Seeking Sovereignty:

Migrant Farm Worker Wellbeing in the New York Capital Region

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ABSTRACT

The United States economy has depended upon imported labor since inception, particularly in relation to agriculture. At present, billions of migrant farm workers help the US food economy run. In the northeast, a strong local food culture rests and grows upon consumer choice as representation of personal ethic; yet it is rare to find a migrant laborer's efforts credited for this, in any venue. There is an immense gap in research about the lives of migrant farm workers in the northeastern US. Because of this, we conducted 45 interviews with migrant farm workers, employers, and service providers over the course of 3 months in order to study migrant farm worker well-being in the Capital Region of New York State. We found that, broadly, migrant farm workers in this region are marginalized by food sovereignty barriers in relation to transportation, wages, nutritional healthcare, and cultural disconnection, and structural conditions that inform domestic and foreign policy and ideology, racial discrimination, and exclusion from the local food movement. Migrant farm workers also employ methods of resilience and cultural preservation through backyard/small-scale agriculture, utilization of local services, and connection with a growing migrant community. In the Capital Region this diverse and varied population is affected by food sovereignty barriers and structural disempowerment in different, interlocking ways; and they are not a population without agency, as they employ a diverse set of tactics and methods of cultural resilience.

KEY TERMS

Food sovereignty, food security, migrant farmworker, traditional food, social and cultural resilience

INTRODUCTION

Economy is grounded by labor; the history of the United States and its rise to global economic hegemony can be read as the history of the movement and regulation of labor forces. Although the Atlantic slave trade is what allowed the U.S. to establish itself in its first 400 years, U.S. agricultural has depended on migratory labor forces since the 19th century (O'Barr 2011). In the Northeast, agriculture was originally made possible by Black workers hailing from the southern U.S.; the 20th century has been characterized by a shift in predominant ethnicities of farmworkers, toward international migrants hailing from Mexico, as well as Central and South

America (Gray, 2014:26); these varied peoples we call 'Latinx'. This term is meant to indicate a gender-non-specific individual from one of the 26 countries comprising Mexico and South and Central America. The shift toward Latinx workers has been facilitated by economic transitions; after 1994, The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) has significantly increased immigration into the U.S. by driving over two million Mexican farmers out of business; increasing unemployment rates in Central and South America and the Caribbean leave folks to migrate northwards in search of greater opportunity. Raúl Delgado Wise describes this process by explicating how one third of Mexico's population has been placed into a state of "operating the shadows" (also known as a grey economy), causing mass migration into the U.S. (2006:39). Many of those who migrate to the U.S. are still a part of this grey economy because they lack necessary documentation, making them participants who fail to pay tax or comply with regulations (*The Economist,* 2004). However, this massive migration of non-legitimated laborers is not enough to fuel the U.S. economic engine; the U.S.'s dependence on foreign labor is so great that the government has created a system of state-officiated labor migration to further expand its workforce: the H-2A Temporary Agricultural Worker Program, and the H-2B Temporary Nonagricultural Worker Program, both of which facilitate companies' hiring of foreign laborers for sojourns in the U.S. Many industries, agriculture especially, rely explicitly on foreign laborers--both documented and undocumented--for profitable business; the case of New York agriculture is no different.

The Northeast Region Migrant Health Profile remarks that "While the numbers of workers who harvest the region's crops cannot be definitively stated, the numbers of dollars their labor produces for the five states' economies are carefully and regularly tabulated" (O'Barr

2011:2). The Economic Research Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture reports that, in 2009, both commodity crops and livestock in the Northeast Region were valued at $11 billion (ibid). According to a 2011 study by Hudson River Healthcare, Inc., estimated revenue from the top five agricultural commodities for New York alone was over $2.6 million-- a significant share of the region's considerable agricultural industry.

To power this industry, New York relied on 112,827 migrant individuals in 2011 for horticulture and livestock combined, as estimated by the National Center for Farmworker Health (O'Barr 2011). The typical April-October flow consists largely of migrants from Mexico, Jamaica, Haiti, Guatemala, Honduras, Texas, and Florida (ibid). The most common sources of off-season employment for migrant workers include: day labor, construction, packing houses, dairy, and factory work (ibid). In the Northeast, approximately 79% of "hired crop farmworkers" are born in Mexico, and bring with them a unique set of cultures and traditions (ibid).

It is very common for these migrating populations to be critically underserved. Migrants are invisible to most U.S. citizens (Gonzalez 2015), and the effects of marginalization are apparent. In 2011, the most frequent health diagnoses for migrants in New York were diabetes and hypertension (O'Barr 2011), both of which can be prevented by dietary management. The most commonly cited reasons by migrants for obstacles to healthcare access include lack of transportation, limited hours of clinic service, cost of healthcare, limited or no interpreter service, and frequent relocation in search of farm work (SAF 2016); the most common reasons for a lack of provision by farmers themselves include "immigration, economy, and national politics" (O'Barr 2011:13).

Migrant workers' cultures have different patterns of communications and structures of meaning--feelings, body language, beliefs, and language--than does U.S. settler culture, what we call the predominantly White U.S. culture commonly (and arrogantly) called 'American'. The majority of migrant workers in the U.S. are Latinx and primarily are Spanish-speakers, so interacting with primarily English speakers can lead to daily difficulties with employers and health care professionals (Bechtel, Davidhizar, & Spurlock 2000). Workers can easily lose job opportunities, or exacerbate existing health problems, if they cannot express themselves in their native tongue. If they do not have the ability to learn the language, they are likewise left without a voice in society; this is a major way in which migrant workers are disempowered in the U.S.

The difficulties of the language barrier compel migrant workers and their families to assimilate into the U.S. culture, which can often lead to a loss of one's heritage; regardless, navigating a foreign food culture without culturally appropriate health and nutrition education can result in a poor diet. Kilanowski (2011) found that migrant worker families battle high meal costs, lack of preparation time, long distances from grocery stores, and limited knowledge of nutrition. Other scholarly studies and news sources show working migrant families in similar situations (*The Economist,* 2010; Cason, Nieto-Montenegro, & Chavez-Martinez, 2006; Wall, 2013; Almendral, 2012; Messier, 2015). There is an unfortunate irony to the situation in which migrant workers and their families provide U.S. with whole, nutritious and affordable food, yet suffer from many of the issues native-born settlers can afford to remedy only after being subsidized by migrant labor.

53% of the hired migrant farmworkers (2-3 million) in the U.S are undocumented, 35% are U.S. citizens and 21% are legal permanent residents (SAF 2016). Nearly 80% of workers are

male and most are younger than 31; most are married and/or have children, yet almost six out of ten farmworkers live apart from their immediate family members (ibid). Immigrant farmworkers are often leaving their home countries, about 75% are from Mexico, to seek better education and employment opportunities for their families (ibid).

Migrant farm workers that are undocumented must hide in the shadows with caution when going to grocery shopping or even deciding where to eat. It is preferable for migrant workers and their families to shop during the night and eat at home (Almendral 2012). Undocumented migrant workers usually do not own a car or have a driver's license, so it necessary to take public transportation (if available) or find a license driver and carpool with other migrant workers (*The Economist* 2010). A migrant worker describes, "the hardest part is not being free, not being able to go out. It's like being in a jail," when any contact with an official could result in deportation, says Felix Verga (*The Economist* 2010). After work, individuals and families tend to not cook or prepare complicated and fresh meals because they are usually limited on time, money, and kitchen space. For instance, one may warm tortillas, cans of tomato sauce and shrimp-flavored cup-of-noodles for dinner (Almendral 2012). Often there is limited access to kitchen appliances, such as a stove, oven, hotplate, or microwave (Messier, 2015). Workers are typically on the job for 60-80 hours a week, and were excluded from the Fair Labor Standards and Practices Act of 1938, which guaranteed overtime, a minimum wage, and other basic protections (Gray 2014:23). This exploitability is often compounded by issues of documentation or migration.

Finally, without the access to culturally appropriate and fresh foods workers cannot prepare traditional foods celebrated in their home country. For example, workers from Mexico

crave molé (a rich, reddish-brown Mexican sauce poured over poultry), pozole (a pre-Columbian soup made from hominy, pork, chile, garbanzo, beans and other seasonings), tamales, menudo (soup made of tripe, hominy, chile, and other spices), nopales (pads of prickly pear cactus), or grilled meats for tacos (Kilanowski 2011). Money, time, and storage concerns make it difficult to purchase culturally acceptable and fresh foods regularly. On average, a single farmworker makes $11,000 a year, while a family with two working parents makes $16,000 a year in the U.S (SAF 2016). Sometimes workers are paid by the bucket, where in some states they earn a little as 40¢ for a bucket of produce (ibid). To overcome low wages, workers labor for many hours in the fields so they can make $50 for two tones of harvested produce (125 buckets) (ibid). Back home, migrant workers and families may be accustomed to street markets offering fresh produce everyday, making it more difficult to navigate American grocery stores and food culture; this often leads them to purchase prepared and processed foods, or others that are high in fats and sugars or otherwise not conducive to health.

While the situation of agricultural migrants in general has received some attention, something that may distinguish their situation in upstate New York is the presence of a highly visible local food movement in the region. While we began our research without consideration of this angle, we came to see how the national ideology of agrarianism translated into a local food discourse that excluded migrant labor from its narrative as well as its consumer base, while still relying on such workers to propel the industry. We clarify this focus in the analysis of our findings, as the discovery of this dynamic was very much contemporaneous with the process of data collection.

Overall, an invisible cognitive dissonance exists in which the U.S. relies heavily upon migrant labor to support citizens' lifestyles and food sources, yet consistently fails to reciprocate with advocacy and support for food sovereignty and the necessary social services for health, education, and housing.

Need for Research

In a survey of research databases and many pages of Google Scholar results, we found the following: five articles about the food security of migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFW) in the United States (none of these articles concerned MSFW in the Northeast, let alone in NY); zero articles about the food security of migrant backstretch racetrack employees whatsoever. Migrant populations in the United States are chronically underserved by researchers and social services alike. As Kiesler writes, **"**There has been little research on the social determinants of health and living conditions of [backstretch] workers" (2013:1074), Borre, Ertle and Graff echo: "Food insecurity is rooted in the cultural lifestyle of farmwork, poverty, and dependency. MSFW... food insecurity require[s] further study to determine the relationship with migration and working conditions" (2010:443).

This deficiency in large part may have to due with the relative difficulty in making these populations an object of study, with Castenada calling "racetrackers… a hidden population both in the sense that little has been published about them and the fact that their work is performed out of the public eye in the restricted backstretch area" (2010:491). Other researchers cite the "instability" of population numbers for MSFW: "the numbers of workers who harvest the region's crops cannot be definitively stated" (O'Barr 2011:3).

O'Barr, a prominent figure in the MSFW aid sector in the Hudson Valley, argues that "the importance of providing a *current* assessment of conditions, needs, resources, and available services for MSFW populations cannot be overstated," (O'Barr 2011:1). Those who work with MSFW populations insist on the importance of further research (in their own as well as all areas writ large) already indicates the need for our research, in order to understand more broadly the general contours of the challenges facing these segments of the population whose size and economic contributions to the welfare of the nation are outstripped only by their immutable dignity as human beings.

Additionally, the relative food insecurity of migrant communities in the U.S. is reported in all studies addressing the issue (Borre et. al. 2010; Kilanowski & Moore, 2010); one study found that "food insecurity was more than four times as prevalent among [migrant] farmworker households as among the general U.S. population," (Quant et. al. 2004:568); in a study of migrant communities near the U.S-Mexico border, 82% experienced food insecurity (Wiegel 2007:157); a study of migrant labor communities in North Carolina found that 63.8% of MSFW households studied were food insecure (Quant et. al. 2004). In a qualitative study interviewing migrant farm worker women about food in general, four of the five themes identified point toward difficulties eating well: meal cost, lack of preparation time, distance to store locations, and limited knowledge of healthy food choices (Kilanowski 2010).

Concurring with the need for more study expressed both explicitly and implicitly by the relative dearth of research addressing migrant labor food security is the conjunction of two common strands of research: the address of the predominant health concerns of migrant labor populations, and those focusing on the adverse health impacts of food insecurity, particularly on

children. Cook et. al. describe how children from food insecure households are twice as likely to have 'fair/poor' health as opposed to 'good' health (2004:1432); Connor, Layne and Hilb, in their meta-analysis of 76 studies addressing the health of migrant farm worker children, conclude that:

> Disparities exist in food security and the health outcomes of cognitive development, obesity, and dental caries. Despite these and other challenges migrant farm worker children and their families face, they exhibit enormous resilience and strengths that may help counterbalance these challenges (2014:16).

These concerns are exacerbated by the stressful and dangerous work environments within which migrant laborers tend to work; the health implications of food security make our research all the more salient.

However, none of these studies gave account of migrant communities in the Northeast, let alone New York State. We sought to discover whether any (or many) of the same issues are present in target migrant labor communities in the region and examine how food issues of these communities compare with previous research, as well as identify what local and contingent factors affect migrant laborer food experiences in our target communities and differentiate our subjects' experiences from those already studied.

This need, identified above, mirrors one demand that we make of our understandings: completeness and coherence. Our study of migrant laborer food sovereignty, justice and resiliency will contribute to that image which is still far from complete or coherent: how well do these communities eat, and what control over that quality can they exert?

Understanding opposing principles is for specificity and distinctness; such is principally what we seek to render. This goal, additionally, more readily equips a practice-- that is, results in the production of knowledge which can be utilized in the betterment of the human estate. By evaluating a few interconnected communities of migrant laborers, and providing substantive data about the food sovereignty dynamics of their situations, resilience tactics, and service needs, the standing of these communities would more easily be improved by those interested parties who might, and already do, work within them. Far and away from reason's perversion for the general, to which our project might unwittingly submit, the specific--tangible and local, the real flowing of bodies--has served as an animating force in our research.

METHODS

Purpose statement

The purpose of our research is to better understand food sovereignty of, resilience tactics developed or used by, and relevant programs serving, migrant labor populations in the Capital region of New York, as practical equipment for the improvement of those populations' standing and community welfare; insofar as our research joins with prior studies that have identified the ill-served nature of these populations, we will work to offer suggestions towards the meeting of identified needs.

Research questions

1. What determination can be given to the food sovereignty of target migrant labor communities and how could they be evaluated in terms of food justice?

