuration of the Midwest migrant stream.

Farmworkers established and strengthened transcultural and migrant ties to combat and adjust to the changing political landscape as they dealt with the ever increasing power of agribusinesses and corporations and the changing structure of the Midwest migrant stream, due partly to the policies of the government. FLOC's leader, Baldemar Velasquez, initially saw growers as the enemy when he created FLOC in 1967.⁹⁹ However, Velasquez came to realize that corporations abused both growers and farmworkers.¹⁰⁰ Though growers themselves initially refused to see their tie with farmworkers, FLOC successfully boycotted Campbell Soup Company to create the first three-party negotiations between growers, farmworkers, and

⁹⁶ James Coates, "Apple lure leaves migrant workers stranded," *Chicago Tribune*, October 4, 1987.

⁹⁷ Coates, "Apple lure leaves migrant workers stranded."

⁹⁸ Sue Ellen Christian, "Harvesting a Dream- Migrant Workers Sow Sweat, Reap Survival," *Chicago Tribune*, June 13, 1993.

⁹⁹ "The Cry of the Harvesters: Farmworkers Fight Campbells Soup, Interview with Baldemar Velasquez," *Catholic Agitator*, May 1984, 24:1, Michigan Farm Worker Ministry Coalition Collection, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

¹⁰⁰ "The Cry of the Harvesters."

corporations.¹⁰¹ FLOC's success against Campbell and the union's continued efforts exemplified the importance of embracing transcultural and migrant communities. In their initial boycott of Campbell, FLOC established migrating organizers in addition to bases in Texas and Florida to organize workers in their homes both before they traveled and while along the migrant path.¹⁰² Employing men, women, and children in the migrant stream, FLOC established a migrating family-based union within the already existing migrant community.¹⁰³ Understanding the importance of using preexisting transcultural or migrating communities, FLOC continued after their success with Campbell in 1986 to expand their union network beyond the United States.¹⁰⁴ FLOC formed ties with the Mexican National Union of Salaried Field Workers (SNTOAC) because they understood that Mexican nationals could be used to break the union and saw the proliferation of H-2(A) workers in other fields.¹⁰⁵ In addition, FLOC worked to unionize H-2(A) workers in the 1980s and 1990s.¹⁰⁶ Using the preexisting and developing communities of migrants and international workers, FLOC established a base of resistance against the government policies that subjugated farmworkers in the changing migrant stream of the twentieth-century.

¹⁰¹ Barger and Reza, *The Farm Labor Movement in the Midwest*, 80-82; John Nichols, "FLOC, Heinz Hold Labor Talks, Officials Confirm," *The Blade*, August 8, 1986, 6, 4:8, Farm Labor Organizing Committee, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

¹⁰² FLOC Winter 1978 and 1979 organizing campaign, 24:3, Farm Labor Organizing Committee, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

¹⁰³ FLOC Women's Committee First Quarter Report, 1978, 4:20, Farm Labor Organizing Committee, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

¹⁰⁴ Barger and Reza, *The Farm Labor Movement in the Midwest*, 80-82; John Nichols, "FLOC, Heinz Hold Labor Talks, Officials Confirm."

¹⁰⁵ Altha J. Cravey, "Cowboys and Dinosaurs: Mexican Labor Unionism and the State," in *Organizing the Landscape: Geographical Perspectives on Labor Unionism*, ed. Andrew Herod (Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 92.

¹⁰⁶ Francesca Coin, "Pickles and Pickets after NAFTA: Globalization, Agribusiness, the US-Mexico Food-Chain, and Farm-worker Struggles in North Carolina," (Ph.D. dissertation, Georgia State University, 2007).

IRCA, NAFTA, and Maquiladoras

Partially a reflection of agribusinesses' power and national concern about undocumented immigration, the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and IRCA, in addition to changes in the Mexican economy, altered the makeup of Midwest farmworker families. From the 1980s to the 1990s, national and international changes in agriculture, economic policies, and immigration compounded on the historical precedent for undocumented male migration to the United States. Altering the migrant streams throughout the nation, the Midwest migrant stream specifically became increasingly male dominated. Though families continued to migrate up the Midwest stream, the proliferation of males traveling separated from their families left in Mexico, Texas, or Florida, altered the structures of families as migrants became more transcultural in nature.

The United States government's decision to implement IRCA in 1986 profoundly affected immigrant farmworkers. Forced to deal with an ever-increasing number of undocumented immigrants, IRCA not only legalized large numbers of undocumented workers but also established specific provisions for farmworkers. IRCA provided a way for immigrants who illegally entered or stayed in the United States a way to become legal citizens, given certain requirements.¹⁰⁷ Congress passed the act as a way to legalize a small number of undocumented immigrants, and, in the end, decrease the number of undocumented immigrants that entered the United States. Under the SAW provision of IRCA, undocumented immigrants who worked in agriculture for three months could become a United States citizen.¹⁰⁸ SAW eased immigrants' ability to become legal citizens, leading to a high number of legalizations,

¹⁰⁷ Majka and Majka, *Farm Workers, Agribusiness, and the State*, 23.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, 23, 33.

many of which were not necessarily farmworkers. The USDA estimated that there were 350,000 undocumented immigrant farmworkers in the United States, but over one million applied for SAW.¹⁰⁹ The initial IRCA law allowed for the immigration and legalization of primarily Mexican males, as men usually immigrated first. Later policies emphasized family reunification, allowing the initial male immigrants to slowly legalize their families.¹¹⁰ The nation, through SAW, created an immediate influx of male immigrants leading transcultural lives, migrating between work in the United States and family in Mexico. Only over time did some of these men encourage the immigration of wives and children to the United States, though not all immigrant males wanted their family to live in the United States.

The passage of IRCA entrenched earlier patterns of immigration that began with the Bracero Program, as more Midwest migrants became males leading transcultural lives. Given the financial hardships of many Mexicans, the Bracero Program provided the means for Mexican males to provide monetarily for their family, thereby maintaining their masculinity through the role of provider.¹¹¹ Though Mexican masculinity would be tested and questioned in the United States, as Braceros performed feminine chores and degrading work, Mexican men maintained their masculinity in Mexico.¹¹² The ability for Mexican males to provide for their families in Mexico and the desire for goods, along with the developing interpretation of migration to the United States as a masculine adventure, shaped the immigration of Mexican

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 24.

¹¹⁰ Deborah A. Boehm, “‘For My Children:’ Constructing Family and Navigating the State in the U.S.-Mexico Transition,” *Anthropological Quarterly* 81:4 (Fall 2008), 792.

¹¹¹ Deborah A. Boehm, “‘Now I Am a Man and a Woman!’: Gendered Moves and Migrations in a Transnational Mexican Community,” *Latin American Perspectives*, 35:1 (January 2008), 21-24; Ruben Martinez, *Crossing Over: A Mexican Family on the Migrant Stream* (New York: Picador A Metropolitan Book Henry Holt and Company, 2001), 46-47, 88-89.

¹¹² Cohen, *Braceros*, 123-138; Coin, “Pickles and Pickets after NAFTA,” 91; David E. Lorey, *The U.S.-Mexican Border in the Twentieth Century: A History of Economic and Social Transformation* (Wilmington, Delaware: SR Books, 1999), 109.

nationals to the United States since the Bracero Program.¹¹³ Masculinity encouraged Mexican males to come to the United States in large numbers. This pattern, though relevant to the Western migrant stream, would not influence Midwest or East migrant streams until coupled with IRCA, H-2(A), the United States' changing agriculture, and Mexico's maquiladora industry. With the increasing use of H-2(A) workers in the Midwest, the gendered dimension of the Midwest stream changed. Martin Mauricio in Illinois had worked to bring H-2(A) workers to the Eckert Apple Orchard since 1990, after several years migrating from Mexico and Illinois as a farmworker.¹¹⁴ Working primarily to bring H-2(A) men to Illinois, Martin, like most of the workers he found to work at the Eckert farm, originally traveled without his family.¹¹⁵ With family living back in Mexico, Martin, like other H-2(A) workers, lived a transcultural life as he traveled between his labor in the Midwest and his family in Mexico.¹¹⁶ Some employers switched to an all-male workforce because of public pressure about the housing conditions of women and children and the changing structure of agriculture. Over time, farmworkers in places like Lake Mills, Wisconsin heard that employers would no longer hire families because of the costs of housing families.¹¹⁷ With fewer growers willing to employ families, the Midwest migrant stream changed to one where children grew up only occasionally seeing fathers and women took on more duties playing both male and female domestic and authoritative roles in their lives, all living different transcultural lives.

¹¹³ Martinez, *Crossing Over*, 46-47, 88-89.

¹¹⁴ Martin Mauricio, interview by Mark DePue, July 20, 2008, transcript, Agriculture in the Modern Era, Agriculture in Illinois, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library & Museum, accessed August 2014, <http://www.illinois.gov/alplm/library/collections/oralhistory/agriculture/Pages/default.aspx>.

¹¹⁵ Martin Mauricio, interview by Mark DePue.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ Reverend Juan Romero, "Ministry to Farmworkers: Experience in Advocacy", PADRES, May 15, 1974, 8:25, PADRES Collection, University of Notre Dame Archives, Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana.

Not only changing the gendered dimensions of the migrant stream, SAW and the H-2(A) program also Latinized agricultural work in new areas of the nation.¹¹⁸ SAW flooded the farmworker labor market as SAW legalized more individuals than had previously worked in agriculture or had worked in agriculture year round. In fact, SAW workers consisted of almost fifty percent of all farmworkers in 1993, most of whom were Mexican.¹¹⁹ While Latinos worked as farm laborers in large numbers before IRCA and SAW, the Southern shift of the meatpacking industry led to the Latinization of agriculture. Latino immigrant farmworkers flooded the East Coast and South as greater numbers of Mexican national males also entered the Midwest stream.¹²⁰ An increasing number of Mexican nationals and individuals from Central America came to the United States to work in a variety of agriculture-related jobs, including meatpacking.¹²¹ Along the East Coast especially, the increase in Latinos resulted in the Latinization, not only of the South itself, but also the migrant stream. Instead of African Americans migrating up the coast to work different crops, many African Americans left the migrant stream in the 1970s and the 1980s, with Latinos, Jamaicans, and Haitians replacing African Americans.¹²²

With greater numbers of foreign and newly legalized male workers in the agricultural fields of the nation, conditions in the fields deteriorated. Farm contractors and middlemen played a bigger role in the employment of immigrants in the Midwest and East, as the wave of

¹¹⁸ Raymond A. Mohl, "Globalization, Latinization, and the Nuevo New South," *Journal of American Ethnic History*, 22:4 (Summer 2003), 44; Rick Mines, Susan Gabbard, and Ruth Samardick, *U.S. Farmworkers in the Post-IRCA Period: Based on Data from the National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS)*, prepared by Office of Program Economics, U.S. Department of Labor, 1993.

¹¹⁹ Mines, Gabbard, and Samardick, *U.S. Farmworkers in the Post-IRA Period*.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Mize and Swords, *Consuming Mexican Labor*, 137-139; Mines, Gabbard, and Samardick, *U.S. Farmworkers in the Post-IRA Period*.

¹²² Mize and Swords, *Consuming Mexican Labor*, 20-21.

new immigrants lacked the knowledge of, or connection to, United States agriculture.¹²³ Farm contractors and organizations such as the North Carolina Growers Association (NCGA) became even more powerful, as they became the middlemen for H-2(A) workers in the South.¹²⁴ This newer agricultural pattern created a predominately younger male immigrant labor force in the Midwest, South, and East Coast, and a greater number of immigrant farmworkers living in poverty, as opposed to the older established immigrant communities of the West.¹²⁵ SAW individuals made comparatively less money than earlier migrant workers since SAW workers usually did not perform semi-skilled work because of lack of contacts and experience.¹²⁶ On the East coast, SAW workers were more likely to lack toilets and drinking water than long term U.S. resident farm laborers, possibly due to unreliable contractors and middlemen who did little about sanitation issues. The Latino citizens, undocumented Latino workers, and H-2(A) workers in the South had few existing rights or economic opportunities, creating an impoverished group of workers.¹²⁷ The predominately male SAW immigrants, undocumented immigrants, and H-2(A) workers in the Midwest and East Coast discouraged public attention on farm labor conditions.¹²⁸ The role of migrants in the pyramid of power thus faded from public consciousness. Not already a part of an established transcultural or migrant community with ties to the Midwest or South, most H-2(A) and SAW workers relied on contractors, growers, and companies. As the twentieth century came to a close, United States

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Coin, "Pickles and Pickets after NAFTA," 1-2.

¹²⁵ Mines, Gabbard, and Samardick, *U.S. Farmworkers in the Post-IRCA Period*.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Mark A. Grey and C. Anne Woodrick, "Latinos Have Revitalized Our Community: Mexican Migration and Anglo Responses in Marshalltown, Iowa," in *New Destinations: Mexican Immigration in the United States*, eds. Victor Zúñiga and Rubén Hernández-León (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2005).

growers and agricultural corporations depended on male immigrant workers as their chief source of farm labor.

The cultural and economic policies of the United States and Mexico also contributed to the proliferation of male workers. Employment in the United States offered more pay and numerous job opportunities, but the poor economic condition of workers in their home country perpetuated the economic pull. Mexican Presidents Miguel de la Madrid (1982-1988) and Carlos Salinas (1988-1994), in league with corporations and under pressure from the World Bank, encouraged foreign investment and dropped protective tariffs and crop subsidies to open Mexico's market with reforms that allowed for the private distribution and lack of protection for communal land.¹²⁹ The maquiladora industry that relied so heavily on cheap, non-unionized Mexican women's labor, developed from Mexican government and international efforts to open Mexico to the "free market."¹³⁰ Seeking to advance their economy similar to the free market ideal touted by the Western World, the Mexican government opened the country to outside corporate investments, establishing an economic system in Mexico that offered few remunerative job opportunities for men and offered women only low paying work.

Since the Border Industrialization Program in 1965, the Mexican government encouraged the establishment of United States corporate factories, or maquiladoras, in Mexico that offered employment for Mexican women. Maquiladoras allowed corporations to ship material to manufacture and assemble products in Mexico at cheaper, un-unionized rates, which were then shipped back to the United States with little to no tariffs.¹³¹ Located originally near

¹²⁹ Grey and Woodrick, "Latinos Have Revitalized Our Community;" Remonnda Bensabat Kleinberg, "Strategic Alliances: State-Business Relations in Mexico under Neo-Liberalism and Crisis," *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 18, no. 1 (January 1999); Mize and Swords, *Consuming Mexican Labor*.

¹³⁰ Lorey, *The U.S.-Mexican Border in the Twentieth Century*.

¹³¹ Mize and Swords, *Consuming Mexican Labor*, 178-179; Lorey, *The U.S.-Mexican Border in the Twentieth Century*, 118-121.

the United States and Mexican border, these factories employed large numbers of Mexican women in arguably “unskilled,” tiring, work with little chance for pay increases or advancement.¹³² The strong sexual “naturalistic” division of labor kept Mexican women degraded, while the maquiladora industry offered few Mexican men opportunities.¹³³ The devaluation of the Mexican peso in 1994, coupled with the creation of NAFTA that same year, continued to harm Mexico’s economy and encourage the movement of primarily Mexican males to the United States since few opportunities existed in Mexico.¹³⁴ The actions of the United States, in their efforts to control the progress of other Latin American nations, usually for political and U.S. corporate’s benefit, in addition to the power of the World Bank and IMF, detrimentally affected Mexican economic stability, leading to an influx of male labor to the United States.

The opportunity for employers’ abuse of farmworkers only expanded after NAFTA in 1994. Proponents of NAFTA argued it would open the borders between Canada, the United States, and Mexico, promoting laissez-faire trade and improving all three nations’ economies. The results of NAFTA were quite different. In contrast to the increasing jobs in the United States, companies opened factories in Mexico to employ the cheap labor force.¹³⁵ United States government subsidies coupled with chemicals and biotechnology to give United States growers a distinct advantage over small Mexican growers. When NAFTA opened the tariff-free borders, it allowed United States products, especially corn, to flood the Mexican market at prices

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Melissa W. Wright, *Disposable Women and Other Myths of Global Capitalism* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 57-60, 110.

¹³⁴ Kleinberg, “Strategic Alliances,” 71-87; Zabin, “U.S.-Mexico Economic Integration,” 337-355; Coin, “Pickles and Pickets after NAFTA.”

¹³⁵ Deborah Barndt, *Tangled Routes: Women, Work, and Globalization on the Tomato Trail*, Second Edition (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2008); Coin, “Pickles and Pickets after NAFTA.”

cheaper than those of small Mexican farmers.¹³⁶ In contrast to the United States groups, most Mexican farmers neither had the financial capital to grow biotech crops on the same scale as United States growers, nor did they receive subsidies like United States growers to produce cheap foods. Though some Mexican crops partially benefited from the free market, such as tomatoes that benefitted from different harvest timing, the United States investment in the Mexican tomato crop since the 1980s, and the cheap labor demanded of Mexican workers to compete with United States growers, continued to hurt Mexicans economically.¹³⁷ With few alternative jobs for Mexican farmers, urban centers began to swell with people desperate for work in post-NAFTA Mexico.¹³⁸ Unable to find work in Mexico's urban centers, many Mexican males entered the United States without papers to find work.¹³⁹

The surplus of male Mexican nationals entering the United States, both legally and illegally, because of the changing political and economic landscape of both countries created the demographic changes of Midwest migrant farmworkers. Farmworkers became disproportionately male since the increase in undocumented Mexicans in the United States since the 1970s. With limited opportunities for Mexican men in maquiladoras and in Mexico, these men entered the United States to work. Though women and children began joining husbands and fathers *al norte*, men provided the transcultural link between Mexico and the United States. In various Mexican areas, such as Tinaja de Coyote, almost the entire male population immigrated to towns and cities in the United States such as Hartford, Michigan, leaving their families behind in Mexico.¹⁴⁰ Returning occasionally to see family, these immigrant populations invested in homes, businesses, and their local *ranchero* Mexican community

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Zabin, "U.S.-Mexico Economic Integration."

¹³⁸ Coin, "Pickles and Pickets after NAFTA."

¹³⁹ Coin, "Pickles and Pickets after NAFTA;" Zabin, "U.S.-Mexico Economic Integration."

through electricity and other improvements.¹⁴¹ Transcultural links between a rural community in the Midwestern United States and a *ranchero* in Mexico started with a brave and desperate immigrant who found work in the United States, and after returning to the *ranchero* with new clothes and money, began to help friends and family members find jobs in the United States.¹⁴² Eventually, most of the men in a city or town migrated across the border to work in a particular field up North, though families did continue to migrate together.¹⁴³ Sometimes these transcultural communities included entire families, but often the cost and danger of undocumented immigration, in addition to farmworkers' strong ties to Mexico, made most immigrant males unwilling to transplant their family *al norte*. Migrant children continued to travel up the Midwest stream with family, struggling to find a place in a culturally and socially different Midwest, just like the additional men who traveled up the stream away from their families in the later part of the twentieth century.

Conclusion

After the passage of NAFTA in 1993, two interconnected but different types of migrant farmworkers existed: individuals like Perla Sanchez in the documentary *The Harvest/La Cosecha* traveling up the Midwest with family members, and farmworkers like Jesús Zamarrón Rocha who traveled *al norte* away from his family to support them back in Mexico.¹⁴⁴ Since the first farmworker migrated to the Midwest, migrants lived between two worlds, trying to

¹⁴⁰ Boehm, "Now I Am a Man and a Woman!," Rothenberg, *With These Hands*, 321; Susan Rose and Sarah Hiller, "From Migrant Work to Community Transformation: Families Forming Transnational Communities in Peribán and Pennsylvania," *The Oral History Review*, 34:1 (Winter-Spring 2007).

¹⁴¹ Rothenberg, *With These Hands*, 309.

¹⁴² Boehm, "Now I Am a Man and a Woman!," 19; Martinez, *Crossing Over*, 46-47, 88-89.

¹⁴³ Rothenberg, *With These Hands*, 321-322.

¹⁴⁴ *The Harvest/La Cosecha*, directed by U. Roberto Romano (Globalvision, Romano Film & Photography, Shine Global, 2011), DVD.

come to terms with family roles and their place in the Midwest as they either lived away from family members, or constantly moved to new, uninviting communities. Both types developed in the Midwest migrant stream during the last half of the twentieth century because of the decisions and policies of the United States and Mexican governments and the influence of society on the government decisions that shaped the opportunities and rights of migrants. Mexican and Mexican American migrant farmworkers became part of established communities up North by the 1980s and 1990s, fighting for greater rights and freedoms in the South and North, and struggled to maintain their cultural and familial ties as they lived in two worlds, all while the migrant population slowly shifted away from a family-oriented population. Both transcultural and migrant communities were separated from their culturally familiar settings and family, and both struggled to maintain ties to their culture as they tried to create and find for themselves a new, temporary place in a foreign society. As Deborah Boehm wrote of transnational immigrants:

Migrants understand themselves as belonging to, divided between, and outside of two nation-states: here and there. (Im)migrants are, in their own words, “*de ambos lugares*/from both places” and “*de ambos lados*/from both sides,” “*mitad allá, mitad aquí*/half there, half here,” “*del otro lado*/from the other side,” and tellingly, “*ni de aquí, ni de allá*/from neither here nor there.”¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁵ Boehm, *Intimate Migrations*, 6.

CHAPTER 2

YOU SAY TOMATO, I SAY *TOMATE*: SPANISH SPEAKERS, FAMILIA, AND MIDWEST BUREAUCRACY; A CASE STUDY OF ILLINOIS

“The Commission strongly feels that unless some of the proposed legislation is passed and enforced the migrant issue will continue to be a source of embarrassment in the State of Illinois.”¹⁴⁶
-Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission

Manuel and Maria Guerra and their three children came to the Midwest to work for years, but one year in the early 1970s a drought devastated the fields along with their opportunity to work. Indebted to the Indiana farmer who paid them to come up North, Maria, Manuel and their children found themselves stuck in a state far from home with no money.¹⁴⁷ Desperate for work, Manuel went to the Indiana State Employment Service, but with no available agricultural jobs the service offered no resolution to Manuel and his family’s dilemma. Although non-agricultural jobs existed, the employee at the Indiana State Employment Service failed to offer these positions to Guerra.¹⁴⁸ Desperate, the Guerras first went to the township for welfare assistance, which immediately refused the family aid, forcing the Guerras to request food stamps from the county.¹⁴⁹ After a week of waiting for help from

¹⁴⁶ Report, prepared by the Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, (Summer 1975), 18, Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, Illinois State Archives, Norton Building, Springfield, Illinois.

¹⁴⁷ Richard Orr, "Migrants Hopes Blighted," *Chicago Tribune*, May 15, 1975.

¹⁴⁸ Orr, "Migrants Hopes Blighted."

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

the county, the Guerras again faced refusal, this time because the county estimated their next month's pay as too high to receive food stamps.¹⁵⁰ Despite seeking aid from agencies created to assist, the Guerras found no help. Like other similar stories depicting the failure of state systems, the Guerra's story found its way into a report, in this case a report written in English by the Indiana Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights entitled "Indiana Migrants: Blighted Hopes, Slighted Rights."¹⁵¹ This report found its way to government offices where numerous committee members probably read the report as they debated migrants' situation with the report eventually ending up in a library. Yet the Guerras probably never saw this report. For other migrants who were not fluent in English, the report was entirely inaccessible because of the language barrier. For the migrant farmworkers who came to the Midwest like the Guerra family, language, state bureaucracy, and prejudice would structure their families' experiences with the state bureaucracy.

Like most bureaucratic institutions, reports, studies, and committees comprised most Midwest states' efforts to understand and react to public concern over migrant farmworkers' plight. As the Guerra family story demonstrated, state governments analyzed how state officials and departments failed to provide the programs and aid migrants needed. Yet the report "Indiana Migrants: Blighted Hopes, Slighted Rights" speaks to a larger issue: language, words and power. Distributed primarily in English, state governments' published reports were in a language largely inaccessible to the Mexican and Mexican American migrant farmworkers who came to the Midwest in the last half of the twentieth century.¹⁵² Legislators and committees' use

¹⁵⁰ Orr, "Migrants Hopes Blighted."

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² "Indiana Migrants: Blighted Hopes, Slighted Rights," prepared by the Indiana Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights, (1975), accessed January 22, 2013, <https://www.law.umaryland.edu/marshall/usccr/documents/cr12in24a.pdf>.

of English demonstrated that they cared little to change or empower farmworkers but rather served only to pacify public concern. For Illinois and other Midwest legislators, the “migrant problem” was believed to be the public attention to the deplorable working and living conditions of migrants that many viewed as temporary. Believing in the widespread argument that the migrant stream would end in a couple of decades, Midwest officials and legislators sought temporary solutions that fit their own gendered, social, and racial conceptions.¹⁵³ Illinois legislatures and state employees were no different, as Illinois’ agricultural interest groups and the government’s reaction to public concern exemplified the bureaucratic response to Spanish-speaking migrant farmworkers throughout the Midwest. For many farmworkers in Illinois and throughout the Midwest, words and language confined, controlled, and limited them as various departments, agencies, and committees within the Illinois state bureaucracy sought to define the farmworker problem as a temporary issue based within bureaucratic members’ own gendered, social, and racial perception.

For the Guerra family, like many other Mexican and Mexican American migrant farmworkers in Midwest, the migrant stream meant negotiating between various state groups. Since the 1960s, large numbers of Mexican and Mexican Americans traveled from their homes in Texas, Florida, and Mexico to work in various Midwestern crops such as tomatoes, apples, and cucumbers.¹⁵⁴ Though the employment of migrants in the Minnesota and Michigan sugar beet fields since the 1920s initiated state government regulations and committees in the first half of the twentieth century, most Midwest states did not have large enough migrant numbers to generate concern and state committees until the 1950s and 1960s.¹⁵⁵ Coinciding with public debates on the continuation of the Bracero Program in the 1950s, the *Harvest of Shame*

¹⁵³ Brian Wiersema, “Rural Poverty Gets Attention,” *Southern Illinoisian*, November 26, 1971, 8.

¹⁵⁴ “Indiana Migrants: Blighted Hopes, Slighted Rights,” 17.

broadcast in 1960, and the United Farm Workers grape boycott in the 1960s, farmworkers became a matter of public concern.¹⁵⁶ Each Midwest state's agriculture was different, yet each state's government reacted similarly to the "migrant problem," as prejudice and agricultural interest groups pressured state officials to squash any major changes to the agricultural system. Although Chicago's large Latino population offered a unique ability for Latinos to sway the state government and the public, the lack of a strong Latino voting block, and the differing concerns between urban Latinos and migrant farmworkers, meant Illinois' leaders reacted to the "migrant problem" in a similar way to other Midwest states.¹⁵⁷ Illinois' reaction to public interest in the plight of Mexican and Mexican American farmworkers in the 1960s and 1970s exemplified Midwest states' reactions to the "migrant problem."

La Cosecha y el gobierno de Illinois/The Harvest and Government in Illinois

Only with public pressure did state governments such as Illinois actively address the situation of migrant farm laborers. Like Illinois, other Midwest states began to address concerns about farmworkers when migrant numbers and public interest forced a bureaucratic response. Though state governments were in many ways constrained by national policies and decisions regarding migrants, they too played a major role in the pyramid of power. Michigan and Minnesota's early employment of large numbers of Mexican and Mexican American

¹⁵⁵ Kathleen Mapes, *Sweet Tyranny: Migrant Labor, Industrial Agriculture, and Imperial Politics* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009); Jim Norris, *North for the Harvest: Mexican Workers, Growers, and the Sugar Beet Industry* (St. Paul, Minnesota: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2009).

¹⁵⁶ Greg Schell, "Farmworker Exceptionalism Under the Law: How the Legal System Contributes to Farmworker Poverty and Powerlessness," in *The Human Cost of Food: Farmworkers' Lives, Labor, and Advocacy*, eds. Charles D. Thompson, Jr. and Melinda F. Wiggins (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 154.

¹⁵⁷ Patricia Mendoza, "Latinos and the Growth of Political Empowerment in Illinois," in *La Causa: Civil Rights, Social Justice and the Struggle for Equality in the Midwest*, ed. Gilberto Cárdenas (Houston: Arte Público Press, 2004), 19-36.

migrants in the sugar beet fields differed from other Midwest states, but studies of Michigan and Minnesota's early sugar beet industry suggest that both state's legislators only improved working and living conditions after labor, international, and national pressure because of the Bracero Program.¹⁵⁸ Initial concern with migrant children's education and the development of governor state committees became common reactions to public pressure, whether initiated in the early twentieth century in Michigan or the mid-twentieth century in Illinois.¹⁵⁹ By the 1960s, every Midwest state government had created a committee that investigated migrants' issues after and during initial efforts to better migrant education.¹⁶⁰ Following similar trajectories, Midwest states' offices and governments established similar methods to mitigate the concern for Mexican and Mexican American migrant farm laborers.

While governor committees' existence coincided with the increase of Mexican migrant farmworkers in the Midwest, the national and local interest in the migrant stream during the 1960s suggested a strong correlation between public interest and government reaction. Local events added to the national story as they increased political pressure for state legislators to act. Strikes by local farmworker unions, such as Obreros Unidos in Wisconsin and the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) in Ohio, made the issues of farm laborers a public concern that state legislators felt pressured to address.¹⁶¹ In addition, local stories of migrant families unable to find shelter one night or a migrant child dying from pesticide poisoning made local communities aware of migrants' difficult lives.¹⁶² All these factors encouraged and sometimes

¹⁵⁸ Mapes, *Sweet Tyranny*, 166-185; Norris, *North for the Harvest*, 61-86.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Dennis Nodin Valdes, *Al Norte: Agricultural Workers in the Great Lakes Region, 1917-1970* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991), 144.

¹⁶¹ Valdes, *Al Norte*, 190-192; W.K. Barger and Ernesto M. Reza, *The Farm Labor Movement in the Midwest: Social Change and Adaptation among Migrant Farmworkers* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1994).

informed Illinoisans and Illinois politicians about the problems that Mexican migrant farmworkers faced in their own state.

With the increasing interest of the national government in migrant affairs, state governments used the finances provided by national programs and laws to create aid programs. National efforts to increase funding or establish better legal standards included such national acts as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, which provided educational funding, the Farm Labor Contract Regulation Act of 1974, the Migrant Health Act in 1962, which gave funding for health clinics, and the Economic Opportunity Act in 1964, which among other things, provided funding for job training.¹⁶³ With national funding, state governments enacted legislation to assist farmworkers, but legislation did not always address all farmworkers' issues as state bureaucracies curtailed and defined the farmworkers' problems and the solutions. Many in the Illinois state government did not want to change the structure of the stream in ways that would improve the lives of farmworkers. Employing national funding, state departments and legislators established programs and enacted legislation that often failed to consider migrants' opinions, instead establishing laws and programs that created only superficial change.

The domination of the English language in Illinois and other Midwest state governments not only complicated Spanish speakers' interaction with the state bureaucracy but also characterized states' anxiety with non-English speakers. Unlike many Midwest states, Illinois had the distinction of establishing English as the official state language in 1969,

¹⁶²Letter to Naomi Hiatt from Stanley M. Knebel, December 27, 1960, Migrant Committee Evaluations, Commission on Children: Migrant Workers Study Research Files, 1950-1963, Illinois State Archives, Norton Building, Springfield, Illinois; Sandra Holter, "Too Broke, Too Tired To Move On," *Southern Illinois*, November 23, 1971, 2.

¹⁶³ Valdes, *Al Norte*, 171-172.

significantly earlier than the 1980s national fervor to establish English as the official language throughout the nation.¹⁶⁴ Originally declaring “American” as the state official language in a 1923 statute, Illinois legislators eventually changed the statute to declare English the official state language.¹⁶⁵ In contrast to future state efforts in the 1980s, this statute did not restrict the use of any other language by government officials or the printing of state government materials, such as laws. Since the 1980s, other Midwest states have declared English as their official language besides Illinois, with Indiana in 1984 and Iowa in 2002.¹⁶⁶ Illinois’ declaration of English as the official language, though a symbolic act akin to declaring a state bird or mineral, came when the nation was concerned with and aware of the Chicano movement, bilingual education, and migrant farmworkers, suggesting a fundamental question about the Illinois state government’s willingness to communicate with a multi-lingual population. While the national government started to offer reports in Spanish by the 1970s, the Illinois state government published only limited reports, brochures, or informational pamphlets in Spanish.¹⁶⁷ In cases where an Illinois department published information in Spanish, the document, like its English counterpart, was a cheaper reproduction not necessarily published by normal Illinois state government publishers.¹⁶⁸ A few academics argued that the establishment of English as an official language in Illinois, although only symbolic, encouraged discrimination as businesses and individuals could misunderstand the symbolic nature of the

¹⁶⁴ Sandra Del Valle, *Language Rights and the Law in the United States: Finding Our Voice* (Buffalo, New York: Multilingual Matters LTD, 2003), 55.

¹⁶⁵ Madeline Zavodny, “The Effects of Official English Laws on Limited-English-Proficient Workers,” *Journal of Economics* 18, no. 3 (July 2000), 430-431.

¹⁶⁶ Zavodny, “The Effects of Official English Laws.”

¹⁶⁷ After consulting a Government Publications library staff member, I searched a government records repository library’s database using broad key words such as “committee,” “department,” “Leyes,” “departamento” in addition to the key words “Illinois” and “government,” restricting the results to Spanish language records. Few results appeared, mostly starting in the 1990s. Similar attempts with the national government yielded more results, with material starting in the 1970s while a search of the National Government Publications database returned similar, but more extensive results.

statute.¹⁶⁹ Typical of many Midwest states with migrant farmworkers, the Illinois government's simple choices obscured a developing linguistic issue within Illinois and the Midwest, as states debated the role of language within the states' growing multi-lingual population.

The history of Illinois' reactions to Mexican and Mexican American migrant farmworkers and the Spanish language hide an even greater complexity to the language difficulties of farmworkers in the Midwest. Hidden beneath the Spanish-English dichotomy were indigenous Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and by the late twentieth century, an increasing number of Central and South Americans. Academics and government agencies' studies and statistics failed to note the number of indigenous Mexicans migrating to the Midwest; however, United States communities such as Cobden, Illinois received large influxes of indigenous Mexicans in the 1960s.¹⁷⁰ P'urépechas migrated from their homes in Cherán, Michoacán to work in various fields along their migratory route, including picking fruit in Cobden, Illinois where a small community of former migrants eventually developed.¹⁷¹ Indigenous to Mexico, P'urépecha migrants spoke their native tongue, and to some degree, Spanish.¹⁷² Though this

¹⁶⁸ "Sumario de las Leyes de Illinois Pertinentes al Trabajo de Agricultura (Efectivo 1972)," prepared by La División de Estadística, Programas y Publicaciones, 5:13, DeKalb County Migrant Ministry, Regional History Center, Founders Memorial Library, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois; "Directorio de Servicios Para Familias Migrantes: Título I 89-750; Programas para Migrantes, 1976-1977," prepared by the Oficina Estatal de Educación de Illinois, 5:10, DeKalb County Migrant Ministry, Regional History Center, Founders Memorial Library, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois; El Department de Trabajo de Illinois "Estado de Illinois: Resumen de un Trozo Escogido de las Leyes Relevantes al Empleo de Trabajadores Agrícolas y Otros de Fuera del Estado," prepared by the Servicio de Empleo del Estado de Illinois, Servicio del Potencial Humano Rural en Cooperación con el Proyecto de las Asistencia legal para Migrantes en Illinois, (1974), 6:2, DeKalb County Migrant Ministry, Regional History Center, Founders Memorial Library, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois.

¹⁶⁹ Zavodny, "The Effect of Official English Laws," 431; Del Valle, *Language Rights*, 61.

¹⁷⁰ Warren D. Anderson, "P'urépecha Migration into the U.S. Rural Midwest: History and Current Trends," *Indigenous Mexican Migrants in the United States*, eds. Jonathan Fox and Gasper Rivera-Salgado (La Jolla, California: Center of U.S. Mexican Studies, UCSD, 2004).

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² *Ibid.*; Eglá Martínez-Salazar, "The 'Poisoning' of Indigenous Migrant Women Workers and Children: From Deadly Colonialism to Toxic Globalization," in *Women Working the NAFTA Food Chain: Women, Food and Globalization*, ed. Deborah Barndt (Toronto: Second Story Press, 1999).

study focuses on the largest group of migrant farmworkers, Mexican and Mexican American, Midwest state governments actually faced different cultural groups with various demands, who, in the case of indigenous Mexicans, did not necessarily speak Spanish as their first language.¹⁷³ The Illinois state government struggled to recognize the linguistic and cultural needs of all Spanish speakers, including Mexican and Mexican American migrants, almost never recognizing the small numbers of indigenous Mexicans, and favored urban, voting Puerto Ricans' needs over the less vocal "Spanish-Speaking" groups.¹⁷⁴ Population numbers, urban vs. rural, permanent vs. migrant, racism, and language often influenced state policies, as Midwest state governments formed "Spanish Speaking" committees that characterized the state's unwillingness to address the real needs of the heterogeneous farmworker *familias*.

The Illinois Committee on Agricultural Migrants

One of Illinois' first actions to address the growing migrant stream was to create the Committee on Agricultural Migrants subcommittee of the Illinois Commission on Children

¹⁷³ Some indigenous Mexicans did speak Spanish, having learned it because the Mexican government financially favored the Mexican educational system, which offered bilingual education with a focus on learning Spanish over indigenous educational networks.

¹⁷⁴ Fall Report, prepared by the Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, (Fall 1974), Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, Illinois State Archives, Norton Building, Springfield, Illinois (also in Spanish); Spring Issue Report, prepared by the Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, (Spring 1973), Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, Illinois State Archives, Norton Building, Springfield, Illinois; Report, prepared by the Spanish Speaking People's Study Commission, (Summer 1975), Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, Illinois State Archives, Norton Building, Springfield, Illinois; Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, Meeting Tapes, March 11, Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, Illinois State Archives, Norton Building, Springfield, Illinois; Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, Minutes, February 27, 1976, cassette audio recording, 5:8, DeKalb County Migrant Ministry, Regional History Center, Founders Memorial Library, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois; Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission note with handwriting, January 11, 1978, 5:8, DeKalb County Migrant Ministry, Regional History Center, Founders Memorial Library, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois; Anderson, "P'urépecha Migration;" Martinez-Salazar, "The 'Poisoning.'" Many Midwest states established committees with the term "Spanish-Speaking," such as Illinois' Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, which will be explored in detail later. My use of quotations around "Spanish Speaking" reflects my recognition that states ignored indigenous Mexicans whose primary language was not Spanish yet were lumped within the broad "Spanish Speaking" committees. Outside of specifically committees, I will continue to use quotations around the term to recognize the lack of homogeneity within migrant populations in the Midwest and throughout the United States.

(ICC). Created in 1955, after several concerned individuals came together to discuss the educational problems faced by migrant children in 1954, the Committee on Agricultural Migrants was Illinois' first major state response to the "migrant problem."¹⁷⁵ Spurred to action by the increasing number of struggling migrant children in schools and by the United States President's Committee on Migratory Labor, the Migrant Committee researched the ordeals of migrant farmworkers to educate the public and provide information on migrant services.¹⁷⁶ Illinois Governor William Stratton offered the Committee on Agricultural Migrants as Illinois' agency on migrant workers that would work in conjunction with the national President's Committee on Migratory Labor started in 1954.¹⁷⁷ While the Committee on Agricultural Migrants could address issues of education, nutrition, or housing, its focus on children limited the committee's ability to question the basic structure of the migrant stream. Unlike the President's Committee on Migratory Labor, the Illinois Committee on Agricultural Migrants developed from various educational and women groups' concerns with migrant children's education, not with the overall issues of migrant farmworkers.¹⁷⁸ Founded under the ICC, the Committee on Agricultural Migrants had a narrow focus on migrant children. The Illinois Governor's choice to make a child-focused agency the state's sole migrant committee impeded questions of migrant farmworkers' power in the agricultural system. While the committee's title suggested a broad committee focus, a brief investigation into the bureaucratic structure of

¹⁷⁵ Letter with material for U.S. Department of Labor from Illinois Commission on Children and Youth, April 7, 1955, Migrant problems study commission I, 1950-1957, Commission on Children: Migrant Workers Study Research Files, 1950-1963, Illinois State Archives, Norton Building, Springfield, Illinois.

¹⁷⁶ Letter with material for U.S. Department of Labor.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Letter to Naomi Hiatt from Rev. Gilbert Carroll, August 5, 1960, Migrant Committee Evaluation, Commission on Children: Migrant Workers Study Research Files, 1950-1963, Illinois State Archives, Norton Building, Springfield, Illinois.

the Committee highlighted the committee's linguistically-defined focus and, simultaneously, the Illinois Governor's unwillingness to question the agricultural system of power.

Since its inception, the Committee on Agricultural Migrants, named as if it was a committee with a broad mission, reflected the gendered and racial beliefs of its creators and the societal changes of the time period. The female members of the Committee represented the female dominated positions in their fields of expertise and interests, while the men made up the experts in stereotypically male fields.¹⁷⁹ As the executive secretary of the Committee, Naomi Hiatt represented the ICC, while the other female members of the committee represented the American Association of University Women (AAUW), the United Women's Christian Association (UWCA), the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), nutrition committees, and numerous other organizations and state departments associated with education and welfare.¹⁸⁰ The rest of the members of the original committee consisted of men representing growers, canneries, specialists in rural sociology, members of the state medical society, chief division of preventative medicine, and other science related fields.¹⁸¹ The proliferation of women on the Illinois Committee on Agricultural Migrants suggested a gendered approach to farm laborers, similar to other Midwest state's initial foray into the lives of migrant farm laborers. Initial organizations and committees, both private and state government, that addressed farmworker issues often started with Anglo women addressing health, housing, and children's education. The female dominion of education and charity coalesced into attempts to reform 1920s Michigan child labor laws, one of the few early efforts by the Wisconsin State Migrant

¹⁷⁹ Letter to Naomi Hiatt from Rev. Gilbert Carroll.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Outline for Obtaining Information in State Committees on Migratory Labor, 1963, Migrant Committee SIU research, 1958-1960, Commission on Children: Migrant Workers Study Research Files, 1950-1963, Illinois State Archives, Norton Building, Springfield, Illinois.

Committee where they experimented with migrant education, the Elizabeth S. Magee Education and Research Foundation, and the United Church Women of Ohio's finance of an educational program in Ohio from 1958-1959.¹⁸² Potentially improving the education of migrant children, committees such as Illinois' Committee on Agricultural Migrants focused on issues of concern to Anglo women, namely the lack of education and poverty of migrant children so visible to the public, but not the cause of children's poverty or lack of education.

Focused on migrant children, the Committee on Agricultural Migrants and its umbrella organization, the ICC, focused on mediating the negative aspects of the migrant stream rather than changing the structure of an agricultural system that used migrant families for cheap and transitory labor. Initially facing resistance from the ICC, the Committee on Agricultural Migrants continued to work under their umbrella organization. The Executive Secretary of the committee, Naomi Hiatt, argued in 1960, "Many member of the Illinois Commission on Children have never been enthusiastic about our entrance into the Agricultural migrant workers committee."¹⁸³ Hiatt argued that some ICC members felt that migrant children should not be the focus of the ICC or its divisions.¹⁸⁴ The Committee on Agricultural Migrants stayed tied, and therefore restricted, to the Illinois Commission on Children despite the ICC's negative view of the Committee's work. Only one year after Hiatt argued that the ICC did not support the Committee's work, the Committee evaluated its success and the direction it would take in 1961, ultimately shifting to a more active role while still confining their activities to the ICC.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸² Mapes, *Sweet Tyranny*, 65-95; Valdes, *Al Norte*, 144, 151.

¹⁸³ Letter to J.E. Clettenberg from Naomi Hiatt, July 26, 1960, Migrant Committee Evaluations, Commission on Children: Migrant Workers Study Research Files, 1950-1963, Illinois State Archives, Norton Building, Springfield, Illinois.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ Letter to Dr. Donald Brieland from Naomi Hiatt, January 18, 1962, Migrant Problems Study Committee II, 1958-1963, Commission on Children: Migrant Workers Study Research Files, 1950-1963, Illinois State Archives, Norton Building, Springfield, Illinois.

Shifting their focus after 1961, the Committee offered not only information and encouragement to organizations, but also initiated their own efforts in migrant health care in addition to promoting legislation for congressional proposals.¹⁸⁶ Yet the committee member's wish to maintain organizational and personal connections to the ICC restricted the committee under the linguistic domain of "children," dividing the concerns of migrant children from the greater issues of migrant children's *familia*. Though the Committee on Agricultural Migrants maintained their tie to the ICC, the narrowing of focus to children demonstrated a propensity for the Committee, like most state organizations, to focus on temporary means to placate public concerns about the migrant stream.

The Illinois Committee on Agricultural Migrants' restrictive mission reflected the Committee's own restrictive membership, as the Committee endeavored to create temporary solutions without radically changing the agricultural structure. As noted earlier, the Committee consisted of several women representing educational and welfare groups and agencies, while several men offered scientific, agricultural, and medical guidance to the Committee. The Committee sought growers' perspectives on migrant children's dilemma, yet they never included a migrant farmworker or farmworker representative, instead criticizing any effort by others to speak in the interest of migrants. Some Committee members were outraged about newspaper articles that depicted the racism and discrimination faced by migrants, arguing that the stories would not properly motivate the public to support programs for migrants.¹⁸⁷ As a field consultant for the Department of Labor, Stanley M. Knebel stated in a letter to the Committee's Executive Secretary that negative stories on tragic events spurred communities to

¹⁸⁶ Letter to Dr. Donald Brieland from Naomi Hiatt.

¹⁸⁷ Agricultural Migrant Workers Committee Meeting Minutes, May 8, 1958, 6, Migrant Problem Study Commission II, 1958-1963, Commission on Children: Migrant Workers Study Research Files, 1950-1963, Illinois State Archives, Norton Building, Springfield, Illinois.

action.¹⁸⁸ Referring to the 1960 case in DuPage County where a two-year-old migrant child, Ernesto Perez, died from exposure to pesticides, both the DuPage County government and the public pushed for changes to the housing and working conditions of migrant farmworkers in the area.¹⁸⁹ Despite such evidence, agricultural representatives and Committee members demanded more restricted language by newspapers to create the illusion that growers and canneries cared about the welfare of migrant farmworkers and willingly could and would enact any changes to better farmworkers' lives.

The Committee on Agricultural Migrants' illusion that growers could and would willingly change the plight of migrants stemmed from the proliferation of grower and cannery representatives on the Committee and their influence. Growers and company representatives on the Committee argued that growers and companies would willingly enact suggestions to better migrant housing, arguing mandatory regulations were unnecessary.¹⁹⁰ In reaction, the Committee in 1958 encouraged voluntary improvements on a one to two-year trial basis to see the results; however, many of these policies would become mandatory around 1961 as growers and canneries apparently failed to follow the recommendations.¹⁹¹ Growers failed to initiate the recommended changes because of some growers' own prejudice against the racially and linguistically different migratory farmworkers, as evidenced by growers' complaints that migrants didn't want or know how to use nice housing facilities, as well as growers' financial

¹⁸⁸ Letter to Naomi Hiatt from Stanley M. Knebel.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Summary Meeting on Migrant Health Problems Associated with Migrant Workers, 1, Migrant Problems Study Commission II, 1958-1963, Commission on Children: Migrant Workers Study Research Files, 1950-1963, Illinois State Archives, Norton Building, Springfield, Illinois.

¹⁹¹ Ibid; Dorthea Ann Weaver, Migrant Ministry State Report, 1959, Migrant Problem Study Commission II, 1958-1963, Commission on Children: Migrant Workers Study Research Files, 1950-1963, Illinois State Archives, Norton Building, Springfield, Illinois.

restrictions.¹⁹² Carl Habenicht of H&E Sod Nursery in Illinois told a newspaper, “We get our places all up to code, and they look real nice...then the Mexicans come in and within a month it looks terrible.”¹⁹³ The Committee’s focus on pacifying growers and cannery operators through representation on the Committee and discouraging negative speech only resulted in initial half-hearted improvements as public and political pressure mounted for unmistakable improvements to migrants’ position.

The Committee on Agricultural Migrants’ pacification of agricultural concerns reflected their racial and linguistic choices. The Committee, like many similar Midwest state committees, rarely listened to the concerns or opinions of farmworkers. The Committee never had a representative of migrant farmworkers throughout its existence, but included growers and cannery operators. Only once, in correspondence, did Executive Secretary Naomi Hiatt suggest migrants should have a representative; however, no migrant farmworker or ex-migrant farmworker ever served on the Committee.¹⁹⁴ Similarly, other Midwest state organizations created specifically to investigate and assist farmworkers had corporate and grower representatives but no farmworkers or ex-farmworker representatives. The Ohio Governor’s Committee on Migratory Labor had no farmworker representative from its start around 1960 until 1968, when a labor recruiter for a canning company became a “farmworker

¹⁹² Letter to Reverend Isaac Igarashi from Mrs. Malvina Holvorsen, March 2, 1966, 1:5, Michigan Farm Worker Ministry Coalition Collection Papers, 1950-1990, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan; Larry Hills, “The Migrant Ministry Can Help the Michigan Fruit Farmer,” *Michigan Christian Advocate*, 3:43, Michigan Farm Worker Ministry Coalition Collection Papers, 1950-1990, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

¹⁹³ Jane Ransom and Bonnie Gross, “Housing: The Worst Problem for Migrants,” *Chicago Sun-Times* North/Northwest supplement, 6:1, DeKalb County Migrant Ministry, Regional History Center, Founders Memorial Library, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois.

¹⁹⁴ Letter to Eisendrath from Naomi Hiatt, 1962, Migrant Problems Study Committee, IL, 1958-1963, Commission on Children: Migrant Workers Study Research Files, 1950-1963, Illinois State Archives, Norton Building, Springfield, Illinois.

representative.”¹⁹⁵ The Illinois Committee further compounded migrants’ lack of representation, as the Committee failed to consistently communicate in Spanish. Many migrant farmworker adults did not speak or read English fluently, sometimes relying on their children for translations. For this reason alone, it would be difficult for farmworker representatives to function on the committee if the Committee operated solely in English. No records indicate that the Illinois Committee made any effort to translate the Committee’s findings into Spanish or to even disseminate information about their investigations or reports to migrant farmworkers, making the Committee completely unaccountable to the migrant farmworkers they were supposed to help.¹⁹⁶ The Committee on Agricultural Migrants’ choice of language in communications and the lack of farmworker representation on the Illinois Committee and other Midwest state committees continued to linguistically and physically distance migrants from the state programs designed to assist them.

Not only failing to represent and communicate with farmworker *familias*, the Illinois Committee on Agricultural Migrants’ use of language ignored migrants’ agency. The Committee’s original mission was to be a “clearinghouse” of information on migrant services; however, no records indicate that the committee offered any information on migrant services in Spanish. Instead, churches and agencies received information on how state services and state and national funding worked to use for their migrant programs to aid.¹⁹⁷ Like the entire state

¹⁹⁵ Valdes, *Al Norte*, 170.

¹⁹⁶ Commission on Children: Migrant Workers Study Research Files, 1950-1963, Illinois State Archives, Norton Building, Springfield, Illinois.

¹⁹⁷ Summary of Status of the Agricultural Migrant Committee in Illinois for Consideration by the Illinois Commission on Children for Future Planning, November 1960, Migrant Committee Evaluations, Commission on Children: Migrant Workers Study Research Files, 1950-1963, Illinois State Archives, Norton Building, Springfield, Illinois.

structure, the Committee assumed only English-speaking Anglos permanently residing in the state could affect any changes in the migrant stream.

Illinois State Employment Service

As a branch of the national United States Employment Service (USES), the Illinois State Employment Service (ISES) became an important part of the bureaucratic state response to migrant farmworkers in the last half of the twentieth century. The national government founded the USES during World War I to manage employers' labor needs, essentially becoming the Italian *padrone* system so decried by social reformers on the East Coast in the early 1900s.¹⁹⁸ Initially facing resistance from the Department of Agriculture, the USES, by the end of World War I, became *the* government agency involved in agricultural job placement.¹⁹⁹ Connecting unemployed workers with employers' labor demands, the USES installed state offices all over the country, eventually transforming into the State Employment Services used both by growers and farmworkers.²⁰⁰ This state-focused structure developed after years of debate and experimentation during the beginning of the twentieth century, eventually establishing a state system by which the national USES office, under the Department of Labor, oversaw only state offices.²⁰¹ Individual SES worked by taking employer estimated farm labor needs and then referring migrants who contacted the state office.²⁰² Each Midwest state's

¹⁹⁸ William J. Breen, *Labor Market Politics and the Great War: The Department of Labor, the United States, and the First U.S. Employment Service, 1907-1933*, (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1997), xi.

¹⁹⁹ Breen, *Labor Market Politics and the Great War*, 37.

²⁰⁰ Jane Adams, *The Transformation of Rural Life: Southern Illinois, 1890-1990* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 157.

²⁰¹ Breen, *Labor Market Politics and the Great War*.

²⁰² *Illinois Occupational Information Quarterly*, prepared by the Bureau of Employment Security, State of Illinois Department of Labor, Research & Analysis Division, (Fall 1977).

employment service office worked similarly, ultimately revealing a state's interaction with migrants and growers.

Used by both growers and farmworkers, ISES was not, however, a neutral party navigating between grower and migrant needs. Debates on the role of the USES between employees and employers occurred since the beginning of the USES, as individuals questioned how best to maintain a “neutral” position.²⁰³ The role of the ISES can best be understood by the language used by Illinois government officials and ISES employees during a meeting when the minutes noted, “Dr. Brooks paid tribute to the outstanding progress that has been made by the ISES... in regulating the flow and direction of migrants. He pointed to the great value of having the workers where they are needed, when they are needed, in the numbers which are needed.”²⁰⁴ For many ISES employees, farmworkers were statistics, pawns to move and control to meet Illinois growers' labor demands. The purpose of the ISES and other SES was to ensure the efficient production of crops by securing growers' labor needs, not to guarantee equitable deals between migrants and employers. ISES reports did not address the working or living conditions of migrant farmworkers or the failure of employers to follow state and national labor and housing laws. Instead, State Employment Services served as a controlling agency designed to serve the needs of growers and canners instead of migrant *familias*.

In negotiating the state bureaucratic network of assistance and regulations, gender norms and family structure among Mexican and Mexican American migrants shaped who interacted with different state offices. For many migrant *familias*, cultural and family structures in the migrant stream dictated family members' involvement with the ISES and other Midwest

²⁰³ Breen, *Labor Market Politics and the Great War*, 151-152. The government deemed the “neutral” solution was to insist on being told when a strike happened, and though still referring employees to the company, inform the referrals of the strike.

²⁰⁴ Summary Meeting on Health Problems Associated with Migrant Workers.

State Employment Services. Often traveling and working as family units or within crews, Mexican and Mexican American migrant families usually worked under the name of one or more adult males.²⁰⁵ Men with families usually served as the contact for the family and the only individual on the payroll with additional family members working under his name.²⁰⁶ This system allowed growers and contractors to pay one individual for a whole family's accumulated labor, which also allowed for the employment of minors in agricultural fields. As such, men likely had the most contact with the ISES, as they served not only as the head of the household in most traditional Mexican and Mexican American migrant families, but also as the sole official employee. ISES statistics in 1977 showed large numbers of references made to male workers and few to women.²⁰⁷ Though statistics indicated primarily male migrants used the ISES system, in reality gender and migrant family norms hid the employment of entire families in the fields.

