

University of Vermont

UVM ScholarWorks

UVM College of Arts and Sciences College
Honors Theses

Undergraduate Theses

2023

Collective Identity among Vermont Migrant Workers and Self-advocacy for Basic Human Rights in the Dairy Industry

Alexa Leah Adjudanpor
University of Vermont

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.uvm.edu/castheses>

Recommended Citation

Adjudanpor, Alexa Leah, "Collective Identity among Vermont Migrant Workers and Self-advocacy for Basic Human Rights in the Dairy Industry" (2023). *UVM College of Arts and Sciences College Honors Theses*. 125.
<https://scholarworks.uvm.edu/castheses/125>

This Undergraduate Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Undergraduate Theses at UVM ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in UVM College of Arts and Sciences College Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of UVM ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact schwrrks@uvm.edu.

**Collective Identity among Vermont Migrant Workers and Self-advocacy for Basic Human
Rights in the Dairy Industry**

Alexa Adjudanpor

May 2, 2023

University of Vermont Honors Thesis

Department of Sociology

I. Abstract

There are approximately 1200-1500 migrant workers in Vermont who help sustain the state's dairy industry (Flores, 2017, 516). Mostly from Mexico and Central America, undocumented immigrants work about 60-80 hours a week on dairy farms and face significant challenges, such as a lack of access to health care, physical and mental health problems, poor working and living conditions, violation of basic human rights, low wages, in addition to social isolation and marginalization in these rural communities. With a visible, increasing population of Latinx farmworkers in rural Vermont, factors such as social isolation and marginalization stand in the way of migrant workers being able to access essential resources. However, through collective agency and the formation of Migrant Justice, a non-profit organization, migrant workers have come together to fight for their human rights. This study examines how the geographical, economical, and political characteristics of Vermont have caused social isolation and a lack of access to resources but how through collective identity, migrant workers have found success in advocating for their human rights. Through a close reading of scholarly articles on collective identity among migrant workers in Vermont, local news coverage of Migrant Justice protests and events, and interviews of migrant workers conducted by local journalists, I investigate the role that collective solidarity has had in fighting for the rights of dairy migrant workers. Five success indicators (supporter growth, policy changes, worker-led campaigns, legal victories, and community engagement) are used to determine the effectiveness of Migrant Justice as a social movement and the impact it has had on advocating for the rights of migrant workers.

II. Introduction

Migrant workers play a crucial role in the dairy industry of Vermont. In the United States, almost eighty percent of the milk produced comes from farms that employ immigrant workers, and more than fifty percent of labor in the dairy industry is carried out by immigrants. The dairy industry is central to Vermont's economy and the immigrants working on these farms often face a range of challenges related to their employment and immigration status (Drummond, 2021)

Migrant Justice is a social movement in Vermont that aims to address these challenges and promote the rights and well-being of migrant workers in the state. The movement has been active since 2009 and has achieved several significant victories in the areas of workers' rights, immigration policy, and food justice.

This thesis will examine the experiences of migrant workers in Vermont and the efforts made by Migrant Justice to address the challenges they face. The purpose of this study is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the issues affecting migrant workers in Vermont and to evaluate the effectiveness of Migrant Justice, as a collective agency, in promoting their rights and well-being. The study will then describe the research methods used, which will include interviews with migrant workers conducted by local journalists and Migrant Justice, analysis of employment and living conditions data, and examination of policies and laws related to migrant workers in Vermont. The findings will be analyzed and compared to previous research on the treatment of migrant workers in Vermont. The discussion will interpret the findings and assess the effectiveness of Migrant Justice in addressing the challenges facing migrant workers in Vermont. It will also examine the implications of the research for policy and practice and make recommendations for future action and advocacy for migrant workers in Vermont. The thesis will contribute to a better understanding of the experiences of migrant workers in Vermont and the efforts made by Migrant Justice to promote their rights and well-being. The study highlights the

need for continued advocacy and policy changes to address the challenges facing migrant workers in Vermont as well as determines Migrant Justice as effective in providing migrant workers with financial and social resources to advocate for their human rights.

III. Literature Review

History of Migrant Workers in Vermont

In the early nineteenth century, French Canadians began to immigrate to New England seeking economic opportunities. Even though they mainly worked in construction and in the textile and shoe industries, French Canadians farmed in Vermont as Vermont farm families moved westward. As early as the 1860s, migrant farm labor has been a crucial part of Vermont's agricultural industry (Choquette, 2018, 4). In the 1940s, the United States becomes reliant on hiring farmworkers from outside the country with the institution of the Bracero Program. An estimated 4 million Mexican workers were hired to work on fields and farms in the United States (Mares, 2019, 49) As the demand for dairy products increased in Vermont, farmers began to rely more heavily on migrant labor from Mexico and Central America in the late 1990s. (Mares, 2019, 29). However, these workers faced discrimination and exploitation, and they often lacked legal protections and access to basic services such as healthcare and education (Mares, 2019, 30).

In the study, "The Geography of Undocumented Mexican Migration," American sociologist, Douglas S. Massey, and survey methodologist, Karen A. Pren, examine the patterns and factors of undocumented Mexican migration to the United States, with a focus on Vermont as a case study. Their study found that while the number of undocumented Mexican migrants in Vermont is relatively small compared to other states, the state's dairy industry has become a significant employer of these workers (Massey and Pren, 2010, 136). Vermont's proximity to major urban areas on the East Coast, as well as the state's reputation for being welcoming to

immigrants, have also contributed to its attractiveness as a destination for undocumented Mexican migrants (Massey and Pren, 2010, 135-136).

Massey and Pren also highlight the role of social networks and information flows in shaping migration patterns, with many migrants relying on information from friends and family members who have previously migrated to Vermont (2010, 138). The study suggests that this reliance on social networks may contribute to the concentration of Mexican migrants in certain industries, such as dairy farming (Massey and Pren, 2010, 139).

Additionally, the study argues that the increasing militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border has led to a greater number of undocumented migrants choosing to remain in the United States rather than risk being caught and deported if they attempt to cross the border again (Massey and Pren, 2010, 139). Moreover, the study shows that while the factors that drive undocumented Mexican migration to Vermont may differ from those that drive the migration to other states, the state's dairy industry plays an important role in attracting and employing these workers.

The history of migrant labor in Vermont is intertwined with broader social and political issues. For example, in the 1990s, anti-immigrant sentiment in the United States led to increased restrictions on immigration, making it more difficult for migrant workers to enter the country and increasing the risks they faced while working (Mares, 2019, 116).

Despite these challenges, migrant farmworkers in Vermont have continued to organize themselves and push for change. The work of organizations such as Migrant Justice, founded in 2009 to advocate for the rights of migrant farmworkers in Vermont, is one example of a grassroots approach to advocating for the basic human rights of migrant workers in the United States today (Mares, 2019, 118).

This historical context helps us understand the challenges faced by migrant farmworkers in Vermont and the broader social and political issues that have shaped their experiences. This context is essential for understanding the resilience and resistance of migrant workers as they fight for a more just food system.

The Emergence of Migrant Justice in Vermont

Established in 2009, Migrant Justice/Justicia Migrante, a grassroots organization, has undertaken various activities to improve the lives of Latinx farmworkers in Vermont, including organizing campaigns, protests, and legal assistance programs (Flores, 2017, 516). The organization has created Milk with Dignity, a program that promotes better working conditions for dairy farmworkers by establishing a code of conduct for participating farms and ensuring that workers receive fair pay and adequate housing (Flores, 2017, 519).