2. What significant impediments to food sovereignty and justice exist for target migrant labor communities?

3. What resilience tactics are used by migrant communities-- specifically, at the intersection of culture and food?

4. To what extent do social service and assistance programs serving target migrant communities address issues of food sovereignty and justice, and work to foster resilience? (I.e., how effective are those programs, and how might these programs better serve target communities?)

5. What economic structures occasion flows of migrant workers, including target communities, and how do these structures relate to or occasion those communities' food security and justice issues (if such issues exist) and/or resilience tactics?

Methodological framing

Our research methods were devised using two qualitative methodological paradigms. Phenomenological research, rooted distantly in the philosophy of Edmund Husserl, is an approach through which the researchers seek to identify the 'essence' of lived human experiences concerning a phenomenon (Creswell 2002). By approaching our research populations in such a way as to gather, from their own descriptions, the 'lived experience' of their food lives--their experience of sovereignty or subjection and the populations' unique cultural tactics of resilience--we seek ultimately, in some way, to give account of these peoples' dynamic experience with as much faithfulness to their actual lives as possible. Maxwell (1996) identifies a number of shifts in food security discourse as it incorporates the onus of

postmodernism: 1) a shift in focus from the global or national to the community and household; 2) from a food first perspective (calories), to a livelihood perspective; and 3) from objective indicators to subjective perceptions; these shifts are all emblematic of the phenomenological spirit of the postmodern approach to food security research, which spirit and approach we have uptaken and appropriated, nominally, in the rejection of the standard survey, and more significantly in the design of our interviews and focus groups.

With this internal critique of food discourse came the blossoming of a set of new concepts that helped to add complexity, flesh, and depth to the study of food situations. Discourses of food sovereignty and food justice began to take root and grow out, creating spaces in which values of autonomy, self-determination, dietary efficacy, and equity were held internally, instead of such values being external goals of supposedly value-neutral research. We, in particular, focus on the concept of food sovereignty, because it helps us capture some of the nuance necessary when addressing the situations of populations that face unique barriers, like migrants.

While in international relations food sovereignty is a policy discourse that "focuses attention on the international 'framework' (World Trade Organization, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, etc.) and the international causes of hunger and malnutrition" (Windfuhr and Jonsen 2005:xi), it is originally rooted in the International Peasant Movement, and "activists have recently called for the adoption of this framework among low-income communities of color" in the United States (Alkon and Mares 2012:327). What makes the claim of food sovereignty unique, how it "articulates with the work of food justice and community food security" (ibid.) is the goal of a world where "all peoples, nations and states are able to determine

their own food producing systems and policies [in such a way] that provide[s] every one of us with good quality, adequate, affordable, healthy and culturally appropriate food" (via Campesina 2007:2); and while it originated in a peasant-agrarian context, the claim of food sovereignty is generalizable to the assertion that all communities should control the eco-social coordinates of this important social and cultural aspect of their lives. We think the situation of agricultural migrant workers in the United States is particularly appropriate for food sovereignty address due to the unique nature of their position: made to navigate a novel and local food economy that does not reflect their heritage, but to which they do contribute; while working to maintain and redefine their cultures in a foreign context; all while situated in a socio-economic position which often facilitates their disempowerment and exploitation.

To study food sovereignty, we found the phenomenological paradigm particularly efficacious. Focusing on narratives and lived experiences is the most effective way to address issues of control and autonomy, which are as much psychological experiences as signifiers of structural power; although we were foreigners in our own right, distant by structure to their lived experience, we sought to understand some aspect of what it is like for these people to live and eat here, by collecting the stories of migrant farmworkers as data for our research.

Where the phenomenological approach squarely situated our interactions with the target populations of migrant workers, our research also incorporated elements of a paradigm known as action research. This framework occasions a collaborative approach to research in which investigators partner with populations and stakeholders to produce knowledge utilizable for the improvement of the standing of target populations, such as increased political efficacy or optimization of services provided by institutions. Berg writes, "action research is one of the few

research approaches that embraces principles of participation, reflection, empowerment, and emancipation of people and groups interested in improving their social situation or condition" (2004:195). As such, the disinterested presupposition latent or manifest widely throughout all quantitative and many qualitative research paradigms is explicitly eschewed in favor of the expression of value commitments in research design through a focus on actionable solutions as research outcomes (Creswell 2002). We applied this paradigm by working closely with stakeholders serving our target populations to produce data and results which could be utilized in the improvement of the services offered by those stakeholders; thus, through our work with the target populations and some of their support institutions, we sought to contribute toward the material good of manifesting the food sovereignty and amplifying the resilience efforts of the underserved and understudied migrant populations with which we worked.

Setting of Population

Our study focused on migrant populations in the Capital District; this encompasses the counties of Albany, Saratoga, Schenectady, Washington, Fulton, and Rensselaer. Detailed demographic information for these counties are below (Table 1).

Table 1. Demographic Information of Target Counties (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014)

	Land Area, in sq. mi. (2014)	**Population (2014)**	**Median Household Income**	**Major Racial Segements (<1%) of Permanent Population (2014)**	**Major Industries (2014)**	**Number of Farms (2013)**
Albany	522.80	308,171	$59,394	77.6% White	Manufacturing; Wholesale Trade;	45

				alone; 13.7% Black; 5.8% Asian alone; 5.7% Latinx or Hispanic	Retail Trade; Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; Healthcare and Social Assistance	
Saratoga	809.98	224,921	$69,826	93.9% White alone; 1.8% Black; 2.4% Asian alone; 2.9% Hispanic or Latinx; 1.6% Two or More Races	Manufacturing; Wholesale Trade; Retail Trade;Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; Healthcare and Social Assistance	199
Schenectady	204.52	155,735	$56,061	79.8% White alone; 11.3% Black or African American alone; 4.5% Asian alone; 6.6% Latinx; 3.5% Two or More Races	Manufacturing; Wholesale Trade; Retail Trade; Healthcare and Social Assistance	36
Washington	831.18	62,372	$52,361	94.6 % White alone; 3.4% Black or African American alone; 2.5% Hispanic or Latinx; 1.1% Two	Manufacturing; Retail Trade; Health Care and Social Assistance; Administrative Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services;	121

				or More Races		
Fulton	495.47	54,105	$44,276	95.6% White alone; 2.0% Black or African American alone; 2.8% Hispanic or Latinx; 1.5% Two or More Races	Manufacturing; Retail Trade; Health Care and Social Assistance	73
Rensselaer	652.43	159,774	$59,432	87.5% White alone; 7.3% Black or African American alone; 2.5% Asian Alone; 4.5% Latinx; 2.4% Two or More Races	Manufacturing; Wholesale Trade; Retail Trade; Health Care and Social Assistance	92

Situated almost due north of the NY-Metropolitan area and south of the Adirondack Mountains, most of the Capital District of New York's land lies west of the Hudson River. It has a topology of rolling hills and cascading ridges carved out by glacial retreat at the conclusion of the last Ice Age, with much of the area once underlying and left with depositions from Glacial Lake Albany; plentiful water for irrigation, and the river's affordance of easy commerce during early development, helped make the Capital District an upstate economic hub for trade, manufacturing, and tourism. Nowadays, Interstate-87 runs direct from New York City, through

Albany, and on further north through the rest of the region. Generally, concentrated development (high-density housing and retail) can be found in the areas immediately surrounding I-87 in the region (Albany and Saratoga Counties being examples); agriculture and other land-intensive economic models are deployed elsewhere, further from the arterial flow of the interstate (further out in Saratoga, or in Washington County). Proximity to I-87 and level of development can be understood through population, land area, median income, and the number of farms reported by the Census.

Existing Practices and Methods

Food Security Assessment Tool

The United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service has developed the *Guide to Measuring Household Food Security* (2000); this document lays out the challenge of measuring food security:

> The full range of food insecurity and hunger cannot be captured by any single indicator. Instead, a household's level of food insecurity or hunger must be determined by obtaining information on a variety of specific conditions, experiences, and behaviors that serve as indicators of the varying degrees of severity of the condition (Bickel et. Al 2000, p.8).

To standardize and make broadly communicable data indications of food in/security, the USDA also offers and suggests a 3-stage, screen-based 'US Household Food Security Survey Module', as part of the US Food Security Survey (US FSS), meant to be administered in-person or over the telephone. This instrument is used by various federal- and state-level governmental agencies, as well as NGOs, to provide broad data about national and state food in/security; it was also used by

all five of the articles amongst the literature addressing food security of MSFW. The USDA also offers a Spanish language adaptation of the survey instrument. Both are said to take about 15-20 minutes per administration of the instrument.

We found this instrument to be limiting for our purposes; it is vastly ill-suited for understanding the variations that make the socio-economic positions of migrant laborers and their communities unique and disproportionately food-insecure. One migrant laborer food security researcher, Dr. Teresa Mares, in a personal communication, described the US FSS as "rapid yet surficial," and utilizing numerous conceptualizations and instrumentations that fail to adequately describe migrant populations (personal communication, 2015); with such paradigmatically insufficient assumptions, we believed it would be ill-advised to deploy the US FSS in our study, even though it is the *lingua franca* of food security research. While Dr. Mares is working to rewrite the survey for use with migrant populations, such revisions are beyond the investigators' expertise and the purview of this investigation; accompanying shifts in food security discourse towards a subjective, community/household livelihood perspective, we instead chose to employ a slate of qualitative methodologies in our study.

Other methodological approaches

Kilanowski, in a study that has important food sovereignty and food justice implications (2011), but does not explicitly wield the concepts, performed (methodologically) brief interviews with migrant farmworker mothers, recorded the responses verbatim, and arranged them into themes to understand emergent issues in their experiences. The questions were specifically designed to query "personal factors… environmental factors… and emotions/physical

expectations" (ibid.), which querying evinces all three shifts identified by Maxwell (1996). The interview style was open and non-leading, with three broad questions opening onto a surprising consistency of answers from the study's participants; Kilanowski's methods served as a spring for our own research design.

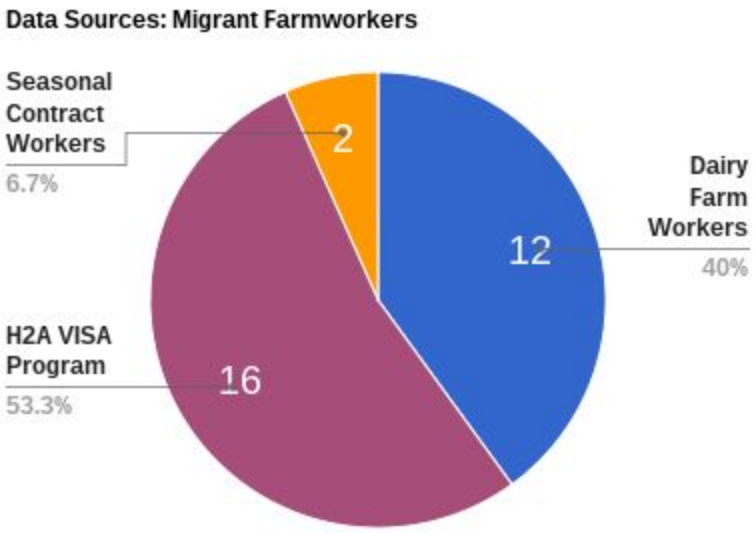
Study Population: Sampling, Instrumentation, and Data Collection

Our mixed-methods qualitative research utilized semi-structured interviews, focus groups, direct observation, site visits, photography, and archival analysis (Creswell 2002). We assessed demographic information from the Census, the 2011 Migrant Health Profile for the Northeast (O'Barr 2011), as well as through our semi-structured interviews. We located a convenient sample of interview respondents and focus groups participants by working through stakeholders, while also employing snowball sampling among workers to develop connections throughout their communities. This multi-dimensional approach was used to investigate the food sovereignty of migrant laborer (ML) or migrant farmworker (MFW--all of our worker respondents were both) populations in the Capital region. Our methodologies employed both source and method triangulation to assure the validity of our data (Creswell 2002:18); this allowed us to produce reliable findings, theoretically explicit conclusions, and socially-oriented recommendations.

Our research brought us into contact with forty-five unique individuals; among them, thirty were migrant workers, eleven were service providers, and four were farmers who employed migrants. Of the 30 migrant workers, twelve were year-round employees on dairy farms, 16 were H-2A temporary agricultural workers, and two were seasonal contract workers

who lived full-time in the U.S (figure 1). Nineteen hailed from Mexico, nine from Jamaica, and two from Guatemala. They worked on four dairies, one vegetable farm, one nursery, and one orchard, all of them in the Capital region. Our interviewee's heritages generally parallel the broader migrant community makeup in this part of New York (O'Barr 2011), on a smaller scale.

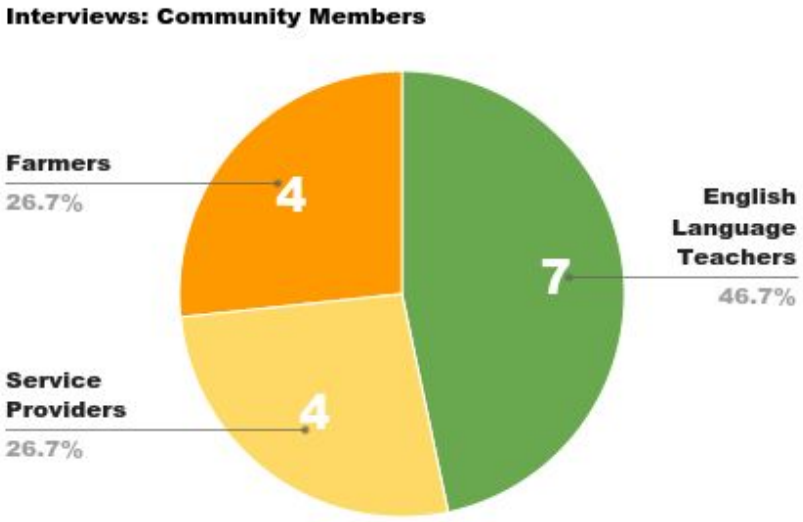
Figure 1: Migrant Farmworker Interaction



Among the migrants, from whom all data was collected between February and April 2016, we met with twenty in three focus groups (of sizes ten, five, and five); these focus groups were conducted in their places of work, and lasted about an hour; in some cases, we provided food for the participants, helping to foster an environment of community and a space of openness. All the members of each singular focus group were from a singular farm, which allowed for cross-talk between co-workers that helped produce more substantial data. (See Appendix B for focus group questions).

