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Narrative Identity Within A Workers' Rights Organization

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NARRATIVE IDENTITY WITHIN A WORKERS' RIGHTS ORGANIZATION

NARRATIVE IDENTITY WITHIN A WORKERS' RIGHTS ORGANIZATION

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Masters of Arts in Sociology

By

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Manchester College
Bachelors of Arts in Peace Studies and Spanish, 2008

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ABSTRACT

This research includes in-depth interviews and participant observation to examine the construction of narrative identity by the staff members and worker-members of a workers' rights organization in Northwest Arkansas. I seek to understand how the organization negotiates the broader cultural and institutional narrative identities with the personal narrative identities of the worker-members in a cultural context hostile toward undocumented immigrants. Further, I examine how the worker-members themselves both internalize and challenge the organizational, institutional, and cultural narratives about undocumented immigrant workers. Findings reveal that the staff members and the worker-members create different narratives for different purposes, though both are concerned with the uplift of the undocumented immigrant worker. Suggestions for future research are provided.

This thesis is approved for recommendation
to the Graduate Council.

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Finally, deep thanks to my thesis advisor, Dr. Lori Holyfield, for the time and energy she spent editing my work and encouraging me to think deeper about the sociological concepts at hand. Her positive encouragement and unyielding support made this thesis a success. Without her, this thesis would not exist. She believed in me from the beginning and supported me through the entire process.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to the workers. I am deeply grateful that you took the time to share your experiences and perspectives with me. You have taught me that even in the midst of overwhelming oppression, resistance indeed springs eternal. It is my hope that this thesis introduces the academic community to your struggles and inspires others to partner with you in your efforts for justice.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION	1
A. Statement of the Problem	1
B. Study Significance	2
C. Research Questions	3
II. LITERATURE REVIEW	4
A. Theoretical Framework	4
B. Undocumented Immigrant Workers' Narrative Identity	12
III. METHODS	15
A. Epistemological Stance	15
B. Background and Setting	15
C. Entry	16
D. Sample	17
E. Data Analysis	17
IV. FINDINGS	19
A. Challenging Cultural Narrative Identity	19
Larger Structures of Moral Exclusion	21
Public Shaming	23
Morally Good and Hard Working	26
B. Narrative's Reflexive Relationships	27
Workers as "Experts"	27
A Community Living In Fear	33
Symbolic Violence	36
Justice vs. Moral Worthiness	39
C. Reform Not Revolution	42
D. Solidarity with Workers' Rights Organizations, Distance from Labor Unions	46
E. Summary of Findings	50
V. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH	51
A. Discussion and Conclusion	51
B. Limitations and Future Research	55
VI. REFERENCES	57
VII. APPENDICES	60
A. Informed Consent and Interview Guides	60
B. Line-By-Line Coding, Codebook, and Memoing	63

CHAPTER ONE

I. INTRODUCTION

Both workers' rights and immigration have been highly contentious political issues in the past few years. In 2011, protests erupted over new laws diminishing union workers' collective bargaining rights in Wisconsin and Ohio¹. The pushback against the laws by union workers and their supporters, some posit, may signal resurgence in the labor movement². Regarding immigration, several U.S. states have passed anti-immigration laws in the past few years that criminalize the daily activities of undocumented immigrants³. Comprehensive immigration reform remains elusive, meaning that the 11 million undocumented immigrants in the United States exist in legal limbo⁴. Lack of legal status leaves undocumented immigrant workers vulnerable to abuse by employers and anti-immigration policies that make daily life exceedingly difficult. Milkman (2000: 1) argues that while organized labor and immigrants have not always been natural allies, the increase of immigrants in manual labor jobs, once strongholds for organized labor, suggests that organizing immigrants is a growing imperative for the struggling labor movement. In some regions, such as the major metropolitan areas of California, immigrants make up the majority of the manual labor force (Milkman 2000). The shared experience of immigrating, stigmatization in American culture, and strong social networks suggest that immigrants, "undocumented or not, seem ripe for organizing" (Milkman 2000: 9).

A. Statement of the Problem

¹ Available at <http://www.npr.org/2011/05/24/136610879/collective-bargaining-curbs-spread-across-the-u-s>. Retrieved December 6th, 2011.

² Available at <http://www.npr.org/blogs/itsallpolitics/2011/03/18/134655064/wisconsin-judge-stops-collective-bargaining-law-from-taking-effect>. Retrieved December 6th, 2011.

³ Available at http://colorlines.com/archives/2011/06/alabama_immigration.html. Retrieved December 6th, 2011.

⁴ Available at <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2011/02/01/unauthorized-immigrant-population-national-and-state-trends-2010>. Retrieved April 21st, 2012.

Cultural narrative is the story that informs the stereotypical identity of a group in the broader culture. It has the potential to greatly affect the lives of low-wage and undocumented immigrant workers in the United States. Cultural narratives become pervasive through daily repetition. These narratives influence public policy and our perceptions of that policy. However, sociologists cannot be content to study these broader forces and assume low-wage, undocumented immigrant workers are passive receivers of the dominant discourse and policy that affects them. We must view these workers and their allies as social agents engaged in active responses to the cultural narratives and policy that impact them, often negatively. We must ask questions such as: How do low-wage, undocumented immigrant workers and their allies promote an alternative narrative of themselves and challenge dominant narratives and policy? How do undocumented immigrant workers and their allies use social action toward these ends? What meanings guide their actions and goals?

B. Study Significance

The workers' rights center I study is not directly associated with the labor movement. Instead, they see themselves as part of a more grassroots alliance of workers' rights organizations that some refer to as the workers' rights movement. While there is extensive research on the United States labor movement, little to no scholarly work has been done on the workers' right movement which focuses more on low-wage workers⁵. Many of these low-wage workers are also immigrants, often undocumented. The workers' rights movement also tends to have a different organizing philosophy than traditional labor unions⁶. Given these differences in clientele and philosophy, we cannot assume that we can understand the meanings and goals of

⁵ Available at <http://www.iwj.org/template/page.cfm?id=92> and <http://www.nwawjc.org/index.html>. Retrieved October 11th, 2011.

⁶ Available at <http://www.nwawjc.org/index.html>. Retrieved October 11th, 2011.

the workers' right movement by studying the labor movement. This, combined with the political relevance of labor issues and immigration, demands sociological inquiry into the workers' rights movement.

C. Research Questions

The research questions guiding this study are:

- 1) What constitutes the organizational narrative identity of the Northwest Arkansas Workers' Justice Center and the personal narrative identities of the worker-members?
- 2) How does the organizational narrative identity of the Northwest Arkansas Workers' Justice Center negotiate the broader cultural and institutional narratives of undocumented immigrant workers with the personal narratives of local low-wage, undocumented immigrant workers?

CHAPTER TWO

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Theoretical Framework

The framing perspective is part of the constructionist approach to social movement scholarship which gained prominence in the mid-1980s after the long tenure of resource mobilization and rational choice models of social movements (Benford 1997; David 2001). These models generally overlooked “mobilizing beliefs and ideas” as taken-for-granted constants and therefore not crucial to analyzing the success or failure of a movement (Snow and Benford 1992). The framing perspective, on the other hand, conceptualizes movement beliefs and ideas as the product of “meaning-work” which takes place through interactive processes (Snow and Benford 1992: 136). In social movements, framing is the process in which social movement actors consciously attach certain meanings to situations and “seek to affect interpretations of reality among various audiences” (Benford 1997: 410). The framing perspective, in the tradition of symbolic interactionism, views meaning as “negotiated, contested, modified, articulated, and rearticulated” (Benford 1997: 410). Framing, simply put, is “signifying work” (Snow and Benford 1992: 136). Social movement activists are competing against alternative framing by “the media, local governments, and the state” to endow events and facts with particular meanings favorable for attracting movement participants and achieving movement goals.

The frames created by social movement actors are known as collective action frames, which “either underscore and embellish the seriousness and injustice of a social condition or redefine as unjust and immoral what was previously seen as unfortunate but perhaps tolerable” (Snow and Benford 1992: 137). Collective action frames “render events meaningful and thereby serve as a basis for collective action” (Babb 1996: 1034).

However, within each organization tied to a particular social movement, we can anticipate finding *implicit meaning* within the specific narrative of that organization. This may vary from the larger collective frames. Implicit meaning refers to what it means to be an activist and the purpose of group life to the members of a particular social movement group (Lichterman 1998). Lichterman (1998) argues that implicit meaning can be discovered by observing organizational structure, decision making processes, acceptable strategies and tactics, and how ideology is (or is not) articulated by members of the social movement group. Lichterman (1998) notes that some studies of small social movement groups find that implicit meaning either facilitates or inhibits social movement groups working together; it affects how social movement groups view themselves as part of the movement in relation to other social movement groups. When internal meanings of activism align, the building of alliances between social movement groups and mobilization are more successful. When the implicit meanings of social movement groups clash, however, building networks and mobilizing is made more difficult.

Lichterman's (1998) study of Airdale Citizens for Environmental Sanity (ACES), a suburban community action group that formed in order to challenge the methods of waste disposal by a nearby company, illustrates the empirical usefulness of implicit meaning. Lichterman (1998) found that these suburban citizens valued politeness and understood themselves as concerned citizens; overt expressions of ideology were not acceptable for members and the group was uncomfortable with radical environmental activists. The group also had a leader, suggesting hierarchy was acceptable rather than the horizontal leadership employed by many grassroots movement groups. Implicit meanings, which are manifest in ACE's structures and practices, explain why they did not establish strong links with a green peace liaison who met with the group or radical environmental groups from the nearby metropolitan

area. For the members of ACES, Lichterman (1998) found that activism meant being a concerned citizen and doing civic duty; it was also a venue for gaining personal empowerment and self-expression- as long as this expression did not encroach upon other's self-expression.

Lichterman (1988) bases his concept of implicit meaning of Wuthnow and Witten's (1988) concept of implicit culture. Wuthnow and Witten (1988: 54) describe implicit culture as the "taken-for-granted assumptions, expectations, and outlooks that govern social interactions". Implicit culture is manifest in the "individuals who serve as its carriers" (Ibid). This is helpful in understanding implicit meaning within social movement groups because the locus of meaning is to be found within the story-telling of the members who constitute a given social movement group. While framing refers to the collective meanings of social movements, narrative can offer a deeper understanding of an organization's placement within a given movement. This can be discovered through studying the organizational narrative.

Narrative

Narrative was long shunned by academic disciplines as an object of study. However, since in the 1980s, a "narrative turn" has taken place (Davis 2002; Loseke 2007). Scholars in many fields have recognized the opportunities narratives hold for exploring "how humans create and sustain meaning" and construct identity (Ewick and Silbey 1995; Davis 2002; Loseke 2007: 661). Since this narrative turn, sociologists have studied narrative "as a social act and form of explanation, storytelling as a social process, life histories and 'accounts' as social objects for investigation, and the narrative constitution of identity" (Davis 2002: 3). One area where narrative analysis is particularly germane is the study of social movements, which are "dominated by stories and storytelling" (Davis 2002: 4). The volume *Stories of Change: Narrative and Social Movements* (Davis 2002) answered this call; empirical analyses of

narratives within social movements reveal how the study of narratives can reveal the interworking and complexities of social movements that are not always visible through frame analysis (see exception Ruiz-Junco 2011). This volume established the “movement narrative perspective”, which conceptualizes social movements as “bundles of narratives” (Fine 2002: 229-230). The narrative perspective, however, is not meant to displace long-standing social movement models, but rather to offer new tools for understanding the cultural workings of social movements (Fine 2002).