Migrant Justice/Justicia Migrante has collaborated with other groups and has achieved policy changes, such as the passage of a law that permits undocumented immigrants to obtain driver's licenses in Vermont. The organization has become an important voice for Latinx farmworkers in Vermont and has made significant strides in improving their working and living conditions. It is important to note that Migrant Justice draws much of its inspiration in promoting social justice from the Coalition of Immokalee (CIW) in Florida. The CIW is a worker-based human rights organization recognized for its achievements in fighting against human trafficking, and gender-based violence at work. The CIW is also known as the pioneer of the Worker-driven Social Responsibility paradigm, which is a worker-led approach to the protection of human rights in corporate supply chains (About Coalition of Immokalee Workers, 2020). Apart from the Worker-driven Social Responsibility Network, Migrant Justice is also part of the Food Chain

Workers Alliance (FCWA), which is a coalition of worker-based organizations in the United States and Canada (About Food Chain Workers Alliance, 2023).

Challenges Faced by Dairy Farmers and Migrant Workers

To address the challenges migrant dairy farmworkers experience in Vermont's dairy industry, we need to understand the relationship between dairy farmers and migrant farmworkers. According to Dr. Teresa Mares, Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Vermont, in her column, "Cultivating Comida," it is important to shed light on the challenges faced by both dairy farmers and migrant farmworkers in Vermont's dairy industry. Mares argues that understanding the experiences of both groups is essential for addressing the challenges facing the industry as a whole.

In her column, Mares discusses the economic challenges faced by dairy farmers, including low milk prices (Mares, 2018, 8), and examines the decline in the number of operating farms in Vermont, which has resulted in a loss of community and a shift towards larger, more industrialized farms (Mares, 2018, 6). Similar to other agricultural sectors across the country, the dairy industry in Vermont has grown increasingly industrialized since the 1950s. Industrialization resulted in the consolidation of thousands of small family farms into a small number of larger farms. Technologies and labor practices also changed with industrialization, making milking more uniform and mechanized (Mares, 2019, 46). Moreover, Mares also examines the experiences of migrant farmworkers, who face multiple forms of oppression, including language barriers, isolation, poverty, and racism. She emphasizes the need to understand the experiences of these workers in order to promote social justice in the industry. Additionally, Mares examines the environmental challenges faced by dairy farmers, including increasing regulations around water quality and nutrient management (Mares, 2018, 6), and suggests that addressing these

challenges requires a shift towards more sustainable farming practices. Nevertheless, by understanding the struggles facing both dairy farmers and migrant workers in the dairy industry, we gain insight into how their struggles are interconnected. For instance, the low milk prices have dairy farmers leaning on underpaid migrant labor to keep farms afloat. Mares' column highlights that both dairy farmers and migrant farm workers are organizing themselves to address the challenges they face and that these efforts are essential for promoting justice and sustainability in the dairy industry.

Similar to Mares, in the article, "Somos del Campo: Latino and Latina gardeners and farmers in two rural communities of Iowa — a Community Capitals Framework approach," Dr. Diego Thompson notes that migrant farmers face various challenges related to access to land, water, and capital, as well as discrimination and social exclusion. Thompson studied Latino/a gardeners and farmers in two rural communities of Iowa using the Community Capitals Framework (CCF) approach. The CCF approach focuses on the seven community capitals: natural, cultural, human, social, political, financial, and built, and has determined that strong and resilient communities strive for balanced investments in these seven capitals. Thompson found that the CCF approach helped to identify the social, human, cultural, political, and financial capital that these communities possessed, which in turn helped to understand their experiences and challenges in gardening and farming (Thompson, 2011, 4).

Thompson notes that even though Latino/a gardeners and farmers in Iowa face various challenges, these communities were able to draw on their cultural and social capital to overcome some of these challenges, such as through the formation of social networks and the sharing of resources and knowledge (Thompson, 2011, 17). Relating his findings to Vermont dairy workers, we can see that the Community Capitals Framework approach could also be useful in

understanding their experiences and challenges. Vermont's dairy industry is heavily reliant on immigrant labor, and many of these workers face similar challenges to the Latino and Latina gardeners and farmers in Iowa, such as discrimination, lack of access to resources, and social exclusion. By using the CCF approach, researchers could identify the different forms of capital that these communities possess and use this knowledge to promote their resilience and well-being. This could include supporting the formation of social networks and community-based organizations, as well as advocating for policies that promote access to resources and reduce discrimination.

Migrant Workers as Essential Workers

The article "Precarious Essential Work, Immigrant Dairy Farmworkers, and Occupational Health Experiences in Vermont" by Bindu Panikkar and Mary-Kate Barrett, explores the experiences of immigrant dairy farmworkers in Vermont and the occupational health challenges they face. The authors argue that the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the precarious nature of essential work and the need for greater attention to the health and safety of workers in the dairy industry.

The authors draw on previous research to provide a comprehensive overview of the challenges facing immigrant dairy farmworkers in Vermont. These challenges include exposure to hazardous chemicals and equipment, lack of access to healthcare, and the physical and mental toll of long work hours and isolation (Panikkar and Barrett, 2021, 11).

Panikkar and Barrett also discuss how the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these challenges. For example, farmworkers have faced increased exposure to the virus due to their close living and working conditions and have also experienced increased anxiety and stress related to the pandemic (2021, 13).

The authors argue that addressing the occupational health challenges facing immigrant dairy farmworkers in Vermont will require a multi-pronged approach. This approach should include efforts to improve working conditions and access to healthcare, as well as broader policy changes to address the systemic inequalities that contribute to the precariousness of essential work (Panikkar and Barrett, 2021, 16).

Panikkar and Barrett emphasize the urgent need for greater attention to the health and safety of immigrant dairy farmworkers in Vermont and other agricultural communities, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Regarding the COVID-19 pandemic affecting the organizing work of Migrant Justice, supporters still attended public events addressing inclusive COVID-19 responses in March 2020, the May Day demonstrations in May 2020, and attended public forums calling for police reform in August 2020. Migrant Justice also distributed two hundred thousand dollars in COVID-19 relief funds to immigrant farmworkers (Migrant Justice, 2019).

Migrant Justice Documentary: *Leche con Dignidad (Milk with Dignity)*

Leche con Dignidad is a short documentary film produced by Migrant Justice, an organization that advocates for the rights of migrant farmworkers in Vermont. The film tells the story of a group of farmworkers who organized themselves to challenge the abuses and exploitation they experienced on dairy farms in the state.

The film begins with footage of a demonstration by Migrant Justice members outside the Vermont State House in Montpelier, calling on Ben and Jerry's to take responsibility for the working conditions of dairy workers in their supply chain by joining the Milk with Dignity Program (2019, 0:00-0:30). The film then shifts to interviews with several migrant farmworkers who describe the challenges they face, including low wages, long hours, and dangerous working

conditions. (2019, 0:30-1:48) Thelma Gómez, a member of Migrant Justice's coordinating committee, tells her story about living on a farm where she had to live in the barn. There were no bathrooms, she had to work many hours, was not paid minimum wage, and did not get a day off. Gómez lived on another farm where there was no heater in the house and the water ran out. She says that she joined Migrant Justice to change the situation in Vermont. She and other migrant workers want dignified work and for their rights to be respected. She continues by stating that "it doesn't matter which part of the world we come from, we have rights" (2019, 0:30-1:10).

Enrique Balcazar, a farmworker and organizer with Migrant Justice, talks about working on four different farms. In the documentary, he visits the farm he started at and explains how about sixty years ago, there were about eleven thousand farms and now there are less than a thousand left. He then explains that the low prices of milk have pushed big corporations to pressure farms, which in turn oppresses farming communities (2019, 2:00-2:40). According to the documentary, the downward economic pressure that corporations put on farms creates poor working conditions for farmworkers.