Additionally, we conducted ten semi-structured interviews with individual workers. This was the first of two rafts of semi-structured interviews; the second involved speaking with service providers and employers of migrant workers. The eleven service providers with whom we spoke worked at 7 organizations, all of which provide services to migrant workers within the study area; these services included English as a new language (ENL) classes, affordable medical and psychological health care, educational assistance, nutrition classes, casework, and advocacy. We spoke to one person each from the Worker Justice Center of New York, Saratoga Economic Opportunity Council, Backstretch Employee Service Team, New York State Migrant Education, Latino Community Advocacy Program, and the Saratoga Community Health Center, as well as six who worked with the New York Board of Cooperative Education as either ENL teachers or migrant outreach workers (figure 2).

Figure 2. Interviews with Service Providers and Farmers



Among the farmers with whom we spoke, one ran an orchard, two ran nurseries, and the forth a vegetable farm. All four of the farmers from whom we collected data employed migrants; we were able to speak to workers employed by three of them.

These two rafts of interviews and the focus groups employed similar but distinct lines of questioning. The instruments deployed with ML were structured to query: 1) ML perceptions of what constitutes good health and nutrition; 2) obstacles ML encounter that stifle attempts to achieve good health, diet, and proper nutrition; 3) what community resources Capital Saratoga region ML are using, if any; and 4) specific practices ML are using to improve their health. Interviews with sundry stakeholders were designed to query: 1) health or social service programs that are utilized or not utilized; 2) the sorts of accommodations offered to migrants; and 3) problems and struggles with service delivery to area migrant populations. These interviews

required travel to farm or migrant aid sites in which we collected data through direct observation (Creswell 2002:18). (See Appendix A for interview questions).

Data analysis and limitations

Interview and focus group data was transcribed and coded to determine emerging themes, and whether our core concepts were touched upon in each interview and focus group session/questions. Additionally, we used descriptive narratives to organize our transcribed data, as a "low-interference data analysis technique used to recognize trends in participants' responses and to convey our multiple research findings" (Schneller 2010:10). Overall, our main goal was to better understand common themes which emerged during the semi-structured interviews and focus groups.

Table 2: Limitations and Solutions for Future Research

Constraints	Solutions(s) for Future Research
Seasonality - Farmworkers live a seasonal life; many who work on nurseries, orchards, vegetable farms, or the racetrack backstretch were not present during our study period, meaning that there was a lower number of migrant farmer workers as potential respondents.	The best time to conduct this sort of research would be in the late spring, summer, and early autumn.
Time - 3 months (February to April 2016) of data collection in the Capital Region. In this period, we were not able to speak with as many workers as we would have liked, and did not have the time to assess a representative or generalizable sample.	At least half a year of data, if not multiple years of data collection, would be ideal, in order to truly assess the distribution of migrant workers in the region, build stronger relationships, and produce a more thorough assessment.
Information and Language Barriers - Migrant farm workers (documented or	The best solution is to have a long period of time to establish tight relationships with

undocumented) and stakeholders may hold back information due to fear of repercussions or endangerment.	migrant workers and stakeholders. Also, holding multiple interviews with one individual can help overcome shyness or fear, and overall create a space of confidentiality. Having a communicator fluent in the migrant's native language also helps to overcome these barriers.

FINDINGS

A thematic analysis of our data revealed three foci: food sovereignty barriers; overlying structural conditions; and tactics of cultural sovereignty. Generally, a broad divide can be made between those workers who once migrated from other countries to establish permanent residence in the US--of the fourteen with whom we spoke, twelve lived on the dairies at which they worked, and two were seasonal contract workers who lived near the orchard at which they often labored--and seasonally migratory laborers who find work through the H-2A Visa program, facilitated by the federal and NY Department of Labor. The legal protections afforded the temporary-yet-recurring H-2A workers offer some advantages, while the stark seasonality and temporal contraction of their stay in the US presents some difficulties; contrariwise, while there are some advantages to the year-round residence of those employed on dairy farms, the long-term co-location of work and home fosters its own unique slate of challenges. Finally, the Saratoga Racetrack itself presents a separate set of issues for workers who come seasonally to care for the horses and are considered migrant farm workers by New York State. For purposes of worker protection and privacy we utilize alias names throughout this paper.

Food Sovereignty Barriers

Food sovereignty barriers are, straightforwardly, particular or structural factors which directly impinge on the food sovereignty of the workers in our study. In our analysis, we identified four themes as commonly mentioned significant barriers to migrant worker food security among worker, employer, and community influential responses: transportation, nutrition and education, wages, and cultural disconnection.

Transportation

Perhaps the most cited barrier, (if not in all cases held up as the most significant) was a chronic and recurring lack of access to transportation to and from food shopping areas. We saw four transportation options available to ML, some with more or less access to each: (1) the farmer owner provides rides or let the workers borrow a car, (2) individuals or family own a car with or without a valid drivers license, (3) workers use a taxi or "raitero" service (someone who transports groups of low wage workers to their desired destination for a fee), or (4) individuals or families find rides with nearby friends, family members, or service providers.

Our first interview was held with two women from Mexico at a Dairy 1 in Schuylerville, NY: one stay at home mom, Elsa, and a cook for the workers, Marta. Marta shared her family's grocery shopping habits, and stated that they food shop once a week (either Fridays or Saturdays) after getting paid. At first the dairy's owners would personally drive Marta and her family to the grocery store; however, over time, the owners told Marta's family that they had to find their own transportation. We saw this trend on other dairy farms in Schuylerville, where a farm owner would be welcoming at first with their workers and then over time did not want the workers

depending on them for rides. Marta's solution was to buy a car: "We bought the cheapest car we could find," even though her and her husband are undocumented and cannot apply for a license in the state of New York.

Owning and driving a car in New York without documentation significantly exacerbates the legal hazard of being pulled over for breaking the law or simply for looking foreign. Marta never mentioned any worries about driving without a license, but she was eager to apply for a license in Vermont since undocumented individuals can obtain one there. At Dairy 2 a working mother, Alessandra, explained her difficulties with documentation and the lack of freedom of movement that comes with it: "Well, I say that it is good but...all is fine but it's just that if we don't have papers, we don't have rights. Going out…is difficult but...well, no. They [government, police] don't do anything to us. And if you don't have papers they don't know it." Not only does a lack of state sanction hinder workers from food sovereignty, but also contributes to difficulties in community preservation if one cannot leave the area they are working for long periods of time.

Two brothers and housemates who work at Dairy 2 in Schuylerville said that they use a taxi service or ask a close friend for transportation. The taxi service is expensive to use, especially going to and from Schuylerville and Saratoga Springs; however, a service like this has to be used when there is no other option for transit. Two workers and housemates from another dairy in Schuylerville, known for its poor housing and working conditions, also face this barrier. Alejandro and Joseph live with three other single men in one trailer, all of whom go grocery shopping together. They use a Saratoga Springs taxi service and expressed, "Well, they charge us expensive fees, but that's the only option we have." This particular dairy farm is generally

unsupportive of workers' well-being, and the farm owner will not provide transportation if an individual needs assistance. Since Alejandro and Joseph use a taxi service, they choose to shop at Walmart, to eliminate extra travel costs, and to save money on household and food products.

Unlike dairy farm workers, agricultural workers under the H-2A Visa program often have a stronger support system through H-2A and the farm owners or managers. At Farm 1 in Altamont, NY, the six workers with whom we spoke were originally from Jamaica and have been coming to work for Farm 1, on average, over 10 years. These individuals have gained a sense of trust with the owners and retail manager, and have the ability to borrow 1-3 cars at a time to go grocery shopping. Farm 1 has two cars all employees can use, and since the migrant farmworkers have a close connection, the retail and hiring manager lets them borrow her personal car on occasion. A handful of the workers at Farm 1 have international driving licenses, allowing them legal road access in a foreign country. Acquiring an international driving license, also known as an International Driving Permit (IDP) requires the individual to apply for an IDP with a valid driver's license and passport size photo in their home country. Once accepted, the individual can drive overseas as long as they have their home country driver's license and IDP on hand at all times. The same case was found at Nursery 1 in Petersburgh, NY where a group of 10 individuals from Mexico are able to drive farm-owned vehicles with an IDP.

The difference in access to transportation can clearly be seen between the two types of workers: H-2A Visa program workers and year-round dairy farm workers. H-2A workers will always have reliable transportation due to many conditions under the Visa program requiring farm owners to supply sufficient resources; while undocumented, seasonal, and year-round workers will suffer more due to lack of mobility, which impedes food sovereignty.

Wages/Work schedule

Common themes among workers experiences, both year-round and H-2A workers, were receiving low wages and intense work schedules. Many workers expressed that there was not enough money or time to shop regularly for fresh or local food because the priorities are earning enough money to survive in the U.S. (requiring longer shifts typically over eight hours a day), and saving money to send back home to family members.

Marta and Elsa from Dairy 1 expressed that they cannot buy everything at once when they go grocery shopping: "We need to buy one product, one week and another product the other week. We must divide our purchases based on priority. We cannot buy everything at once each week." In Marta's household both her and her husband worked for the farm. Marta cooks for the workers and earns $8.75/hour, while her husband milks cows at least 12 hours out of the day for minimum wage. Elsa is a stay-at-home mom, while her husband milks and serves as an unofficial translator among the workers for 12 hours out of the day for minimum wage as well. After discovering that workers at Dairy 1 were paid minimum wage or below, Leanne Troy-Murphy from the Worker Justice Center wanted to help. The minimum wage in the state of New York is $9 an hours, so Leanne recommended filing a lawsuit and Worker Justice would provide the costs of a lawyer; however, Marta is undocumented and did not want her or her husband facing punishment from the farm-owners, or worse, deportation, which would involve leaving her children alone in the United States. She explained, "I did not want to get myself into any problems." At Dairy 1, farm owners believe that they do not have to pay workers the minimum wage, as they are giving the workers 'free living' (rent and utilities are paid-for).

Marta and other workers are tied down by their 'illegal' status giving them no voice, forcing them to face these issues uncontested.

A similar issue was found at Dairy 2 and Dairy 3 where single individuals mentioned that they cannot buy everything at once because they are earning under $10/hour for 12 hour (or more) workdays, without receiving overtime pay. Mateo from Dairy 2 stated his financial situation: "Well, not a lot [money]. We have to buy with caution, if we don't, then our whole paycheck is wasted….we always need to be careful." Mateo and his brother, Cesar, need to be economically savvy with their purchases and prioritize where the money should go: "We need to help our family in Guatemala...our mother and father."

Sending money back home (abroad) to support family members was a main priority for most respondents. To maximize remittances, long hours are worked and nutrition and free time are sacrificed, leaving workers to purchase low quality food at stores, such as Walmart, or giving them no occasion to maintain a *huerta* (personal garden) even when farm owner allow space for personal gardens. When we interviewed the single men at Dairy 2 and Dairy 3 they never considered having a *huerta* when they all clearly stated they have the space for it.

Dairy workers do not have much free time because they are occupied milking and caring for the cows early in the mornings (between 3am - 5am) until the evenings, with meal breaks in between. All those with whom we spoke had either one or zero days of rest during the week, this varies on workers' schedules, falling on any day of the week, and rarely the same day as many of their co-workers. The single day of rest is when workers would take care of grocery shopping and other errands. A lack of coordination with one's coworkers and cultural familiars diminishes community and wellbeing.

While H-2A workers also tended to work very long hours, they earned slightly more than the typical dairy worker rate. In the state of New York, that rate was $11.74 per hour, with no consideration of the type of employment and experience. On Farm 1 the retail manager, Casey, viewed this set wage as a drawback to the H-2A Visa Program: "One of the bad things about H-2A is that, by contract, we are only allowed to pay them a top dollar, which is also the minimum. So it's a flat rate...and it's not fair." Farm 1 employed a father and son from Jamaica; the father had been traveling to Farm 1 since 1983, while the son had been employed since 2007, and both are earning the same rate pay; Casey said that "it's not fair that they make the same wage, and the job experience is completely different." She was the most outraged out of all six workers with this flaw in the visa program. One worker indicated that the set wage was not issue:

> Back home, a dollar is a dollar. Whereby, the US dollar, will equal… I think seventeen Jamaican dollars. So that's a big plus there. If I take home a hundred dollars, I'm rich, pretty much (laughter)… and the jobs and resources in Jamaica is not so plentiful as here. Whereby, I could just walk out the door and get the job here. In Jamaica, I'd have to walk around the building, up the hill, before I could get a call to say, 'Maybe, you might get the job.'

Agricultural jobs are rarely sought by U.S.-born laborers because they are labor intensive and low-paying. Therefore, farmers are seeking out labor from countries that have a weaker economy where the U.S. dollar is more valuable, incentivizing workers to migrate northward. For this reason, Jamaican workers are more inclined to work through the H-2A Visa program knowing that one US dollar is equivalent to seventeen Jamaican dollars.

The invisibility of workers is often cited by academics and has been evident in our research mainly through undocumented dairy workers and their families. Without legal status in the U.S., workers are unable to seek legal assistance to battle low wages and deserved overtime pay, which prevents them from power-building and lowers their capacity to organize within the community. H-2A workers also face low wages, but state protection and its mandates for employer provision often help them assert sovereignty over their food lives.

Food and Nutritional Healthcare

Service providers, farm owners, and farm workers provided clashing perspectives on nutritional and healthcare provision and education. The fact that service providers and farm owners are accustomed to a Western diet and healthcare influence their perspective of migrant workers' lifestyle and cultural traditions. Community organizations and farm owners assumed that healthcare and nutritional education is not a priority to migrant workers in their country of origin. Interviewing workers and their families showed that they do have a sense of health care and nutritional education, but they do not have the same understandings of food and health as dominant U.S. culture and narrative.

While interviewing MFWs at their homes there was either a visible amount of food in the kitchen or traditional dishes being cooked. There was no evidence of MFW suffering to get sufficient quantities of food, but rather struggling to access fresh, locally grown produce, dairy, and meats. Kathy McNeice, program director at the Saratoga Community Health Center agrees, "We don't see, necessarily, very many starving people, but a lot of people who eat the wrong thing, the fast thing, the cheapest thing, and the most convenient thing….What we hear the most

is, 'I can't afford...the produce or the things that you suggest." Unfortunately, those who have the ability to shop regularly for fresh and local foods are from upper-middle class and predominantly white Americans. Instead of shopping at farmers' markets and supermarkets supplying organic and local products, MFWs and their families overwhelmingly go to discount stores such as Walmart or Price-Rite for their affordability and convenience. Both supermarkets offer fresh produce, meat, and dairy sections, but also a dizzying array of prepared products containing preservatives, fats, and highly refined sugars. Most MFWs that we spoke with agreed that the American diet is centered around processed and sugary foods, which is not always customary to their diet; as one H-2A worker from Nursery 1 expressed, "We are not accustomed to American food. It has too much sugar;" another H-2A worker from Farm 1 said that "in America, people like to eat junk food. In Jamaica, people like to cook--from start to finish." Many of the Jamaican workers indicated that the main differences between Jamaican and U.S. food is the amount of time spent preparing meals, and the quality and freshness of the food.