Working through ISES, Mexican and Mexican American men and their *familias* had to navigate the linguistic and bureaucratic barriers constructed in part by the SES. Comprised of English speakers, the ISES and other Midwest SES often failed to break down the language

²⁰⁵ Anne Power, "An Analysis of the Family System Among Spanish-Speaking Migrant Labourers in the State of Wisconsin," 15:6, Governor's Committee of Migratory Labor Records, Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin; John Ortega, "Memoirs of John R. Ortega, Reflections of a Mexican Migrant Boy: Growing Up in the Fields of Iowa," 2003, Iowa State Special Collections and University Archives, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa; Crew Membership Listing- Luis Hernandez, August 3, 1973, 1:64, Wisconsin State Employment Service: Farm Placement Clearance Orders and Worker Schedule, 1970-1973, Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin; Agricultural Worker Schedule- Tomas M. Gomez, 1:24, Wisconsin State Employment Service: Farm Placement Clearance Orders and Worker Schedule, 1970-1973, Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin.

²⁰⁶ Elizabeth Brandeis Raushenbush, "The Migrant Labor Problem in Wisconsin," Governor's Commission on Human Rights, Madison, WI, April 1963, 43, 13:10, Wisconsin Governor's Committee of Migratory Labor: Records, 1960-1972, 3:3, Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin.

²⁰⁷ *Illinois Manpower Review*, prepared by the Illinois Bureau of Employment Security, Department of Labor, Research and Analysis Division, (August 1977), 47.

barriers necessary to serve migrants.²⁰⁸ The ISES rarely offered information, in person or in print, in Spanish.²⁰⁹ A *Chicago Sun-Times* undercover investigation indicated a Spanish-Speaking employee sought a bribe for a work referral.²¹⁰ In an undercover investigation of life as a migrant worker in 1978, the Chicago ISES office referred a *Chicago Sun-Times* reporter to the only Chicago Job Service Spanish-speaking employee, who then offered a job referral through her brother for a fee.²¹¹ An illegal action, the newspaper confronted the ISES employee and her supervisor, but both claimed she tried to help “the migrant” because few jobs were available.²¹² A state employee assisting her brother, along with the general lack of Spanish-speaking employees, exemplifies how state employment services did not always serve the interests of farmworker families. Despite state and national laws, ISES and other SES departments and employees ignored whether or not growers provided the pay and work promised or the housing legally required.²¹³ Not only an Illinois issue, the *Alton Evening Telegraph* reported that Mexican farmworkers avoided the ISES and other state employment services because of the tight collusion between growers and the agency.²¹⁴ A 1971 lawsuit filed by individual farmworkers, their representatives, and migrant advocates claimed that the United

²⁰⁸ Refugio I. Rochin, "Farm Worker Service and Employment Programs," in *Seasonal Agricultural Labor Markets in the United States*, ed. Robert D. Emerson (Ames, IA: The Iowa State University Press, 1984), 435.

²⁰⁹ Illinois State Employment Service, "Job Facts", Migrant Problems Study Commission, 1950-1957, Commission on Children: Migrant Workers Study Research Files, 1950-1963, Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, Illinois State Archives, Norton Building, Springfield, Illinois.

²¹⁰ Manuel Galvan and Bonnie Gross, "State Investigates Job Referral," *Chicago Sun-Times*, North/Northwest Supplement, 6:1, DeKalb County Migrant Ministry, Regional History Center, Founders Memorial Library, DeKalb, Illinois.

²¹¹ Galvan and Gross, "State Investigates Job Referral."

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Brian Wiersema, "Nobody Takes Care of Migrant Worker," *Alton Evening Telegraph*, October 27, 1971, B3; Valdes, *Al Norte*, 81.

²¹⁴ Ibid; James L. Terry, "The Political Economy of Migrant Farm Labor and the Farmworker Movement in the Midwest," (Ph.D. dissertation, Purdue University, 1988), 63-64.

States Department of Labor's USES offices were “grower staffed and oriented.”²¹⁵ The case claimed, and subsequent studies noted, that the USES provided referrals to growers that broke housing and other laws and preferred giving referrals to alien workers who worked for less money.²¹⁶ The court mandated a thirteen-point alteration to the USES program.²¹⁷ By 1977, state offices finally started to comply with the court order to make the USES program more accountable to farmworkers, with slow and questionable results.²¹⁸

The ISES and other Midwest SES’ shift away from a “grower staffed” organization resulted in a shifting patchwork of usage that exasperated SES efforts to control the agricultural labor system. A questionnaire about the employing practices of growers in Illinois found that few smaller growers actually acquired employees through the ISES, with the exception of asparagus growers.²¹⁹ Primarily larger grower operations, usually associated with canneries and corporations, used the ISES.²²⁰ The various degrees of use of ISES reflected differences by state, as Ohio growers extensively used the Ohio State Employment System, only half the migrants who came to Wisconsin used the WSES in 1973, and, in a study of over three hundred migrant farmworkers in Michigan, *eight* used the Michigan State Employment Service.²²¹ The different uses reflected not only regional differences, such as Ohio’s larger tomato and pickle canning industry and the OSES’ long successful history, but also changes over time.²²² After the Farm Labor Contract and Regulation Act of 1974, Ohio growers specifically avoided the

²¹⁵ Rochin, “Farm Worker Service and Employment Programs,” 435; Terry, “The Political Economy of Migrant Farm Labor,” 63-64; Valdes, *Al Norte*, 81.

²¹⁶ Rochin, “Farm Worker Service and Employment Programs,” 436-437.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 437.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*

²¹⁹ Don E. Bauer and William T. Cammack, “The Competitive Structure of the Illinois Seasonal Farm Labor Market Specific to the Vegetable and Fruit Industry,” (M.S., Southern Illinois University, 1971), 59.

²²⁰ Adams, *The Transformation of Rural Life*, 174; Wiersema, “Nobody Takes Care of Migrant Worker.” Large, corporate growers are not necessarily a large contingent within the state of Illinois- one newspaper article noted four large corporations.

previously grower-friendly Ohio Bureau of Employment Service (OSES) because the OSES attempted to ensure crew leaders complied with the act.²²³ Used to the OSES overlooking illegal acts, growers circumvented the OSES so they could not be held liable if crew leaders failed to comply with the law.²²⁴ State agriculture, history, and compliance with state and federal regulations all influenced and changed the use of the Midwest's State Employment Services.

Exasperated by the changing patterns of use, the ISES agency blamed "free-wheeler" farmworkers for the agency's inability to control the migrant stream. Ignoring growers and canneries' own usage of the system, ISES and national SES employees blamed "free-wheelers," individuals who drove around in their own vehicles and negotiated their own contracts outside the USES structure, for the migrant stream's chaotic nature.²²⁵ Viewing their job as controllers of the migrant agricultural network within their state, the ISES made little attempt to provide an easy, usable service that growers and farmworkers would use. Despite their negative portrayal by the ISES, "free-wheelers" were just migrants who learned about jobs by word-of-mouth from relatives and other Spanish-speakers aside from other well-established

²²¹ Rochin, "Farm Worker Service and Employment Programs," 10; "Migrant and Local Seasonal Farmworker Questionnaire," 23:2, Michigan Farmworker Ministry Collection, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan; UMOS Inc. FY 1974-1975, United Migrant Opportunity Services, Inc., United Migrant Opportunity Services, Inc., Milwaukee Area Research Center, UW- Milwaukee, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The ISES also reportedly discriminated against African Americans, preferring to assist Mexicans and white farmworkers. As few migrants were white and some Mexican migrants did not have papers to be in the United States, growers easily exploited migrants.

²²² Breen, *Labor Market Politics and the Great War*, 21-23, 80.

²²³ Valdes, *Al Norte*, 81; Terry, "The Political Economy," 63-64.

²²⁴ Terry, "The Political Economy," 63-64.

²²⁵ Letter to Mr. A. W. Motley from Walter Parker, January 23, 1962, Migrant Problems Study Committee II, 1958-1963, Commission on Children: Migrant Workers Study Research Files, 1950-1963, Illinois State Archives, Norton Building, Springfield, Illinois; Norris, *North for the Harvest*, 113-140; Kathleen Mapes, "'A Special Class of Labor': Mexican (Im)migrants, Immigration and Industrial Agriculture in the Rural Midwest," *Labor Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas* 1, no. 2 (2004). Kathleen Mapes also notes that some sugar companies discouraged car ownership by threatening to withhold credit advances.

tactics.²²⁶ Working together as a migrating community, many migrant farmworkers navigated the national USES system, understanding when to circumvent or use the organization. In 1977, ISES reports indicated that the service provided many referrals for agricultural employment, but made significantly fewer job placements.²²⁷ This suggests that either the ISES made referrals to jobs already filled by “free-wheelers,” or farmworkers used the agency to obtain information about possible jobs, but carefully chose which referral to accept. Even more telling, poor weather and harvests in other states led to a reportedly “urgent” situation in Illinois, as farmworkers desperate for money diverted their usual route to enter Illinois for work in 1977.²²⁸ While the influx of workers who commonly did not come to Illinois likely increased the use of the ISES, these workers carefully made decisions and did not always take any employment referral offered by the ISES. Though demanding the right to control migrant farmworkers as pawns in the agricultural state structure, many migrant farmworkers, through ‘free-wheeling’ and other methods, traversed the Midwest migrant stream outside the efforts of the State Employment Services.

Ultimately the ISES, like the Committee on Agricultural Migrants, discounted the voice of migrant farmworkers in their effort to control the migrant stream. In defining their charge as solely ensuring the labor needs of state growers and canners, SES services ignored the unequal power relationship between agricultural employees and employers. Lumping uncooperative and independent migrant workers under the term “free-wheelers,” the ISES defined what they

²²⁶ Bauer and Cammack, “The Competitive Structure,” 59; Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Committee, Meeting Tapes, 1969-1970, cassette audio recordings, Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, Illinois State Archives, Norton Building, Springfield, Illinois.

²²⁷ Illinois Manpower Review, 47.

²²⁸ Illinois Department of Public Health division of Sanitary Engineering, “Rules and Regulations for Migrant Labor Camps,” 1962, Public Health Migrant Advisory Committee, Commission on Children: Migrant Workers Study Research Files, 1950-1963, Illinois State Archives, Norton Building, Springfield, Illinois.

deemed good migrant workers, those who allowed the ISES to control their movements, and bad migrant workers, those who refused to be completely dictated by the bureaucratic agency. Though the Committee on Agricultural Migrants' use of English instead of Spanish and English suggested half-hearted attempts to placate public concern and racial bias, the ISES made no claim that they served migrants. Rather, the State Employment Services' few Spanish speaking staff represented the groups' unwillingness to address unequal power relationships between the employees and employers. Blatant disregard for the migrant men seeking decent jobs for their families, and the violation of state and national laws, only led to the decreasing and uneven use of the State Employment Services as employers and migrants sought more ideal conditions.

Illinois Departments

Successfully finding employment in Midwest agricultural fields, migrant farmworkers faced poverty conditions that necessitated their navigation of the Illinois state bureaucracy and welfare agencies. Illinois legislators estimated that migrant farmworkers made an average of \$1,580 in a year in 1970, significantly less than the \$1,732 a year in 1969.²²⁹ Even the \$1,732 high remained well below the poverty index for a farm residence in 1969 where the government defined a female-headed household with one child making less than \$2,117, in poverty.²³⁰ With such meager wages, and usually lacking health insurance, many migrant farmworkers in the Midwest needed state government assistance to survive. However, as the story of the Guerra family in the introduction suggests, language, residency, and racism

²²⁹ Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Committee, Meeting Tapes.

²³⁰ "Poverty: Income Thresholds at the Poverty Level in 1969 by Sex of Head, Size of Family, and Number of Related Children Under 18 Years Old, by Farm-Nonfarm Residence," prepared by the U.S. Census Bureau (Washington, DC, 1969), accessed 2009, <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/threshld/thresh69.html>.

restricted farmworkers' use of state services. Unlike committees such as the Committee on Agricultural Migrants, various Illinois state departments had pre-existing programs based on English-speaking permanent residency. The state departments' failure to provide meaningful programs for Spanish-speaking migrant farmworker families, as language and residency restricted aid to farmworker *familias*, evinced the state of Illinois' continued view of farmworkers as a temporary concern of the public.

Faced with public pressure, the Illinois state government, along with other Midwest states in the 1960s, tried to mitigate negative publicity regarding farmworkers' housing plight. Newspaper articles, organizations, and legislators commonly used "hovels" and "sprawling ghettos" as descriptors of the housing that growers provided migrants.²³¹ Housing could lack anything from toilet facilities and running water to stoves and air conditioning.²³² Like most Midwest states, Illinois law enacted regulations for farmworker housing well below the standards for permanent residences, accepting outside water supplies and toilet facilities. Not only relegating migrant housing well below non-migrants, most Midwest states' migrant housing regulations failed to cover a majority of growers and thus lacked enforcement. Illinois law only established housing regulations for growers employing at least ten migrants or four migrant families, allowing numerous growers who employed only a few migrant families to legally provide "hovels" for their workers.²³³ In the 1960s, the investigation of two-year-old Ernesto Perez' death because of pesticide exposure in DuPage County drew public attention to the Panaglotaros' farm where Ernesto died, leading to newspaper articles and public outrage

²³¹ John Gilbert, "Okay Migrant Housing Law," *Bensenville Register*, August 18, 1968; Charles Hayes, "Migrant Is Local Issue," *Daily Herald*, November 5, 1959.

²³² Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Committee, Meeting Tapes.

²³³ *Ibid.*

over migrant housing.²³⁴ Under the Illinois Department of Public Health, the Illinois state government attempted to appease the public's concern for migrants' appalling living conditions through limited legislative actions.

For migrant farmworker *familias*, language barriers and policies that discriminated against migrant farmworkers marred the Illinois Department of Public Health's efforts to investigate and improve migrant housing. Although laws established specific housing regulations, the Illinois Department of Public Health rarely inspected housing and provided only a limited avenue for migrants to report housing problems.²³⁵ Due to a shortage of staff, the Department of Public Health claimed it could not see all the facilities multiple times or when migrants worked during weekdays, which restricted investigators' access to housing due to privacy issues.²³⁶ This issue occurred throughout the Midwest, as Michigan's Department of Public Health rarely checked facilities twice, even if they had violations, even though sixty percent of migrant camps in Michigan had six violations per camp.²³⁷ In addition, few of the Department of Public Health's migrant housing investigators were bilingual.²³⁸ Language barriers made Health Department inspections ineffective, as migrants could not report unseen problems. Even with a rare Spanish-speaking staff member, inspectors failed to report or note problems resulting from the Illinois government and Department of Public Health's

²³⁴ Steve Franzmeier, "County Vows Action on Migrant Plight," *Around and About Addison*, August 13, 1960; "Farmers Rush to Better Quarters for Mexican Workers," *Bensenville Register*, August 11, 1960; Gilbert "Okay Migrant Housing Law."

²³⁵ Fall Report, prepared by the Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission; Fall Issue Report, prepared by the Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, (Fall 1972), 17, Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, Illinois State Archives, Norton Building, Springfield, Illinois; "Task Force on Migrants," prepared by the Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, 10, 17, Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, Illinois State Archives, Norton Building, Springfield, Illinois.

²³⁶ Fall Issue Report, prepared by the Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission; Ransom and Gross, "Housing."

²³⁷ Valdes, *Al Norte*, 174-175.

²³⁸ Report, prepared by the Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, (Summer 1975).

unwillingness to inconvenience growers. In a booklet designed to tell growers and canners about the housing regulation of Illinois, the Department of Public Health consistently assured the employer that the policies and laws would be followed under “reasonable” guidelines, arguing that regulations would not be systematically followed in a way that would cause hardship for employers.²³⁹ In another booklet, the Department tried to describe themselves as reasonable individuals who could ensure migrants, and by extension the Illinois public’s health, while also ensuring that the regulations did not negatively affect the agricultural economy. The Department’s desire to not inconvenience growers apparently extended to ignoring rat holes in mattresses, leaks in roofs, and flooding during their inspections.²⁴⁰ Preference for growers, lack of funding, lack of bilingual staff, and racism characterized the Illinois Department of Public Health’s role as housing regulators.

Not only did the Department of Public Health fail to properly investigate housing violations, but also the Department of Public Health’s system failed to accommodate non-permanent or Spanish speaking residents. The Illinois Department of Public Health made it difficult (if not impossible) for migrants to file complaints about their housing, with limited office hours and a long process that usually lasted well after a migrant had left Illinois.²⁴¹ Although the expansion of the Voting Rights Act in the 1970s and 1980s ensured non-English speakers received access to certain rights, such as election ballots in their language, legislation, and court decisions, it did not ensure that all state departments could adequately speak with its non-English speaking residence.²⁴² The Department of Public Health’s inflexible programs

²³⁹ “Rules and Regulations for Migrant Labor Camps,” i-ii; Ransom and Gross, “Housing.”

²⁴⁰ Fall Issue Report, prepared by the Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, 10; Report, prepared by the Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, (Summer 1975), 18.

²⁴¹ Fall Issue Report, prepared by the Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, 10.

²⁴² Del Valle, *Language Rights*, 105.

reflected not only a bureaucratic but also a class and racial propensity to ignore the facts on the ground. The Department designed their policies and forms for stationary English-speaking residents. Although not intended by the creation of the policies, the department's policies reflected an anti-foreign, anti-migrant mentality. In creating a lengthy and complicated process for English speakers, the Illinois Department of Public Health provided limited assistance to migrants to placate public concern for farmworkers.

The dangerous nature of migratory farm work: pesticides, inadequate housing and water, working with knives at a hurried pace, and dangerous machinery, complicated farm laborers' already inadequate access to medical help. Migrant *familias* often made poverty wages that made nutritional food and doctor visits almost impossible. Only large company growers and canneries offered any health insurance, though it was still inadequate.²⁴³ Illinois legislators could do little to aid workers until significant financial backing from the national government came in 1962.²⁴⁴ With national funds, Midwest states created and co-funded a variety of programs to provide medical assistance and food provisions to migrant workers. National legislation allowed for the creation of migrant health centers in "high-impact" areas, where a large number of migrants went, and migrant health projects in "low-impact" areas, where migrants could receive limited medical resources in the areas that employed fewer migrant workers.²⁴⁵ Illinois founded the Migrant Medical Program in 1977 to provide financial medical assistance to migrants; however, a newspaper claimed that of the fifty-three applications for help within the first year, the Migrant Medical Program denied twenty-two,

²⁴³ Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, Hoopston Hearing, July 24, 1970, cassette audio recording, Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, Illinois State Archives, Norton Building, Springfield, Illinois.

²⁴⁴ Valdes, *Al Norte*, 170-172.

²⁴⁵ Patricia C. Ramirez, "Migrant Health Care: A Mixture of Hope and Despair" *Health*, 7, no. 2 (March/April 1977), 6:2, DeKalb County Migrant Ministry, Regional History Center, Founders Memorial Library, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois.

suggesting the restricted nature of state assistance.²⁴⁶ Hospitals' limited funding and lack of translators restricted migrants' ability to seek medical assistance in the Midwest.²⁴⁷

Like the Illinois Department of Public Health's involvement in migrant housing, racism and residency requirements restricted state and county programs that provided food and medical assistance to migrant farmworkers. In Illinois and throughout the Midwest, residency restrictions excluded migrants from receiving aid. Migrants who did not regularly reside in a community were ineligible for Medicaid, food stamps and welfare, all of which were of vital aid to migrants.²⁴⁸ Several 1976 pamphlets from the Illinois Department of Public Aid noted that the state required aid recipients to live in the state or expect to remain in the state, which was certainly an issue for *migrant* farmworkers.²⁴⁹ In some cases, state and local officials inaccurately denied migrants aid. An organization, Food and Nutrition Services, insisted in 1980 that the United States Department of Agriculture investigate local and state failures to provide bilingual services and occurrences of offices refusing migrants assistance because of inaccurate calculations of income and "misinterpretations" of citizenship requirements.²⁵⁰ The Food and Nutrition Service claimed local and state offices around the nation often harassed migrants about their citizenship, insisted on using uncertain future income in calculating need,

²⁴⁶ Bonnie Gross and Jane Ransom, "Chronic Health Problems Afflict Migrant Families," *Chicago Sun-Times* North/Northwest Supplement, 6:1, DeKalb County Migrant Ministry, Regional History Center, Founders Memorial Library, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois.

²⁴⁷ José Martínez, interview by Mark DePue, July 31, 2008, transcript, 5, Agriculture in the Modern Era, Agriculture in Illinois, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library & Museum, accessed August 2014, <http://www.illinois.gov/alplm/library/collections/oralhistory/agriculture/Pages/default.aspx>.

²⁴⁸ Ramirez, "Migrant Health Care."

²⁴⁹ "Aid to Families with Dependent Children," prepared by the Department of Public Aid, 1976, 6:2, DeKalb County Migrant Ministry, Regional History Center, Founders Memorial Library, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois; "State Supplemental Payments to the Aged, Blind, or Disabled," prepared by the Department of Public Aid, 1976, 6:2, DeKalb County Migrant Ministry, Regional History Center, Founders Memorial Library, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois.

²⁵⁰ Community Nutrition Institute, "USDA Pressed on Farmworker Problems," X, no. 8 (February 21, 1980), 6:1, DeKalb County Migrant Ministry, Regional History Center, Founders Memorial Library, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois.

and used confusing and “misleading” forms.²⁵¹ Whether due to racial discrimination or residency requirements, farmworkers struggled to receive assistance from state governments because of the migratory nature of their life.

As migrants navigated the linguistic and residency barriers in food and medical aid, most migrants’ first encounter Illinois bureaucracy through the migrant educational programs, offering the opportunity to bridge the language gap for the next generation. For Illinois and most of the Midwest states, programs for migrant farmworker children often started before programs focused on adults. By 1968, the federal Bilingual Education Act (BEA) offered financial assistance to school districts to promote and establish bilingual educational programs.²⁵² In the Midwest, summer educational programs created by local communities and funded through state and national monies offered bilingual and ESL programs. Funding came from a variety of sources, with two Illinois migrant educational programs receiving funding from at least three government sources: HEW, Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, and CETA.²⁵³ In DeKalb, Illinois, the Children’s Learning Center, and in Kankakee, Illinois, the Little Star Migrant Center, offered summer educational opportunities to migrant children in the hopes of bridging the gap between their education in the Midwest and in their Southern homes of Texas, Florida, or Mexico.²⁵⁴ In addition, the DeKalb school district

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Del Valle, *Language Rights*, 226.

²⁵³ Mike Krey, “Migrant Student Program Strives for Continuity,” *Daily Chronicle*, July 19, 1978, 6:1, DeKalb County Migrant Ministry, Regional History Center, Founders Memorial Library, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois; Roberta Rempfer, “History of the Children’s Learning Center,” February 19, 1975, 1:7, DeKalb County Migrant Ministry, Regional History Center, Founders Memorial Library, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois; Mrs. Vernon Rempfer, note on history, 1:7, DeKalb County Migrant Ministry, Regional History Center, Founders Memorial Library, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois; Roberta Rempfer, Little Star Migrant Center 1979 Season Summary, 5:2, DeKalb County Migrant Ministry, Regional History Center, Founders Memorial Library, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois

²⁵⁴ Krey, “Migrant Student Program Strives for Continuity;” Rempfer, “History of the Children’s Learning Center;” Rempfer, note on history; Rempfer, Little Star Migrant Center.

established a program for Spanish speakers. Though not a bilingual program, as the Director John Cassani strongly insisted to the local newspaper, the DeKalb School District program focused on teaching children English while also respecting Mexican culture.²⁵⁵ As one of the initial forms of state involvement, migrant education offered the opportunity to break the linguistic and cultural barriers that divided migrant children from others, and, for some educators and migrant parents, the hope that the next migrant generation would permanently settle.

Language within education played a divisive role, as state offices did not always respect parents' language difficulties, and state agencies and the public debated the role of bilingual education and special programs for migrant children. Some Illinois departments, such as the State Board of Education, at least partially accepted the importance of breaking down language barriers between state institutions and parents as they published a Directory of Services for Migrant Families in 1977 in Spanish.²⁵⁶ Yet not all state governments and local communities accepted bilingual education. By 1979, members of the Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission (SSPSC) feared House Bill 169, as initiated by Representative Donald E. Deuster, would set bilingual education "...back ten years if not more."²⁵⁷ In Wautoma, Wisconsin, the local community failed to create an education program for migrant children, ignoring the problems of migrant children and the national and state funding available to assist migrants.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁵ Krey, "Migrant Student Program Strives for Continuity."

²⁵⁶ *Directorio de Servicios Para Familias Migrantes; Título I 89-750; Programas para Migrantes Oficina Estatal de Educación de Illinois, 1976-1977*, 5:10, DeKalb County Migrant Ministry, Regional History Center, Founders Memorial Library, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois.

²⁵⁷ Letter to Friends of the Commission from the Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, January 31, 1979, 5:13, DeKalb County Migrant Ministry, Regional History Center, Founders Memorial Library, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois.

²⁵⁸ Patricia Ann Pogre, Letters, migrant workers, 2:54, Wisconsin State Employment Service: Farm Placement, Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin.

Controversy regarding bilingual education divided the nation. Few Midwest school districts offered BEA-funded bilingual education, with four programs each in Illinois and Michigan, two in Indiana, and only one in Wisconsin and Ohio during the 1973-1974 school year.²⁵⁹ The limited bilingual programs in the Midwest reflected the tension between pacifying public concern for migrant farmworker children and public resistance to non-English languages. As programs such as the Children's Learning Center in DeKalb sought parental involvement, linguistic barriers between parents and teachers meant that, in the case of education, farmworker children themselves had to maneuver through the opportunities and restrictions of state and nationally funded educational programs.

In migrant farmworkers' interactions with state and state-funded local agencies, migrant families negotiated the state bureaucracy within their own gendered and family ideology and structures. State funded programs in Illinois and other Midwest states often failed to provide the assistance they were supposed to provide. As previously noted, migrant men often handled any interaction with the State Employment Services; but all family members interacted with state agencies, as families went to the hospital for medical treatment or agency offices for food assistance. With different family members interacting with different groups and different programs, migrant *familias* debated within their own cultural and gendered norms how best to handle state and local programs that often discriminated against them. While a migrant woman felt comfortable going to a local Michigan hospital to deliver her baby because of the available translators, a farmworker in Michigan did not want his wife to go to a local hospital because of rumors the local hospital discriminated against migrants.²⁶⁰ The occasional lack of translators at hospitals discouraged yet another migrant male, this time in Illinois, from seeking medical

²⁵⁹ Lawrence Wright, "The Bilingual Movement at the Crossroads," *The Phi Delta Kappan*, 55, no. 3 (November 1973), 184.

help; instead, he avoided medical treatment until he returned to Mexico.²⁶¹ Different migrant *familias* rejected and accepted assistance based on perception, fear and their role in the family.

Though one migrant male dictated his wife's interaction with state and local services, many other migrant women had to negotiate state and local programs, such as food stamps, education, and medical assistance, by themselves. Gloria Ortega went to a health service office in Ottawa, Ohio alone with her children to receive powdered milk.²⁶² Unfamiliar with the system and possibly dealing with a language barrier, Gloria Ortega waited for two days at the Putnam Regional Health Services as the office's employee racially insulted Gloria.²⁶³ Office staff continually ignored Ortega throughout the two days and the manager criticized her for the mess her children caused. The manager of the facility commented that the facility was "not just for the Mexicans." In reaction to the treatment she received, Gloria Ortega responded by writing a letter to the editor of the *Nuestra Lucha*, a Chicano community newspaper in Ohio.²⁶⁴ In some families, men dictated family members' interaction with state organizations, yet in other families women dealt with state agencies. In either case, whether women faced discrimination and language barriers in fulfilling traditional female caretaker roles or men protected their families from discriminating organizations, all migrants had to decide how best to handle language barriers and discrimination, whether through avoidance or confrontation.

Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission

²⁶⁰ "Texas-Michigan Public Health Service Migrant Health Project, 1957-1958: Summary of Findings Based on Interview at End of Migration Year," Migrant Problems Study Committee Illinois, 1958-1963, Commission on Children: Migrant Workers Study Research Files, 1950-1963, Illinois State Archives, Norton Building, Springfield, Illinois.

²⁶¹ Jose Martinez, interview by Mark DePue.

²⁶² Farm Labor Organizing Committee, Organizing Report, January-October 1976, 4:19, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit.

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

With increased public concern for minorities throughout the 1960s, Illinois in 1971 established the Illinois Spanish Speaking People's Study Commission (SSPSC), which investigated all Spanish speakers' concerns, including those of migrant farmworkers.²⁶⁵ Created only a few years after Illinois made English the official language of the state, the SSPSC's goal was to ensure the rights of "Spanish speakers." Similar to the committees created by other Midwest states, the SSPSC, like the Committee on Agricultural Migrants, investigated and suggested new and improved legislation to better conditions in the migrant stream and throughout the state.²⁶⁶ However, the SSPSC and similar Midwest committees remained largely ineffective because much of the legislation did little to better migrants' lives. Instead of bettering migrants' lives, SSPSC members worked to placate agricultural interest groups while providing little to no avenue for migrant involvement.

Outside pressure from agricultural interest groups, and legislator's racial and gendered perceptions of migrant farmworkers, influenced the effectiveness of the SSPSC and similar Midwest groups. Agricultural influence manifested itself sometimes in the brazen coalition between growers and government committees on migrant farmworkers. The Governor's Committee on Migratory Labor in Indiana included the president of the Indiana Canners Association, a person who had a vested interest in maintaining the agricultural system of power.²⁶⁷ Though the Illinois SSPSC did not consist of known canner or grower affiliates,

²⁶⁵ Illinois State Archives, "Spanish Speaking People's Study Commission," Archon database, accessed February 15, 2014, <http://archon.ilsos.net/?p=creators/creator&id=188>.

²⁶⁶ Valdes, *Al Norte*, 190, 196, 163, 143-144, 179; Letter to Dr. Frank Finch from Naomi Hiatt, February 27, 1961, Migrant Committee Evaluations, Commission on Children: Migrant Workers Study Research Files, 1950-1963, Illinois State Archives, Norton Building, Springfield, Illinois. Other committees in the Midwest include: Wisconsin's Governor's Migrant Committee, Ohio and Indiana's Governor's Committee on Migratory Labor.

²⁶⁷ Valdes, *Al Norte*, 179.

SSPSC members faced pressure to appease public concern by assisting migrant farmworkers without actually creating any real change that would anger powerful agricultural interest groups.²⁶⁸ For some committee members, legislation and investigations simply quelled protest and outrage over farmworkers' plight until the entire migrant system ended.

Created in 1963, the SSPSC investigated and suggested solutions to issues faced by Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and other "Spanish-speakers" in their everyday lives, both in rural and urban Illinois.²⁶⁹ The committee formed several subcommittees: Employment, Housing, Consumer Protection, Education, Agricultural Migrants, Political Representation, Justice and Police, Health and Welfare, and a subcommittee on the "Implementation of existing legislation."²⁷⁰ The main committee consisted primarily of state congressmen while the SSPSC encouraged subcommittees to include persons who were experienced in the area of the subcommittee and were persons of Puerto Rican, Mexican, and Cuban backgrounds. Records on the SSPSC committee members included numerous persons of Puerto Rican descent, and several others with Spanish surnames, which comprised the non-congressional members of the committee.²⁷¹ Some of the Latino members actively took part in ethnic organizations, such as the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) and the Puerto Rican Political

²⁶⁸ Fall Report, prepared by the Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission (Fall 1974); Spring Issue Report, prepared by the Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, (Spring 1973); Report, prepared by the Spanish Speaking People's Study Commission (Summer 1975), 1-5; Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, Meeting Tapes.

²⁶⁹ Fall Report, prepared by the Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission (Fall 1974).

²⁷⁰ Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, Summary of January 28th Meeting of the Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, 1972, Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, Illinois State Archives, Norton Building, Springfield, Illinois.

²⁷¹ Fall Report, prepared by the Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission (Fall 1974); Spring Issue Report, prepared by the Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, (Spring 1973); Report, prepared by the Spanish Speaking People's Study Commission (Summer 1975), 1-5; Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, Commission Meeting Tapes; Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, Minutes, cassette; Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, note with handwriting.

Committee, with a few who had union backgrounds.²⁷² Biographies described no one as a migrant or former migrant, and although the committee sought to represent the state of Illinois, almost all the committee members came from the Chicago/Northern Illinois area. The makeup of the SSPSC and its subcommittees suggested that the SSPSC focused primarily on urban areas, improving the life of “Spanish speakers” in the main center of Illinois’ permanent Latino population, Chicago.²⁷³

The Northern, urban focus, and the failure of the Agricultural Migrants subcommittee to provide a migrant or former migrant representative, continued to subjugate migrant farmworkers’ issues. By creating a subcommittee under a large umbrella committee called the Spanish Speaking People’s Study Commission, the Illinois government allowed the complicated issues of the migrant stream to become secondary to the general issues faced by all, but most importantly to the SSPSC, urban “Spanish-speakers.” Unlike the other issues addressed by the SSPSC, such as police relations and urban housing, migrant farmworkers were a part of a national structure shaped not only by racism, but also by powerful corporations on a local and national level. In treating the problems of the migrant stream under general issues represented by the SSPSC and in failing to give farmworkers a voice, the SSPSC could not accomplish real change in the agricultural system.

The type of change the SSPSC members sought partially reflected their gender. Between the Committee on Agricultural Migrants and the SSPSC, the Committee on Agricultural Migrants consisted of large numbers of women concerned with children, while the SSPSC consisted of legislators and representatives from organizations and activists, most of

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ "Illinois - Race and Hispanic Origin for Selected Large Cities and Other Places: Earliest Census to 1990," prepared by the U.S. Census Bureau (Washington, DC), accessed May 4, 2009, <http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0076/ILtab.pdf>. By the 1970s, the Chicago population was 14 percent Hispanic.

whom were men. The SSPSC's gendered makeup influenced the type of efforts they focused on, as they offered little comment in the way of migrant education; rather, they left early women-dominated groups to deal with migrant education and focused solely on general migrant problems. Although the SSPSC's mission did not restrict the committee to children like the ICC subcommittee, its male and urban composition, in combination with a lack of migrant farmworker's involvement and broad scope of concern, shaped SSPSC efforts.

Tempering public criticisms of the migrant stream, Illinois politicians and the SSPSC addressed migrants' problems, sometimes with benevolent intentions, but never through empowerment. SSPSC efforts to fix the "migrant problem" in the 1970s and 1980s happened in a time period where farmworkers' issues intersected with the movements for change at the national level, as consciousness of issues influenced political agendas that promised change. State legislators and organizations tried to end the problems inherent in migrant work when public forums and the press raised the daily difficulties migrants faced in the stream. The Illinois government/SSPSC viewed migrant farmworkers along two interconnected frameworks, describing migrant workers as both helpless victims in an agricultural power structure and defenseless minorities who could not better their own lives. The SSPSC, as an institution, acknowledged the racial aspect of the agricultural power structure, but they ignored the state government's own collusion through legislation and committee structure. The Illinois government, like the rest of the Midwest, founded legislation and committees based on a racialized interconnected framework that safeguarded legislators' authority to shape farmworkers' fates with minimal input from farmworkers themselves.

Migrant farmworkers had limited opportunities to influence the SSPSC. One time came when the SSPSC committee visited a migrant camp, and another when they held hearings in

different locations throughout Illinois where locals spoke about issues of concern.²⁷⁴ The last opportunity came when the SSPSC sent out a questionnaire in both English and Spanish.²⁷⁵ The speakers at the hearings included Latinos and non-Latinos on issues ranging from police harassment, to housing discrimination, to migrant farm labor. At the hearings, people offered their varied opinions ranging from those speaking on behalf of ending racism and discrimination, to migrant farmworkers, to grower representatives defending unfair practices, as seen in the case of a Stokely Van Camp representative from Hoopeston.²⁷⁶ Yet the subcommittee on migrants, feeling that previous studies adequately covered the basic information, did not establish or create any new studies on migrants.²⁷⁷ Instead, the migrant subcommittee members visited migrant camps as best they could and spoke with workers during those visits.²⁷⁸ Unlike the earlier Committee on Agricultural Migrants under the ICC, the SSPSC did provide farmworkers with an avenue to voice their concerns to the committee at local hearings. Yet again, language would restrict farmworkers' access to representation, as the

²⁷⁴ Spring Issue Report, prepared by the Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, (Spring 1973).

²⁷⁵ Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, Questionnaire Prepared by the SSPSC for the Spanish Speaking Community of Illinois, April 28, 1978, 5:8, DeKalb County Migrant Ministry, Regional History Center, Founders Memorial Library, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois; la Commission de Studio Para la Gente de Habla Hispana, Cuestionario Preparado por la Commission de Studio Para la Gente de Habla Hispana, para Someterlo a Consideracion de la Comunidad Hispana, April 28, 1978, 5:8, DeKalb County Migrant Ministry, Regional History Center, Founders Memorial Library, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois.

²⁷⁶ The hearings were recorded on cassette tapes and supposedly transcribed, however most of the cassette tapes were erased or damaged. As such only a few hearings remain including part of the Waukegan hearings, Hoopeston, and approximately one sixth of Sterling, Illinois' hearings. The transcripts are missing. It should also be noted that thirty-one reel-to-reels with other possible hearings or tapes of committee meetings were missing as of 2009.

²⁷⁷ Fall Issue Report, prepared by the Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, 17. I never found any extensive study or statistics of Illinois migrants outside these statistics. The committee never reported where they found their information except to say that the information came from non-government agencies.

²⁷⁸ Fall Issue Report, prepared by the Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, 17. The time frame migrants came to Illinois, starting as early as April, did not always coincide with the congress' schedule, so visits to the migrant camps were initially delayed.

SSPSC offered limited translation services to non-English speakers.²⁷⁹ While migrants could fill out a questionnaire or speak at one of the hearings, access and language barriers complicated their ability to make their opinions heard; yet when they did, they had to voice their frustrations with state bureaucracies that limited the migrants' rights.

When the SSPSC examined migrants' problems, they used gendered language that depicted the migrants as incapable of helping themselves. In a section of the SSPSC's report entitled "The Visit," the subcommittee described a migrant camp as follows:

From the road we could see in the distance the farms with their small white houses. It was one of those views that had made famous the fields of Illinois. Suddenly, amidst this natural beauty, a fence, a graveled road and a crowded view of shacks on top of a small hill as they were on top on one another. They brought to the memory the concentration camps that one has seen in so many documentaries... On the very top of the hill, women shivering with cold were washing dishes and clothes. The clean shacks with flowers here and there helped to disguise their ugliness. The room with a partition as a kitchen, without sink, only with a small stove in which coffee and bacon were being cooked... Outside, young men walk on the dusty road toward the cold looking common showers. As we drive away an old lady sweeping in front of her shack smiled at us... A feeling of hopelessness invaded us as we drove away from a Migrant Camp.²⁸⁰

The SSPSC described migrants' problems in hopeless terms and the migrants themselves appeared not as agents, but as individuals unable to change their living and working conditions. The SSPSC also described migrants in gendered language, as seen in the above paragraph. The SSPSC described the women as cooking and cleaning as the male migrants walked outside to the showers. Yet the paragraph makes no suggestions as to what the men just did as everything

²⁷⁹ Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, Sterling hearing, September 27, 1978, cassette audio recording, Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, Illinois State Archives, Norton Building, Springfield, Illinois; Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, Waukegan hearing, September 23, 1972, cassette audio recording, Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, Illinois State Archives, Norton Building, Springfield, Illinois; Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, Hoopeston Hearing, July 24, 1970, cassette audio recording, Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, Illinois State Archives, Norton Building, Springfield, Illinois..

²⁸⁰ Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, Sterling hearing; Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, Waukegan hearing; Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, Hoopeston hearing.

in this paragraph depicted either an inactive person or an activity overshadowed by a miserable predicament and gendered as “inactive.” Sweeping, cooking, and cleaning are rarely viewed as active, instead they are usually degraded as feminine actions. The paragraph never depicted the migrants as laborers in fields or canneries, or as capable and willing to change a degrading system. Like their other reports, the SSPSC’s “visit” publication was not available in Spanish, making the committee unaccountable for their biased view of migrants’ helplessness.

The language used by the SSPSC to describe migrants, and the failure of the SSPSC to establish open linguistic communications with non-English speakers, portrayed farmworkers as passive, despite evidence to the contrary. By the time of the SSPSC “visit” to the camp in 1971, farmworkers had already created several farmworker unions and organizations, even achieving some success; the most widely known case being the United Farm Workers in California, a union of primarily Mexicans who organized themselves and gained national attention and support throughout the 1960s.²⁸¹ More local geographically speaking to Illinois, the Obreros Unidos (OU) in Wisconsin and FLOC in Ohio both originally organized in the late 1960s by farmworkers and ex-farmworkers to better the lives of migrants.²⁸² While the OU failed to achieve their objectives in 1968, and FLOC had only brief success in the 1960s, FLOC’s strike initiated in 1978 and OU’s efforts still demonstrated the possibility of farmworkers actively changing their situation.²⁸³ Like their brethren in other Midwestern states, farmworkers in Illinois made small efforts to gain a certain level of control over their lives. Farmworkers spoke at SSPSC meetings about the issues they faced, avoided or partially used the ISES to their benefit, reported housing violations to authorities, and refused to work for growers with

²⁸¹ Frank Bardacke, *Trampling Out the Vintage: Cesar Chavez and the Two Souls of the United Farm Workers* (New York: Verso, 2011).

²⁸² Valdes, *Al Norte*, 190-191; Barger and Reza, *The Farm Labor Movement in the Midwest*.

²⁸³ Valdes, *Al Norte*, 188-190. FLOC’s strike is further described in Chapter 5.

horrendous conditions; all of which demonstrated migrant farmworkers' agency. Not all SSPSC members necessarily knew about farmworkers' activism, yet several of the members must have been aware of these unions and organizations, making the committee's view of helpless farmworkers unrealistic and unfortunate.

Without the power to change existing laws or provide greater funding to enforce existing laws, the SSPSC's legislative efforts merely provided temporary solutions to the "migrant problem." The SSPSC recommended several laws, which the Illinois government passed in 1975, including an amendment to the Child Labor Law to include agricultural workers and raise the working age to twelve years old for non-family members of farmers.²⁸⁴ In addition, the Illinois state government passed a law that forced employment and private agencies to provide the work recruitment paperwork to the individual in English and the language the worker spoke, as well as increased the violation from a Class C to a Class A misdemeanor for private employment offices.²⁸⁵ The state also passed the Illinois Farm Labor Contractor Certification Act that required crew leaders to register with the state.²⁸⁶ However, the Illinois Congress tabled, or killed, SSPSC recommendations to include agricultural workers in the Unemployment Compensation Act and for the addition of farmworkers in the Workman's Occupational Disease Act and the Fair Employment Practice Act in 1975.²⁸⁷ Other acts killed included requiring educational and recreational facilities as well as first aid stations in migrant camps, and providing \$25,000 to the Department of Public Health so they could hire

²⁸⁴ Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, *Enacted Migrant Laws, 1975*, 5:8, DeKalb County Migrant Ministry, Regional History Center, Founders Memorial Library, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁷ Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, *Proposed Commission Bills: Tabled Migrant Legislation, 1975*, 5:8, DeKalb County Migrant Ministry, Regional History Center, Founders Memorial Library, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois.

bilingual migrant camp inspectors.²⁸⁸ SSPSC legislative suggestions failed to radically change the system of power, as they focused on creating minor changes that only supported faulty state aid systems.

The Conclusion or the *Continuación* of the Migrant Stream?

Facing mounting public pressure to address the appalling situation of migrant farmworkers throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Midwest state governments, like Illinois, established committees, agencies, and legislation. Despite public pressure, state government responses characterized a resistance to radically altering or investigating the problems inherent within the migrant stream, instead subsuming migrant problems under other issues and ignoring the language barriers that divided many migrant farmworkers in the nation from the permanent, English-speaking public and government of Illinois. As Mexican and Mexican American migrant farmworker *familias* navigated the various Midwest state groups and legislation meant to better their lives, linguistic barriers allowed governments to ignore the voices of migrants in favor of English-speaking, white, permanent residents. Throughout the Midwest during the last half of the twentieth century, permanent, English-speaking residents manned the agencies and committees created to assist migrants, defining the “migrant problem.”

Just as public pressure initiated apathetic Midwest state government efforts in the 1960s and 1970s, so too did the dissolution of this interest lead to the disbandment of committees and legislative efforts in the 1980s and 1990s. Shifting migrant streams and cultural changes within the nation diverted public sympathy and attention away from migrant farmworkers. The 1980s backlash against welfare efforts, minority concerns, and unions created an atmosphere that

²⁸⁸ Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, Proposed Commission Bills.

slowly extinguished the public outcry and compassion over migrant farmworkers' plight.²⁸⁹ The SSPSC ended in 1984 because migrant numbers decreased enough that the public could easily forget and ignore migrant issues.²⁹⁰ These changes characterized shifting patterns in the migrant stream rather than the increase in mechanization that many argued would totally replace farmworkers. Mechanization did increase in the 1960s and 1970s, but land issues and increasing undocumented workers in the late 1970s decreased grower compulsion to totally replace farm laborers with machines.²⁹¹ The shifting migrant route meant that the disappearance of migrants in some areas of the Midwest occurred at the same time as public concern and aid committees disappeared from the Midwest social and physical landscape.²⁹²

With shifting migrant streams and changing social concerns came changes in state government efforts. Like Illinois, many of the Midwest state committees focused on farmworkers eventually disappeared as farmworker numbers and public interest decreased, and as fewer groups and individuals debated legislation and the actions of state departments. Largely rural populations, influence of growers and large canneries, the power of urban versus rural interest, and farm labor unions impacted public sympathy and, as a result, state efforts. The Illinois government's concern for migrants diminished significantly in the 1980s, but the farmworker union FLOC made migrant farmworkers a prevalent issue in Ohio throughout the

²⁸⁹ Joseph A. McCartin, *Collision Course: Ronald Reagan, the Air Traffic Controller and the Strike that Changed America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Guadalupe San Miguel, Jr., *Contested Policy: The Rise and Fall of Federal Bilingual Education in the United States, 1960-2001*, (Denton, Texas: University of North Texas Press, 2004); Del Valle, *Language Rights*.

²⁹⁰ Illinois State Archives, Spanish Speaking People's Study Commission, Archon.

²⁹¹ James W. Parker, "2 Worlds Collide," *The Plain Dealer*, September 23, 1979, 5:13, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

²⁹² George Gutierrez, interview by Lucille Aikins, March 16, 1981, transcript, 14, 2.31, Oral History Collection: Town Gown Relations in DeKalb, 1955-1980, Regional History Center, Founders Memorial Library, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois; Anderson, "P'urépecha Migration into the U.S. Rural Midwest."

1980s.²⁹³ Started in 1977, Ohio's Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs addressed a broad range of "Spanish Speaker" concerns.²⁹⁴ With declining and varied public interest came different state responses, as some Midwest states continued commissions focused on "Spanish-Speakers" and others dissolved similar committees.

The disintegration of public concern in the Midwest 1980s and 1990s mirrored the intensifying language debate in the United States. Despite the failure of groups such as US English to make English the official language of the United States in the 1980s, statewide efforts to restrict the use of languages other than English, in addition to a backlash against bilingual education, became common throughout the nation and the Midwest.²⁹⁵ Mexican Americans fought for linguistic rights within the Midwest and the nation during this backlash. In Illinois, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) investigated and sued the Illinois Board of Education for their failure to enforce and provide directions on how to analyze Mexican American students' English proficiency.²⁹⁶ Onarga, Illinois in Iroquois County schools' perfunctory examination of students led to a low estimate of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students that ultimately meant the school district could avoid a state law requiring a bilingual program, jeopardizing children's education.²⁹⁷ *Gomez vs. Illinois Board of Education* forced the state of Illinois to provide a standard by which testing would determine LEP and enforce the 1971 state law that legislated a bilingual program for

²⁹³ "Zimmers Propose Negociaciones Cole Colectivas," *Nuestra Lucha*, July 1982:2, 5:20, Farm Labor Organizing Committee, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

²⁹⁴ Ohio Latin Affairs Commission, "What We Do: Advise, Connect, Build," accessed January 22, 2014, <http://ochla.ohio.gov/AboutUs/WhatWeDo.aspx>.

²⁹⁵ David A. Badillo, "Litigating Bilingual Education: A History of the *Gomez* Decision in Illinois," *Latinos in the Midwest*, ed. Rubén O. Martinez (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2011) 207-226; San Miguel, Jr., *Contested Policy*.

²⁹⁶ Badillo, "Litigating Bilingual Education;" *Gomez, et. al v. Illinois State Board of Education* 811 F.2d 1030 (1987), Justia, accessed May 5, 2014, <http://law.justia.com/cases/federal/appellate-courts/F2/811/1030/205943/>.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

twenty or more LEP students in a school and fulfilling the national Equal Educational Opportunities Act (EEOA) of 1974 to provide “appropriate action to overcome language barriers” in education.²⁹⁸ In 1988, bilingual education came under attack nationally as President Ronald Reagan decreased federal funding and legislators weakened the BEA in the 1980s and 1990s while state and national organizations tried to enact English only laws.²⁹⁹ Mexican and Mexican Americans’ rights to bilingual education, citizenship status, affirmative action, and basic rights and services came under attack and criticism. In the Midwest and the nation, language continues to be a point of contention, with the ability to either empower and facilitate, or repudiate and disparage, the rights and culture of transitory and settled Mexican and Mexican Americans.

The Midwest migrant stream has continued to this day despite estimates to the contrary. In reality, Mexican migrants like the Guerra family still travel from their homes in Texas, Florida, or Mexico to the northern states, finding jobs through agencies like the State Employment Service, financially scraping by as weather conditions destroy or delay work, and facing the constant threat of injury or poisoning. And, as before, linguistic barriers continue to shape migrant *familias*’ interaction with Midwest state services and governments. Though state committees such as the SSPSC ceased meeting, and although legislation increased and state departments still dispense aid, farmworkers in the Midwest still struggle. As *The Chicago Sun-Times* stated in 1978 about their investigation on migrants, “. . .peering behind the honeysuckle curtain to see what life there is like. And what they found should prick the conscious of the

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

²⁹⁹ Badillo, “Litigating Bilingual Education.”

comfortable to greater compassion and stir bureaucracies toward more resolute dedication to their obligations. What's there is shameful."³⁰⁰ And it still is.

³⁰⁰ "Harvest of Shame: 1978 Crop," *Chicago Sun-Times*, August 19, 1978, 6:1, DeKalb County Migrant Ministry, Regional History Center, Founders Memorial Library, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois.

CHAPTER 3

"BITTER HARVEST"³⁰¹: AGRICULTURE, GENDER, AND GROWER-FARMWORKER RELATIONS IN A CHANGING LANDSCAPE

“All of them were caught in something larger than themselves. Some of them hated the mathematics that drove them, and some were afraid, and some worshipped the mathematics because it provided a refuge from thought and from feeling.”³⁰²
-The Grapes of Wrath

Marching along the cold paved streets in 1985 Iowa, men and women held signs demanding change in the agricultural system of the nation. As one protester argued, “It’s a big change...People here are getting tired of getting stepped on. We’re learning how to fight back...This is the only way to get what we deserve.”³⁰³ The angry protesters were not alone. Labor unions and clergy throughout the nation supported the protests.³⁰⁴ Television crews and journalists stood nearby watching the spectacle and interviewing the protesters, noting the people’s anger and frustration at the current agricultural system and the momentous nature of the protest.³⁰⁵ Two years before the Iowa march, another group of individuals marched, this

³⁰¹ I picked “Bitter Harvest” because it appears to be a relatively popular phrase used to describe both growers and farmworker’s stories throughout the world in addition to the recent phenomenon of consumer worries about what is happening with the food we eat. Interestingly, many of these newer books focus on consumer safety with little comment on farmworker or meatpacker workers’ safety.

³⁰² John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath* (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1988), 42.

³⁰³ Eillen Ogintz, “Hardships Pulling Farm Belt Together,” *Chicago Tribune*, March 11, 1985.

³⁰⁴ Laurie Cohen and Christopher Drew, “Farmer Protests Gaining Steam as Crisis Worsens,” *Chicago Tribune*, January 27, 1985; Ogintz, “Hardships Pulling Farm Belt Together.”

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

time from Toledo, Ohio to Camden, New Jersey protesting the role of corporations in the agricultural system.³⁰⁶ This group specifically protested Campbell Soups' ability to control the system of production in their region.³⁰⁷ As a core group traveled with tired feet across the landscape, members of the public, clergy, and labor unions joined the protesters' demands for change.³⁰⁸ The media wrote about the protesters tired journey like they did about the protest two years later.³⁰⁹ However, there existed major differences between the two protests; the Iowa protest consisted of angry growers and the second of farmworkers boycotting and striking both the Campbell Soup Corporation and the growers in Ohio that sold tomatoes to the company.³¹⁰ Like the Joads in *Grapes of Wrath*, the agricultural structure trapped growers and farmworkers in a system much larger than themselves, a system where corporate interests created divisions between growers and migrants while sanctioning growers' abuse of farmworkers. Though the similarities in protests and the shared support network suggested ties between the two different groups, growers and farmworkers remained divided within public perception and often, within their own viewpoints.

Despite the similarities between both marches, migrants and growers rarely understood their common position within the agricultural system while public perception contained farmworker's struggles for a better life and the Farm Crisis, as two distinct stories. The 1960s and 1970s were a time where farmworkers unionized and gained the attention of the public, government officials, and church leaders. For growers, the 1970s was a time of prosperity,

³⁰⁶ Eric Harrison, "Farm Workers' Long Trek to Camden Reflects the Passion of a 5-Year Strike," 5:14, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹⁰ Ibid.

especially for grain growers, as land values and crop prices rose.³¹¹ Encouraged by the economy, the government, and banks, growers bought more land and more machinery.³¹² When the economy faltered in the late 1970s and throughout most of the 1980s, growers struggled to maintain ownership of their farms.³¹³ Though a vast majority of farmers did not employ farmworkers, the narrative of Midwest growers in the 1980s ignored the limited, but important vegetable and fruit growers and the farmworkers they employed. For the public, the 1960s and 1970s emphasized the role of migrants in the agricultural system, while the 1980s Farm Crisis highlighted corporate and government power over growers, but many in the public failed to see the entire pyramid of power to understand the complicated role of growers, farmworkers, corporations, and governments in the system. Despite the connection between growers and farmworkers and the intimate association between the economic situation of growers and the migrants that worked in the fields, the Farm Crisis narrative remained disconnected from the farmworker narrative.

Growers, migrants, and the public separated the narrative of farmworkers and growers from each other, and in so doing overshadowed the role of the landscape as a factor that shaped and was shaped by the interaction between migrant farmworkers and growers. The Midwest landscape shaped the crops grown, the work performed by farmworkers, farmworkers' route through the Midwest, and growers' financial situation. At the same time, the facade of the

³¹¹ Mark Friedberger, "Women Advocates in the Iowa Farm Crisis of the 1980s," *Agricultural History* 67, no. 2 (Spring 1993), 227-228.

³¹² Timothy J. Conlan, "Bitter Harvest: Intergovernmental Dimensions of the Farm Crisis," *Publius* 17, no. 3 (Summer 1987), 145-161; Cohen and Drew, "Farmer Protests Gaining Steam as Crisis Worsens;" Friedberger, "Women Advocates in the Iowa Farm Crisis of the 1980s," 227-228; Barry J. Barnett, "The U.S. Farm Financial Crisis of the 1980s," *Agricultural History* 74, no. 2 (Spring 2000), 366-380.