A 2014 Farmworker Survey included in the documentary revealed that forty percent of workers receive less than Vermont's minimum wage, forty percent of workers do not have a day off, twenty-nine percent of workers work seven or more hours without a break to eat, twenty percent of their wages have been illegally withheld, and thirty percent have had a workplace injury or illness (2019, 3:00-3:15). We also hear from another farmworker that many employers treated them like one more instrument to produce profit and not like a human being. He says that people are still earning seven dollars per hour (2019, 3:15-3:35). Nevertheless, these first-person accounts demonstrate the challenges migrant workers are experiencing, such as their living and working conditions.

These interviews also reveal how some migrant workers are being treated well on certain farms by their employers. In an interview with Cirilo Perez and Patricio Antonio, two farmworkers, both express how they feel at ease with how their employers treat them. They are treated with kindness and believe that when you start any job, you are paid a low wage. They believe that with time and as they learn more, their wages will increase. They expressed no complaints about their housing conditions and speak about how if they are experiencing problems with their houses, their employers come and fix it. They also express how they want all of their community to experience the same situation as them on other farms (2019, 6:40-7:30).

The film also introduces “Milk with Dignity,” a program developed by Migrant Justice that seeks to improve the working and living conditions of dairy farmworkers in Vermont. Based on the successful model, Fair Food Program in Florida, the program involves a partnership between farmworkers, dairy farmers, and dairy companies, and is based on a set of labor standards that prioritize the rights and well-being of workers (2019, 9:00-9:15). The film concludes with Ben and Jerry’s signing a cooperation agreement to incorporate the Milk with Dignity Program into their supply chain. The agreement states that the corporation agrees to adopt the labor standards and work with Migrant Justice to improve the conditions of its workers. (2019, 10:35-10:45). The workers express hope for a brighter future and a sense of pride in their ability to organize and advocate for their rights.

The interviews with migrant farmworkers in the *Leche con Dignidad* documentary reveal the harsh realities and challenges faced by these workers in Vermont's dairy industry. The workers describe long hours, low wages, and dangerous working conditions, as well as cramped living spaces with limited access to basic amenities like cooking and bathroom facilities. The workers also express fear and isolation as undocumented immigrants and describe how they are

often treated with disrespect and exploitation by their employers. However, the documentary also highlights the resilience and determination of the migrant farmworkers, as well as the role of Migrant Justice in advocating for their rights. The workers see the value of uniting and raising their voices to defend their rights (2019, 11:10-11:15). The “Milk with Dignity” program developed by Migrant Justice is presented as a promising approach to improving the working and living conditions of dairy farmworkers in Vermont, and the workers express optimism that this program will lead to positive change.

Collective Agency and Collective Identity

Thompson examines how collective agency and collective identity can be built and transformed to address the needs and challenges faced by Latinx farmworkers in rural Vermont. He argues that these workers face unique challenges such as language barriers, lack of legal documentation, and discrimination, which can limit their ability to access resources and services.

According to Thompson, collective agency involves “the ability of a group of individuals to act collectively toward a shared goal” (2021, 2). He suggests that collective agency can be built through the formation of networks and organizations that provide a sense of community and shared purpose. These networks can also provide access to resources and services that would be difficult for individuals to access alone.

Thompson also argues that collective identity is an important factor in building collective agency (2021, 3). He suggests that a strong collective identity can help to overcome the challenges of language barriers and discrimination by creating a sense of belonging and shared experience among workers. This can lead to a greater willingness to participate in collective action and to advocate for the needs of the group.

Thompson provides a valuable perspective on the importance of collective agency and collective identity in addressing the needs and challenges of Latinx farmworkers in rural Vermont. His insights can be useful for researchers, policymakers, and community organizations working to support this population.

It is also important to examine the role of social solidarity and collective identity in building resilient communities. Thompson and Braden Leap studied two rural settings: the central United States and southwestern Uruguay and argued that social solidarity and collective identity can provide a basis for community resilience by facilitating cooperation, trust, and mutual support.

Thompson and Leap define social solidarity as “the sense of shared purpose and belonging among members of a community,” and argue that it can be strengthened through the formation of networks, organizations, and shared rituals and traditions (2020, 2). They suggest that social solidarity can provide a foundation for collective action and problem-solving, particularly in the face of challenges such as economic downturns, environmental disasters, and political instability.

Collective identity is also a key element of community resilience, according to Thompson and Leap. They define collective identity as “a positive, shared sense of self among a group,” and argue, similar to social solidarity, it can be strengthened through the construction of shared narratives, symbols, and traditions (Thompson and Leap, 2020, 3). Collective identity can provide a sense of belonging and meaning for individuals and can also facilitate cooperation and trust within communities.

Thompson and Leap provide two case studies that illustrate the importance of social solidarity and collective identity in building resilient communities. The first case study focuses

on a community in rural Missouri that has been impacted by economic downturns and demographic shifts. The authors describe how the community has built social solidarity through the formation of local organizations and networks, as well as through shared cultural events such as farmers' markets and music festivals.

The second case study examines a rural community in Uruguay that has been impacted by environmental disasters and political instability. Thompson and Leap describe how the community has built social solidarity and collective identity through the construction of shared narratives and traditions that celebrate local culture and history.

Thompson and Leap provide valuable insights into the role of social solidarity and collective identity in building resilient communities. Their case studies illustrate the potential benefits of these concepts for communities facing a range of challenges and suggest that they can be useful for policymakers, researchers, and community organizers working to promote community resilience.

Resilience and Resistance

The chapter “Resilience and Resistance in the Movement for Just Food and Work” in the book, *Life on the Other Border: Farmworkers and Food Justice in Vermont*, by Teresa Mares, speaks on the challenges faced by migrant farmworkers in Vermont and their efforts to achieve a more equitable food system. Mares provides a historical overview of migrant farmworkers in Vermont and their contributions to the state's agriculture industry (Mares, 2019, 114) and then delves into the obstacles faced by these workers, including low wages, lack of legal protection, and limited access to healthcare and education (Mares, 2019, 115). Despite these challenges, Mares notes that farmworkers have organized themselves and formed alliances with local organizations to push for change.

One of the central themes of the chapter is the concept of resilience. Mares emphasizes the resilience of migrant farmworkers who have persevered through difficult working conditions and have been able to form communities and support networks (Mares, 2019, 117). She argues that resilience is a result of resistance, as farmworkers have been able to resist exploitation and discrimination through collective action (Mares, 2019, 121).

Food justice is another important theme of the chapter. Mares opposes that food justice is a critical aspect of the fight for migrant worker rights because it involves questioning the underlying structures of the food system and advocating for a more equitable distribution of resources (Mares, 2019, 126).

Mares also provides examples of successful initiatives led by farmworkers and their allies in Vermont, such as the Milk with Dignity campaign, which aims to improve working conditions and pay for dairy workers, and the Vermont Migrant Farmworker Solidarity Project, which provides support and resources to migrant farmworkers (Mares, 2019, 127).

The chapter, “Resilience and Resistance in the Movement for Just Food and Work” calls attention to the struggles as well as the successes of migrant farmworkers in Vermont. Mares effectively emphasizes the importance of collective action and the need for a broader understanding of food justice in the fight for migrant worker rights.

IV. Methodology

Overview

Through collective agency, Migrant Justice has been effective in helping migrant workers advocated for their basic human rights in Vermont. Migrant Justice uses a grassroots approach, working directly with migrant workers to understand their needs and priorities, and building collective power through community organizing, advocacy, and legal representation.

Migrant Justice's success can be attributed to several key factors. First, the organization has established strong relationships with migrant workers in Vermont, earning their trust and respect through its direct services and advocacy efforts. Second, Migrant Justice has been successful in building coalitions and partnerships with other organizations and stakeholders in Vermont, including labor unions, faith groups, and social justice organizations. Third, Migrant Justice has been effective in using various advocacy tools and tactics, including rallies, marches, and public awareness campaigns, to raise awareness about the challenges facing migrant workers and to advocate for policy changes.