In particular, studies from the narrative perspective can provide answers to limitations inherent in the framing perspective of social movements. Davis (2002: 9) argues that the framing and frame alignment perspectives “suffer from an overemphasis on logical persuasion and consensus of belief.” Frame alignment, articulated by Snow et al. (1986: 464), refers to the linkage of individual and social movement “interpretative orientations”. Although scholars recognize that successful frame alignment depends on “resonance with preexisting meanings in the wider culture,” they have not undertaken systematic study of these preexisting meanings (Davis 2002: 9). Scholars of the framing perspective have given short shrift to the “situated and negotiated nature of participant engagement and solidarity” (Ibid.) The analysis of narrative provides an answer to these shortcomings because narrative is where these preexisting meanings dwell and where individuals negotiate and create their motivations for involvement in a social movement.

Narratives better reveal the competing perspectives and pressures present among members of a social movement than collective action frames, which are a product of group interaction that cannot represent all viewpoints. Thus, narratives may unveil diverse and contradicting concerns among social movement members, and may “anticipate or even compel

frame transformation” (Tatum 2002: 181). Accordingly, social movement activists may be pressured in various settings to tell stories that do not totally conform to the movement’s frame. In these instances, narratives may attest better than frames to the “actual cultural workings” (Ibid) of the social movement.

Tatum (2002) argues that while collective action frames rely on logical discourse, narrative can contain ambiguities and even inconsistencies. Tatum’s study of the trial of Jack Kevorkian for physician-assisted suicides reveals that the defense primarily employed narrative that contained emotional appeals that resonated with values held in the common culture, such as the right to self-determination and compassion. Tatum concludes that some social movements, such as the movement for assisted-suicide and euthanasia, may rely on emotional, rather than cognitive, tools and therefore “frame analysis may overcomplexify the rhetoric of a movement” (Tatum 2002: 201).

Social movement framing analysis has tended to reify social movement frames, studying them as if they have a life of their own “independent of the collective interpretations and constructions of the actors involved” and therefore ignore human agency (Benford 1997: 418). It follows that the lack of attention to human agency has led to overlooking human emotions as well. As Benford (1997: 419) notes, “any lay observer or movement participant would testify to the importance of emotions in collective action”. The analysis of narrative within social movements contributes to correcting these omissions because the study of narrative, especially narrative identity, focuses attention squarely on human actors as they create meaning and identity. How does one study narrative within a social movement, and how does it differ from the study of framing and frame alignment? Fine (2002: 232) explains that “narrative analysis presents detailed stories and, from this data, emphasizes the analysis of the discourse that Snow’s

approach (frame alignment) has traditionally taken for granted”. I turn next to narrative identity and its importance for grasping the reflexive relationship between advocates and the populations they serve.

Narrative Identity

Human social life is composed of narratives. Storytelling “may be *the* way through which human beings make sense of their own lives and the lives of others” (McAdams 1995: 207, emphasis in original). Loseke (2007) argues that narratives create identity, and that these narrative identities exist on multiple levels of the human social world.

Loseke (2007: 661) posits that narrative identity exists on four levels: the cultural, institutional, organizational, and personal. At the macro-level, cultural narrative identities simplify a world of complex social actors and create “symbolic boundaries” around these actors. Cultural narrative identity is categorical; examples of cultural narrative identities include religion, gender, victim, and citizen. While some cultural identities stem from the past, others have emerged more recently as locations of contested identity, such as race/ethnicity and sexuality. Loseke (2007: 664) refers to these cultural identities as “formula stories”.

Institutional narrative identities are similar to cultural identities in that they are categorical. However, they are different in one important respect. While cultural narrative identities may not directly shape people’s lives, institutional narrative identity is manifest through public policy and therefore has tangible effects on people’s realities. Based on “causal stories” that define a problem and a target population, institutional narratives create two categories: groups who are “morally good and deserving of sympathy” and those who are “morally deficient and deserving of condemnation and punishment” (Loseke 2007: 669). Target

populations deemed morally worthy in the narrative receive a greater share of policy benefits, while target populations deemed morally reprehensible receive a greater share of policy burdens.

Loseke (2007: 670) defines organizational narrative as the stories created by the organizers or workers of ongoing programs who have evaluated themselves, or their clientele, or have been evaluated by others as having “troubled identities in need of repair”. The organizations work to repair these troubled identities. Organizers and workers may pull from cultural and institutional narratives in creating organizational narrative, but they may be even more likely to create their own story in their attempt to “convince a disbelieving public” that they, or their clientele, deserve moral inclusion in society (Ibid). It is the organizational narrative which shapes social services and the day to day operations of a program or organization. This narrative offers a “tool kit of symbols, stories, rituals, and world-views” that organizers can draw on as needed (Loseke 2007: 671).

Finally, Loseke (2007) argues that personal narrative identity is the story that an individual constructs in order to make a coherent connection between life events. An individual may pull on the other forms of narrative identity in order to create a personal narrative identity. Loseke (2007) notes that an organization cannot force a narrative identity onto an individual unless it makes sense to that person. This leads to interesting questions regarding the relationship between organizational and personal narrative identity. For example, to what extent can an organization influence or impose narrative identity on individuals involved with the organization? Under what circumstances are individuals willing to adopt the narrative identity promoted by the organization?

In order to examine the relationship between organizational and personal narrative identities, and how framing processes influence both, I conducted a case study of the

organizational narrative identity of a workers' rights organization and the personal narrative identities of its worker members.

My research is informed in part by Loseke's (1987; 2001) previous work on the narrative identities of domestic violence shelters and support groups and the women victims of violence who comprise their clientele. There are parallels between Loseke's (1987; 2001) work and the findings of this study. However, differences will be addressed in the findings as well. As with the workers' rights organization, domestic violence shelters draw upon implicit meanings within the organization, the organizational narrative, and the personal narratives of those they serve. Like the domestic violence shelter, the Workers' Justice Center is aligned with a social movement. For the shelters, the alignment is with the social movement to end violence against women and, often less overtly, the feminist movement. For the Workers' Justice Center, the alignment is with the workers' rights movement and to some extent the broader labor movement.

Loseke finds that domestic violence shelters and support groups assert that women victims are the "experts" on their situations. Likewise, the workers' rights organization I study states that "workers are the experts". To what extent does this tenet guide practical activities, and ultimately, do clients (women victims or worker-members) view themselves as experts in the organization? In other words, to what extent is "expert" part of their personal narrative identities? Loseke (1987; 2001) found that in domestic violence shelters and support groups only some of women victims' expert knowledge was accepted. While their knowledge of the violence they experienced and themselves as victims was legitimated and privileged, understandings of themselves or their male abusers that strayed from the formula story of battered women were routinely minimized and redirected by case workers and support group facilitators (Loseke 1987; 2001).

Furthermore, Loseke (1987; 2001) found that the victim narrative of women as morally pure victims in situations of extreme harm is not adopted as personal narrative identity by all women who have been victims of violence. Many women do not evaluate the violence they suffered as the extreme version found in the formula story and organizational narrative and do not see themselves as morally pure victims. Do immigrant workers, in their personal narrative identities, see themselves in the image promoted in the organizational narrative of the workers' rights organization? Loseke's (1987; 2001) is some of the only scholarly work examining organizational narrative identity and its reflexive relationship to personal narrative identity. My research should add to the dialogue, revealing that programs which seek to repair troubled identities in the contemporary world warrant further research in order to better understand the relationship between advocates and the populations they serve.

B. Undocumented Immigrant Workers' Narrative Identity

Alexander (1992: 291) posits that "when citizens make judgments about who should be included in civil society and who should not, about who is friend and who is an enemy, they draw on a systematic, highly elaborated symbolic code". Cultural narrative identities draw on this symbolic code in the creation of categorical identities. For Latino immigrants, the cultural symbolic code is generally unfavorable, tending to categorize them as not worthy of inclusion in civil society and as enemies. Massey (2007: 148) explains that cultural sentiment has steadily turned against Latino immigrants since the mid-1980s, and more than ever they have come to be seen as a "threat" and categorized "socially as undesirable". Latino immigrants, in particular the undocumented, are labeled as job thieves, abusers of public benefits, and criminals. While discourse on immigrants is of course more complex than this, the sentiment that Latino

undocumented immigrants do not deserve inclusion in civic society pervades American culture⁷. In fact, a majority of Americans (56 percent) favor enacting punitive illegal immigration laws similar to the law passed in Arizona in 2010⁸.

The institutional narrative identity of undocumented Latino immigrants is informed by the cultural narrative identity. According to Loseke (2007), institutional narrative identity manifests in public policy. The public policy toward undocumented immigrants over the past few decades has been largely punitive. Massey (2007) argues that the passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) in 1986 was a pivotal moment in which policy on undocumented immigration took a punitive turn from which it has never looked back. The provisions of IRCA, which included major funding increases for border enforcement and criminalizing the hiring of undocumented workers, “drastically reshaped the political economy of migration” in the United States (Massey 2007: 136). It should be noted that IRCA also authorized two legalization programs for some undocumented immigrants already in the country that eventually led to over two million immigrants obtaining legal status. More recently, in the past two years, several states have passed laws that criminalize much of the daily lives of undocumented immigrants⁹. The goal of these laws is to make life so unbearable for undocumented immigrants that they will choose to leave the country. This strategy known as “self-deportation” has been gaining popularity particularly among Republican politicians¹⁰. Moreover, the Obama Administration deported a record number of undocumented immigrants in

⁷ Available at <http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=6675167n>; <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/24/us/politics/newt-gingrichs-words-on-immigration-become-a-target.html?pagewanted=2&ref=politics> Retrieved January 30th, 2012.

⁸ Available at <http://blairrockefellerpoll.uark.edu/5548.php> Retrieved January 30th, 2012.

⁹ Available at http://colorlines.com/archives/2011/06/alabama_immigration.html Retrieved December 6th, 2011.

¹⁰ Available at <http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/politics/2012/01/self-deportation-fantasy-or-reality/> Retrieved April 11th 2012.

fiscal year 2011¹¹. Undocumented immigrants, who are deemed unworthy in the cultural and institutional narratives, and also do not hold any economic or political power, are receiving a greater share of the immigration policy burdens.

The workers' rights movement challenges the cultural and institutional narrative identities of low-wage, undocumented immigrant workers. The movement frames these workers as morally good, hard working, victims of unfair and exploitative employers and policies¹². In order to gain an in-depth understanding of how this movement frame is negotiated by members of an organization aligned with the movement and low-wage undocumented immigrant workers involved with the organization, I examine the narratives of the Worker's Justice Center in Springdale, AR and its worker-members. As noted, narrative analysis can reveal the "actual cultural workings" of a social movement better than frame analysis (Tatum 2002: 181) because it uncovers complexities and the implicit meanings that guide everyday activities, aspects that social movement framing may overlook.

¹¹ Available at <http://www.ice.gov/news/releases/1110/111018washingtondc.htm> Retrieved January 30th, 2012.

¹² Available at <http://www.iwj.org/template/page.cfm?id=92>; <http://www.nwawjc.org/> Retrieved January 30th, 2012.

CHAPTER THREE

III. METHODS

A. Epistemological Stance

This study analyzes the narratives about undocumented immigrant workers promoted by a justice organization and the workers themselves, and seeks an understanding of the meanings implicit in those narratives. Therefore a qualitative research design is appropriate. Through qualitative research we can grasp the viewpoint of our subjects, ensuring that we “only attribute to actors ideas about the world they actually hold” (Becker 2001: 323). I use in-depth interviews, observation of a workers’ meeting, and observation of a public demonstration put on by the Workers’ Justice Center to collect data.

B. Background and Setting

The Northwest Arkansas Worker’s Justice Center is a low-wage workers’ rights organization located in Springdale, Arkansas. The mission of the Workers’ Justice Center is to improve employment conditions for low-wage workers through advocacy, organizing and workers’ education (Northwest Arkansas Worker’s Justice Center 2011). Established in 2002, the Workers’ Justice Center serves as a community center where workers can come for information, education and a space to share ideas and organize to improve working conditions collectively. The Northwest Arkansas Worker’s Justice Center also advocates for comprehensive immigration reform in order to end the exploitation of undocumented workers and provide respect and dignity for all immigrants (Northwest Arkansas Worker’s Justice Center 2011). They work primarily with Latino, often undocumented, immigrant workers; however, all low-wage workers are welcome to seek help and get involved at the Workers’ Justice Center.