³¹³ Barnett, "The U.S. Farm Financial Crisis of the 1980s," 366-380; Jim Hightower, "The Case for the Family Farm" in *Is There A Moral Obligation To Save The Family Farm?* ed. Gary Comstock (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1987); Steve H. Murdock and F. Larry Leistritz eds., *The Farm Financial Crisis: Socioeconomic Dimensions and Implications for Producers and Rural Areas* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988).

Midwest, specifically of Midwest family farms and the agrarian ideal, influenced growers' perception of themselves, their interactions with farmworkers, and the public understanding of growers' troubles during the economic crisis of the 1980s. The Farm Crisis of the 1980s narrative focused on the loss of family farms in the nation, especially in the Midwest where the mythos of the small, male-led, family-labor centered farm still pervaded public and even grower imaginations.³¹⁴ In fact, family farms had previously changed from the envisioned ideal as many vegetable and fruit family farms in the Midwest employed Mexican and Mexican American migrant farmworkers. The narrative of farmworkers in the Midwest became largely separate from the narrative of Midwest family farms, ignoring the reality of the land.

In the Midwest, the land connected the disparate migrant and farmer narratives. Migrant farmworkers moved across the land, toiling on land with their families as they struggled sometimes against growers and corporations. For growers, the land was what they struggled to produce enough on to survive in an environment where corporations increasingly gained power and government and banks pushed growers to risk more. The imagining of the landscape also shaped growers understanding of their place in the agricultural system, and as a result, their perception of migrant farmworker's place and the gender dimension of agricultural labor. Similarly, the Midwest agrarian ideal shaped public perception of what Midwest farms were, family-oriented institutions threatened by corporate interests and not also employers that defended the agricultural system's abuse of migrant farmworker families. The landscape not only influenced the interaction between growers, migrant farmworkers, and the public, but migrant farmworkers and growers also shaped the land. Farmworkers provided the means

³¹⁴ William Adams, "Natural Virtue: Symbol and Imagination in the American Farm Crisis," *The Georgia Review* 39, no. 4 (Winter 1985), 695-712; Mark Ritchie, "Our Loss: The Family Farm" *CALC Report*, April 1982, 10, 24:3, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan; Frank Tobias Higbie, *Indispensable Outcasts: Hobo Workers and Community in the American Midwest, 1880-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 5-7.

through with growers could expand acreage, necessitating the creation of migrant camps to house farmworkers. With migrant camps came negotiations between growers and migrants over the meaning of private property when migrants demanded the right to organize a union in their migrant homes owned by growers. Land determined the type of crops, which in turn influenced the gender composition of workers and therefore the housing provided by growers as single men could be housed in a large bunker and families could not. In analyzing the landscape of the Midwest, both the real and the imagined, the narratives of growers and farmworkers in the Midwest comes into focus and allows for a greater understanding of their interaction and provides an analysis of how migrant farmworkers became so disconnected from the agricultural narrative of the Midwest in the late twentieth century.

Sowing the “Bitter Harvest”

The public imagining of Midwest agriculture had long been at odds with reality. The idyllic public perception of rural society and farmers in the United States as moral, stronger, family oriented, male, and inherently possessing the democratic ideals of the nation, had a long history.³¹⁵ Thomas Jefferson praised and envisioned the United States as a nation of small farmers, with the male farmer working with his entire family on the land and where male hired farm hands could eventually realize their own desire of land ownership.³¹⁶ This idealism quickly faced different agricultural realities as national racism against Asians, African Americans, and Eastern Europeans restricted land ownership and led to large-scale abuse of

³¹⁵ Jack Temple Kirby, “Rural Culture in the American Middle West: Jefferson to Jane Smiley,” *Agricultural History* 70, no. 4 (Autumn 1996), 581-597; James H. Shideler, “The Farm in American History” *OAH Magazine of History* 5, no. 3, 18-23; Higbie, *Indispensable Outcasts*, 4-10.

³¹⁶ Kirby, “Rural Culture in the American Middle West;” Shideler, “The Farm in American History;” Higbie, *Indispensable Outcasts*, 4-10.

farm laborers in the East Coast, West, and South, and as large scale, industrial farms created “factories in the field.”³¹⁷ In addition, the realities that women labored in the fields and provided much needed income through chicken, egg, and milking operations countered the classification of farmer as “male.”³¹⁸ Yet the male ideal became strengthened through the corporatization of farming as women became marginalized in agriculture operations.³¹⁹ While slavery, racism, and “factories in the fields” marked other parts of the nation, the Midwest agrarian ideal remained largely intact into the twentieth century despite the eventual shift from family and community labor, to reliance on male transitory hobo labor at the end of the nineteenth century.³²⁰ Despite relying on outsiders, first Anglo hobos and by the early to mid-twentieth century, Mexican and Mexican Americans, the Midwest maintained its idyllic rural image.

Though the imagined Midwest fields consisted of grains, the nature of the Midwest landscape determined the crops grown and therefore the type of work and the structure of the migrant stream that developed in the twentieth century. Most Midwest growers grew corn and soybeans for large powerful processing corporations such as Archer Daniels Midland and Cargill, crops that rarely required migrant labor.³²¹ Though grain crops required little in the way of hand labor, agribusinesses and processing corporations like Cargill could dictate prices and products just like the corporations that bought fruit and vegetable crops. For this reason, all

³¹⁷ Cary McWilliams, *Factories in the Field: The Story of Migratory Farm Labor in California*. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1939); Cindy Hahamovitch, *The Fruits of Their Labor: Atlantic Coast Farmworkers and the Making of Migrant Poverty, 1870-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1997); Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*.

³¹⁸ Friedberger, “Women Advocates in the Iowa Farm Crisis of the 1980s,” 224-234.

³¹⁹ Jane Adams, *The Transformation of Rural Life: Southern Illinois, 1890-1990* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 188-192.

³²⁰ Higbie, *Indispensable Outcasts*, 10-13.

³²¹ Brewster Kneen, *Invisible Giant: Cargill and its Transnational Strategies*. (London: Pluto Press, 2002); Michael Pollan, *The Omnivore’s Dilemma: The Secrets Behind What You Eat* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006).

farmers in the Midwest worked within an agricultural system dominated by corporate interests. In addition to grain crops, Northern Ohio and Southern Indiana contained large numbers of tomato and cucumber fields, while Southern Illinois and Northern Michigan land successfully produced fruits.³²² Growers produced various other vegetables in central parts of Ohio, Northern Illinois, and Wisconsin, as Minnesota and Michigan growers grew sugar beets.³²³ These different types of crops determined the migration stream for farmworkers and the role of agribusinesses. The growth and harvesting of cucumbers and tomatoes around Ohio offered migrants the ability to switch between the two crops with ease. At the same time, sugar beet companies as well as tomato and pickling companies, usually sold the seed to a contracted grower and processed the products after harvest.³²⁴ Yet the types of crops also influenced the gender dimensions of work. For one migrant family that worked the cucumber and tomato fields from June to October, the fieldwork allowed the whole family to work together, but in October and November, the man of the house could work packing sugar beets, a job considered too difficult for women and children.³²⁵ Similarly, the father of the Delgado family, who worked in Ohio during 1974, loaded tomatoes as the wife and other family members picked

³²² Illinois State Employment Service, "What Type Farm Job Do You Want?," Migrant Problems Study Commission I, 1950-1957, Commission on Children: Migrant Workers Study Research Files, 1950-1963, Illinois State Archives, Norton Building, Springfield, Illinois; Joy Hints, "Seven Families: A Two Year In-Depth Study of Incomes and Job Experiences of Seven Ohio Migrant Farm Worker Families, 1974-6," 1976, 20:3, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan; Migrant Labor Camps 1984, 19:45, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan; Kathleen Mapes, *Sweet Tyranny: Migrant Labor, Industrial Agriculture, and Imperial Politics* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 141-142, 221; Dennis Nodin Valdes, *Al Norte: Agricultural Workers in the Great Lakes Region, 1917-1970* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991); Jim Norris, *North for the Harvest: Mexican Workers, Growers, and the Sugar Beet Industry* (St. Paul, Minnesota: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2009).

³²³ Ibid.

³²⁴ Mapes, *Sweet Tyranny*; Valdes, *Al Norte*; Norris, *North for the Harvest*; W.K. Barger and Ernesto M. Reza, *The Farm Labor Movement in the Midwest: Social Change and Adaptation among Migrant Farmworkers*, with a forward by Baldemar Velásquez, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994).

³²⁵ Ibid.

tomatoes.³²⁶ For all farmworkers, the farmland played a vital role in grower, migrant relations as the land dictated the type of crops grown, and therefore the gender dimensions of the labor and migrant family's decisions on how to negotiate the migrant stream.

By the mid-twentieth century, the increasing numbers of Mexican and Mexican American migrant farmworker families working in the Midwest brought government, church, and journalist's scrutiny of the system. Between 1960 through the 1970s, this fervor reached its peak with state and national regulations on migrant farmworker housing, pay, insurance, social security, and crew leaders.³²⁷ In the Midwest and throughout the nation, the public reacted to the horrible conditions of migrant families in the nation as reports such as the nationally televised Edward R. Murrow special *Harvest of Shame* depicted the struggles of men, women, and children.³²⁸ In the Midwest, Churches and a few Latino groups created organizations and programs to provide assistance to farmworkers through legislation, negotiating between growers and farmworkers, and through programs that assisted farmworkers with leaving the stream.³²⁹ Simultaneously, farmworkers themselves fought the agricultural system by unionizing and striking, with the two most well known Midwest unions being the short-lived Wisconsin's Obreros Unidos and Ohio's Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC).³³⁰ In the case of FLOC, the union drew on the cooperation and strength of entire farmworker families to not only strike, but also convince the public of the powerful role of corporations such as

³²⁶ Joy Hints, "Seven Families."

³²⁷ Federal Legislation on Migrants Prepared for the Agricultural Migrant Committee, circa 1961, Migrant Problem Study Commission II, 1958-1963, Commission on Children: Migrant Workers Study Research Files, 1950-1963, Illinois State Archives, Norton Building, Springfield, Illinois.

³²⁸ Edward R. Murrow, *Harvest of Shame*, directed by Fred W. Friendly, (CBS Report, November 24, 1960), videocassette.

³²⁹ See Chapter 4 for more on aid organizations.

³³⁰ Valdes, *Al Norte*, 190-192; Barger and Reza, *The Farm Labor Movement in the Midwest*, 55, 59-60; James Terry, "The Political Economy of Migrant Farm Labor and the Farmworker Movement in the Midwest" (Ph.D. dissertation, Purdue University, 1988) 141-143.

Campbell. Yet despite some public awareness about the role of corporations in the agricultural system, growers remained the focus of public and government policies and regulations regarding the treatment of migrant farmworkers. With more regulations, public scrutiny, and farmworker unionization came grower's frustration with migrants as they struggled to survive.

Growers' frustration over increased public scrutiny and farmworker unions became to some growers, an obstacle to stay on the land that had been in their family for generations. For some growers, national regulations and public support of farmworker unions restricted the independence so inherent to the agrarian ideal. To these growers, state and national regulations proved that the nation ignored the struggle of family farmers by supporting costly policies that benefitted migrants to the detriment of small growers.³³¹ Federal regulations such as the Crew Leader Registration Act that required crew leaders to register, the Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act, Child Labor Laws, state laws that provided certain requirements for migrant housing including the registration of migrant housing; and state workman comp laws all established complex rules governing policies regarding migrant employment. Mechanization brought relief from unions and public scrutiny of farmworker conditions, yet scientists and corporations failed to totally mechanize fruit and vegetables crops, and existing mechanization required expanding acreage and increased debt for growers.³³² For fruit and vegetable growers that also grew grains during the early to mid-1970s, the increase in grain crop value in addition to the increase in farmland value in the 1970s made

³³¹ Frank E. Martinez "Migrants: Legal Status of the Farmworker in Minnesota," (Seminar, Fall 1970), Al Wroblewski Papers, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota; American Crystal Labor Agency, 8:10, Red River Sugar Beet Grower Records, Northwest Minnesota Historical Center, Livingston Lord Library, Moorhead University, Moorhead, Minnesota; Letter to Bill Dosland from Stewart Bass, January 10, 1974, 20:13, Red River Sugar Beet Grower Records, Northwest Minnesota Historical Center, Livingston Lord Library, Moorhead University, Moorhead, Minnesota.

³³² "Mechanization-Another View," *Nuestra Lucha* 2, no. 5 (July 1979), 5, 5:20, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

expansion easier.³³³ Yet the land dictated what could be grown, restricting many growers to grain crops when grain prices fell in the late 1970s.³³⁴ No matter what crops growers grew, all growers struggled to survive when land and grain prices fell in the late 1970s.³³⁵ Many small grain growers had to sell or foreclose on farms in their family for generations as larger, corporate, growers with capital survived the 1980s “Farm Crisis.”³³⁶ Growers that combined grain with fruits and vegetables found a slight reprieve in the 1980s as fruit and vegetable prices did not plummet, yet these growers faced costly regulations that made the family farm’s survival difficult.

Growers not only faced more farmworker regulations, but also laws concerning undocumented immigrant in the 1970s and 1980s. Public outrage at the increasing number of undocumented Mexican immigrants resulted in greater regulation, more stringent border enforcement, and Immigration Naturalization Service (INS) raids. Although the United States government did not know the number of undocumented migrants who worked in Midwest agricultural fields in the latter half of the twentieth century, the public’s anti-immigrant sentiment in the 1980s and 1990s had a profound effect on Midwest agriculture. Undocumented workers provided growers, canneries, and meatpacking plants a cheap source of labor that greater border enforcement and regulation threatened.³³⁷ Though Midwest agriculture continued to employ undocumented immigrants, public concern altered the power relationship between growers and farmworkers. Employers could contact INS to counter unionization while

³³³ Ibid; Barnett, “The U.S. Farm Financial Crisis of the 1980s,” 372-375.

³³⁴ James W. Parker, “2 Worlds Collide,” *The Plain Dealer*, September 23, 1979, 5:13, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

³³⁵ Conlan, “Bitter Harvest,” 145-161.

³³⁶ Hightower, “The Case for the Family Farm,” 205-206.

³³⁷ Matt Garcia, *From the Jaws of Victory: The Triumph and Tragedy of Cesar Chavez and the Farm Worker Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 150.

simultaneously regulations that demanded proof of citizenship before employment encouraged some growers to work through crew leaders to avoid legal responsibility.³³⁸ For family farm growers of the mid-twentieth century, regulations and laws concerning undocumented immigrants restricted grower's freedom regarding employment practices.

As some in the nation feared undocumented workers took jobs from citizens and used benefits paid for by taxpayers, others demanded undocumented immigrants be given rights, and all the while growers demanded the continuation of cheap labor. As a solution, the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) in 1986 provided an avenue for citizenship to undocumented immigrants already in the country, though simultaneously creating stricter regulations and a stronger border system.³³⁹ To pacify growers, Congress added the Special Agricultural Worker (SAW) provision that allowed for an easier path to citizenship for workers employed briefly in U.S. agriculture while the Replenishment Agricultural Worker (RAW) allowed the importation of foreign workers under a documented labor shortage in the fields.³⁴⁰ Though the government never implemented the RAW provision, SAW allowed for the legalization of millions of previously undocumented immigrants who saw brief agricultural employment as an easy means to permanently live in the United States.³⁴¹ Despite initial grower fears, many SAW immigrants remained workers in the agricultural fields of the United States and many more came because of SAW, essentially flooding the agricultural labor market.³⁴² The employment of Mexican and

³³⁸ Letter to Agricultural Manager and Agriculturalist Stew Bass, July 25, 1979, 20:13, Red River Sugar Beet Grower Records, Northwest Minnesota Historical Center, Livingston Lord Library, Moorhead University, Moorhead, Minnesota; Chris Eckert, interview by Mark DePue, July 31, 2008, transcript, 22, Agriculture in the Modern Era, Agriculture in Illinois, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library & Museum, accessed August 2014, <http://www.illinois.gov/alplm/library/collections/oralhistory/agriculture/Pages/default.aspx>.

³³⁹ Linda C. Majka and Theo J. Majka, *Farm Workers, Agribusiness, and the State*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982), 23, 33.

³⁴⁰ Ibid.

³⁴¹ Ibid.

³⁴² Majka and Majka, *Farm Workers, Agribusiness, and the State*.

Mexican American migrant farmworkers in the Midwest began to alter the construction of the Midwest agricultural landscape and public perception of farming as growers and the public struggled to find a place for farmworker hovels within the envisioned agrarian ideal.

Jefferson's Agrarian Ideal and the *Harvest of Shame*

The involvement and influence of growers in the national policies of the United States government demonstrated growers' power over the migrant farmworker streams, but the notion of the Midwest family farm would continue to cloud public acknowledgement of Midwest growers' role in farmworkers' lives. The 1980s Farm Crisis added an existential crisis to the agrarian ideal with the new threat to the family farm. Many envisioned parents and children forced off land that had been in their family for generations.³⁴³ Hidden within public imagining of the Midwest rolling fields were grower's tomato, cherry, apple, cucumber, mushroom, and other numerous fruit and vegetable fields grown and harvested in the Midwest. Though many fruit and vegetable growers operated family farms, they also employed migrant farmworkers that traveled from their homes in Texas, Florida, or Mexico to work in various northern fields.³⁴⁴ As 1960s Midwesterners came to realize that the *Harvest of Shame* happened in their own backyards, the agrarian ideal that envisioned small, noble, traditional family Midwestern growers, clouded the public's ability to see the *Harvest of Shame* happened in *family* farmers fields. Though some Midwesterners would come to realize that the violence and oppression of farmworkers in California happened to a degree in the Midwest, the vision of the small family

³⁴³ *Country*, directed by Richard Pearce (Walt Disney Video/Mill Creek, 1984); *Places in the Heart*, directed by Robert Benton (Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, 1984); *The River*, directed by Mark Rydell, (Universal Studios, 1984).

³⁴⁴ Valdes, *Al Norte*, 136-137.

farm would forever shape the public vision of the Midwest landscape as one free from the divisions and racism.

The social, racial, and economic divisions inherent in the migrant stream affected the relationship between growers and Mexican and Mexican American migrant farmworkers and shaped the layout of the rural Midwest. Scattered throughout the Midwest were rural communities made up of growers, canneries, and small local businesses. Most growers housed migrants on their land or in facilities built by several growers, usually far from the community's center.³⁴⁵ For growers Steve and Nancy Turnow in Ohio, they housed fifty individuals in several cramped houses that lacked running water.³⁴⁶ While most women became increasingly disconnected from farming operations, Nancy managed the migrant camp located far from the local community of Lindsey, Ohio, making her an important contact for farmworkers and an integral part of the farm operation.³⁴⁷ Physically separate from towns and living on grower land or in housing paid for by growers, growers could dictate not only the living conditions of farmworkers, but also their contact with local communities and other migrants and ex-migrants. Claiming ownership of the land, growers barred, sometimes violently, both farmworker unions such as FLOC and even individuals trying to offer aid to farmworkers.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁵ Minnesota Department of Health, *Migrant Health Services* 7, no. 2 (March-April 1969), 10:2, Red River Sugar Beet Grower Records, Northwest Minnesota Historical Center, Livingston Lord Library, Moorhead University, Moorhead, Minnesota.

³⁴⁶ Gary Pakulski, "Worried About His Future, Says Farmer 27," *Catholic Chronicle*, July 12, 1985, 20, 24:58, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

³⁴⁸ "FLOC: The Second Five Years," *Nuestra Lucha* 1, no. 11 (November- December 1977), 5, 5:20, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

Yet the farming landscape's inclusion of farmworker housing sometimes established familial ties between growers, farm families, and migrant families. While the controlling, paternalistic relationship between growers and farmworkers did occur, other growers attempted to treat farmworkers more like family. Correspondence between a DeKalb County Illinois grower, Joe Lanan, and migrant workers like Severa Fraga, suggested a fairly cordial relationship where they asked about each other's health and Severa Fraga referenced inside jokes for the name of Lanan's car or a migrant worker talked about a birth of a baby.³⁴⁹ Though Lanan might have felt close to some of the migrants he employed, other growers specifically noted feeling close to some of the farmworkers that came to their fields. The existence of farmworker families on family farms offered more ties between farmworkers and farmers as women and children could initiate friendships between women and children. Karen Dawson of Hartford, Michigan felt close to the migrant family, the Avilas, she and her husband employed while Irene McGuire described a close relationship with the wife of the migrant family who worked on their farm, noting that she insisted the migrant wife call her by Irene not Mrs. McGuire.³⁵⁰ Dawson and other growers respected the migrants' family relationship, specifically male-headed households and respect for parents.³⁵¹ Yet one grower that called the migrants he employed "his kids" because they "were like family" suggests even when growers compared

³⁴⁹ Letter to Joe Lanan from Juan Felipe [Reyneu,] October 31, 1967, 4:4, Guy Lanan Collection, Regional History Center, Founders Memorial Library, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois; Letter to Joe Lanan from Severa Fraga, 4:4, Guy Lanan Collection, Regional History Center, Founders Memorial Library, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois.

³⁵⁰ Daniel Rothenberg, *With These Hands: The Hidden World of Migrant Farmworkers Today* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 65; Irene McGuire, interview by Mike Maniscalco, May 27, 2008, 8, Agriculture in the Modern Era, Agriculture in Illinois, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library & Museum, accessed August 2014, <http://www.illinois.gov/alplm/library/collections/oralhistory/agriculture/Pages/default.aspx>.

³⁵¹ Rothenberg *With These Hands*, 65; Dan Waste Jr., "Appleton Goes to Bat for Migrants" *Minneapolis Tribune*, June 22, 1969, Migrants, 1945-1976, Mexican American Community in St. Paul Collections, Minnesota State Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota.

farmworkers to family, they did not necessarily view their employees as equals.³⁵² In addition, cordial and family-like relationships did not lead to changes to the physical landscape of most family farms or a significant financial benefit for farmworkers, resulting in a strained relationship as migrants lived and worked in poverty conditions next to their employer “friends.”

Housed on farms away from local cities and towns, farmworkers became outsiders to rural communities. Rural small towns and cities depended on the canneries, growers, and large businesses for the community’s survival and community members felt a strong desire to maintain the status quo.³⁵³ Many rural communities considered the migrant farmworkers that came to the Midwest as outsiders not only because migrants were racially, linguistically, and culturally separate, but also physically separate from the community center. Though the Turnow family farm accepted migrants’ right to determine the visitors in their “home,” migrants remained separate from the local community.³⁵⁴ Nancy Turnow argued to the *Catholic Chronicle* that local perceptions of migrants changed since her husband grew up on a farm, in that their children played with migrant children, yet she also emphasized how the FLOC strike would hurt the permanent local community far more than farmworkers, distancing migrant issues from the concerns of the local community.³⁵⁵ For migrant farmworkers, “Private Property” signage provided a psychological signal that they were outsiders to the local community and that growers controlled their temporary homes.

³⁵² Article, 24:58, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

³⁵³ “Update on FLOC Related Legal Cases,” 24:9, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

³⁵⁴ Pakulski, “Worried About His Future.”

³⁵⁵ Ibid.

Any efforts by reporters, unions, churches, or a few community members to address the poor housing and working conditions of migrant farmworkers met with general anger as growers and other community members fought for the continuation of their picturesque land and psychologically distanced “do gooders” from the community.³⁵⁶ When some locals or nearby community members noted the conditions of farmworkers, grower and even the local community depicted them as “do-gooders” and more importantly “outsiders.” Growers especially argued that individuals outside the community riled up migrants and that churches and reporters failed to speak with growers about their struggles, instead these “outsiders” just agitated state and national officials to create more regulations.³⁵⁷ Growers argued these regulations in turn forced them to cease growing the fruits and vegetables that employed farmworkers, hurting farmworkers.³⁵⁸ In Putnam County, Ohio where FLOC initiated a strike against the Campbell Corporation so central to the community, the entire community reacted with rage and supported the local violent sheriff Robert Beutler.³⁵⁹ In declaring “do gooders” as outsiders, some rural communities maintained a peaceful, idyllic image of rural society and family farms, ignoring how the beautiful vegetable and fruit fields hid shacks and stooping migrants.

Though opposition to outsider “do gooders” characterized numerous Midwestern cities and towns, other communities displayed a more complex dynamic to the insider/outsider division. With the fervor of public concern for migrants generated in the 1960s, some local

³⁵⁶ Pakulski, “Worried About His Future;” Letter to J.C. Tanner from R.A. Krabbenhoft, August 9, 1971, 20:10, Red River Sugar Beet Growers Records, Northwest Minnesota Historical Center, Livingston Lord Library, Moorhead University, Moorhead, Minnesota.

³⁵⁷ Ibid.

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

³⁵⁹ “Update on FLOC Related Legal Cases;” “Sunday Demonstration for Law and Order,” *Putnam County Sentinel*, October 10, 1979, 5:13, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

community members actively analyzed the living and working conditions of migrant farmworkers. However, the involvement of various growers and cannery businessmen on some of these committees resulted in a complex understanding of migrants' role in communities. In Michigan, Malivina Holvorsen who, with her husband, ran a farm argued that migrant aid committees had to address grower concern when considering farmworker problems.³⁶⁰ Both Holvorsen and another Michigan fruit grower in Grand Junction, both held positions in organizations concerned with migrant farmworker conditions.³⁶¹ In arguing that growers struggled to provide adequate housing when they lacked the money, both the Holvorsen and the fruit grower described migrants as disrespectful, dirty individuals who did not respect or understand the housing and facilities provided.³⁶² In doing so, these rural residents differentiated farmworkers from the rest of the clean rural community by blaming the dirty blight of migrant camps on the migrants. The residence of some cities and towns, like the local communities in Putnam County, Ohio where the FLOC strike started, resisted efforts to radically better farmworkers' lives, especially when it threatened to modify their economic base. For various Midwest areas, "helping" migrants meant minor assistance that ensured the maintenance of the racially based agricultural system.

Growers and rural residents not only categorized migrant supporters as "outsiders" and "insiders," but farmworkers as well. As an Illinois report of a Study Committee on the Church and Agriculture exclaimed: "The public acknowledges the existence of migrant workers, but it

³⁶⁰ Letter to Reverend Isaac Igarashi from Mrs. Malvina Holvorsen, March 2, 1966, 1:5, Michigan Farm Worker Ministry Coalition Collection Papers, 1950-1990, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan; Larry Hills, "The Migrant Ministry Can Help the Michigan Fruit Farmer," *Michigan Christian Advocate*, 10, 3:43, Michigan Farm Worker Ministry Coalition Collection Papers, 1950-1990, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

³⁶¹ Ibid.

³⁶² Ibid.

declines to accept them as member of the community. As soon as crops ripen, farmers anxiously await their coming; when the harvest closes, the community with equal anxiety awaits their going.”³⁶³ Local growers and entire cannery communities labeled individuals like ex-farmworker and FLOC leader Baldemar Velasquez, an outsider because he raised public interest and concern on farmworker conditions.³⁶⁴ Yet, Velasquez grew up in the local fields and his transitory life made him no more or no less an outsider than every other migrant farmworker.³⁶⁵ Similarly, California growers labeled United Farm Worker members as outsiders in comparison with “our workers” who refused to unionize.³⁶⁶ Northern Ohio communities saw FLOC migrant families who worked in the area as outside agitators, yet they viewed Campbell as a part of the local community. Though Campbells’ cannery in Napoleon, Ohio employed many in the local community; locals defended the company over individuals who constantly migrated to the area and sought better conditions.³⁶⁷ One grower described migrant farmworkers that worked and never pushed for unionization or better conditions as “kids” or “our workers,” reflecting a paternal relationship with migrants he viewed as acceptable.³⁶⁸ Some growers spoke of unionization as a threat to happy worker’s lives, differentiating farmworkers that agitated for change with farmworkers that refused to speak out, creating an “insider” “outsider” dynamic even among migrants.³⁶⁹

³⁶³ Elgin World Ministries Commission Church of the Brethren General Board, Illinois, " 'This Land: Ours for a Season': Report of a Study Committee on the Church and Agriculture," February 1974, 19:38, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

³⁶⁴ Terry, "The Political Economy of Migrant Farm Labor," 167.

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

³⁶⁶ Marshall Ganz, *Why David Sometimes Wins: Leadership, Organization, and Strategy in the California Farm Worker Movement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 145.

³⁶⁷ "Campbell Employees Regret Boycott Backing," *Catholic Chronicle*, June 28, 1985, 22, 24:58, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

³⁶⁸ Article.

³⁶⁹ Letter to J.C. Tanner from R.A. Krabbenhoft.

Grower's relationship with farmworkers, though paternalistic at times, did not necessarily reflect rural communities' portrayal of migrants. If farmworkers tried to leave the migrant stream and live in local towns or cities, they met rural residents hostility as many viewed migrants as a blot on their ideal community with their dilapidated housing and uncultured life. In Walworth County, Wisconsin, the vegetable fields brought an influx of workers, but over time, the Mexican and Mexican American farmworkers came to settle in the area in the late 1960s as food processors and factories offered more remunerative opportunities.³⁷⁰ The *Milwaukee Journal's* description of the influx of farmworkers in the city of Delavan in Walworth County depicts the physical change of Delavan's landscape. "Dark faces of [migrants'] children dot the classrooms, Singsong Spanish is heard on the streets. Pinto beans and tortillas are on grocers' shelves. Old, dilapidated houses are crammed with these families..."³⁷¹ The description of physical changes within Delavan all leading to dilapidated housing suggests the disturbing physical changes that locals believed social and cultural outsiders, or migrants, brought to the landscape.

Though fearing the sight of dilapidated housing on their street, only some Midwest communities had issues with dilapidated housing when it existed far in the outskirts of town, hidden from the community and the picturesque image of the rural scene. The death of a young migrant child, Ernesto Perez, in DuPage County, Illinois and the public scrutiny of the horrible living conditions by the investigation that ensued, brought attention to this blot on the local area and resulted in newly built housing facilities created by local growers.³⁷² The negative publicity

³⁷⁰ Loren H. Osman, "Migrants Stop Wandering, Settle in Walworth County," *Milwaukee Journal*, March 12, 1969, Wisconsin Governor's Committee of Migratory Labor: Records, 1960-1972, 3:10, Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*

³⁷² Molly Wiseman, "On Three Area Farms: Migrant Life Improving," *Roselle Register*, August 11, 1968.

from the event forced the local community and growers to deal with the shame and negative publicity, forcing growers and other community members to repair their damaged public image. Not all communities reacted negatively to farmworkers, as one rural town offered a celebration for the local migrant farmworkers for their hard work and some other communities had members that truly desired to better farmworkers' lives in the 1960s and 1970s. Yet in numerous Midwest communities, residents viewed migrants as unwanted "outsiders" that forced residents to acknowledge that the agrarian ideal rang hollow.³⁷³

Midwestern communities' concerns that migrant farmworkers lived too close for comfort reflected the changing physical and psychological distance between growers and migrant farmworkers in the Midwest. The late nineteenth century practices of male farm hands sleeping in the main house and laborers eating supper with the farm family suggested a sense of comfort between worker and employee.³⁷⁴ Over time, the more migratory and "outsider" the labor, the more likely farm laborers slept, ate, and worked away from the family home. By the 1960s, laborers became minority migrant families who lived and ate outside the farm house as female farmers successfully negotiated farm laborers out of the farmhouse where farm women previously cooked and or cleaned for workers.³⁷⁵ The continued separation between the farm family and the migrant family, as in the case of Steve Turnow who rarely played or interacted with migrants as a child growing up on a farm, demonstrated social separation.³⁷⁶ By the 1950s and 1960s when Mexican and Mexican American migrant farmworkers worked in the vegetable and fruit fields of the Midwest, growers' relationships with farmworkers was

³⁷³ Rohda Miel, "Blissfield Host Picnic for Workers," *Daily Telegram*, 19:3, Michigan Farm Worker Ministry Coalition Collection Papers, 1950-1990, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

³⁷⁴ Adams, *The Transformation of Rural Life*, 113-115.

³⁷⁵ Adams, *The Transformation of Rural Life*; Higbie, *Indispensable Outcasts*, 10-13.

³⁷⁶ Pakulski, "Worried About His Future."

categorized by separate physical spheres within the physical landscape of the family farm.

Housed away from the family farm home and characterized as children and socially inept, some growers ensured migrants remained distanced both psychologically and physically from growers' ideal family farm.

“You Can Only Push the Farmer So Far”³⁷⁷

“You can only push the farmer so far,” argued the cucumber grower Rosendale to the FLOC leader Baldemar Velasquez, “Things’re marginal now.”³⁷⁸ These two sentences summarize the struggles of growers during the start of the Farm Crisis in the late 1970s and into the 1980s. However, growers struggled not only with the crisis, but also changes pushed by farmworker unions, new regulations and laws regarding farmworkers and undocumented immigrants, and the shattering of the independent agrarian farmer image. Most growers vehemently opposed greater regulations on migrant housing and strict enforcement of employment of undocumented immigrants because it raised their costs during a time where they were barely surviving due to the increasing cost of seed, machines, and chemicals and their decreasing income from products.³⁷⁹ Many growers strongly opposed the influence and power of agricultural corporations, in so far as they influenced and controlled grower’s fate, yet growers failed to see farmworkers’ common struggle versus agricultural corporations or their own complacency in migrants’ struggles.

³⁷⁷ Article.

³⁷⁸ Ibid.

³⁷⁹ Pakulski, “Worried About His Future;” Letter to Richard Krabbenhofdt from Alex Dexter, August 7, 1979, 20:13, Red River Sugar Beet Grower Records, Northwest Minnesota Historical Center, Livingston Lord Library, Moorhead University, Moorhead, Minnesota.

As opposition to FLOC demonstrated, growers also feared their increasing lack of independence that was so pivotal to the agrarian image. FLOC wanted to work with growers to ensure the Campbell Company paid for increased migrant expenses while providing growers a better price for their product, yet most growers strongly resisted working with farmworkers.³⁸⁰ As Baldemar Velasquez argued, “Unfortunately, the farmer considers himself an independent businessman protecting his petty-profit margins...Committed to a misguided notion of ‘rugged individualism’ sadly enough, he superexploits our people and what he cannot get from the multinational he gets it from the sweat of our back.”³⁸¹ Growers resisted any threats to their independence, as loss of power threatened the primarily male growers’ ability to control their land that was so important to the growers’ self-image and masculine identity.³⁸² The agricultural system relied on abusive labor practices by growers to maintain the illusion of grower independence, and in the process, hide the role of stooped laborers and agricultural corporations in the fields.

With the advent of Mexican and Mexican American migrant families working in Midwest fields came public criticism and questions about the picturesque image of the family farm long characterized by a hardy work ethic and the moral and physical strengthening of family members. Farmers argued that children especially benefitted from working on farms, building muscle and character. In a short educational video from the 1960s, city children visited relatives on a farm for a summer where they became stronger, had fun, but also developed a

³⁸⁰ Barger and Reza, *The Farm Labor Movement in the Midwest*, 61; "Ohio Catholic Bishops Urge Campbell Boycott," *The Blade*, June 18, 1985, 24:58, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

³⁸¹ Baldemar Velasquez, "Farm Labor Organizing Committee Report Fourth Quarter" (International Conference Presentation, November 1978), 3, 4:21, Farm Labor Organizing Committee, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

³⁸² Eric Ramírez-Ferrero, *Troubled Fields: Men, Emotions, and the Crisis in American Farming*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005); Michael R. Nusbaumer, "Rural Masculinity in Context: When Going Bigger Risks Your Manhood," *Journal of the Indiana Academy of the Social Sciences* (October 2009), 33-45.

strong work ethic.³⁸³ Growers argued that living and working on farmland benefitted children and they used this argument to fight against the inclusion of agriculture in child labor laws.³⁸⁴ One Wisconsin article about child labor legislation affecting cherry pickers described the “do-gooders” concerned about migrants and demanding child labor laws as lazy individuals unaccustomed to a little hard work and was responsible for destroying family togetherness by stopping children from working with their families.³⁸⁵ The author’s portrayal of cherry picking as a means for family fellowship and a way to instill good hard work ethic into children ignored the basic problem that children of migrants sometimes missed school to assist their family in the fields all day.³⁸⁶

The family farm ideal not only glorified the value of children’s labor but also the value of hard labor in farming culture. Arguing that modern society devalued hard work, Karen Dawson of Hartford, Michigan, argued that the public felt sorry for growers and migrants who worked all day on the land and got dirty.³⁸⁷ Dawson felt that people in the United States did not respect hard labor, implying public concern for migrant farmworkers lay in lack of respect for growers’ hard work, not the deplorable living and working conditions of migrant farmworkers.³⁸⁸ This argument expounded the virtues of working the land but ignored the fact that most farmworker families had to work in the migrant stream to survive. Various congressional members extolled the virtue of the family farm, specifically their importance to

³⁸³ “Uncle Jim’s Dairy Farm,” produced by Jam Handy (National Dairy Council, 1963), DVD.

³⁸⁴ Jim Robertson, “Minimum Age on Cherry Pickers Viewed as Blow to Initiative, Family Effort,” Wisconsin Governor’s Committee of Migratory Labor: Records, 1960-1972, 3:3, Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin; Anne B. W. Effland, “Agrarianism and Child Labor Policy for Agriculture,” *Agricultural History* 79, no. 3 (Summer 2005), 281-297.

³⁸⁵ Robertson, “Minimum Age on Cherry Pickers;” Effland, “Agrarianism and Child Labor Policy.”

³⁸⁶ Barger and Reza, *The Farm Labor Movement in the Midwest*, 101.

³⁸⁷ Rothenberg, *With These Hands*, 66.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

the nation, equating family farms with American values.³⁸⁹ These arguments ignored the changing and gendered nature of agriculture, as corporatization and crop centralization pushed women out of agriculture and led to farmworkers, rather than farm families, working on the farm. Support for the agricultural ideal failed to acknowledge farming's male dominance and that the only familial aspect of farming left was the migrant men, women, and children working in the fields to survive.

As growers defended the agricultural ideal, their relationship with the land changed, and some growers remained blind to their own changing relationship with the land. Corporations and banks pressured growers to “get big, or get out,” and to grow limited types of crops on massive scales, usually year after year. To do so, growers used chemicals to enrich soil depleted from producing the same crop constantly, while fruit and vegetable growers employed larger numbers of farmworkers or bought machinery to harvest their expansive fields.³⁹⁰ The family farm grew from a small family operation to a large operation that increasingly required outsiders, which also led to growers continuously poisoning the land and the people on it.³⁹¹ At the same time, these efforts failed to provide for farm families, forcing family members to find waged work. Instead of growers relying on the labor of their family for survival, they relied on migrant farmworker who in turn relied on their own families for survival.

³⁸⁹ *The Spreading Impact of the Farm Crisis: Hearing before the Joint Economic Committee*, September 19, 1985, 99th Cong. 13, 24-25 (1985); *Farm Crisis: Growing Poverty and Hunger among America's Food Producers: Hearing before the Domestic Task Force of the Select Committee of Hunger, House of Representatives*, June 24, 1987, 100th Cong. 4 (1987).

³⁹⁰ Steve Franzmeier, "County Vows Action on Migrant Plight," *Around and About Addison*, August 13, 1960; Letter to Pat Whelan from Frank I. Meinen, September 19, 1973, 1:14, UFW Wisconsin-Milwaukee Boycott Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan; Dana L. Hoag, *Agricultural Crisis in America: A Reference Handbook* (Santa Barbara, California: ABL-CIO, 1999), 20-50.

³⁹¹ "FLRP Organizes Pesticide Task Force," 5:20, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan; Randy Shaw, *Beyond the Fields: Cesar Chavez, the UFW, and the Struggle for Justice in the 21st Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 121-141; Crop-Dusted Farmworkers File Suit, October 19, 1977, 2:11, DeKalb County Migrant Ministry, Regional History Center, Founders Memorial Library, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois.

Meanwhile, the changing demographics in the field paralleled the changing demographics in the family farmhouse. With the beginning of the Farm Crisis of the 1980s, male and women's relationship with farming, the land, and farmworkers changed. The farming ideal focused specifically on men as farmers while women remained "helpers." With the corporatizing of farming, women's roles in poultry, dairying, gardens, and egg production became marginalized as farming operations became large, masculine endeavors.³⁹² By the 1980s, some women became arguably disenchanted with farming, with many seeking off-farm employment for both financial and personal reasons.³⁹³ More and more farms survived because of off-farm employment, occasionally by men, but more often by women. Women's employment outside the farm represented the professionalization of farming within the confines of the family farm narrative, making men the sole "farmers," an occupation that required an increasing amount of capital and debt subsidized in part by women's off-farm employment.

With the gendered professionalization of family farms, family farms became industrial centers. The farming landscape became a masculine center of science and industry and no longer a small, family-focused operation. These changes shaped grower relations with farmworkers as the relationship became one of a man managing a large operation with employees, not a man working with family and friends. The male industrial nature of farming emotionally distanced growers from farmworkers as migrant and farm families no longer had an opportunity to interact daily. In addition, the employment of men and women outside the farm weakened the family farm myth as farmland no longer provided all that a family required. Instead, farm families expanded their reality to include waged labor in towns and cities, not

³⁹² Katherine Jellison, *Entitled to Power: Farm Women and Technology, 1913-1963*. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 165-180.

³⁹³ Ramírez-Ferrero, *Troubled Fields*.

only among their family members, but also those employed on their farm. Expanding the farming landscape to include waged labor also shattered part of the farming ideal as waged labor meant the inability of growers to provide for their family. This inability shattered the traditional male and farming idealism that positioned men and farms as providers, and as such encouraged growers to resist regulations, laws, and policies that diminished their other powers in regards to farmworkers. Grower strategies to resist farmworker regulations within the farmworker/grower relationship became an ever-important part of many growers' lives in the last half of the twentieth century.

The effect of the modern family farms ultimately damaged the land and people. The public image of the family farm centered on the assumption that it brought a family together and that each generation passed the land down to future generations. However, the massive scale of farming usually involved more than a single family, economic times forced family members to find jobs off the farm, continuously expansive acreage offered less opportunity for the children of farmers, and the poisoning of the land and water only made it less likely that future generations could profitably use the land.³⁹⁴ All the while, pesticide poisoned growers and farmworkers and thousands of individuals moved around every year to live in shacks with little pay.³⁹⁵ Growers fought for a stretch of land, arguing that regulations imposed on them jeopardized the family farm, as farmworkers not tied to a piece of land had the mobility to leave the area for work.³⁹⁶ Unlike growers who lived on the land they owned, migrants were not tied to one piece of land; yet migrants depended on the land, and the methods of production affected their survival. In reality, the family farm that growers fought for had long since

³⁹⁴ Hoag, *Agricultural Crisis in America*, 20-50; Conlan, "Bitter Harvest," 150.

³⁹⁵ Franzmeier, "County Vows Action on Migrant Plight."

³⁹⁶ Pakulski, "Worried About His Future."

disappeared, and the agricultural industry's ideal of a scientific, business utopia rang hollow to the people in the fields and in the farmhouse.³⁹⁷

“And on His Farm He Had a ...”

The popular “Old MacDonald” song with verses containing various animals represented the diversity of family farms so prevalent in the pre and early twentieth century. By the mid-twentieth century, “Old MacDonald” grew only a few types of produce and/or raised only a couple types of animals. For vegetable and fruit growers in the mid twentieth century, the farm also contained migrant farmworkers and migrant camps with outhouses and outside shower facilities, adding several unsavory additions to the Midwest’s “MacDonald” farm. The increasing number of regulations, the farmworker union FLOC in Ohio, and the implementation of IRCA all led to shifts in the landscape of the Midwest family farm. A more realistic song for fruit and vegetable “MacDonald’s” farms in the 1960s would contain verses for migrant houses, communal showers, and migrant farmworkers; but only a couple of decades later, national policies and agricultural changes would permanently alter “Old MacDonald’s” farm.

With the onset of FLOC’s strike and boycott campaign against Campbell and their Ohio growers in 1978 and 1979, some Midwest growers faced pressure to mechanize or abandon planting fruit and vegetable crops while, concurrently, the Farm Crisis of the 1980s offered few alternatives to growers.³⁹⁸ Campbell tried to avoid unions by forcing growers to replace

³⁹⁷ It should be noted that there are growers who refused the mentality of bigger is better and the use of chemicals. In fact, organic crops have a niche.

³⁹⁸ Barger and Reza, *The Farm Labor Movement in the Midwest*, 57-58, 64.

farmworkers with machines, refusing contracts to growers who continued to use hand labor.³⁹⁹

Many growers also sought to fill their fields with machines instead of farmworkers to avoid unionization and regulations; yet with the decreasing land value and financial difficulties of most growers in the 1980s, most growers faced difficulty mechanizing. Aside from the financial hardship, the Midwest landscape itself also restricted growers' use of machines because frequent rain and the Midwest soil often made it almost impossible to use the machines sometimes.⁴⁰⁰ Both FLOC and growers acknowledged that unlike California, another major tomato producing area of the time, Ohio soil could easily clog machines when wet.⁴⁰¹ For this reason, tomato growers in Ohio could not reliably replace farmworkers with machines. Ultimately, few growers could totally avoid farmworkers through mechanization as machines did not always work on Midwest soil and most growers' finances severely restricted their ability to purchase machines.

As mechanization proved only partially successful for Midwest growers trying to avoid the issues inherent in employing migrant farmworkers, the other alternative, switching crops, proved even less successful. The financial Farm Crisis hit popular Midwest crops such as corn, wheat, and soybeans, offering little alternatives to vegetable and fruit growers wishing to avoid farmworker regulations. In addition, numerous vegetable and fruit growers, such as the Turnows, already planted these other staple crops alongside their vegetables.⁴⁰² For many Ohio tomato growers affected by the FLOC strike and boycott, tomatoes and cucumbers, though not very remunerative, buoyed farms' other failing crops, soybeans and corn.⁴⁰³ For Midwest

³⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁰ Parker, "2 Worlds Collide."

⁴⁰¹ Ibid.

⁴⁰² Pakulski, "Worried About His Future."

⁴⁰³ Ibid; Barger and Reza *The Farm Labor Movement in the Midwest*, ix.

growers, land and the economy affected their ability to reshape their land from fields with Mexican and Mexican Americans migrants working in vegetable and fruit fields to rolling fields of grain and corn.

For growers who could not successfully switch crops or mechanize to avoid farmworker regulations, changing the physical landscape of the farm established greater physical and psychological distance between the farm and farmworkers. To avoid government oversight on farmworkers, numerous growers stopped providing housing to migrants.⁴⁰⁴ Since state and national governments highly regulated migrant housing, some growers simply informed farmworkers that they would no longer provide housing. This forced migrants to use their meager earnings to find their own housing, usually in local towns. A few migrants, such as Jesus Sanchez Jr. in Minnesota, argued that he and his father in the late 1960s and 1970s did not complain about the poor housing since they were there to work and they understood the financial hardship of growers.⁴⁰⁵ However, many migrants condemned housing conditions, and the presence of women and children in dilapidated housing only brought negative public attention to farmers' fields. In reaction to public attention, some growers diverted housing off the farm, sometimes becoming an in-town landlord who catered to migrant farmworkers. The Minnesota sugar beet grower Larry LaHaise switched from housing twelve to thirteen farmworkers in dilapidated houses built for laborers in the 1950s near his farm, to a four-bedroom apartment in town by 1990.⁴⁰⁶ Even grain corporations that directly hired and paid a

⁴⁰⁴ Dorthea Ann Weaver, Migrant Ministry State Report, 1959, 2, Migrant Problem Study Commission II, 1958-1963, Commission on Children: Migrant Workers Study Research Files, 1950-1963, Illinois State Archives, Norton Building, Springfield, Illinois; Norris, *North for the Harvest*, 188-189.

⁴⁰⁵ Jesus Sanchez Jr., interview by Terry L. Shoptaugh, July 25, 1990, transcript, 19, Red River Sugar Beet Grower Records, Northwest Minnesota Historical Center, Livingston Lord Library, Moorhead University, Moorhead, Minnesota.

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

few farmworkers refused to pay for housing by the end of the 1990s.⁴⁰⁷ In the end, grower and corporate changes regarding housing at the end of the twentieth century helped draw public attention away from the dilapidated shacks in the fields.

For growers who altered their migrant housing during the 1980s and 1990s, they could recondition the ideal family farming landscape, free from migrant housing, while also reinstating greater freedom from state and national regulations. This change altered grower, farmworker, and community relations, as the physical distance between migrants and growers meant local communities adjusted to a greater migrant presence in town. In physically distancing migrants from the farming landscape, growers psychologically distanced themselves from any responsibility for migrants' conditions and from socially interacting with migrants or seeing them as anything more than laborers. Yet in reshaping the physical land formation to reinforce the agrarian ideals, migrant housing changes adjusted relationships in rural societies and farmworkers' survival strategies, forcing rural communities to deal with temporary influxes of poor migrants, reinforcing an employer/employee relationship between growers and farmworkers, and forcing migrants to pay rent from their limited income. Forced into the rural towns and cities, new migrants in the 1980s faced a different relationship with growers and the local community.

For growers still employing farmworkers, the decreasing number of migrants also changed growers' relationships with migrants and the gender composition of the stream. Though mechanization failed to totally replace farmworkers, minor genetic changes to crops such as dwarf trees, in addition to small mechanical changes in the fields, reduced the numbers

⁴⁰⁷ "Migrant Housing Reported to be Dwindling in Iowa," *Chicago Tribune*, July 25, 2004, 9, accessed June 9, 2014, <http://www.ulib.niu.edu:2205/docview/420081436?accountid=12846>.

of migrant farmworkers needed.⁴⁰⁸ Jesus Sanchez Jr., who had worked in Minnesota sugar beet fields since he was a child, noted how plant spacing technology and chemicals reduced the need for migrants to thin the fields; ultimately, this reduced the number of migrants needed, but it also provided some migrants with the ability to negotiate pay based on the level of thinning required.⁴⁰⁹ Not all farmworkers willingly worked in fields where growers used fewer chemicals and therefore had more weeds, allowing willing workers to ask for greater pay. Changes in work not only reduced farmworker numbers, but also impacted the gender dimensions of the Midwest stream. Various growers in Illinois and in Lake Mills, Wisconsin vegetable fields refused to hire families because of the cost of and likely the public attention to family housing.⁴¹⁰ In addition, the increasing use of the H-2(A) program in the 1980s and 1990s decreased the likelihood of migrant families working and living together as the program primarily employed men.⁴¹¹ In restricting family housing, men left their families in their homes of Texas, Florida, or Mexico to travel up North for work.⁴¹² To avoid family housing which attracted public inquiries into the living conditions of women and children, growers or grower organizations provided cheap barrack housing for men.⁴¹³ The changing gender composition and number of migrants thus altered farmworkers' interaction with growers.

⁴⁰⁸ Philip Martin, *Importing Poverty?: Immigration and the Changing Face of Rural America*, (New York: Yale University Press, 2009), 150-152.

⁴⁰⁹ Jesus Sanchez Jr., interview by Terry L. Shoptaugh; Batriz Castillo, interview by Terry Shoptaugh, July 21, 1992, transcript, Red River Sugar Beet Grower Records, Northwest Minnesota Historical Center, Livingston Lord Library, Moorhead University, Moorhead, Minnesota.

⁴¹⁰ Juan Romero, "Ministry to Farmworkers: Experience in Advocacy," 8:25, PADRES Collection, University of Notre Dame Archives, Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana.

⁴¹¹ Francesca Coin, "Pickles and Pickets After NAFTA: Globalization, Agribusiness, the US-Mexico Food-Chain, and Farm-Worker Struggles in North Carolina" (Ph.D. dissertation, Georgia State University, 2007), 131.

⁴¹² Martin Mauricio, interview by Mark DePue, July 20, 2008, Agriculture in the Modern Era, Agriculture in Illinois, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library & Museum, accessed August 2014, <http://www.illinois.gov/alplm/library/collections/oralhistory/agriculture/Pages/default.aspx>.

⁴¹³ Minnesota Department of Health, *Migrant Health Services*; Juan Romero, "Ministry to Farmworkers."

Though publicity, regulation, unionization, and costs encouraged growers to partially mechanize fields, major changes happened in the 1970s and 1980s to counter this shift. Through the implementation of SAW, and to a lesser degree the foreign importation program H-2(A), the demographics of Midwest farmworkers and the rural landscape changed.⁴¹⁴ The government legalized a significantly larger number of undocumented individuals through the SAW program than the government estimated worked in United States agriculture, as SAW's only requirement was a brief note from a grower.⁴¹⁵ In addition, mostly males applied for SAW and despite fears of growers that newly documented SAW individuals would find better jobs with their citizenship, many SAW workers worked the agricultural fields, essentially flooding the labor market.⁴¹⁶ Though Midwest growers did not extensively use the H-2(A) program, both the H-2(A) program and SAW, coupled with growers' desire to avoid public attention to family labor, slowly altered the Midwest farmworker demographics as more men labored in Midwest fields without families.⁴¹⁷ By the late 1990s, the Eckert's apple and peach farm in Illinois employed only H-2(A) workers from Mexico, with only a few of these H-2(A) workers being women. The H-2(A) program, along with the physical demands of carrying baskets weighing forty pounds up and down ladders, restricted the employment of women in the Eckert field.⁴¹⁸ The shift to a more predominately male labor force in the 1980s and 1990s, at a time when Churches and organizations struggled to even generate concern for women and children in

⁴¹⁴ Majka and Majka, *Farm Workers, Agribusiness, and the State*, 33; Coin, "Pickles and Pickets After NAFTA," 133.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid.

⁴¹⁶ Mark A. Grey and C. Anne Woodrick, "Latinos Have Revitalized Our Community: Mexican Migration and Anglo Responses in Marshalltown, Iowa," in *New Destinations: Mexican Immigration in the United States*, eds. Victor Zúñiga and Rubén Hernández-León (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2005).

⁴¹⁷ Chris Eckert, interview by Mark DePue; Coin, "Pickles and Pickets After NAFTA," 1-2.

⁴¹⁸ Chris Eckert, interview by Mark DePue.

poverty and when the beloved “Old MacDonald’s” farm went bankrupt, drew attention away from the disparity between the ideal family farm and its reality.⁴¹⁹

With the alteration of the physical landscape and the gendered composition of migrants distancing “Old MacDonald’s” farm from the regulations and public scrutiny of migrant family housing came a different relationship between growers, farmworkers, and rural areas. With some migrant farmworkers no longer isolated on grower land, migrants could become members of the rural community; but as previously noted, local residents did not always accept farmworkers.⁴²⁰ In addition, shifting housing off the growers’ lands or shifting the labor force to an all-male group changed the farm dynamics and growers’ interactions with migrants. In so doing, grower families and farmworkers would no longer interact as much. Several growers respected migrant family structures and came to know migrant families within familial terms as fathers, mothers, and children. A cucumber, corn, and soybean grower in Hartford, Michigan, Karen Dawson, respected how the Avilas migrant family, who had worked on her family’s field for years, had “rural values” that emphasized the family and respect for parents, especially the father.⁴²¹ She saw the male head of the Avila family, Gustavo, almost as a son, though acknowledging he and his wife were her age.⁴²² In another example, Irene McGuire of Illinois and her husband visited with the migrant couple who worked on their farm for ten years, even

⁴¹⁹ Joseph A. McCartin, *Collision Course: Ronald Reagan, the Air Traffic Controller and the Strike that Changed America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); James T. Bonnen, William P. Browne, and David B. Schweikhardt, "The Economic Roots of Reaganism: Corporate Conservatives, Political Economy, and the United Farm Workers Movement, 1965-1970," *Western Historical Quarterly* 41, no. 1 (Spring 1996).