All the Jamaican H-2A workers we spoke with made it clear that they prefer to cook their meals from start to finish, whether that means purchasing fresh produce and meat at the grocery and cooking a meal from scratch, or growing their own crops and raising livestock and preparing meals on the farm. Both options of meal preparations are available to these workers, as one worker from Farm 1 shared his experiences in cooking in Jamaica compared to cooking in the U.S., "Not much different. We can make it the way we want it….we can buy the same things if we want, so not much different." The H-2A workers with whom we spoke were lucky to work at farms where they can grow their own crops and raise livestock, and were also situated in towns that have access to Jamaican products and flavors. They mentioned the presence of Grace Foods

products in Walmart, Price Rite, and Hannafords, and some pointed toward S&A West Indian Grocery in downtown Albany, NY, which specializes in African and Hispanic Caribbean products. Farm owner, Louie, from Orchard 1 believes Jamaican migrant workers are more in touch with their food than Americans based on his observations of employing and working with these workers. Over the years Louie's foreman has built a large vegetable and fruit garden from which workers can harvest food for personal use. Louie remarked on what he called 'a funny pattern of eating' among his workers: "At least two days a week, during the course of an hour and half to two hour lunch, they will go down and slaughter a chicken from the pen in the yard. Slaughter it, pluck it, cook it, and eat it for lunch. Then they come back to work." While Louie remains captivated with his workers' methods of food preparation, this is seen as normal in Jamaican culture. Derek, a H-2A worker on Louie's orchard, explained that he prefers to not consume meat from grocery stores due to past experiences of buying soiled chicken: "We don't like to buy the rotten chicken at the store, at Walmart and those places. Sometimes we have an animal we send to the butcher shop...we like it fresh, on the fresher side. We don't fancy the overnight." These workers were often effective at creating their own source of food; on the other hand, many Latinx MWF described that they struggled to access local and fresh foods.

Latinx MWFs also tended to shop at Walmart, Price-Rite, and other discount supermarkets; as Alessandra, from Dairy 2 declares, "It is more economical for the Latinx community to shop at Walmart." When we asked what type of foods they buy on a regular basis, they mentioned a variety of produce (tomatoes, carrots, onions, cabbage, lettuce, apples, and bananas), meats (chicken, beef, sausage, ham, and fish), beans, rice, dairy products (milk, cheese, cream, and butter), canned goods (mainly vegetables), eggs, bread, juice, and ingredients

to make tortillas, all of which can be found in Walmart. Most Mexican mothers on dairies go grocery shopping for their families, and the mothers say they buy the "most Mexican" and freshest. Walmart is able to supply a variety of Mexican inspired products in its International aisle; however, no other products or brands relating to the other twenty-five Latinx cultures are available. When asked if Walmart or Price-Rite supply fresh produce and meats, most MFWs said yes. Nonetheless, workers stated they can find fresher produce and meats in Hannaford and Price Chopper, and most definitely at farmers markets. Natalia from Dairy 2 indicated that leafy greens and tomatoes are "really ugly in Walmart, and are better in Price Chopper." There is a desire to shop at farmer's markets for their multitude of high quality products, but as one stay at home mother, Elsa, from Dairy 1 says, "Yes it's definitely fresher but more expensive," and the the food stamps she receives are quickly used due to higher priced food. Eating fresh and healthy food is important to MFW, but such food is regularly inaccessible to them.

When MFW are not given the means to provide themselves with local and fresh food, they tend to suffer from nutrition-related diseases. According to Kathy McNeice of the Saratoga Community Health Center, the MFWs they see often developed nutrition-related illness after coming to the United States. McNeice was not the only person who mentioned the risk of being exposed to a Western diet; farm-owner Louie opined, "I feel like the biggest risk they [MFW] took was exposing themselves to the Western diet or the North American diet of highly refined foods." Nonetheless, he continues the conversation by saying that MFW are subject to the same risks as any other American because both are shopping at the same groceries stores: "We are all going to end up eating the same stale food laced with preservatives, sugars, salts, hydrogenated

oils, basically exposes ourselves to a bad diet." He is not the only person we interviewed who expressed that workers should be advised not to eat what they see on TV.

The workers surveyed in the research seemed to have less nutritional-related illness then the general migrant population in the Capital region, as described by service providers. While only two male workers with whom we spoke suffered from diabetes, Kathy McNeice at the Saratoga Community Health Center recounted, "most of our patients are diabetic or hypertensive." She says that the clinic's main message is to teach preventive medicine, starting from the basics, which is having the capability of accessing healthy foods in order to eat well balanced meals. Alessandra, a wife of a worker at Dairy 2, said her husband who developed diabetes because of poor eating habits, long work hours, and consumption of sugary drinks. The navigation of a foreign food culture is sure to influence the makeup of his dietary inputs. Kathy believes that Latinx workers come from cultures that do not seek out medical help until it is an emergency; but this was not the case for Alessandra, who said, "we think work is important, but what is more important is our health," before adding that if they are sick, they take time to fully recover and take precautions to prevent the illness in the future so they do not have to sacrifice work and money-earning time.

It is important to understand the cultural differences among U.S. settlers and MFW when nutritional health care is discussed, to avoid assumptions and their harms. It is also important to understand the lack of access workers and their families have to local food (see *Exclusion from the Local Food Movement*).

Cultural Disconnection

There are two forms of cultural disconnection limiting MFWs' ability to achieve food sovereignty. First, the migrant laborers with whom we spoke expressed that they were often expected to assimilate to U.S. settler culture, especially in the venues of food and language; this assimilation can create a mental disconnection from their home country and culture. It is healthier and more just if workers had sovereignty over their food and health situations, so that they can integrate certain aspects of U.S. settler culture while also maintaining their own traditional knowledge. Secondly, the traditional gender roles of many Latinx cultures can also diminish food sovereignty. In interviews with services providers and migrant workers, we found that Latinx men living without a family struggle more to consume culturally appropriate and healthful food.

Assimilation into U.S. culture leads migrant workers and their families to lose connections with their cultural heritage and identity. When these connections are lost, consuming appropriate food for one's health becomes even more difficult when is navigating an unfamiliar food culture. Marta and Elsa from Dairy 1 explain that they are struggling to have their children eat Mexican food, speak Spanish, and stay involved in the Mexican culture. Marta said her sons "want to imitate Americans. My oldest son wants to be more American than he already is, and he says he is not Mexican." She continues to describe that her oldest son was born in Mexico, but prefers to eat American food--perhaps fearing that he will be socially excluded in school if he brings a "foreign-looking or smelling" lunch. Controlling food behavior choices among children is especially challenging when entering a new country where it is expected that foreigners will eat like 'Americans'. In Megan Carney's work, she discovered migrant mothers who have abandoned the American fast food lifestyle early on said that they had no control over their

child's diet in school, where the cafeteria could be serving unhealthy and culturally inappropriate meals (Carney 2014: 12). Marta did not go into much further detail about what her sons are being served at school, but she said she does not fully understand the source of her sons' resistance to Mexican culture.

The machismo aspect in many Latinx cultures plays a significant role in young men's food sovereignty while working in Capital region. Emily Hanehan, a recruiter for New York State Migrant Education, told us of a difference in food quality between Latino men and Latinx families. The power differentials of patriarchy create social norms of machismo, a sort of male dominance, as well as marianismo, suggesting that women must be inferior to and dependent on their husband. By tradition, women are given limited opportunities to create a life of their own because they are viewed as incapable of taking care of themselves. The marianismo construct teaches girls to grow up obeying males, and they learn the importance performing domestic labor and household chores (cooking and cleaning). This will allow women to be better prepared for the role they will play in their future families.

Emily Hanehan's observation highlighted the struggle among Latino men living without a wife or family to prepare healthy and fresh food, while also maintaining their living spaces:

> If there's a family with a mother who cleans and cooks; or, if there's a camp of solely young men it [the home] tends to be dirtier, left food out, crumbs-- cleanliness is not something they know, don't care to learn; when there is a female in house, they tend to keep things cleaner. Many will leave things out of fridge.

Because they do not prioritize proper food storage, male workers often rely on prepared and processed, thus rarely or never eating traditional cultural dishes. When asked about who cooks in

the household, Marta a working mother on Dairy 1 asserted, "You already know 'los Mexicanos' [Mexican men] don't make food. The men don't cook, women do!" She continued to explained that she is teaching her sons to break social norms in a machista world, and even goes against her husband's ideals of who should be responsible for cooking:

> I'm teaching my sons how to cook, and I tell them, 'No, no, no I don't want you becoming machistas.' Just because they are men doesn't mean they can't cook. When I tell my sons to help me cook in the kitchen, my husband says, 'They are men! And I'm like *so*, they still have to eat.

Marta found that her younger sons in elementary school enjoy helping out in the kitchen and cleaning around the house; however, she is struggling to connect with her oldest son in high school.

Another case of machismo affecting Latinx men's ability to cook for themselves is on Dairy 4: single 21-year-old, Andrés, native to Mexico. When Andrés was asked who was in charge of meal preparation he said "the lady next door;" it was shocking to hear that none of the men in his trailer cook, rather they rely on an older lady to cook for them three times a day because "it is her job to cook for us." The only grocery shopping Andrés and his housemates will do is at Walmart for purchasing snacks and alcohol, specifically cases beyond cases of Corona beer. The older lady that cooks for them is addressed as 'Tia' (Aunt in English), suggesting a sort of maternal quality: she is not quite their mother but functions as one because she feeds all the men working on Dairy 4, filling a very similar role to that of Marta on Dairy 1. Andrés and his young male co-workers rely entirely on 'Tia' for good food, and especially for food of their culture; he mentioned that he would not be able to feed himself if she did not exist.

Structural Conditions

Domestic and Foreign, Policy and Ideology

Undergirding and facilitating the issues we and others have noted is a long history of United States domestic and foreign policy that creates an architecture of easy worker exploitation; indeed, one especially well suited to the exploitation of foreign and agricultural sector workers. Prior to even the most meager of domestic worker protection legislation, a widespread ideology of agricultural exceptionalism dominated national and New York economic culture. Buttressed by a conception of the 'agrarian ideal', asserting three main tenets-- "farmers are economically independent and self-sufficient; farming is intrinsically a natural and moral activity; and farming is the fundamental industry of society" (Gray 2014:21)--a widespread "belief in agricultural exceptionalism helped to cement the agreement that excluded farmworkers from New Deal labor protections, such as the collective bargaining protections of the National Labor Relations Act (1935) and the minimum wage and overtime laws of the Fair Labor Standards Act (1938)" (Gray 2014:23). A significant element that Gray misses, however, is the racialized motivation of that exclusion: the maintenance of Jim Crow and White supremacy. As Ira Katznelson writes:

> "As Congress regulated labor markets and enhanced the powers of employees… its southern members introduced features designed to fortify their region's social, economic, and political order…. Because no bills could be legislated into law without the assent of the members of Congress from that region… public policy had to be

tailored to meet their preferences, most notably their desire to protect Jim Crow" (2006: 544-5).

When these labor protections were beginning their path through the legislation process, the considerable majority of Black folks were agricultural or domestic workers; it is for this reason that Southern legislators ensured the exclusion of these two segments of workers from labor protection legislation, as well as from such programs as Social Security and other social insurance policies. The regional interests of Southern legislators helped to maintain racial disparities nationally, as, in New York, "Southern blacks… arrived in the Great Migration of the 1920's. By the end of the 1920's, out-of-state migrant workers had become an integral component of New York agriculture" (Gray 2014:32).

The connection of racism to public policy toward agricultural workers is significant because the continued racialization that has attended the shifts in the New York agricultural workforce since the 1920s. As the postwar labor economy of the state shifted, with more and more of the local labor force being drawn into prosperous cities or growing suburbs, New York agriculture was made to rely more and more on intranational migrants (wherein a distinction was made between 'interstate' migrants--White Southerners-- and 'Southern' migrants--Black Southerners), as well as foreign guest workers from Jamaica, the Bahamas, Puerto Rico, and Canada (Gray 2014:33-34). This trend continued until, "by 1960, New York was employing 27,600 interstate farmworkers who were almost exclusively African American migrants" (Gray 2014:35); as economic transition in the South offered new job opportunities in construction and labor in developing urban centers, and new technologies helped expand orange harvesting in Florida, New York agriculture came relied transitionally on more Jamaicans and Haitians before,

in the "late 1980s, farmers began to rely on a newer population stream: Latino workers" (Gray 2014:35). Throughout this entire transition, the predominantly White, farm-owning planter class in New York has relied on the labor of non-White bodies to keep their industry afloat; as Jim, owner of Nursery 1**,** put it: "The reality is, I'd be out of business if, if I didn't have access to these workers…. this country has always been known to feed ourselves, and a great portion of the world, from dairy to orchards, to anything related to agriculture. It's all based on access to Hispanic labor;" we might add a note that the reliance on the labor of those we call Latinx is somewhat recent, which groups have largely taken the place of other non-White cohorts.

Before addressing some of the push and pull factors involved in this new South-of-U.S. migrant stream, we would like to address some of the ways the exception of agricultural workers from the most basic worker protections forms insidious conjunctions with those methods by which the United States and its constituents disempower and disenfranchise foreigners, migrants, and Othered peoples entirely. Ideologies like agricultural exceptionalism serve material purposes; already, a material arrangement that made the exceptionalism of agriculture important had to be in place, prior to the development of that ideology; this material arrangement began with the colonization of the 'New World' and the theft of Native lands.