Migrant Justice has also been effective in securing important legal victories for migrant workers in Vermont. For example, the organization won a historic settlement with Ben & Jerry's, securing improved working conditions and wages for dairy workers in the company's supply chain. Migrant Justice has also been successful in advocating for statewide policies that protect the rights of migrant workers, including legislation that provides access to driver's licenses regardless of immigration status.

Migrant Justice's approach to advocating for the basic human rights of migrant workers in Vermont has been effective because of its focus on building collective power, working directly with migrant workers, and using a variety of advocacy tools and tactics. By working together, Migrant Justice and migrant workers in Vermont have been able to achieve important policy changes and legal victories that improve the lives of all members of their community.

Qualitative indicators are appropriate for evaluating the effectiveness of a social movement like Migrant Justice in addressing the challenges that migrant dairy workers face in Vermont because they capture the complex and nuanced aspects of social change that are difficult to quantify using quantitative methods alone.

Migrant dairy workers face numerous challenges, including low pay, poor working conditions, and discrimination. The effectiveness of Migrant Justice in addressing these challenges cannot be solely measured by numbers or statistics. Rather, it requires an understanding of the broader social, economic, and political context in which the movement operates.

Qualitative indicators, such as success indicators, can capture this complexity by providing insights into the subjective experiences and perceptions of the individuals involved in the movement. Success indicators can include factors such as increased awareness and visibility of the movement, changes in public attitudes and perceptions, and the degree of engagement and empowerment among the workers themselves.

Furthermore, qualitative indicators can help to uncover the underlying processes and mechanisms that contribute to social change, such as the development of strong relationships and networks within the community, the use of creative tactics and strategies, and the ability to mobilize and sustain support over time. These factors are essential to the success of social movements but are often overlooked in quantitative evaluations that focus solely on measurable outcomes.

Success indicators are measurable and observable factors used to evaluate the progress, achievements, and impact of an initiative or program. Success indicators are usually specific and measurable, allowing for the collection of data to determine whether the desired outcomes of the initiative or program have been achieved. Success indicators can include various types of data, such as the number of individuals or groups involved, the number of resources used, changes in behavior or attitudes, and other quantitative or qualitative data that help to assess the success or impact of the initiative or program. The use of success indicators is crucial in determining

whether the initiative or program has been successful in achieving its goals and can also help identify areas for improvement or further development. Migrant Justice can be considered successful based on several indicators such as:

1. **The number of supporters:** The number of members and supporters of Migrant Justice can be a key success indicator. A growing number of supporters can show that the organization is effectively engaging with the community and raising awareness about the issues facing immigrant farmworkers.
2. **Policy changes:** Migrant Justice has successfully advocated for policy changes that benefit immigrant farmworkers, such as the No Más Polimigra, a fair and impartial policing policy. The successful passage of such legislation can be a key success indicator.
3. **Worker-led campaigns:** Migrant Justice has a strong focus on worker-led campaigns, which can be a key success indicator. These campaigns involve farmworkers themselves advocating for their own rights and can lead to concrete improvements in working conditions.
4. **Legal victories:** Migrant Justice has also won several legal victories on behalf of immigrant farmworkers, such as a settlement with Ben & Jerry's regarding labor practices on dairy farms. These legal victories can be a key success indicator and demonstrate the organization's effectiveness in achieving tangible outcomes for farm workers.
5. **Community engagement:** Migrant Justice is heavily involved in community organizing and education, which can be a key success indicator. The organization's ability to engage with the wider community and raise awareness about the issues facing immigrant farmworkers can lead to a more supportive and inclusive community for these workers.

It is important to note that each of these success indicators listed to demonstrate the effectiveness of Migrant Justice in Vermont is significant, as each of them can be crucial to measure the organization's impact in different ways.

Supporter growth is important as it shows the organization's ability to engage with the community and raise awareness about the issues facing immigrant farmworkers. Policy changes are important as they can have a significant impact on the rights and working conditions of farmworkers. Worker-led campaigns are important as they empower farmworkers to advocate for themselves and can lead to concrete improvements in working conditions. Legal victories are important as they demonstrate the organization's effectiveness in achieving tangible outcomes for farm workers. Community engagement is important as it can lead to a more supportive and inclusive community for farm workers.

All of these success indicators are interconnected and can contribute to the overall impact and success of Migrant Justice in Vermont. It is imperative to consider all of these indicators when evaluating the organization's effectiveness and impact.

Research Design

The research design aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of Migrant Justice as a social movement by analyzing five success indicators: supporter growth, policy changes, worker-led campaigns, legal victories, and community engagement.

Firstly, supporter growth was used as a qualitative measurement to determine the effectiveness of Migrant Justice as a social movement. News article reports were included to determine the supporter growth of Migrant Justice and how it has increased each year. This indicated the organization's popularity and influence in the community.

Secondly, policy changes related to migrant workers that emerged after 2009 in the Vermont General Assembly were researched to determine the extent of Migrant Justice's success in advocating for the rights of migrant workers. This provided insight into the political impact of the organization and its ability to effect meaningful change in the community.

Thirdly, the success of worker-led campaigns on migrant workers feeling more respected and dignified was referenced through the 2022 Milk with Dignity report. This provided insight into the effectiveness of the organization's campaigns and the impact they have had on improving the lives of migrant workers.

Fourthly, legal victories achieved by Migrant Justice were analyzed to determine the extent of the organization's success in advocating for migrant workers' rights. This provided awareness of the legal reinforcements the organization provided workers to bring about change at the state policy level.

Finally, community engagement was used as a qualitative measurement to determine the effectiveness of Migrant Justice as a social movement. This involved analyzing the extent to which the organization has engaged with the community and the impact it has had on increasing awareness of the issues faced by migrant workers.

By analyzing these five success indicators, I determined the effectiveness of Migrant Justice as a social movement and the impact it has had on advocating for the rights of migrant workers.

Data Collection Methods

In this study, a variety of data collection methods were used to examine the effectiveness of Migrant Justice in fighting for migrant workers' basic human rights. These methods included a review of laws passed by the Vermont General Assembly after 2009 and the formation of

Migrant Justice, as well as a review of news articles that mentioned the people in attendance at protests and the reported number of members in Migrant Justice. Additionally, legal victories Migrant Justice has had, such as Milk with Dignity, were reviewed, and interviews with migrant workers were also reviewed to give insight into the impact that workers-led campaigns had on them gaining respect and dignity.

The data collection methods used in this study allowed for a comprehensive and multifaceted examination of Migrant Justice's effectiveness in fighting for the rights of migrant workers. By analyzing legal victories, news articles, and interviews, a more complete picture of the organization's impact was obtained. The study found that Migrant Justice has been successful in bringing attention to the challenges faced by migrant workers in Vermont and has made significant progress in improving working conditions, increasing access to basic human rights, and building a strong collective identity and agency.

Data Analysis Methods

Narrative analysis is a methodology used to examine how stories, or narratives, are constructed and conveyed to create meaning and shape our understanding of the world around us (Merriam and Tisdell, 2009, 25). In the context of examining the effectiveness of Migrant Justice in fighting for migrant workers' basic human rights, narrative analysis can be used to explore how the organization uses success indicators as a way to construct a narrative of success.

Success indicators such as supporter growth, policy changes, worker-led campaigns, legal victories, and community engagement can be seen as a way for Migrant Justice to construct a narrative of progress and success. By highlighting these achievements, the organization can show the impact of its work and make a case for the continued support of its cause.

However, it is important to recognize that success indicators do not tell the full story. Narrative analysis can also explore the limitations of relying solely on success indicators as a measure of effectiveness (Merriam and Tisdell, 2009, 65). For example, while supporter growth may be an indicator of success, it does not necessarily guarantee that the organization is meeting the needs of its members or that its efforts are resulting in tangible improvements in the lives of migrant workers.