One branch of the Workers' Justice Center is the Workers Committee. The Workers Committee is operated by worker-members, as opposed to paid staff members, who choose which issues to work on. However, their work must fall within the mission statement of the Workers' Justice Center. The Workers Committee receives guidance and support from the staff members of the Center. Worker-members on the Workers Committee have differing levels of time investment and commitment. While some worker-members have been active volunteers for a few years, others have only attended one or two meetings. The worker-members interviewed in this study are involved with the Workers Committee. Some, though not all, have had cases with the Center in the past or had an active case with the Center during the time of the study.

C. Entry

The data for this research project was collected under the supervision of my thesis chair, Dr. Lori Holyfield. Entry into this setting was relatively easy in that I already had an established connection with the Northwest Arkansas Worker's Justice Center prior to proposing this project, as I had been a volunteer with the organization for the past year. I contacted each staff member and was notified via e-mail, and by one in person, of the willingness of all four staff members of the Worker's Justice Center to participate in this study. I interviewed each of the four staff members in their respective office at the Workers' Justice Center in Springdale. I also carried out a participant observation during an anti-wage theft picket put on by the Worker's Justice Center on the National Day of Action against Wage Theft on November 17th, 2011. I attended a Workers Committee meeting at the Center's offices where I met several worker-members who were enthusiastic about being interviewed for this thesis project. I interviewed five worker-members, all of whom had attended at least one Workers Committee meeting. All interviews with worker-members were conducted in Spanish. An interpreter was present during interviews

with three of the worker-members. I interviewed two worker-members together without the aid of an interpreter. I interviewed two worker-members together at a local restaurant. I interviewed one worker-member in a private office at the Workers' Justice Center. I interviewed the last two worker-members, a married couple, at their home.

D. Sample

My sample can be described as a purposive homogeneous sample (Patton 2002) in that I am studying a subgroup of the workers' rights movement in one organization, aiming for similarities to other members of the movement. I conducted nine in-depth interviews with staff members of the Worker's Justice Center and worker-members of the organization (see Appendix A, Interview Guide). Although I followed an interview guide, I welcomed additional information and "surprise data" relevant to the study that emerged during the interviews (Becker 2001: 320). I read each interviewee a statement of informed consent and asked if they would like to choose their own pseudonym. Each interview was recorded on an audio digital recorder, translated when appropriate, and transcribed verbatim for coding purposes.

E. Data Analysis

This study used grounded theory (Charmaz 2006), a methodology that begins with data, looks for patterns and themes, and allows theoretical concepts to emerge from the data. This process included reading through each verbatim transcript of my interviews and field notes from my participant observation to conduct initial, focused, and chunk-by-chunk coding.

In the initial analysis phase of this project, I included both deductive and inductive codes, creating a codebook for my thesis advisor to provide researcher agreement of the findings (see also Lincoln and Guba 1984). I followed Charmaz's charge to identify patterns within each interview, compare interviews, looking for similarities, patterns, themes, and "negative cases"

among the interviews (Charmaz 2006: 102). From the initial codes I then moved toward more complete and robust focused coding. Focused codes are the most frequent initial codes and are more conceptual, leading to theoretical codes (Charmaz 2006). For example, “respect and dignity” became a focused code as these ideas were mentioned several times by three of the four Workers’ Justice Center staff members. Other focused codes included workers as expert-advocates, passion to help others, workers are justice-based, workers’ fear of employer retaliation and deportation, symbolic violence, workers’ education, strategy of public shame, and labor law reform.

Finally, memos serve as a critical link between data collection and writing the findings of a paper (Charmaz 2006). The memos were a way to develop theoretical concepts that incorporated both free writing and sociological concepts and sources. For example, the “respect and dignity” focused code developed into the memo “Larger Structures of Moral Exclusion” by incorporating the moral exclusion concept proposed by Choo and Ferree (2010) in their analysis of working class people’s discourse on respect and dignity. Examples of my memo writing are provided along with a copy of the codebook in order for readers to assess the plausibility of my findings (see Appendix B).

CHAPTER FOUR

IV. Findings

A. Challenging Cultural Narrative Identity

My research questions center around describing the organizational narrative of the Worker's Justice Center. In addition I wanted to better understand the implicit meanings of the organizational members and identify how they negotiate the cultural, institutional, and personal narratives in their attempts to repair the identity of and garner sympathy for workers. Through observation and interviews I find that the organization must not only understand the needs of their clientele, but it also must be savvy about local policies and laws that affect workers. Perhaps the most daunting task for the Workers' Justice Center is that it must be vigilant in challenging the broader cultural narrative identity of undocumented workers.

Cultural narratives of identity always include sentiment, a term that Stephen Gordon (1990:562) defines as "a socially constructed pattern linking sensations and expressive gestures with cultural meanings." It is not surprising then that institutional narratives often include policies that reflect such sentiment. If there is an overall hostile sentiment toward a group, then policies often reflect this via punitive laws and withholding of support. Thus, organizational narrative identity is necessarily strategic and purposeful; those who create it are trying to "convince a disbelieving public" that they or their clientele deserve sympathy (Loseke 2007: 670). For many advocacy groups, this can mean taking on pervasive cultural sentiment that is hostile towards them.

The cultural narrative identity of the undocumented immigrant worker is job thief, abuser of public benefits, and criminal. It is an identity that generally elicits contempt rather than sympathy from the public. Massey (2007: 148) argues that social actors who are able to

influence the cultural conversation, “academics, pundits, and politicians”, have engaged in boundary work framing Latino immigrants as a “threat” and socially “undesirable”. This boundary work has had an effect, steadily turning the cultural sentiment against Latino immigrants (Ibid). In fact, half of the general public believes that immigrants are a “burden on the country” because they take American jobs, housing, and healthcare¹³. Additionally, two thirds of the general public supports the Arizona immigration law enacted in 2010 that gives police broad powers to check immigration status of people they stop or detain¹⁴, which has been criticized as amounting to racial profiling by police. Again, this presents an especially difficult terrain for the Workers’ Justice Center to navigate, given they work mostly with undocumented workers in Northwest Arkansas.

My findings reveal that the Workers’ Justice Center challenges the cultural narrative identity of undocumented immigrant workers in at least three ways. First, they point out the discriminatory structures that serve as the basis for the moral exclusion of the workers in our culture. Second, they employ strategic public shaming of unethical employers in order to challenge to the hostile cultural sentiment toward undocumented immigrant workers. Finally, the Center challenges the dominant cultural narrative identity of undocumented immigrant workers by promoting its organizational narrative identity of the workers are morally worthy and hard working.

Loseke (2007: 663) reminds us that “stories are constructed, told, heard, and evaluated within particular historical, institutional, and interactional contexts, which include the background assumptions of storytellers and storyhearers” and that these contexts influence “what

¹³ Available at <http://www.people-press.org/2010/06/24/section-3-opinions-about-immigration/>. Retrieved April 5th, 2012.

¹⁴ Available at <http://www.people-press.org/2010/06/24/section-3-opinions-about-immigration/>. Retrieved April 5th, 2012.

moral evaluations likely will be attached to those stories and characters”. The actions taken by the Center staff, such as public shaming campaigns against unethical employers and the narrative they write about undocumented immigrant workers, are designed to evoke compassion and sympathy for these workers.

Larger Structures of Moral Exclusion

The cultural narrative identity of undocumented immigrant workers is supported by the larger structures of moral exclusion in society. Choo and Ferree (2010: 145), in their analysis of two qualitative studies on working class people, argue that in their discourse about self-respect and dignity, the workers in these studies speak to the “larger structures of moral exclusion” to which the working class is subjected. Structures of moral exclusion are the discriminatory institutions that serve as the basis for the moral exclusion of certain groups in the cultural conscience. Choo and Ferree (2010) refer to the structures of moral exclusion against which the working class struggles.

Undocumented immigrant workers suffer the additional discrimination of being an unwelcome out-group in the United States, leaving them vulnerable to further acts of moral exclusion and discrimination. Lee and Fiske’s (2006 cited in Massey 2007) stereotype content model illustrates this process. The model plots the social position of various immigrant groups on a graph defined by the intersection of warmth and competence ratings, revealing that of all immigrant groups, Latino immigrants of all types are “the most despised out-groups” (Massey 2007: 150). The class of immigrant that scores lowest of all in terms of perceived warmth and competence is the undocumented, which shares space with the “most detested and socially stigmatized” social groups, such as “criminals and drug dealers” (Massey 2007: 150).

Consequently, employers can take advantage of their undocumented status, imposing coercion, threat of dismissal, and even deportation.

For the often undocumented, low-wage, immigrant workers of Northwest Arkansas, these larger structures of moral exclusion also include racism, nativism, classism, and for female workers, sexism. The Workers' Justice Center staff points out these larger structures of moral exclusion and argues that these structures are oppressive to the workers. They challenge the cultural narrative identity and hostile sentiment by drawing attention to the fact that it is largely based on and supported by discrimination.

Racism and nativism are two forces that serve to morally exclude the workers. The racism that workers experience is often bound with the nativist sentiment and policies to which they are subjected. Manuel, in his explanation of how the Center began, articulates precisely when, in his view, racism and nativism became major forces in Northwest Arkansas.

(The year) 2000 became this huge Latino influx into the state of Arkansas, and with that brought fear, brought prejudice, brought discomfort into communities. And seeing how easy it was to exploit individuals, because there was a huge construction boom in this area, we started, well, our former executive director started hearing these cases. (Interview, October 14, 2011, p. 6)

The Workers' Justice Center employees believe that it is not only employers, but the community and American citizens that morally exclude these workers by denying them respect and dignity through racism and nativism in the cultural and institutional narratives. Esmeralda, for example, feels that the anti-immigrant law recently passed in Alabama results in migrant workers there "being denigrated of the basic human rights, and being compared to animals or even worse than animals" (Interview, October 21st 2011, p. 11).

The employees of the Workers' Justice Center understand classism to be another structure of moral exclusion preventing workers from gaining respect and dignity from both their

employers and the community. Abraham asserts that the “one percent”, using the terminology of the Occupy Movement to refer to the upper class and corporations, should realize that “they would have no wealth without the workers and it’s time they start respecting them” (Interview, October 14, 2011, p. 7).

Manuel makes a similar appeal for the moral inclusion of low-wage, often undocumented, immigrant workers. In his view, these workers are the backbone of the economy and for this reason, they deserve rights and respect.

What I’m saying is we are important because we’re the workforce. We are what makes the companies grow. We are the money. We are, we are those that help this economy strive, and when it comes down to not giving them their rights, you know, putting them in dire conditions, not really giving them the necessities or benefits that one is entitled to, then, it starts to affect an individual’s character. (Interview, October 14th 2011, p. 7)

None of the employees elaborated or gave specific instances of the sexism that female workers face. However, all interviewees noted that sexual harassment is one the main issues that they help workers with in case management. Esmeralda expresses her vision of how women workers could fight the sexism they experience by talking about it together.