Indeed, the ideology of agricultural exceptionalism, as an element in the tradition of American exceptionalism, is in structural alliance with the logic of settler colonialism. As John Withrop's metaphor of a 'city-upon-the-hill' "captured the Puritan's sense of the exceptional nature of their" settlement, "which they believed both divinely ordained and without precedent", so settlers sought to build "a utopian community that transcended history, a New Zion that was free of... corruption and oppression" (Adas, 1999, p. 2); supposedly alone on this new land, the

necessity of agricultural production for immediate consumption is obvious. Lest we forget, however, that the first British settlement on the land now widely called the United States was the Jamestown Colony, an explicitly money-making endeavor. Lest we forget, also, that the majority of settlements would have descended into famished desolation without the assistance and support of indigenous peoples. However, once established, settlers demanded of indigenous peoples another, paradoxical function. The ideology of settler colonialism utilizes the logic, one of the three that renowned scholar Andrea Smith identifies as a pillar of White Supremacy, called 'Genocide/Colonialism':

> This logic holds that indigenous peoples must disappear. In fact, they must always be disappearing, in order to allow non-indigenous peoples rightful claim over this land. Through this logic of genocide, non-Native peoples then become the rightful inheritors of all that was indigenous, [including land]. As Kate Shanley notes, Native peoples are a permanent 'present absence' in the US colonial imagination, an 'absence' that reinforces, at every turn, the conviction that Native peoples are indeed vanishing and that the conquest of Native lands is justified (2015:68)

Genocide is the foundational political and economic practice for the US agrarian economy; indeed, the founding act for the nation, "the law of the country" (Smith 2015:70) itself.

The necessity for indigenous peoples to disappear, thereby offering up vast expanses of land to be settled and farmed, is a distinct, yet interlocking logic to that which demands the labor for production, originally for African slaves; this logic of 'Slavery/Capitalism' "is the anchor of capitalism. That is, the capitalist system ultimately commodifies all workers" (Smith 2015:67), but reserves the ultimate commodification for Black folks, as evinced by the brutal history of

chattel slavery and the machinations of Southern Congressmen to disempower agricultural workers as a means to preserve Jim Crow. With Gray noting that "the history of the relationship between the development of [New York] agriculture and its workforce is important for understanding the racialization of farmworkers and how they developed as a distinct class from farmers" (2014:27), we see that the transition to Latinx agricultural workers through the 1980's compounded the ideological dynamics already at work in Smith's third logic, 'Orientalism/War.' She writes that "This logic is evident in the anti-immigration movements within the United States that target immigrants of color. It does not matter how long immigrants of color reside in the United States, they generally become targeted as foreign threats" (Smith 2015:68). The combination of these logics is seen in the contradictory demands that the US places on foreign workers: while at once there is a relationship of economic dependence, as the producers have upon the laboring class, as attested to by Jim of Nursery 1 ("You know what, if we don't have Hispanic labor, our agriculture is going to go into a depression. And if you're paying $125 dollars for a head of lettuce, this country is going into a depression. Nobody realizes how important these people are to our economy. And nobody says anything about it…") and argued thoroughly by Gray (2014), there is also a racialized, Orientalistic fear of foreigners (Jim again: "you have this Trump-Cruz mentality that these people are bad for our economy, are bad for our society. Which couldn't be more wrong, you know. That tells me that there's a sentiment that exists in our government and in our society, that for some reason wants to go back to isolationism") that contradictorily demands that these workers, legal or not, hard-working and human regardless, leave the country. This is expressed in worker experiences of racist

aggressions, as addressed below. The combination of these logics works to create the structures for a uniquely exploitable workforce.

The pull factor helping to develop this new migrant stream is evident: job opportunities. The United States government has actively recruited guest workers from foreign countries since the institution of the H-2 program through the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, and even prior to that in less official capacities (Bruno 2012:2) ; throughout this period, and especially in the past few decades, farmers have actively welcomed so-called 'undocumented workers' into their operations, as this wayward population can easily be made to need to fluctuating labor demands of the agricultural sector. This was both escalated and eased by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which reduced barriers to trade and worked to integrate the economies of the US, Mexico, and Canada. The push factors for many migrants, from Mexico, at least, are rooted in the impacts of this agreement. As Gerardo Otero writes, "Mexico's asymmetrical integration into the North American economy, combined with neoliberalism, had a detrimental impact on its food self-sufficiency, its labor sovereignty, and substantially increased its out-migration rates" (2011:384), with Elaine Levine adding that "deteriorating employment conditions in México have coincided with a continuing demand for cheap Latino labor in the US over the past several years, thus bolstering the migratory process" (2006:103). (It is worth noting that, while less researched, the United States has signed Free Trade Agreements similar to NAFTA with Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Chile, Colombia, Panama, and Peru (US Department of Commerce 2016); NAFTA is the most studied because of the considerable size of the Mexican economy and population, as well as the country's geographical position which leaves most

migrants to the US passing through its border, regardless their country of origin). NAFTA, and similar free trade agreements, helped to deteriorate employment conditions in Mexico and other Latinx-cultured countries through economic intrusion; part of the impact of US corporate capitalization in these countries was the dismemberment of what remained of traditionally structured agro-familial communities, thus diminishing opportunities for traditional lifeways and forcing people into a wage-labor economy. This, combined with the pull factor of considerably increased money-making opportunities in the US (as Jim described, the same work that is earning his H-2A workers $11.74 an hour would have garnered $.30-.60 hourly in their home regions), lead workers to make the economically rational yet culturally and emotionally trying choice to migrate to the U.S. to labor at great distances from their families and communities. While the national discourse around isolationism and fear of Latinx migrants is growing, the migration that the US government is attempting to stop or control remains to be

> driven more than anything else by the economic policies of the U.S. Free trade agreements such as NAFTA have severely reduced the ability of Mexicans and others from the global south to sustain themselves by permitting corporations to extract huge amounts of wealth and resources from these countries into the U.S. This has led to millions of people risking the terror and death that so many face to cross into the US. looking for ways to better support their families (Smith 2013:xi-xii).

While NAFTA and similar Free Trade Agreements are purported to be in the best interests of all signatories, they are truly the calcified manifestation of a colonial pattern, evinced already in historical documents like the Monroe Doctrine; the artifacts of a paternalism on the US's behalf towards foreign countries that mirrors that of the farmers' paternalism toward their workers.

Farmer Paternalism/Noble Savagism/Service Provider Rose-glasses

Among almost all of the non-ML community members with which we spoke, there was evidenced a loosely organized yet intersecting set of patterns--of both thought and behavior--which, despite good feelings or best intentions, contributed to the disempowerment of workers. We identified three foci to understand these patterns: farmer or employer paternalism, farmer or employer deployment of 'Noble Savage' ideology ('noble savagism'), and the wearing of rose-colored glasses by both farmer/employers and service providers. While distinct, we place these three thematics together because of the ideological work they do of validating those white US-born settlers with which the workers interact; minimizing the difficulties the workers face; gratifying those surrounding them by highlighting mitigating factors; or valorizing the non-worker as a noble or morally extrinsic to the structural exploitation of migrant labor.

The sort of paternalism explicated by Gray in *Labor and the Locavore* was also evidenced in every interaction between the investigators and farmers. Gray defines: "Workplace paternalism by employers can be understood as an intimate but extremely hierarchical relationship in which the employer's control extends into workers' everyday lives, affecting even their personal and recreational habits." (2014:14) While this relationship was particularly pronounced among the dairy farmer-worker relationships we studied, it also applied to the H-2A employment arrangements, revealed through interviews and on-site visits.

Because of the physical isolation of dairy workers living on the farms at which they labor, and their often chronic lack of transportation, the farmer-employer typically becomes the main conduit for all of the workers' interactions with the world beyond the farm, including those

concerning such basic needs as food shopping and healthcare. Such a relationship is typified by the sign (Figure 2), seen outside of dairy workers Alejandro and Joseph's trailer at Dairy 3, making visible the deprivation of agency workers experience concerning their connections beyond the workplace. Louie of Orchard 1 also sought to control access to his workers; while he was happy to let us meet with them, he permitted us only ten minutes while they were in field, and noisily drove his tractor around the area in which we were interviewing his workers before getting out and hovering around us all when he wanted data collection to end.

Figure 2. Sign posted at the entrance to Alejandro and Joseph's trailer home at Dairy 3

This controlling dynamic is wholly evident in the case of Elsa**,** a resident and wife of a laborer on Dairy 1, who recounted:

> If one goes to apply for food stamps...I have to show how much my husband is making...they look at how much we make, how many children we have and see if we

> qualify for food stamps….One time I went downtown Schuylerville, there is a food bank and I asked for food. I don't know why they called the boss, but she said not to give us any food because we don't need it. They said that I didn't need food because my husband earns enough money (personal communication, 2016).

Indeed, this provisioning for their workers is often a point of stubborn pride for the farmers. A number of farmers interviewed specifically emphasized their own generosity or effort on the workers' behalf. Jim, the owner of Nursery 1, is a prime example of this pattern. Over the course of a 30-minute interview, he repeatedly classified his H-2A workers as his kin: "These guys are like family to me. They've been, some of them have been here 25 years. And I treat them like family, in every respect.". He discussed numerous cases of his own beneficence: from acquiring 'Obamacare' for one of his workers when they had kidney stones, and paying $7,000 for the coverage, to helping them with the costs of 'corruption' in the Mexican H-2A registration infrastructure and the perilous trip across the U.S.-Mexico border:

> I pay for a courier van that takes them directly from the Consulate, across the border, and they're here in 36 hours. And now that I know of all the corruption that goes on and everything, I frontload them the money before they leave, in December, so that they have the money to get through this whole horrible process.

He repeated his consideration of his workers as 'family' again toward the end of the interview; nevertheless, his workers recounted that he has made little effort to learn Spanish, and were visibly affected by Jim's presence as he passed through the space in which we were interviewing them; at the conclusion of our focus group with the workers, Jim pointed at the door and shouted 'Trabajo!' (Work!), sending them back into the fields with no further interaction.

Another farmer, John of Hand Melon Farm, who employs seasonal workers not in the H-2A program, also spoke of how he went above-and-beyond in his relationships to his workers. He spoke first of his perceptions of his workers' satisfaction, then about an instance of his own generosity, motivated in part by a need to 'let them know...that I'm here to help take care of them':

> It's self evident that, especially with the two guys who have been working here almost twenty years, they're very happy with their job here… Sometimes they call me up asking for money, or whatever, because they can't find work for winter. You know, given that they've been working here for 20 years, and we do so value the work they do for us… I will send them the money… what's a thousand or two thousand dollars. I know they'll come and work it off and pay it back. And even if something happens, and they weren't able to make it back for whatever reason, over the many years of hard work they've put in, it's fairly minor compensation to let them know how much I appreciate them, and that I'm here to help take care of them.

We also repeatedly saw a paternalistic pattern of farmers speaking *for* their workers. Kenny, owner of Dairy 1**,** with whom we spoke while moving around his farm between interviews, effectively refused to let us speak with any of his workers. While we had already interviewed two folks who lived on his farm, both of which were enthusiastic and eager to speak with us, when we asked for the opportunity to speak with some of the workers in the milking area at some point, he was very pointed in his rejection. He asserted that these workers are "private people"; in addition, they were very busy, could not take the time to speak with us, and would have refused to do so anyway, due to their lack of trust in *gringos*. Jim of Nursery 1 also asserted that

his workers did not trust *gringos*, while at once intimating that they did trust him; in both cases, the sense was one of a closed intimacy between the farmer and their workers into which no intrusion was welcome. Kenny was able to use that apparent intimacy to assert that his workers had neither the interest nor time to speak with us, without the workers ever knowing of the request or offering an answer.

An interesting twist to this dynamic was evident between Casey and the workers she managed at Farm 1. She insisted on being present during the focus group we held with the workers, after mentioning in preliminary correspondence that "They trust me and will probably not want to talk without me around," insisting that she was "not hiding anything" but that "they are just sort of not trusting in people they don't know." During the focus group itself, she repeatedly interjected, talking over or speaking for the workers. Sometimes, she would hold herself back, and prompt a worker, but often prompt them to speak about a particular thing, instead of letting them choose their own course of response. Additionally, she at one time asserted that "they [the workers] like fried food," before a worker had a chance to speak on the topic; she was roundly contradicted immediately by a worker who said, "Oh no, not for me. I don't do fried food." This dynamic reached a point of absurdity when Casey argued with her Jamaican workers about what vegetables were available to them in Jamaica, insisting that she knew the country's food markets better. Not only did she contradict a worker's claim that "[they] eat lots of different types of vegetables back home," she also consistently degraded the Jamaican foods the workers really enjoyed, such as ackee and saltfish, boiled green bananas, and dashine.

The second theme, noble savagism, represents a series of ideological constructions of the migrant worker which uphold them not only as simplistic, satisfied, and honorable, but also as

superhuman in hardiness and capacity for labor. As Gray writes, while Edenic conceptions of agrarian life depended upon the concealment of migrant workers, "whatever attention was placed upon workers offered them up as 'noble savages' who had modest needs and did not mind dwelling on the rural periphery in humble living conditions" (Gray 2014:25). We also include in this section farmers' romanticizations of their workers, their lifestyle, and their cultures.

We noted these sorts of imagings among all three of the farmers that we were able to interview individually. Seemingly embarrassed about the long-seeming (to a U.S. worker) hours labored by his workers, John of Hand Melon Farm mentioned of his own accord that "they want to put in a lot of hours." When prompted to speak more about the length of the workweek, he said

> Yeah, uhm, and that's more their choice than mine. You know, usually, there's a fairly regular sequence to the day, as we get into the main harvest season… We'll say: you can do this, this, and this, uhm, and some of the things which it doesn't really matter whether they get done today or tomorrow. But gosh, it seem like, I'll give them the list of things that they can do, and they'll… they, they'll… it's 6 or 7 o'clock, and mostly get it finished. Like: God, I can't send you guys home early! But they're here to work. They're here to put in hours, and send the money home to their families.

This constellation, connecting the worker's satisfaction with long days to their agreeable attitudes toward work and their upstanding moral obligation to their families, was also in play in the mind of Jim from Nursery 1**.** He connected his H-2A workers' willingness to labor 100-hour weeks, 11 weeks in a row, without a day off, to a nostalgic idea of rural family life:

> These people still have a family unit that we had 150 years ago. We don't have that anymore, here… those guys, all their money goes back to take care of grandfathers, sick parents, babies that are being born, education--the best that's possible--, medical. These guys give up... everything they do, they leave their family, for this strong family unit. It's something to admire."

Indeed, their admirable qualities were again highlighted when Jim described his workers as "...from the country...peasants...agricultural workers... *pure and innocent*" (emphasis ours).