⁴²⁰ *Proyecto Adelante*, 4:22, La Raza Records, Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin; Tim Kane “Village Allows New Quarters for Migrant Workers Lake In Hills Oks Tree Farm’s Bid,” *Chicago Tribune* (McHenry County Edition), January 14, 2000, accessed June 9, 2014, <http://www.ulib.niu.edu:2205/docview/418997336?accountid=12846>.

⁴²¹ Rothenberg, *With These Hands*, 65.

⁴²² *Ibid.*

after they retired.⁴²³ Without migrant families living on grower land, grower and migrant wives could not socialize with each other as occasionally happened, and growers had fewer opportunities to see farmworkers' family and social values.⁴²⁴ The intersection of shifting migrant housing, H-2(A) labor, and changing labor demographics, both in the fields and in the farmhouses, preserved the ideal family farm in the minds of the public as growers further distanced themselves from farmworkers.

The Other America: Farmworkers or Growers?

When Michael Harrington's work *The Other America: Poverty in the United States* came out in 1962, the United States public came out of the complacency that permeated the 1950s, which had made the poor, as Harrington argued, invisible.⁴²⁵ In Harrington's added Introduction to the 1969 version, he argued that the political fervor of the 1960s to confront poverty had faded and portended a grim future for the poor.⁴²⁶ Almost ten years after the release of his added introduction, a Farm Crisis forced scores of growers off the land and added to the poverty already noted by Harrington twenty years earlier. As the successes of the United Farm Workers' boycotts in California faded from public memory, the 1980s Hollywood portrayals of the struggles of family operated farms endeavoring to survive against the cold, calculating agricultural system replaced the concern for farmworkers generated by the UFW's efforts, newspaper articles, and specials like the *Harvest of Shame*.⁴²⁷ Hollywood portrayed family

⁴²³ Irene McGuire, interview by Mike Maniscalco.

⁴²⁴ Rothenberg, *With These Hands*, 65; Pakulski, "Worried About His Future;" Irene McGuire, interview by Mike Maniscalco.

⁴²⁵ Michael Harrington, *The Other America: Poverty in the United States* (New York: Macmillan, 1969).

⁴²⁶ *Ibid*, xi-xxx.

⁴²⁷ Prairie Farkas, "Hollywood and the Farm Film," *North Dakota Quarterly* 53, no. 4 (Fall 1985), 115-134.

farms in crisis as struggling families with strong wives and mothers, working with husbands and children to save the farm.⁴²⁸ The portrayal of the idyllic family farm in jeopardy on movie screens throughout the nation, concerts put on by famous country musicians, and newspaper articles about the loss of the family farm, all competed with the voices of FLOC members and supporters who understood that the “family farm” also hurt farmworkers.⁴²⁹ Public focus centered on the importance of family to the farm; all the while, growers argued they were at the bottom of the food triangle, ignoring the reality that the agricultural system *and* growers abused farmworker families.⁴³⁰ The 1980s Farm Crisis, which shaped and was shaped by the agrarian ideal of the family farm, influenced the public’s understanding of the farm landscape, and ultimately, the role of farmworkers in the agrarian narrative.

“Victimized,” unable “to control their own destinies,” “feeling of injustice,” “losing... their whole way of life,” and “independent-minded farmers” were just a few phrases and quotes used by journalists to describe Midwest growers and their impressions of the Farm Crisis in the 1980s.⁴³¹ For many Midwest growers, these descriptions aptly described how, despite their view of themselves as independent toilers of the land working alongside their family members in a job that defined their whole way of life, growers were in fact increasingly male-dominated and controlled by powerful government, economic, and corporate forces that destroyed the family farm. Though Hollywood films such as *Country* established a strong woman’s role in the farm, public imagination continued to characterize “Old MacDonald” as a man working alongside his

⁴²⁸ *Country*, directed by Richard Pearce; *Places in the Heart*, directed by Robert Benton; *The River*, directed by Mark Rydell.

⁴²⁹ Patrick H. Mooney and Theo J. Majka, *Farmers’ and Farm Workers’ Movements: Social Protest in American Agriculture* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1995), 111-112.

⁴³⁰ Farkas, “Hollywood and the Farm Film,” 115-134; Janet Galligani Casey, “ ‘This is YOUR Magazine’: Domesticity, Agrarianism, and ‘The Farmer’s Wife,’” *American Periodicals* 14:2 (2004), 179-211.

⁴³¹ Cohen and Drew, “Farmer Protests Gaining Steam as Crisis Worsens;” Ogintz, “Hardships Pulling Farm Belt Together.”

family members.⁴³² In reality, by the 1980s, women and sometimes men worked outside the farm, and expanding vegetable and fruit farms often employed migrant families. However, the public continued to envision the family farm as a male-dominated and family-centric operation, as they ignored the many families who did work in the fields. The large corporate farms, common in California, replaced the family farms in the Midwest as growers and the public began to contrast the perceived independence of growers with the reality of growers' helplessness against economic and corporate forces.⁴³³ Though most Midwest growers might have described the 1960s and 1970s as a time of increased and unwanted government involvement and regulations that restricted their freedoms, growers could characterize the 1980s as a time when they demanded the government did something about the economic crisis that destroyed independent small growers and left massive, corporate growers as the sole survivors.⁴³⁴ To combat government, corporate, and economic forces, both male and female farmers stopped viewing themselves as independent islands and joined farm coalitions, help groups, rural churches and businessmen, and even labor unions in protests and direct actions to protect the family farm.⁴³⁵ Hollywood films and concerts focused on the loss of the family farm in addition to new protest and aid farmer groups contrasted with past emphasis on individual grower's independence, helping to bring public focus to the rural "other America" during the 1980s.

Hidden within this 1980s rural "Other America," seen by the public in movies and concerts, was the "Other America" that contained farmworkers, unsanitary housing, pesticides,

⁴³² *Country*, directed by Richard Pearce; Farkas, "Hollywood and the Farm Film," 115-134.

⁴³³ "Fewer Jobs for Farmworker..." 18:10, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

⁴³⁴ Cohen and Drew, "Farmer Protests Gaining Steam as Crisis Worsens;" Ogintz, "Hardships Pulling Farm Belt Together." It should be noted that there was little consensus on what growers wanted the government to do.

⁴³⁵ Ogintz, "Hardships Pulling Farm Belt Together."

and degenerated soil commonly found on fruit and vegetable family farms, destroying the agrarian mythos so ingrained within society. The *Grapes of Wrath* tied the narrative of migrants with growers, just as the special *Harvest of Shame* and the UFW in California also destroyed the agrarian myth that ignored farmworkers; yet, as the 1980s Farm Crisis progressed, few growers acknowledged farmworkers' struggles. How after the UFW and *Harvest of Shame* raised public awareness in the 1960s could the *Other America* that shattered the agrarian ideal be so forgotten in public memory? Long before the UFW unionized farmworkers in California, Cary McWilliams described 1930s California farms as "factories in the fields" that destroyed the land and abused people.⁴³⁶ *Grapes of Wrath* and *Harvest of Shame* also presented abusive growers as large or under the control of large, agricultural groups.⁴³⁷ The description of growers in *Grapes of Wrath* and the UFW as large or cooperative farming organizations, allowed the public to envision Midwest family farms as free from corruption and farmworker abuse. Instead, Hollywood films in the 1980s presented Midwest farms as small family operations, in sharp contrast to the corporate farming long depicted in the Eastern and Western United States.⁴³⁸ As Hollywood and news channels reported the struggles of Midwest family farms, the most public examples of migrant farmworkers' struggles took place outside the Midwest, maintaining the Midwest family farm's image.⁴³⁹

Though the 1960s social activism and the farmworker unions of the 1970s and 1980s brought limited attention to farmworkers in the Midwest, the public differentiated the Midwest from the rest of the nation. Despite FLOC's efforts, the cries of growers and the retaliation

⁴³⁶ McWilliams, *Factories in the Field*.

⁴³⁷ Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*; Murrow, *Harvest of Shame*.

⁴³⁸ Farkas, "Hollywood and the Farm Film," 115-134; Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*; Murrow, *Harvest of Shame*.

⁴³⁹ Murrow, *Harvest of Shame*; Ganz, *Why David Sometimes Wins*; Higbie, *Indispensable Outcasts*, 4-11.

against aid programs in the 1980s resulted in a limited support network for the concerns of farmworkers. In addition, rural communities and growers, already threatened and powerless against the Farm Crisis, vehemently opposed any unionization or negotiating efforts by FLOC, arguing that corporations would never negotiate and any attempt would destroy growers and communities' ties to the land.⁴⁴⁰ Though some Ohio tomato and pickle growers eventually learned the value of cooperation with farmworker unions, most growers in the Midwest remained hostile to organized efforts to better migrants' lives, especially since it meant spending more money. In the end, public focus lay on the survival of the family farm.⁴⁴¹

The public and grower focus during the Farm Crisis not only ignored the struggles of farmworkers and the effect of the crisis on them, but public imagining reshaped the agricultural landscape into a historical, agrarian myth. As the Midwest grower Karen Dawson argued, the changes in agriculture propelled by the Farm Crisis brought irresponsible tenants to agriculture who answered to no one since the corporate agricultural system offered no real responsible party, similar to the argument made in *Grapes of Wrath* about the system involved in farm foreclosure.⁴⁴² Dawson blamed these outsiders for the poisoning and overuse of the land and the lack of concern for the local community, in so doing describing the better family farm as one concerned about the community and concerned for the land.⁴⁴³ Yet this ideal ignored the fact that most growers operated large farms and that the concern for community specifically excluded farmworkers, as growers and local residents depicted farmworkers as "outsiders." As

⁴⁴⁰ Pakulski, "Worried About His Future;" Terry, "The Political Economy of Migrant Farm Labor," 158.

⁴⁴¹ Thomas A. Lyson, "Who Cares About the Farmer? Apathy and the Current Farm Crisis," *Rural Sociology*, 51, no. 4 (Winter 1986).

⁴⁴² Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*; Rothenberg, *With These Hands*, 66.

⁴⁴³ Rothenberg, *With These Hands*, 66.

growers, the public, and even political individuals decried corporate farms, their ideal farm harkened back to a historical and fictitious ideal long since dead.⁴⁴⁴

For a few people, the “for sale” signs among rolling fields depicted in movies and on television in the 1980s did not overshadow the dilapidated housing near the fields, but rather the housing became a part of the rolling fields and “for sale” signs. Decrying the agricultural system supported by the United States government that benefitted large, polluting, corporate farms that destroyed the family farm, *Hard Tomatoes, Hard Times*, a report by the Agribusiness Accountability Project Task Force on the Land Grant College Complex, investigated the role of the United States government.⁴⁴⁵ Unlike many written accounts of the Farm Crisis, Jim Hightower in *Hard Tomatoes, Hard Times* noted the struggles of farmworkers in the abusive agricultural system, focusing primarily on how mechanization slowly replaced migrant workers and how the Extension Service, created to help the rural area, should provide training programs to farmworkers forced out of the stream.⁴⁴⁶ In focusing on mechanization and retraining, Hightower avoided some of the problems inherent in the “us vs. them” relationship between growers and migrants, as growers and grower organizations understood that migrants lived in horrible conditions and lost jobs because of mechanization, but refused to see their own complacency in accepting the converted chicken coops, stooped laborers, and inadequate outdoor toilets, as a natural extension of the system and land. Though written before the Farm Crisis, Hightower’s mention of migrant farmworkers within the overall agricultural system, brought migrants out of the shadows and into the light, at least for a brief moment.

⁴⁴⁴ Jim Hightower, *Hard Tomatoes, Hard Times; A Report of the Agribusiness Accountability Project on the Failure of America’s Land Grant College Complex* (Cambridge: Schenkman Publishing Company, 1973); Steven V. Roberts, “The Farm Issue Personified,” *New York Times*, February 28, 1986; Rothenberg, *With These Hands*, 66.

⁴⁴⁵ Hightower, *Hard Tomatoes, Hard Times*.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 125-126.

Puncturing the agrarian myth that separated the Midwest farm from farmworkers' struggles, church organizations that supported FLOC in the 1980s also occasionally described the struggles of migrants in relation to the Farm Crisis. Though growers and migrants hinted at the importance of the Farm Crisis in grower-migrant relations, few described the FLOC strike directly in relation to the Farm Crisis. In one case, the Turnows noted how the success of their tomato and cucumber crops were vital to their survival as the grain crop prices plummeted in value; and Baldemar Velasquez, leader of FLOC, similarly noted the importance of tomato and cucumber crops because of the poor value of popular grain crops.⁴⁴⁷ However, few others noted the intersection between growers and migrants' consciousness of the agricultural system that entangled both groups. In one rare instance, the National Farm Worker Ministry, an inter-denominational religious organization that assisted migrants, sent out a position statement arguing that the public should be sure to keep farmworkers in mind in their concern for the family farm.⁴⁴⁸ It also noted that religious attention to migrants' issues led to religious groups awareness of farmers' problems, and that three-way deals, as demanded by FLOC, benefitted all.⁴⁴⁹ As the statement noted, "Consumers benefit from the fruits of cheap labor and the risks of marginal farmers. The same economic forces that squeeze small growers also squeeze farm workers."⁴⁵⁰ The National Farm Worker Ministry understood that only when the migrant farmworker and Farm Crisis stories lived in the same narrative could the agricultural system change.

⁴⁴⁷ Pakulski, "Worried About His Future;" Barger and Reza, *The Farm Labor Movement in the Midwest*.

⁴⁴⁸ National Farm Worker Ministry, "Position Statement about Farm Workers in Relation to the Rural Crisis in America," unprocessed at time of access, Jane Heckman Collection, Regional History Center, Founders Memorial Library, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois.

⁴⁴⁹ National Farm Worker Ministry, "Position Statement about Farm Workers in Relation to the Rural Crisis in America."

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid.

Though barriers still continued to divide the Farm Crisis from the farmworker narrative in the UFW and FLOC's "other America," numerous growers did change their vision of agriculture. Despite growers' inability to pay for better migrant housing and pay or negotiate better deals with the Campbell Corporation, growers refused to work with FLOC in 1978 to provide growers and farmworkers an avenue to negotiate together with a major corporation.⁴⁵¹ Some growers, such as the Turnow family growing tomatoes and cucumbers, argued Campbell would not negotiate.⁴⁵² Other growers, such as Frank Meinen, saw organized farmworkers and their supporters as a threat to their survival, arguing they were "anti-farmer and anti-business."⁴⁵³ After FLOC's success in numerous tomato and pickle fields in Northern Ohio during the late 1980s, growers who contracted with Campbell and Vlastic entered into three-party negotiations with farmworkers and the companies Campbell and Vlastic. Initially resisting the intrusion of migrant influence and farmworker unions on their agricultural practices, the three-party negotiations eventually reshaped grower/farmworker relationships. Some Northern Ohio farmers eventually realized the financial benefits of negotiating within grower organizations and alongside farmworkers. Seeing greater profits and experiencing a less controlling relationship with companies, many Northern Ohio growers realized the freedom that came with seeing their world beyond their personal fields, where they had merely imagined power, and instead worked alongside farmworkers to reshape the farming landscape.

Yet for most of the public, the Farm Crisis and farmworkers' struggles were two separate stories. In the 1980s *Other America*, Harrington depicted the Midwest family farm as

⁴⁵¹ Mike Steere, "Farm Labor Strike Against Canneries, Growers Seen as Almost Inevitable," *The Blade*, July 28, 1978, 24:42, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

⁴⁵² Pakulski, "Worried About His Future."

⁴⁵³ Letter to Pat Whelan from Frank I. Meinen.

the rural “other America,” that is, the Anglo individuals in rural communities struggling to survive against a heartless government and agricultural system. In another chapter, Mexican and Mexican American migrant farmworkers traveled to the Midwest, organizing with growers against corporations, refusing to live in dilapidated houses and scratching a meager living on land owned by growers. Two chapters. Two separate narratives. Yet, migrant farmworkers were rural; they lived, though disconnected, in these rural communities and made it possible for growers to make an income. Even in the 1960s, the public struggled to come to terms with the role of the family farm in migrant farmworkers’ lives, a struggle which became even more difficult when so many saw the American agrarian ideal, which was so important to United States mythos, “for sale.” Though family farms in the Midwest had long become more industrial, growing fewer types of crops on more land using farmworkers’ labor instead of the family, the family farm continued to capture the imagination of the public in film, books, and television, forever hiding the realities of migrant farmworkers crouched in the fields. Instead, the families who worked the fields and took part in the rural community on a transitory, limited basis remained disconnected from the public imagination of farm and rural society made up of male farmers and hardworking family members.

Concluding “Reflections on Food, Farmers, and Farmworkers”⁴⁵⁴

Though public perception did not define the 1980s as a time of protest in regards to agriculture, the 1980s was a time of marches and tractorcades as people demanded changes to the structure of the agricultural system.⁴⁵⁵ When FLOC members and supporters marched from Toledo, Ohio to Camden, New Jersey in 1983, and Iowa growers and supporters marched in

⁴⁵⁴ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops–Committee on Domestic Policy, *For I Was Hungry & You Gave Me Food: Catholic Reflections on Food, Farmers, and Farmworkers*. (Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2003).

1985, they joined the agricultural revolt. However, public focus on the agricultural upheaval of the 1980s largely ignored the tie between farmworker and grower struggles against an agricultural system that benefited only a few. Unlike the 1930s, the 1980s United States public did not awaken to the struggles of both small growers in a system that benefitted only large and powerful growers and corporations *and* the struggles of the workers in the fields. The story of the Joad family's struggle to keep their farm against the power of corporations, government, and banks became the focus of the 1980s public, instead of the *Grapes of Wrath's* additional depiction of the Joad's struggles as farmworkers. Though shaken by the protests and conscious raising events of the 1960s and 1970s, Midwest growers and public support reinvigorated the agrarian mythos of the wholesome, American family farm, which encouraged the public to ignore the role of Midwest farmworkers. Spurred to protect the loss of the family farm against uncompassionate, unethical, and distant grower corporations; rural communities, growers, churches, and even labor unions, fought for the family farms' survival. Yet hidden beneath the picturesque image of rolling fields so important to the Midwest agrarian myth were the racism and inhuman conditions of migrant farmworkers living on family farms that employed the use of pesticides and the industrial reasoning so prominent in large farms. Grower protests and concern for the welfare of the family farm drew public attention away from the interconnected lives of Mexican and Mexican American migrant farmworker families and the family farm.

Though still an important part of United States agriculture and rural communities, the ideal family farm envisioned in films and public imagination had ceased to exist, replaced by fruit and vegetable family farms developed through the negotiations between growers and

⁴⁵⁵ Ritchie, "Our Loss: The Family Farm;" William P. Browne, "Farm Organizations and Agribusiness," *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science*, 34, no. 3 (1982), 210; Gregg Easterbrook, "Making Sense of Agriculture: A Revisionist Look at Farm Policy," in *Is There A Moral Obligation To Save The Family Farm?* ed. Gary Comstock (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1987), 19.

migrant farmworkers. For growers and the public, land and the perception of the land, was an important part of the agrarian mythos. For many vegetable and fruit Midwest growers, their landscape reflected negotiations and conflicts over land ownership, human rights, public perception, economics, and independence. The existence or lack of existence of housing and bathroom facilities, the gender makeup of growers and migrant communities, the presence of FLOC officials in migrant camps, the type of crops grown, and the presence of children in the fields, all represented struggles between growers, migrant farmworkers, and even government officials over the structure of the family farm landscape. Changes in farmworker regulations, economics, and immigration policy also contributed to the negotiating process, as rural residents and growers came to terms with rural insiders and outsiders and growers' perceptions of their own independence. Though these negotiations over the nature of the landscape established a tie between migrant farmworkers and growers' struggles, the narrative of migrant farmworkers in the 1980s remained largely separate from the narrative of growers during the Farm Crisis.

Three decades after the Farm Crisis, books and documentaries now decry pesticides in food, unhealthy diets in the United States and the world, the poverty conditions of small growers, and the large industrial growth, harvest, and slaughter of agricultural goods.⁴⁵⁶ Hidden beneath these narratives are the laborers in the fields, slaughterhouses, and canneries.⁴⁵⁷ Current works and documentaries highlight the upper echelon of the food pyramid of power, realizing the role of the national government, corporations and international power structures in

⁴⁵⁶ Eric Schlosser, *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001); *Food, Inc.*, directed by Robert Kenner (Magnolia Pictures, 2009), DVD; Robert Gottlieb and Anupama Joshi, *Food Justice* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2010); Belinda Martineau, *First Fruit: The Creation of the Flavr Savr: Tomato and the Birth of Biotech Foods* (McGraw Hill Co., 2001).

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid.

controlling growers and, therefore, what the public eats. Few currently tie these issues together into a cohesive story about the use and abuse of land and people, specifically migrant farmworkers. In one of the few exceptions since FLOC's success with Ohio growers in the mid-1980s, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops specifically tied the family farm, migrants, and the land together. The 2003 booklet, "For I was Hungry & You Gave Me Food: Catholic Reflections on Food, Farmers, and Farmworkers," noted that small growers around the world deserved the right to sell their products for a fair, livable price, the land should be treated with respect and not abused in an attempt to industrialize agriculture, and farmworkers deserved the right to be paid livable wages and provided decent housing.⁴⁵⁸ Despite the small voices in the wilderness arguing for the commonality between growers and farmworkers, most growers and farmworkers in the Midwest and the nation at-large still struggle against each other to shape the land as the public remains oblivious to the farmworkers in the fields.

⁴⁵⁸ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops-Committee on Domestic Policy, *For I Was Hungry & You Gave Me Food*.

CHAPTER 4

“I HEARD IT THROUGH THE GRAPE VINE”⁴⁵⁹: CATHOLICISM, GENDER AND AID IN THE ERA OF ACTIVISM

“The pastoral care of the migrants has always attracted the motherly attention
and the solicitude of the church.”⁴⁶⁰
-Stephen Solis

In 1968, Cesar Chavez ended a twenty-five day fast by taking Communion in a massive outdoor Catholic service. Bringing attention to the striking United Farm Workers (UFW) and their grape boycott, Chavez and the UFW made national news after his fast and the subsequent communion that included presidential hopeful Robert F. Kennedy.⁴⁶¹ Religious leaders, including Catholic priests, served communion to workers and politicians, marking a social and religious change in the nation.⁴⁶² The United States and Midwest public previously saw the intersection of Catholicism, unions, Mexican and Mexican Americans, and farmworkers with the former unionizing struggles of the Depression, but the combination of all these elements in 1968 was notable. The historic ties between Catholicism, Mexican Americans, and unions built

⁴⁵⁹ Gladys Knight and the Pips, “I Heard it Through the Grape Vine,” by Norman Whitfield and Barret Strong, in *Everybody Needs Love*, Motown Records, 1967.

⁴⁶⁰ Stephen Solis, “Migrant Farmworkers and the Church: A Report to the NCCB Ad Hoc Committee for the Spanish Speaking,” November 17, 1974, 8:22, Midwest Council of La Raza, University of Notre Dame Archives, Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana.

⁴⁶¹ Alan J. Watt, *Farm Workers and the Churches: The Movement in California and Texas*, (Texas A & M University Press, 2010), 84.

⁴⁶² Ibid.

the foundation for Chavez and the UFW's relationship with the church. Though the United States Catholic Church's rocky association with Mexican Americans and unions continued even after the Church offered its support to the UFW, the publicized tie between the Church and the Mexican American farmworker union marked an important transition not only in California, but the Midwest.⁴⁶³ With Midwest Catholics, farmworker unions, and Chicanos demanding changes in the church and in the fields, the historic ties and ideas that manifested into the publicized endeavors of the UFW grape boycott and the Catholic Church's support, spread through the grape vine to the Midwest.

Realizing that the farmworker conditions in California's grape fields happened in their own backyards and spurred to action by new social movements, church officials and laypersons in Midwest cities and universities became active participants and advocates for local migrant farmworkers.⁴⁶⁴ Though numerous churches created aid programs for migrant farmworkers, the connection between Mexican Americans and Catholicism and the important role the Catholic Church played in the UFW and the Midwest's Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC), made the United States Catholic Church a key factor in the development of services for Midwest migrants. The effects of Vatican II in Catholicism, the Chicano Movement which generated Latino pride, the farmworker rights movement initiated by the public attention to the UFW grape fields of California, and the Feminist Movement in the United States, all induced the Church to assist Mexican and Mexican American migrant farmworkers in the Midwest. The

⁴⁶³ For ease, I will be writing "Catholic Church" or "Catholic Church hierarchy" throughout this chapter. However, it should be noted that when I write "Catholic Church," I am, unless otherwise noted, referring to the United States Catholic Church. Though a world-wide Church under the leadership of the Pope, I do not attempt to state that the racism, actions, or ideas found in the United States or United States Church hierarchy reflected the entire Catholic Church. This being outside the scope of this work, I leave other scholars to analyze the international differences in the Catholic Church.

⁴⁶⁴ Edward R. Murrow, *Harvest of Shame*, directed by Fred W. Friendly, (CBS Report, November 24, 1960), videocassette.

Midwest rural landscape and urban centers became sites of negotiation between the general public, religious organizations and individuals, and farmworkers as each side had various opinions about the role of aid societies, women, and the rights and ability of migrants to affect radical change in the stream. Although the Midwest lay outside the Chicano and UFW centers of power in the Southwest, these movements in addition to the Feminist Movement and Vatican II motivated Midwesterners, especially women, to develop support networks to empower farmworkers within the food pyramid of the Midwest. The movements of the 1960s and 1970s brought attention to minority farmworkers while also shaping and transforming over time religious efforts to better farmworkers' lives as the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s forced negotiations over gender, ethnicity, and human rights. As farmworkers came to the forefront of public discourse at a time of social change, Midwest Catholic Church members' religious beliefs, social concepts, and gender ideals shaped and changed their understanding of the "migrant problem," ultimately influencing the assistance offered to farmworkers and its effect on migrants.

Vines and Signs

The 1960s and 1970s was a time of radical ideas, as men and women of different colors and religions marched down streets with protest signs demanding changes within the nation. In the 1960s and 1970s, minorities demanded the freedoms and rights of the American dream denied to them because of their sex and color. Of the various social movements of the 1960s and 1970s, the Feminist Movement encouraged women to subvert the gender norms of society while Latinos in the Chicano Movement called for an end to inequality and proudly identified

with their cultural heritage.⁴⁶⁵ Both groups demanded change not only within society, but also within the laws and systems of power entrenched in the procedures of the nation and religious institutions. At the same time farmworkers rose up to demand changes in the power structure of the agricultural system that forced migrants to live and work in poverty conditions.⁴⁶⁶ With the popularity of the UFW grape boycott in California spreading “through the grape vine,” farmworkers’ living and working conditions became an issue of national concern and debate. Midwesterners already learned about migrants in their nearby fields after the airing of *The Harvest of Shame* in 1960, but farmworker unions like the UFW and FLOC brought farmworkers’ demands and activism to Midwesterners’ televisions, newspapers, grocery stores, and even churches.⁴⁶⁷ Due to their concern for farmworkers, Catholics and young Chicanos in Midwest urban cities and universities established relief efforts in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and eventually took part in the UFW and FLOC boycotts in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. Meanwhile, Midwest cities and entire states developed boycott support groups as happened in 1975 Chicago when almost 700 Chicago residents marched three miles to a Jewel grocery store to entreat the store to support the UFW’s boycott.⁴⁶⁸ The women inspired by the Chicano and Feminist movements to alter power relationships in the Church and society also gravitated towards empowering farmworkers. The intersection of the UFW, Chicano, and Feminist movements coupled with the changes of Vatican II in the Catholic Church, altered the

⁴⁶⁵ Lara Medina, *Las Hermanas: Chicana/Latina Religious-Political Activism in the U.S. Catholic Church* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004); John C. Hammerback, Richard J. Jensen, and Jose Angel Gutierrez, *A War of Words: Chicano Protest in the 1960s and 1970s*, (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1985); Richard Edward Martinez, *PADRES: The National Chicano Priest Movement*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005).

⁴⁶⁶ Hammerback, *A War of Words*; Lorena Oropeza, *Raza Si!, Guerra No!: Chicano Protest and Patriotism During the Viet Nam War Era*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Medina, *Las Hermanas*.

⁴⁶⁷ Murrow, *Harvest of Shame*.

⁴⁶⁸ Emmet George, “Anti-grape, lettuce campaign gets boost,” *Chicago Tribune*, May 15, 1975.

power structures of society as women, Mexican Americans, Midwesterners, and migrant farmworkers protested up and down streets, on campuses, and in front of grocery stores, demanding change in the Church, the fields, and in society.

The social movements of the 1960s and 1970s intersected with events within the Church to create a time of contestation and change in the United States Catholic Church. Vatican II alongside the Feminist, UFW, and Chicano Movements inspired various Catholic minorities to demand ideological changes in society and the Church. Social movements encouraged students, nuns, and priests to pressure the Church to back farmworker unions while all debated the role of gender equality within the farmworker and Chicano struggles.⁴⁶⁹ While social movements in the United States spurred these demands, doctrinal changes decided by Vatican leaders fueled these larger demands as the changes altered the United States Catholic Church's relationship with parishioners. Vatican II was an international meeting of Catholic hierarchy that discussed and edited Catholic policy and doctrine to make Catholicism more relevant in modern times. Some of the most doctrinal innovations of Vatican II included *Lumen Gentium*, which encouraged lay participation and involvement in mass and the church.⁴⁷⁰ Other changes included *Sacrosanctum Concilium* which accepted local and ethnic practices of Catholicism and allowed mass to be conducted in a language other than Latin, and *Guadium et Spes* and *Pacem in Terris* which encouraged Catholics to speak out for the basic rights of all individuals, especially the poor and abused.⁴⁷¹ These changes had a profound effect on women like Yolanda Tarango, who eventually helped start Las Hermanas and extended her radicalism regarding women and Chicano's rights, to farmworkers' rights. Joining a convent in the 1960s,

⁴⁶⁹ Colleen McDannell, *The Spirit of Vatican II: A History of Catholic Reform in America* (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 141-8, 170.

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 91.

⁴⁷¹ *Ibid*, 78, 82, 96-101.

Yolanda experienced the changes of Vatican II, including her new-found freedom to read about national events in *Time* and *Newsweek*. No longer secluded from the outside world, nuns like Yolanda learned about Cesar Chavez and attended college. For Yolanda, this meant attending Chicago's radical Jesuit Theologate at Loyola University.⁴⁷² These changes in the Catholic Church combined with existing and developing social movements such as the Chicano Movement, Civil Rights Movement, Feminist Movement, and the UFW in California, to create a time of contesting power relationships as Chicana women and Mexican Americans sought to empower Chicanos in the Church, Latinos in the field, and women in society.

Church laypersons, nuns, priests, and the public's involvement in migrant aid programs built on the public's awareness of migrant farmworkers. With the advent of the *Harvest of Shame* in 1960, Midwest nuns, priests, Mexican Americans, and the general public developed programs and supported union boycotts, all of which addressed the Midwest power structure that placed farmworkers on the bottom. The Migrant Ministry relied on religious individuals to provide food, clothes, and religious guidance to the families in nearby migrant camps. A national organization, the Migrant Ministries' state and local chapters developed in the 1960s throughout the semi-rural Midwest communities. In Michigan, the Migrant Ministry offered services as early as the 1920s because of the state's early sugar beet industry, but like other parts of the Midwest, Michigan's early efforts did not extend beyond food and shelter.⁴⁷³ Many Midwesterners' early efforts focused primarily on the issues that *The Harvest of Shame* presented: poverty, dangerous working conditions, and migrants' separate living and working

⁴⁷² Sr. Yolanda Tarango, interview by Sr. Maria Eva Flores, October 4, 2008, Chicano History, University of Incarnate Word, accessed May 15, 2015, <http://sites.uiw.edu/chicanohistory/interviews/sr-yolanda-tarango>.

⁴⁷³ Michigan Migrant Ministry, Report, 1959, 2:17, Michigan Farm Worker Ministry Coalition Collection Papers, 1950-1990, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan. The Migrant ministry would later be renamed the Migrant Farm Worker Ministry in 1971.

conditions, not the structure of the migrant stream that was the cause of the farmworkers' problems.

Pre-1970s programs offered basic assistance to farmworkers, but when the Chicano, UFW, and Feminist Movements combined with Vatican II to partially radicalize some Midwesterners, the Catholic Church faced public pressure to shift their understanding of "the migrant problem," women's roles in the church and society, and the rights of Chicanos. Drawing on earlier aid services for farmworkers and on some Hispanic priests and nuns' personal experiences in the fields, nuns, laymen, priests, and the public attempted to alter the food pyramid. Faced with intersecting external pressures from the largely Catholic Mexican American farmworkers unionizing in the Midwest and in California, and internal pressure from Chicanos and women in the church, the United States Catholic Church had to address the poverty conditions of the predominately Catholic farmworker population and the treatment of Mexican American and women within the Church.⁴⁷⁴ Numerous Christian churches already offered support for the UFW in the early 1960s, making the Catholic Churches' hesitation to stand alongside predominately Catholic workers as they used communion, Catholic mass, and the Virgin of Guadalupe in marches, difficult for some in the Church to understand.⁴⁷⁵ The general public pressured Catholic leaders to react to farmworkers' issues, resulting in Catholic male leaders' taking on roles as negotiators or supporters of the UFW and FLOC unions while those not in positions of authority, including women, provided more direct assistance to local migrants. Simultaneously, the Catholic Church faced internal pressure to promote some Mexican priests to Bishops and to ordain women.⁴⁷⁶ While early efforts characterized concern

⁴⁷⁴ Marco G. Prouty, *César Chávez, The Catholic Bishops, and the Farmworkers' Struggle for Social Justice* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2006), 4-5; Martínez, *PADRES*, 130-133.

⁴⁷⁵ Martínez. *PADRES*, 122.

⁴⁷⁶ McDannell, *The Spirit of Vatican II*, 183-184; Martínez, *PADRES*.

for surface level issues, Midwest Catholics radicalized by the social movements of the time felt Vatican II justified the church's greater role in farmworker unions and Chicanos' greater role in the Catholic Church. As Caesar Chavez' massive outdoor communion and the Chicano movement combined with women's demands, Midwest Catholics developed more services to better Midwest migrant farmworkers.

Inspired by the movements of the time, nuns in NAWR and Chicanos in PADRES and Las Hermanas, as well as the Midwest public, all pressured the Catholic hierarchy to change its relationship with migrant farmworkers, Mexican Americans, and women in the church, with varying success. Change stemmed from the time period, where people increasingly turned to activism to address issues instead of providing assistance to deal with the symptoms of the problem. As Raymond J. Spatti of the *National Catholic Reporter* aptly described, food and clothes addressed only the symptoms, not the basic issues of migrant poverty.⁴⁷⁷ Nuns, priests, and the general public often became involved in migrant activism due to their involvement in the UFW's Midwest boycott support groups. In Detroit, Michigan, police arrested Reverend Joseph Melton, Sister Rose, Ricardo Guzman, a Brown Beret, and the Michigan boycott director, Hijinio Rangel, and his family, along with several other adults and children when they took products off a grocery store shelf after the store owner refused to support the grape boycott.⁴⁷⁸ The ideas of the 1970s inspired some Catholics to rethink the church's obligation to assist Latinos in the church and the Mexican American farmworkers that labored in the Midwest. Priests like former migrant Patrick F. Flores became Latino Bishops who supported farmworker rights while women like Consuelo Covarrubias and Dolorita Martinez in the

⁴⁷⁷ Raymond J. Spatti, "Why Gift Baskets Don't Help," *National Catholic Reporter*, February 17, 1987, 17:1, Michigan Farm Worker Ministry Coalition Collection Papers, 1950-1990, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

⁴⁷⁸ "Detroit Grape Protest Group Grab Groceries; 16 Arrested," *Chicago Tribune*, July 13, 1969.

Midwest joined Las Hermanas to demand a role for Latina nuns in the Church.⁴⁷⁹ All the while Flores, Covarrubias, and Martinez assisted farmworker boycotts.⁴⁸⁰ Freed in some religious orders from wearing traditional habits and staying secluded in convents, some nuns found themselves drawn to public issues and influenced by notions of empowerment for women, Chicanos, and the poor, translating these ideas to farmworkers' issues. Women in the Sisters of Humility of Mary in the Midwest and Las Hermanas members became involved in the UFW and FLOC boycotts because of radicalized Chicana members who extended their notions of changing gender and racial power dynamics to the farm power structure.⁴⁸¹ Yet, local Bishops and Vatican did not always consent to nuns' greater freedoms as not all within the Catholic Church sought changing gender power relationships within society and the Church. The Immaculate Heart of Mary resisted their own Archbishop James McIntyre's control when he required they keep their strict clothing, bedtimes, and other traditional rules that many nuns in the United States changed after Vatican II.⁴⁸² The Vatican backed the Archbishop, demanding the nuns obey the Archbishop or leave the Church.⁴⁸³ Similarly, not all priests and nuns believed unions or secondary boycotts solved farmworkers' problems, disagreeing with a major avenue to effect change. As the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s mobilized Catholics to support farmworker services and unions, not everyone shared the same ideas about men, women, and migrants' rights.

Nuns, Priests, and Tomatoes

⁴⁷⁹ "The Church and the Migrant," 5:11, La Raza Records, Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin; Medina, *Las Hermanas*, 19.

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸¹ Medina, *Las Hermanas*, 35.

⁴⁸² McDannell, *The Spirit of Vatican II*, 170, 222.

⁴⁸³ *Ibid.*

As farmworkers came to the Midwest to work in the tomato, cucumber, onion, and fruit fields of the 1950s and 1960s, religious and non-religious groups developed programs to address what each group perceived as the “migrant problem.” Catholic concern over the “migrant problem” stemmed from public interest and characterized Midwesterners’ changing perspective of society. In Wisconsin, the once religious United Migrant Opportunity Service (UMOS) in Milwaukee, Wisconsin became a Latino-lead organization in 1969 after local Mexican Americans protested the lack of Latinos or former migrants in a group created to assist Latinos and migrants.⁴⁸⁴ UMOS’ change exemplified changes in Midwest universities as school groups in the 1950s and 1960s initially offered basic assistance, hosting Christmas parties or providing educational assistance for migrant children, while later programs provided Hispanics with a college or vocational education and students organized boycott support groups. Supporting farmworker boycotts and efforts to better Latinos’ lives characterized many Midwesterners’ changing views of society. Newspapers like *The Chicago Sun-Times* published a multi-part series in the summer of 1978 about farmworkers in the Chicago vicinity, and state legislators started investigating and changing the laws that dictated farmworkers’ living and working conditions, while some religious organizations shifted focus away from clothes, food, and church services.⁴⁸⁵ At the same time at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, young and old occupied Chancellor J. Martin Klotsche’s office to demand Hispanic’s right to a higher

⁴⁸⁴ United Migrant Opportunity Services, 1965-1985, 20th Anniversary Album, United Migrant Opportunity Services, Inc., Milwaukee Area Research Center, UW- Milwaukee, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

⁴⁸⁵ Bonnie Gross, Manuel Galvan and Jan Ranson, “Migrants Live and Work like Slaves in the Shadows of Affluent Suburbs,” *Chicago Sun-Times*, Suburban Week- North/Northwest supplement, August 17, 1978, 6:1, DeKalb County Migrant Ministry Collection, Regional History Center, Founders Memorial Library, DeKalb, Illinois.

education.⁴⁸⁶ Likewise, CHANCE at Northern Illinois University assisted minority students seeking a college education.⁴⁸⁷ At the same time, students began to back farmworker unions, calling for universities to stop buying grapes, lettuce, and Campbell products. The increased concern and involvement of the public and students in the lives of Latinos and farmworkers in the Midwest developed from the public awareness of migrants' conditions and the activism of the UFW's grape and FLOC's Campbell boycotts.

As word of the UFW spread "through the grape vine" during the 1960s and 1970s, boycotters and the general public pressured the Catholic Church to address farmworker issues beyond providing basic goods to migrant families. Spurred by the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s and concerned with local issues, most Catholic migrant aid programs started in the 1960s. The Migrant Ministry was a notable exception as the national and inter-denominational Migrant Ministry started in the 1920s in reaction to the conditions of Italian immigrant family farmworkers on the East Coast.⁴⁸⁸ Though not a Catholic organization, the massive and important nature of the Migrant Ministry in the UFW and FLOC boycotts made the Migrant Ministry another important part of the Midwest tale worth noting. The influx of Mexican American migrant workers in the Midwest sugar beet fields spurred the creation of the statewide Michigan Migrant Ministry in the 1920s, yet other local Midwest churches would not create state divisions and local chapters until the 1950s and 1960s when migrant farmworkers

⁴⁸⁶ Frank A. Cassell, J. Mart Klotsche, and Frederick Olson, *University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee; A Historical Profile, 1885-1992*. (Milwaukee: UMW Foundation, 1992), 81, in *UW Digital Collections*, accessed October 2015, <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu>, 81.

⁴⁸⁷ George Gutierrez, interview by Lucille Aikins, March 16, 1981, transcript, 2.31, Oral History Collection: Town Gown Relations in DeKalb, 1955-1980, Regional History Center, Founders Memorial Library, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois.

⁴⁸⁸ Linda C. Majka and Theo J. Majka, *Farm Workers, Agribusiness, and the State* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982), 108; Cindy Hahamovitch, *The Fruits of Their Labor: Atlantic Coast Farmworkers and the Making of Migrant Poverty, 1870-1945* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 147, 151; Watt, *Farm Workers and the Churches*, 40.

started working in other Midwest fields in large numbers.⁴⁸⁹ Like the Catholic Church, the Migrant Ministry's early support of the UFW in California developed into general support for all farmworkers and farmworker unions in the Midwest.

Public support for migrant unions and farmworker services often led to the formation of Catholic aid efforts or organizations. Traveling to the Midwest states of Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, Ohio, Iowa, and Indiana, the large number of family units in the Midwest migrant stream contrasted sharply with migrant streams along the West and East coasts.⁴⁹⁰ These Midwest migrant families eventually compelled local Churches and laypersons to action as consciousness-raising local and national events such as the UFW union and the local FLOC and Obreros Unidos unions, encouraged groups to develop services for the men, women, and children who labored in the fields. Religious groups eventually offered vocational training for men and women, educational services for children, and health and welfare assistance for the entire family. UFW boycott networks not only radicalized Midwest locals and brought awareness to the national struggles of farmworkers, but also resulted in support for local farmworkers. In Indiana, the Saint Joseph County Grape Boycott Committee and the Fort Wayne Grape Boycott Committee combined around 1970 to create the Farm Labor Aid Committee that not only assisted farmworker boycotts, but also attempted to organize local workers.⁴⁹¹ Catholic individuals developed both Indiana boycott support groups because of local support for the UFW boycott, but like other Midwest UFW support networks, Catholic

⁴⁸⁹ Michigan Migrant Ministry, Report, 1959; Letter to Fellow Ministers from Rev. Paul Paskewitz, August 8, 1964, unprocessed, Salem Lutheran Church, Regional History Center, Founders Memorial Library, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois.

⁴⁹⁰ Baldemar Velasquez, "Farm Labor Organizing Committee Report Fourth Quarter," (International Conference Presentation, November 1978), 4:21, Farm Labor Organizing Committee, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan; Migrant Labor Population 1984, 20:3, Farm Labor Organizing Committee, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

⁴⁹¹ Dustin McLochlin, "American Catholicism and Farm Labor Activism: The Farm Labor Aid Committee of Indiana as a Case Study" (Ph.D. dissertation, Bowling Green State University, 2008).

organizations expanded their understanding of migrants' plight to include local farmworker's struggle to unionize.

Concern for migrants occurred at the same time as religious and non-religious groups' addressed labor, race, and gender issues, often intersecting within the Church as Latino and women's groups called for both outward support for farmworkers, and internal support for Latino culture and/or women's rights. Numerous religious organizations developed to support Latino and women's issues during the 1960s and 1970s. Two Latino Catholic organizations, PADRES, an organization of Latino priests, and Las Hermanas, an organization of Latina lay persons and nuns, began in 1969 and 1971 respectively.⁴⁹² Aside from the Latino/a organizations, the Catholic nun organization, NARW, and the nun organization, Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ, also began to assist farmworkers in the late 1960s and early 1970s.⁴⁹³ While the Poor Handmaids did not agitate for a different relationship between the Catholic Church and women, NARW women addressed women's lack of power within the church and farmworker's lack of power in the stream. Not only national organizations in the Midwest, numerous local Catholic programs also developed during the late 1960s and early 1970s to address the problems faced by Midwest migrant farm laborers, including St. Paul Minnesota's Guadalupe Area Project (GAP).⁴⁹⁴ In the Midwest religious, social, and labor issues collided, as PADRES priests like Alberto Galagos struggled with a racist Anglo priest in Chicago's Holy Rosary Parish while assisting farmworker unions, and as Tess Browne worked

⁴⁹² Martínez, *PADRES*, 51, 59; Medina, *Las Hermanas*, 2

⁴⁹³ Juan Romero, "Ministry to Farmworkers: Experience in Advocacy," PADRES, May 15, 1974, 8:25, PADRES Collection, University of Notre Dame Archives, Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana; NAWR *Trends*, December 1974, 14:8, National Association of Religious Women Collection, University of Notre Dame Archives, Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana; Nursing Services Marshall County Migrant Workers County Migrant Workers 1968, October 21, 1968, 30:21, Handmaids of Jesus Christ Collection, University of Notre Dame Archives, Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana. The organization eventually changed names from the National Association of Women Religious to the National Association of Religious Women.

as a UFW boycott organizer in Wisconsin while working with Las Hermanas to better women's rights in the Catholic Church and society.⁴⁹⁵ Developing organizations to work for betterment of society, Latino men and women saw the Church as an avenue for change, not just for farmworkers, but for Latinos and women.

Extending beyond the Catholic Church, the Midwest public took part in religious and Chicano organizations becoming active participants in farmworker unions, programs targeting Latinos' concerns, and gender equality efforts. Students not only protested the conditions of local Latino workers in their universities, as Notre Dame *El Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán* (MeCHA) students and local activists like Olga Villa Parra and Ricardo Parra did in reaction to the poor pay of the largely Latino university groundskeepers and cafeteria workers in 1977-1978, but Chicano and non-Chicano students organized boycott support groups for the UFW and even the lesser known FLOC union.⁴⁹⁶ Midwest Chicano university students often went on to assist farmworker unions and Latino community organizing, tying together the various movements as the Midwest public, like Catholic men and women, were radicalized to change power dynamics in society. One such interconnected example was that of José Gamaliel

⁴⁹⁴ Paula Hirschhoff, "Mexican Market to Help Two Communities," *The North Minneapolis Post*, July 17, 1975, Guadalupe Area Project, 1965-1977, Mexican American Community in St. Paul Collections, Minnesota State Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota; "Worthy Plan Dies on Desk," *St. Paul Sunday Pioneer Press*, January 2, 1966, Guadalupe Area Project, 1965-1977, Mexican American Community in St. Paul Collections, Minnesota State Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota; Donald Demarest, "Bridging the Gap: Sister Giovanni Brings Individualized Education Techniques to Chicano Dropouts," Guadalupe Area Project, 1965-1977, Mexican American Community in St. Paul Collections, Minnesota State Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota; Dorothy Lewis, "Smiles Greet Migrant Worker," August 3, 1967, Guadalupe Area Project, 1965-1977, Mexican American Community in St. Paul Collections, Minnesota State Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota; Margo Hayes, "Nuns, Coeds, High Schoolers Push 'Head Start' for Area Youngsters" *St. Paul Dispatch*, October 8, 1970, Guadalupe Area Project, 1965-1977, Mexican American Community in St. Paul Collections, Minnesota State Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota.

⁴⁹⁵ A Statement by the Spanish Speaking Community of Holy Rosary Parish, January 17, 1974, 5: Albert Galagos, PADRES Collection, University of Notre Dame Archives, Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana.

⁴⁹⁶ Alberto López Pulido, Barbara Driscoll de Alvarado, and Carmen Samora, eds., *Moving Beyond Borders: Julian Samora and the Establishment of Latino Studies*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 85, 170.

González who helped start MeCHA in Notre Dame, worked as a Northwest Indiana coordinator for the UFW boycott, and eventually formed a neighborhood organization in Lake County.⁴⁹⁷ Outside the Church, youth often served as radical agents of change, sometimes connecting the efforts of the Catholic Church to other social movements.

Yet students, churches, and the general public's reaction to boycotts publicized on TV and farmworkers in the field often reflected people's gendered perspectives as each interpreted the "migrant problem" and developed services accordingly. Although the nationally televised UFW boycott forced Midwest locals to acknowledge the degrading and dangerous working and living conditions in the Midwest migrant stream, church members did not agree on the ultimate cause of these conditions. Catholic and other Church programs in the 1950s and 1960s especially, focused on poverty conditions: providing food, clothes, education, and medical help, often provided by women's groups that usually were not major members of other radical social movements of the time period. The Migrant Ministry in DeKalb, Illinois arranged to provide migrants with clothing and food.⁴⁹⁸ Similarly, seven church members in Chicago, Illinois aided the Hermosillo family with food, clothing, and housing when an incoming highway threatened to leave the family homeless.⁴⁹⁹ While these groups focused on lack of food and clothes, other groups in the church and public saw the "migrant problem" in terms of isolation. Migrants' isolation coupled with poverty compelled groups like the Migrant Ministry to provide movies, games, and religious guidance, while NIU university students hosted a Christmas party for local migrant children sometime in the 1960s or 1970s, and the Handmaids of Jesus Christ

⁴⁹⁷ José Gamaliel González, *Bringing Aztlán to Mexican Chicago: My Life, My Work, My Art*, ed. Marc Zimmerman (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 44-52.

⁴⁹⁸ Letter to Fellow Ministers from Rev. Paul Paskewitz.

⁴⁹⁹ Julie Ann Lyman, "A Shack on a Canal: Seven Who Care," *Chicago Tribune*, March 8, 1964.

provided medical assistance.⁵⁰⁰ Midwest service organizations' diverse programming exemplified early groups' understanding of the "migrant problem."

As social movements radicalized some churches, students, and the public's understanding of power relationships for minorities and women, so too did individuals' involvement or lack of involvement shape people's perception of "the migrant problem." Womens changing role in the Migrant Ministry from its founding in the 1920s to the Ministry's shift to male leadership in the 1960s, led to significant variations in the goals and services. The Migrant Ministry, though a national organization, had statewide Migrant Ministries with local chapters made up of local individuals.⁵⁰¹ Women's important position in the early Migrant Ministry, starting with the Ministry's creation by women in the 1920s to the local women like Olga Sanchez in 1977 Edgington, Illinois and the 1970 League of Catholic Women in Alpine County, Michigan, started to change in the 1960s.⁵⁰² While the lack of overarching leadership on the national level meant that efforts could vary significantly by state, many services initially focused on the educational, health, and religious needs of farmworkers, essentially perceiving the migrant problem in terms of isolation from religious institutions and abject poverty. While the Illinois Migrant Ministry, which started no later than 1959, had several clearly defined social programs by the mid 1960s, Illinois' DeKalb County Migrant Ministry initially focused

⁵⁰⁰ 17.007b, Quick Reference photos, Audio Visual Collection, Regional History Center, Founders Memorial Library, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois.

⁵⁰¹ "Migrant Work Report, August 9- October 2nd", circa 1965, 1:2, DeKalb County Migrant Ministry, Regional History Center, Founders Memorial Library, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois; Michigan Farm Worker Ministry, Report, 5, 2:22, Michigan Farm Worker Ministry Coalition Collection Papers, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

⁵⁰² Letter to Fellow Ministers from Rev. Paul Paskewitz; Outreach Workers, Migrant Day Care Program, 1977 Season, 2:11, DeKalb County Migrant Ministry Collection, Regional History Center, Founders Memorial Library, DeKalb, Illinois; Project reviews, Michigan Migrant Ministry, 1970, 5:24, Michigan Farm Worker Ministry Coalition Collection, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan; Letter to Friends from Michigan Migrant Ministry, May 1, 1955, 1:5, Michigan Farm Worker Ministry Coalition Collection Papers, 1950-1990, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

in 1964 on Christian education, church services, and family nights where volunteers provided religious and recreational programs.⁵⁰³ Women served as important leaders of the Migrant Ministry's early aid programs in time periods largely before the era of activism.

After men came to dominate the leadership of the national Migrant Ministry in the 1960s, Migrant Ministry programs and policies shifted to legislation, job training, and union support.⁵⁰⁴ The switch from religious, health, and educational services to programs that promoted changing the food pyramid signified the changing public idea of the "migrant problem" and women's role. As the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s called for action and change, the Migrant Ministry like other religious groups, shifted to become more active, seeking to change the migrant stream. Yet, with public interest also came increasing male membership as active change apparently required male leadership while women continued to serve on the ground.⁵⁰⁵ Though women proved capable of demanding change within other religious organizations, the changing perception of the "migrant problem" reshaped and masculinized the Migrant Ministry.

Not just within the interdenominational Migrant Ministry, some other Catholic groups also assisted instead of empowering farmworkers with their charity services. The Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ established numerous health and educational programs including the El Centro Day Care in South Bend, Indiana in 1969; nursing services in Marshall County,

⁵⁰³ Letter to Fellow Ministers from Rev. Paul Paskewitz.

⁵⁰⁴ National Farm Worker Ministry Objectives & Strategies, circa 1981, 1-2, 13:44, PADRES Collection, University of Notre Dame Archives, Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana; Letter to Mr. President Carter from Arturo Lopez, Illinois Migrant Council, February 9, 1979, 2:11, DeKalb County Migrant Ministry, Regional History Center, Founders Memorial Library, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois; Lucia Quintanilla, Trabajo, 1973-1974, 4:Organizations and Activism- Area Board for Migrants- Trabajo, 1973-1974, LULAC Council 93/4, Iowa Women's Archives, University of Iowa Libraries, Iowa City, Iowa.

⁵⁰⁵ Letter to Friends from Michigan Migrant Ministry; Letter to Fellow Ministers from Rev. Paul Paskewitz; Marjorie H. Royle, "Women Pastors: What Happens after Placement?," *Review of Religious Research* 24, no. 2 (December 1982). Men dominated most churches in the nation during this time as women made slow inroads into Protestant, Episcopal, Baptist and other Church leadership.

Indiana from 1968 to at least 1977; and summer volunteer programs in Ohio and Michigan where participants made crafts with farmworkers unable to work in the fields.⁵⁰⁶ Many Handmaids were registered nurses, which resulted in strong attention to health services.⁵⁰⁷ Besides doctors and professors, women's predominance in health and education in the twentieth century fits comfortably within traditional gender norms, both within society and the Catholic Church. The continued focus on education and health remained within the confines of women's gendered roles while also safely addressing outward symptoms of poverty, but never the cause. Though the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ's efforts continued throughout the 1960s and 1970s, no Handmaid notes or reports indicated an involvement in farmworker unions or programs that encouraged farmworker agency, instead accepting existing power relationships in the field, the temple, and society. While other Catholic women's organizations moved beyond the welfare relief, the Poor Handmaids remained focused on addressing some of the basic symptoms of poverty instead of migrants' lack of power within the agricultural system.

Praying and Marching over Sour Grapes and Rotten Tomatoes

As the social movements of the era shaped the men and women of the Midwest, assistance programs for local farmworkers began to change. Though the social movements of the last half of the twentieth century failed to radically shape some organizations, several other religious organizations came to understand the "migrant problem" within the contours of gender and power norms. These groups helped change the Midwest's food pyramid just as they

⁵⁰⁶ Summer Volunteer Migrant Program Ohio and Michigan, 30:21, Handmaids of Jesus Christ, University of Notre Dame Archives, Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana; Myra D. Young, Evaluation of El Centro Day-Care and Educational Development Program 1969 in Greene School South Bend, Indiana from June 9, 1969- August 1, 1969, 30:21, Handmaids of Jesus Christ, University of Notre Dame Archives, Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana.