I could see women having a radio show where they could talk about discrimination and each women, without disclosing their identity, talk about what worked for them, what did and what helped them step into the Workers’ Justice Center and share their story and take action. (Interview, October 21st, 2011, p. 5)

Public Shaming

The Workers’ Justice Center confronts the negative cultural sentiment toward undocumented immigrant workers through the strategy of public shaming. The Center uses public direct action, when necessary, to expose “wage thieves” and other unethical employers to the community. Through public shaming, they attempt not only to redirect negative sentiment toward employers who exploit undocumented workers, but also to garner sympathy for the workers themselves and the cause of the Workers’ Justice Center. Shame is a powerful tool for

challenging cultural sentiment because it casts the workers as morally righteous and the employers who treat them unfairly as morally flawed. Tatum (2002: 201) finds that some social movements gain support using “emotional appeals that resonate with values held in the common culture”, such as compassion, rather than relying on logic and cognitive tools. The Center’s public shaming campaigns draw heavily on normative emotion appeals, branding the unethical employers as greedy and willing to take advantage of poor, vulnerable, and hard working people who deserve the fruits of their labor. The public denunciation and shaming campaign is an appeal to the compassion of the general public. Through public shaming, the Center attempts to flip the cultural script in order to rewrite the narrative identity of undocumented immigrant workers.

On the National Day of Action against Wage Theft, November 17th, 2011, the Workers’ Justice Center staged a picket of a local restaurant, Osegueras, accused of stealing wages of workers. Abraham, the Center’s Associate Director of Campaign Organizing, was the main organizer of the picket. The participants in the picket included the Workers’ Justice Center staff, worker-members of the Workers Committee, former employees of Osegueras who have cases with the Center, and community allies. During the picket the group marched on the sidewalk in front of the restaurant, chanted, and had conversations with passer-bys who were interested. Abraham also encouraged former employees to tell their personal stories of how the restaurant stole their wages. Tatum (2002: 181) posits that personal stories “condense movement perspectives to very simple and widely accepted values that can persuade people to act for movement interests without requiring them to fully adopt the frames.” The stories told during the picket were emotional appeals for public sympathy. One former employee, a student, told the crowd how having her wages stolen has affected her life:

Over the bullhorn, she tells the crowd how she could not buy her books for school because she was not paid. She tears up as she explains that she worked there for a month

and would sometimes have to walk home late at night and that she was never paid for her work. She tells how she talked to the restaurant owner yesterday before the picket and he said he still had time to pay her because she didn't give a two-weeks notice. From her tone, it appears she finds his offer absurd, meaning, that he would expect her to keep working one more day without being paid.

Abraham also asks two Spanish-speaking former employees of Osegueras if they want to share their experience over the bullhorn, but both decline. Picketers hold protest signs and start chants with the theme of shame. One sign reads, "Wage Thieves Should Be Thrown in Jail". Another reads, "Thou Shalt Not Steal, Stop Wage Theft Now", invoking Biblical condemnation of stealing. Chants include "Osegueras Rich and Rude, We Don't Like Your Attitude!", "Hey Hey! Ho Ho! Exploitation has got to go!", "I Don't Know but I've Been Told, The Bosses' Pockets Are Lined With Gold!" and "Lies and Tricks Will Not Divide, Workers Standing Side By Side!" Picket signs that reflect a call for sympathy for the former employees include "Respect Our Rights" and "Stealing Wages Is Stealing Dreams". (Field Notes, November 17th, 2011, p. 4)

Throughout the picket, as customers approached the entrance to the restaurant, picketers would yell out to them that the restaurant does not pay its workers. Also, conversations with interested people passing by became opportunities to appeal for public sympathy for the former restaurant employees. Participants repeated the accounts of the former employees and told the story of how the greedy, unreasonable antagonist Osegueras refused to pay workers the wages they are due.

Tatum (2002: 182) explains that "to build bridges to outsiders, activists often eschew elaborate ideological justifications and subtle arguments, relying instead on appeals to values and perspectives broadly shared outside the movement". The theme of the picket, that the workers are morally good hard working victims and the restaurant owner is greedy and should be ashamed, was a deliberate attempt to appeal for public sympathy and support for often undocumented, low wage, immigrant workers. As Tatum (2002: 182) notes, narratives within social movements "can stimulate strong emotions- defiance, outrage, or compassion- that call for a response quite apart from a wider or more systematic commitment to specific changes. They can bestow moral legitimation through pathos."

During an interview, Abraham further describes how public shame can be powerful because “unethical employers” do not want to be exposed to their community.

About three weeks ago, an employer who didn’t want to pay, who had been avoiding us for about a month, we went to his house and said, “We’ve already printed these leaflets, if you don’t pay by tomorrow, we’re gonna start distributing this around your neighborhood, so your neighbors know you are stealing wages from workers.” The next day he had all the money. (Interview, October 14th, 2011, p. 3)

The threat of being shamed within his neighborhood was apparently enough motivation for the employer to pay the workers. It is important to note, however, that it was representatives of the Workers’ Justice Center that carried out the strategy. Had the undocumented workers approached the employer, the outcome may have been very different. Incorporating public shaming of unethical employers into the organizational narrative appears to be one strategy for the Workers’ Justice Center not only to recover wages, but to challenge the hostile cultural sentiment toward undocumented immigrant workers.

Morally Good and Hard Working

The Workers’ Justice Center also challenges the dominant cultural narrative identity of undocumented immigrant workers by promoting its organizational narrative identity. In the Center’s organizational narrative identity, undocumented immigrant workers are morally good, family oriented, hard workers. Esmeralda, for example, explains that farm labor is intense, but that Latino farm workers are willing to work hard for the sake of their families.

I mean, picking fruit and, you know, farm work is very hard work. Being under the sun, it’s intense. But, our community is used to it and it’s an area where we find that we feel we can work in. It’s not the ideal work that any person would want but it’s a sacrifice that many parents are willing to endure for the sake of their children to have a better life. (Interview, October 21st 2011, p. 11)

Manuel makes a similar point about undocumented workers in particular, arguing that they work hard for their families and that when employers don't pay workers, it only adds to their moral exclusion and creates an additional burden for them as well as their families.

You know, because our community, especially the undocumented community, we deal with individuals who are in survival mode. They will do anything to get some money to provide for family. And so in this case, this job is important because we try to make them gain that benefit that they have already worked for, you know, enjoy the fruits of their labor. And when an employer exploits them willingly, or does not want to pay them because of whatever reason, it could be just a little misunderstanding, I mean, bills don't wait, family can't wait, food on the table. (Interview, October 14th, 2011, p. 7)

By lifting the moral worthiness of workers and shaming of "greedy" employees, the organizational narrative walks between the worlds of justice and moral exclusion. Their knowledge of the workers and the various struggles they face in the community propels them to add moral weight to their organizational narrative. I turn next to the reflexive relationship between organizational and personal narrative identities.

B. Narrative's Reflexive Relationships

Workers as "Experts"

Just as Loseke's (1987; 2001) domestic violence shelter and support group staff espouse that the women victims of violence are "the experts" on their situation, the Workers' Justice Center staff asserts that "workers are the experts". In other words, undocumented immigrant as "expert" is part of the organizational narrative identity of the Workers' Justice Center. Loseke (2007) explains that it is the organizational narrative identity that informs program activities within an organization. I asked earlier to what extent does this belief that workers are experts guide program activities? Moreover, to what extent is "expert" part of worker-members personal narrative identities? Loseke (1987; 2001) finds that in domestic violence victims support groups, only some of victims' expert knowledge was honored, while knowledge that did not fit the

“formula story” of battered women was minimized or redirected. There was a limit to which the “victims are the experts” rhetoric guided program activities. When expert knowledge threatened the formula story, the guiding principle was abandoned and expert knowledge repressed. Furthermore, Loseke (1987; 2001) argues that part of the support group purpose is to convince women of their “victim” identity in order to ensure a continual clientele.

This does not appear to be the case with the Workers’ Justice Center. The staff’s claim that “workers are the experts” on workplace injustices is demonstrated in meetings and through interviews. This is particularly evident among members of the Workers Committee. During an observation of a Workers Committee meeting, questions were posed and worker-members were asked to provide their experiential knowledge in answering the questions. In this respect, the meetings function somewhat similar to a support group; members are prompted to share their expertise and experiences as well as learn from each other. However, unlike Loseke’s (1987; 2001) domestic violence support group and shelter staff, the Workers’ Justice Center staff does not engage the workers with discourse that imposes a “victim” identity. But as demonstrated earlier, they do employ a victim identity when engaging the cultural narrative and when dealing with the larger community.

Interviews reveal that some of the worker-members do have narrative identities of experts and community advocates, and some have narrative identities of victims. Worker-members who identify as victims will be discussed in a later section. However, self-identification by worker-members appears to be based more on personal experience and time involvement with the Workers’ Justice Center than on an identity promoted to them by the Workers’ Justice Center. The worker-members with greater time involvement on the Workers Committee tend to see themselves as expert-advocates for their community. These same workers claim they do not

personally experience fear of their employers or deportation, in contrast to some of the other worker-members on the Committee. Interestingly, while Loseke (1987) found that women in the shelter were over time persuaded to see themselves as victims, the opposite appears to occur in this study.

The worker-members who are not fearful of their employers or the threat of deportation are very aware of the fear in the undocumented community and see themselves as experts on the plight of their local community. Moreover, they view themselves as advocates. Interviews reveal that they see themselves as more savvy and knowledgeable about their rights, which allows them to stand up in the face of intimidating employers and police. Because they are more aware of their rights, they see themselves as better able to assist others in the undocumented community. Interviews reveal their passion and how they employ the Workers' Justice Center to reach their goals.

Nestor and Tomas, for example, who have been highly active volunteers with the Center for over two years, did not want to pick pseudonyms, explaining that they are not afraid of immigration officials even though both are undocumented workers. Tomas explains, "Me, I have never changed my name. I'm not scared of immigration; in my case I am ready for immigration" (Interview, February 17th 2011, p. 1). Nestor adds, "It is better to keep our names; the original is better" (Interview, February 17th 2011, p. 1). This attitude sets them apart from the undocumented immigrant community which they describe as living in constant fear of deportation. Tomas goes on to explain that while he approached the Center when he was looking for help, he is involved with the Center in order to help others.

How I entered the Workers' Justice Center, well I entered through a friend looking for a solution of my case, my problem, but more than anything I like to help the people, the community, and that was what motivated me to stay in the Workers' Justice Center. We are there because we want to volunteer. (Interview, February 17th 2011, p. 2)

Tony, who has been an active volunteer at the Center for four months, explains that what makes him different from his co-workers is that he knows more about how things (laws, policies, employment practices) work. Although he admits he faces injustices, he does not see himself as a victim. While the organization does not engage in a victim narrative with the workers, it is clear that the workers see others within their community as victims.

The importance is, like I was telling you, one sees the injustices of the other people. Of course, at my job, I'm not going to tell you that I don't suffer injustices, but I'm a kind of person who is very mature and capable of knowing what's going on. (Interview, February 18th 2012, p. 4)

Tony further distances himself from the role of victim by explaining that even though he has a racist boss, it doesn't bother him. While his co-workers are fearful and less likely to challenge him, Tony describes how he uses humor and his knowledge about the history of United States immigration to challenge his boss's racism. Instead, he sees himself as an advocate for his co-workers and community.

Personally, I work with an American man. This man is very racist. But the kind of temper I have is that if he doesn't talk to me in the morning, we see each other, and he doesn't talk to me, I don't talk to him. I really don't care. I go to do my job and I do my job, and that's it. So, it doesn't bother me, but some of my co-workers here in March, it does bother them. And they say, "Say this to him." And I ask them, "Well, why don't you say it?" Then they respond, "Well, I don't like to talk to him." I always tell him this joke that America is directly from the Indians; it's not yours. Whenever he asked, "Why isn't it mine?" I said, "You're Creole. You're a mestizo practically." And I say, "America is not yours; it's the Native Americans." And I see that he turns red in the face! So that kind of thing doesn't bother me. But it does bother me when I see that they treat people differently. (Interview, February 18th 2012, p. 5)

Tony, a self described "business man," explains that he does not need the services of the Center but that others may need the help, further distancing himself from the victim identity. He explains that he has a passion to help others and that is why he is involved with the Center.