In a curious capitalistic turn, Louie from Orchard 1 linked the workers' contentedness with increased workloads, one of the qualities that makes for an ideal laborer, and their desires for the building of individual wealth, a basic capitalist ante, with this sort of moral righteousness of familial sacrifice, as well as with the superhuman capacities of the foreign workers. He said they work long hours because many are striving to buy land or build houses in Jamaica, adding that the "international agricultural worker is up here [U.S] to get money to take it home. They are focused on earning money and not spending. They actually have a good opportunity to do that, especially in the H-2A program because basically all their expenses, except for food and beverage, are paid by the farm. They are allowed to work long hours too;" he later added that the issue with hiring local workers is that they are psychologically and physically incapable of meeting the intense labor demands of agricultural work, implying the extraordinary capacities of his Jamaican H-2A workers. Jim offered a similar economic analysis, when he said that "their motives are the same as mine--they just want to make money, and work." This conception that H-2A is a *good opportunity* to make a lot of money, while perhaps accurate (with Jim recounting a 20-40 times disparity between wages in his workers' home country and the H-2A wage of

$11.74 per hour), ignore the fact that his workers, or indeed any of those with whom we spoke, will never get overtime pay for the 30-50 hours above the standard 40 they put in every week; nor, really, do their wages grow to match costs of living or experience.

While workers may make more money laboring in the U.S. than they could have earned in their home countries, this does not erase the reality of structural exploitation. One employer, Casey**,** did note how it was "unfair" that more experienced workers could receive higher compensation, but she did not express any thoughts about the lack of overtime pay or other labor protections.

Before continuing to speak more about how comparisons between the U.S. and foreign countries serve to minimize the workers' struggles or justify local situations, we would connect romantic imaginings of workers' characters or capacities with the trend of noble savagism. While we noted this with Louie, who said that he believes his workers, and Jamaicans in general, are "more in touch with their food than Americans", it was more evident in Jim's characterization of his workers, who remarked not only on their superhuman capacities ("These guys don't lose productivity… these guys will work 100 hours a week, 11 weeks in a row, and on the last day be as productive as on the first. They do not lose productivity, because it is ingrained in them. They go out into the fields when they are four years old, and they work from sunrise to sunset", and "Those guys are incredibly strong, unbelievably strong"), but also their cultural authenticity:

> So yeah, when it comes to food, these guys can't work if they don't get the food that they need. They just can't, they won't. They don't live on American fast food. They'll eat some American food, but most of those guys won't eat a meal if they don't have corn tortillas… then after that it's frijoles, peppers, ya' know… ya' know, it's good quality

> food. Unfortunately, we don't have that in a fast way, so they'll eat at Stewarts a lot for lunch, but their dinner, ya' know, is a family affair. They all cook their authentic Mexican food.

Jim also firmly insisted that his workers "would not eat McDonald's", even when, in our interview with them, they explicitly stated that they did sometimes enjoy food from that restaurant; this, even when he characterized his management style thusly: "Or you can be like, 'I truly understand your life', and be a part of it. And I get more out of that with these guys. These guys give me the extra…" The apparent clash of narrative, and the farmer's ignorance in the face of their self-confident assertion of knowledge, typifies the dynamic in which farmers speak on behalf of their workers.

A third ideological thematic that emerged was what we call *rose colored glasses*. These are narratives that gratify individuals around the workers while minimizing the difficulties of their situations. The devices that affected this either compared the workers' places in U.S. with their situation in their home countries', or by valorizing both the services available to workers and the service providers who administer them; in multiple narratives, this was sometimes to an extent that these charity services are said to account for all of the unmet needs of the worker populations, effectively mitigating the structural issues that in fact construct and link their lives in the U.S. and abroad.

Louie, owner of Orchard 1, for example, believes that foreign workers are at no greater risk of food insecurity than the rest of the population in their income group: "I would say that, the foreign workers… I know, it's trendy to do stuff about migrant workers, but I would say that they're subject to the same risks that you and I are when we go buy food at the large service

stores." And while a number of service providers who made claims about the sufficient access workers had to foodstuffs (Joan Odess: "In terms of scarcity or lack of food the dairy farm families and single men I'd say are well off in terms of quantity… The families are surprisingly well off. … I think people would be surprised. They work lots of hours, is what it boils down to. And they really… are pretty financially stable") that are more or less borne out by our research, the tone of mitigation evident in that quote came out again in the self-congratulatory remarks she made toward the end of the interview, highlighting the high quality of services in this region: "Sometimes I'll get calls from people from other states….They just do not have that same support system." She specifically picked out the Saratoga Community Health Center ("They've really done a fantastic job [with the health clinic]. Really filled a gap that was huge"), whose Program Director, Kathy McNeice, repeatedly highlighted the (admittedly, empirically justified) exceptionalism of the clinic:

> It's been great. I mean, what a wonderful wonderful job that we have here. Quite something. And you know that you really make a difference at the end of the day. The organization is wonderful, they are so supportive. I say, 'I want to build a garden.' They say, 'Okay!'. And what other organization would allow you to do that without a lot of red tape. We say, 'We want to build a food pantry.' 'Okay!' We say, 'We want to build a pet pantry.'… we get donations, it doesn't cost them anything. People are incredibly generous in Saratoga… they help us with any needs that we have. I haven't been turned down yet…. It's been wonderful.

This wealth of service opportunities was expanded upon by Fran Wurster, Migrant Specialist at the Herkimer County Board of Cooperative Education Services, who took time to list and detail

all of the different services that she and her staff help migrants connect with: WIC, SNAP, the Cornell Cooperative Extension, a network of volunteer drivers and community advocates, churches, charities, food banks and pantries and kitchens, four or five different educational services, in addition to the over a dozen different sorts of educational services that BOCES offers. Her attitude could be characterized as blithe; when asked if she had ever encountered an employer interfering with their workers' utilization of services, she immediately said "Oh no, I have never. Many times they welcome us to come in, because they know we connect them with services… we can help them connect with dental services, we can bring them to appointments… we can bring them to doctor's appointments, we can help them register for school." It is hard to capture the spirit of Fran's responses in a single quote; her responses tended to rout from the question, asking about a particular issue, to branch out into all the different ways in which people go out of their way to help the workers. While charity and support work is important, it was very rare to find an analysis of the systemic features affecting the workers' situations, let alone work being done to address the structures or do more than, as Kathy McNeice acknowledged of her role, provide a "band-aid".

An interesting case is that of Emily Hanehan**,** a recruiter for the New York State Migrant Education Program who grew up on a migrant-recruiting dairy in this region. When we spoke to her about the situations of migrant laborers in this region, she never once spoke from personal experience on the farm where she grew up. Meanwhile, a number of workers with whom we spoke said they had used to work at Hanehan Family Dairy, but left within a few months because the working conditions were so bad. One worker, now at Dairy 4, expressed that they were treated "like bulls" at Hanehan. Alessandra, now at Dairy 2**,** explained that at Hanehan she

and her family lived in a trailer with several men, despite being told beforehand they'd be given their own home. She explained, "I think it isn't okay to live so many people [in one place]-- I think it is better to live one family per house." At Hanehan they had no car and her husband had no day of rest. She and her three kids could not go anywhere. They were "closed up in the house. At Hanehan…[life was just] the trailer, work, the trailer." Her husband developed diabetes because he was working long hours and drinking a lot of soda. At this point in our interview, she began to tear up as she explained that "We think that, yes, work is important, but our health is more important." While it is plausible that Emily never knew of the harsh treatment of the migrant workers on her family's dairy, she did still do some work for the farm, and it is curious that she would have never taken the chance to get to know the experiences of those migrants around whom she was working. Or, perhaps she was too ashamed of her family's treatment of these workers to facilitate our interviews or connections with them. While this is perhaps a curious case, it epitomizes a trend of service providers seeking to downplay the severity of the workers' conditions while highlighting the services being offered them.

It bears mentioning an exception to the near-ubiquity of rose-colored glasses among service providers: Leanne Tory-Murphy, who does agricultural outreach for the Workplace Justice Program of the Worker Justice Center of New York**,** was more keen on picking out the structural factors at work in the disempowerment of workers and the 'charity mentality' of much of the service provision in the region. She offered a direct critique of the aggrandizing trend we noticed among service providers, developed over years of on-the-ground visits to migrants residences and direct experience with many service organizations:

> A lot of service providers are very well-intentioned people, and a lot of people do know a lot, but I think there's also a charity mentality that goes into a lot of service provision that is really unhelpful to changing the underlying conversation. That's why I say that access is really about poverty wages and other structural issues. I think that it's important to talk about that, because I think a lot of people tend to… I wouldn't say blame, but place a lot of responsibility on individual workers for their situation, and really, that they're filling a need that exists; and that's a broader conversation to have about our economy and how these industries are working… a lot of times service providers will, kind of, will call farmworkers 'voice-less' or 'incapable', and I think that that's really not helpful moving forward.

The desire to advocate on behalf of 'voice-less' workers, while perhaps having a veneer of admirable virtue, in fact further helps to squash the voices of those workers on behalf of which one advocates; indeed, such work can further effect or cement the disempowerment that results in the needs being met by service provision. As the anonymous author of the indigenous provocation *Accomplices Not Allies: Abolishing the Ally-Industrial Complex* writes, "allies all too often carry romantic notions of oppressed folks they wish to 'help.' These are the ally 'saviors' who see victims and tokens instead of people" (Anonymous:2014). We found such explicitly romanticized notions more among employers than service providers, but noticed a complex form of victimization performed by service providers: the essentialization of victimization, the use of conceptions of the served/worker populations that would keep them in places of disempowerment with their needs being met by service provision. Besides Leanne Tory-Murphy, none of the service providers with whom we spoke mentioned concrete pathways

for workers to move to positions in which they no longer needed support from service organizations. Even when directly asked, 'If you have unlimited resources, what would you change? What needs to be done?', most spoke about increasing eligibility windows for their services, or expanding their organization's reach to serve more people. While these are not incorrect, they evince a sort of limitation in scope, one which jives with an 'underlying conversation' in which workers do not organize to build power or change their situations.

This complicity through victimizing essentialism could be rooted in the vested economic interest of career service providers like Fran Wurster, Kathy McNeice, and Joan Odess; this is precisely what the indigenous author means by the 'ally-industrial complex'. Some of the 'allies' vilified in the indigenous provocation are those who make their living from service provision to underserved populations: "The ally industrial complex has been established by activists whose careers depend on the 'issues' they work to address. These non-profit capitalists advance their careers off the struggles they ostensibly support" (Anonymous:2014); to abolish the need for service provision is to destabilize the service providers' careers; to empower the workers is, in a sense, to disempower their service providers--and it takes radical self-transformation to will oneself to give up power-over and take up the mantle of power-with (Anonymous:2014). Among service providers, it was only Leanne Tory-Murphy who offered a vision of power-with:

> I think that having an organization that would do that [actively support worker organizing] would be really helpful, and would change the conversation…. I say that access is really about poverty wages and other structural issues. I would say doing more, like, leadership development and empowerment work, and really getting worker voices

> out there to talk about their own position…. Any time you visit a farm, you'll see, like, a person or two who has certain initiative, and they'll see things in a certain way, and they'll have an analysis about their situation. And I think… for me, being able to meet all of those people in all these different places, I figure it must be really important to... bring that together more, and support those people in meeting each other, learning from each other, and building their strength to be able to actually change their conditions.

A notable difference in vision here is the element of collective power-building: power-with implies that those with which one works, themselves, are efficacious in their work to change their situations. As addressed above, there are numerous factors that make it difficult for workers to organize together--such as transportation, odd and irregular hours, farmer-employer paternalism, not to mention the dizziness that can accompany entering a new socio-cultural, political-economic landscape--but it is not impossible or unheard-of. For the example, As Leanne Tory-Murphy described, the Agricultural Worker Committee of the Worker Center of Central New York, an organization run almost entirely by workers or former-worker organizers, met to discuss how to improve conditions in the dairy industry. They were successful in compelling the Occupational Safety and Health Administration to perform unannounced inspections on dairies, ensuring farms maintain the standards that are often disregarded between regularly scheduled inspections.

While our interviews with migrant workers did not address organizing or power-building, there was a widely shared understanding among dairy workers that being undocumented meant being disempowered and excluded. There were nuances that emerged in each workers' understanding of their position, evident even from the surficial dusting of our questioning. An

important avenue for further research could be an explicitly economic-structural and political-communal interview program, with the intention of discovering the workers' inclinations towards and the most effective means of solidarity and the facilitation of worker power-building.

These ideological devices--paternalism, noble savagism, and rose-colored glasses-- are diffuse and interlocking, together working to rationalize, mitigate, minimize, or otherwise soften perceptions of workers' situations. Farmer/employer paternalism, above and beyond the other two, also functions as "a significant component of labor control" that Gray identifies as "unique to small-scale agriculture" (Gray 2014:42). As with much in the local food movement, proximity is understood to be a sign of wholesomeness, where an ideological "agrarianism also helped perpetuate the notion that labor was treated better on organic farms, if for no other reason than that labor concerns were initially not addressed by food writers or scholars" (2014:42). However, proximity between the workers and their employers is not a guarantor of worker welfare; while workplace justice is *implied* by the local food movement, yet never made explicit, the closeness of workers to their employers can foster a more personal sort of controlling relationship.

Racial Discrimination

Instances of workers experiencing racial discrimination came up in several of our interviews--both explicitly and implicitly--in instances of profiling both from civilians and police, and in false narratives about migrant workers taking the jobs of U.S. citizens. For the purposes of outlining these narratives, we refer to such acts of racism as "racial discrimination"

to emphasize the interpersonal nature of these events, experienced on an individual level. Within this, we fully acknowledge that racism is also perpetuated systemically by institutions and structures which, in addition to experiences with locals holding racist ideologies, permeate the lives of the workers we interviewed in many other ways: see *Domestic and Foreign, Policy and Ideology.*

Despite evidence that people (namely those white, middle class folk who most commonly engage in local food culture) have little knowledge of the migrant labor that makes the local food economy run, migrants still are conceived as outsiders in the public eye. 'The border' is in both concept and deployment a lived metaphor, extending beyond a geographical location; it is a mechanism used to place people into categories of rightness, of belonging in a given place. Walia explains that,

> whether through military checkpoints, gated communities in gentrified neighborhoods, secured corporate boardrooms, or gendered bathrooms, bordering practices delineate zones of access, inclusion, and privilege from zones of invisibility, exclusion, and death. Everywhere that bordering and ordering practices proliferate, they reinforce the enclosure of the commons, thus reifying apartheid relations at the political, economic, social, and psychological levels (2013:9).