⁵⁰⁷ List of Migrant Registrants, 30:21, Handmaids of Jesus Christ, University of Notre Dame Archives, Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana.

sought to alter power relationships in society and the church in regards to gender and race. The new ideas that encouraged change and activism in Vatican II, the Chicano Movement, the Feminist Movement, and the UFW Movement inspired nuns, priests, students, and laypersons to demand change within their own organizations and societies as well as for farmworkers. Women like Olga Villa Parra and priests like Juan Romero described moments where they heard a speaker, met a group, or read a book that inspired them to push for change.⁵⁰⁸ Maria Elena felt a religious call to help fellow farmworkers, first creating a dance group as a means to educate people about farmworkers' plight and Mexican culture; but she soon became more active in farmworkers' struggles, creating a UFW Service Center in Onagra, Illinois, boycotting Illinois grocery stores, and eventually organizing for FLOC as the 1970s and 1980s progressed.⁵⁰⁹ Maria Elena cited Olgha Sierra Sandman, the director of the Illinois Farm Worker Ministry, as a guide to her activism, encouraging her and even getting her involved in FLOC.⁵¹⁰ Like Yolanda Tarango, who went from being inspired by articles to becoming an activist encouraged by fellow radical women, men and women inspired the individuals they came in contact with in the fields, the classroom, and the Church. Personal experience, in addition to religious ideology, especially *Guadium et Spes* and *Pacem in Terris*, served as a guiding point for Church groups, students, and laypersons' religious involvement in the farmworker movement; but the Chicano and Feminist Movements in addition to farmworker unions, forced these groups to adjust their understanding of "the migrant problem."

Inspired by the times and learning from their Midwest experiences, Catholic groups like PADRES offered more than food or clothing. PADRES, an organization of Spanish Speaking

⁵⁰⁸ Pulido et al., *Moving Beyond Borders*; Romero, "Ministry to Farmworkers."

⁵⁰⁹ Maria Elena Ortega, *Forged Under the Sun/ Forjada Bajo el Sol: The Life of Maria Elena Lucas*, ed. Fran Leepa Buss (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 182, 187, 195.

⁵¹⁰ *Ibid*, 185, 187, 216, 225.

Catholic priests, provided written support of FLOC through resolutions while also providing vocal and organizational assistance to the UFW by arranging meetings with interested parties to garner support for the California Agricultural Labor Relations Act.⁵¹¹ PADRES also worked to improve undocumented farmworkers' lives through legislation.⁵¹² While PADRES' primary goal remained providing Latinos with a voice in the Catholic Church, the group also viewed assisting the UFW and FLOC as critical to improving the lives of Mexican Americans within the nation, extending their desire to change power relationships in the Church to farmworkers.⁵¹³ Father Gallegos, who worked in Chicago in the 1960s, realized how important organizing for social justice was because of his experience witnessing Chicago's Civil Rights Movement.⁵¹⁴ For other priests in the PADRES movement, the Midwest region proved to be a source for empowerment, as Chicago's Saul Alinsky provided the important training for social movement activism, which was accepted by numerous PADRES, Chicanos, and union farmworkers like UFW's Chavez.⁵¹⁵ While many PADRES members served in parishes outside the Midwest, the Midwest served as a place to gain important skills necessary to assist the farmworkers and Chicanos of the Midwest and nation.

PADRES' ideology encouraged members to support farmworker unions and Chicanos, but did not always support other ideas regarding power. As PADRES member Reverend Juan

⁵¹¹ Letter from Trinidad Sanchez to Rev. Dick Notter, March 23, 1979, 15:13, PADRES Collection, University of Notre Dame Archives, Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana; Si Se Puede, October 18, 1976, 15:13, PADRES Collection, University of Notre Dame Archives, Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana; Letter to PADRES members from Rev. Manuel R. Martinez, December 1, 1976, 15:13, PADRES Collection, University of Notre Dame Archives, Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana.

⁵¹² Letter to Friends from Rev. Juan Romero, 17:24, PADRES Collection, University of Notre Dame Archives, Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana.

⁵¹³ Ibid.

⁵¹⁴ Martínez. PADRES, 45.

⁵¹⁵ J. Craig Jenkins, *The Politics of Insurgency: The Farm Worker Movement in the 1960s*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 134; Gonzalez, *Bringing Aztlán to Mexican Chicago*, 52; Martínez, *PADRES*, 84.

Romero stated in an article in 1974, the church should not just stop immorality, but seek “authentic liberation” and end “oppressive situations.”⁵¹⁶ For some members of PADRES, “authentic liberation” came from their experiences meeting UFW leader Cesar Chavez and learning about the struggles of farmworkers, ultimately radicalizing these Latino priests.⁵¹⁷ Despite PADRES’ progressive stance on the “migrant problem,” the PADRES organization failed to always support gender changes within the Church as some Catholic men disagreed with Chicanas who saw renegotiating gendered power structures as important to society. PADRES, while working alongside Las Hermanas for similar goals, never had a permanent association with Las Hermanas because PADRES remained an all-clerical and, therefore, all male group that sometimes rejected women’s rights.⁵¹⁸ While unions and the Chicano Movement motivated PADRES to demand changes in the agricultural system, their all-clerical, all-male structure demonstrated their restricted acceptance of changing power structures.

Seeing the stooped laborers in the fields of the United States, different religious groups debated how best to respond to the “migrant problem,” but consistently within the dialectic of gender and power. Organizations became more aware of farmworker unions and altered their understanding of the “migrant problem” because of Vatican II and the radical social movements of the 1960s and 1970s. In providing nursing services, the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ noted farmworkers’ desire to independently control their own medical care, pick their doctor, pay medical bills themselves without using free vouchers, and decide whether they could afford time off from work for a medical visit.⁵¹⁹ Despite recognizing this desire, some RNs took individuals to dentists and other medical appointments to ensure they went and

⁵¹⁶ Romero, “Ministry to Farmworkers.”

⁵¹⁷ Ibid.

⁵¹⁸ Medina, *Las Hermanas*, 4, 76.

sometimes insisted that farmworkers follow their dictates, essentially refusing to let farmworkers make their own judgments.⁵²⁰ Similarly, the Handmaids' El Centro Day Care in Indiana taught citizenship and English while also celebrating the Fourth of July.⁵²¹ These groups contrasted with Catholic groups and programs such as PADRES, Las Hermanas, and GAP that were inspired to renegotiate power for minorities or women as well as farmworkers. While the Handmaids offered much needed medical and day care assistance that fit within women's gendered norms, their focus on medical and day care help and their failure to respect farmworkers' choices and culture suggests they perceived the "migrant problem" as solely an issue of poverty, not a racialized lack of power.

The patriarchal and racially based aid that assumed farmworkers' dependency on Anglo outsiders contrasted with church efforts under PADRES, Las Hermanas, NAWR, the national Migrant Ministry, and even Mexican American led movements with religious ties. Initially focused on the religious needs of farmworkers, the DeKalb County Migrant Ministry shifted to social and economic services as the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s shaped public perceptions of power structures.⁵²² One of the first programs developed by the Migrant Ministry was Family Night, which provided entertainment and religious instructions to migrants, but later programs included job training, assistance finding housing and jobs for migrants who wanted to leave the stream, legal assistance for farmworkers who were cheated out of their pay,

⁵¹⁹ Sister M. [Richilde], Report on Migrant Nursing, Summer 1976, 30:21, Handmaids of Jesus Christ, University of Notre Dame Archives, Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana; Sr. Kathleen Quinn R.N., Sr. M. Richilde Detmer R.N., and Sr. Helen M. Watkins, "Nursing Services Marshall County Migrant Workers 1968, Summary of Migrant Nursing Service, Marshall County," June 15-August 15, 1971, Migrant Nursing in Marshall County, 1977, 30:21, Handmaids of Jesus Christ, University of Notre Dame Archives, Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana.

⁵²⁰ Sister M. [Richilde] et al., Report on Migrant Nursing.

⁵²¹ Young, Evaluation of El Centro Day-Care.

⁵²² DeKalb County Migrant Ministry Information Sheet, 1972, 1:2, DeKalb County Migrant Ministry, Regional History Center, Founders Memorial Library, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois.

and medical and educational help for farmworkers.⁵²³ By 1972, the DeKalb County Migrant Ministry's programs included: Health Services, Settling Out, Family Night, Legislation, Child and Adult Education, Legal Aid, and a Vocational Scholarship Fund.⁵²⁴ Statewide, the Illinois Migrant Ministry supported a mushroom workers' union in Princeton, Illinois after workers initiated a strike in 1989.⁵²⁵ National and local Migrant Ministries also supported the UFW and FLOC boycott.⁵²⁶ As the Migrant Ministry, nationally, state-wide, and locally, supported programs meant to better migrants' lives, Migrant Ministry members became increasingly more radical, assisting farmworker unions.

In addition to the interdenominational Migrant Ministry, PADRES, Las Hermanas, and NAWR provided help to address union struggles and feminist and Latino issues. PADRES supported UFW legislative efforts and Las Hermanas support programs that brought Latino women together to deal with Latina female issues such as sexuality.⁵²⁷ In addition, PADRES, Las Hermanas, and NAWR continued to assist farmworker unions, including UFW and Midwest's FLOC. NAWR programs directly supported farmworker women's agency and empowerment while simultaneously assisting farmworker unions fighting the agricultural system. Sr. Pat Drydyk, a nun paid by NAWR to directly assist the UFW in their boycott,

⁵²³ Letter to Fellow Ministers from Rev. Paul Paskewitz; Migrant Ministry, "Migrant Work Report, August 9-October 2nd," DeKalb County Migrant Ministry Information Sheet, 1972.

⁵²⁴ DeKalb County Migrant Ministry Information Sheet, 1972.

⁵²⁵ Illinois Conference of Churches: The Illinois Farm Worker Ministry Summer of 1989 Newsletter, 38:9, PADRES Collection, University of Notre Dame Archives, Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana; Prouty, *Cesar Chavez, The Catholic Bishops*, 119; Pat Hoffman, "Gaining Justice Ground," *Sojourners*, October 1977, 17:1, Michigan Farm Worker Ministry Coalition Collection Papers, 1950-1990, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan; DeKalb County Migrant Ministry Information Sheet, 1972.

⁵²⁶ National Farm Workers Ministry, "Cesar Chavez Calls for Boycott of All Galo Wines Until Elections Are Held," 1975, 5:5, DeKalb County Migrant Ministry, Regional History Center, Founders Memorial Library, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois.

⁵²⁷ Lara Medina, "The Challenges and Consequences of Being Latina, Catholic, and Political," in *Latino Religions and Civic Activism in the United States*, eds. Gastón Espinosa, Virgilio Elizondo, and Jesse Miranda (Oxford University Press, 2005), 103.

exemplified some NAWR members' endorsement of farmworkers' self-sufficiency. Drydyk believed the agricultural system of power should be changed, and questioned California nuns who preferred to donate and provide temporary solutions to farmworkers' living conditions rather than "think in terms of changing the system."⁵²⁸ Sister Drydyk, PADRES, Las Hermanas, and some local and statewide Migrant Ministries understood the "migrant problem" in terms of farmworkers' lack of power, ultimately refusing temporary solutions and instead seeking more meaningful change.

As national and regional programs and organizations provided much needed support, locally developed efforts also provided avenues for farmworker agency. Sister Mary Giovanni, SSND, with the assistance of other local nuns, created the GAP in St. Paul, Minnesota in 1965.⁵²⁹ GAP sought "to serve people of Mexican American ancestry who struggle to preserve their cultural heritage while assimilating into a new culture (and) all people in need whose education and training do not prepare them for an equal opportunity in society."⁵³⁰ Sister Giovanni acted as an important local supporter of farmworkers and argued for the continuation and respect of Mexican culture. Contacted by other nuns, Sister Giovanni arranged for a migrant farmworker to receive necessary medical surgery in Minnesota and a non-agricultural job in the area that did not threaten the woman's recovery.⁵³¹ A respected Anglo within the Latino community of St. Paul, Sister Giovanni's emphasis on respecting Mexican culture exemplified the changes in the Catholic Church, as Latinos demanded the Church respect their different cultures and as Vatican II provided an avenue by which the international Church could

⁵²⁸ Letter to NAWR from Sr. Pat Drydyk, RE: Farmworker Initiative Campaign, April 1-30, 1976, May 9, 1976, 5:17, National Association of Religious Women, University of Notre Dame Archives, Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana.

⁵²⁹ Hayes, "Nuns, Coeds, High Schoolers."

⁵³⁰ Demarest, "Bridging the Gap."

⁵³¹ Lewis, "Smiles Greet Migrant Worker."

adapt to ethnic practices.⁵³² Sister Giovanni questioned the hierarchy that relegated Mexican Americans and migrant farmworkers to the bottom of the food pyramid by creating relief services that supported farmworkers and Latino culture. Encouraging self-determination and pride in one's culture, the female-led GAP program, like other Catholic women's organizations, reflected the changes that occurred due to Vatican II, the Chicano Movement, and the farmworker unions of the latter half of the twentieth century.

Religious groups and individuals worked both within and outside religious organizations designed to assist migrants. Olga Villa Para, a member of Las Hermanas, took part in both religious and non-religiously based organizations. Parra worked as the director of the Institute for Urban Studies for the Midwest Council of La Raza in Notre Dame University. Although Parra worked to better all Latinos lives, she specifically continued to be actively concerned with farmworkers, even being arrested around 1970 for refusing to leave with her Sisters of Kalamazoo friends when they protested the local food stamp office for refusing assistance to farmworkers who traveled to Michigan to work for a grower that over-estimated his labor needs.⁵³³ Similarly to Parra, who labored in Michigan and Indiana to better all farmworkers and Latinos' lives, Tess Browne, a Franciscan, worked in the Milwaukee UFW boycott office until she became the Wisconsin state director of the boycott. At the same time, she worked with the Milwaukee Justice and Peace Center, a Catholic based group in the Milwaukee diocese.⁵³⁴ Browne, like Parra, worked within the worlds of the Church and Chicano Movement to create change for Latinos and farmworkers. The interplay of religion,

⁵³² Ann Baker, "Brown Power" *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, July 6, 1969, Brown Berets, Minnesota Chapter, St. Paul Records, 1969-1974, Mexican American Community in St. Paul Collections, Minnesota State Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota.

⁵³³ Pulido et al., *Moving Beyond Borders*, 81.

⁵³⁴ Medina, *Las Hermanas*, 85.

unions, the Chicano Movement, and social activism played out in a variety of individuals' lives from the 1960s through the 1980s, just as it had at the UFW communion rally in 1968.

While members' involvement in the UFW, FLOC, and the Chicano or Feminist Movements' radicalization of some religious organizations, not all sought to change the agricultural, social, or gender system of power. Some groups, including NAWR, PADRES, and Las Hermanas, gave no pretense for impartiality between farmworkers' and growers, yet other religious groups argued that religion should instead encourage mediation and peace. On a national scale, the Catholic Church by way of the Bishops Ad Hoc Committee fostered negotiations between the UFW and grape growers in the 1960s, but eventually supported the UFW fully in the UFW's struggle with the Teamsters Union by 1973.⁵³⁵ In the Midwest, the interdenominational National Council of Churches tried to bring FLOC, growers, and Campbell's soup, the major focus of FLOC's boycott, to the negotiating table.⁵³⁶ In reaction to this effort by the National Council of Churches, the Catholic bishops in Ohio initially refused to support FLOC's boycott until negotiations failed.⁵³⁷ In contrast, other Churches did not limit their role to mediators of strikes and boycotts. The interdenominational DeKalb Migrant Ministry, one year after its creation in 1964, noted its goal was "to create an atmosphere of friendship" between growers and farmworkers.⁵³⁸ Although some religious groups became staunch advocates of farmworkers' rights to unionize, the Catholic hierarchy and other

⁵³⁵ Prouty, *César Chávez, the Catholic Bishops*, 4-5.

⁵³⁶ Bill Osinski, "Battle Heats Up for Migrants' Loyalty," *Akron Beacon Journal*, June 23, 1985, 24:58, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan; Laura Hared, "Ohio Catholic Bishops Back Campbell Boycott," *Akron Beacon Journal*, June 17, 1985, 24:58, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

⁵³⁷ Hared, "Ohio Catholic Bishops Urge Campbell Boycott."

⁵³⁸ Migrant Ministry, "Migrant Work Report, August 9- October 2nd."

religious groups, on both a national scale and within states, resisted early attempts to support farmworker unions over local religious individuals.

The Catholic Church's role as peacemaker and negotiator indicated not only a possible lack of radicalization within the Catholic hierarchy, but also contestation over the role of the Church in labor issues. Church leaders understood that growers in their community were church members who did not appreciate criticism and showed their anger by not attending church, complaining to church leaders about local priests and nuns, and, most importantly, refusing to donate money.⁵³⁹ One local priest in Napoleon, Ohio, where a Campbell Soup factory was the "lifeblood" of the community, feared local Catholics' reaction to the Ohio Catholic Bishops' recognition of FLOC's boycott of Campbell Soup.⁵⁴⁰ Father Fred Duschl tried to mediate between the two sides, arguing that the Ohio Bishops were correct to be concerned about farmworkers, but wrong to support the boycott because of its effect on other Catholics.⁵⁴¹ This priest felt caught between powerful forces: the wealthy donations and complaints of permanent locals; the conditions of transient, Catholic minority farmworkers; and the public outcry for churches to help the poor.⁵⁴² The division between some within the Catholic hierarchy and the priests, nuns, and laypersons on the ground meant that, while the church male hierarchy acted as public mediators or as verbal advocates for unions, individuals in the Midwest either acted as staunch migrant advocates or resisted support for local farmworkers.

⁵³⁹ "Campbell Employees Regret Boycott Backing," *Catholic Chronicle*, June 28, 1985, 24:58, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan; Romero, "Ministry to Farmworkers."

⁵⁴⁰ "Campbell Employees Regret Boycott Backing."

⁵⁴¹ Ibid.

⁵⁴² Prouty, *César Chávez, the Catholic Bishops*, 3-4; Sister Thomas More Bertels, "A Nun Speaks Out Against the FLOC Boycott", 11:22, National Association of Religious Women, University of Notre Dame Archives, Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana; "Campbell Employees Regret Boycott Backing."

Inspired by the Chicano movement and sometimes faced with public pressure, religious and non-religious groups by the 1970s began to listen to the concerns and opinions of local Latinos and migrants by having them participate in organizations. In Milwaukee, locals pressed Chancellor Klotsche of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee to create a group to encourage and promote Latino enrollment.⁵⁴³ Similarly, students in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and St. Paul, Minnesota demanded administrators listen to Latino concerns.⁵⁴⁴ Outside schools, Madison, Wisconsin leaders faced pressure from local Latinos and the farmworker group UMOS, when farmworkers and Latinos took over a Wisconsin governor's session in 1972 to demand the governor listen to the concerns and issues of migrants and promote direct change to the food pyramid rather than working through his ineffective Committee on Migratory Labor.⁵⁴⁵ Father James Groppi endorsed UMOS' strategy, though radical, to pressure the Governor to give migrants a voice in a system that controlled their lives, which Father Groppi argued was important.⁵⁴⁶ Interestingly, Anglo religious individuals initially formed UMOS, ignoring local Latinos' concerns until local Latinos demanded a voice in the organization in 1969.⁵⁴⁷ Throughout the Midwest, the surge of Midwest Latino activism forced some state and religious organizations to address the actual problems faced by farmworkers and Latinos, not an outsiders' perception of the problems.

⁵⁴³ Cassell, et. al., *The University of Wisconsin –Milwaukee*, 81.

⁵⁴⁴ Cassell, et. al., *The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee*, 81; Brown Berets, Mexican American Community in St. Paul Collections, Mexican American Community in St. Paul Collections, Minnesota State Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota.

⁵⁴⁵ Eileen Hammer, "Migrants Take Over Session," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, August 8, 1972, 3:4, Wisconsin Governor's Committee of Migratory Labor: Records, 1960-1972, Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin; Wisconsin Governor's Committee of Migratory Labor: Records, 1960-1972, 3:3, Wisconsin Governor's Committee of Migratory Labor: Records, 1960-1972, Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin.

⁵⁴⁶ Hammer, "Migrant's Take Over Session."

⁵⁴⁷ University Migrant Opportunity Services, Inc., 1965-1985, 20th Anniversary Album.

Though pressure forced some to acknowledge the voice of migrants and Latinos, other organizations willingly accepted migrants' ability to change their own lives. The Illinois Migrant Council initiated within their constitution a position for local migrants to participate in the programs meant to assist them. The Illinois Migrant Council (IMC) began in 1966 after the Bishop's Committee for the Spanish Speaking, the Catholic Council of Working Life, the Illinois Council of Churches, and the Church Federation of Greater Chicago created the organization.⁵⁴⁸ The IMC's by-laws provided migrants and former-migrants a percentage of representative seats on local and state committees.⁵⁴⁹ The IMC's acceptance of migrants' role in the organization proved abnormal as most religious groups failed to provide farmworkers a voice in organizations designed to assist them, categorizing the "migrant problem" as best understood and solved by outsiders. Few Catholic groups included farmworkers in their organizations with the exception of some ex-farmworker PADRES and Las Hermanas members. Non-Catholic groups also ignored farmworkers, such as the early UMOs organization and the DeKalb County Migrant Ministry, which in 1972 had only a few members with Spanish surnames.⁵⁵⁰ The inclusion or exclusion of migrants or migrant representatives in religious groups exemplified the extent of religious organizations' radicalization.

For one organization, the Migrant Ministry, the lack of farmworker representation and the relative autonomy of locals led to significant difference of opinion between locals and the national organization. Although the national Migrant Ministry established goals in 1960 that included increased education and vocational training, putting an end to the Bracero Program, and maintaining "responsible and democratic organizations for economic and self help," the

⁵⁴⁸ Illinois Migrant Council, Regional Advisory Council- Rochelle Region, 2:11, DeKalb County Migrant Ministry, Regional History Center, Founders Memorial Library, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois.

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁰ DeKalb County Migrant Ministry Information Sheet.

Migrant Ministry had no overarching control on local ministries.⁵⁵¹ An example of local ministries' ability to counter national Migrant Ministry policy occurred in Van Buren County, Michigan when the local Ministry denied farmworkers the use of the Migrant Ministry building for labor organizing purposes.⁵⁵² After changing their minds several times, the state-level Michigan Migrant Ministry criticized the Van Buren County Ministry for failing to assist farmworker unions.⁵⁵³ While the social movements of the time period influenced the DeKalb, Illinois Migrant Ministry members to support FLOC and the UFW, Van Buren members refused to support farmworker unions. Van Buren members' lack of concern for farmworker power mirrored the lack of farmworker representatives in Van Buren's Migrant Ministry. Contesting ideas on the "migrant problem" coupled with the lack of migrant farmworker representation in aid societies limited the reach of services and revealed the inconsistencies of the 1960s and 1970s, as social movements motivated individuals to better migrants' conditions, but not to change society.

Midwesterners' complicated understanding of the "migrant problem" meant that even when organizations accepted farmworkers' right to have a voice, not all understood Latinos and farmworkers' pre-existing agency in their own lives. In the Conference of Major Superiors of Women in 1970, individual nuns offered various prayers; while some called for Bible classes or the UFW's success, others prayed "that Anglos will help develop leadership programs for the Spanish speaking and the migrant," or "that the migrant will be helped to take a greater share in his development."⁵⁵⁴ Considering that the existence of the UFW, FLOC, the little known and

⁵⁵¹ Watt, *Farm Workers and the Churches*, 64.

⁵⁵² Michigan Farm Worker Ministry, Report.

⁵⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁴ Sister Mary Eileen, Migrant Prayer List, Conference of Major Superiors of Women August 1970, 30:21, Handmaids of Jesus Christ Collection, University of Notre Dame Archives, Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana.

short lived Obreros Unidos union in Wisconsin, and random strikes in Illinois and elsewhere in the nation were all started by former and current migrant farmworkers, Mexican and Mexican American migrants proved capable leaders without Anglos' guidance.⁵⁵⁵ In addition, PADRES and Las Hermanas helped to develop Latino/a leadership through programs that instituted cultural pride while groups like MeCHA developed programs at Notre Dame on Chicanos' identity and Latinos in Milwaukee and Minneapolis demanded universities make efforts to increase Latino enrollment and establish Latino Studies programs, all exemplifying Latinos' leadership and organizational skills.⁵⁵⁶ The blatant perception of migrant farmworkers as being in need of Anglo guidance characterized the lack of farmworker representation in organizations created to assist farmworkers and the continued racism that limited change in the Catholic Church and society.

Equality in the Temple and the Fields

The Feminist Movement, the Chicano Movement, and the UFW and FLOC impelled some religious women to question agricultural power structures just as they questioned patriarchal power structures. Vatican II and the Chicano Movement brought increasing questions about the structure of power within the church and society at large. For the women in and outside the Catholic Church, these questions extended to women's position within the Church, the fields, and the social movements of the era. The variety of migrant services from female-dominated or female led organizations exemplified the variety of opinions regarding women's traditional roles as nurturers or women's new position as agents of change. Earlier

⁵⁵⁵ W.K. Barger and Ernesto M. Reza, *The Farm Labor Movement in the Midwest: Social Change and Adaptation among Migrant Farmworkers* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1994), 55, 59-60.

⁵⁵⁶ Cassell, et. al., *The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee*, 81; Brown Berets.

women's aid societies, such as the Migrant Ministry and Handmaids of Jesus Christ, were largely uninfluenced by the social movements of the time, working within gendered norms and existing power structures. Based on women's position as caretakers, the women who established the Migrant Ministry and the nuns in Handmaids of Jesus Christ provided basic assistance to migrant farmworkers. Though based within traditional gendered norms, the Handmaids of Jesus Christ's successfully offered farmworkers aid because of their gendered positions as nurses and teachers. Many Handmaids trained as registered nurses, a largely female occupation, allowing handmaids to provide medical assistance as they embraced the gendered depiction of women as caregivers. Not just in Churches, the UFW and FLOC boycotts relied on women protesting outside grocery stores and refusing to buy grapes, lettuce, and Campbell's products.⁵⁵⁷ Employing women's reproductive labor as family caretakers and cooks, women organizers and protesters tried to connect with local women shopping in grocery stores to encourage them to join the boycott. Inside and outside the temple, gender influenced the type of assistance offered to migrant farmworkers as charity organizations and unions capitalized on women's gendered roles and their ties to other women.

Employing women's "natural" position as caregiver, the Migrant Ministry served as an example of employing women's natural role to solve the "migrant problem," yet numerous other women's groups worked within and outside these caregiver ideals to improve migrants' lives. Women who believed it was important to empower migrants just as they themselves felt empowered by social movements, had no official power within the Catholic Church to provide the vocal and written recognition so desired by the UFW and FLOC, instead focusing on hands-

⁵⁵⁷ Pat Hoffman, *Ministry of the Dispossessed: Learning from the Farm Worker Movement* (Los Angeles: Wallace Press, 1987), 60; Boycott Support of Ohio Farm Workers list, 11:11, Farm Labor Organizing Committee, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

on active participation to effect change.⁵⁵⁸ Similarly to Sister Mary Giovanni starting GAP in St. Paul, Minnesota to help local Latinos and farmworkers, other women like Irene and Molly Muñoz successfully got their local sisters to back farmworker unions.⁵⁵⁹ Women like Olga Villa Parra in Michigan and Tess Browne in Wisconsin tied their farm labor activism in with their preexisting activism. Tying together their work in Indiana and Wisconsin respectively, Olga Villa Parra and Tess Browne, both members of Las Hermanas, also assisted farmworker unions by serving in the Midwest Council of La Raza and working as a leader of the Milwaukee and Wisconsin state boycott offices, respectively.⁵⁶⁰ Working within women's traditional roles as nurturers, both women also exemplified their growing personal strength as women and the ideals of the Chicana and Feminist movement as they led organizations.

Mobilized by the movements of the time to change the patriarchal power structure, Las Hermanas, a national organization of Latino nuns and laywomen, also demanded greater equality for women and Latinos in the Catholic Church and in society at large. The Chicano Movement, farmworker boycotts, and Vatican II radicalized Chicana religious women in the 1960s and 1970s. Yolanda Taranga began to learn about the Chicano movement and the UFW from newspaper and journal articles she read while she was a novice. Already thrilled by what she read, she met more radical and inspiring ideas and individuals when she went to school in Chicago. Motivated by the new yet fringe theological ideas that encouraged equality for women and Chicanos in the church and society, Yolanda helped start Las Hermanas, supported farmworker boycotts, and took part in protests during ordinations to challenge women's lack of

⁵⁵⁸ Letter to Fellow Ministers from Rev. Paul Paskewitz.

⁵⁵⁹ Medina, *Las Hermanas*, 35.

⁵⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 85; Pulido, de Alvarado, and Samora eds., *Moving Beyond Borders*, 81.

power in the Church.⁵⁶¹ Las Hermanas members like Yolanda fought to better Catholic Mexican American women's experience in the Catholic Church, including arguing that the Church should respect and properly pay Mexican nuns who were forced to work as domestics in rectories.⁵⁶² Las Hermanas members tied together the ideals of feminism, Chicano identity, and the labor rights ideals developed by farmworker unions to demand a better life for Chicanos, women, and migrants.

Not just radicalized to better women's position in the church and society, Las Hermanas assisted farmworker unions, using their newsletter *Informes* to inform and update other Las Hermanas members of FLOC and the UFW.⁵⁶³ Many Las Hermanas members consistently appealed to the Catholic Church and Catholic groups to respect farmworker unions by protesting, walking out, and demanding non-union foods be banned from various religious women's conferences.⁵⁶⁴ Two members, Irene and Molly Muñoz, convinced their local sisters to take an active stance in the farmworker boycotts. Irene and Molly, sisters who both entered the Sisters of Humility of Mary in the Midwest, struggled to convince all their Catholic sisters to take a stand on farmworker unions and not be concerned about disturbing the "status quo."⁵⁶⁵ Members like the Muñoz sisters even demanded the removal of a Campbell Soup ad in the Catholic Directory in 1981.⁵⁶⁶ Influenced by the Feminist and Chicano Movements of the time,

⁵⁶¹ Tarango, interview by Sr. Maria Eva Flores.

⁵⁶² Medina, *Las Hermanas*, 19.

⁵⁶³ Ibid, 19.

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid, 86. A 1975 NAWR conference at a university served non-union lettuce, so Las Hermanas walked out and protested the university. Las Hermanas members demanded that no grapes be served at a Women's Ordination Conference, and they also demanded a college where they held a conference to not serve nonunion lettuce.

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid, 35.

⁵⁶⁶ Letter to P.J. Kennedy and Sons from Sylvia Sedillo, SL, September 1, 1981, 31: Las Hermanas, 1981, Midwest Council of La Raza, University of Notre Dame Archives, Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana.

and encouraged by the changes enacted in Vatican II, Las Hermanas members demonstrated alternate ideas of power, demanding the Church listen to women and the migrants in the fields.

The women of Las Hermanas combined the ideologies of migrant farmworkers' struggles, Catholic Mexican Americans, and women into a cohesive set of ideals that empowered farmworkers, Latinos, men, and women. They called for an end to racism within the Catholic Church and specifically within their religious institute, but they did so by not only addressing lack of representation or programs for Mexican Catholics, but also by addressing the labor rights of Mexican American Catholic nuns, the rights of women in general, and the struggles of the Church's Mexican American constituents: striking farmworkers. Combining issues of gender, labor, and power, Las Hermanas members refused to be subjugated by Catholic men, including PADRES members. In a letter sent to PADRES, Las Hermanas members argued in 1973 that they would continue "peaceful co-existence" with PADRES as long as PADRES did not interfere with Las Hermanas' efforts to help their people.⁵⁶⁷ A debate at Las Hermanas' National Encuentro revealed that some Las Hermanas members felt held back by PADRES members, that PADRES did not support the "struggle of [their] people," PADRES failed to work cooperatively with Las Hermanas, and PADRES members failed to place themselves within any major Catholic group that could influence national religious politics.⁵⁶⁸ Las Hermanas' empowerment of women and Latinas in the Church extended to their work with farmworkers as Tess Browne became one of the few female UFW boycott leaders to manage an entire state boycott and Olga Villa Parra labored in the Midwest Council of La Raza

⁵⁶⁷ Letter to PADRES national and Regional director from Las Hermanas National Office, received September 7, 1973, 16: Las Hermanas, PADRES Collection, University of Notre Dame Archives, Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana.

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid.

in Indiana. The ideas that developed out of social movements inspired the women of Las Hermanas to demand the Church and society listen to the issues of Chicana women.

Working alongside Las Hermanas, NAWR members in the Midwest and the nation at large, in addition to other non-Latino religious women, worked to change the agricultural, gender, and social power structures that relegated minorities, women, and farmworkers to poverty. Nuns and laywomen became involved in the UFW and FLOC boycotts because of their increasing awareness of the farmworker cause, encouraging others to see the issues of farmworkers. NAWR encouraged the activism of nuns and other religious women in farmworker issues, establishing a committee totally focused on farmworkers, as well as having a paid staff member, Sister Pat Drydyk.⁵⁶⁹ Drydyk worked full-time to promote and work on the UFW boycott and encouraged other nuns to also support farmworkers, not just in the way of food and used clothes, but in changing the food pyramid. Like numerous Las Hermanas members and the Illinois and Michigan Migrant Ministry, Pat Drydyk and some of her NAWR allies realized that the early charity efforts to feed and clothe migrants did not address the real problem. While migrant unions like UFW and FLOC petitioned for religious support, women like Pat Drydyk believed women had the power to support farmworkers' unionizing efforts. NAWR leaders desired "to challenge and mobilize sisters to live out the gospel values they espouse through active participation in the struggle of the farmworkers in this county."⁵⁷⁰ Similarly, Sister Giovanni of St. Paul, Minnesota saw empowerment as important for Latinos. Likely influenced by her labor-organizing father, Sister Giovanni encouraged pride in Mexican

⁵⁶⁹ Letter to NAWR from Sr. Pat Drydyk.

⁵⁷⁰ Letter to the Members of the NAWR Board from S. Catherine, "Job Description of Coord of Sisters Working with Farm Workers," August 12, 1974, 5:17, National Association of Religious Women, University of Notre Dame Archives, Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana.

culture and provided assistance to farmworkers in the St. Paul, Minnesota area through GAP.⁵⁷¹ Though outside the Chicano Movement, some of the women of NAWR and Sister Giovanni understood their religious charge in terms of changing an unjust system by mobilizing religious and public support for Chicano culture and agency.

NAWR, Las Hermanas, and GAP's efforts to alter the agricultural system of power often tied directly or indirectly to gender roles and Chicano identity, exemplifying the influence and intersection of various social movements of the last half of the twentieth century. Vatican II, the Chicano Movement, and the Feminist Movement led NAWR members to stand by Las Hermanas and demand the Catholic Church ordain women and give minority women a greater position in the church.⁵⁷² Though unsuccessful in getting the Catholic Church to accept women's leadership roles, NAWR empowered farmworkers not just through unionizing, but also by expanding the rights and freedoms of farmworkers through female migrants' empowerment. Sister Drydyk, like the Las Hermanas members, Irene and Molly Muñoz, criticized nuns and laywomen who focused solely on "band-aid" solutions, food and clothing. To do more than "band-aid" programs, the Camp Health Aid Program (CHAP), established in 1985, instituted medical training for farmworker women to become health counselors who provided non-emergency medical care and guidance to farmworkers traveling between Texas and Michigan.⁵⁷³ This program encouraged female farmworker agency by giving some women the training to better farmworkers' lives and even ultimately "empowering" these farmworker women to continue their own medical education.⁵⁷⁴ The CHAP program gave women the means

⁵⁷¹ Hayes, "Nuns, Coeds, High Schoolers;" Demarest, "Bridging the GAP."

⁵⁷² Medina, *Las Hermanas*, 119.

⁵⁷³ Leslie Jackson, "Migrant Health Aides: A Downstream Pilot Project," *Catalyst*, 7:2, June 1988, 40:14, National Association of Religious Women, University of Notre Dame Archives, Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana.

⁵⁷⁴ Jackson, "Migrant Health Aides."

to potentially leave the migrant stream, if they desired, or stay within the stream and act as a respected and important member within the migrant community. The CHAP program also provided some traveling migrant communities with the ability to help themselves as these traveling communities no longer had to rely on the dictates and ideas of Anglo charity. The CHAP program especially characterized some Catholic women's efforts to support Chicanos' struggles to gain respect and equality in society.

Religious women's groups consistently pushed religious women to confront the agricultural system as radical women sought to empower all minorities and Catholics, especially women, through unions and other avenues of empowerment. Sister Giovanni in St. Paul, Minnesota, while not focused solely on women or farmworker issues, established along with fellow nuns, services that encouraged agency and activism for Latinos. The program she established, Guadalupe Area Project or GAP, helped farmworkers like Mrs. Fields find non-agricultural jobs and local housing when her health did not permit her to continue working in the fields.⁵⁷⁵ In addition, GAP built on the *Guadium et Spes* and *Pacem in Terri's* teachings of Vatican II and the Chicano Movement by encouraging respect for Latino culture and fighting society's attempts to "Americanize" Latinos. GAP did not offer specific programs that addressed gender rights and roles, yet Sister Giovanni's approach in GAP went well beyond the traditional woman's role, encouraging and taking a stance to promote activism and agency among farmworkers and Latinos. The ideological stance of some religious women's organizations meant having programs that empowered women and farmworkers to change the system of power.

⁵⁷⁵ Lewis, "Smiles Greet Migrant Worker."

Not only within the Catholic Church, gender and social movements also influenced Midwestern youth. The social movements of the era fueled student activism in universities with organizations, conferences, protests, and centers established to investigate, discuss, educate, and demand change. In Catholic universities such as Notre Dame, students like Gilbert Cardenas and Jose Gamaliel Gonzalez and Olga Villa Parra started MeCHA.⁵⁷⁶ At the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Chicanos in the area protested the university's lack of Mexican students in the school.⁵⁷⁷ Programs such as the week long Chicano Week at Notre Dame also included a pre-event entitled "Las Mujer Chicana" focused specifically on women's issues in society and the Chicano Movement.⁵⁷⁸ The efforts of college students in universities around the Midwest demonstrated the influence of social movements on the youth of the Midwest.

While priests and nuns at Notre Dame University encouraged Chicano and non-Chicano students to get involved in the Chicano Movement and union boycotts, social activism tied with religious ideology to shape other students' lives.⁵⁷⁹ Chicano students reacted to the combination of their religious background and the vibrant activism they encountered in the Midwest, as individuals became involved in groups like MeCHA, Brown Berets, and OLAS. Magda Ramírez-Castañeda of Chicago noted a priest, Father Jim, who provided support for undocumented immigrants, was arrested for working with local unionists alongside several

⁵⁷⁶ González, *Bringing Aztlán to Mexican Chicago*, 44-48.

⁵⁷⁷ Cassell, et. al., *University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee*, 81.

⁵⁷⁸ Wesley Vargas, "La Semana de la Raza," *Observer*, April 29, 1975, Digital Collections, University of Notre Dame Archives, last accessed July 2015, http://www.archives.nd.edu/Observer/1975-04-29_v09_124.pdf.

⁵⁷⁹ Amelia M. Munoz, "Major FLOC Victory Ends the Campbell's Boycott" *The Observer*, February 26, 1986, Digital Collections, Notre Dame University Archives, accessed July 2015, http://www.archives.nd.edu/Observer/1986-02-26_v20_100.pdf; Patrick Gaffney, "Strike! The South Bend Settlement," *Scholastic*, November 21, 1969, 23, Digital Collection, University of Notre Dame Archives, accessed July 2015, http://www.archives.nd.edu/Scholastic/VOL_0111/VOL_0111_ISSUE_0009.pdf.

nuns. This priest's activism and his argument that women could change the system of power encouraged Magda's personal feminist ideology.⁵⁸⁰ For Yolanda Tarango, the Jesuit School of Theology in Chicago connected her with more radical ideologies and individuals. During her time at the Jesuit School, Yolanda met Etna Kennedy, the first president of NAWR, and Sister Marjorie Tuite, a future activist for social justice issues, all the while attending a Jesuit school so radical that the local Catholic leaders hid the Jesuits from the Pope when he came to the city.⁵⁸¹ Universities and churches became sites to spark youth to action, questioning religious and gender norms.

However, not all religious groups and student groups acknowledged farmworkers' power struggles or the role of gender, church hierarchy, and race relations in Latino's struggles. Chicano youth at the University of Minnesota, like other universities around the nation, became involved in groups like the Brown Berets or MeCHA in Notre Dame where students supported farmworker boycotts, demanded the University of Minnesota's administrators create a Chicano Studies Program, and supported Latino university groundskeepers' demands for better pay.⁵⁸² Yet for some women like Yenelli Flores of Chicago, Illinois, the Chicano Movement ignored Latina women's concerns because not all those radicalized by social movements believed in focusing on women's rights.⁵⁸³ Flores described her and her friend Magda's dislike for some of the macho attitudes of some Chicano members in the Midwest and the nation. Flores recalled female Chicana students confined to cooking tacos in the University of Chicago's Organization

⁵⁸⁰ Leonard G. Ramírez, et. al., *Chicanas of 18th Street: Narratives of a Movement from Latino Chicago*. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2011), 159.

⁵⁸¹ Tarango, interview by Sr. Maria Eva Flores.

⁵⁸² Mexican American Community in St. Paul Collection, Minnesota State Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota; Pulido et al., *Moving Beyond Borders*, 85, 170.

⁵⁸³ Ramírez et. al., *Chicanas of 18th Street*, 109.

of Latin American Students (OLAS) group.⁵⁸⁴ In the Church, Las Hermanas members met hesitation by PADRES members to financially assist Hermanas member's participation in the Women's Ordination Conference, likely due to some PADRES members' disinterest in women's ordination.⁵⁸⁵ The different experiences of activist religious women and youth characterized the contested understanding of hierarchy, rights, patriarchy, and gender in the churches, schools, fields, and general public of the Midwest.

While organizations like NAWR and Las Hermanas and individual Chicanas in the Midwest consistently questioned the role of migrant farmworkers and women in society, many continually met resistance. Las Hermanas and NAWR, like several other Catholic women's groups in the 1960s and 1970s, questioned gendered division of labor, women's subordination, and the position of the Catholic Church in social movements. Las Hermanas members' refused to be subjugated to the kitchen by some PADRES members who relegated them to traditional gender norms instead of treating them as equals in the fight for Chicano rights in the Church and in the fields. In demanding PADRES accept them as equals and insisting on women's rights in the stream and in the Church, Las Hermanas and NAWR members questioned the male hierarchy and insisted that women's rights be part of both the fight for farmworkers and minorities. In 1972, Las Hermanas worked alongside PADRES to create the Mexican American Cultural Center (MACC) that educated priests and laypersons about Hispanic culture and faith and sought to empower the Chicano poor to "direct their own destinies."⁵⁸⁶ PADRES and Las Hermanas' MACC relationship was strained as early as the late 1970s, but by 1980 Las

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁵ PADRES and Las Hermanas Joint Board Meeting Minutes, August 18, 1978, 16: Las Hermanas, PADRES Collection, University of Notre Dame Archives, Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana.

⁵⁸⁶ Medina, *Las Hermanas*, 70.

Hermanas board members considered boycotting MACC because of some of PADRES' actions, including choosing Las Hermanas' representative on the MACC board instead of allowing Hermanas to choose their own representative.⁵⁸⁷ Later on, PADRES forced out the Las Hermanas representative on the MACC board of directors and forced out or fired other Las Hermanas members who taught at MACC because of their strong feminist ideologies.⁵⁸⁸ A future attempt to work in MACC in 1983 by a strong feminist Las Hermanas member, Yolanda Tarango, had a similar ending.⁵⁸⁹ Though sharing similar concerns and ideologies regarding the agricultural power structure, Catholic women still faced resistance from the patriarchal structure of the Catholic Church.

As several PADRES members relegated women to supporting roles based on gender norms, they demonstrated not only a set of ideologies within the Catholic Church, but also Mexican and Mexican American society. The Cursillo Movement was a Mexican American male-centric religious revival where Mexican American men, who were traditionally less religious than women, became closer to the Catholic faith by focusing on a more masculine type of Catholicism.⁵⁹⁰ Many went through this program, including some PADRES members and the UFW's leader, Cesar Chavez.⁵⁹¹ The emphasis on masculine religion arguably compounded masculine ideas that ignored women's role in the Catholic Church. PADRES' acceptance of an all male structure of power in the church exemplified their approach to

⁵⁸⁷ Las Hermanas board meeting, August 9, 1981, 31: Las Hermanas, 1981, Midwest Council of La Raza, University of Notre Dame Archives, Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana.

⁵⁸⁸ Medina, *Las Hermanas*, 100. Las Hermanas and PADRES had guaranteed representatives on the MACC board. In 1979, when the Las Hermanas board member's term was finished, PADRES informed Las Hermanas that board members had to be elected and no organization would have guaranteed representatives on the board.

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁰ Frank Bardacke. *Trampling Out the Vintage: Cesar Chavez and the Two Souls of the United Farm Workers* (New York: Verso, 2011), 64, 30-31.

⁵⁹¹ Ibid, 64, 30-31.

farmworkers as they supported efforts to empower farmworkers through official structures usually dominated by men, such as unions, and failed to work with feminist nuns demanding greater equality in the Catholic Church. Some Las Hermanas members noted that in joint meetings with PADRES some PADRES members insisted that Las Hermanas members cook and clean.⁵⁹² PADRES' support for hierarchical and gendered structures was also exemplified by the inclusion of only clerical persons. While Las Hermanas allowed laywomen to be in the Las Hermanas leadership in 1976, PADRES remained an all-clerical group, maintaining men's influence and power as women could not be ordained.⁵⁹³ While PADRES sought to empower farmworkers and Mexicans in the Catholic Church, they reaffirmed traditional gender norms and power structures based within Catholic and Mexican American social structures and religious ideology.

The traditional gender norms within the farmworker movement, the Catholic Church, and even the Chicano Movement within the Midwest influenced the involvement of men and women in the farmworker movement as some excelled beyond traditional gender norms while others felt trapped. For women in Las Hermanas, Notre Dame or UW-Madison's MeCHA group, or for NAWR members, gendered norms motivated their activism and involvement within the UFW or FLOC boycott.⁵⁹⁴ While Tess Browne and Olga Villa Parra had certain leadership positions, most other women struggled to be respected. Maria Elena Ortega argued that she felt mistrusted by FLOC leader Baldemar Velasquez when she organized with FLOC in the mid 1980s, making her feel unwelcome in the organization despite believing in the

⁵⁹² Medina, *Las Hermanas*, 94-95.

⁵⁹³ Ibid, 63; Martínez, *PADRES*, 60-65. Las Hermanas did not allow laywomen to have voting rights for many years, but Las Hermanas eventually allowed all Chicana women to hold leadership roles in the organization.

⁵⁹⁴ Valeria Davis, ed., *Wisconsin Badger*, 93 (1980), digital collection, University of Wisconsin Collection, accessed June 2015, <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/UW/UW-idx?type=turn&id=UW.UWYearBk1980&entity=UW.UWYearBk1980.p0253&q1=chavez>.

union's efforts.⁵⁹⁵ Ortega also argued that she felt discouraged by Chavez and Velasquez from organizing Illinois mushroom workers, essentially discouraging her from taking a major organizing role.⁵⁹⁶ In contrast to Ortega's experience that discouraged women's active position, some female Mexican American were encouraged to vocalize women's rights and women's experiences. A two-week "Chicano Week" event in 1975 occurred after a Chicana week entitled "Las Mujer Chicana," sponsored by the student group MeCHA at Notre Dame.⁵⁹⁷ Women's experiences in the last half of the twentieth century illustrated the different forces that discouraged and encouraged women's participation within the Chicano Movement, FLOC, the Catholic Church, and the general public. Different perceptions of women's power and the Catholic Church's refusal to ordain women perpetuated public and farmworker unions' underappreciated view of women as the UFW and FLOC focused on gaining recognition from the official church hierarchy, ignoring women's positions as educators and respected Catholics.⁵⁹⁸

While organizations like Las Hermanas, NAWR, Handmaids of Jesus Christ, and the Sisters of Humility of Mary in the Midwest supported farmworkers in the fields and in the picket line, women's lack of authority and power in the Catholic Church meant women did not have the authority farmworker unions sought. Authority meant unions could legitimate their cause with the backing of local, state, and national religious groups that spoke on behalf of their church. As Chavez once noted: "I go to unions for publicity and money; to the Church for

⁵⁹⁵ Ortega, *Forged Under the Sun*, 229.

⁵⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 216-221.

⁵⁹⁷ Wesley, "La Semana de la Raza."

⁵⁹⁸ "Schools Reject Soup Label Program," *Labor News*, June 1980, 5:13, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan; McDannell, *The Spirit of Vatican II*, 183.

respectability; to students for bodies.”⁵⁹⁹ Religious women like Dolorita Martinez of Las Hermanas, though important, did not provide the legitimacy or respectability that UFW and FLOC publically sought, especially since religious women’s groups like Las Hermanas worked outside the Catholic bureaucracy because women had no official position in the male dominated church. As farmworker unions sought public support from Catholic leaders sitting in committee rooms, Catholic women who wanted to support migrants changing the power structure of society, used their hands and voices to enact radical change on the ground just as they did in other social movements. The structure of the Catholic hierarchy coupled with unions’ use of boycotts that emphasized public support, encouraged the subjugated women’s public roles in affecting change.

Planting and Reaping the Seeds of Change

The 1960s to 1970s era of activism influenced the logistical, financial, and moral support farmworkers received. The interdenominational Migrant Ministry, especially, offered much needed financial and logistical assistance to farmworker unions, while the Catholic Church offered moral support for migrants.⁶⁰⁰ The Catholic Church and its members offered legitimacy to the union cause. University students radicalized by the Chicano, Civil Rights, and Feminist Movements created an army of farmworker union allies. At Notre Dame, a Catholic University, a student boycott group convinced enough students to vote for the university to boycott Campbell products.⁶⁰¹ In addition, the university encouraged discussions on social issues, creating among other things a class that included guest speakers such as Jesus Salas, the

⁵⁹⁹ Jenkins, *The Politics of Insurgency*, 167.

⁶⁰⁰ Letter to NAWR from Sr. Pat Drydyk; Si Se Puede.

⁶⁰¹ Munoz, “Major FLOC Victory Ends the Campbell’s Boycott.”

leader of the Wisconsin farmworker union, Obreros Unidos.⁶⁰² Catholic grade schools, not just universities, also played an important part in the FLOC boycott. The support of Catholic nuns resulted in grade schools' refusal to take part in the Campbell's "Labels for Education" financial program, as schools refused to accept money from a company that exploited its workers.⁶⁰³ Catholic assistance also lifted the spirits of strikers as both FLOC and UFW marches and events included prayers, Lady of Guadalupe banners, and communion.⁶⁰⁴ Migrants and Campbell felt that Catholics' support was so important that Campbell desperately tried to receive Catholic recognition and publicized any Catholic group or individual that spoke out against unionization.⁶⁰⁵ With the moral and boycott assistance of the Catholic Church and nuns, FLOC successfully created the first three-party negotiations between growers, farmworkers, and a company; while at the same time the UFW successfully unionized California grape workers and educated the public about farmworker conditions.

In addition to providing moral support, female members of the Catholic Church also served as a point of contact for migrants' interactions with the feminist movement as religious women often worked on the ground to enact change. Radical Latinas in Las Hermanas, boycott leaders like Tess Browne, and other strong-willed women in Catholic groups like NAWR offered Mexican and Mexican American migrant women examples of women who defied gender norms. These ideas dovetailed into the type of union created by farmworkers, as FLOC

⁶⁰² UW News release, February 28, 1969, Industrial Relations Research Institute, University of Wisconsin Collection, accessed July 2015, <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/UW/UW-idx?type=turn&entity=UW.IndustrialRelations.p0054&id=UW.IndustrialRelations&isize=M&q1=Obreros>.

⁶⁰³ "Schools Reject Soup Label Program."

⁶⁰⁴ Michael Penn, image, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 5:14, Farm Labor Organizing Committee, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

⁶⁰⁵ Bertels, "A Nun Speaks Out Against the FLOC Boycott;" Letter to Sister Mynette Tossing of St. Teresa School from Rodger Dean Duncan, Corporate Relations of Campbells Soup, December 14, 1981, 24:2, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

encouraged all family members to take part in the union and as one of the most well known leaders of the UFW was a woman, Dolores Huerta.⁶⁰⁶ Las Hermanas, though originally led by a president and vice-president, shifted to a more egalitarian organization with three voted to co-lead the organization, including in 1972 Consuela Covvarubias from Milwaukee, Wisconsin.⁶⁰⁷ Notions of empowerment and egalitarianism empowered some farmworker women, such as Maria Elena Ortega, as they became active members of the union and adopted some feminist ideology.⁶⁰⁸ Maria remembered a nun who worked with FLOC and fought for women to be treated with respect and humanely within the union, fighting in one instance for Maria's need to miss a meeting for health reasons.⁶⁰⁹ Olga Sandman, the female leader of the Illinois Farm Worker Ministry, inspired Maria to actively take part in farmworker unions.⁶¹⁰ These inspirations led Maria Elena to push gender boundaries by organizing in the fields for FLOC. At the same time women also used their traditional gendered roles to support organizing, such as Maria Elena making tamales, tostadas, and taquitos to help draw people to meetings demanding the Catholic Church provide the Mexican American residents of Onarga with a church of their own.⁶¹¹ Latina farmworkers encountered feminist ideology through Las Hermanas, other Catholic women's organizations, and even farmworker unions that were influenced by the social movements of the era.⁶¹²

⁶⁰⁶ FLOC Women's Committee First Quarter Report, 1978, 4:20, Farm Labor Organizing Committee, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

⁶⁰⁷ Report of National Coordinations, 16: Las Hermanas, PADRES Collection, University of Notre Dame Archives, Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana.

⁶⁰⁸ Ortega, *Forged Under the Sun*.

⁶⁰⁹ *Ibid*, 254.

⁶¹⁰ *Ibid*, 185.

⁶¹¹ *Ibid*, 193.

⁶¹² "Coordinators Reports- Yolanda Taranga," *Informes de Las Hermanas*, 1, no. 5, (December 1986), 16: Las Hermanas, PADRES Collection, University of Notre Dame Archives, Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana; Ortega, *Forged Under the Sun*.

Despite Catholic and farmworker women's attempts to effect change in the fields and the Church, women met with resistance as power structures continued to support masculine power and gender norms. While some religious orders and bishops accepted women's position in social movements, such as Tess Browne's role as the UFW boycott director in Wisconsin, other local Bishops forced women like Sister Rosa Martha Zárate, who created a religious self-determined community in San Diego, to resign and leave the church.⁶¹³ In the Midwest, Maria Elena felt Baldemar Velasquez, the leader of FLOC, did not have confidence in female organizers' abilities, and Maria also met resistance by her local priest for trying to organize and better her fellow farmworkers' lives.⁶¹⁴ Similarly, Yolanda Taranga met resistance from the Catholic Church in Chicago when her and her fellow female activists stood up during men's ordination ceremonies to shout "I am ready and willing" when the men being ordained were to say the words, disrupting the service to protest the Church's refusal to ordain women.⁶¹⁵ Local officials eventually made the ceremonies private and hired police to block the nuns from handing out fliers and protesting outside the private chapels, but local officials faced public scrutiny for arresting women who were peacefully protesting outside a church.⁶¹⁶ Women like Tess Browne who had leadership roles and the prominent position of Dolores Huerta in the UFW offered migrants examples of changing gender dynamics. However, migrants also had examples of women facing resistance to their activism as people within the Church, public, and migrant stream negotiated how notions of women's power and Chicano rights fit within farmworker rights. Female activist youths faced resistance as Chicano student movements often

⁶¹³ Medina, *Las Hermanas*, 113-116. Sister Zárate sued the diocese and was expelled for her lawsuit. She lost the suit.