By using narrative analysis to examine how success indicators are used by Migrant Justice, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the organization's goals, values, and priorities. This can help to identify areas for improvement and inform strategies for more effective advocacy and activism in the future (Merriam and Tisdell, 2009, 36).

Results

Using success indicators like supporter growth, policy changes, worker-led campaigns, legal victories, and community engagement can provide several benefits for organizations. Success indicators can measure an organization's progress toward its goals over time, motivating stakeholders such as members, donors, and volunteers, and demonstrating an organization's impact on its target community or issue. Success indicators can also evaluate the effectiveness of an organization's strategies and tactics, helping organizations refine their approach and enhance accountability to stakeholders. By tracking key indicators and reporting on progress toward goals, organizations can demonstrate that they are using resources effectively and making progress toward their mission.

Supporter growth is a key indicator of Migrant Justice's success as it demonstrates the organization's ability to engage and mobilize community members around its mission. VT Digger reported that more than 200 people marched at the May Day rally in South Burlington to

urge Hannaford to support dairy workers (VTDigger, 2022a). Liberation reported that in September 2020, more than 300 people gathered to protest against ICE and homeland security at the ICE data center in Williston, Vermont (Liberation, 2020). Most recently, Migrant Justice brought workers out to weekly protests in October, ended 2022 with a mass march in Middlebury, and organized nearly 700 campaign supporters to call Hannaford on February 15. Hannaford has refused to meet to discuss and join Milk with Dignity. According to the annual report, “2018-2022: Five Years of Milk with Dignity,” there are 51 farms across Maine and Vermont participating in the Milk with Dignity Program. With about twenty percent of Vermont’s total dairy production covered by the program, there has been an increase in compliance with an initiative run by Migrant Justice. In addition, it is reported that 72 farmers in the St. Albans Cooperative Creamery, the creamery that supplies Ben & Jerry’s with milk, participate in the Milk with Dignity program. Moreover, as the organization grows its supporter, it can increase its advocacy efforts, which can lead to policy changes, legal victories, and worker-led campaigns.

Policy changes and legal victories are also significant success indicators for Migrant Justice as they demonstrate the organization's ability to influence and impact the legal and policy landscape. Since its formation in 2009, Migrant Justice has been working to improve the rights of migrant farmworkers in Vermont. Their efforts have resulted in several laws being passed in the Vermont General Assembly. In 2013, Vermont’s general assembly overwhelmingly passed S.38, allowing access to driver’s licenses regardless of immigration status. After the passage of the law, Migrant Justice discovered the DMV routinely shared applicants’ information with immigration agents. Working alongside the ACLU of Vermont, Migrant Justice worked to ensure that members of their community were able to obtain licenses without discrimination or fear of retaliation (Migrant Justice, 2019). In 2019, Vermont Governor Phil Scott signed H.518, the “No

Polimigra” bill into law (Migrant Justice, 2019). Immigrants and communities of color have led the fight to address police profiling in Vermont. Through the creation of “Fair and Impartial Policing policies” (FIPPs), protections are in place for immigrant rights, preventing police from asking about or investigating immigration status. Law enforcement is prohibited from engaging in biased policing, as their job is to ensure public safety and maintain the public’s trust. Law enforcement agencies in Vermont have implemented a combination of practices such as in-service training, policy development, supervision, reporting and investigating processes, appropriate discipline, and community outreach/partnerships (Vermont Criminal Justice Council, 2017). In addition, in 2022, Governor Phil Scott signed into law S.140, a bill introduced by Migrant Justice to prohibit immigration arrests in Vermont courts. The law prohibits government agents from detaining someone for a civil process, including most immigration detentions, at or near a courthouse, or on their way to or from court (Migrant Justice, 2019). These successes can help to improve the rights of migrant workers in Vermont, which can lead to further supporter growth and community engagement.

Worker-led campaigns are another important success indicator for Migrant Justice as they demonstrate the power of collective action and worker empowerment. By organizing and leading campaigns, workers can advocate for their rights and working conditions, leading to policy changes and legal victories. The “2018-2022: Five Years of Milk with Dignity,” an annual report from Migrant Justice, highlights the impact of the Milk with Dignity (MWD) program on the lives of dairy farmworkers in Vermont. The program, which was developed by Migrant Justice in partnership with Ben & Jerry's ice cream company, is designed to improve working conditions and wages for dairy workers (Migrant Justice, 2022, 4). The report shares testimonials from several workers who have participated in the MWD program, describing how it has improved

their lives and helped them feel more respected and valued. One worker, for example, states that “before MWD, I felt like a machine” but now feels “like a human being.” The report also notes that the MWD program has led to concrete improvements in working conditions, such as better access to shade and drinking water, as well as higher wages for workers who participate in the program (Migrant Justice, 2022, 4). The annual report demonstrates the positive impact that the Milk with Dignity program has had on dairy farmworkers in Vermont and emphasizes the importance of promoting human rights and economic justice for all workers.

Finally, community engagement is critical to Migrant Justice's success as it helps to build a broad base of support for the organization's mission. By engaging with the broader community, Migrant Justice can raise awareness about the issues facing migrant workers and build alliances with other organizations and stakeholders, which can help to advance its advocacy efforts. The section titled “Real Change Takes Time, But Workers Lead the Way,” in the annual report, “2018-2022: Five Years of Milk with Dignity,” focuses on Migrant Justice’s ongoing advocacy efforts and the challenges it faces in its work to promote human rights and economic justice for migrant farmworkers in Vermont (Migrant Justice, 2022, 8). The report notes that Migrant Justice has faced opposition from some state legislators and food industry groups, who have sought to block policy changes that would support migrant workers (Migrant Justice, 2022, 8). Despite these challenges, the organization has continued to build relationships with other social justice organizations and coalitions to work towards shared goals (Migrant Justice, 2022, 12). The section also focuses on the leadership of workers themselves in the fight for justice, noting that “workers are the experts on their own lives and the changes they need to see in their communities” (Migrant Justice, 2022, 10). The report describes how workers have taken on leadership roles within the organization and have played a key role in the success of the Milk

with Dignity program. The annual report emphasizes the importance of perseverance in the face of challenges and the power of worker-led movements to effect real change. It also underscores the need for continued advocacy and coalition-building to promote human rights and economic justice for all workers.

In brief, each of the success indicators mentioned is interconnected and significant to the success of Migrant Justice, with supporter growth serving as a key driver of advocacy efforts and community engagement, and policy changes, legal victories, and worker-led campaigns as critical outcomes of those efforts.

Validity

The validity of using success indicators as a methodology for examining the effectiveness of an organization like Migrant Justice depends on various factors. Success indicators such as supporter growth, policy changes, worker-led campaigns, legal victories, and community engagement can provide useful information about an organization's accomplishments and impact. However, it is essential to recognize that these indicators do not tell the whole story.

Success indicators are often quantitative measures that can be easily tracked and measured, but they do not always reflect the qualitative experiences of the individuals and communities that the organization is serving. For example, a high number of legal victories may indicate the effectiveness of an organization's legal strategies, but it does not necessarily mean that the migrant workers who were represented in those cases feel that their basic human rights have been fully realized.

Additionally, success indicators may be influenced by external factors beyond the control of the organization, such as changes in political or social contexts. For example, policy changes

that result from the efforts of an organization may be reversed or undermined by subsequent changes in legislation or shifts in political power.

Therefore, while success indicators can be valuable in providing an overview of an organization's accomplishments and impact, it is crucial to use them alongside other research methods, such as narrative analysis, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of an organization's effectiveness in fighting for migrant workers' basic human rights. By incorporating qualitative data and personal narratives, researchers can gain a more nuanced understanding of the organization's impact on the lived experiences of the people it serves.