In relation to migrant farm workers, the border is exemplified by a Donald Trump-style discourse which posits foreigners as dangerous for both the U.S. economy and civilian safety. It fully ignores that economic structures that push and pull foreign workers to the U.S. Foreign workers are accused of 'taking jobs', despite the fact that the US has broadly shifted away from agrarianism as a common lifestyle. As Jim of Nursery 1 explained,

> I couldn't get local workers to do it if I paid them twenty times that rate… There's a big sentiment, you know, in this town too. There's a lot of people in this town who think these people are taking their job. That's the classic: 'These people are taking our jobs'... *Nobody* will do their job. For no amount of money.

These beliefs work to foster a certain hostility in the rural areas of the Capital Region which we sampled. Derek**,** a Jamaican H-2A worker at Orchard 1 expressed that he prefers not to shop at Hannaford's because "sometimes they are a little mean. Maybe because there are not very many colored people there, I don't know. But there's cameras watching, it's not like I'm going to steal anything. So they don't need to be mean." He expressed that he was followed around the store, and experienced similar negative energy from employees at Cumberland Farms. Though several workers expressed that food was fresher at grocery stores other than Walmart, Derek is impeded from stocking his fridge with such produce due to his discomfort as a Black man in certain venues.

The most common form of racism that came up in our interviews was that of profiling by police officers. Joan Odess, an ENL teacher with the EOC, explained a story of a worker from Mexico who was stopped by police for riding his bicycle on the sidewalk, a common practice in many White and more densely populated areas. The boy later expressed to Joan his immense fear in that moment--the interaction might have turned into a greater issue for him. As Joan explains, there is a lot of "fear that people live in, constant fear of deportation or at least jail… If you get into any kind of scrape… like a car accident" you are more likely to encounter deportation issues.

Jim explained similarly disturbing instances of racial profiling and brutality by the local police force that his H-2A workers had experienced:

> The further north you go, the less community they have. You run into a lot of rednecks in the police force, whatever, they don't even follow the laws. They'll see these [migrant farm workers] in a store, they'll throw 'em down in the dirt and handcuff 'em, even though they have valid visas. Hubert,... he's been arrested three times, once in New York twice in Vermont, and all three times been immediately threatened with deportation, even though he has a valid visa… In Cambridge, the police chief up there… we used to bank there, and I've known him forever. And he called me up and said, 'We don't want people with that color skin waiting outside our banks, on our streets.'

Even with his knowledge of the racial discrimination faced by workers, Jim employs stereotype ideologies as well in his classification of a 'redneck'. Perhaps Jim uses this term to distance himself from those he sees as uneducated, as dangerous, and as a means to further paternalistically posit himself as a supporter and provider for migrant laborers facing such racism.

Another way migrants face discrimination is in profiling from police. Jim explained how one of his workers experienced this in a way that endangered the health of both he and his six year old daughter:

> You know, Alfonso, and his daughter when she was six years old, they were pulled over at the IGA store in Cambridge. It was New Year's Eve, it was eight below zero. And they said, 'Oh, you have drugs. Our dogs said you had drugs in the car.'

> It was my truck. These guys don't drink, they don't drug, nothing. [The police] interrogated them for eleven hours without letting him call me, and then made them walk [11 miles] from Cambridge to Hoosick Falls, eight below zero, with no hat, no gloves, no boots, no winter coat…. It was all bullshit.

In a sense, such blatant acts of racism are to be expected from police and civilians due to the settler colonialist and White supremacist logics upon which the U.S. is founded. We agree with Smith when she writes that "settler colonialism ultimately depends on an exclusivist concept of nation based on control and ownership of land and territory that is demarcated by borders" (Smith 2013:xiii). It is this ideology of exclusivity which posits migrant farm workers as outsiders in the minds of those in power and justifies inhumane acts of racism, threatening migrant farmworker health and well-being in myriad ways..

Exclusion from Local Food Movement & Culture

Our findings also show that while migrant farm labor in the Capital Region contributes substantially to the local, healthy food movement and culture, these workers are largely excluded both from the nutritional benefits of such food and from any sort of public-sector acknowledgment of their importance to the economy and its movement. Records on the Department of Labor's website show that several dozens of small farmers from the Capital region are requesting H-2A workers for the upcoming season, and this does not account for the widespread use of year-round and contract workers of different statuses. Many of the migrants working in this region are here for vegetable production, one of the main components of 'local food' in broader public consciousness. Though we were unable to reach these other vegetable

farming populations due to seasonality and time constraints, our findings indicate their presence and lack of inclusion in local food culture.

Of the 30 migrant farmworkers and families we interviewed only 6 had ever been to or heard of the Saratoga Farmers' Market or another direct-to-customer venue, and never had they visited more than 3 times per year. However, the majority of workers we interviewed explicitly expressed a desire for natural, healthy food. All of these 6 who had heard of or attended the Saratoga Farmers' Market were women who live with their families on dairy farms. But despite the clear desire for the energy of the outdoor, farmer-to-person market, workers told us they either had never been to the market, or had been once or twice but had to leave after buying only a few items. Corroborating this, farmers and service providers we interviewed expressed that the workers cannot afford much more than Walmart or similar produce. Each echoed the sentiments of Elsa, a worker at Dairy 1, that the market "is definitely fresher, but much more expensive." Elsa then pulled out her phone to enthusiastically show us photos of the outdoor food markets she frequented back home in Mexico.

Although the Saratoga market in particular does accept WIC and foodstamps, only one woman we spoke with mentioned that she had used WIC but had discontinued it as it did not seem to her to be completely worth it; another woman at Dairy 1 had been denied access to food stamps due to the paternalistic farm owner. Joan Odess, an ENL teacher with the Latino Advocacy Program, articulates farmers' market failings for the migrant farm worker population:

> I mean we love to say, you know, '[the farmers' market] is a community thing and it really isn't all that more expensive', but when you get right down to it, it is. And the one thing I think that's wonderful about farmers' markets is that many of them are accepting

> benefit cards. But if you're not a population that has access to that, depending on your documentation status, that doesn't help you.

Odess notes that, despite market attempts at increasing accessibility, migrant workers are often excluded due to documentation issues, in addition to financial barriers.

Our findings in the Capital Region echoed Gray's account of how, in the Hudson Valley, farmers greatly benefit from "the revival of interest in...agriculture by living up to the idealism of boutique farms, heritage fruit, pick-your-own venues,… branded products", farmers' markets, and local food restaurants (Gray 2014:15). A quick stop at the Saratoga Farmer's Market, or to any one of several cafes and restaurants claiming organic, healthful food throughout the Capital Region will display a mostly White consumer base, enthusiastically exploring "local" food options. Though not formally a part of our research, our interactions with various community persons and peers throughout this project made it evident to us that knowledge about the extent of migrant labor in New York is limited. For example, while many people enjoy spending a day at Orchard 1 eating cider donuts and picking their own fruit, they remain unaware of the five Jamaican workers who make such autumn festivities possible through several months of hard labor. Additionally, US/Mexico relations at the geographical border are generally conceptualized as the locus of immigration conflict (Walia 2013), despite the presence of an estimated 112,827 migrant farm workers in New York alone (O'Barr 2011). Gray continues:

> There is an intrinsic relationship between the success of [elite] regional food culture and the exploitation of farm laborers; arguably the largest agricultural subsidy in the region comes not from the government, but from farmworkers themselves. According to a 1994 U.S. Department of Labor Report, it is

> farmworkers who subsidize farms 'with their own and their families' indigence,' through structures that 'transfer costs to workers' and leave them impoverished (2014:24).

Despite their contributions to local food culture in the Capital Region, the migrant workers we interviewed cannot sustainably shop at a farmers' market, nor eat at any of the number of cafes and restaurants in the Capital Region which tout local, healthy food on their menus. The farms we went to were all local food or nursery products, or dairies that contribute to brands like Cabot which capitalize on the concept of 'local'. This makes for heightened irony when migrant workers are structurally barred from participating in the local food culture Saratoga and the Capital region know so well--that culture, which itself is powered by migrant labor.

The Backstretch

The Backstretch presents its own set of food sovereignty barriers for migrant workers, who come seasonally possessing vast amounts of knowledge about livestock. The backstretch is the area in which migrant track workers live, eat, and take care of horses. As Paul Ruchames, the executive director of the Backstretch Employee Service Team (BEST), explained to us, the Saratoga Racetrack has been around for over 150 years, and currently depends on hundreds of workers from Mexico, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, nearly every country in South America, a few European and Irish migrants, and some US born migrant workers (mostly of African American descent). Although we were unable to interview any track workers due to both seasonality and an informative hesitancy on the part of the New York Racing Association, we

did speak to Paul Ruchames, Kathy McNiece, program director of the Saratoga Health Clinic, and Krystle Nowhitney, a former employee with both BEST and the Latino Advocacy Program, regarding conditions for the workers behind the scenes of the racetrack. They all shared that, though the backstretch workers come to the Capital region for different kinds of work than our study population, they are affected by a similar array of issues including food sovereignty barriers, paternalism, racism, and exclusion from local food culture.

The New York Racing Association's mission statement reads: "Meeting the highest standards in thoroughbred racing and equine safety." This is in stark contrast to the apparent lack of resources and support workers on the backstretch receive (not to mention that one or more horses die each week at the track in summertime; but this is beyond the scope of our study). We found that the backstretch has no more than two kitchens for its thousand workers, no onsite food options year round, no heat, and non-existent food storage. Krystle Nowhitney explained that workers also face many challenges including "language and cultural barriers, a range of legal statuses, demanding work schedules, lack of transportation and a migrant lifestyle that contribute to social isolation." Paul Ruchames echoed this in his emphasis that "some workers, really come to the track... with not much more than the shirt on their backs, so they...need help until they can get a paycheck and get working."

Migrant track workers do not directly contribute to local food culture in Saratoga--however, their efforts directly make possible a different sort of elitism. The Saratoga Racetrack is a place where many wealthy people come each summer to dress up and gamble; this is a central element of Saratoga Spring's settler-culture of opulence and consumption. Kathy McNeice, program director at the Saratoga Health Clinic, expressed her shame regarding the

state of the humanitarian crisis that is the backstretch, especially when juxtaposed with the racetrack's glitzy culture:

> Well let me tell you, the backstretch is disgusting. It's disgusting. They finally have running water, you know, as of five years ago… They're freezing. Uhm, there is no place to cook there. … [It's] like, your worst of your worst. It's awful, I cannot tell you how awful it is. It's an embarrassment to me, to go to the track, and be at the track for a day, you know, doing the track thing, knowing what is over on the other side. It is disgusting.

Nowhitney also explained to us that migrant track workers do employ tactics of resilience, despite their difficult situations. Even with such rudimentary facilities, some workers are able to prepare fresh meals, often cooperating together to buy ingredients and prepare meals as a group. Nowhitney also explained an "informal economy...in which people will prepare and sell food to fellow workers." They rely on each other for rides to the store, or utilize services provided by BEST, like van runs to Walmart. We expand on the presence and importance of methods of resilience in migrant communities in the following section.

Methods of Resilience/Cultural Preservation

Despite numerous barriers to food sovereignty and structural conditions, our findings show some of the methods of resilience and cultural preservation MFWs use to maintain and redefine their cultures in a foreign context: backyard/small-scale agriculture, utilization of local services, and connection with a growing migrant community. The use of these tactics show that these migrant populations are not without agency.

Small-scale Agriculture

Out of the 30 workers we interviewed, a 12 stated that they had some sort of access to a home garden, or *huerta*. This was a combination of those who kept their own home garden and those who had access to land upon which the farmer and workers grew vegetables for consumption as a team. Several participants kept their own small-scale livestock, usually chickens.

In these gardens, one Latinx worker named Alessandra explained that her garden allowed her to grow certain spicy peppers that she often used back home in Mexico. Another Latinx dairy worker, Marta**,** grows tomatillo, tomato, cucumber, carrot, cilantro, melon, watermelon, and radish. At Orchard 1, the workers use the garden to grow vegetables common at home such as Redroot Pigweed, which consumers at the orchard store have little idea how to utilize. These H-2A workers also keep chickens and will kill one themselves fairly often for personal consumption. The use of traditional preparations, while made easier by access to traditional foods, was, for some workers, itself an effective means of cultural preservation, even with ingredients purchased at Walmart. These practices, though foreign to U.S. settler culture, displays the importance of food in cultural preservation for migrant farmworker populations.

Most participants displayed a desire for fresh food, but expressed that the idea of maintaining a garden was exhausting. Two Guatemalan brothers working on a dairy expressed that they probably would not have time to have a garden. After working long, physically laborious hours each day migrants are left with little time nor energy to harvest more produce. Most dairy workers we spoke with also had changeable schedules, which makes it difficult to

regularly water a garden or feed livestock. Other workers expressed that they had difficulty obtaining space to have a garden-- one boss denied a worker permission to use a small section of the field to grow maize, suggesting she just use the small space around her trailer.

Despite these barriers, a good number of the migrants we interviewed employed small-scale agriculture as a means of cultural preservation and resilience; when employed, small-scale agriculture acts as an important means of achieving food sovereignty. Gardens give workers a measure of autonomy over their food lives, helping them consumer foods that allow them to reconnect with a preserve their cultures.

Utilization of Local Services

We found that many migrant farm workers, particularly at dairies, capitalize on already existing services as a resource to overcome transportation issues. Though BOCES, and various ENL services, exist *de jure* for English teaching purposes, we heard about how relationships formed from these services led to a *de facto* system of workers arranging rides from service providers when in need. Though not technically part of their job, several service providers explained their willingness to provide migrants rides to grocery stores or doctor's appointments in their spare time. All of the workers we spoke to in Saratoga County had heard of the Saratoga Community Health Clinic and went there when they needed medical attention. Finally, most workers we spoke to on dairy farms spoke of a Mexican food truck which travels around the Capital Region selling a wide array of traditional Mexican products. However, two Guatemalan brothers, Mateo and Cesar, displayed that despite the amount of traditional Mexican goods the truck boasts, possession of which is vital to food security for migrant populations, the truck is

unable to satisfy greater need of migrant workers because its business interests have not yet learned about heterogeneity in the Latinx community-- not all Latinx persons eat the same foods.

Growing Latinx Community

"Empezaron a crecer la comunidad latina"-- the Latinx community is beginning to grow, Alessandra told us. This growing Latinx and migrant community has led to opportunities for cultural preservation through food, craft, and kinship. Several workers, particularly those on dairies or H-2A workers who have been coming for many years, expressed that there is a greater array of culturally appropriate food for them in stores like Walmart, Price Rite, and Hannaford. Workers, especially at Nursery 1 were aware of the business interest for stores like these in providing more products for the growing migrant community.