⁶¹⁴ Ortega, *Forged Under the Sun*, 258.

⁶¹⁵ Tarango, interview by Sr. Maria Eva Flores.

⁶¹⁶ *Ibid.*

silenced female dissent, arguing that Chicana arguments were an Anglo-inspired divisive strategy, essentially pushing Chicana feminists to either ignore women's issues or be considered by some male and female Chicanos as a destructive force within the organization. Yet, the silencing of Chicana feminists in Las Hermanas and universities meant that migrants had few such examples of women in leadership, instead most of the women in aid programs and within Midwest unions struggled to gain respect and sometimes left programs, unions, or religious groups after continued problems. Other women in the field and in the temple continued to face resistance to their feminist ideology, though many continued to persevere and inspire others. For migrant women in the field, the experiences of female leaders in the Church and union exemplified the tenuous rights of women who resisted the hierarchical male power structures in the union, in the Catholic Church, and in society.

While some of the assistance programs developed in the Midwest characterized developing notions of feminism, labor rights, and civil rights, farmworker aid also characterized conflicting notions of agency and power. While several groups supported labor organizing, many still relegated migrants to the secondary role when it came to decisions. Limited migrant input in Migrant Ministries in Michigan and Illinois, as well as the prayer for Anglo guidance to struggling Latinos, indicated a general perception that Anglo outsiders had to enact change.⁶¹⁷ The use of boycotts by Midwest and national unions only strengthened the image of Anglos as agents of change and migrants as passive subjects seeking Anglo assistance. Very few farmworkers or ex-farmworkers had leadership roles in organizations meant to assist them. This meant that while programs provided important services their

⁶¹⁷ DeKalb County Migrant Ministry Information Sheet; Letter to Reverend Isaac Igarashi from Mrs. Malvina Holvorsen, March 2, 1966, 1:5, Michigan Farm Worker Ministry Coalition Collection Papers, 1950-1990, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan; Larry Hills, "The Migrant Ministry Can Help the Michigan Fruit Farmer," *Michigan Christian Advocate*, 10, 3:43, Michigan Farm Worker Ministry Coalition Collection Papers, 1950-1990, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

methods did not always benefit migrants, as was the case with the El Centro Day Care Poor Handmaid's daycare service where migrant children learned to become good Americans. Farmworkers needed to have input on services to ensure that programs truly helped. In one example, Wisconsin's La Raza established an English language program that few ex-migrants attended. Only after talking with the migrants did they learn that migrants preferred to learn English, since this was a skill that would help them leave the stream.⁶¹⁸ No such encounter or discussion exists in other program records. The hierarchical and racial based power structure of some organizations meant leaders made the decisions on how to define and solve "the migrant problem," ultimately failing to work with migrants to provide some of the assistance farmworkers actually needed.

Social movements of the 1960s and 1970s shaped the religious, gendered, and social perspectives of organization members, influencing the variety of programs Mexican and Mexican American migrant farmworkers found in the Midwest. While 1950s and early 1960s organizations such as the Migrant Ministry focused on providing needed basics and religious services, future Migrant Ministry programs and services by organizations, such as NAWR and Las Hermanas, empowered farmworkers to change their lives. The social movements of the 1960s and 1970s radicalized the public's understanding of power, gender, and ethnicity. Yet the different composition of organizations, the changing influence of various social movements, and the different gendered and ethnic composition of organizations led to a variety of services that exemplified the beliefs of the organizations' members rather than the actual needs of farmworkers in the area. The Handmaids' medical assistance to farmworkers exemplified their interest in providing assistance to farmworkers using their medical knowledge. While the

⁶¹⁸ "Project self-help for settled out migrants," 4:49; La Raza Collection, Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin.

Handmaids' efforts helped farmworkers, other groups like NAWR's CHAP gave basic medical training to farmworker women to specifically empower female farmworkers so they could assist each other without the assistance of Anglo outside groups. The organizations of the 1960s through the 1980s, though influenced by the social movements of the mid twentieth century, were still influenced by traditional, racial, and gendered interpretations of society, resulting in services that sometimes offered minimal assistance to farmworkers.

Dead Vines and the End of Aid

Aid programs in and outside the Catholic Church developed during an era of activism and awareness. Various groups within the Catholic Church reacted differently to the struggles of migrants, viewing the struggle of migrants in terms of the *Harvest of Shame* with its issues of poverty or the UFW which attacked migrants' lack of power within the system. For those influenced by the notion of empowering migrants, especially women, the social movements of the era also tied notions of women's rights and Chicano rights to the notion of changing the power structure of the migrant stream. Yet not all within the Catholic Church or society accepted the combination of these social movements with the movement for change in the stream, resulting in negotiations about how much the issues of women and Chicanos interacted with migrants' position in the stream. As members of the Catholic Church interacted with the Midwest public and social movements of the era, each aid group decide whether they would offer basic aid that failed to address migrants' position on the bottom of the food pyramid, or aid that supported farmworkers' empowerment. The form of aid often characterized the

makeup of the organizations, as groups that ignored the voices of migrants often ignored migrants' position at the bottom of the food pyramid, while groups involved in social movements, especially women's groups interested in gender equality, often wanted to restructure power dynamics for farmworkers, Chicanos, and even women. Yet the public activism and awareness that resulted in this time of aid, no matter the form, made aid tied to public sympathy. As public interest and sympathy for migrants, women, and Chicanos faded away in the 1980s and 1990s, so too did the momentum for change. The ultimate result was a moment of major assistance in the form of food, shelter, clothing, and empowerment that had important ramifications, but did not continue to leave a lasting impact on migrants in the stream.

As the twentieth century drew to a close, the social movements that shaped Midwesterners, Latinos, farmworkers, and Catholics' perceptions of society came to end just as the geography of the Midwest stream shifted. The fervor of concern for workers that started in the 1960s, alongside unions and civil rights movements dissipated in the 1980s and 1990s. The tomato growers who drew migrant laborers to DeKalb, Illinois for several months throughout the 1960s and 1970s decreased in number as farmworker regulations and economics encouraged growers to switch to corn.⁶¹⁹ In Ohio, some growers changed to crops that required almost no laborers to avoid the FLOC union.⁶²⁰ Lack of apathy forced the DeKalb Migrant Ministry to close in the 1980s as fewer farmworkers came to the region by the 1980s. Similarly, local efforts to provide minimal help to farmworker children through summer education programs or donations of food and clothing, as in DeKalb, Illinois, ceased. Throughout much of the Midwest, fewer growers grew the vegetables and fruits typically harvested by migrants

⁶¹⁹ George Gutierrez, interview by Lucille Aikins.

⁶²⁰ Mike Steere, "Farm Labor Strike Against Canneries, Growers Seen as Almost Inevitable," *The Blade*, July 28, 1978, 24:42, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

while mechanization reduced migrant numbers, compounding the decreasing interest and concern for migrant farmworkers.⁶²¹ All the while, the general public became apathetic to the farmworkers' plight just as the social movements faded into the background. While GAP still existed by 1991 and Las Hermanas existed into the twenty-first century, Las Hermanas founding members noted a greater conservatism within the organization and a struggle to survive.⁶²² The Catholic activism that started with Vatican II and coincided with 1960s and 1970s social movements, shifted away from a focus on social activism. The conservatism and the union and minority backlash of the 1980s reduced national and Midwest interest in minorities and farmworkers' struggles while feminists faced a backlash in the 1980s.

Midwest public support for boycotts and unions, in addition to Mexican American concerns, began to fade from the public conversation. Though student activism flared briefly in the 1980s to support FLOC and the end of Apartheid in South Africa, and although Latino academic programs and organizations still existed in Universities like Notre Dame, the University of Minnesota, and other Midwest schools, universities ceased to be sites of activism by the 1990s.⁶²³ Part of this decreasing activism came from the success, and thereby the public disappearance, of farmworker boycotts. Midwest boycott groups existed to advocate for the UFW or FLOC, so when unions' boycotts came to a close, so too did these groups that brought Midwest attention to migrants' issues. Many organizations that supported Latino and

⁶²¹ Philip Martin, *Importing Poverty?: Immigration and the Changing Face of Rural America*, (New York: Yale University Press, 2009), 35; Philip L. Martin and David A. Martin, *The Endless Quest: Helping America's Farm Workers*, (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1994), 169.

⁶²² Ramsey County, Minnesota Telephone Directories, 1991, Minnesota Historical Society, Minnesota State Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota; Medina, *Las Hermanas*, 144-145.

⁶²³ Letter to the President from Jo, March 28, 1985, 3727: South African Concerns, Office of the President, Indiana State University Archives, Cunningham Memorial Library, Indiana State University, Terre Haute, Indiana; Memo to Donald M Hilt from Orin L. Dahl, Subject: South African Concerns, May 17, 1985, 3091: South African Investments, Office of the President, Indiana State University Archives, Cunningham Memorial Library, Indiana State University, Terre Haute, Indiana.

farmworker rights either ceased to operate or disappeared from the public's attention; for example, PADRES ceased to meet after 1989.⁶²⁴ Though both the UFW and FLOC still exist today, the UFW eventually lost their original contracts, and FLOC shifted focus to the pickle industry in North Carolina in the 1990s, leaving the Midwest.⁶²⁵ The public's increasing lack of apathy coupled with the decreasing interest in farmworker unions meant that the Midwest and Churches were no longer sites of activism.

The disappearance of organizations and programs at the end of the twentieth century made it so that the "migrant problem" appeared solved, or at least no longer an issue worth attention as migrants' role in the food pyramid faded from public memory. Yet the "migrant problem," no matter how defined, remains. The general disinterest in farmworkers' living conditions in the 1980s weakened pressure on the government and industry to change the system just as the United States leadership displayed strong anti-union sentiment.⁶²⁶ Instead of solving the "migrant problem," decreasing concern for migrants in the 1980s only let the "migrant problem" disappear from public view while simultaneously making it more difficult for farmworkers to solve their problems through unions. By the 1990s, the public did not view the "migrant problem" as solved so much as they simply saw no migrants and thus no "migrant problem." Just as Vatican II, the Chicano Movement, the Feminist Movement, the UFW, and FLOC inspired religious organizations and the Midwest public's interest in "the migrant problem," so too did the decreasing influence of these movements mean Mexican and Mexican American migrant farmworkers faded from Midwesterners' memories.

⁶²⁴ Martínez, *PADRES*, 130, 132-133.

⁶²⁵ Prouty, César Chávez, *The Catholic Bishops*, 133-137; Patrick H. Mooney and Theo J. Majke, *Farmers' and Farm Workers' Movements: Social Protest in American Agriculture* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1995), 209-211; Francesca Coin, "Pickles and Pickets after NAFTA: Globalization, Agribusiness, the US-Mexico Food Chain, and Farm-worker Struggles in North Carolina," (Ph.D. dissertation, Georgia State University, 2007).

⁶²⁶ McCartin, *Collision Course*.

CHAPTER 5

"CREAM OF EXPLOITATION": AGRIBUSINESS, THE FOOD CHAIN AND FARMWORKER AGENCY IN THE CASE OF FLOC

“The canner has the grower under his thumb and the grower has the worker under his thumb... we want to change that relationship.”⁶²⁷
-Baldemar Velasquez

Walking into the migrant camp, Maria Elena Ortega felt nervous. This was the first time she came alone to talk about the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) to farmworkers, and though she met some opposition in the past, she continued. Maria knew organizing the pickle workers in Ohio was the right thing to do. Only organizing and obtaining more power in the migrant stream and in the field would help the migrants. Maria Elena knew this. She grew up a migrant worker and continued to occasionally work in the fields as an adult.⁶²⁸ She knew the struggle, and she knew farmworkers needed a voice in the farmworker system. That’s why she supported the United Farm Workers (UFW) in California and why she started organizing for FLOC in the summer of 1985. That’s why she walked into this camp, to get the pickle workers to sign cards making FLOC their representative.⁶²⁹ But she also knew some already

⁶²⁷ "FLOC Anticipates Strike," *Nuestra Lucha*, 2, no. 3 (July- September 1978), 1, 5:20, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

⁶²⁸ Maria Elena Ortega, *Forged Under the Sun/ Forjada Bajo el Sol: The Life of Maria Elena Lucas*, ed. Fran Leepa Buss (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1993).

⁶²⁹ Pickle workers grew and harvested cucumbers that were then harvested and pickled. From here on, I will refer to the fields and workers as pickle workers and fields as FLOC’s focus lay only on workers that handled cucumbers meant to be pickled.

heard of FLOC as many pickle workers also worked the tomato fields that FLOC had been organizing since 1975. So while she knew there would be some opposition, she had hope, hope that a majority of this camp would vote to make FLOC their representative and a hope that with one more camp, FLOC would be able to push companies like Campbell and Vlasic to negotiate with both FLOC and the growers. Then the farmworkers could obtain a voice in the process and push for better working and living conditions, while growers could continue to survive and get an even better deal with the companies. Maria Elena knew this was the best way for workers, that's why despite her nervousness, she confidently walked up to the first migrant family she saw standing outside their home.⁶³⁰

Maria Elena's endorsement for the United Farm Workers and FLOC exemplified the activism of migrants in the last half of the twentieth century. Individual Midwest farmworkers like Maria Elena, and farmworker organizations like FLOC, both adapted to but also questioned the structure of the Midwest migrant stream. Developed during an era of social protests, FLOC's construction and choices reflected an awareness of power relations in agriculture and the changing and contested gender and patriarchal dynamics both within and outside the migrant stream. Empowering the farmworkers that came to the Midwest, FLOC focused on organizing tomato and pickle workers in Ohio not just against growers, but also against the large corporations that dictated the agricultural structure. In questioning certain power structures, FLOC helped reshape the migrant stream in the Midwest by pushing for three party negotiations between growers, workers, and corporations while also developing an organization that empowered migrant families to defend their rights. FLOC's strike and boycott against Campbell Soup, the subsequent inclusion of the pickling company Vlasic and its pickle

⁶³⁰ This narrative is based on the information about Maria Elena's life.

fields, and the development of a migrant, family-centered, union provides a glimpse of the various parties and roles within the food chain and the agency farmworker men, women, and children displayed. Examining the organizational formation of FLOC and the strategic choices of FLOC and its members provide a key to understanding gender, agency, and the organizational structure of the Midwest agricultural system within the last half of the twentieth century.

Condensed Power

The pyramidal agricultural structure in the pickle and tomato fields in Ohio and partially in Michigan, developed after years of negotiation between the different forces of the system. The story of FLOC's struggle with tomato canning and pickling companies began in the 1940s and 1950s with the growth of canning corporations. Already a tomato producer region by the 1930s, major canning corporations opened facilities in Northwest Ohio in the 1940s.⁶³¹ With the introduction of large canning facilities in Northwest Ohio by companies like Heinz; Campbell; Libby, McNeil and Libby; Stockley; Green Giant; and California Packing Corporation (Del Monte), Ohio became a major agricultural center not just for tomatoes, but a variety of crops.⁶³² After the introduction of large canning facilities, companies took greater control of the various levels of agricultural production, contracting with growers for a fixed price per acre or bushel thereby controlling through these set prices, the rate of farmworker's pay.⁶³³ In addition, corporations extend their power to the fields themselves, providing seed and

⁶³¹ Dennis Nodin Valdes, *Al Norte: Agricultural Workers in the Great Lakes Region, 1917-1970* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991), 37; W.K. Barger and Ernesto M. Reza, *The Farm Labor Movement in the Midwest: Social Change and Adaptation among Migrant Farmworkers* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1994), 54.

⁶³² Valdes, *Al Norte*, 90.

⁶³³ *Ibid.*

strict guidelines to grow the product.⁶³⁴ Corporations enticed growers with a guaranteed price, and controlled every aspect of the growth and harvest of the product at no cost to themselves. With fertile soil and numerous canning corporations, Ohio became second only to California in tomato production by the 1950s, compelling growers to find a large, cheap labor force to work in the fields.⁶³⁵

With the increasing amount of tomatoes grown, harvested, and canned in Ohio, canneries and growers' labor needs shifted to include Mexican and Mexican American migrants. Originally employing poor Southerners, African Americans, locals, and Eastern Europeans, Ohio growers and canneries did not start employing Latinos in large numbers until the second half of the twentieth century.⁶³⁶ Instead, most Mexican and Mexican Americans who came to the Midwest for agricultural labor from the 1930s to the 1950s worked in the sugar beet fields of Michigan and Minnesota.⁶³⁷ As various crops increased in production in the 1940s and 1950s as sugar beet production simultaneously decreased, Mexican and Mexican Americans from Florida and Texas became the primary labor force for most Midwestern crops.⁶³⁸ Usually migrating and working in family units, Mexican American migrant workers travelled along a variety of migrant routes through the Midwest, working in various fields including: apples, cherries, sugar beets, tomatoes, pickles, mushrooms, and onions.⁶³⁹ Although

⁶³⁴ Ibid.

⁶³⁵ Barger and Reza, *The Farm Labor Movement in the Midwest*, 136.

⁶³⁶ Frank Tobias Higbie, *Indispensable Outcasts: Hobo Workers and Community in the American Midwest, 1880-1930* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 105.

⁶³⁷ Higbie, *Indispensable Outcast*, 35; Michigan Migrant Ministry Annual Report 1963, 5, 2:17, Michigan Farm Worker Ministry Coalition Collection Papers, 1950-1990, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

⁶³⁸ Valdes, *Al Norte*, 136-137.

⁶³⁹ "Fewer Jobs for Farmworker....," 18:10, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan; Sister Mary Eloise Thomas, "A Study of the Causes and Consequences of the Economic Status of Migratory Farm Workers in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin" (Ph.D. dissertation, Notre Dame University, 1960).

routes varied, tomato laborers also commonly worked the pickle fields because the tomato harvest in the early to late summer fit nicely with pickle harvests shortly before.⁶⁴⁰ As Midwest growers employed more Mexican and Mexican American migrant families in the tomato and pickle fields, the formation of the Midwest migrant stream of the last half of the twentieth century began to form.

The familial nature of the Midwest stream and the tie between the tomato and pickle fields shaped the development of FLOC. Pickle fields geographic closeness to tomato fields and the overlapping nature of the pickle and tomato growth and harvest cycles, coupled with the familial nature of pickle and tomato work, meant many tomato workers organized by FLOC also worked in the pickle fields. Tomato and pickle fields were so connected that FLOC, though initially focused on tomato fields in Ohio, expanded to include the pickle fields of Michigan and Northwestern Ohio around 1983.⁶⁴¹ Yet unlike tomato fields, pickle growers signed a contract with pickle companies, but gave sections of land to migrant families to sharecrop.⁶⁴² Based on Mexican migrants' family construction, farmworker families tended sections or rows of pickles collectively, with the male head of a household received a paycheck for the family's work, usually forty to fifty percent of the profits split with the grower.⁶⁴³ Grower paid farmworkers for the amount of pickles harvested, yet migrants also graded the pickles by size and weight and loaded the produce onto trucks, tasks farmworkers lost

⁶⁴⁰ Thomas, "A Study of the Causes and Consequences;" Barger and Reza, *The Farm Labor Movement in the Midwest*, 73.

⁶⁴¹ Collective Bargaining Agreement Between Farm Labor Organizing Committee and Vlastic Foods, Inc. and Growers Under Contract to Classic Foods, Inc, March 15, 1986 to December 31, 1989, 20:24; Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan; Barger and Reza, *The Farm Labor Movement in the Midwest*, 73.

⁶⁴² FLOC Winter 1978 and 1979 Organizing Campaign, 24:3, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan; "FLOC Takes Exception to Madison Pickle Contracts," *FLOC Newsletter* 13 (April 1975), 1-2, 6:63, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

⁶⁴³ "FLOC Takes Exception to Madison Pickle Contracts."

harvesting time and money performing.⁶⁴⁴ FLOC's decision to include pickle workers in the strike and boycott meant expanding their understanding of power relations within Midwest agriculture.

For tomatoes, the agricultural structure included canneries, growers, and farmworkers in a system of diminishing power, yet the pickle industry further complicated power relations. The agricultural pyramid of power was based on the backs of migrant farmworkers. Although pickle workers remained at the bottom of the food chain like tomato pickers, their role as sharecroppers significantly altered their relationship to power in terms of the law. Agricultural interest groups, legislatures, and courts continually negotiated and debated the roles of growers, crew leaders, and farmworkers to determine the "employer" and therefore the one legally liable to follow legislation.⁶⁴⁵ The pickle industry's use of sharecropping allowed companies and growers to obscure power relations by giving themselves actual power and redefining farmworkers' power on paper. In an Ohio federal court in 1976, a judge decided that under the sharecropping system, growers did not pay Federal Insurance Contribution Act (FICA) for workers.⁶⁴⁶ Later, in a U.S. district Court in 1985, a judge argued that because of the sharecropping structure, farmworkers were independent contractors making growers not liable to follow child labor laws or pay social security.⁶⁴⁷ Based on this decision, the government and

⁶⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁵ Robert Jerome Glaser, "American Farm Bureau's Position on Six Federal Bills Affecting Migrant Farm Labor." (M.S., Illinois State University, 1963). Within the various crops in the national migrant stream, crew leaders, growers, canning and refinery corporations' employment agencies, private or public employment agencies, employment placement programs through organizations such as the American Farm Bureau, and in the case of sharecropping, farmworkers themselves, could be considered the "employer" of farm laborers depending on how any given law was written or interpreted. As the costs for following regulations as well as any punishment for the failure to follow regulations was placed on the "employer," many groups argued about the interpretation of farm regulations.

⁶⁴⁶ James L. Terry, "The Political Economy of Migrant Farm Labor and the Farmworker Movement in the Midwest" (Ph.D. dissertation, Purdue University, 1988), 68-69.

⁶⁴⁷ Barger and Reza, *The Farm Labor Movement in the Midwest*, 73-74.

the IRS classified pickle workers as self-employed individuals contracting out their personal and family's labor to growers. Unfortunately, since many farmworkers did not understand this labor and legal construction, they eventually found they owed back taxes as tax laws required them to pay their own taxes as self-employed individuals.⁶⁴⁸ Affecting not only taxes, the 1985 court decision also excused child labor as it could now be classified as similar to performing farm chores for your parents. The configuration of the pickle fields and the legal ramifications of the 1985 decision confused workers so much that FLOC created pamphlets to help farmworkers tell if they were sharecroppers and how that affected their lives.⁶⁴⁹ The tomato canning and pickling corporations depended on an arrangement that manipulated power as well as used leverage against growers and the family labor of Mexican and Mexican American migrants to increase agricultural corporations profits.

Corporate Alphabet Soup

Countering migrant protesters' claims that Campbell helped create and shape the dilapidated houses and poverty conditions of migrant farmworkers in Ohio's tomato fields, the director of Campbell's Community Relations stated, "We're just sitting around trying to sell soup...and they are picking on us."⁶⁵⁰ The simple claim of "just selling soup" exemplified the hidden power of corporations such as Campbell and Vlastic as commercials, labels, and stocked grocery shelves hide the true power of agricultural corporations. The story of FLOC and the migrant workers of Ohio's tomato and pickle fields spoke to the construction of the migrant

⁶⁴⁸ Terry, "The Political Economy of Migrant Farm Labor."

⁶⁴⁹ "Are You a Sharecropper?" *Nuestra Lucha* 5, no. 3 (July 1982), 5:20, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

⁶⁵⁰ Timothy Dwyer, "Each Side Feels Like the Underdog in a Campbell Boycott," *Philadelphia Enquirer*, August 5, 1983, 5:14, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

stream and the power of agri-corporations in the food pyramid. When FLOC struck, they sought to change the very structure of the food chain structure, thereby rearranging the system's use of their lives for their profits. Influenced by the social and union movements of the time, FLOC's efforts to rearrange the food pyramid of power exemplified their intimate understanding of the system and provided a radical reimagining of the food pyramid.

The FLOC union encouraged and empowered Mexican migrant farmworkers and the Latino community since FLOC began in 1967. Velasquez started FLOC in the fields of Ohio in 1967 when he organized workers against growers.⁶⁵¹ Quickly realizing grower's limited power, Velasquez shifted FLOC's attention to empowering urban Chicanos in the Toledo, Ohio area. Emboldened by the Chicano Movement, FLOC started coops and pushed for a Hispanic voice in the organizations created to assist Toledo Hispanics.⁶⁵² This idea of empowering Mexicans to better their own lives continued when FLOC re-focused on organizing Mexican migrant farmworkers again in 1975.⁶⁵³ Realizing the agricultural framework pitted growers and farmworkers against each other as corporations dictated the conditions, FLOC focused on providing both growers and migrants' with a voice at the negotiating table with corporations. Originally trying to organize alongside growers, FLOC leaders eventually initiated a strike against growers and corporations when growers failed to understand their common position with farmworkers. Lacking the support of growers, FLOC initially organized farmworkers to

⁶⁵¹ "The Cry of the Harvesters: Farmworkers Fight Campbell's Soup, Interview with Baldemar Velasquez" *Catholic Agitator* (May 1984), 24:59, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

⁶⁵² "FLOC: The Second Five Years," *Nuestra Lucha*, 1, no. 11 (November-December 1977), 5:20, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

⁶⁵³ Collective Bargaining Agreement Between Farm Labor Organizing Committee and Vlastic Foods; Barger and Reza, *The Farm Labor Movement in the Midwest*, 52.

picket the canneries and fields of two of the larger tomato processors in the Toledo, Ohio area: Libby, Libby & McNeil and Campbell Soup.⁶⁵⁴

FLOC initially targeted two canning corporations in the Toledo, Ohio area to draw on member's knowledge of tomatoes and the agricultural system to ultimately shift power in the food pyramid. FLOC leaders understood that winning a three-party deal with one or two major companies in the tomato industry would provide monumental and life altering change for migrant farmworkers. Though targeting only one crop and a couple of companies, FLOC's initial efforts held the possibility of significant change in the larger tomato industry and the food chain because a three party deal would force corporations to take responsibility for their role in the agricultural power structure. FLOC initially boycotted Campbell and Libby, Libby & McNeil because they were major companies that contracted with growers in FLOC's area of support and because FLOC leaders and early members were familiar with tomato fields.⁶⁵⁵ Unlike other crops, the few companies that canned tomatoes could set low rates for tomato growers who risked an uncertain market if they sold their product independently.⁶⁵⁶ Though FLOC leaders eventually shifted their focus to the Campbell Corporation and the Vlasic pickle company, FLOC's targets represented an understanding of the Midwest agricultural system of power for local Ohio workers.

Not only organizing farmworkers against the power of corporations in the fields, FLOC also educated migrants and the public about canning companies extensive power in the grocery store and public opinion. In canning tomatoes and processing them into soups and other

⁶⁵⁴ Ward Sinclair, "Saucy Union Battle Tomato Giants," *The Washington Post*, July 8, 1982, 9:121, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

⁶⁵⁵ FLOC Organizing Report for August, September and October 1978, 4:20, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

⁶⁵⁶ Barger and Reza, *The Farm Labor Movement in the Midwest*, 58.

products, Campbell created “value added products,” making the item more expensive.⁶⁵⁷ For tomatoes, the price of “value added products” increased 150% from 1959 to 1979 with canneries and retail outlets received eighty-three percent of the money, growers nine percent, and farmworkers and cannery workers a whole four percent.⁶⁵⁸ Canneries’ profits also came from the employment of cheap, usually female, workers in the canneries, again increasing company’s profits without sharing the profit with their workers and forcing the general public to pay higher prices.⁶⁵⁹ These factors remained largely hidden from public view. By focusing on Campbell’s hidden power in the fields, canneries, and stores, FLOC sought to educate the public about the agricultural structure to empower farmworkers in the stream.

Campbell and Vlastic’s power lay in the many layers of the food chain that hid the power and influence of corporations. Campbell tried to sway the public with claims that they played no role in the “private” labor negotiations of their growers and refused to “force” growers to create an organization to negotiate with workers.⁶⁶⁰ Campbell’s argument presented growers and fellow corporations as independent parties not tied to each other through the food chain system. Yet within the agricultural framework of the Midwest, Campbell had power over growers, and therefore farmworkers, a fact exemplified by Campbell’s refusal to sign contracts with growers who did not mechanize, thereby cutting farmworker jobs. FLOC successfully argued that Campbell’s power to force mechanization on growers demonstrated their power in

⁶⁵⁷ Deborah Barndt, ed. *Tangled Routes: Women, Work, and Globalization on the Tomato Trail*, 2nd ed. (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2008), 20.

⁶⁵⁸ Peter Downs et. al., “Tomato Industry in Ohio,” *Response-Official Program Journal of the United Methodist Women*, 11, no. 6 (June 1979), 4:121, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

⁶⁵⁹ Barndt, ed. *Tangled Routes*; Vicki L. Ruiz, *Cannery Women, Cannery Lives: Mexican Women, Unionization, and the California Food Processing Industry, 1930-1950* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1987). As *Tangled Routes* noted, cannery work in Mexico was predominately female, similarly *Cannery Women and Cannery Lives* also noted women dominated California canneries between the 1930s and 1950s.

⁶⁶⁰ “Facts about FLOC,” *The Bowling Green Review*, 24:58, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

the system, and therefore over farmworkers.⁶⁶¹ Later, Campbell tried to confuse the public's perception of power by offering assistance to the migrant community. Using policies that harkened back to their canning factories elsewhere in the 1960s, Campbell avoided the issues of worker power by giving money to programs that aided migrant farmworkers.⁶⁶² Campbell offered money to Central Valley Opportunity Center and Clinicas Migrantes Regional, in addition to donating food to the Ohio Migrant Rest Center and the Texas Migrant council who gave out food to the farmworkers that tended the land but could not afford food for their families.⁶⁶³ Yet FLOC convinced the Clinicas Migrantes Regional to refuse Campbell's aid because Campbell's assistance alleviated the symptoms of poverty but not the problem, farmworkers lack of power and poverty.⁶⁶⁴ Aid allowed Campbell to retain power over growers and farmworkers through the agricultural system, and even more power as migrants would come to depend on the financial assistance of Campbell's generosity for survival. To restructure the stream, FLOC members had to bring to light Campbell's various means of power over migrants and growers in the Midwest tomato fields.

For farmworkers and the public to understand the food pyramid, they had to understand grower's power and lack of power. Many farmworkers directly saw growers' power over migrants' lives, but hidden beneath this display of power and control, growers struggled to

⁶⁶¹ Barger and Reza, *The Farm Labor Movement in the Midwest*, 64; "Mechanization- Another View," *Nuestra Lucha* 2, no. 5 (July 1979), 5, 5:20, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan; "Mud, Blood Characterize Ohio Tomato Strike," *Rural America* (November 1979), 5:13, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

⁶⁶² Daniel Sidorick, *Condensed Capitalism: Campbell Soup and the Pursuit of Cheap Production in the Twentieth Century*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 163-164.

⁶⁶³ Letter to Sister Mynette Tossing of St. Teresa School from Rodger Dean Duncan, Corporate Relations of Campbell Soup, December 14, 1981, 24:2, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan; "Clinic Rejects Campbell's Money" *Nuestra Lucha* 5, no. 2 (April 1982), 5:20, Farm Labor Organizing Committee, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

⁶⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

survive in an agricultural system dominated by powerful corporations. FLOC tried to work with growers in the 1970s, but growers refused out of fear and pride. Some growers viewed unionized farmworkers as a threat to their livelihood or a foolish group that would anger powerful corporations that could certainly squash them. Other growers held on to their fictitious masculine power and independence so pivotal to the grower self-image, refusing to accept their common position with migrants.⁶⁶⁵ Independence drove growers to resist government interference in their labor relations with migrants, for ex-growers and their children to truck agricultural goods outside government regulation and control, and to refusing cooperation with farmworkers.⁶⁶⁶ Despite the ever-present interference and control of ag-corporations on their operations, growers had a degree of independence dealing with farm laborers on their farm, but held all financial liability to pay for farmworker housing or comply with government regulations. FLOC wanted to make companies more liable for farmworkers' condition because of their major role in the system, but some growers continued to view themselves as private businessmen, thus refusing to work with farmworkers.⁶⁶⁷ FLOC leader, Baldemar Velasquez, reflected this idea when he stated:

Unfortunately, the farmer considers himself an independent businessman protecting his petty-profit margin not seeing the potential power of his unity including his collaboration with the farmworker against the company. Committed to a misguided notion of 'rugged individualism' sadly enough, he superexploits our people and what he cannot get from the multinational he gets it from the sweat of our back.⁶⁶⁸

⁶⁶⁵ Eric Ramírez-Ferrero, *Troubled Fields: Men, Emotions, and the Crisis in American Farming*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005); Michael R. Nusbaumer, "Rural Masculinity in Context: When Going Bigger Risks Your Manhood," *Journal of the Indiana Academy of the Social Sciences* (October 2009), 33-45.

⁶⁶⁶ Shane Hamilton, *Trucking Country: The Road to America's Wal-Mart Economy* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2008), 99-163.

⁶⁶⁷ Letter to J.C. Tanner from R.A. Krabbenhoft, August 9, 1971, 20:10, Red River Sugar Beet Growers Records, Northwest Minnesota Historical Center, Livingston Lord Library, Moorhead University, Moorhead, Minnesota.

Initially failing to educate and convince growers of their common position with farmworkers, FLOC members continued to educate other farmworkers and the public about the expansive power of corporations “just trying to make soup.”

FLOC’s efforts and knowledge extended beyond the basic structure of the stream: farmworkers, growers, and canning corporations; into the larger food chain that included consumers, banks, and stockholders. Canning companies like Campbell not only shaped how growers and farmworkers worked in the tomato fields, but food corporations had ties in financial industries and power in grocery stores with “value added products” that easily sold to an expanding number of busy women cooking for their families after a day of work. In addition, subsidiaries allowed corporations to extend their influence into different crops and products, such as Campbell’s subsidiary Vlastic pickles, yet another tie between the tomato and pickle fields of Ohio.⁶⁶⁹ For FLOC members to understand and fight corporate agriculture power they also had to understand the larger food chain that involved Board of Directors all the way down to women buying a can of tomatoes and a jar of pickles for dinner.

Corporations like Campbell extended their power through stock ownership and Board of Directors that often connected different corporations to each other. Utilizing the corporate campaign union strategy that attacked financial ties due to board membership and stock ownership, FLOC targeted Philadelphia National Bank, Equitable Life, and Prudential Insurance for protest.⁶⁷⁰ Starting in 1984, FLOC worked with Roy Rogers and Ed Allen who

⁶⁶⁸ Baldemar Velasquez, “Farm Labor Organizing Committee Report Fourth Quarter,” (International Conference Presentation, November 1978), 4:21, Farm Labor Organizing Committee, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

⁶⁶⁹ Helen Fogel, "Profile: Robert Vlastic, Pickle Magnate and Hospital Chairman," 20:21, Michigan Farm Worker Ministry Coalition Collection, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

⁶⁷⁰ James Asher, "Fight with Campbell is Expanded to PNB," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, April 14, 1984, 24:1, Michigan Farm Worker Ministry Coalition Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan; Campbell Chart, 24:59, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

established the corporate method, to attack Campbell through stock ownership, board members, and loans.⁶⁷¹ By understanding the corporate framework, FLOC members targeted individuals like John T. Dorrance, who owned two million shares of Campbell stock, served as chairman for Campbell, and was associated through family and business to Philadelphia National Bank, while the President of Campbell, Gordon McGovern, served on the Board of Directors for Philadelphia National Bank.⁶⁷² FLOC noted these ties in the hope that public pressure on those involved with Campbell, could influence the company. As FLOC argued,

The FLOC Corporate Campaign program is based on the premise that farm workers are not simply being challenged by Campbell or any single corporation. Their struggle is with the interlocked web of powerful banks, insurance companies and other large corporations who form the power structure behind a company such as Campbell Soup. These institutions, by virtue of their financial ties and position on the Campbell Soup board of directors, represent the corporate decision maker controlling the lives of farm workers.⁶⁷³

In utilizing the relatively new corporate campaign strategy, FLOC members encouraged the public to pressure Campbell and the individuals and companies financially associated with and benefitting from Campbell's power in the Midwest agricultural system.

FLOC not only employed a boycott, strike, and the corporate campaign, but FLOC established public support for FLOC from within the company. FLOC encouraged supporters and owners of Campbell stock to voice their concern about migrant farmworker at Campbell's stockholders meeting between 1983 and 1986.⁶⁷⁴ In addition, stock owners who backed FLOC

⁶⁷¹ Barger and Reza, *The Farm Labor Movement in the Midwest*, 75.

⁶⁷² Asher, "Fight with Campbell is Expanded to PNB."

⁶⁷³ FLOC- Corporate Campaign Action Plan, 24:59, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

⁶⁷⁴ "Farmworkers Take Their Case to Campbell Shareholder," *AFSC Women's Newsletter*, 6, no. 1 (Winter 1985), 24:58, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan; Campbell Signs!, February 1986, 19:45, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

allowed migrant union members to represent them at the meeting which led to picketers outside Campbell's annual stockholder meetings, protesters in the meetings, and even a nominated resolution to endorse FLOC's goals at the 1983 meeting.⁶⁷⁵ FLOC members understood and utilized strategies that targeted Campbell and later Vlasic's entire power structure, from stockholders all the way down to the men and women buying pickles and tomatoes at the grocery store.

Changing the Tomato and Pickle Pyramids

To succeed, FLOC drew on their association between other farmworker unions, specifically the UFW, as well as current social movements, to establish FLOC's configuration and to develop the tactics they used to alter power. The success of UFW's grape boycott and the general success of the UFW to unionize farmworkers, which many considered impossible, was an important influence on FLOC tactics. Baldemar Velasquez's choice to use the boycott played to the success of UFW and allowed FLOC to engage the UFW advocates for FLOC's cause. A boycott to better farmworker lives drew on the already conscious raising efforts of the UFW and the social movements of the era. At the same time, FLOC drew on the feminist movement by engaging and empowering both men and women to participate in the union and encouraging whole families to work in the union together. Not only drawing on the Feminist movement in the 1960s and 1970s, the inclusion of women also drew on old union tactics used in mining that employed families.⁶⁷⁶ FLOC's demands for social justice were closely linked to the Civil Rights and Chicano Movements of the 1960s and 1970s, drawing on the social

⁶⁷⁵ Campbell Signs!.

⁶⁷⁶ Thomas G. Andrews. *Killing for Coal: America's Deadliest Labor War*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 238, 276.

movement's ideologies and public networks. Drawing on social movements and successful union tactics as a basis for FLOC's social union movement, Midwest tomato and pickle farmworkers campaigned for change.

Initially starting with a strike campaign, FLOC drew on the men, women, and children who worked in the fields and adapted strike strategies to the wide geographic landscape of the scattered farms and canneries. Because strike locations existed across vast spaces and in different settings, FLOC used various strategies to address the different settings of the strike: fields and canneries. Factory unions would usually position strikers near the few access points in a factory, yet farms' wide-open spaces forced unions to adopt different methods of protest. FLOC members drew on past agricultural union practices by adapting their strategies to fit their specific situation. FLOC transported workers and their families to farms and the canneries that processed the tomatoes and pickles.⁶⁷⁷ Men, women, and children traveled to various growers' farms to encourage other farmworkers to leave the fields, staking out near field entrances and near the edges of fields where migrants worked. These workers and their families formed picket lines to block tomatoes from getting to the canneries and shouting information to workers in the fields to encourage them to join the strike.⁶⁷⁸ At the same time, FLOC drew on and altered gendered roles as FLOC women prepared food for the workers on strike as well as caravanned and protested at different fields.⁶⁷⁹ Midwest Mexican migrant farmworkers adapted gender norms and union strategies to the physical landscape of the strike.

⁶⁷⁷ "One Day of the 1980 Strike," *Nuestra Lucha*, 1980, 5:20, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

⁶⁷⁸ James W. Parker, "2 Worlds Collide," *The Plain Dealer*, September 23, 1979, 5:13, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

⁶⁷⁹ "One Day of the 1980 Strike."

While FLOC's strike against Campbell and Vlasic technically continued until 1986, the focus of FLOC's efforts shifted in 1979 to a boycott, shifting FLOC's tactics.⁶⁸⁰ Using consumer power, FLOC members sought greater control over the migrant system and the food chain. Though FLOC initially struck Libby, McNeill and Libby, the international boycott of Nestle products and their subsidiaries, which included Libby, pushed Libby to leave the cannery business.⁶⁸¹ This left FLOC to focus on Campbell and eventually Vlasic pickles in their strike and boycott campaigns. The boycott ultimately meant a reorganization of FLOC as members began to educate the public about the living and working conditions of migrant farmworkers and the role of the tomato canning industry. FLOC's boycott campaign meant a focus in part on women who shopped for groceries and schools that used the Campbell's "Labels for Education" program.⁶⁸² To this end, FLOC focused on portraying women and children's helplessness and poverty, appealing to the public's sympathy for helpless workers and using gender norms and union networks to target possible boycott supporters.

To combat the Campbell Corporation and educate the public about the pyramid of power in Midwest agriculture, FLOC established a public presence by attacking iconic images of Campbell and highlighting the poverty of migrant families. Posters with the well-known image of Campbell basic soup label altered by FLOC to read "Cream of Exploitation," became commonplace among strike and boycotting unions.⁶⁸³ In addition, the Campbell soup kids and

⁶⁸⁰ Barger and Reza, *The Farm Labor Movement in the Midwest*, 57-58.

⁶⁸¹ Ibid, 68. Nestle faced an international boycott because the company encouraged women in poorer nations to use their instant baby formula, which had negative economic and health effects. With Nestle's additional problem, Libby ceased their involvement in tomatoes.

⁶⁸² Rev. Juan Romero, "Ministry to Farmworkers: Experience in Advocacy," May 15, 1974, 8:25, PADRES Collection, University of Notre Dame Archives, Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana.

⁶⁸³ Rainbow Coalition photo, 1984, 24:1, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

Campbell's "Labels for Education" became prime targets for attack. Similar to a 1968 strike by United Packinghouse Workers of America (UPWA) Local 80 in Campbell's Camden, New Jersey plant, FLOC adorned the iconic Campbell kids with pro-union clothes and signs.⁶⁸⁴ However FLOC took this tactic further by also educating the public about migrant farmworker children. FLOC described the hypocrisy of Campbell for using the figures of children as their mascots while migrant children worked in the fields to harvest produce for their products. In addition, FLOC attacked the Campbell "Labels for Education" program where Campbell provided supplies for schools based on how many Campbell labels schools saved.⁶⁸⁵ FLOC contrasted the "labels for education" program with the farmworker children who went to school without a good meal and missed school to work in the fields that provided Campbell's products.⁶⁸⁶ FLOC refused to accept Campbell's argument that they played no role in the migrant stream. They actively encouraged schools, especially Catholic schools whom FLOC had a close connection with due to Mexican American's ties to the Catholic Church, to end their participation in the "labels for education" program.⁶⁸⁷ FLOC was relatively successful, especially among Catholic schools, as twenty Indiana schools agreed to stop the program by 1980 with several others contemplating ending their Campbell association.⁶⁸⁸ FLOC effectively

⁶⁸⁴ Sidorick, *Condensed Capitalism*, 191; Consumer Reports: Soup, 5:13, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan; "Farmworkers are asking you to Boycott Campbell's: Facts about Campbell's Labels," 24:59, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

⁶⁸⁵ Baldemar Velasquez and D.Y. Robinson, *The Farmworker Struggle: A Debate by Letter*, revised December 1980, 11:11, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

⁶⁸⁶ Velasquez and Robinson, *The Farmworker Struggle: A Debate by Letter*.

⁶⁸⁷ "Schools Reject Soup Label Program" *Labor News*, June 1980, 5:13, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan; Raphael Marie Clifford "Ban on Campbell Soup Labels and the Catholic Church," *Sisters of St. Joseph Third Order of St. Francis*, 3, no. 3 (Spring 1980), 5:13, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

⁶⁸⁸ "Schools Reject Soup Label Program."

manipulated Campbell's visual symbols to their benefit by manipulating Campbell's likeable children mascots into FLOC protesters, demonstrating the poverty of migrant children and drawing on the compassion and sympathy of teachers and mothers.

FLOC leaders' choice to use a boycott exemplified the conflicting message of farmworker power and agency. Turning to tactics successfully used by the United Farm Workers in California, FLOC used boycotts, placing greater emphasis on the public's support than farmworkers' perseverance. The boycott depended on portraying farmworkers as victims instead of activist. Boycott success came from garnering sympathy for migrants, which drew on images of children, poverty, and helplessness, directly contrasting with strikes that demonstrated men, women, and children marching, protesting, and demanding a voice. Many news articles from and about FLOC often presented saddened families or children clad in rags with protest signs, conflating together migrants' self-determination and agency with migrants' vulnerability.⁶⁸⁹ As FLOC leaders and members stressed farmworker demands and agency they simultaneously portrayed farmworkers as weak and in need of public endorsement.

Though public sympathy developed from FLOC's depiction of farmworkers' poverty and helplessness, FLOC also empowered farmworkers within their own ranks. The public image of farmworker helplessness often conflated with migrants' own empowerment. FLOC offered men, women and children opportunities to effect change in their own lives, working as organizers, strikers, and even public speakers, all working to the success of FLOC's campaign to empower migrants in the Midwest. Organizers like Maria Elena Ortega felt empowered, not just in her personal life to become strong and independent woman working as an organizer, but also as a farmworker fighting for a voice in the agricultural structure. Yet the experience of

⁶⁸⁹ David I. Anders image, *The Plain Dealer*, August 5, 1979, 5:13, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

migrants like Maria Elena or FLOC's Vice President Cuevas' entire family that worked as picketers, strikers, organizers, and even public speakers, often occurred at the same time the public viewed migrants as helpless victims.⁶⁹⁰ The young Fernando Cuevas Jr. toured the nation telling others about his experiences in the migrant stream and encouraging assistance for farmworker's rights as FLOC circulated an image of a child in tattered clothes holding a FLOC sign.⁶⁹¹ Sympathetic images of helpless women and children used by FLOC to garner public sympathy, coexisted alongside migrants' own experience of activism that contributed to FLOC's goals of empowerment.

The empowerment of Midwest tomato and pickle workers came from FLOC's efforts to change the food pyramid despite FLOC's emphasis on creating a sympathetic image of farmworkers for the boycott. FLOC's insistence in having a voice in the food chain, which a three party negotiation would create, remained a firm commitment of FLOC as they encouraged farmworkers to organize and strike.

If what we are doing sounds outlandish or somewhat radical, it is only because the tomato industry and the public has become accustomed to literally a peonage system to harvest its tomato crop. It is institutionalized...it not only deals with us as second-class citizens but also as subservient Mexican, Puerto Rican, black and others who cannot do anything for ourselves. Well those days are long gone because we no longer fear prevailing mentalities and no longer accept the role prescribed to for us by economic, political and social institutions...This is, not to be controlled and consumed by our environment and through simple organized we seek to take control of our destiny.⁶⁹²

Despite using the boycott to generate public endorsement, FLOC and Midwest migrants did not want to rely on public sympathy forever, but rather use the public to temporarily give a

⁶⁹⁰ Barger and Reza, *The Farm Labor Movement in the Midwest*, 104.

⁶⁹¹ "Campbell Signs!;" Tom Marshall, "A Young Voice Speaks Up for Farm Migrants," *Dallas Times Herald*, November 24, 1985, 24:58, Farm Labor Organizing Committee, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

⁶⁹² "FLOC Anticipates Strike."

voice and empower farmworkers in the agricultural system. As Maria Elena stated, “This is what we have to learn: We can be on welfare forever, we can receive handouts forever...but that’s not going to solve our problems. The problem will be solved when we deal with the growers, and they pay better wages, and we have political power.”⁶⁹³ FLOC’s employment of a boycott stressed to the public farmworker’s subjugated role in the food chain, but the individual experiences of migrants and FLOC’s goal of a three-way deal empowered the Mexican and Mexican American migrant farmworkers in the Midwest stream.

FLOC not only gave migrants a place at the negotiating table, but also a place in the union. Past unions that struggled to unionize farmworkers claimed the changing and migratory nature of farm work made unionization impossible, but in establishing a malleable structure, FLOC leaders established a union for migrant farmworkers. Influenced by the UFW in many ways, FLOC differed from the United Farm Workers. The UFW’s emphasis on the boycott and public support, coupled with Chavez’ demands for ‘sacrificial’ union members, distanced many farmworkers from leadership roles in the UFW.⁶⁹⁴ Although FLOC and the UFW had single charismatic leaders for a long time, FLOC eventually developed a participatory union with some traditional union structures like local committees.⁶⁹⁵ FLOC initially relied heavily on union farmworkers and the public to sacrifice their time for the boycott, but FLOC leaders also established an organization that eventually allowed for a participatory union. Union leaders communicated with workers through summer organizers that traveled around to different camps, through camp representatives that looked out for the interest of FLOC workers in a

⁶⁹³ Ortega, *Forged Under the Sun*.

⁶⁹⁴ Frank Bardacke, *Trampling Out the Vintage: Cesar Chavez and the Two Souls of the United Farm Workers*. (New York: Verso, 2011), 549.

⁶⁹⁵ Ibid, 320; FLOC Leadership, accessed February 22, 2015, <http://www.floc.com/wordpress/about-floc/floc-leadership/>.

particular camp, through meetings in different camps, as well as the FLOC national conventions where farmworker representatives voted on issues.⁶⁹⁶ Although Chavez resisted camp committees, FLOC's use of camp representatives who migrated and worked alongside farmworkers, gave Midwest farmworkers and their families a level of agency and involvement in the union that represented them.⁶⁹⁷ FLOC's structure gave farmworker's several avenues to voice their concerns, contrasting to the sacrificial mentality of the UFW that separated farmworkers from the union leadership.⁶⁹⁸

FLOC's organizational structure not only provided avenues for migrants to voice their ideas and concerns within the union, but also ensured a sense of community who encouraged all to work together to better Midwest migrants' lives. FLOC leaders accepted that union organizers and representatives had to continue working in the stream to survive as the union could not pay. Manuel Moreno, executive board member, continued to migrate up and down the Midwest working in non-tomato and pickle fields to support his family.⁶⁹⁹ FLOC leaders also did not require dues from union members until they succeeded gaining a three-party contract, ensuring more individuals could take part in the union.⁷⁰⁰ In addition, most of the union protests and strike activities occurred solely around the harvest season. After harvest,

⁶⁹⁶ "FLOC- Ten Years of Struggle" *Nuestra Lucha*, 1, no. 9 (August 1977), 5:20, Farm Labor Organizing Committee, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan; Barger and Reza, *The Farm Labor Movement in the Midwest*, 136-137.

⁶⁹⁷ Organizing Report 1975 Farm Labor Organizing Committee, 4:19, Farm Labor Organizing Committee, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan; Barger and Reza, *The Farm Labor Movement in the Midwest*, 136-137.

⁶⁹⁸ Barger and Reza, *The Farm Labor Movement in the Midwest*, 88; Appeal letter by Baldemar Velasquez-rough draft, July 17, 1981, 24:9, Farm Labor Organizing Committee, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

⁶⁹⁹ Appeal letter by Baldemar Velasquez; "Special Section: Pesticides" *Nuestra Lucha*, 3, no. 3 (November 1980), 5:20, Farm Labor Organizing Committee, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan; Barger and Reza, *The Farm Labor Movement in the Midwest*, 148.

⁷⁰⁰ "Farm Labor Organizing Committee -Building the Union," 11:11, Farm Labor Organizing Committee, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

workers moved on to other crops, eventually returning to their homes in Texas and Florida.⁷⁰¹ This allowed migrant families to survive by making up some of the money lost striking tomatoes as they continued to migrate and work in other crops.⁷⁰² In the off season, FLOC regrouped, organizing migrant workers in their home bases in Texas and Florida so that union members and future tomato and pickle workers knew about the strike effort before heading back North.⁷⁰³ This configuration helped integrate the strike effort into the lives of migrant farmworkers. Focusing on strike and picket efforts during the tomato and pickle season saved the union money, but this strategic choice, like the lack of dues and organizing in Texas and Florida, also encouraged a strong sense of community among farmworkers and allowed for the involvement of all the migrants in the union.

The Public's Power in the Food Chain

As FLOC created a participatory union that drew on the men, women, and children working in the tomato and pickle fields of Northwest Ohio, the employment of the boycott also meant integrating the public and outside organizations into the construction and decisions of the union. FLOC relied on public endorsement by political, union, and religious individuals and groups as the boycott drew power from outsider's influence and purchasing power. Seeking public aid meant drawing on important national and local figures and organizations to carry FLOC's message and encourage assistance. FLOC successfully received endorsement from Jesse Jackson during his presidential bid in 1984 in addition to various union organizations: UFW; American Federation of Teacher in Toledo, Ohio; Communication Workers of America

⁷⁰¹ Terry, "The Political Economy of Migrant Farm Labor," 170; Organizing Report, 1975.

⁷⁰² Appeal letter by Baldemar Velasquez.

⁷⁰³ FLOC Winter 1978 and 1979 Organizing Campaign.

in Cleveland, Ohio; West Coast International Longshoremen and Warehousemen's Union in San Francisco, California, and many others.⁷⁰⁴ Yet not all unions assisted FLOC, including the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW) that represented many Campbell cannery employees.⁷⁰⁵ Support for FLOC varied within and among unions and religious institutions, but FLOC successfully garnered enough public endorsement to pressure Campbell and Vlastic.

FLOC needed union endorsement because it provided important financial assistance and legitimacy amongst the working class. Though a conservative backlash in the 1980s hindered unions, FLOC pushed for union assistance to gain working class support for the farmworker cause.⁷⁰⁶ Union assistance to farmworker's cause gave FLOC legitimacy as a real union champion for hard working individuals abused by a corporate system. Because of the legitimacy unions provided, Campbell emphasized the UFCW's dismissal of FLOC's campaign as Campbell tried to convince the general public to question whether FLOC was a real union.⁷⁰⁷ Separating the interests of migrant farmworkers from the working class cannery workers, Campbell and the UFCW tried to diminish FLOC's power by diminishing FLOC's base of support. Understanding the power and influence of the working class consumers in grocery stores, FLOC and Campbell competed for the hearts and minds of the public.

To reach more of the public important to FLOC's boycott, FLOC leaders and members shaped their tactics and decisions to effectively encourage and influence financially powerful

⁷⁰⁴ Velasquez and Robinson, *The Farmworker Struggle: A Debate by Letter*; "Rainbow Coalition" photo.

⁷⁰⁵ "Campbell Employees Regret Boycott Backing," *Catholic Chronicle*, June 28, 1985, 24:58, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan; "UFCW Says FLOC Move Is Harmful," *The Crescent-News*, August 10, 1982, 24:41, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

⁷⁰⁶ Bardacke, *Trampling Out the Vintage*, 663.