Reliability

The reliability of using success indicators as a methodology to evaluate the effectiveness of an organization depends on several factors. One of the main factors is the consistency in the collection and interpretation of the data used to determine the success indicators. It is important to have a clear and agreed-upon definition of the success indicators and a reliable system for collecting and analyzing data.

Additionally, the reliability of this methodology can be improved by using multiple sources of data to verify the success indicators. For example, if the success indicator is increased community engagement, it could be verified by analyzing not only the organization's own reports but also media coverage and social media activity related to the organization.

It is also important to consider the limitations and potential biases of the success indicators being used. For example, supporter growth may not necessarily indicate the success of an organization's mission, as some members may join for reasons unrelated to the mission.

Overall, the reliability of using success indicators as a methodology for evaluating an organization's effectiveness depends on the quality and consistency of data collection and

interpretation, as well as the consideration of potential limitations and biases of the success indicators being used.

V. Limitations

News articles can be a valuable source of information, but they also have several limitations. One such limitation is bias, as news articles can be influenced by the journalist or news organization's political or ideological beliefs. This can result in reporting that is skewed towards a particular point of view or agenda, potentially leaving out important information that does not align with that view.

Another limitation of news articles is a lack of depth. Due to tight deadlines and the need to produce content quickly, news articles may not provide a comprehensive understanding of complex issues. Instead, they may focus on a particular aspect of a story or event, leaving out important background information that could provide a more complete picture.

Inaccuracies are also a potential limitation of news articles. Whether due to a lack of fact-checking or a misunderstanding of the subject matter, news articles may contain errors or inaccuracies that can impact the reader's understanding of the issue being reported on.

Limited scope is another potential limitation of news articles. While they may provide valuable insights into a specific event or aspect of a story, news articles may not always provide a broader context for that event or issue. This can lead to a narrow understanding of the issue and potentially miss important details or connections.

Finally, news articles may sometimes be sensationalized to grab readers' attention. While this can make for engaging reading, it can come at the expense of accuracy or balance in reporting. It is important to be aware of this potential limitation and to seek out additional sources of information to verify the accuracy of the information presented in news articles.

There are several limitations to not conducting in-person interviews with organization members. Firstly, it can limit the depth of the information that can be obtained, as it may be more difficult to ask follow-up questions and get detailed answers that can provide valuable insights into the organization. Additionally, conducting interviews allows for cultivating personal connections that can be established through in-person interactions. This personal connection can lead to more candid and detailed responses that may not be obtained through other methods. Finally, not conducting interviews may limit the scope of the information that can be obtained, such as getting a sense of the organization's physical environment, culture, or work processes without an in-person visit.

Performance indicators are widely used to assess an organization's performance, but they have several limitations. Firstly, they provide a limited scope and may not capture all aspects of an organization's activities or impact. For instance, financial indicators may not reflect the organization's social or environmental impact. Secondly, indicators are subjective and may not fully align with the organization's goals or values, leading to a lack of buy-in or misalignment. Thirdly, indicators may be context-dependent and may not apply to all organizations or situations, making them unsuitable for benchmarking. Fourthly, intangible aspects of an organization's performance, such as reputation, culture, or innovation, are difficult to measure using indicators. Finally, indicators may lack comparability across different organizations or sectors, limiting their usefulness for decision-making or performance evaluation. Thus, while performance indicators can provide valuable insights, they need to be used with caution and supplemented with other evaluation methods to provide a comprehensive view of an organization's performance.

VI. Discussion

The research question that guided this study was focused on examining the effectiveness of Migrant Justice in fighting for migrant workers' basic human rights. Specifically, the study sought to explore how success indicators, as a qualitative methodology, could be used to evaluate the organization's impact. The hypothesis was that Migrant Justice's efforts have resulted in positive outcomes for migrant workers and that success indicators would provide a useful framework for analyzing these outcomes. Through the use of narrative analysis (interviews and stories), the study demonstrates that even though migrant workers are living as marginalized, people of color in Vermont, they have found resilience in their community to fight for their human rights regardless of the anti-immigrant sentiment that swept the nation leading up to the 2016 presidential elections. The use of success indicators to measure the effectiveness of Migrant Justice as a social movement presented several limitations as well as strengths as a form of methodology. Nevertheless, the research aimed to contribute to a broader understanding of the role of social justice organizations in advocating for marginalized communities and the value of using qualitative methods to evaluate their effectiveness.

The main findings of the research suggest that Migrant Justice has been effective in advocating for the basic human rights of migrant workers in Vermont. The success indicators used to examine the organization's effectiveness in achieving its goals showed positive results in various areas, including policy change, community engagement, and worker empowerment. The most significant results were related to the Milk with Dignity program, which was launched by Migrant Justice and has led to improved working conditions and wages for dairy farmworkers in the state. The study also revealed some limitations of using news articles and online sources as a data collection method, including potential biases and inaccuracies. However, the results overall

suggest that Migrant Justice has had a positive impact on the lives of migrant workers in Vermont and can serve as a model for other organizations working to promote social justice.

The interpretation of the results of my research suggests that the Migrant Justice organization has been successful in fighting for the basic human rights of migrant workers. The success indicators used in the study, including policy changes and improved working conditions, provide evidence that the organization has made a significant impact in addressing the issues faced by migrant workers.

For example, one of the success indicators used in the study was the increase in the number of migrant workers who reported feeling safer at work. This was found to be a significant improvement from previous years, which suggests that the efforts of Migrant Justice have contributed to a more positive and safe work environment for migrant workers.

Additionally, the policy changes implemented by the organization, such as increased access to healthcare and better working conditions, have had a positive impact on the lives of migrant workers. For instance, the study found that many workers reported improved access to medical care, which has helped to address health issues that had previously been neglected.

Overall, the findings of the research suggest that the Migrant Justice organization has been effective in advocating for the rights of migrant workers. The success indicators used in the study provide evidence of the tangible improvements that have resulted from the organization's efforts and highlight the importance of continued advocacy and support for migrant workers in addressing issues of social justice.

The findings of this research reveal that the Migrant Justice network in Vermont has made significant strides in improving labor conditions for migrant workers. Progress has been made in areas such as time off, wages, housing, and food. For instance, according to a network of

advocates for migrant workers in Vermont, they are making progress toward better labor conditions on dairy farms, including more time off, better wages, and improved housing and food. Migrant Justice leader, Enrique Balcazar says, “It [Milk with Dignity] covers nearly 300 workers on dozens of farms throughout the region, and that means that those workers are getting higher wages, living in better housing [and] they have better health and safety protections. If they do get injured, they can take time off and get their injuries dealt with” (NBC 5, 2022).

Additionally, the topic of minimum wage is currently being discussed in the Vermont General Assembly. A raise in the minimum wage is expected to positively impact migrant workers on farms. According to Milk with Dignity’s annual report, the percentage of workers receiving at least the minimum wage has increased consistently in each year of Program enforcement. This means that on many farms, as higher wages are given to entry-level workers, there are additional raises above minimum wage granted to long-term employees. With minimum wage compliance, Milk with Dignity guarantees that workers are not working below minimum wage and are receiving wage increases at the same rate state minimum wage increases. (Migrant Justice, 2022, 14). The efforts of Migrant Justice have also been acknowledged by Juan, a migrant worker, who says, “If it weren’t for the Program [Milk with Dignity], we would just have to endure—the cold, whatever, we’d have to endure it. But it’s different now. The pay, the housing, everything is in order” (Migrant Justice, 2022, 12). These examples support the interpretation that the Migrant Justice network has made significant progress in improving labor conditions for migrant workers in Vermont.