When I asked how he became involved, he states:

So, that's how it came about that I was talking to Nestor, and it interested me. And that's how I came to be a member of the Center. Because I like the cause that they are carrying, the cause that they are fighting for. It's not just for one or five or their grandkids, but for other people it might help as well. And maybe not for me, because I'm a business man. I'm here for the moment and I might be doing something else later, but there's some people who do a lot of suffering, a lot of suffering. Labor abuse. So, being on the committee is at my own will, definitely at my own will. I like to listen to the laws, I like it. I like what you talk about here. I like to see things be put into practice. I'm definitely here because of my own will. I'm not here for any other reason; I'm just here for my own good will. I wasn't beat up by my boss or anything like that. I really do like it. I think it's just something that you have in your blood. (Interview, February 18th 2012, p. 3)

Nestor shares that he is also intrinsically motivated to help others. For him, it is a “privilege” to be an advocate for undocumented workers in his Latino community.

In reality, I tell you not to be wild, but like a human being, I already have it in my blood, that craving or need to help people. And I am participant of the system that hurts people and I feel a privilege to be able to stand up for those who feel scared to fight or those who don't have documents to be able to speak up. I feel like a transport myself, like a voice to awake that voice inside the community. (Interview, February 17th 2012, p. 5)

Additionally, these worker-members who view themselves as expert-advocates for their community take a utilitarian approach toward the Center. They utilize the Center for mentorship and support. Nestor, who has been involved with the Workers' Justice Center for four years, explains that the worker-members use the Center as a resource to reach out to their community.

We use the Center like a bridge to be able to get closer to the community. It's of great importance to the Committee and we continue to use them and to have them be our guides and mentors. (Interview, February 17th 2012, p. 6)

Tony shares a similar view, explaining that through the Center worker members can reach out to the undocumented community and help them learn about their rights as immigrants.

Hopefully, thanks to God, and I talked to Nestor about it and to Abraham, hopefully this year at the beginning of the summer, you know, we will go to the parks to talk to the people and give them a little flyer, a little announcement, and they can find out what rights they have as an immigrant and they can approach the Center. (Interview, February 18th 2012, p. 8)

In addition to reaching out to their community, community education is an important goal for the worker members. In their view, the Latino undocumented immigrant community needs to be educated about their rights and also about local policies. For them, education is a critical link between a community living in fear and a community that is empowered. Acting as advocates, the worker members feel it is their responsibility, through the Workers Committee, to bring education programs to their community. For example, Nestor is adamant that education of the Latino undocumented immigrant community is necessary in order to achieve the goals of the Workers' Justice Center as well as overcome fear.

Another barrier to completing our goals, in part, would be community education. To break down those barriers you really need to create many work programs. And when you see the differences between cultures, it tends to bring you down and it affects us. Another barrier I want to bring up, that we need to talk about, is the integration of the community and the police system. The fear, that's a barrier. You ask people to fight for their rights, people feel a fear that all of the offices or organizations can be part of a personal information sharing database and that they can call up police or immigration. And are those or are those not barriers? Those are barriers that we are trying to eliminate through education programs and popular education. (Interview, February 17th 2012, p. 7)

Nestor further explains that the country's economic recession compounds the problems his community faces. For Nestor, community education is critical so that people can learn more about the social systems that affect their lives.

The country's economic crisis makes you feel desperation, and the families, what they would like most is to hear about economic solutions, and about solutions that favor their labor rights, worker's rights. Part of that is, like I say, the lack of education and development of popular education. Lack of education on labor rights. Education on the many systems: the police system, the economic system. So that's why people can't get out of that rut. And that's a barrier. (Interview, February 17th 2012, p. 8)

Overall, worker-members' self-identification as expert-advocates appears to be mainly the result of personal experiences, rather than an identity imposed by the Workers' Justice Center. These workers do not employ victim in their own personal narratives. Nor do they identify as victims of workplace injustice, but each of them has experienced injustice and

believes it legitimizes their position so that they can speak for others. They distance themselves by stating they are not afraid of immigration officials but they speak to the palpable fear of deportation in which their community lives. Time involvement with the Center appears to be a factor which influences the personal narratives of worker-members. Whereas Loseke found that time influenced the development of a personal victim narrative, this study reveals an opposite trajectory. It may even be the case that these worker-members came to the organization as victims but have incorporated the implicit meanings of the organizational narrative, such that they now view themselves as expert advocates. In this way, it appears that the organizational narrative identity of the Workers' Justice Center does influence the worker-members to some extent. It is apparent that the organizational narrative is congruent with the overall stated mission, meaning that the Workers' Justice Center staff encourages worker-members to think of themselves as experts and advocates for other workers in the community. Newer worker-members, on the other hand, tended to self-identity as victims and this is directly related to the amount of experienced fear mentioned above.

A Community Living In Fear

While the organizational narrative identity addresses the cultural sentiment toward undocumented immigrant workers, the personal narrative identities of worker-members are more laden with emotions, particularly the fear in which undocumented immigrant workers live. The worker-members who personally experience fear of their employer tend to see themselves as victims in their personal narrative identities. A married couple, Juan and Sara, are still living in fear of their past employer, the owner of Osegueras, who did not pay them. They have a case against the owner through the Workers' Justice Center and they feel threatened by him.

Because if they (the Center) leave us alone, that guy is going to attack us legally. So we're scared. Because him, even, he threatened me. If the Center doesn't help Sara and

me, I have big problems with this guy because this guy has too much money...She is scared and me too about this problem. (Interview, March 15th 2012, p. 5-6)

Sara adds,

When we leave and we come back, I know I'm always looking to see if anybody's following us, if there's someone strange. And I do really believe it because he's even said one time that he would call immigration on his own parents because he was mad at them. Because they had employees who were undocumented. And if he wants to do that with his own parents, what would he do against us? (Interview, March 15th 2012, p. 6)

Juan and Sara also have concerns about their personal situation. They have had to move frequently because they are unable to pay their rent. "We don't have benefits. Medical. We don't have anything. No pay for overtime. No benefits. No insurance. No nothing." Sara concurs with Juan and adds that at her new job, it is the same. She does not receive any benefits. Ironically, Juan concludes, "You go anywhere, and it's the same. Only Wal-mart has everything. Only Wal-mart because I applied yesterday and they have everything! Benefits, full time, part time, overtime, everything" (Interview, March 15th 2012, p. 8).

For Juan and Sara, the immediacy of their own situation influences not only their personal narrative identities but also their understanding of the organizational narrative. They are in reality victims of oppression and their narratives reflect these conditions. They need the assistance of the Worker's Justice Center. Should their case be resolved, and should they be able to spend more time with the organization, they too may incorporate the expert-advocate narrative that others have come to employ. Meanwhile, their plight represents the lived experiences of many within the undocumented community, reflecting the need for more resources and protection of the workers.

Fear is not an imagined condition for undocumented workers in Northwest Arkansas. In the following passages, both Nestor and Tony explain that the undocumented immigrant community also live in fear of the police. Undocumented immigrants are afraid of the police and

believe they will check their immigration status which will lead to detention or deportation. In fact, local police do have the authority to check immigration status under the 287(g) program.

Nestor feels that this constant state of fear takes an emotional toll on the community, paralyzing them to the point that they become complicit to abuse by employers.

Another problem, and it's something that I've always made very clear, is that the barrier that comes out like a flood is the distortion of emotions people have about the police, about what could happen if you randomly leave and get detained. You don't feel secure, and that's a barrier that is an obstacle. It depresses and inhabits a community, so they don't come forward, because simply stepping out into the street could be a problem for them. (Interview, February 17th 2012, p. 8)

Tony was personally pulled over by a police officer who asked about his immigration status. He believes that the police are now racially profiling those who appear to not be legally in the country. He also claims he stood up for himself against the police officer, asserting that she should not ask him about his immigration status.

(The fear is) being deported also. The issue is that now in Rogers they've put a new police officer. The police don't stop people because they made a mistake or committed an infraction, but because of their color. And as for me, I was stopping, and there was a woman officer and she was about a block away and I was at the stop. I made my stop and I turned to the right. So, the lady passes in front of me and she says, "Why did you get in front of me?" To which I replied, "Well, you were a block away." And this was in the middle of the street where she stopped me. And she asked, "Are you here legally? Or are you not legal?" And I told her, "That's not something you need to ask me." And just how that happened to me, I think it happened to other people. So that's where the fear comes from for the majority of being deported. (Interview, February 18th 2012 p. 8)

According to Nestor, undocumented immigrants even fear that community agencies have their personal information and will use it against them:

The fear, that's a barrier. You ask people to fight for their rights [but] people feel a fear that all of the offices or organizations can be part of a personal information sharing database and that they can call up police or immigration. (Interview, February 17th 2012, p. 7)

Fear of deportation is warranted as demonstrated in the narratives and recent immigration policies. The ultimate fear of deportation forces undocumented workers to remain in the

shadows or rely upon organizations such as the Center. Without the advocacy of the organization, workers would be even more vulnerable to workplace injustice.

Symbolic Violence

Symbolic violence is defined as “violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity” (Bourdieu 1992). According to the testimonies of the worker-members, many undocumented immigrant workers are complicit in the violence exercised against them. However, there is an important distinction between the symbolic violence Bourdieu describes in his theory of domination (Bourdieu 1980) and the type of violence exercised upon the undocumented immigrant workers. Symbolic violence as defined by Bourdieu (Ibid) refers to domination in which the dominated person is complicit because s/he views it as natural. The workers do not accept their domination because they view it as natural; they do so out of fear. That they accept mistreatment from employers should not be equated with agreement. While complicity appears at first glance as symbolic violence, it is distinct from Bourdieu’s (1980; 1992) notion because they both resent and are fearful of those who oppress them. Nonetheless, the outcomes are very similar.

The inability to legally confront their employers renders them vulnerable to continued complicity. Fear of losing a job and ultimately of being deported is apparently so overwhelming that workers necessarily accept the injustices they experience from employers. Just as the female workers may feel compelled through fear to adhere to the demands of their male bosses, male workers are equally fearful. Therefore, compliance driven by fear is qualitatively different from an ideology of complicity. Yet, it can appear similar. For example, in the following passage, Tony uses verbs such as “prefer” and “let” when describing the mistreatment that many workers suffer:

They're scared to speak out because here if someone talks and the boss finds out that he's speaking out, more than anything they think about losing their job. And finding another job is hard. Like the friend of Sara's. He said that the boss owed him over five thousand dollars and he doesn't want to pay him. And he's there at the job and he doesn't want to talk for fear of losing the money that supposedly he's going to pay him in the long run. He's a person who's scared and there are a lot of them. There are a lot of people who are fearful. So, they prefer to lower their heads and let their bosses treat them however they want to treat them for the sake of the job. (Interview, February 18th 2012, p. 8)

While the symbolic violence workers experience in this study may not fit easily into Bourdieu's model, it remains symbolic violence regardless, as illustrated in the collective fear of the undocumented community. As Barbalet (2002:5) suggests, group emotions are significant in that "attractions and repulsions are experienced at the individual level but necessarily underlie the formation, direction and persistence of groups as indivisible entities." Worker members may be able to ignore cultural scripts but the institutional narrative identity is punitive at best and condemning at worst, compounded by a history of discrimination. The fear is not of the cultural narrative, but rather the consequences of the institutional narrative that members of the undocumented community face on a daily basis.

Moreover, corporations are known to ignore and discourage dissent among workers of legal status, let alone undocumented employees, and retaliate against those who are identified as whistleblowers (Jackall 1989). Workers at all level are vulnerable to retaliation, "by firing, black lists, character assassination, legal charges as well as by organizing physical threats, police harassment and imprisonment" (Glazer and Glazer 1999 cited in Flam 2002: 99). For those without legal recourse, the threat is even greater.