⁷⁰⁷ Fiction v. Fact: A Message from Campbell Soup Company ad, *New York Times*, January 1, 1984, 24:1, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

organizations. To garner public support, FLOC members presented themselves in sympathetic terms that often focused on migrants' helplessness and the numerous women and children that labored in the fields, instead of migrant families organizing farmworkers to better everyone's lives. FLOC understood the need for sympathy as well as the endorsement of religious and secular organizations with prominence and networks. FLOC used its connections with the UFW and the Farm Worker Ministry as well as their own FLOC groups throughout the nation, to establish a network of aid and information. FLOC's common goal with the UFW, a popular union with a charismatic public figure, gave FLOC a well-established infrastructure of communications. The commonality between FLOC and the UFW allowed FLOC to ride the public success and interest generated by the UFW.⁷⁰⁸ In addition, FLOC members also availed themselves of UFW training.⁷⁰⁹ FLOC's aid network built upon the UFW's own small boycott groups in cities across the nation, including Chicago.⁷¹⁰ Allying with Chavez' union provided FLOC members with an infrastructure of aid while simultaneously demonstrating the importance of farmworkers working together across state, crop, and union boundaries.

For both the UFW and FLOC, the United Farm Worker Ministry became the key to obtaining the logistical aid and manpower necessary to reach and influence the public, yet unlike the UFW, FLOC sometimes struggled to gain the Ministry's attention.⁷¹¹ As an

⁷⁰⁸ "Human Billboard Line to Launch Toledo Farm Worker Week Monday July 29- Saturday August 3," Released July 26, 1985, 24:59, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan; Terry, "The Political Economy of Migrant Farm Labor and the Farmworker Movement in the Midwest," 178; Farm Labor Organizing Committee: Organizing Report, January- May 1979, 4:21, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan; Barger and Reza, *The Farm Labor Movement in the Midwest*, 66, 70.

⁷⁰⁹ Farm Labor Organizing Committee: Organizing Report, Fourth Quarter, October, November, December 1978, 4:21, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

⁷¹⁰ Letter to Sister Merle Nolde of NAWR from Martha McFerran the Chicago Boycott Coordinator, June 24, 1981, 10:42, National Association of Religious Women, University of Notre Dame Archives, Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana.

⁷¹¹ Terry, "The Political Economy of Migrant Farm Labor," 219-220.

interdenominational religious organization focused on bettering farmworkers' lives, the UFWM had the finances, manpower, and connections to make a significant difference in FLOC's boycott campaign. Yet the Migrant Ministry, like other national groups, paid considerably more attention to the UFW than FLOC. Besides the Ministry's vocal and written endorsement, the Migrant Ministry did nothing to initially assist FLOC yet they provided the UFW with paid personnel.⁷¹² This contrast spoke to FLOC member's struggle to make people and organizations respect their efforts with the same zeal as they did the UFW. Though the UFW provided inspiration to the FLOC boycott, it also overshadowed FLOC's efforts. Local organizations and churches proved key to FLOC's campaign, yet national organizations' resources remained largely tied to the UFW's campaign. The result of this disparate assistance arguably accentuated farmworker helplessness, as FLOC used more marches, fasts, and other measures similar to the UFW to create the kind of sympathy, attention, and ultimately resources FLOC needed to succeed with the boycott. When the Ministry did offer more manpower in the early 1980s, it came curiously after a long fast by Baldemar Velasquez, a tactic popularly done by Chavez.⁷¹³ In addition, the Ministry offered manpower assistance only after the UFW arguably no longer needed significant assistance and after Velasquez demonstrated his sincerity and piety in a fashion similar to Chavez.⁷¹⁴ Though FLOC members did not make every decision based on how to gain public support, the need for public and organizations' aid shaped the way FLOC leaders interacted with the public it so desperately needed. In relying on other

⁷¹² National Farm Worker Ministry Objectives & Strategies, circa 1981, 13:44, PADRES Collection, University of Notre Dame Archives, Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana; National Farm Worker Ministry Board of Directors Meeting, May 13-15, 1981, 13:44, PADRES Collection, University of Notre Dame Archives, Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana.

⁷¹³ Terry, "The Political Economy of Migrant Farm Labor," 219-220; "Mass to Celebrate the Breaking of Baldemar Velasquez's Fast at St. Peter & Paul's Catholic Church," September 30, 1982, 24:41, Farm Labor Organizing Committee, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

⁷¹⁴ Terry, "The Political Economy of Migrant Farm Labor," 219-220.

organizations to get the public endorsement critical to a boycott, FLOC had to shape their tactics to compete for the attention of groups like the Migrant Ministry.

FLOC leaders and members focused on gaining religious support because of the financial assistance religious group could offer and because of the impact religious organizations had on union members and public endorsement. Religious organizations and unions shared a tenuous past of aid, opposition, and indifference, but the religious nature of Mexican and Mexican American culture and the religious symbolism in FLOC's marches and Baldemar Velasquez' fasts, pressured religious organizations to react to the FLOC boycott. Set within a time period of social awareness and activism, many Churches reacted to UFW and FLOC farmworkers' demands for a better life and equality.⁷¹⁵ Not only drawing upon Christian faith, FLOC also specifically drew on Mexican American's strong tie to Catholicism. For the Catholic Church, institutional aid did not come until public pressure arose from the UFW and FLOC's continued use of religious symbolism in their strike and boycott. FLOC and the UFW's choice to use religious symbols, whether solely tactical, sincere, or both, strengthened the resolve of striking farmworkers and encouraged the involvement of churches who saw the poverty and faith of farmworkers.

Marching with the image of the Lady of Guadalupe, fasts, Church services, and other religious symbolic acts provided inspiration and strength to the largely religious FLOC and UFW farmworkers, encouraging religious organization's to assist the farmworker's cause. FLOC and the UFW's use of religious symbols in their protests and demonstrations made public the faith of farmworkers and the poverty and injustice they faced in the food chain. For Churches to ignore farmworker's cry for justice as they paraded with crosses would look

⁷¹⁵ Velasquez and Robinson, *The Farmworker Struggle: A Debate Letter*.

negatively upon the religious institution, especially in the case of the Catholic Church as many migrant farmworkers were Catholic. FLOC's leader, Baldemar Velasquez' fast not only drew parallels between himself and Chavez, but more importantly it drew on religious symbolism that provided an air of sincerity, piety, and conviction that encouraged public approval but also strengthened migrants' resolve. The importance of FLOC's Catholic tie can be seen by Catholic schools' boycott of Campbell.⁷¹⁶ Even the student population of Notre Dame University, a Catholic university, voted for the university to boycott Campbell products.⁷¹⁷ Religious symbols like the Virgin of Guadalupe brought hope to many farmworkers, but it also maintained a tie to a powerful and financially fluent institution that could bring legitimacy to FLOC's struggles and influence the masses.

Not only working to garner aid from the Catholic Church, religious organizations, and unions, FLOC also sought support from the population primarily responsible for grocery shopping and education, women. Women played key roles in the food chain as women often served as the individuals who bought and cooked food for their families.⁷¹⁸ In addition, women traditionally served as teachers, influencing children and possibly school policies regarding Campbell's "Labels for Education" program.⁷¹⁹ In encouraging farmworker women's involvement and demanding Catholic endorsement, FLOC established a group of women farmworkers, ex farmworkers, nuns, and Mexican Americans that became the strong supporters

⁷¹⁶ "Schools Reject Soup Label Program."

⁷¹⁷ Steve Askin, "Notre Dame Joins FLOC Food Boycott," 34:28, National Association of Religious Women, University of Notre Dame Archives, Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana. Notre Dame students had the right to vote on boycotting products offered and served on campus.

⁷¹⁸ Margaret Rose, " 'Women Power Will Stop Those Grapes': Chicano Organizers and Middle-Class Female Supporters in the Farm Workers' Grape Boycott in Philadelphia, 1969-1970," *Journal of Women's History* 7, no. 4 (Winter), 16-17.

⁷¹⁹ "Two Tiffin Women Attend CWU Ecumenical Assembly," *The Advertiser-Tribune*, August 11, 1984, 24:58, Farm Labor Organizing Committee, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

and influential leaders for the FLOC movement. In addition, FLOC and its supporters targeted grocery shoppers by providing them with an “un-shopping list,” a list of Campbell’s brands to avoid purchasing, and even a recipe for cream of tomato soup.⁷²⁰ Targeting women because of their roles as educators, mothers, and homemakers, FLOC sought public support for the union cause.

Families, Food, and FLOC

FLOC made men, women, and children an integral part of its boycott efforts, organizational structure, and FLOC’s overall campaign against Campbell. Since migrant farmworkers in the Midwest traveled together as family units, FLOC leaders understood families had to be the backbone of the union. FLOC’s construction supported and drew upon the rhetoric of family involvement, yet it would be individual migrant farmworkers that negotiated the role of men, women, and children in the Midwest worker’s struggles for change.

Based in the Midwest where most farmworkers migrated in family units, FLOC made families a pivotal part of the strike and boycott efforts. FLOC members encouraged men, women, and children to participate in strikes, protests, and marches, with much success. Since the beginning of FLOC, FLOC material and local newspaper articles depicted migrant families as active participants in the union. Men, women, and children took part in marches, told strikebreakers about FLOC, and educated the public about farmworker’s life. In one of FLOC’s three marches, a migrant mother and her children marched five hundred sixty miles from Toledo, Ohio to Camden, New Jersey, the home of Campbell Soup in 1983, to bring attention

⁷²⁰ "Um-Umm Good Alternative" Quick Cream of Tomato Soup recipe from Mennonite *More with Less Cookbook*, *National Farm Worker Movement Newsletter*, 13, no. 1 (March 1984), 24:58, Farm Labor Organizing Committee, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan; “Un-shopping List,” *Women and Global Corporations AFSC Women's Newsletter* 5, no. 1-2 (1984), 24:58, Farm Labor Organizing Committee, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

to the demands of farmworkers.⁷²¹ The women of FLOC in addition to other FLOC members, pushed for the involvement of farmworkers of all ages and the ability for all members to participate in FLOC to better their lives. FLOC had skit teams that gave creative FLOC members the ability to educate others about farmworkers, in addition to Spanish and English classes.⁷²² At least one child, Fernando Cuevas Jr., the son of FLOC's vice-president, toured the country speaking with different groups about his experience growing up as a farmworker.⁷²³ Influenced by the feminist movement of the time and reflective of FLOC's push for women's involvement, FLOC women also demanded greater training and empowerment. As some female FLOC members watched *Salt of the Earth* to learn about past women's role in a farm union, another FLOC woman, Sara Rios, wrote and received a grant to engage more women in the strike.⁷²⁴ Understanding that Midwest farmworkers migrate and worked as a family unit, FLOC leaders encouraged the involvement of all family members to empower and change the migrant stream.

For FLOC members and leaders, migrant families served not only the union's foundation, but families also played a key role in the union ideology and union rhetoric on farmworker rights. FLOC leaders often placed families visibly on the front lines of FLOC protests and marches. In one incident, men, women, and children physically blocked machines from harvesting in the fields of Napoleon, Ohio.⁷²⁵ The familial nature of the Midwest migrant stream meant FLOC leaders often argued and described the financial struggles of farm workers

⁷²¹ Scott Kirschman, "Farm Union Marches Against Campbell," *Second Front Page* (July 10, 1983), 24:42, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan; Terry, "The Political Economy of Migrant Farm Labor," 166-167, 184.

⁷²² FLOC Women's Committee Report, circa March 3, 1976, 4:19, Farm Labor Organizing Committee, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

⁷²³ Marshall, "A Young Voice Speaks Up for Farm Migrants."

⁷²⁴ FLOC Women's Committee Report, 1976.

in terms of the family. FLOC described wages in rhetoric similar to the idea of the “family wage,” noting that farmworker men and women should make enough as parents to raise their family. Though some FLOC members suggested that both parents should be able to provide for a family, at other times, FLOC rhetoric hinted to a more traditional “family wage,” men making enough to provide for the entire family. In one of FLOC’s convention resolutions, FLOC called for farmworkers to be trained and receive jobs working mechanical harvesters, receiving a family wage for their labor.⁷²⁶ Yet in arguing for a family wage, FLOC members also stated that this would mean that the elderly, children, pregnant women, and mothers of young children would not need to work.⁷²⁷ FLOC’s inclusion of mothers in the list of those that should not have to work, suggests that under the ideal of family wage, mothers would stay at home to raise the children. The resolution did not state specifically that women’s roles lay in the home nor did it define “young children,” yet the resolution suggested a somewhat traditional role for women. A newspaper article on FLOC reflected this idea when it stated of FLOC’s position on mechanization and a family wage, “...with adequate wages, women and children would be freed to establish a permanent home. The men could travel to where the work is; the children would be home to attend school year-round.”⁷²⁸ It is unknown how accurately the author reflected FLOC’s stance, but the similarity between this statement and the FLOC resolution

⁷²⁵ “27 FLOC Supporters Seized,” *The Blade*, September 2, 1979, 5:13, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan. This incident was also one of the many cases of violence committed by local Sheriff Robert Beutler and his deputies. In this situation, farmworker parents attempted to intervene on their children’s behalf when the police moved to arrest the group blocking the machines. The Sheriff and his deputies then beat and arrested several of the parents.

⁷²⁶ Dee Car, “Velasquez Sees FLOC Victories Coming Slowly,” *Crescent-News*, June 29, 1982, 9:121, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan; Velasquez and Robinson, *The Farmworker Struggle: A Debate by Letter*; FLOC, Resolutions, no date, 11:11, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

⁷²⁷ Car, “Velasquez Sees FLOC Victories Coming Slowly;” Velasquez and Robinson, *The Farmworker Struggle: A Debate by Letter*; FLOC, Resolutions.

⁷²⁸ Car, “Velasquez Sees FLOC Victories Coming Slowly.”

suggests the complicated nature of gender and family roles. Though FLOC often used the struggle of migrant families in their rhetoric, not all FLOC members shared the same interpretation or goal for farmworker families.

Family provided not only the foundation for the FLOC movement, but also a rhetorical tool for FLOC leaders to use in the boycott. Velasquez noted several times that children worked in the fields. Velasquez promulgated FLOC's ability to better the lives of farmworker children and argued that Campbell's success came on the backs of migrant children.⁷²⁹ Velasquez commented,

The tomato industry is the last industry in which the government (through inaction) and the public (through not caring) has accepted child labor, low wages, no benefits, bad housing, and no enforcement of protective legislation. We as farmworkers have put our meager resources, whatever little security we have, our families, and our lives on the line to win this struggle and rearrange the tomato industry into a system that will give us justice. All we ask is that if you are concerned with quality education, please do not attempt to obtain it for your school children at the expense of farmworker children. We are asking you to be concerned for one of the most violently exploited groups of workers in this country, whose life expectancy is 49 years, whose infant mortality is double the national average, whose wages are the lowest of any group of workers. We ask you not to patronize the Campbell Soup company.⁷³⁰

FLOC leaders and members argued family was important not just because families served as the backbone of the union, but because families represented the reason for FLOC members' struggles and provided a sympathetic image for the public to rally around. FLOC members and leaders could emphasize the importance of better wages to improve the conditions of all farmworkers or highlight children working in the fields or migrant children going to school hungry as both created a sympathetic image that could not easily be ignored by the public. FLOC members stressed the poverty of migrant children by using images of farmworker

⁷²⁹ Velasquez and Robinson, *The Farmworker Struggle: A Debate by Letter*.

⁷³⁰ *Ibid.*

children protesting in tattered clothes or drawings of the Campbell Soup Kids holding a sign publicizing child labor in the field.⁷³¹ FLOC's rhetorical emphasis on migrant children not only drew on farmworker's desire for a better life for their children, but was also a tactical decision to draw on the sympathy of the public to generate boycott support.

FLOC's emphasis on children and family coincided with the union's efforts to include farmworker women as active organizers and members, as individual FLOC members mediated the role of women in the union and families. Since the beginning, FLOC encouraged women's involvement, creating a woman's committee to spur farmworker women's involvement. Some of the first women involved in the women's committee understood that they had to encourage women to speak out and participate because many women felt timid around men.⁷³² Not only encouraging women's voice in the FLOC union, FLOC women also demanded opportunities to attend meetings as men often expected women to raise children and perform household chores.⁷³³ The gendered construction of Mexican and Mexican American farmworker families in the migrant stream was that though economics necessitated women working in the fields, there remained a gendered division of labor at home. As some younger farmworker families shifted to a more egalitarian family unit, there remained gender divisions of labor within most migrant families.⁷³⁴ As Lucy Duran a FLOC organizer stated, "but if you are a woman farmworker, your work doesn't end at sun down. You have to prepare dinner, do the laundry, get the children ready for bed, fix lunches for the next day, do the dishes, and all of the other

⁷³¹ Campbell Signs!; Marshall, "A Young Voice Speaks Up for Farm Migrants."

⁷³² FLOC Women's Committee First Quarter Report, 1978; "Lucy Duran Wife, Mother and Organizer," *Nuestra Lucha*, 1, no. 6 (April 1977), 5:20, Farm Labor Organizing Committee, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

⁷³³ FLOC Women's Committee Report, 1976; FLOC Women's Committee First Quarter Report, 1978.

⁷³⁴ There will be greater analysis of changing gender roles in migrant families in Chapter 6.

things that need to be done.”⁷³⁵ She went on to note women’s difficulty talking about labor issues around men, but the need for change and women’s participation in FLOC.⁷³⁶ FLOC women did not necessarily push for a change in gendered roles, but rather a loosening of these rules and alternate organizing avenues so women could comfortably participate. Lucy Duran’s comment reflected the negotiation within FLOC and Mexican and Mexican American society during the 1960s and afterwards as the Feminist and Chicano Movements encouraged activism and changing notions of freedoms, rights, and roles. FLOC leaders did not encourage and demand radical changes in family units or within the union, yet the call for female organizers created an avenue for negotiation and discussion about gender roles in the home and the union.

The resulting gender negotiation occasionally led to dramatic changes within family structures and norms. As vice-president of FLOC, Fernando Cuevas noted how he used to make the decision in his family as the male head-of-the-household.⁷³⁷ After his family became involved with FLOC, with all family members picketing, organizing, and marching, the family dynamic changed.⁷³⁸ FLOC sought to give farmworkers a voice in the system that controlled their lives by giving farmworkers the ability to vote on individuals to represent them in FLOC conventions. These types of democratic ideals influenced the Cuevas family, encouraging family members to demand a voice in the decisions that affected the family, resulting in family votes on major issues. Of the various issues the Cuevas family voted on was who in the family would go on tour to speak about the migrant stream, with the family voting on Fernando Cuevas Jr. to speak to the public.⁷³⁹ FLOC encouraged men and women to work together, with

⁷³⁵ "Lucy Duran Wife, Mother and Organizer."

⁷³⁶ Ibid.

⁷³⁷ Barger and Reza, *The Farm Labor Movement in the Midwest*, 104.

⁷³⁸ Ibid.

⁷³⁹ Marshall, "A Young Voice Speaks Up for Farm Migrants."

women like Berna Romero becoming coordinator for Field Operations.⁷⁴⁰ For some, the result of FLOC's inclusive organization created massive changes to family dynamics.

Yet for most FLOC members, change was not so dramatic, with union leaders and individual migrant farmworkers negotiating gender, family, and union roles. For Maria Elena who organized pickle workers in the 1980s for FLOC, not all union leaders fully endorsed women's roles in the union. She felt that when interacting with Baldemar Velasquez specifically, he seemed "dictatorial" and almost untrusting of women organizers because he did not want women organizers to talk to one another after a day of solo organizing.⁷⁴¹ In contrast other women, Amelia Nava, Alicia Patino, and Berna Romero, made no mention of their gendered struggles in the union.⁷⁴² Migrant women's different experiences reflected women's different gender expectations and the dynamics within their families and the union they experienced.⁷⁴³ Maria Elena contrasted her feelings on FLOC with her brief experiences working with the UFW, which had at least one notable Chicana in a leadership role, Dolores Huerta.⁷⁴⁴ The UFW embraced organizing women, in direct contrast to its predecessor, Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC), a primarily Filipino union.⁷⁴⁵ Though FLOC encouraged women and children to take part in the union, many women had to negotiate

⁷⁴⁰ FLOC, "Brothers & Sisters Join Our Struggle: Sustaining Membership Program," 24:59, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

⁷⁴¹ Ortega, *Forged Under the Sun*, 229.

⁷⁴² "Brothers & Sisters Join Our Struggle: Sustaining Membership Program;" Audrey Mackiewicz, "Fremont Woman Helps Because She Remembers," *Sandusky Register*, February 10, 1985, 5:14, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

⁷⁴³ Maria Elena noted that she felt unsure of criticizing FLOC's leader and the union in general regarding the treatment of female organizers. She feared discrediting the union and its mission. Similar hesitation existed within the UFW as some came to question the tactics and choices of Chavez, as well as within the Chicano Movement as both men and women retaliated against Feminist Chicana's who demanded gender equality in the Movement. In all cases, people feared criticizing a part of a movement or its leader, believing it would give traction to its opponents. In so doing though, these movements and unions faced internal fissures.

⁷⁴⁴ Bardacke, *Trampling Out the Vintage*, 173.

⁷⁴⁵ Bardacke, *Trampling Out the Vintage*, 115.

their involvement with family members, such as Gloria Chiquita who had to ask her husband for permission to train to be an organizer and brought her children to the training.⁷⁴⁶ FLOC and UFW leaders encouraged women to become organizers, yet women had a variety of experiences as they mediated gender roles with union leadership.

For both the UFW and FLOC, encouraging women to become organizers did not mean a large-scale embrace of feminist ideology or a radical change in migrant families and traditional gender norms. Traditional Mexican American culture did not necessarily embrace the more radical Chicana or Feminist ideology of the 1960s and 1970s. The inclusion of women in union organizing often meant the alteration of gender norms, but without totally changing women's traditional gender role in the home. Despite the inclusion of all ages and sexes, FLOC women struggled finding the time to organize alongside their domestic responsibilities.⁷⁴⁷ For this reason, FLOC women insisted on the creation of day care facilities and TV rooms for children, giving women the freedom to attend meetings.⁷⁴⁸ Yet within FLOC, farmworker women acted both within traditional geographic spaces: the house in addition to the public spaces of union organizing and protest. FLOC provided a space and avenue for women's involvement, but did not necessarily seek to radically change gender norms within families or Mexican American cultures. Instead, migrant families negotiated gender roles as men, women, and children debated the roles of family members within the home and the union.

Family and union negotiations of gender roles often meant FLOC members had to reshape union strategies. As noted by Maria Elena and other FLOC women, women had to

⁷⁴⁶ Ortega, *Forged Under the Sun*, 225.

⁷⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁸ Ibid; FLOC Women's Committee Report, 1976; Organizing Report 1975; Sara Velasquez, "New Series on Family Issues," Editorial, *FLOC Newsletter*, 11 (November 1974), 6:63, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

work together to draw on each other's strengths.⁷⁴⁹ For some Midwest farmworker women, like a friend of Maria Elena, they required permission from a male relative to become an organizer.⁷⁵⁰ In other cases, entire families voted equally on issues that affected the family, providing men, women, and children, equal share in family decisions.⁷⁵¹ These differences represented the variety of personal experiences of migrants and their experience and connection with feminist and democratic ideology, and traditional gender norms. The Cuevas family's involvement in FLOC through the father's role in the union, influenced the family to adapt a democratic ideal that gave all family members a voice.⁷⁵² In contrast, other farmworkers remained largely divorce from these ideologies. Even the UFW's leader, Cesar Chavez, though encouraging women's involvement, took part in the very male-centric and gendered *Cursillo* Movement that emphasized traditional masculinity.⁷⁵³ The different experiences and beliefs of FLOC members and leaders meant that though FLOC encouraged men, women, and children's involvement, leaders did not stress gender equality or Feminist ideology. Rather union leaders encouraged women's participation, but usually within safe confines. As Maria Elena and other farmworker women came to realize, they had to negotiate the varied interpretations of gender roles in migrant families and unions within the changing social landscape of the nation.

Ending the "Cream of Exploitation"

⁷⁴⁹ Bardacke, *Trampling Out the Vintage*, 225-229.

⁷⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 203, 225.

⁷⁵¹ Marshall, "A Young Voice Speaks Up for Farm Migrants;" Barger and Reza, *The Farm Labor Movement in the Midwest*, 104.

⁷⁵² Fernando Cuevas served as the first Vice President of FLOC.

⁷⁵³ Bardacke, *Trampling Out the Vintage*, 64, 30-31.

In early 1986, FLOC won a three-way deal with Campbell and grower associations, ultimately establishing a commission, the Dunlap Commission, to regulate and enact three party agricultural deals.⁷⁵⁴ As a separate deal in 1987, Vlasic pickle growers in Ohio signed a deal, several months after another company, Heinz, signed a deal with FLOC.⁷⁵⁵ In the tomato and pickle fields, workers won set wages, a paid holiday on Labor Day, a grievance procedure, and promises to investigate health care options, better housing, and numerous other issues.⁷⁵⁶ While FLOC did not immediately eliminate the pickle sharecropping system, the different sides agreed to conduct studies on how to better organize pickle harvests.⁷⁵⁷ In 1987, FLOC represented over three thousand workers in the pickle and tomato fields of Ohio and Michigan.⁷⁵⁸ Afterwards, FLOC expanded the geographic space of the tomato and pickle industry by talking with a Mexican agricultural worker union: Mexican National Union of Salaried Field Workers (SNTOW) as well moved to Florida pickle workers in the 1990s.⁷⁵⁹ In addition, other farmworker unions adapted FLOC's technique of attacking corporations within the larger power structure as other migrants throughout the nation attempted to alter the power system of the migrant system. The geographic expansion of FLOC's coverage and their tie to SNTOW allowed FLOC to expand their success in Midwest fields to other farmworkers in the nation, demonstrating FLOCs understanding of the international and national structure of agriculture.

⁷⁵⁴ Barger and Reza, *The Farm Labor Movement in the Midwest*, 80-82; John Nichols, "FLOC, Heinz Hold Labor Talks, Officials Confirm," *The Blade*, August 8, 1986, 4:8, Farm Labor Organizing Committee, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

⁷⁵⁵ Barger and Reza, *The Farm Labor Movement in the Midwest*, 80-82, 128.

⁷⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁸ Ibid, 81.

⁷⁵⁹ Altha J. Cravey, "Cowboys and Dinosaurs: Mexican Labor Unionism and the State," in *Organizing the Landscape: Geographical Perspectives on Labor Unionism*, ed. Andrew Herod (Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 92.

The success of FLOC at the negotiating table empowered and shaped farmworker's like Maria Elena Ortega not only in her experience in the fields, but in her life. In integrating the family framework into the FLOC organization, FLOC notions of family and gender roles influenced the migrants in FLOC. Social movements of the last half of the twentieth century in addition to the gender norms within families and unions influenced farmworkers' perceptions of gender and family. The negotiation between these different forces and ideas led to a variety of results. As some families gave adults and children of all sexes a vote on family issues, other FLOC women had to demand childcare to be able to participate in organizing, and some women had to request permission from their husbands to become a FLOC organizer. For Maria Elena and other migrant farmworkers, family participation in the union did not necessarily mean a radical change in gender equality, but rather a way to encourage families and individuals to negotiate gender roles.

Though FLOC members did not agree on gender roles, the activism of FLOC coupled with the social movements of the time, transformed the Midwest migrants in the tomato and pickle fields. For Maria Elena, the UFW and FLOC movements encouraged her to organize Illinois mushroom workers. Neither FLOC nor the UFW initially agreed to organize Illinois mushroom workers in Princeton, but farmworkers like Maria Elena propelled Princeton mushroom workers to go on strike in 1989.⁷⁶⁰ Encouraged by the unionizing efforts of FLOC and the social movements of the time, Midwest farmworkers like Maria Elena and the Illinois mushroom workers organized themselves against other agricultural corporations, asking then

⁷⁶⁰ FLOC –pamphlet/ flyer, 37:47, National Association of Religious Women, University of Notre Dame Archives, Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana; Illinois Conference of Churches, *The Illinois Farm Worker Ministry Newsletter*, (Summer of 1989), 38:9, National Association of Religious Women, University of Notre Dame Archives, Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana; Letter to friends of the Farm Workers from Illinois Farm Worker Ministry, re: Solidarity Days with Princeton Mushroom Workers, May 18, 1989, 38:9, National Association of Religious Women, University of Notre Dame Archives, Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana.

for FLOC's assistance.⁷⁶¹ In addition, other farmworkers outside the Midwest adapted FLOC's strategies to force corporations involved in the food pyramid to negotiate with growers and farmworkers, drastically changing power dynamics in other parts of the nation.⁷⁶² The FLOC union, coupled with other social and union movements of the time, empowered workers in the Midwest and throughout the nation, to rethink labor and power structures.

FLOC depended on a foundation of empowered farmworker families, but the union's strategic choice to use a boycott made the union dependent on the public's capricious support. When Campbell signed the deal with growers and FLOC, the 1980s backlash against welfare programs and unions had started.⁷⁶³ In other Midwest states, social organizations created to aid migrant farmworkers and Mexican Americans declined in numbers. St. Paul, Minnesota's thriving community of organizations created to assist migrants and Mexican Americans, disappeared by 1981 with only one appearing in the phonebook.⁷⁶⁴ Some of the decline reflected the shifts in agriculture as growers changed to crops that required little or no farmworkers, as mechanization eliminated the need for larger numbers of farmworkers, or as growers left the farming business altogether.⁷⁶⁵ Yet, the wider trend represented the backlash of the 1980s with even the UFW fading from public memory as the UFW faced anti-union

⁷⁶¹ Illinois Conference of Churches, *The Illinois Farm Worker Ministry Newsletter* (Summer 1989). The mushroom strike started after the Princeton Mushroom Farm fired Juan Villegas for starting to organize in 1989. Workers walked out in reaction and sought assistance from FLOC.

⁷⁶² Silvia Giagnoni, *Fields of Resistance: The Struggle of Florida's Farmworkers for Justice*, (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2011).

⁷⁶³ Joseph A. McCartin, *Collision Course: Ronald Reagan, the Air Traffic Controller and the Strike that Changed America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

⁷⁶⁴ Mexican American Community in St. Paul Collection, Minnesota State Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota.

⁷⁶⁵ "Fewer Jobs for Farmworker....;" Mike Steere, "Farm Labor Strike Against Canneries, Growers Seen as Almost Inevitable," *The Blade*, July 28, 1978, 24:42, Farm Labor Organizing Committee, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan; "Church and Agriculture: Answer of the Church of the Brethren General Board," circa 1974, 19:38, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

pressure and as the union unraveled internally.⁷⁶⁶ With the changes in 1980 United States society, FLOC faced a greater challenge in employing a boycott campaign that depended on public endorsement.

The three-party deals between FLOC, growers, and Campbell and Vlastic companies were significant to the Midwest migrant stream. Despite FLOC's boycott, which gave significant power to the public during a time of significant social changes in society, FLOC successfully garnered enough public aid to succeed. FLOC used member's understanding of the food chain and agricultural system to achieve their goal of a three-party deal and a voice for farmworkers. After their success in the late 1980s, FLOC continued to learn and adapt to the changing food pyramid of power, shifting their focus to the pickle fields of Florida. FLOC's intimate understanding of the agricultural system of power, and their success in changing the food pyramid, encouraged future farm unions to attack the higher echelon of the food pyramid as FLOC itself organized workers elsewhere in the nation. FLOC later organized not just Mexican and Mexican American farmworkers but also the predominately male H-2(A) foreign workers.⁷⁶⁷ FLOC's focus on H-2(A) workers meant a shift away from a family-centered framework, but FLOC's focus in the 1990s continued to demonstrate their understanding of the power relations in the agricultural system. Using a greater understanding of the power of corporations in the food pyramid, FLOC provided avenues for empowerment for the Mexican and Mexican American migrant farmworkers of the Midwest.

⁷⁶⁶ McCartin, *Collision Course*; Matt Garcia, *From the Jaws of Victory: The Triumph and Tragedy of Cesar Chavez and the Farm Worker Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 145, 217-256.

⁷⁶⁷ Francesca Coin, "Pickles and Pickets after NAFTA: Globalization, Agribusiness, the US-Mexico Food Chain, and Farm-worker Struggles in North Carolina," (Ph.D. dissertation, Georgia State University, 2007).

CHAPTER 6

COLONIAS AND BARRIOS IN THE NORTH: FAMILY, HOME AND THE MIDWEST IN MIGRANT FARMWORKERS' LIVES

“...I always will call home Texas though, even though I’ve been here longer than there.”⁷⁶⁸
-Sylvia Garcia

“Migratory farm laborers move restlessly over the face of the land... They pass through community after community, but they neither claim the community as home nor does the community claim them.”⁷⁶⁹
- U.S. Migrant Problem Study Commission

For most of their lives, both John Ortega and Sylvia Garcia were migrants. Though born in different generations, both experienced similar struggles within the Midwest migrant stream. Traveling from Texas to the Midwest in 1920s and 1930s and 1960s and 1970s respectively, the Midwest was the place that offered both generations the financial security needed for their family’s survival. Despite the necessity for migrating, both felt the label of “migrant” and felt culturally isolated. Even when Sylvia was an adult with her own family, this sense of isolation still defined her identity and resonated across time. Racism, the lack of culturally relevant food, as well as separation from extended family made it difficult for some migrants to feel comfortable in the Midwest. Some urban areas of the Midwest offered non-agricultural

⁷⁶⁸ Sylvia Garcia, interview by Abner Arauza, December 22, 2010, transcript, Lideres Latinos Oral History Project, Minnesota Immigrant Oral Histories, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota, accessed April 17, 2014, <http://collections.mnhs.org/cms/display.php?irn=10872845>.

⁷⁶⁹ *National Consumer Committee for Research and Education, Inc.*, Migratory Labor in American Agriculture, Migrant Problem Study Commission II, 1958-1963, Commission on Children: Migrant Workers Study Research Files, 1950-1963, Illinois State Archives, Norton Building, Springfield, Illinois.

employment and some cultural comforts, like Mexican grocery stores, but migrants in smaller cities sometimes felt more at home in Texas than the small Midwest communities where they settled. Though John and Sylvia eventually settled in Iowa and Minnesota respectively, John felt out of place in the Midwest throughout his childhood while only Sylvia's children felt at home in Moorhead, Minnesota. Feeling isolated in the smaller Midwest cities and towns where they worked or settled, migrants like Sylvia and John relied on their immediate family for basic and cultural survival, cooking traditional Mexican dishes to retain their culture in their new permanent home or adapting traditional gender norms to survive in the Midwest migrant stream.⁷⁷⁰ Though cooking traditional Mexican food helped maintain Mexican culture in the North, some children still felt ashamed and different because of their Mexican lunches like John Ortega did as a child. For these reasons, some migrants and former migrants, like Sylvia and her husband, continued to call the South, instead of the North, home.

For farmworkers like Sylvia Garcia and John Ortega who traveled between their homes in the South to the fields of the North and for the families permanently settled in Northern communities, home shaped their experiences as migrants. For some, home was a physical space, where you lived throughout the year, or a feeling of safety and belonging, a place where the family resided. Home was the place where family relationships developed and where family defined gender roles within the house and as a result, outside the confines of the physical house. Home, whether as a physical space, a place of belonging, or a place for family, defined the gender and family dynamics within the Midwest farmworker community. While the 1963 Migrant Study quoted at the beginning depicted all farmworkers as unbound to any community and without any sense of home, most Midwest migrants felt aimless and unwanted in the

⁷⁷⁰ Sylvia Garcia, interview by Abner Arauza; John Ortega, "Memoirs of John R. Ortega, Reflections of a Mexican Migrant Boy: Growing Up in the Fields of Iowa," 2003, Iowa State Special Collections and University Archives, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa.

communities in which they traveled, but not from where they started. Like the growers that argued that the migrant stream fit workers natural transient nature, so too did this writer suggest migrants were incapable of creating a home.⁷⁷¹ Yet, finances drove Midwest migrants to leave as family units to work in the Midwest. In contrast to the West coast or Eastern stream, Midwest migrants traveled as a family unit with pre-designed gender norms, to a region that did not support Mexican culture. In contrast to other parts of the nation, the Mexican American migrant and ex-migrant farmworkers men, women, and children struggled to establish a sense of home in a region largely devoid of Mexican culture and Mexican Americans, adapting gender roles in the migrant stream and emphasizing Mexican culture to create both temporary and permanent homes in the Midwest.

Background

Since almost the beginning of the Midwest migrant stream, Mexican and Mexican Americans worked and travelled alongside their family members. Though some areas of Minnesota and Michigan employed Mexican migrants in sugar beet fields since World War I, most Mexican migrant families did not start their migrate treks until after the Second World War.⁷⁷² Forced to migrate to survive when few employment opportunities existed in their Southern cities, farmworker families left their homes in Texas as well as Florida and Mexico, as early as April, to travel to the Midwest to harvest a variety of crops until November when

⁷⁷¹ Edward R. Murrow, *Harvest of Shame*, directed by Fred W. Friendly, (CBS Report, November 24, 1960), videocassette.

⁷⁷² Kathleen Mapes, *Sweet Tyranny: Migrant Labor, Industrial Agriculture, and Imperial Politics* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009); Jim Norris, *North for the Harvest: Mexican Workers, Growers, and the Sugar Beet Industry* (St. Paul, Minnesota: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2009).

they returned to their Southern homes.⁷⁷³ Southern homes acted as migrants' home base, the place migrants consistently returned to after traveling to the Midwest. Though traditionally traveling with immediate family members, migrating meant farmworkers traveled away from extended family members and familiar communities to travel North with crew leaders or as a family unit. Working for a variety of growers along the different migrant routes of the Midwest stream meant farmworker families lived in numerous dwellings owned by growers, and children attended a variety of schools, whether migrant summer schools or regular schools for a few months in a year. Previous experience shaped the individual migrant group's routes, allowing a degree of regularity in migrants' lives and temporary Northern homes, though weather, changing crop patterns, and financial opportunities often led to slight alterations.⁷⁷⁴ Aside from working in the fields, farmworkers occasionally worked in canning factories or other agricultural jobs for brief periods, such as Christmas tree harvesting in the North.⁷⁷⁵ In the case of the Delgado migrant family in 1970s Ohio, the wife and some of the children continued to work in the tomato fields during the summer as the husband worked in the nearby canning factory, combining field and cannery work into their migrant route.⁷⁷⁶ No matter the fields they harvested, Mexican and Mexican American migrant farmworkers labored and migrated

⁷⁷³ Sister Mary Eloise Thomas, "A Study of the Causes and Consequences of The Economic Status of Migratory Farm Workers in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin, 1940-1958" (Ph.D. dissertation, Notre Dame, 1960); Kristina Lindborg and Carlos J. Ovando, *Five Mexican-American Women in Transition: A Case Study of Migrants in the Midwest* (San Francisco, California: R & E Research Association, Inc., 1977), 5.

⁷⁷⁴ Norris, *North for the Harvest*.

⁷⁷⁵ Martin Mauricio, interview by Mark DePue, July 20, 2008, transcript, 46, Agriculture in the Modern Era, Agriculture in Illinois, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library & Museum, accessed August 2014, <http://www.illinois.gov/alplm/library/collections/oralhistory/agriculture/Pages/default.aspx>.

⁷⁷⁶ Joy Hints, "Seven Families: A Two Year In-Depth Study of Incomes and Job Experiences of Seven Ohio Migrant Farm Worker Families, 1974-1976," (1976), 56, 20:3, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan; Anne Power, "An Analysis of the Family System Among Spanish-Speaking Migrant Labourers in the State of Wisconsin," 19, 15:6, Governor's Committee of Migratory Labor Records, La Raza, Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin.

alongside their family members, traveling and in some cases, leaving the migrant stream as family units.

The Midwest migrant stream was historically distinguished from other migrant streams because of the large numbers of women in the stream and the role of families. According to a report conducted between 1988-1990, while many families in the migrant stream had young children, the majority (as much as fifty percent) of migrants in the stream were between the ages of eighteen and thirty-four years old; with only a small percentage (around four percent) under seventeen years old.⁷⁷⁷ This means that although most Midwest migrant families had young children, migrant families were less likely to have numerous young children in the stream. In contrast, the Western and Southern migrant streams had significantly more single males and reflected Western Mexican American's ability to work in local fields instead of migrating long distances.⁷⁷⁸ In fact, a 1989 report from the National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS) found that the Midwest had a higher number of female to males than other areas of the country.⁷⁷⁹ This study coincided with another study on the Southern stream which noted not only how African Americans dominated the stream, but the significantly higher numbers of men in the stream, both married with their spouses back home and unmarried.⁷⁸⁰ Eastern migrant men adjusted gender norms to survive as single men in the stream, sometimes

⁷⁷⁷ *Findings from the National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS), 1989: A Demographic and Employment Profile of Perishable Crop Farm Workers*, prepared by Department of Labor, Office of Program Economics (Washington, D.C., November 1991).

⁷⁷⁸ Lindborg and Ovando, *Five Mexican-American Women in Transition*, 26, 60; Matt Garcia, *A World of Its Own: Race, Labor, and Citrus in the Making of Greater Los Angeles, 1900-1970* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 36-37; Vicki L. Ruiz, *Cannery Women, Cannery Lives: Mexican Women, Unionization, and the California Food Processing Industry, 1930-1950*. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987); Roger Daniels, *Guarding the Golden Door: American Immigration Policy and Immigrants Since 1882* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2004).

⁷⁷⁹ *Findings from the National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS), 1989*, iv.

⁷⁸⁰ William H. Friedland and Dorothy Nelkin, *Migrant: Agricultural Workers in America's Northeast*. (Chicago: Hold, Rinehard and Winston, 1971), 122.

joining with one of the few migrant women in the stream to divide reproductive labor along traditional lines, with women cooking and cleaning and men working for wages.⁷⁸¹ Like migrants in the Midwest, Eastern male farmworkers, when they could pair with women, used gender norms as a basis for their survival strategies in the stream. For Midwest migrants, family was a resource that with reproductive and waged labor patterns, created the basis for maintaining a place they could call home.

Mexican and Mexican American families' struggle for acceptance amplified the Midwest region's peculiarity as a region; an aspect of experience long ignored by scholars and the public.⁷⁸² Mexican American families travelling up the Midwest stream entered a region viewed by the general United States public, and even by some Mexican Americans, as outside the Mexican cultural sphere despite generations of Mexican American communities in some Midwest urban centers. The immigration of Mexican nationals to the Midwest in the early 1900s and the Bracero immigration in the 1940s and 1950s created rich Mexican American communities in some Midwest cities, while other areas of the Midwest were almost totally devoid of Mexicans. However, recent scholars argue that the continued focus on the Southwest region by academics, and even some Mexican Americans, forever reduces Mexican Americans in the Midwest to the role of outsider and "immigrant."⁷⁸³ Maria Elena, who was a migrant and eventually became a union organizer, argued a pilot sprayed her with pesticide because he likely believed her to be an undocumented worker because of her visible "otherness."⁷⁸⁴

Although she clearly parked on the side of the road, she argued the pilot probably saw no issue

⁷⁸¹ Friedland and Nelkin, *Migrant*.

⁷⁸² Sandra M. Gonzales, "Aztlán in the Midwest and other Counter-Narratives Revealed," in *Latinos in the United States: Latinos in the Midwest*, ed. Rubén Orlando Martínez (Michigan State University Press, 2011), 18-19.

⁷⁸³ Gonzales, "Aztlán in the Midwest," 18-19.

⁷⁸⁴ Maria Elena Ortega, *Forged Under the Sun/ Forjada Bajo el Sol: The Life of Maria Elena Lucas*, ed. Fran Leepa Buss (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 36.

with spraying dangerous chemicals on top of her. Though migrant workers in the Western stream had the comfort of living in a region with a large Mexican and Mexican American population, migrants working in the Midwest were publically perceived to be outsiders. For Maria Elena and other migrants, home provided a place of comfort and acceptance, something at least partially lacking in the Midwest where some of the public started to view even families that lived in the region for generations, as “immigrants” and “outsiders.”

With a predominance of families in the Midwest migrant stream, women and children provided their families critical assistance as families survived and negotiated familial roles and labor in the migrant stream. The reproductive labor of women and children and the allocation of paid and unpaid labor for survival, intersected with the needs of growers for a cheap labor force. Mexican American culture provided a framework of sacrifice that migrants based their paid and unpaid labor patterns. Migrant families struggled not just with exploitive and poverty conditions in work and in their temporary Northern homes, but from these conditions came migrants’ needs for established familial roles to financially maintain the family and to perform the reproductive labor complicated by constantly moving. In the West, women often had opportunities to work as wage earners outside the fields, although they often worked as secondary waged earners and still within the confines of gender roles, accepting husband and father’s decision on their right to work.⁷⁸⁵ In the Midwest stream, women usually followed traditional gender norms that gave men greater authority in the family as they worked in the fields as well as performed reproductive labor.

Adjusting the need for a house and the necessary hands in the fields was a balancing act for many migrants. Irene Fávila’s mother cooked lunches for her husband and children every

⁷⁸⁵ Garcia, *A World of Its Own*, 161.

night and labored in the fields during the day as her eldest daughter, Irene, reheated the precooked lunches for her younger siblings. Not only reheating food, Irene also looked after her siblings while her parents worked in the fields.⁷⁸⁶ In contrast, Lupe Serna remembered working in the fields while her two younger brothers helped in the house.⁷⁸⁷ At the same time, women could be the prime individual in a family to maintain important ties with others including extended family members and establishing necessary networks of mutual assistance.⁷⁸⁸ One woman's kindness to offer food to a family in need or nurturing an ill neighbor, could easily result in that person reciprocating with food for her family when they were in need, or sharing important information about a job opportunity, making women's reproductive roles a powerful component to migrants' lives.⁷⁸⁹ Migrants' different choices regarding who labored in the fields and who performed household chores reflected the intersection of individual family's composition with Mexican American cultural norms and gender changes in United States society. Various migrants established different reproductive and paid labor familial roles, yet family consistently remained pivotal to migrants' survival strategy as they migrated away from their Southern homes and communities to the numerous fields of the North.

Set within the backdrop of the last half of the twentieth century, migration in the Midwest stream meant the interaction between farmworker families and the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s and the racially charged backlash against "illegal immigrants" in the 1980s and 1990s. Migrant families traveled to the Midwest during a time of radical challenge in

⁷⁸⁶ Irene Fávila, interview by José Angel Gutiérrez, November 4, 1998, transcript 8-9, CMAS 134, Special Collections, University of Texas at Arlington Libraries, Arlington, Texas, accessed on June 2013, <http://library.uta.edu/tejanovoices/interview.php?cmasno=134>.

⁷⁸⁷ Lindborg and Ovando, *Five Mexican-American Women in Transition*, 26.

⁷⁸⁸ Brett William, "Why Migrant Women Feed Their Husbands Tamales: Foodways as a Basis for a Revisionist View of Tejano Family Life," in *Ethnic and Regional Foodways in the United States: The Performance of Group Identity*, eds. Linda Keller Brown and Kay Mussell (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1984).

⁷⁸⁹ Ibid.

United States society. The United Farm Workers (UFW) in California brought the plight of farmworkers to public attention at the same time that the Chicano, Civil Rights, and Feminist Movements brought public attention to the problems faced by minorities and issues in gender relations. Social movements exposed farmworkers and the public at large to avenues for empowerment and change in gender, labor, and social relations. With these new ideas, social perceptions of Mexican American identity, farmworker power, and gender roles became negotiable rather than pre-defined. Yet the backlash of the 1980s and the 1990s brought criticism of Feminism, government support for equality and anti-poverty legislation and programs, in addition to a growing fear of “illegal” Mexican immigrants. For migrants, this meant decreasing support for programs that benefitted migrants and the increasing categorization of all ethnic Mexicans as “illegal” and therefore “outsiders.”⁷⁹⁰ Though Mexican American communities could partially shield some Mexicans Americans from the constant outside label of “illegal,” migrants who traveled to rural Midwest regions often faced the racially-based label of “illegal,” making migrants even more of an outsider to the local cities and towns.⁷⁹¹ Traveling from their homes in the South to the fields of the Midwest during the last half of the twentieth century, farmworkers experienced changing social norms and backlash.

*“A donde el corazon se inclina, el pie camina”*⁷⁹²

⁷⁹⁰ Garry G. Geffert, "H-2(A) Guestworkers Program: A Legacy of Importing Agricultural Labor," in *The Human Cost of Food: Farmworkers, Lives, Labor, and Advocacy*, eds. Charles D. Thompson, Jr. and Melinda F. Wiggins (Austin, TX: Austin University of Texas Press, 2002), 118; Ronald L. Mize and Alicia C. S. Swords, *Consuming Mexican Labor: From the Bracero Program to NAFTA* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 7, 9.

⁷⁹¹ *Proyecto Adelante*, 4:22, La Raza Records, Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin; LULAC, Committee List, 1: Administration-Committees, 1973-1974, LULAC Council 93/4, Iowa Women's Archives, University of Iowa Libraries, Iowa City, Iowa..

⁷⁹² “A donde el corazon se inclina, el pie camina” is a Spanish proverb that is essentially equal to the English proverb “Home is where the heart is.”

Since the beginning, farmworker's Southern homes and towns influenced those who traveled up the Midwest stream and the cultural and family adaption strategies used to survive. Texas, Florida, and Mexico served as Midwest migrants' home base, usually located in the center of a Mexican community and near extended family networks. Extended family, festivals, and school friends made up the migrants' local Southern communities, making migrants call the South home. From Jose Martinez in the mid-twentieth century to Zulema Lopez and Perla Sanchez in the recent documentary *The Harvest/La Cosecha*, friends and the Mexican American community made migrant children more comfortable in their Southern schools and homes than the migrant schools and fields of the North.⁷⁹³ Though differences could make farmworkers feel out of place even in the South, such as Beatriz Castillo who was born in Mexico but moved with her family to Texas in the 1970s where she felt out of place in high school because of her accent, most farmworkers described feeling comfortable and accepted in their native Southern homes.⁷⁹⁴ Farmworkers' financial success in the North provided funding to make improvements to migrants' stable Southern homes, especially for Mexican nationals.⁷⁹⁵ The culturally similar environment meant migrants felt at home in the South as similar language, experiences, food, and culture brought the community together and made the physical space where they lived, home.

⁷⁹³ *The Harvest/La Cosecha*, directed by U. Roberto Romano (Globalvision, Romano Film & Photography, Shine Global, 2011), DVD; Daniel Rothenberg, *With These Hands: The Hidden World of Migrant Farmworkers Today* (University of California, 1998), 276.

⁷⁹⁴ Beatriz Castillo, interview by Terry Shoptaugh, July 21, 1992, transcript, 19, Red River Sugar Beet Grower Records, Northwest Minnesota Historical Center, Livingston Lord Library, Moorhead University, Moorhead, Minnesota.

⁷⁹⁵ "Who are the Migrants, and What is Home?" *The Register*, June 2, 1969, 5.

Within Mexican and Mexican American dominated cities and towns, farmworkers could easily take part in significant events and daily activities centered on the home and the local community. Quinceañeras, Day of the Dead, Spanish mass, and even traditional Mexican food, created a sense of community in the Texas, Florida, and Mexican migrant communities. Family, including immediate and extended family members, played important roles in these events, as migrants also forged and maintained ties within the local and extended community. Food itself proved a notable expression of culture, with Sylvia's parents sending spices and ingredients essential to traditional Mexican dishes to her when she moved up North.⁷⁹⁶ Southern homes and communities served as a safe place that sheltered and maintained Mexican American culture. Even for migrants who traveled up the Western stream, the existence of Mexican American culture in the Southwest eased migrants ability to find and cook traditional food as well as take part in traditionally cultural events. As a child in the migrant stream in his family of ten, Jose Martinez remembered being happier in his Texas home because of the significant number of Mexican and Mexican Americans in Texas, especially as people in the Michigan area where his family migrated to yearly, treated him "differently."⁷⁹⁷ He stated, "When I went back to Texas, I had no problems making friends. In Texas it's like ninety percent raw Mexicans and Mexican Americans. I formed my group of kids... If they weren't migrant kids, then they'd been migrants. They'd all worked in the fields. Michigan and Texas were two totally different worlds. Every time I went back to Texas, I felt like I was going home."⁷⁹⁸ Traditional meals as well as the ability to share in common cultural events, such as a

⁷⁹⁶ Sylvia Garcia, interview by Abner Arauza.

⁷⁹⁷ Rothenberg, *With Theses Hands*.

⁷⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 274.

daughter's Quinceañera, made some farmworkers feel more comfortable and at home in Mexico, Texas, or Florida than in the Midwest.

It is within the comfortable physical space of farmworker's Southern homes that farmworker family and gender norms developed. Mexican and Mexican American culture often provided a cultural basis for the division of labor within migrant families. Mexican culture emphasized kinship and the importance of family and sacrifice.⁷⁹⁹ Helping each other and the inculcation of individual sacrifice for the family's welfare proved even more relevant to migrant farmworkers who had little money and labored together as a family to survive. Migrant families depended on members following gender and familial roles as family members performed both paid and unpaid labor. Based on the idea that many hands made farm labor easier, the average Mexican migrant family during the 1960s to the 1970s consisted of six to seven individuals.⁸⁰⁰ Those old enough to work in the fields, which could be almost half of the family, ensured greater earnings for the family unit.⁸⁰¹ In addition, childcare and other household chores done by family members freed older persons to perform waged labor. For all members of the traditional Mexican family, familial loyalty was critical to the family's survival in the migrant stream as they traveled without a "home" for a large portion of the year.

The sacrificial nature of the Mexican American migrant culture provided a framework for the gender division of labor for migrants in the stream. Traditionally, women and girls provided reproductive labor and men provided financially for the family and controlled the sexuality of women.⁸⁰² As migrants, this meant women occasionally worked in the fields, but

⁷⁹⁹ Lindborg and Ovando, *Five Mexican-American Women in Transition*, 55; Sylvia Garcia, interview by Abner Arauza.

⁸⁰⁰ Lindborg and Ovando, *Five Mexican-American Women in Transition*, 5, 81.

⁸⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 81.

⁸⁰² William, "Why Migrant Women Feed Their Husbands Tamales.

consistently performed reproductive labor. For example, Adelle Martinez remembered girls and mothers left the fields to make lunch as the men continued to work.⁸⁰³ This division of responsibilities extended to children as many parents raised young boys to eventually be the head of the household with the responsibility of providing for the family and protecting sisters, simultaneously sheltering girls to protect their valued virginity.⁸⁰⁴ For Silvia and Israel Garcia, this meant restricting dances and dates for their daughters.⁸⁰⁵ For Lidia Curiel, boys who wanted to take her to a dance had to ask her brother for permission.⁸⁰⁶ Despite this broad depiction of Mexican machismo, the reality of Mexican culture and the lives of migrant farmworkers meant a degree of adjustment. Economic necessity meant women usually had to work in the fields, though some husbands avoided this if possible. Yet the traditional gender norms did not leave Mexican women without power; women at least partially controlled finances in the family, managing family resources to save money and using reproductive labor, like cooking or providing medical assistance to neighbors, to create ties and support their family.⁸⁰⁷ Gender relations in migrants' Southern homes established the structure for the gender division of labor that would be employed, and even altered, within the temporary homes of the Midwest migrant stream.

Despite Mexican and Mexican Americans' sense of home in Texas, Florida, or Mexico, economic necessity, driven by decreasing financial opportunities in the South and racially

⁸⁰³ Adella Martinez, interview by Janet Weaver, October 10, 2006, Iowa Women's Archives, University of Iowa Libraries, Iowa City, Iowa.

⁸⁰⁴ Power, "An Analysis of the Family System," 12, 14.

⁸⁰⁵ Sylvia Garcia, interview by Abner Arauza.

⁸⁰⁶ Lindborg and Ovando, *Five Mexican-American Women in Transition*, 43.