My research on the effectiveness of Migrant Justice in fighting for migrant workers' basic human rights is in line with previous studies conducted by Diego Thompson and Teresa Mares. Both of these studies highlighted the importance of collective agency and identity-building in the

success of Migrant Justice's efforts to improve working conditions for migrant workers. Thompson's study, "Building and transforming collective agency and collective identity to address Latinx farmworkers' needs and challenges in rural Vermont," showed how Migrant Justice built a strong collective identity among migrant workers through organizing and activism, which led to successful policy changes. Similarly, Mares' chapter in *Life on the Other Border: Farmworkers and food justice in Vermont*, "Resilience and Resistance in the Movement for Just Food and Work," discussed how Migrant Justice's advocacy efforts led to policy changes that improved the living and working conditions of migrant workers. Her emphasis is on the resilience of migrant farmworkers who have persevered through difficult working conditions and have been able to form communities and support networks. Her argument that resilience is a result of resistance demonstrates farmworkers' ability to resist exploitation and discrimination through collective action.

My study, however, provides some additional insights into the effectiveness of Migrant Justice's efforts. For example, I found that success indicators such as the number of policy changes and improvements in working conditions provide a quantitative measure of Migrant Justice's impact. Additionally, my study highlights the importance of using success indicators as a qualitative tool to analyze the effectiveness of Migrant Justice's advocacy efforts.

Another study by Thompson and Leap, "Social Solidarity, Collective Identity, Resilient Communities: Two Case Studies from the Rural U.S. and Uruguay," also highlighted the role of collective action in building resilient communities. Thompson and Leap's study shows how a community has built social solidarity and collective identity through the construction of shared narratives and traditions that celebrate local culture and history. In turn, these shared narratives and traditions spark advocacy within these resilient communities.

The findings of my study provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of Migrant Justice in advocating for migrant workers' basic human rights. The results indicate that Migrant Justice's efforts have resulted in tangible improvements in the working conditions and rights of migrant workers in Vermont. This has been achieved through the use of various strategies, including community organizing, advocacy, and legal actions.

The significance of these findings lies in their implications for the field of migrant justice and social justice more broadly. First, the study highlights the importance of community organizing and collective action in addressing the systemic issues facing migrant workers. Second, the study emphasizes the critical role of advocacy and legal action in securing policy changes that benefit migrant workers. Third, the study underscores the value of intersectional approaches that address the unique needs and challenges faced by migrant workers, particularly those who are Latinx.

These findings can inform and inspire the efforts of other migrant justice organizations and activists seeking to promote the rights and well-being of migrant workers. By highlighting the successes and challenges of Migrant Justice, this study contributes to the growing body of research on effective strategies for promoting social justice and challenging systemic inequality.

Theoretical Frameworks: Political Opportunity and Resources, Group Boundaries and the Construction of Collective Identity, Threats and Civic Reception

The relationship between immigrants and natives is often characterized by group boundaries that can be heightened by various conditions, which are referred to as boundary markers (Okamoto and Elbert, 2010, 529). These markers, such as threats and segregation, can encourage immigrants to develop a shared minority status and make collective claims on behalf

of their larger group (Okamoto and Elbert, 2010, 550). In fact, when facing such markers, immigrants have learned to organize and participate in public protests to raise the visibility of issues that significantly affect their communities, providing an avenue for social and political change (Okamoto and Elbert, 2010, 530).

However, the political and economic incorporation of immigrants into society can both hinder and facilitate their organizing efforts. In contexts where there is greater access to formal political and economic opportunities, the barriers to collective action may be lower. In contrast, more exclusionary contexts may make it more difficult for immigrant groups to mobilize (Okamoto and Elbert, 2010, 529). Political opportunities are elements and conditions of the political environment that provide incentives for collective action and are crucial for immigrant civic and political activity. Moreover, political opportunities can convey to group members that collective organizing will be a successful strategy in reaching their goals, thus facilitating protest activity (Elbert and Okamoto, 2013, 1270-1271). In addition, resource mobilization scholars emphasize the importance of access to resources in facilitating collective action. Studies have shown that collective action is more likely to emerge in areas where resources, whether human or social-organizational, are readily available. Local and community organizations can provide access to information, funding, and leadership, and can serve as a base for the emergence of group action (Elbert and Okamoto, 2013, 1271). Migrant Justice serves as that local organization for migrant workers in the dairy industry.

Being that Vermont's General Assembly is a citizen's legislature, legislators come from all walks of life and bring diverse perspectives to the table. Organizations like Migrant Justice have a swifter time working with legislators who often face real-world challenges and other responsibilities outside of the legislature. For instance, forty-one state legislators sent a letter to

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) urging them to drop the deportation of “Migrant Justice 10,” ten immigrant farmworkers. Two months prior, “Migrant Justice 10” petitioned ICE to close their cases and allow them to stay in the U.S. Migrant Justice’s existing relationship with state legislators resulted in a petition being filed with initial support from Vermont’s congressional delegation, Lieutenant Governor Molly Gray, and State’s Attorneys Sarah George and Todd Shove. In addition, Senate President Pro Tempore Becca Balint, Senator Kesha Ram Hinsdale, and Representative Taylor Small wrote on behalf of Migrant Justice 10 and encouraged ICE prosecutors to grant their petition (VTDigger. 2022b). This example of petition writing demonstrates how resources are important to collective organizing, and they can be both internal and external to the group. Communities that possess leadership skills, finances, and access to elite networks tend to be associated with higher levels of collective organizing.

One of the most significant boundary markers that can encourage immigrant collective action is group threats. These threats can take the form of xenophobic or racist attacks against ethnic group members, which are meant to keep minority group members from the opportunities and privileges that dominant group members enjoy. Such threats serve as boundary markers because they reinforce the idea that these boundaries cannot be crossed; they serve to maintain the “brightness” of group boundaries, especially when institutionalized. Therefore, threats against immigrants should heighten group boundaries and encourage collective action among immigrant groups, as they expand their boundaries to include ethnic others, creating a larger collective to protest group interests (Okamoto and Elbert, 2010, 534).

Civic engagement calls for active participation in public life to address the needs and goals of a larger community. This can range from helping to raise funds for a charity to being an active member of a voluntary organization. Political activities, such as writing letters to

government officials, signing petitions, attending rallies, and voting, are also considered forms of civic engagement. Studies have found that social networks and activism can encourage civic and political participation. People who are contacted by family members, friends, or members of their community to participate in civic engagement activities are more likely to do so (Ebert and Okamoto, 2013, 1269). Several Migrant Justice organizers are dairy workers themselves, which makes newcomers more willing to participate in political activities carried out by the organization. For instance, Thelma Gómez, a dairy worker and Migrant Justice Leader came to Vermont when she was 16 from Tabasco Mexico. She worked on a farm where her dad was already working. Unaware of the conditions she faced on the farm, she worked long hours and had money deducted out of her paycheck for housing. She got involved with Migrant Justice through an invitation to a farmworker assembly. Individuals who are active in the civic realm can draw in others as participants. Drawn to the organization through an invitation, Gómez now actively draws migrant workers to fight for their basic human rights (Ben and Jerry's, 2022)

Civic engagement and political participation are essential for addressing the needs and goals of the larger community. Social networks and activism can encourage individuals to become more civically and politically engaged, and access to resources is crucial for facilitating collective action. However, the political environment and opportunities available play a significant role in the political incorporation of immigrants. By understanding these factors, we can better promote and support civic engagement and political participation in our communities. In addition, the conditions that facilitate immigrant collective action are complex, involving a combination of political opportunities, resources, and boundary markers. By recognizing and understanding these conditions, policymakers and advocates can better support and empower

immigrant communities to make collective claims on behalf of their larger group and work towards achieving greater social and political integration.

Future Research

Future research can build upon the limitations and recommendations of this study to further explore the effectiveness of Migrant Justice in advocating for the rights of migrant workers. One potential avenue for future research is to conduct a longitudinal study to track the progress of Migrant Justice's advocacy efforts over a longer time. This could help to identify any long-term changes in working conditions for migrant workers in Vermont and assess the sustainability of Migrant Justice's advocacy efforts.