However, in other, more isolated parts of New York workers of Latinx heritage are forced to depend on the Mexican food truck that moves around Upstate NY, despite the fact that this truck's options exclude those not from Mexico. This trend is similar in bigger grocery stores in the region that clump Latinx heritages together, leaving many with with no opportunity to get the foods that are significant to their identities and their heritage

One worker, Lucia**,** expressed that she does not see the Latinx community growing, but she attributed this to her isolation on a Schuylerville dairy farm, somewhat cut off from the larger community of migrants working in the region. In contrast, many workers expressed that they generally cook in groups. This was true for two dairy workers from Mexico, Alessandra and Natalia, who explained how they generally cook together, even though they each have their own families and live in separate houses. Despite harsh conditions and being isolated in a rural area,

these women find ways through shared meals and reciprocity to keep cultural traditions alive. At Dairy 1, Marta sews traditional Mexican tapestries to share with Elsa and other family and friends. Additionally, workers at Dairy 4 pay one Latinx woman on the farm to cook for them most days, thus creating a community with which to share a meal. Practices like this displayed for us the cultural importance of food and cooking in community-- options that increase with growing numbers of migrant workers.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, we wish to emphasize that the situations of migrant farmworker communities in Upstate New York cannot be generalized. This diverse and varied population is affected by food sovereignty barriers and structural disempowerment in different, interlocking ways; and they are not a population without agency, as they employ a diverse set of tactics and methods of cultural resilience.

While we did not explicitly study it, it was apparent to us that the food security was technically variable across the populations with which we worked. What our investigation of food sovereignty does highlight, however, are some of the ways in which migrant populations are structurally disempowered and restrained from asserting autonomy over their food choices. Structural issues of documentation, location and isolation exacerbate difficulties with transportation to grocery stores, service providers, doctor's appointments, and other places necessary for a good life. The Noble Savage ideology among employers helps to conceal both the brutal intensity of work schedules and the deficiency of migrant worker wages for the provisioning of all the workers' needs, while the rose-colored glasses of service providers helps

to maintain the workers' marginalization by essentializing victimization and naturalizing exploitation. A lack of acceptable wages and access punctuates the workers' exclusion from the local food movement, a sector of the economy that they literally power and subsidize with the discrepancy between their labor and its compensation. Coming from foreign cultures, migrants can have a difficult time navigating and adapting to U.S. culture, food, and concepts of nutrition; and while these workers are seeking opportunities for peace and productivity, their honest intentions are often betrayed by individual and structural racism--by xenophobia, and a paradoxical nationalism that economically demands their presence while socially seeking their liquidation.

This study holds relevance to the local food movement because it exposes an oft-concealed fact: local food largely depends upon global labor. The tremendous irony of foreign laborers' exclusion from local consumption is emphasized by Gray's assertion that "it is important for those interested in ethical eating to understand that it is not only the violation of labor laws, but also, and perhaps more importantly, the institutional marginalization of agricultural workers--including the denial of basic labor and human rights--that reproduces their inequality in the workplace and confines them to substandard working conditions" (Gray 2014:49). Future research should expand on our study by targeting more populations of workers to get a more complete picture of the varied situations of migrants in the Capital region and beyond, including those who work at the backstretch; additionally, assessments of local food consumers perceptions of the role that migrant labor plays in the local food economy could help develop a better understanding of the ideological devices at work at the consumer level, while also beginning to explore how the activist discourse of local food can leverage its power to

improve the conditions of workers. For, while the locavore movement proceeds by implying ethicality and wholesome practices, its concealment of labor exploitation and migrant labor marginalization belies the fraudulence inherent to concepts of unexploitative capitalisms. While food production is a human practice of antiquity, "this heritage and our capacities to produce healthy, good and abundant food are being threatened and undermined by neo-liberalism and global capitalism" (via Campesina 2007:1); organizing for food sovereignty gives "the hope and power to preserve, recover and build on our food producing knowledge and capacity" (ibid.).

There are already many ways in which migrant communities are working to manifest food sovereignty in their spheres. Inherent to food sovereignty is community; and there are a number of ways in which growing migrant and Latinx communities in the Capital region are banding together for cultural resilience and power-building. Small-scale agriculture helps workers maintain and reconnect with traditional ways of producing and preparing food, while social services offer migrants means and relationships to redefine their cultures in a foreign context.

However, there are improvements that could be made to these services. Although the Capital region appears to have more resources for migrants than some surrounding regions, especially those closer to the U.S./Canada border, we noticed an unfortunate trend whereby rose-colored glasses restricted community support services to outside service provision along a charity model, and severely limited the community empowerment work that is would help grow food sovereignty. Along these lines, we make three recommendations--directed at research, service provision, and policy--that we believe could help migrant communities further manifest food sovereignty.

First, we suggest that research and service provision utilize culturally sensitive understandings of food, nutrition, and health. The concepts Western science and medicine bring to bear in these areas are *not* truly universal, and other cultures have ways of thinking about good food and wellbeing that are not only efficacious, but also hold significant places in those cultures' heritage. To subject migrants to Western concepts, to organize service provision solely around ways of thinking that are foreign to the served communities, is blatant cultural imperialism, and works to disconnect migrant communities from the important cultural dimension of food sovereignty.

Moreover, in all the service provider interviews we did, only one, when asked how they would use unlimited resources, said they would work to promote worker empowerment, worker leadership, and worker-led collective organizing efforts. We think that this should be the explicit focus of all service provision. To counter the essentialization of marginalization evident among service provider perspectives, we would seek services that empower workers to manifest true sovereignty as the product of collective autonomy in food choices; we believe that the most effective aid to these populations would manifest such sovereignty, instead of reinforcing paternalism--would manifest power-with, instead of power-over.

An example of such efforts can be found in The Huertas Project. Based out of the University of Vermont, Huertas "is a community-based food security project that enables Latino/a migrant farmworkers and families living on Vermont's dairies to access culturally familiar and local foods through cultivating kitchen gardens" (University of Vermont 2016). Huertas works in collaboration with workers and community stakeholders to build gardens at migrants' residences, as well as distribute seeds and seedlings to dairy workers in rural Vermont,

empowering these workers to produce their own culturally-appropriate food and exert control over this salient socio-cultural element of their lives. An exciting possibility for future action research exists here: researchers could partner with migrant workers and service providers to build gardens and micro-livestock facilities at migrants' homes, collaborating with workers in the installation, design, and sourcing of inputs, thus facilitating migrant autonomy while building lasting and reciprocal partnerships that set a new standard for service provider-worker interactions.

Another example might be to build upon and strengthen the informal systems workers have already constructed to respond to the barriers and challenges that they confront. We heard numerous examples of informal economies--of rides, goods, and services like food preparation. Fortifying these systems by which migrants come together to meet their own needs in culturally-appropriate ways is another way to manifest worker sovereignty. Service providers, if cautious and collaborative, can use their systemic privilege to 'legitimate' these systems in the eyes of those who would otherwise denounce and crush them, helping to create spaces for migrants to exert control over their own lives.

Finally, we suggest a broad reimagining of bordering practices, immigration policy, and national space in a way that appreciates every individual's right to be where they are, regardless of race or nationality. Bordering and nation have always been an ensemble for exploitation. The history of the United States evinces that it has always relied on the 'Other', or on numerous others, both materially and ideologically, to maintain its dominance; border imperialism manifests this reliance. Borders serve to constrain the flow of disenfranchised humans, but remain porous to empowered business avatars and flows of capital; at the same time, the United

States economy--especially agriculture and domestic service--depend to a huge extent on the flow of the workers seeking relative opportunity in exploitative industries in the U.S. The xenophobia of ordinary U.S. citizens harms both the targets of border imperialism and the U.S. citizens themselves, as tax money is spent on irresponsible installations and practices that fail to address the intentional economic arrangements which condition mass migration, while the exacerbation of labor supply raises the price of commodities on which U.S. citizens and businesses rely. The migration flows are caused in large part by the raft of free trade agreements which constitute one of the main neoliberal tools of border imperialism; we suggest that 'free trade' is very far from free, and is harmful to ordinary populations on all sides of every border. To rearrange this venue for true sovereignty would require rescinding all free trade agreements and abolishing all borders; while it is truly a divine wickedness which permits on the *imagination* of perfection, we may at once effect the possible *in* reality while demanding the impossible *of* it. We submit that migrant workers are worthy of sovereignty and equity because, regardless all other conditions, this cannot be denied: that these people are human, and they are here.

APPENDIX A

Questions for employers:

1. How did you come about hiring migrant laborers as employees?
    a. Are they a regular labor source (annual or returning every season), or intermittent source of labor (filling gaps in labor demand not met by non-migrant workers)?
    b. Are they employed here the whole year round, or only for seasonal work?
2. Do you know where the migrant laborers you employ are from?
    a. Do they cross international borders, or state borders, to work here?
    b. How do they get here? Are you involved in the transportation process? Are any other people or any businesses or organizations involved in the process?
    c. Do the migrant laborers you employ live with their families? Do they travel with them? Do you know if they regularly send money elsewhere?
3. What sort of accommodations do the migrant laborers you employ enjoy?
    a. Where do they live? Is housing provided as part of their employment, or do they arrange their own living situations?
    b. If they live away from the site of employment, how do they get to work each day? Is transportation provided (if so, by whom), or do they arrange their own transportation to the work site?
4. What do you know about the migrant laborers' food situations?
    a. What do they eat? Do they prepare their food themselves? Do you know what sorts of dishes the migrant laborers you employ will typically prepare? What sorts of facilities do they have to prepare food, and where are those facilities?
    b. Where does their food come from? Where do they shop? How do they get there--do they transport themselves, or do you, other people, or an organization arrange transportation for them? Do they grow any of their own food? With what facilities?
    c. Do you think the migrants under your employ eat well? Do you think they eat enough? Do you think they eat what they want to eat, and can typically do so? Do you think they eat healthfully?
        i. If no to any of these, why do you think that is? What impediments exist to any dimension of their food situations being adequate?
    d. What, if anything, could you say about the migrant laborer populations' food cultures?
5. What do you know about social service organizations that provide services to migrant laborer populations?
    a. What organizations offer services to the migrant laborers under your employ?
    b. What sort of services do these organizations offer? What services are used by the migrant laborers you employ?
    c. Do you think these services are important to the migrant laborers' livelihoods?
    d. How could the existing services being offered be improved?
    e. What new services do you think would help the migrant laborers you employ, or migrant laborer populations in the area more broadly?

Questions/Prompts for Stakeholders and Community Service Organization Affiliates:

1. What does you or your organization do?
    a. If an organization-- what is its mission? If an individual--what is your interest in working with these populations?
    b. Do you/they collaborate with migrant laborers? How so--in what respects?
    c. Do you/they provide services to/for migrant laborers? What services? What needs of the migrant populations with which you work do you think these services meet?
2. What populations of migrant laborers do you/the organization serve?
    a. Where are the populations located? At what are they employed? By whom?
    b. Where do they come from? Are they here seasonally--if so, where do they spend the rest of the year? If they reside here permanently, from where did they first migrate?
    c. If they actively move regularly, who is involved in that transportation process? Employers, you, your organization, or others similar?
    d. Do the migrant laborers you employ live with their families? Do they travel with them? Do you know if they regularly send money elsewhere?
3. What sort of accommodations do the migrant laborer you collaborate with enjoy?
    a. Where do they live? Is housing provided as part of their employment, or do they arrange their own living situations?
    b. If they live away from the site of employment, how do they get to work each day? Is transportation provided (if so, by whom), or do they arrange their own transportation to the work site?
4. What do you know about the migrant laborers' food situations?
    a. Do you or your organization provide any services that specifically deal with their food needs? Including but not limited to: transportation, food acquisition, health, access, cuisine, etc.
    b. What do they eat? Do they prepare their food themselves? Do you know what sorts of dishes migrant laborers will typically prepare? What sorts of facilities do they have to prepare food? Where are those facilities?
    c. Where does their food come from? Where do they shop? How do they get there--do they transport themselves, or do you, other people, or another organization arrange transportation for them? Do they grow any of their own food? With what facilities?
    d. Do you think the migrants with which you collaborate eat well? Do you think they eat enough? Do you think they eat what they want to eat, and can typically do so? Do you think they eat healthfully?
        i. If no to any of these, why do you think that is? What impediments exist to any dimension of their food situations being adequate?
    e. What, if anything, could you say about the migrant laborer populations' food cultures?
5. What else do you know about other social service organizations that provide services to migrant laborer populations?
    a. What other organizations offer services to the migrant laborers with which you collaborate?

    b. What sort of services do these organizations offer? What services are used by the migrant laborers with which you work?
    c. Do you think these services are important to the migrant laborers' livelihoods?
    d. How could the existing services being offered--both your own and other organizations'--be improved?
    e. What new services do you think would help the migrant laborers with whom you collaborate, or migrant laborer populations in the area more broadly?
6. What do you know about the migrant laborer populations' relationships to their employers?
    a. What do their employers offer the migrant laborers, in addition to wages? Housing, transportation, healthcare assistance, etc.
    b. Are they treated fairly by their employers?
    c. In what ways are their employers involved in these populations food situations?

APPENDIX B

Focus Group Questions and Prompts for migrant workers:

1. Current health and nutritional status
    a. To what extent do you feel nourished?
    b. What are your current health practices?
    c. Do you have health care?
        i. To what extent do they feel supported by the healthcare system in this country?
    d. Are any of these health practices home/natural remedies?
    e. Have you, or ML you know, suffered from nutrition-related disease?
2. Level of food security in the New York Capital Region
    a. What do you usually go grocery shopping?
        i. What time of day to you go shopping?
        ii. What are the usual items you put in your grocery cart?
        iii. How do you decide which foods to eat?
        iv. What problems do you have when buying food?
        v. Who is the household is in charge of buying and/or preparing food? Are they able to afford sufficient food for all dependents until the next shopping opportunity?
        vi. Do you have transportation to grocery stores?
    b. What are your favorite food to eat in the area?
        i. Where do you go out to eat?
        ii. How often do you go out to eat?
        iii. What transportation do you use?
    c. To what extent do you have access to traditional food from home?
        i. What are you favorite traditional dish(es)?
        ii. Are you able to find all or most of the ingredients for your favorite meals?
        iii. Are there any restaurants that serve your traditional food?
3. Work and housing conditions:
    a. What kitchen appliances do you have access to?

    b. What meals do you normally cook on a daily basis?
    c. What meals do you cook for special occasions?
4. Practices of food security maintenance
    a. What traditional resources do you use to employ for both logistical and cultural survival? (Funds of Knowledge)

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