⁸⁰⁷ Loki Thorkelson, "Migrant Concerned about Image," *Redwood Gazette*, August 19, 1975, 1, Social Life and Sports, Mexican American Community in St. Paul Collection, Minnesota State Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota; Adella Martinez, Lupe Serrano, and Julio Serrano, interview by Janet Weaver, October 10, 2006, transcript, 23-24, Iowa Women's Archives, The University of Iowa Libraries, Iowa City, Iowa.

limited opportunities in the North, forced many to migrate *al Norte* year after year. Many Mexican and Mexican Americans, especially those with less education, lacked job opportunities in Texas, Mexico, and Florida. Migrants who grew up in Mexico or Texas remembered their parents owning small stores, growing crops, picking cotton and performing a variety of other jobs in their home towns, but they also remember being poor. Since childhood, Mary Ramos recalled working in the cotton fields to help her family survive, but after her family started migrating to the field up North, her family was able to buy a radio, a record player, soda, and meat, things her family could not afford before entering the migrant stream.⁸⁰⁸ Mechanization and changing economies in farmworkers' Southern homes left many without year-round employment. Families like Mary Ramos' heard and saw migrants' success as migrant farmworkers returned to their Southern homes. In reality, migrant families worked long and hard hours, lived in shacks, experienced discrimination, made meager wages, and often had to save their Northern money to survive Southern winters, yet migrants' apparent success encouraged future migration. Tales of individual migrant families' success in Northern fields combined with former migrants visible success living *al Norte*, made the Midwest an appealing option for struggling Mexican Americans. As some migrants found year-round factory or other employment up North, some migrants even left the stream, frequently between the 1960s and 1980s, with the assistance of local agencies in the Midwest. Despite Mexican and Mexican Americans' established homes in the South, many families found themselves migrating *al Norte* for work.

Migrating *al Norte*

⁸⁰⁸ Lindborg and Ovando, *Five Mexican-American Women in Transition*, 56.

Though migrants' homes in Texas, Florida, or Mexico could hardly be considered luxurious, they were often better equipped than the dilapidated temporary housing they resided in within the Midwest. Growers provided migrants' temporary northern homes and most growers faced limited, if any, housing regulations.⁸⁰⁹ Growers from the 1950s to the 1970s usually converted barns, shacks, or trailers to house large families or several families. For the Perez family who worked in a Roselle, Illinois field, the family of twelve lived in a converted chicken coup located near the grower's unsecured pesticide. In addition, housing usually lacked basic facilities like running water or toilets. An Indiana state report on migrants took note that the Guerra family lived in a toolshed converted to a house for a few families with no indoor plumbing.⁸¹⁰ Because of the camps poor location and the lack of proper facilities, disease and animal or insect infestations became common problems in some migrant camps.⁸¹¹ From as early as the 1930s when John Ortega grew up as a migrant traveling to the Midwest, to the 1960s when the Perez family came to Illinois, Midwest growers provided migrants with unsuitable housing that sometimes caused deaths. In the case of the Perez family, two year-old Ernesto Perez died from exposure to unsecured pesticide stored next to the Perez' shack, while John Ortega blamed his baby sister's death on a drafty migrant house.⁸¹² The farmworkers unstable life as they traveled to various shacks along their migrant route, made it difficult for

⁸⁰⁹ Kathleen Mapes, "'A Special Class of Labor': Mexican (Im)Migrants, Immigration Debate, and Industrial Agriculture in the Rural Midwest," *Labor*, 1:2 (Summer 2004), 65-88; "Summary Meeting on Health Problems Associated with Migrant Workers," Migrant Problem Study Commission II, 1958-1963, 1, Commission on Children: Migrant Workers Study Research Files, 1950-1963, Illinois State Archives, Norton Building, Springfield, Illinois; John Gilbert, "Okay Migrant Housing Law," *Bensenville Register*, August 18, 1968; Charles Hayes, "Migrant Is Local Issue," *Daily Herald*, November 5, 1959.

⁸¹⁰ "Indiana Migrants: Blighted Hopes, Slighted Rights," prepared by the Indiana Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights, (1975), accessed January 22, 2013, <https://www.law.umaryland.edu/marshall/usccr/documents/cr12in24a.pdf>.

⁸¹¹ Lindborg and Ovando, *Five Mexican-American Women in Transition*.

⁸¹² Ortega, "Memoirs of John R. Ortega," 44; "Farmers Rush to Better Quarters for Mexican Workers," *Bensenville Register*, August 11, 1960; Gilbert, "Okay Migrant Housing Law;" Hayes, "Migrant Is Local Issue."

farmworkers to establish a sense of “home” in the Midwest stream. For Jose Martinez who migrated as a child to Michigan, housing was part of a constellation of factors that made him feel as if he did not belong in Michigan, choosing to not make friends in the area. Home was a mindset of an imagined destination, and he knew he would leave shortly.⁸¹³ Whether a single family in a converted barn or a small camp of migrant families in trailers, the poor conditions of migrants’ Northern houses left farmworkers lacking a sense of home in the North.

Family played an important role in how migrants faced the deplorable conditions of migrant housing and made the migrant camps a home away from home. Migrant families tried to create some sense of home in migrant camps, working to clean the dirt in the house and bringing some of the essentials of their Southern house to create a temporary home in the Northern fields. For farmworkers with children, developing a sense of “home” meant recreating family structures that allowed all family members to eat, drink, find warmth, and other basic functions. Family members cooked, found wood to burn in stoves, cleaned the house, and raised children as each housing structure had to serve as a home for a few months in a year.⁸¹⁴ Yet for others, establishing a temporary home was barely a necessity, as Mary Ramos intentionally worked in the fields because she hated tending a shack to make it a temporary “home.”⁸¹⁵ As some farmworkers sought to clean the dirt and create some kind of “home away from home” for their family members, others, especially the few single migrants traveling up the Midwest stream, found it easier to view the Northern fields as a temporary stop.⁸¹⁶ Migrants like Jesus Sanchez and his father argued they did not need pleasant housing because they were

⁸¹³ Rothenberg, *With Theses Hands*, 274.

⁸¹⁴ Adella Martinez, Lupe Serrano, and Julio Serrano, interview by Janet Weaver.

⁸¹⁵ Lindborg and Ovando, *Five Mexican-American Women in Transition*, 60.

⁸¹⁶ Romano, *The Harvest/La Cosecha*.

there to work, accepting a field or the back of a car to sleep.⁸¹⁷ Midwest migrants' family structure in the stream shaped whether migrants' viewed Northern housing accommodations as only a place to sleep until the next work day, or as a place to care for the health, safety, and nutrition of multiple people, especially children. Family meant migrants had to create a place, even if only for a few months in a year, for their children to grow-up, eat, work on homework, and play. Even in the early 2000s, the Lopez and Sanchez families came with their pots and pans and a few basic personal items and started cleaning and arranging their temporary home in Northern fields.⁸¹⁸ Though single adults could easily view the North as a place only for work and sleep, migrant families had to wrestle with dilapidated Northern housing to establish a temporary home for their children.

To survive in the Midwest stream, farmworker families sacrificed in the fields and in their temporary homes, adapting traditional gender norms to perform necessary reproductive and waged labor. Within the private sphere of the home and the public sphere of waged labor, migrants of all ages faced gendered expectations of men, women, and children's roles. Families depended on each members' sacrifice to survive. As one boy recalled of himself and his siblings working in Michigan fields, "We just did it. Working was what we did to survive."⁸¹⁹ When children reached the age of seven or eight, they performed labor equal to adults in the fields.⁸²⁰ For children in the early twentieth century like John Ortega, children rarely attended school since local officials ignored existing truancy laws.⁸²¹ Similarly, an Indiana report on

⁸¹⁷ Jesus Sanchez Jr., interview by Terry L. Shoptaugh, July 25, 1990, transcript, 19, Red River Sugar Beet Grower Records, Northwest Minnesota Historical Center, Livingston Lord Library, Moorhead University, Moorhead, Minnesota.

⁸¹⁸ Romano, *The Harvest/La Cosecha*.

⁸¹⁹ Rothenberg, *With Theses Hands*, 273.

⁸²⁰ Irene Fávila, interview by José Angel Gutiérrez.

⁸²¹ Ortega, "Memoirs of John R. Ortega."

migrants in 1974 noted that the state did not even legally require migrant children attend school as late as the 1970s.⁸²² For Perla Sanchez who migrated with her family to Indiana and Ohio, she missed part of the beginning and end of the school year so she could travel and work with her family.⁸²³ Even when parents did not employ their children in the field because they were too young, children played or slept on nearby blankets because few migrant parents had cheap or free childcare.⁸²⁴ For many Mexican and Mexican Americans working in the Midwest, the entire family either worked or played in the fields.

Since migrants first started coming north to work in the fields, family members expected the entire family to perform some type of labor. For early migrants like Amelia Nava who started working in the fields with her parents during the 1940s when she turned eleven, work in the fields meant she could not attend school or play with kids, receiving only four years of public school education.⁸²⁵ As some migrant parents pushed for their children to receive an education, many children still worked in the fields for most of their life. Beatriz Castillo labored in the fields throughout the 1970s and 1980s, migrating with her family after the school year finished and even working with her family during breaks in college.⁸²⁶ Beatriz stopped migrating only when she found full-time employment, yet even at the time of her interview in 1992, Beatriz still worked in the fields some weekends.⁸²⁷ Family expectations extended beyond young children, with Lidia Curiel taking care of her elderly mother who migrated with

⁸²² "Indiana Migrants: Blighted Hopes, Slighted Rights;" Claras Backes, "The Migrants' Union Comes to Pickle Country," *Chicago Tribune*, October 20, 1968.

⁸²³ Romano, *The Harvest/ La Cosecha*.

⁸²⁴ Adella Martinez, Lupe Serrano, and Julio Serrano, interview by Janet Weaver, 7.

⁸²⁵ Audrey Mackiewicz, "Fremont Woman Helps Because She Remembers," *Sandusky Register*, February 10, 1985, 5:14, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

⁸²⁶ Beatriz Castillo, interview by Terry Shoptaugh, 11-12, 16.

⁸²⁷ *Ibid*, 16.

her daughter.⁸²⁸ At the same time, Lidia's elderly mother occasionally worked in the fields, picking a row or two to help her daughter's family.⁸²⁹ The sacrificial nature of Mexican American culture and life in the stream meant that migrant family members had to support the family, which for many men, women, and children in the stream, meant working in the fields or the home.

Though all family members often labored in the fields regardless of sex, the gender division of labor played a more significant role in the reproductive labor of the home. The gender and even age division of labor provided farmworkers with a way to manage their lives in the stream. Parents expected older children to help out and be a good example for younger siblings.⁸³⁰ Young girls took on the domestic role of mother to allow their own mother to work in the field, with older girls taking on roles with greater responsibility, like cooking and taking care of their younger siblings. One woman in the Western stream, Irene Fávila, recalled her mother cooked and prepared items each day for all the children to eat, and that she, at the age of six, had to feed her younger siblings as her mother worked in the field.⁸³¹ Some women cooked breakfast, lunch, and dinner, which they brought out to the workers in the field, allowing field workers to take a much needed meal break before going back to work.⁸³² Women who grew up as migrants remember girls helping more around the house than boys: cooking, cleaning, and baking, while boys did other chores such as collecting firewood. However, all older children cared for younger siblings.⁸³³ In addition, migrants remember older boys taking caring of

⁸²⁸ Lindborg and Ovando, *Five Mexican-American Women in Transition*, 47.

⁸²⁹ Ibid.

⁸³⁰ Ibid, 64.

⁸³¹ Irene Fávila, interview by José Angel Gutiérrez.

⁸³² Adella Martinez, Lupe Serrano, and Julio Serrano, interview by Janet Weaver.

⁸³³ Lindborg and Ovando, *Five Mexican-American Women in Transition*, 26-27, 42; Ortega, "Memoirs of John R. Ortega.

younger sisters as guardians and protectors of sisters' sexuality as older girls often took on motherly roles looking after younger sibling.⁸³⁴ Gendered roles became so engrained that one migrant woman, Mercedes, remembered feeling like an adult woman at the young age of twelve because she could accomplish many of the tasks adult women performed such as washing, cooking, and taking care of children.⁸³⁵ Migrants partially established a "home" in the temporary houses of the North by maintaining their family structure through the maintenance of the gender division of labor, using norms as a basis for their adaptation to work and housing demands.

For the women that raised their children, cooked, and cleaned the shacks they temporarily called home, the fields were either an added chore or a freedom from the frustrations of maintaining a shack. A much younger migrant, Mary, stated, "I've always worked in the fields, too. A woman doesn't have to, just if she wants to, but she usually does."⁸³⁶ Hating to only tend to a house in the shacks provided by growers and raise two children, Mary figured it better to help her family financially by working with her husband in the fields.⁸³⁷ Another migrant woman, much older than Mary who eventually settled in Michigan, willingly labored in the fields though her husband felt that as a man he should be the main worker.⁸³⁸ Both Mary and the older migrant woman showed a willingness to work outside the confines of the home, in the fields, even when their husbands did not feel it necessary. These women understood that their family's survival, especially when their family returned to their Southern homes, depended on the income made in the fields. Migrant women's desire to

⁸³⁴ Irene Fávila, interview by José Angel Gutiérrez.

⁸³⁵ Lindborg and Ovando, *Five Mexican-American Women in Transition*, 69.

⁸³⁶ *Ibid.*, 60.

⁸³⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸³⁸ *Ibid.*, 38.

financially support their families, notably in the case of Mary, demonstrated a consciousness to work outside the reproductive labor roles assigned to women. Mary specifically saw herself not only in terms of her role in the house, performing reproductive labor, but also as a paid worker. In addition, Mary disregarded her Northern shack as a home worth caring for, instead seeking to support her family through other means. Whether supporting the family through paid labor in the fields or reproductive labor in the home, farmworker women worked to establish a home for their family.

Struggling to create a physical “home” in the Midwest, farmworkers also struggled with cultural and physical isolation in some Midwest towns and cities, relying on any local migrant community to establish a sense of belonging. For the many migrants who traveled within crews, lack of automobiles left migrants dependent on growers and crew leaders for transportation into local cities. This physical isolation, though confining migrants to a small area with other Mexican American migrants, also meant that they could not integrate themselves in the local community or create the necessary ties to leave the stream and establish local acceptance of a culturally different population. In contrast to the Western stream where farmworkers likely migrated to areas with nearby Mexican American communities, Midwest migrant workers were often culturally different in many of the rural fields of the Midwest. When reaching local cities and towns, migrants often felt out of place, and sometimes, unwanted. Like the example of Jose Martinez, migrant children were outsiders in Midwest communities, facing indifference from the school system, if not hostility from teachers and fellow students. Mexican American groups like La Raza in Wisconsin, pressured schools to do more than place migrants’ education in the hands of one overworked Mexican American teacher. Yet schools did not always listen, with one Wisconsin principal arguing she did not

need to solve the fact that the migrant stream left many migrant students behind on their education.⁸³⁹ For John Ortega, growing up in the stream meant language, culture, and money made him feel different from other local children, leading him to avoid eating his traditional Mexican lunch around his classmates.⁸⁴⁰ Yet, some migrants and Northern residents tried to create better ties between the farmworkers and local community. In Redwood Falls, Minnesota, the Migrant Parent Council organized a celebration with Mexican musicians, a large piñata, and traditional Mexican dishes like frijoles and enchiladas to share Mexican American culture with the Anglo residents of Redwood Falls.⁸⁴¹ These cultural exchange events, with migrant women using their reproductive role of food preparation to create important community ties, provided rural Midwest towns that had no strong Mexican community with an avenue to learn about Mexican American culture. Few rural areas had preexisting Mexican communities as previous immigrants went to larger cities such as Chicago, Illinois or St. Paul, Minnesota, or slightly smaller cities such as Cooks Point, Iowa, where railroad and industrial opportunities drew early Mexican and Mexican American immigrants.⁸⁴² For the many migrants who followed the Midwest stream to the fields of small farming towns, migrants struggled against cultural and physical isolation.

Cultural differences made Mexican American migrants' cultural isolation in the Midwest communities where they worked, more pronounced. For the migrants outside urban

⁸³⁹ Project self help for settled out migrants, 4:49, La Raza, Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin.

⁸⁴⁰ John Ortega, "Memoirs of John R. Ortega."

⁸⁴¹ Lori Thorkelson, "Migrant Concerned about Image."

⁸⁴² Mexican American Community in St. Paul Collections, Minnesota State Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota; Grace Nunez, "Voices of a Different Color: An Oral History of Eastern Iowa Mexican American Women," (paper, University of Iowa- School of Journalism and Mass Communication, 1993), 5, University Iowa Women's Archives, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa; Dionicio Nodín Valdés, *Barrios Norteños: St. Paul and Midwestern Mexican Communities in the Twentieth Century*, (University of Texas Press, 2000), 137.

cultural havens like Chicago or St. Paul where large numbers of Mexican Americans lived, simple things like food proved difficult. Sylvia Garcia noted that when leaving the migrant stream to live in Moorhead, Minnesota, her family in Texas would mail chili peppers, jalapeños, and other ingredients because she could not find them in local stores.⁸⁴³ Sylvia mentioned food several times as an important component of Mexican culture that she tried to maintain for her children growing up in a culturally different community.⁸⁴⁴ Though Moorhead, Minnesota became her family's new home, Silvia, who was born and raised in Crystal City, Texas, and her husband, Israel, a native of Mexico, struggled with the notion of Moorhead, Minnesota as their home, even though their children who were raised in the area felt comfortable.⁸⁴⁵ Similarly for John Ortega's father, who came to the United States in the early twentieth century, a Mexican radio station provided an important tie to his old home in Mexico.⁸⁴⁶ As some younger generations created a place for themselves *al Norte*, many migrants and ex-migrants like Silvia, Israel, and Ortega's father remained tied to their Southern homes because of extended family and Mexican American culture.

As some farmworkers dreamed of the South, other migrants sought out Mexican American culture in the Midwest. John Ortega's family always took their day off of work to visit any other Mexican Americans in the area, curbing their cultural isolation while living in the stream.⁸⁴⁷ For migrant farmworkers living near larger cities, local Mexicans provided a cultural haven, especially in the 1960s and 1970s when the Civil Rights and Chicano Movements encouraged the establishments of numerous cultural organizations. The Mexican

⁸⁴³ Sylvia Garcia, interview by Abner Arauza.

⁸⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁴⁶ Ortega, "Memoirs of John R. Ortega," 57.

⁸⁴⁷ Ibid, 54

American community of St. Paul, Minnesota created a Mexican American Cultural Center by the 1970s which provided any nearby migrants or ex-migrants with an important tie to Mexican American culture. Smaller cities like DeKalb, Illinois, where only a few Mexican Americans resided after leaving the stream in the 1970s, had no cultural centers to support the Mexican American community of local and ex-migrants.⁸⁴⁸ Some of these smaller cities eventually provided some cultural havens after some farmworkers left the stream, such as when the Balli family established a Mexican restaurant in DeKalb, Illinois.⁸⁴⁹ Few Midwest cities and towns provided a sense of “home” for migrants since they lacked the Mexican American culture, community, and sense of belonging important for establishing a home.

Barrios and Migrants

The farmworkers who migrated between their Southern homes and the temporary shacks of the North or who established homes in the North, had to negotiate between their sense of home in the South and the opportunities of the North. Farmworkers’ Southern *colonias* and *barrios*, though usually located within Anglo-controlled cities, still provided a cultural haven for migrants. The Mexican American residents of Crystal City, Texas organized to win council seats in the late 1960s and early 1970s because of Mexican Americans lack of

⁸⁴⁸ *Mexican-American Cultural and Educational Center*, bulletin 4, August 1973, Mexican American Cultural and Educational Center Records, 1971-1974, Mexican American Community in St. Paul Collections, Minnesota State Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota; Luis Balli, interview by George Gutierrez, March 24, 1981, Oral History Collection: Town Gown Relations in DeKalb, 1955-1980, Regional History Center, Founders Memorial Library, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois.

⁸⁴⁹ Luis Balli, interview by George Gutierrez, 5-7.

representation in a city with a large Mexican population.⁸⁵⁰ Despite facing racism and discrimination in their Southern homes, farmworkers from Crystal City still had the advantage of a large Mexican American population to organize for change. Though racism and the growing public fear of undocumented immigration brought backlash even in the Southern and Western parts of the United States, the existence of Southern and Western *colonias* and *barrios* still provided a cultural refuge for Mexican American.

In contrast to Southern *barrios*' homogeneous population, the Midwest contained anything from rural communities with limited opportunities and no Hispanic residents to urban areas with a Mexican American *barrio* and numerous job opportunities. The mixture of old and new, *colonias* and *barrios*, and Mexican American and Anglo communities within the North made the farmworker experience in the Midwest stream markedly different than in Southern and even Western cities where larger and more historical Mexican American and Mexican communities existed. Migrants who left the stream to live in the Midwest often did so because of the support of local organizations that offered assistance with housing and jobs, like in DeKalb, Illinois and St. Paul, Minnesota. Yet these aid groups did not always exist in cities with a preexisting Mexican American communities. The first few farmworkers who left the stream with the assistance of some local agencies, created a home in an Anglo-dominated community, ultimately encouraging others to live in the area. In the case of DeKalb, Illinois, this meant a burgeoning community after Luis Balli and Benito Alamia's families left the stream in 1967 and 1968. These pioneers were some of the first Mexican American migrants to live in the area, and through their entrepreneurship they developed a few cultural institutions including restaurants and eventually a grocery store that served future Mexican Americans that

⁸⁵⁰ Marc Simon Rodriguez, *The Tejano Diaspora: Mexican Americanism of Ethnic Politics in Texas and Wisconsin* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 60-125.

came to live in the city.⁸⁵¹ In contrast, other Midwest cities such as St. Paul, had extensive Mexican American communities that supported each other, including day care centers and even organizations that came out of the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s like the Brown Berets.⁸⁵² The variety of environments in the Midwest meant migrants could either create for their families a home in the Midwest, or struggle to not feel isolated from Midwest culture, land, and people.

Activists during the 1960s and 1970s and scholars of Mexican American and Chicano culture, focused heavily on the Southwest region as the heart of Mexican and Mexican American culture, ultimately ignoring the Midwest region where pockets of Mexican Americans resided. Though the Southwest region of the United States had the distinction of continual Mexican presence before the current United States borders were established, the Midwest did not have any significant Mexican immigrants until the early 20th century. Despite the early waves of immigrants, the early Mexican and Mexican American residents of the Midwest remained patchy and centered in urban centers. The overall perception of the Midwest as non-Hispanic meant that the local and national community saw Midwest Mexican Americans as immigrant outsiders even if families lived in the Midwest for generations.⁸⁵³ The influx and subsequent media attention on undocumented Mexicans encouraged the perception that all Mexican Americans in the Midwest were outsiders. The public notion that Mexicans outside the Southwest were foreign, thwarted farmworkers' efforts to comfortably create a home for themselves in the Midwest as they traveled in the stream and sometimes left the stream to live in the North.⁸⁵⁴

⁸⁵¹ Luis Balli, interview by George Gutierrez.

⁸⁵² Mexican American Community in St. Paul Collection.

⁸⁵³ Valdés, *Barrios Norteños*, 249-250.

⁸⁵⁴ Gonzales, "Aztlán in the Midwest and other Counter-Narratives Revealed," 18-19.

Outside the pockets of Mexican Americans in the Midwest, out-migrating farmworkers also blended into small and large Northern urban centers. The Midwest often drew migrant farmworkers to the area for agricultural employment, but Midwest urban centers also served as a draw to the region especially for migrants that sought to leave the stream. St. Paul, Minnesota; Chicago, Illinois; and Madison, Wisconsin offered industrial employment. In Chicago, various industrial employment opportunities existed, including railroad work earlier in the twentieth century and steel work in the later half of the twentieth century.⁸⁵⁵ In Madison and Milwaukee, Wisconsin, large numbers of migrants from Crystal City, Texas left the stream to live in Wisconsin. The transmission of culture and ideas to Wisconsin, including the activist ideology of Crystal City residents, came from the continuation of the migrant stream from Crystal City to Wisconsin.⁸⁵⁶ In this case, the continuation of the migrant stream between these two points encouraged Mexican American activism in both Crystal City, Texas and Madison and Milwaukee, Wisconsin. In contrast, large and small urban centers with early Mexican populations provided migrants and new Mexican residents with cultural institutions, with St. Paul having Mexican American cultural centers and Mexican American day care centers, and Chicago had grocers and neighborhood communities.⁸⁵⁷ Yet, the existence of cultural centers in larger urban cities and industrial employment options did not prevent migrants from leaving the stream and landing in urban ghettos. Northern Mexican Americans and Anglos feared that migrants who left the stream would become another member of the Midwest urban ghetto as Midwest industrial employment, though year-round and more remunerative than field work, did

⁸⁵⁵ For Immediate Release-Save Our Jobs Committee, July 31, 1980, 2:11, Frank and Beatrice Lumpkin Papers, 1949-2013, Chicago History Museum, Research Center, Chicago, Illinois.

⁸⁵⁶ Rodriguez, *The Tejano Diaspora*.

⁸⁵⁷ Mexican American Community in St. Paul Collection; Dennis Nodin Valdes, *Al Norte: Agricultural Workers in the Great Lakes Region, 1917-1970* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991); Norris, *North for the Harvest*.

not provide enough for decent housing in urban centers. The Hermosillo family, who left the stream on the outskirts of Chicago, lived in a shack located near a sewage canal which they rented for ten dollars a month.⁸⁵⁸ Though leaving the stream, the Hermosillo family's living conditions hardly improved from the shacks in the fields. Though Carmen Hermosillo's employment as a janitor allowed for his family's stable presence in the Midwest, their shack hardly served as a stable home. Like the Hermosillo family, many ex-migrants lived in slums, so much so that the Wisconsin's United Migrant Opportunity Services, Inc. struggled to remedy it through assistance for migrants transitioning out of the stream.⁸⁵⁹ For the former migrant farmworkers drawn to year-round employment in the urban Midwest, large cities offered the possibility of a Mexican American community in addition to the disadvantage of urban decay and poverty.

The opportunities of the Midwest in the last half of the twentieth century would ultimately combine with the social movements of the time to reshape the gender dimensions of ex-farmworker families. Ex-farmworkers who found a remunerative urban job that provided for their family, usually led to the renegotiation of gender norms. With more remunerative jobs, women could stay in the private realm of the home with men in the public realm of paid employment. However, not many ex-farmworkers found high paying jobs. Amelia Nava spent a few years away from the agricultural fields of the Midwest, but as her family grew she returned to the fields around her new home in Tiffin, Ohio to help support her family as her

⁸⁵⁸ Julie Ann Lyman, "A Shack on a Canal: Seven Who Care," *Chicago Tribune*, March 8, 1964.

⁸⁵⁹ Statement of Farmworker Involvement and Board Participation, UMOS Inc. FY 1974-1975, United Migrant Opportunity Services, Inc., United Migrant Opportunity Services, Inc., Milwaukee Area Research Center, UW-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

husband continued to work in a Bettsville, Ohio factory.⁸⁶⁰ Year-round industrial employment did not guarantee ex-farmworkers ability to return permanently to traditional gender roles.

At the same time the Midwest drew migrants to the region for year-round employment, the Feminist movement altered farmworker and former farmworker's perception of reproductive labor and remunerated employment. Though some migrants held relatively traditional views about men and women's roles in the public and private spheres, some demonstrated a desire for change. Amelia specifically argued that she should have greater control over the finances as she was in charge of the private realm of the home and therefore knew the financial needs of the household.⁸⁶¹ She then went on to talk about how a man should be faithful to a woman as she is to him, not only because of all the cooking and cleaning she did in the house, but also because cheating meant he would spend money on another woman.⁸⁶² For Amelia, traditional gender norms provided justification for changing power relationships between husband and wife, arguing her reproductive labor gave her the right to hold financial power and to expect her husband's fidelity. Not just with women, male migrants after the 1960s and 1970s showed a changing perspective on gender relations. A migrant in the Midwest stream, Fernando Cuevas' family power structure changed when he accepted a democratic voting structure to handle important decisions that affected the entire family.⁸⁶³ For farmworkers living in the stream or creating a home in the North, the Feminist Movement forced a renegotiation of gender roles. Former migrants struggled to find a place in the Midwest where they could find year-round employment and a Mexican American community that made

⁸⁶⁰ Mackiewicz, "Fremont Woman Helps Because She Remembers."

⁸⁶¹ Lindborg and Ovando, *Mexican-American Cultural and Educational Center Women in Transition*, 66.

⁸⁶² *Ibid*, 68.

⁸⁶³ W.K. Barger and Ernesto M. Reza, *The Farm Labor Movement in the Midwest: Social Change and Adaptation among Migrant Farmworkers* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1994), 104.

them feel at home; but just as they were in the Midwest stream, ex-farmworkers also struggled to adjust their family dynamics to address the changing perceptions of gender and the gender division of labor.

Conclusion

As the fervor of the Chicano Movement, like the other social movement of the 1960s and 1970s, slowly died away, Mexican American organizations disappeared and opposition to programs that supported social movements and migrant legislation increased. In the Midwest, migrant and ex-migrants faced continual discrimination from local white elites as urban renewal destroyed some *barrios*.⁸⁶⁴ In addition, Midwesterners, like the rest of the public in the United States, were filled with rampant fear about undocumented immigrants, as people around the nation portrayed and viewed all ethnic Hispanics as undocumented persons. Simultaneously, the national government decreased funding for important programs, leading to the decline of programs and laws that addressed discrimination in the nation. This led to diminished support for many of the Mexican American cultural institutions.⁸⁶⁵ Financial and social changes led to St. Paul's Mexican American day care center, cultural centers, and numerous Mexican American organizations like the Brown Berets, to disappear, leaving only a handful of organizations that supported Mexican American culture by the late 1990s.⁸⁶⁶ In addition, urban renewal destroyed vibrant Mexican American communities in Cooks Point,

⁸⁶⁴ Valdés, *Barrios Norteños*, 174.

⁸⁶⁵ Mize and Swords, *Consuming Mexican Labor*, 91-93.

⁸⁶⁶ Mexican American Community in St. Paul Collection.

Iowa and St. Paul, Minnesota.⁸⁶⁷ Changes in agriculture altered migrant routes, forcing the closure of aid organizations like DeKalb's Migrant Ministry, which combined with dwindling government funding and public support for legislation and regulations, meant migrants in the 1980s and 1990s received little in the way of assistance.⁸⁶⁸ All the changes of the 1980s and 1990s combined to complicate migrant and former migrants' sense of home in the Midwest.

The Mexican and Mexican American migrants who traveled to the Midwest lived between two worlds as they migrated *al Norte* for work. The Mexican and Mexican Americans who migrated to the Midwest traveled between their Southern homes where family, friends, and a Mexican community existed, to work and sometimes live in the North where farmworkers would meet either cultural isolation and hostility or a supportive Mexican American community. Unlike the East Coast stream, migrants in the Midwest had families to divide waged and reproductive labor roles in the stream, yet family did not prevent some farmworkers from feeling culturally isolated in many parts of the Midwest. In contrast to the Western stream that provided migrants an opportunity to be among Mexican Americans, many in the Midwest public viewed Mexican Americans as "immigrants" and "outsiders." For both Sylvia Garcia and John Ortega's families, job opportunities drew them *al Norte* and allowed them to survive in their Northern homes and communities, and in the case of the Garcia family, to establish a permanent year-round home up North. For the farmworkers who traveled up and down the Midwest migrant stream, home, family, and identity were an important part of their life and survival strategies in the stream; but even as some created for themselves a permanent home in the Midwest, the migrant identity of living and working between two worlds would

⁸⁶⁷ Valdés, *Barrios Norteños*, 174.

⁸⁶⁸ Greg Schell, "Farmworker Exceptionalism Under the Law: How the Legal System Contributes to Farmworker Poverty and Powerlessness," in *The Human Cost of Food: Farmworkers' Lives, Labor, and Advocacy*, eds. Charles D. Thompson, Jr. and Melinda F. Wiggins (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 154.

forever influence them. To live between these two worlds, migrants and former migrants' attempted to create a home for their families, adjusting familial roles to establish a temporary or permanent home in the North. Even when farmworkers eventually viewed their Northern house as home, many still identified if not worked, as migrant farmworkers throughout their life. As Jose Martinez stated of growing up as a migrant traveling from Texas to the fields of Michigan, "Still, I don't think I'll ever stop being a migrant. Once you're a migrant, you're a migrant for the rest of your life, whether or not you travel from place to place, working the fields. Even when I have a degree, I'll still be a migrant, on the inside anyways."⁸⁶⁹

⁸⁶⁹ Rothenberg, *With These Hands*, 276.

CONCLUSION

THINKING OUTSIDE PYRAMIDS AND PLATES:

MIGRANT FARMWORKERS SINCE 1993

“I think if more people knew about farmworkers,
Maybe things would be different.”⁸⁷⁰
Jose Martinez

“Agriculture’s Cynical Answer to Farm Workers’ Poverty” (1999), “Migrant Housing Reported to be Dwindling in Iowa” (2004), “Migrants’ Dry Season; Crops Falter as Gas, Immigration Woes Shrink Workforce” (2006), “Home is Where the Harvest is; For Juan De La Cruz, Illinois Keeps Calling” (2007), “Registering Farmworkers’ Housing Riles Landlord” (2011).⁸⁷¹ Well into the twenty-first century, local newspapers contained articles about migrant farmworkers’ conditions that continued to resemble that of the early and mid twentieth century. The migrants that traveled to the Midwest between 1960 and 1993 came at a time of increasing

⁸⁷⁰ Daniel Rothenberg, *With These Hands: The Hidden World of Migrant Farmworkers* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1998), 275.

⁸⁷¹ Daniel Rothenberg, “Agriculture’s Cynical Answer to Farm Workers’ Poverty,” *Chicago Tribune*, November 4, 1999, accessed August 2014, <http://www.ulib.niu.edu:2205/chicagotribune/docview/418976356/CEED48455F284A3EPQ/1?accountid=12846>; “Migrant Housing Reported to be Dwindling in Iowa,” *Chicago Tribune*, July 25, 2004, accessed August 2014, <http://www.ulib.niu.edu:2205/chicagotribune/docview/420081436/9C8B2A9ED2AC4F5CPQ/1?accountid=12846>; Ray Quintanilla, “Migrants’ Dry Season; Crops Falter as Gas, Immigration Woes Shrink Workforce,” *Chicago Tribune* (Chicagoland Final Edition), September 24, 2006, accessed September 2014, <http://www.ulib.niu.edu:2205/chicagotribune/docview/420520625/202E91A116AA4254PQ/1?accountid=1284>; “Home Is Where the Harvest Is; For Juan De La Cruz, Illinois Keeps Calling,” *Chicago Tribune*, October 21, 2007, accessed August 2014, <http://www.ulib.niu.edu:2205/chicagotribune/docview/420654255/F3BF794D75834469PQ/1?accountid=1284>; “Registering Farmworker’ Housing Riles Landlord,” *Chicago Tribune*, July 31, 2011, accessed August 2014, <http://www.ulib.niu.edu:2205/chicagotribune/docview/880092358/2F1CDC0413AB42FAPQ/1?accountid=12846>.

and then decreasing social activism and awareness that was apparent in newspaper articles and other media. Though national and state governments, some aid organizations, many growers, as well as agricultural corporations did not wish to drastically alter the food pyramid, many in the public pushed for some type of change for farmworkers. The changes people demanded during this era of awareness and activism often exemplified what they reacted to, either the conditions of poverty depicted in Edward R. Murrow's *Harvest of Shame* or the United Farm Worker's call to empower farm laborer. The types of programs and legislation developed during this era ultimately shaped the experience of migrant farmworkers in the Midwest stream as some migrants were able to settle in the Midwest, some migrant children received an improved education, and some farm laborers unionized. For the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC), public sympathy was critical to transform the power dynamics in at least two crops. Though a small success in comparison to the Midwest as a whole, FLOC's success altered a small part of the food pyramid as some growers discovered their common position with migrants against a larger system of power.

Yet as the era of activism and aid diminished, so too did the momentum for change. For this reason, the different features that made up the Midwest stream in the 1960s to the 1990s: migrant families, state and national governments, agribusinesses, gender dynamics in the stream, unions, aid societies, the public, and growers, remained relatively in the same position within the pyramid. Some state and national migrants developed aid programs, some migrants were unionized, some growers worked with migrants, and some within the public supported aid organizations or farmworker empowerment, but no massive alteration of the entire food pyramid occurred. Since the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the almost pyramidal power structure with farmworkers on the bottom, struggling growers and

the misinformed public in the middle, and powerful agribusinesses on the top, continues within the Midwest migrant stream.

Compounding the decreasing interest in migrants' plight in the 1990s was the changes in the structure of the migrant stream that made it more difficult to improve migrants' lives after the implementation of NAFTA in 1993. A struggling Mexican economy, faltering in part because of the United States policies and increasingly stringent United States border controls, forced primarily Mexican males to stay for long periods of time in the United States.⁸⁷² Many Midwest growers came to rely on international laborers through the H-2(A) program or undocumented workers, including the Eckert fruit farm in Illinois which employed primarily H-2(A) workers in the 1990s and early 2000s.⁸⁷³ The increasing internationalization of laborers failed to bring the same sympathy that news article and specials about men, women, and children in the Midwest stream brought during the 1960s to the 1990s, sympathy that was so critical to public awareness and activism that brought about aid and legislation. At the Eckert farm, both Martin Mauricio who managed the H-2(A) workers and one of the workers, Jose Martinez, both lived between two worlds, working in Illinois and living occasionally with their families in Mexico. Mauricio had been working in the United States in some capacity since 1989, yet he met a woman in Mexico and got married by 1999, returning to Mexico every year

⁸⁷² Remonda Bensabat Kleinberg, "Strategic Alliances: State-Business Relations in Mexico under Neo-Liberalism and Crisis," *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, 18:1 (January 1999), 71-87; Carol Zabin, "U.S.-Mexico Economic Integration: Labor Relations and the Organization of Work in California and Baja California Agriculture," *Economic Geography*, 73, no. 3 (July 1997), 337-355; Francesca Coin, "Pickles and Pickets after NAFTA: Globalization, Agribusiness, the US-Mexico Food Chain, and Farm-worker Struggles in North Carolina," (Ph.D. dissertation, Georgia State University, 2007); Kelly Lytle Hernández, *Migra!: A History of the U.S. Border Patrol* (Oakland: University of California Press), 2010.

⁸⁷³ Martin Mauricio, interview by Mark DePue, July 20, 2008, transcript, 46, Agriculture in the Modern Era, Agriculture in Illinois, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library & Museum, accessed August 2014, <http://www.illinois.gov/alplm/library/collections/oralhistory/agriculture/Pages/default.aspx>; Jose Martinez, interview by Mark DePue, July 31, 2008, transcript, 5, Agriculture in the Modern Era, Agriculture in Illinois, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library & Museum, accessed August 2014, <http://www.illinois.gov/alplm/library/collections/oralhistory/agriculture/Pages/default.aspx>, 5.

for a few months to be with his family.⁸⁷⁴ Men like Mauricio struggled in the fields without their families because of the masculine nature of immigration from Mexico, because they still desired to permanently settle in Mexico, or because of the difficulty Mexican families had in entering the United States.⁸⁷⁵ Though the Midwest remains family oriented to a greater degree than other streams, the Midwest notably changed. While migrants in the mid-twentieth century struggled living transcultural lives between their homes in Texas, Florida, or Mexico and the Midwest fields, at the turn of the century, the Midwest migrant stream became increasingly single Mexican and Central American men working alongside migrant families.

National government policies and international relations in the late twentieth century internationalized the farmworker populous in Midwest states at a time that states' aid budgets shrank and state and cities struggled to handle a diverse population. Migrants in the Midwest in the last half of the twentieth century faced a bureaucratic structure that did not wish to alter the system of power, but rather create programs that addressed only certain issues within the stream. National governments and international policies continued to influence the structure of power, with state governments enacting policies to react to the changing environment caused by national policies. Part of the increase in Mexican Americans in the rural Midwest reflected the aid migrants received during the 1960s to the 1990s. The growing national Spanish-speaking population at the turn of the century came at a time of public backlash against Mexicans, government spending, and equality initiatives.⁸⁷⁶ Like before NAFTA, Spanish speakers in the Midwest stream received educational opportunities and some assistance, but

⁸⁷⁴ Martin Mauricio, interview by Mark DePue; Jose Martinez, interview by Mark DePue.

⁸⁷⁵ Ruben Martinez, *Crossing Over: A Mexican Family on the Migrant Stream* (New York: Picador A Metropolitan Book Henry Holt and Company, 2001), 46-47, 88-89.

⁸⁷⁶ Bradford Martin, *The Other Eighties: A Secret History of America in the Age of Reagan* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2011); Daniel J. Tichenor, *Dividing Lines: The Politics of Immigration Control in America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

also discrimination as state governments relegated the Spanish Speaking migrants as “other.” The growing Hispanic population in 1990s Willmar, Minnesota occurred because of educational and job opportunities in the community, but a newspaper reported some locals believed the influx happened because of the state’s lenient and generous welfare program.⁸⁷⁷ This view exemplified anti-immigrant sentiments that characterized the public belief that migrants and immigrants abused the welfare system, despite the fact that many migrants struggled managing the aid system. Though Hispanics could receive state welfare assistance, many felt the sting of anti-immigrant sentiment, as an ex-migrant noted locals stared at him and his family when they spoke Spanish in a store and as other former migrants reported being denied housing or jobs because of their ethnicity and former migratory status.⁸⁷⁸ Midwest state and city governments faced larger numbers of Hispanic immigrants who increased the cultural stresses in cities and states as some in the public called for an English speaking America and fewer benefits for questionably legal residents at the same time public schools faced pressure to educate Spanish speaking children. Despite the increasing number of Mexican Americans in the Midwest, many still disregard the Midwest as a Latino area. Though migrant workers are more likely to encounter a Mexican American community in the rural Midwest, many migrants and Mexican Americans still struggle to be accepted in the Midwest. The later changes in Midwest demographics shifted how other parties in the food pyramid interacted with each other, as cities and states struggled to adapt to a changing population with a different language and culture and as current migrant farmworkers were more likely to travel to rural cities with a Hispanic community.

⁸⁷⁷ Roger Worthington, “Hispanics Drawn to Minnesota: More Farmworkers from Texas Coming and Staying,” *Chicago Tribune*, December 24, 1990.

⁸⁷⁸ Worthington, “Hispanics Drawn to Minnesota.”

As the Hispanic population increased in the Midwest, agricultural corporate power continued to grow. In the Midwest and the nation, powerful agribusinesses forced more and more growers to “get big or get out” leading to a significant reduction in growers in the Midwest at the turn of the twenty-first century and decreasing migrants’ employment options in the Midwest.⁸⁷⁹ By the turn of the twenty-first century, the United States public became interested in their food, with public interest in farmer’s markets and organic growers as more of the public became aware of corporate power and what they ate. Similarly, corporate power has arguably grown, but few academics explored its effect on the food pyramid. The public support of FLOC during this era of activism created a bond between some growers and migrants as tomato and pickle growers around Ohio eventually realized how they could benefit from working with migrants to realign the system of power. Yet corporations continued to consolidate their power in the 1990s and afterwards as they patented genetically modified seed to force all growers to pay exorbitant prices for seed each year.⁸⁸⁰ Corporations’ power after the 1990s was apparent even in the Department of Agriculture’s shift from a Food Pyramid to a Food Plate. The Department of Agriculture’s food pyramid previously had clear divisions, which the Department replaced with a plate where almost all groups looked evenly distributed. The plate speaks to hopes by those on the top of the food pyramid that few in the public would understand the system of power, accepting instead that various parties have equal influence over what people eat. Though more and more recent books, documentaries, and articles analyze

⁸⁷⁹ *Change in Number of Farms, 1997-2002, the National Agricultural Workers Survey*, prepared by Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, accessed April 2015, <http://www.doleta.gov/agworker/naws.cfm#s-regions>.

⁸⁸⁰ Erik Sherman, “Supreme Court sides with Monsanto on seed suit,” CBS News, May 13, 2013, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/supreme-court-sides-with-monsanto-on-seed-suit/>.

where our food comes from in terms of corporate influence, government decisions, and grower rights, few in the public talked extensively about farmworkers in the fields.⁸⁸¹

The recent interest in what we eat instead of who labors in the fields, exemplified the decreasing activism and concern regarding migrant farmworkers in the 1990s. After the 1990s, migrants disappeared from the public's perception of the land, with one Village Board in Lake in the Hills apparently unaware of a local old farmhouse that housed migrants nearby. Not only unaware they came to the community, the village zoning board also denied the grower's request to build a "ranch-style bunk house" for the approximate ten migrants that came to work at the farm because as the Huntley Mayor, Charles Becker claimed, "[the housing was] incompatible and will adversely impact the future residential and commercial uses in the area."⁸⁸² Ignored by some Midwest communities, growers forced other migrants to live in local communities as growers tried to disconnect migrant poverty from their farm. One newspaper article in 2004 noted how Zenon and Isidra Zuniga's family, as well as their neighbors the Canter family, lived in an off-farm housing complex near Des Moines, Iowa.⁸⁸³ Both families paid rent for a place that had bats, no hot water, and no working smoke detector.⁸⁸⁴ Farmworkers' working and living conditions hardly improved since the 1990s, even when they lived off the farm. The public's lack of interest and acknowledgement of farmworkers in

⁸⁸¹ Raj Patel, *Stuffed and Starved: The Hidden Battle for the World Food System* (New York: Melville House Publishing, 2008); Mark Winne, *Closing the Food Gap: Resetting the Table in the Land of Plenty* (Boston: Beacon Press), 2008; Eric Schlosser, *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal* (New York: First Mariner Books), 2001; *Food, Inc.*, directed by Robert Kenner (New York: Magnolia Pictures, 2008), DVD; *Forks Over Knives*, directed by Lee Fulkerson (Monica Beach Media, 2011), DV. Interesting a few recent books actually include the role of farmworkers in the narrative: Robert Gottlieb and Anupama Joshi, *Food Justice: Food, Health, and the Environment* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2010).

⁸⁸² Tim Kane, "Village Allows New Quarters for Migrant Workers Lake in the Hills Oak Tree Farm Bid," *Chicago Tribune*, McHenry County edition, January 14, 2000.

⁸⁸³ "Migrant Housing Reported to Be Dwindling in Iowa."

⁸⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

Midwest fields, coupled with growers' effort to disconnect stooped workers with their farms, ultimately led to migrants disappearing from the public's imagination.

The public's unwillingness to see migrants in the fields, mirrored the Midwest public's disinterest in migrants. Many aid organizations that offered support for migrants in the Midwest either totally ceased existence, or local operations closed their doors in the 1990s. Changes in agriculture forced the DeKalb Migrant Ministry and GAP in Minnesota to close their doors, while religious groups like PADRES and Las Hermanas ceased to operate or became significantly less active by the late 1980s.⁸⁸⁵ Though some organizations still exist on a national or state scale, specifically the national Migrant Ministry and United Migrant Opportunity Services in Wisconsin, the diminishing social activism of the public decreased interest in migrants' plight. Instead, public concern since the mid-1990s focused on personal or international issues, with books and documentaries on what is in our food, international agricultural policies, genetically modified food, and animal treatment. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops exemplified a rare interest in agriculture and labor, referring to the power of agricultural corporations in the world, the need for greater grower rights, better access to food, with some discussion on farm labor.⁸⁸⁶ Despite current FLOC and the United Farm Workers (UFW) efforts in addition to books and documentaries about agribusinesses and food safety, the United States public usually ignore documentaries about migrant children

⁸⁸⁵ Ramsey County, Minnesota Telephone Directories, 1991, Minnesota Historical Society, Minnesota State Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota; Lara Medina, *Las Hermanas: Chicana/Latina Religious-Political Activism in the U.S. Catholic Church* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004), 144-145; George Gutierrez, interview by Lucille Aikins, 17, Oral History Collection: Town Gown Relations in DeKalb, 1955-1980, Regional History Center, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois; Richard Edward Martínez, *PADRES: The National Chicano Priest Movement*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), 130.

⁸⁸⁶ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Committee on Domestic Policy, *For I Was Hungry and You Gave Me Food: Catholic Reflections on Food, Farmers, and Farmworkers*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops), 2003.

produced by TV stars or specials on the 50th anniversary of *The Harvest of Shame*.⁸⁸⁷ Though the public is reacting to the recent activism by fast food workers, few if any tied the meager wages and living conditions of fast food workers in the food pyramid with the migrants in the field that harvest the food in the food chain.⁸⁸⁸

The minimal public awareness of agribusiness and the agricultural power structure since 2000, centered more on the connection between growers and corporate interest, than farmworkers. FLOC's radical decision to seek a three party deal between corporations, growers, and farmworkers, exemplified their understanding of the true system of power within the United States, influencing future union actions by themselves and other farmworker unions and altering power relationships in part of the Midwest. Since FLOC's success in the Midwest in the 1980s, the union went to North Carolina during the 1990s where they worked with H-2(A) pickle workers and are currently working with tobacco workers.⁸⁸⁹ Though still doing community building in Ohio, FLOC's move down South characterized the changing agriculture in the Midwest as Ohio diminished in prominence as a tomato producer, and as FLOC had to address the increasing use of H-2(A) workers as growers sought cheaper labor. This shift in focus meant an international shift as well as gender shift as H-2(A) workers are primarily international men, though FLOC recently refocused on unionize families working in tobacco fields, reintroducing the importance of family to FLOC.⁸⁹⁰ Yet since FLOC's Midwest success in the 1980s, few if any attempted to organize Midwest migrants. Though unions moved away

⁸⁸⁷ Byran Pitts, " 'Harvest of Shame' 50 Years Later," CBS, November 24, 2010, accessed August 2015, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/harvest-of-shame-50-years-later/>; *The Harvest/ La Cosecha*, directed by U. Roberto Romano (Globalvision, Romano Film & Photography, Shine Global, 2011), DVD; Farm Labor Organizing Committee, "Reynolds Campaign," accessed September 2015, <http://www.floc.com/wordpress/reynolds-campaign/>; "United Farm Workers," accessed September 2015, <http://www.ufw.org/>.

⁸⁸⁸ Zachary Roth, "Low-wage Workers' Massive Show of Strength," MSNBC, April 15, 2015, accessed August 2015, <http://www.msnbc.com/msnbc/low-wage-workers-plan-massive-show-strength>.

⁸⁸⁹ Coin, "Pickles and Pickets after NAFTA," "Reynolds Campaign."

from organizing Midwest laborers, it was the Midwest union's tactics that shaped union efforts for migrants elsewhere in the country. Since the 1980s, activism drifted South with FLOC and the Coalition of Immokalee Workers who adopted FLOC's strategy, targeting fast food restaurants who bought Florida tomatoes and successfully increasing wages for many Florida tomato pickers in 2005.⁸⁹¹ FLOC's success in Ohio's tomato fields not only changed the structure of the food pyramid for part of the Midwest, but also provided future farmworker unions like the Coalition of Immokalee Workers an important tactic. Now addressing the increased internationalization of farm laborers, a FLOC member commented about why he joined the pickle effort in North Carolina, "I want to change the economic life of Mexico. I want to change farm-labor in the U.S., make sure that our rights are respected."⁸⁹² After the success of FLOC in the Midwest, FLOC and other unions continued in the Southern part of the United States, taking on the increased international nature of the agricultural power structure.

Though the number of growers, the type of crops, and mechanization decreased the number of farmworkers needed in the Midwest, and while national and international policies bring more and more Mexican men to the Midwest for work, the Midwest is still a place of migrant families. The documentary, *The Harvest/La Cosecha*, told the story of several migrant children who worked in the nation's fields. Released in 2011, three migrant children regularly traveled with their family from their homes in Texas and Florida to Michigan, Tennessee, and

⁸⁹⁰ Mark A. Grey and C. Anne Woodrick, "Latinos Have Revitalized Our Community: Mexican Migration and Anglo Responses in Marshalltown, Iowa," in *New Destinations: Mexican Immigration in the United States*, ed. Victor Zúñiga and Rubén Hernández-León (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2005); "Reynolds Campaign," Steven Greenhouse, "Just 13, and Working Risky 12-Hour Shifts in the Tobacco Fields," *New York Times*, September 6, 2014, accessed September 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/07/business/just-13-and-working-risky-12-hour-shifts-in-the-tobacco-fields.html?_r=0.

⁸⁹¹ Silvia Giagnoni, *Fields of Resistance: The Struggle of Florida's Farmworkers for Justice* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2011).

⁸⁹² Coin, "Pickles and Pickets after NAFTA," 165.

Mississippi.⁸⁹³ All three dealt with the stressors of leaving friends, missing school, working dangerous jobs, and worrying about family members. For Perla Sanchez, her family had to travel throughout the Midwest, including Indiana and Ohio, after a family medical emergency delayed the family's regular migrant route.⁸⁹⁴ All three, Perla Sanchez, Victor Huapillo, and Zulema Lopez, hoped for a better future, but understood the importance of helping their family to survive by working in the fields, looking after younger siblings, and helping out in the house.⁸⁹⁵ Like the pre-NAFTA migrant stream, family and gender norms continued in the 1990s and afterwards, serving as an important tool for farmworkers' survival as every person in the family worked together to survive. In the Midwest, Zulema traveled up and down the stream with her family, often working in fields next to single men. While it was common for Zulema to work alongside male workers who likely missed their families down South, Zulema and other migrants in the Midwest, continued to rely on familial relationships to survive the migrant stream.

The Midwest during the era of activism between 1960 and 1990, proved a unique moment and place in time. In an area of family migration during an era of increased interest and activism and an era of financial crises on farms, various parties including growers, farmworkers, agribusinesses, national and state governments, unions, and Catholic aid organizations interacted to adjust the agricultural system of power. The Midwest was an area where national events stimulated change, farmworker unions developed new models for changing the migrant power structure, and gender and family norms shaped migrants' survival strategies in the stream. Though the various groups that shaped the Midwest stream continued

⁸⁹³ *The Harvest/ La Cosecha.*

⁸⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

to influence the stream after 1990, the changing nature of agriculture, national and international policies, and social activism after the 1990s, altered the way these groups interacted in contrast to the mid-1900s. For the Mexican and Mexican American migrants living and working between their Southern homes and the Midwest fields, the mid 1900s was a time of struggle but also hope as unionization and public interest supported some efforts to better their conditions in the stream. Aid alleviated migrants' struggles, but empowerment gave migrants the ability to alter relationships within the pyramid and reshape some power relationships. The pyramidal structure of power placed farmworkers at the bottom of the agricultural system, with growers, the public, governments, and agribusinesses profiting from the labor of farmworkers. In 2011, the Department of Agriculture's replaced its well-known food pyramid eating guide with a plate with very closely sized wedges and a small circle. This choice coincides with public perception of agriculture, with some acknowledgement of the powerful few in agribusinesses with little awareness or interest in the system of power that places growers, the public, and most especially, farmworkers under the control and influence of the elite. As Edward R. Murrow stated in 1960's *Harvest of Shame*, "Must the two to three million migrants who help feed their fellow American work, travel and live under conditions that wrong the dignity of man?"⁸⁹⁶ As almost a response and characteristic of the era of activism in the mid-1900s, organized Mexican and Mexican American migrant farmworkers often sang "*Nosotros Venceremos/We Shall Overcome*."⁸⁹⁷

⁸⁹⁶ Edward R. Murrow, *Harvest of Shame*, directed by Fred W. Friendly, (CBS Report, November 24, 1960), videocassette.

⁸⁹⁷ George Rivera Jr. "Nosotros Venceremos: Chicano Consciousness and Change Strategies" 8, no. 1 (January-February 1972), 21:13, Farm Labor Organizing Committee Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan; Stevan César Azcona, "Movements in Chicano Music: Performing Culture, Performing Politics, 1965-1979" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 2008), 77.

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APPENDIX: MIDWEST MIGRANT STREAM MAP