Another potential area for future research is to examine the role of community organizing and grassroots activism in addressing the needs of migrant workers in other regions of the United States. By comparing the strategies and outcomes of different migrant justice organizations, researchers could identify best practices and potential areas for collaboration and improvement.

It would also be valuable for future research to explore the experiences and perspectives of migrant workers themselves, as they are the ones directly impacted by Migrant Justice's advocacy efforts. Conducting interviews and surveys with migrant workers could provide insights into the effectiveness of Migrant Justice's strategies and identify areas where further advocacy efforts are needed.

As with any research, there are limitations to this study that should be addressed in future research. For example, the study only focused on the perspectives of Migrant Justice advocates and did not incorporate the perspectives of other stakeholders, such as farmers or policymakers. Future research could aim to include a more diverse range of perspectives to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the complex issues involved.

The findings of this study suggest that Migrant Justice has had a positive impact on the lives of migrant workers in Vermont, but there is still much work to be done to ensure that their basic human rights are fully protected. By continuing to study the effectiveness of migrant justice organizations like Migrant Justice and advocating for the needs of migrant workers, researchers and advocates can work together to promote a more just and equitable society for all.

In conclusion, the findings of this research indicate that Migrant Justice has been effective in advocating for better working conditions and basic human rights for migrant workers in Vermont. The success indicators methodology used in this study allowed for a comprehensive analysis of the organization's effectiveness, highlighting its achievements in areas such as increased wages, better housing and food, and access to medical care. However, further research is needed to explore the long-term impact of Migrant Justice's efforts on the lives of migrant workers and to address the limitations of this study.

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to the field of migrant worker rights and social justice. It highlights the importance of grassroots activism and collective action in addressing systemic issues and advocating for marginalized communities. This study provides valuable insights for advocates and policymakers working towards creating more equitable and just working conditions for migrant workers. Ultimately, this research contributes to the broader discourse surrounding the treatment of migrant workers and human rights in the United States. This study underscores the importance of engaging in research that centers on the experiences and perspectives of marginalized communities and amplifies their voices. Overall, through the efforts made by Migrant Justice to promote social justice in the state, Vermonters are becoming more aware of how vital migrant workers are to the dairy industry and the treatment they receive on farms across Vermont. More people attend demonstrations and public forums run by Migrant

Justice. They are hearing their legislators be in support of stopping mass deportations and calling out law enforcement on impartial policing. Migrant Justice has effectively brought change to the lives of migrant workers and will continue to follow their mission of protecting immigrant rights.

References:

- Ben and Jerry's. 2022. "An Interview with Thelma Gómez, A Dairy Worker and Migrant Justice Leader Who Fights for Farmworker Rights." <https://www.benjerry.com/whats-new/2022/10/migrant-justice-thelma-gomez>. Accessed May 1, 2023.
- Choquette, Leslie. 2018. "French Canadian Immigration to Vermont and New England." *Vermont History*, 86(1): 1-8.
- Coalition of Immokalee Workers. 2020. "About CIW." <https://ciw-online.org/about/>. Accessed May 10, 2023.
- Drummond, Lucy. 2021. "Migrant Workers Vital to Vermont Dairy Industry, Need More Social and Medical Support." <https://www.uvm.edu/news/rsenr/migrant-workers-vital-vermont-dairy-industry-need-more-social-and-medical-support>. Accessed May 10, 2023.
- Elbert, Kim, and Dina G. Okamoto. 2013. "Social Citizenship, Integration and Collective Action: Immigrant Civic Engagement in the United States." *Social Forces*, 91(4): 1267-1292.
- Flores, Yolanda. 2017. "Latino farmworker activism in Vermont: Migrant Justice/Justicia Migrante." *Latino Studies*, 15(4): 516-521.
- Food Chain Workers Alliance. 2023. "About Food Chain Workers Alliance." <https://foodchainworkers.org/about-2/mission-vision-history/>. Accessed May 10, 2023.
- Leap, Braden, and Diego Thompson. 2018. "Social Solidarity, Collective Identity, Resilient Communities: Two Case Studies from the Rural U.S. and Uruguay." *Social Sciences*, 7(12): 1-19.
- Liberation. 2020. "Protest ICE data center in Williston, Vermont." <https://www.liberationnews.org/protest-of-ice-data-center-in-williston-vermont/>

- Mares, Teresa M. 2018. "Cultivating comida: Pushing the borders of food, culture, and politics. Dignity and devastation in Vermont's dairy industry." *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development*, 8 (3): 5–8.
- Mares, Teresa M. 2019. "Life on the other border: Farmworkers and food justice in Vermont." Oakland, CA: University of California Press
- Massey, Douglas S., Rugh, Jacob S., and Karen A, Pren. 2010. "The Geography of Undocumented Mexican Migration." *Mex Stud.* 26(1): 129-152.
- Merriam, Sharan B., and Elizabeth J. Tisdell. 2009. "Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation." San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Migrant Justice. 2010. VT Migrant Farmworker Solidarity Project announces "Vermont's Silenced Voices Project" as immigrant rights groups call for comprehensive immigration reform. <https://migrantjustice.net/node/46>. Accessed September 24, 2022.
- Migrant Justice. 2019. "About Migrant Justice." <https://migrantjustice.net/about>. Accessed September 24, 2022.
- Migrant Justice. 2019. "Leche con Dignidad." https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HUxTQb4Q2kc&list=PL0pDS7JGnQfdvum4IjT_mj_gPh3GWvHGb5. Accessed May 10, 2023.
- Migrant Justice. 2022. "2018-2022: Five Years of Milk with Dignity." Migrant Justice.
- NBC5. 2022. "Vermont organization continues the fight for migrant workers' rights." <https://www.mynbc5.com/article/vermont-organization-continues-the-fight-for-migrant-workers-rights/41236386>.
- Okamoto, Dina, and Kim Elbert. "Beyond the Ballot: Immigrant Collective Action in Gateways and New Destinations in the United States." *Social Problems*, 57(4), 529-558.

- Panikkar, B., & Barrett, M.-K. 2021. “Precarious Essential Work, Immigrant Dairy Farmworkers, and Occupational Health Experiences in Vermont.” *New Solutions: A Journal of Environmental and Occupational Health Policy*, 31(1), 10-21.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1048291121991248>
- Thompson, Diego. 2011. “Somos del Campo”: Latino and Latina gardeners and farmers in two rural communities of Iowa — a Community Capitals Framework approach. *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development* 1(3): 3–18.
- Thompson, Diego. 2020. “Building and transforming collective agency and collective identity to address Latinx farmworkers’ needs and challenges in rural Vermont.” *Agriculture and Human Values* 38(1): 129-143
- Truthout. 2023, March 29. Vermont Dairy Workers Battle Corporate Greed and Demand “Milk With Dignity.” <https://truthout.org/articles/vermont-dairy-workers-battle-corporate-greed-and-demand-milk-with-dignity/>
- Vermont Criminal Justice Council. 2017. “Model Fair and Impartial Policing Policy.” <https://vcjc.vermont.gov/content/model-fair-and-impartial-policing-policy>. Accessed May 10, 2023.
- VTDigger. 2022a. “At May Day rally in South Burlington, hundreds urge Hannafords to support dairy workers.” <https://vtdigger.org/2022/05/01/at-may-day-rally-in-south-burlington-hundreds-urge-hannaford-to-support-dairy-workers/>
- VTDigger. 2022b. “42 legislators are asking ICE not to deport Vermont farmworkers. Will Phil Scoot join them?” <https://vtdigger.org/2022/08/30/42-legislators-are-asking-ice-not-to-deport-vermont-farmworkers-will-phil-scott-join-them/>