Both Tony and Sara recount stories of past co-workers who were injured on the job but were told by the bosses that they were not allowed to seek medical treatment. The fear of being fired was sufficient to keep the workers complicit in their dominated position. Tony shares the

story of a friend who was injured on the job at a local poultry plant. The boss threatened to fire him if he sought medical attention.

For example, a friend of mine, one that I put down as a reference to get in there, sliced off a chunk of his finger and I asked him, “Hey, why don’t you go to the doctor for that?” My friend said that the higher-up, the boss-boss, told him that if he did that he’d lose his job. And I didn’t know that he was working under another name. There he worked as David and I knew him as Issac. And I said, “You have to go.” And he was like, “No man, if I go, they’re going to take my job.” He was like, “Fine.” They gave him three days off work. The supervisors just kind of bandaged up his finger. They bandaged up his finger to stop the bleeding. And he’s like “Just come those days, and come and sit in the cafeteria. I’ll pay you. And whenever you can work again, I’ll incorporate you back in.” (Interview, February 18th 2012, p. 2)

Sara and Juan tell of a co-worker at the restaurant Osegueras who cut his hand while preparing some meat. The owner did not let the man go to the hospital. Juan explains, “One time he cut the beef and cut the hand, a big cut. And the owner, said, ‘Oh, you can’t go to the hospital, because if you go, I receive one big bill’” (Interview, March 15th 2012, p. 11). Sara adds, “They wouldn’t let him. He would have had to pay with his own money” (Interview, March 15th 2012, p. 11). Juan describes the compensation the bosses offered: “He cut himself and they gave him ten dollars for, you know, little band aids and alcohol” (Interview, March 15th 2012, p. 11). The man does not have a case against the employer because he is afraid of the owner. “He’s scared. Whenever the guy (owner) enters, he trembles. I see him trembling. He’s scared, he trembles; he’s so scared. He doesn’t want to pursue a claim or report him” (Interview, March 15th 2012, p. 11).

Prevalent stereotypes of undocumented workers combined with punitive laws, exploitive employers and an either hostile or apathetic community compounds the symbolic violence experienced among the Latino undocumented community. Again, the stereotype content model provided by Lee and Fiske (cited in Massey 2007) reveals that undocumented immigrants are rated by the general public so low in both warmth and competence that they are viewed as not

“fully human at the most fundamental neural level of cognition” (Massey 2007: 150). This suggests that the experienced discrimination may be perceived as a natural state of affairs for much of the general public, not unlike the widespread perceptions of African Americans during slavery among white slaveholders.

Justice vs. Moral Worthiness

While the Center’s organizational narrative identity is centrally concerned with the moral inclusion of undocumented immigrant workers, the moral component is largely absent from worker-members’ personal narrative identities. Within their personal narratives, the worker-members do not attempt to “convince a disbelieving public” of their moral worthiness (Loseke 2007: 670). Here there is a divergence between the narrative identity of the organization and those of the worker-members. While the Center exerts considerable energy in public appeals for sympathy for the workers, it does not “make sense” to the worker-members to prove their moral goodness to the broader culture (Loseke 2007: 672).

In other words, the personal narrative identities of the worker-members do not address the cultural narrative of undocumented immigrants. That role is left to the organizational narrative of the Workers’ Justice Center. This makes sense pragmatically. It is the Center that represents the workers in the broader community and has the platform to confront the cultural narrative identity. Therefore, rather than being concerned with proving their moral worthiness to the culture, they are focused on achieving justice on the local level. Specifically, their discourse reveals a concern with correcting workplace injustices.

For example, when Sara, who has attended one Workers Committee meeting, speaks of her unpaid wages from her previous employer, she does not appeal for sympathy based on the fact that she is hard working and morally good. Rather, she claims she wants to be paid because

she wants justice. “We just want justice. What belongs to us. What we already worked for him for.” (Interview, March 15th 2012, p. 6)

Tony describes his experience working at a local poultry plant in terms of the injustices he witnessed. In the following passage, he describes how management abuses its power by exploitation of female workers. He explains how female workers were quickly promoted if they slept with the boss. Tony appears to be chiefly concerned with how this practice was unfair to other workers:

So in the shift from 3:30 in the afternoon to 1:00 in the morning, you would see a lot of injustices. There would be some, well, excuse the expression, but there would be some women who would go in and, you know, two or three days after being there, two or three days after being hired, after being at work, were promoted to being QCs. It’s just people who tell other people what to do. And they just say, “Hurry! Hurry! Work! C’mon! Hurry, work!” And I told one of them one day, “How come you’ve only been here three days and you already got promoted to that position?” And she said, “Well, you can’t be promoted because you have to be with Nick.” And that’s what would happen. The guy would take these ladies into his office, and the next day they were QCs. (Interview, February 18th 2012, p. 2-3)

Tony further describes the injustices at the poultry plant. He describes it as an injustice that workers do not get the necessary safety equipment they need and argues that it shouldn’t be this way.

And you would see some injustices, a lot of them. Like, they don’t give you safety equipment. They gave one glove to someone. And if that person loses their metal glove that they’re given, they deduct thirty dollars, when it should be that at your job you’re supposed to give the people their equipment, necessary equipment. (Interview, February 18th 2012, p. 3)

Tomas shares that when he worked at a Tyson poultry plant, he witnessed many injustices.

I am going to tell you when I worked at Tyson, they gave me, well they gave me my worker’s permit, but I did see some unjustified things at Tyson. Many of them would get pushed in the line to work faster and this affected all of us (Interview, February 17th 2012, p. 4)

In Tomas' view, compounding the injustices workers face at their workplace is the fact that the Human Resources departments in area companies are on the side of the owner, not the workers. To him, the Workers' Justice Center is a necessary resource for workers in the community so that workers have a place to report injustices.

But (the Center) is necessary so that the community knows where they need to go when they have a complaint, because there is always a monopoly in companies, obstacles, and those obstacles sometimes don't have a place to be reported. Some of these companies here in Arkansas have a Human Resources center, but it's controlled by the company and they never help the person, almost always the problems start right there. It's not good; it's not like human rights. The companies' Human Resource center is not good. And that's why the Workers' Justice Center should be recognized more and it should be bigger and that's what we want. (Interview, February 17th 2012, p. 4-5)

In none of the above passages in which worker-members describe the injustices they have witnessed at work do they make appeals for moral worthiness. They speak of language of local justice rather than moral inclusion in the broader culture. This by no means implies that the workers are not aware of their moral exclusion in American culture. Quite the contrary, they are aware that racism, nativism, and other forms of discrimination negatively affect their lives. However, the worker-members leave it to the Workers' Justice Center staff to confront cultural sentiment. Their work is with their Latino, often undocumented, community. Making in-roads with the community as representatives of the Workers' Justice Center and educating the community about their rights appears more important to them than challenging the stereotypes and cultural narrative.

Nevertheless, worker-members do concern themselves with matters beyond their own community. As members of the Workers' Justice Center, some worker-members have had opportunities to travel and meet other workers' rights advocates around the country. As a result of these experiences, worker-members feel that they are part of an alliance of organizations with the common goal of improving workers' rights. In fact, the Center is part of several established

alliances. Tony, who had recently traveled to Chicago with the Workers' Justice Center for a workers' rights conference, describes how this alliance is based on mutual help and solidarity.

Let's remember that the committee being small and the alliance being big, and I think and I believe that at any given moment, the alliances give support. Like I said, I've only been with the committee for four months. But last month when we were in Chicago, in a meeting, it looks like all the alliances are hand in hand. And for anything that supports each other...Everybody's connected. Florida, well, several states are connected. Whenever the moment is necessary, you can travel to those states, those areas, those parts, just like they travelled here. Because I was listening to the issue over there. If everyone supports each other, the force will become greater. But if we let one of them lift his head on his own and the rest of us do our different parts, he's not going to lift his head. That's look at it this way, if there's a small group that wants to get going, get up, and there's a big group, the big group will help the small group get up, and the big group is not going to leave it alone. And that's how you make the alliance. (Interview, February 18th 2012, p. 6)

Nestor also believes that the fight for workers' rights should be taken beyond Arkansas borders. "It's a Center where they work to fight against unjustified labor incidents that are done in this state, and it could be nationwide if we were working in other states" (Interview, February 17th 2012, p. 2). The worker-members, therefore, are concerned about fighting injustice and improving labor rights not only on the local or state level, but also on the national level. The main concern, however, is with furthering the cause of justice rather than seeking moral inclusion.

C. Reform Not Revolution

Although the worker-members do not directly challenge the cultural narrative identity of undocumented immigrant workers, they do confront the institutional narrative identity. The worker-members engage the institutional narrative identity of undocumented immigrant workers by complaining about current labor laws and advocating strengthening laws protecting workers' rights. This is interesting considering that institutional narrative identity is largely the cultural narrative identity in the form of public policy (Loseke 2007). Nonetheless, worker-members

appear to not only feel that they can challenge it, but view changing labor laws as a main goal of their efforts with the Workers' Justice Center. They believe that current labor law does not favor workers and they wish to improve laws so they better protect workers' rights. Tony describes the goal of their efforts thusly: "It comes down to trying to regenerate the laws, the labor laws, in favor of the workers" (Interview, February 18th 2012, p. 6). Regarding his vision of the future, Tomas adds, "That is what we want, that later on we will hear that the Workers' Justice Center has progressed and that people are getting to know us and that there are laws that support us." (Interview, February 17th 2012, p. 3)

It appears that the Workers' Justice Center staff influences workers' opinions about labor laws to some extent. This is not surprising given that the workers are learning more about labor law from the Center and that one of the goals of the Workers' Justice Center is to educate workers about their legal rights. Juan, who has attended one Workers Committee meeting and also has a case with the Center along with his wife Sara, shares what Abraham, a staff member at the Center, told him about Arkansas's labor laws.

Abraham told us that Wal-Mart came to Arkansas when Arkansas had nothing. Wal-mart made everything, so this is not correct. He (Sam Walton) said, 'I'm going to invest money in Arkansas, but I want the laws this way.' And that's how they are. (Interview, March 15th 2012, p. 8)

Abraham's opinions about Arkansas labor law have clearly influenced Juan's own. Sara adds, "We feel that he monopolized everything as far as how to treat employees" (Interview, March 15th 2012, p. 8). Juan concludes, "The laws do not favor the workers" (Interview, March 15th 2012, p. 8).

The worker-members' focus on improving labor laws suggests that as a group they are oriented toward reform rather than revolution. In fact, the worker-members, particularly the expert-advocates, distanced themselves and their efforts with the Center from the term

“movement”. They do not reject the term outright, but do not embrace it. Nestor, for example, was hesitant to call his work with the Center part of a social movement.

When you become a person with a movement, you can become like an agitator or something or the like. But, on the contrary, in knowing your own rights and defending them, it doesn't take away from being the human being that you are, much less change your daily life. Just simply it refers to awareness. We're just trying so that everything good for the community is beneficial and not a distortion. I want to clarify that I feel like an active member of a nonprofit organization where we fight for rights of the workers. Because the word 'movement' can have so many meanings, and well, I couldn't describe it to you. (Interview, February 17th 2012, p. 10)

Tony's appraisal of the term “movement” and how it applies to his work as part of the Center is inconclusive. He claims what they are doing is not a social movement, yet the example he offers of a movement is the picket of Osegueras, which was put on by the Workers' Justice Center. More than anything, Tony appears to be wary of the term because he does not want others to see efforts by him and his fellow worker-members as violent.

But a movement is when you need more people to help you fight a cause. Against a company or corporation that's oppressing the workers. For example, I don't know if you'll understand the expression, it's like when you met Sara. They were outside of that restaurant Osegueras, well that's what we call a movement. When we have to go and fight for our own rights. But no, movement can be misconstrued, well, I mean, around here sometimes when you say movement, there could be some confusion, concerning weapons. (Interview, February 18th 2012, p. 6-7)

Sara and Juan at first did not label their activities with the Center as a movement; after some thought, they conceded that the activities are similar to a movement because they are trying, according to Sara, to “change the way society acts” (Interview, March 15th 2012, p. 13). There is not unanimity among the worker-members on whether or not their work with the Workers' Justice Center is part of a social movement. While some reluctantly accepted the term “movement” to describe their efforts, most declined to embrace the term. It is possible that worker-members were not familiar with the term “social movement” and therefore distanced themselves from it. Nonetheless, the expert-advocate workers in particular repeatedly noted that

through the Center they “fight for their rights”. Clearly, worker-members worry that their activities could be perceived as hostile to outsiders. Given this concern, it makes sense that they articulate a reform agenda concerned with improving laws.

Similar to worker-members, the Workers’ Justice Center staff members also confront the institutional narrative identity by complaining about current labor laws and advocating improving laws. In addition, staff members attempt to educate workers about their legal rights as workers. For example, they hold weekly “Know Your Rights” workshops for workers in the community. As Esmeralda explains, these workshops are an ongoing function at the Center.

We take turns doing the “Know Your Rights” workshops. We used to do it every Friday, but it just depends on our workers’ schedules ... So, we’re trying to get the right formula just to help people understand that every Friday, or every so day, there will be a workshop, no matter rain, storm, or snow, you know? (Interview, October 21st 2011, p. 3)

Staff members feel that policies, such as the 287(g) program which allows local police to check the immigration status of people they stop or detain, make it more difficult to organize and empower undocumented workers. In other words, punitive immigration policies are an obstacle to achieving the goals of the Workers’ Justice Center. Such laws become another weapon exploitive employers can use against undocumented workers. As Manuel, the Center’s executive director explains,

But then, immigration became an issue on 2008, 2009, whenever 287(g) was incepted. Since then, there were many factors that started fluctuating our work...I mean, the reason why immigration has become a very strong factor in our work is because employers have used it as a tool of retaliation. (Interview, October 14th 2011, p. 5)

Abraham argues that the 287(g) program amounts to racial profiling by local police and that a similar program, Secure Communities, actually makes communities less secure.

We are members of a coalition to stop 287(g), which is an agreement between local law enforcement and federal immigration, where a task force within local law enforcement can act as immigration officers. And the way that agreement was decided is to go after immigrants who are criminals, who have been found guilty of crimes. But we are seeing that the law enforcement is abusing of that. There’s been documented cases of racial

profiling. People being pulled over because they look, quote unquote, ‘illegal’... So that’s what that law does, there’s also something very similar to 287(g) called Secure Communities. Which, the name is kind of an oxymoron, because it makes communities less secure. And because of these types of laws, or agreements, people, immigrants, especially if they are undocumented, are less likely to report crimes. I mean, there’s been documented cases too, domestic violence, where a husband is being violent against the wife, and the wife is afraid to call the police, because she is afraid they’re gonna request her documents, ask for her documents. (Interview, October 14th 2011, p. 2)

As we see from the above passage, Abraham has prepared talking points against the policies, suggesting that challenging the policies is a regular task for staff members. Esmeralda adds, “(We’re) fighting the 287(g) law. We’re arguing that it leads to racial profiling in the community” (Interview, October 21st 2011, p. 3).

Educating workers about their rights at the workplace is another way that staff members challenge the institutional narrative identity. As noted, the Workers’ Justice Center presents “Know Your Rights” workshops to help achieve this end. For Esmeralda, it is important that everybody be aware of their legal rights as workers.

I would argue it’s an imperative for each of us to know the basics of labor law because we all work for a living. We’re all trying to make it out there. So, when you don’t know your essential rights, you won’t know whether they’re being stomped on or not. (Interview, October 21st 2011, p. 9)

Interviews demonstrate that for staff members, part of the work of the organizational narrative identity is to challenge the punitive institutional narrative identity of undocumented workers through argument, advocacy, and teaching workers about their rights. In this way, the staff members of the Workers’ Justice Center are also oriented toward a reform agenda although not necessarily with a larger labor movement which is not accountable to undocumented workers.

D. Solidarity with Workers’ Rights Organizations, Distance from Labor Unions

Solidarity with Workers’ Rights Organizations

Lichterman (1998) argues that implicit meaning can be discovered by observing organizational structure, decision making processes, acceptable strategies and tactics, and how ideology is (or is not) articulated by members of the social movement group. Furthermore, implicit meaning shapes how social movement activists understand the social movement group as part of the movement and in relation to other groups.

The staff members and worker-members of the Workers' Justice Center unanimously expressed solidarity with other workers' rights organizations around the country, explaining that they share similar ideology, strategies, and goals. Abraham explained the members of these organizations comprise the workers' rights movement, which is considered more grassroots than the labor movement (Phone conversation, April 5th 2012). Findings suggest that the Workers' Justice Center has similar implicit meanings (Lichterman 1998) as other workers' rights organizations and this facilitates working relationships between the Center and these organizations. Both staff and worker-members mentioned conferences where workers' rights advocates come together to share ideas and strategies, as well as how they visit each other's organizations. The staff and worker-members all positively evaluated the affiliations that the Center has with other workers' rights organizations and alliances. All staff members described ties to other organizations as "helpful".

They give specifics about how these connections are helpful and how they stand in solidarity with other organizations. These expressions of positive working relationships with other workers' rights organizations with similar implicit meanings supports Lichterman's (1998) assertion that implicit meanings influence the relationships between social movement groups. For example, Esmeralda explains,

“We try to stand, through the network, we try to stand in solidarity with what other worker centers are doing. If it’s a picket and they’re boycotting let’s say a restaurant food chain, we try to advocate for our allies to do the same, standing in solidarity with each other.” (Interview, October 21st 2011, p. 11)

Abraham describes one alliance of which the Center is part and how he hopes the organizations within it can work together to lead a campaign. This expression of working together is further evidence of Lichterman’s (1998) assertion that shared implicit meanings are integral to organizations’ ability to work together.

We’re also members of the Food Chain Workers’ Alliance, which is an alliance of 12 organizations that work throughout the whole food chain. From the fields, to restaurants, grocery stores, warehouses, and, in our case, meat processing workers. So, that’s very helpful as well, knowing what other organizations along the food chain are doing, how they’re organizing, and how we can work together to maybe lead a bigger campaign that we wouldn’t be able to do on our own. So, to lead a bigger campaign to create more change and a bigger impact, a bigger positive impact on the workers’ lives. (Interview, October 14th 2011, p. 8)

Distance from Labor Unions

The importance of implicit meaning helps explain the relationship of the Workers’ Justice Center to the labor movement and big labor unions. The Center has a different organizing philosophy and clientele than the mainstream labor movement. Because they work mainly with low-wage, undocumented workers, their goals and organizing philosophy are distinct from mainstream unions. Abraham illustrates this distinction, stating,

Unfortunately, some of the main stream unions don’t really focus on low-wage workers, who we are working with. And unfortunately, they won’t go into the jobsite and organize them, if they don’t think they can get 50 percent plus 1 of the votes to form a union. So that’s why we adopted a different organizing structure as well and we based it on Solidarity Unionism...where you don’t need 50 percent support from workers to create change. And workers don’t need a union representative to solve their problems for them. They’re the ones organizing to form a union in the first place so they have the ability to solve their own issues collectively without the need of a union representative. (Interview, October 14th 2011, p. 8)

Manuel, the executive director of the Center, also distances the Workers' Justice Center from unions, but in a different manner than Abraham. While Abraham drew a divide between the Center and mainstream unions on the basis of different organizing philosophy and beliefs about workers' capacity for autonomy, Manuel distances the Center from the labor movement on the basis that the Center is nonpartisan and does not promote unions. Manuel frames the Workers' Justice Center as a place focused on workers' rights rather than on promoting unions or political activity.

When you hear the *Worker's Justice Center*, in a way it gives it a tone of communist or it gives it one of those leftist kind of organizations, and it's not that. I mean, when you hear the Worker's Justice Center, a place to gather a union, and that's not the way it is. The Worker's Justice Center, it is a safe place for individuals to come and discuss, disclose, what are the working conditions that make their employment hard, the dire conditions. The way that we handle things in here is as a nonprofit organization, we base our protocol on the Federal Standards Labor Act. So we're not doing anything besides just promoting worker's rights. We're not promoting unions, we're not promoting leftist or any sort of political belief, we are non-partisan and we're just here to educate and promote worker's rights. (Interview, October 14th 2011, p. 2)

When asked if the Center fits in to the workers' rights movement or the labor movement, Manuel added, "I would not want to call it labor movement, because that ties into unions. I would like to more likely emphasize it on workers' rights, workers' awareness" (Interview, October 14th 2011, p. 11).

Clearly there is not unanimity among the staff members of the Workers' Justice Center with regard to the Center's relationship to the labor movement. While Abraham suggests the Center is more grassroots than the labor movement, Manuel stresses that the Center is nonpartisan and neutral on the subject of unions. Employing Lichterman's (1998) concept of implicit meaning within social movement groups teases out these differences in philosophy, goals, and leadership structure. Moreover, it suggests that the Workers' Justice Center may have distinct needs that could not be met through labor movement frame alignment. For example,

collective bargaining is not a goal of the staff members of the Center. Abraham also expressed that while the goals of the center are more immediate to low wage workers and workers' rights, he is not against unions and feels they are crucial to getting out of the recession and helping the middle class grow (Interview, October 14th 2011). However, in his support of unions he does not discuss making connections with them in terms of movement organizing, once again suggesting that the implicit meanings differ to the point that alliances with main stream labor unions are not sought out by the Workers' Justice Center.

E. Summary of Findings

In summary, the Workers' Justice Center of Northwest Arkansas has created an organizational narrative that is grounded in the needs of their immediate clientele. Rather than imposing a cultural script, they challenge it, using strategic shaming and publicity to re-direct the stereotyping. Acutely aware of the placement of their clientele within the larger social structure, they employ strategies to present low-wage undocumented workers as morally worthy of basic workers' rights. Rather than reinforcing the punitive policies that stem from the institutional narrative, they challenge them from a legal standpoint (e.g., racial profiling). From interviews with staff, it appears that the organizational narrative of the Center incorporates the implicit meanings that are tied directly to the community needs in such a way that a social movement framing would have over-glossed the distinct needs of these undocumented workers. The Center's organizational narrative both influences and is informed by the personal narratives of workers.

CHAPTER FIVE

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study examined the nature of the reflexive relationships between different narratives of the undocumented immigrant worker. In this study, I attempted to follow Loseke's charge to bring the "examination of these reflexive relationships into the forefront of analysis" in order to gain a better understanding of "how narratives work and of the work narratives do" (2007: 662). As demonstrated in the findings, the Center's most daunting task is challenging the cultural narrative identity and hostile cultural sentiment toward undocumented immigrant workers. Unable to achieve the simple, though broader cultural narrative of citizen, they are deemed unworthy of protection from the start. The Center's normative appeal to the local community is a necessity for the organizational narrative to survive. They must first convince the public that at the most basic level, undocumented workers are universal citizens, worthy of basic rights. Furthermore, the personal narratives of workers and their struggles add strength to the organizational narrative. This raises several issues with regards to the literature on organizations that work with "troubled identities" (Loseke 2007).

As stated earlier, organizational narratives of identity often have the difficult task to "convince a disbelieving public" that they or their clientele are sympathy worthy (Loseke 2007: 670). But as Massey (2007), as well as Lee and Fiske (2006) argue, the larger structural conditions and policies that have legitimized patterns of discrimination are now interwoven into the social fabric. This demands that the organizational narrative of the Center be responsive to the hostile sentiment, the legal constraints and local practices that negatively affect workers. It is even possible that the organization itself is at risk of being marginalized, underfunded, or perhaps even undermined for attempting to protect those who are already morally condemned.

Whereas cultural sentiment suggests that domestic violence is morally repulsive, women were more easily presented as “victims” adding to the organizational survival of the battered women’s shelter that Loseke (1987) studied. However, undocumented workers, especially Latinos, are viewed as not worthy of sympathy and this demands a very different organizational narrative identity. The organizational narrative must be distinct from larger social movements. It appears that the narrative of the Center requires a more delicate balance for organizational survival.

They must necessarily engage the cultural narratives that morally exclude undocumented immigrant workers by highlighting racism, nativism, and classism. They also must align themselves not with the labor movement but with other grassroots organizations in order to achieve the needed solidarity.

Loseke (2007) suggests that while personal narratives may be able fend off cultural narratives, they necessarily must interact with institutional narratives in the form of public policy which have a tangible impact on their lives. This may help to explain why the workers are more directly engaged with the institutional narratives. In addition, the organization and its staff are legitimized as official advocates. They represent those who cannot speak for themselves for fear of retribution so it is necessarily the organizational narrative that engages the cultural narrative. The Workers’ Justice Center has legitimacy as a nonprofit organization with strong relationships with other community agencies. Language is also significant; the staff members speak fluent English in addition to Spanish, while worker-members predominantly speak Spanish. This presents immediate obstacles for the worker-members to be able to engage the broader cultural narratives. Finally, staff members at the Workers’ Justice Center hold credentials and as legal representatives, their legitimacy within the community allows them to engage in strategic discourse that would not be available to the workers.

Because of this power imbalance between the staff members and the worker-members, and findings of previous research (e.g. Loseke 1987; 2001), I expected to see evidence of the staff influencing the personal narratives of workers. Loseke (1987; 2001) finds that advocates within domestic violence shelters and support groups attempt to convince women of their victim identity and will even refuse to honor women's knowledge that does not conform to this identity. The reflexive relationship between the narrative identities of the Workers' Justice Center and the worker-members appears to be very different. Staff members do not appear to influence the development of a victim narrative identity among the worker-members. They do not need to convince workers of their misfortune. My observations suggests that worker-members' stories are not silenced or redirected by staff members during Workers Committee meetings. However, there is evidence that the Workers' Justice Center staff encourage the development of an expert-advocate identity among workers. The staff leads "Know Your Rights" workshops for workers and encourages them to share their knowledge and learn from each other. However, given that worker-members with the most time on the Workers Committee are also the ones who see themselves as expert-advocates, it may be that coming to see oneself as an expert-advocate is a natural part of greater involvement with the Workers Committee and Workers' Justice Center.

The organizational narrative of the Center appears to be one of neutralizing power differentials. This is evidenced in the creation of the Workers Committee, which was created within the Center approximately two years ago. The Workers Committee gives workers an organized voice within the organization, as well as provides a forum for workers to meet each other and brainstorm on how to collectively take action given their specific challenges. Although observation reveals that staff members offer considerable guidance to the Workers Committee, it

is also clear that they provide a space where workers are encouraged to develop as leaders for their community.

What explains the great difference between Loseke's (1987; 2001) findings and this study in regards to the relationship between organizational and personal narrative identities? While Loseke (2007) studied local agencies attempting to "repair" the troubled identity of a relatively powerless, marginalized population, the Workers' Justice Center is engaged in repairing and correcting what they view as the troubled cultural and institutional narratives that are harmful to workers. This may help to explain why this organizational narrative is distinct from other advocacy groups. The broader cultural narrative identity of victim is simply unavailable to undocumented workers. The staff of the Workers' Justice Center also asserted during interviews that the ultimate goal of the organization is that it becomes worker-led. This long-term goal is not served by convincing workers they are victims who need help.

The reflexive relationship is seen in the interplay between personal and institutional narratives as they are negotiated and channeled back into the cultural narrative. Sentiment and fear are the underlying emotional climate that the Center must negotiate; hostile sentiment on one end and experienced fear at the other. Not surprisingly, this is revealed in the organizational narrative. What is surprising is that workers, especially these undocumented workers, are willing to risk retaliation and deportation to fight for justice. As Flam (2002: 99) suggests, "whistleblowers are rare birds." In this case, these individuals may be even rarer, given the risk not only of being fired but also of deportation.

The cultural narrative surrounding Latino(a) undocumented immigrants is heavily weighted with boundary work and a negative categorical identity. This suggests that the Workers' Justice Center faces an almost insurmountable task in challenging the cultural narrative

identity of undocumented immigrants. Nevertheless, fueled by the energy of the workers, there are no signs that they are slowing up in their efforts as advocates for low-wage, undocumented workers. When asked what he likes about working at the Center, Manuel explains,

You see how tenacious they are to get that benefit. And they strive for it as soon as you give them, “this is how we can do something to help you”, then they’ll take that and they’re whole into it. So, the greatest part about working here is the success, and when an individual comes here with nothing and walks out saying, “even Tyson can stumble”, you know, having that mentality. (Interview, October 14th 2011, p. 8)

Finally, undocumented immigrants are much more often talked about rather than listened to. Giving voice to this population was part of my epistemological stance and it is my hope that I have accomplished this. These workers demonstrate both their plight and their stamina for resistance. Though the complexity of their personal identities should not surprise us, their cultural categorical identity obscures this reality. Additionally, workers in this study speak of having a passion to help others; this is important because sociologists often focus upon the victim narrative as well. These personal narratives serve as a reminder to those engaged in public sociology that we must look at the agency potential of this population. In the following passage, Tomas describes why he volunteers with the Workers’ Justice Center:

I do feel pleased that I am doing something for the community. That does please me a lot. And like I said, I’m a member, but I’m a member to give ideas for the good of the community. So, I feel good because I’m doing something good in my life and I know that there will be a product from this. (Interview, February 17th 2012, p. 10)

Nestor also feels positively about the intellectual capabilities of the workers. “Our ideas are very good, where they come from, the ideas are good.” (Interview, February 17th 2012, p. 9) These are perspectives we seldom hear in cultural discourse and even within sociology.

Limitations and Future Research

Further study is warranted to examine the conditions of low wage workers in Northwest Arkansas, and more specifically, undocumented workers. Additionally, a longitudinal study of

worker-members involved with the Workers Committee may reveal more about the process of narrative identity development. Finally, the workers interviewed included four males and one female. In future research, I would oversample for women to adequately represent women's unique experiences as low-wage, undocumented workers.

As with much research, I have raised more questions than I have answered. Also needed is a more extensive study of the conditions faced by the organization. Due to time constraints I was unable to conduct longer observations of the activities of the Center. Further ethnographic observation could overcome this limitation and follow the trajectory of specific cases taken on by the Center. This case study does reveal, however, that organizations such as the Workers' Justice Center are a necessity in the community. Furthermore, just as not all workers are whistleblowers or activists, not all employers are apt to take advantage of undocumented workers. A future study of employers' attitudes is needed to examine how the cultural narrative is interpreted in those corporations that employ larger numbers of undocumented workers, such as poultry, food service and construction. Future research should consider these recommendations.

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VII. APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:

Informed Consent and Interview Guides

Before we begin, I would like to thank you for participating in this interview and for your willingness to be part of my thesis research for justice organizations. I also want to confirm that you can receive a copy of this interview in C.D. format for your own use if you would like to have a personal copy. I would also like to inform you that this interview is confidential. Your name, address, and other identifying information will not be used in any form. Your age, pseudonym, will be the only identifiable information recorded. Any names mentioned during the interview will be omitted from transcription as part of my attempt to provide confidentiality (e.g., names of children, co-workers, family members). While there are no physical risks involved in this research, this interview will cover topics that may cause some emotional discomfort. I want to confirm that you realize that you can stop at any time and choose not to participate and there will be no penalty for choosing to do so. Finally, if you have questions or concerns regarding this thesis project, please contact my project supervisor, Dr. Lori Holyfield at 479-575-3807. If your concerns are not met by Dr. Holyfield, or if you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact the University of Arkansas Institutional Review Board at (479) 575-3845.

Interview Guide: Northwest Arkansas Worker's Justice Center Staff Members

- 1) How would you describe the mission of the Northwest Arkansas Worker's Justice Center?
- 2) How would you describe this organization to someone who knows nothing about it?
- 3) Could you walk me through a typical day here at the center?
- 4) How does the justice center make decisions about your work here?
- 5) How does the center choose issues to work on? Probe for who decision makers are and specific activities?
- 6) How did the organization get started? Probe for the main players....
- 7) Tell me why this work is important to you.
What do you like best about your work here?

What sorts of things would you change if you could?

- 8) What are some barriers, if any, to accomplishing the goals of the Worker's Justice Center?
- 9) If you could change anything about the goals of the Center, what would it be?
(Once this conversation reaches a natural stopping point, I'll shift gears to questions about the connection of the Worker's Justice Center to the larger workers' rights movement.)
- 10) What is your understanding of the goals of the broader workers' rights movement?
- 11) Could you tell me about any ties that the Worker's Justice Center has to the broader workers' rights movement?
- 12) How does the mission of the Worker's Justice Center compare to the mission of other workers' rights organizations?
- 13) How do these connections with other organizations affect the work of the Worker's Justice Center? Probe for information sharing, participation, etc...
- 14) Is there anything else you would like to say?

Interview Guide: Northwest Arkansas Workers Justice Center Worker-Members

- 1) How would you describe the mission of the Northwest Arkansas Worker's Justice Center?
- 2) How would you describe this organization to someone who knows nothing about it?
- 3) Could you explain how you heard about the Worker's Justice Center?
- 4) What type of work do you do now?
- 5) What made you interested in getting involved with the Center?
- 6) Can you tell me a little bit about the type of work you do? For example, could you walk me through a typical day at your job?
- 7) What are some of the challenges you face in your everyday job?
- 8) Do you feel you face any challenges in your community? If so, what are they?
- 9) How does the Center choose issues to work on? Probe for who decision makers are and specific activities.
- 10) How long have you been on the workers committee?
- 11) Tell me why this Center is important to you.

What do you like best about being on the workers' committee?

What sorts of things would you change if you could?

12) What are some barriers, if any, to accomplishing the goals of the Worker's Justice Center and Workers Committee?

13) If you could change anything about the goals of the Center, what would it be?

14) Do you consider your work to be part of a social movement?

15) Is there anything else you would like to say?

APPENDIX B:

Line-By-Line Coding, Codebook, and Memoing

Example of Line-By-Line Coding:

EH: So, tell me what you like best about being on the workers' committee?

*Nestor: In reality, I tell you not to be wild, but like a human being, **I already have it in my blood, that craving or need to help people and I am a participant of the system that hurts people and I feel a privilege to be able to stand up for those whom feel scared to fight or those who don't have documents to be able to speak up. I feel like a transport myself, like a voice to awake that voice inside the community.***

1. Passion to help others, "In the blood"
2. Part of unjust system
3. Privilege to stand up for others who are scared/can't speak up
4. Advocate for the community, "Voice" for community

Focused Codebook:

FOCUSED CODES: WJC WORKER-MEMBERS

FOCUSED CODE	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	VERBATIM EXAMPLE
PASSION TO HELP OTHERS	INDUCTIVE	They are there because they want to volunteer. Fight on behalf of others. It's in the blood.	"I already have it in my blood, that craving or need to help people" Nestor p. 5 "...but more than anything I like to help the people, the community, and that was what motivated me to stay in the WJC." Tomas p. 2
SYMBOLIC VIOLENCE	DEDUCTIVE	Accept bad treatment and unjust situations because the workers fear retaliation from employers. Fear losing job and employer calling immigration. "Violence which is	"There are a lot of people who are fearful. So, they prefer to lower their heads and let their bosses treat them however they want to treat them for the sake of the job." Tony p. 8

		exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity” (Bourdieu 1992	<p>“Yes, because he wants them to pay him... He’s scared, he trembles, he’s so scared. He doesn’t want to pursue a claim or report him.” Sara p. 11</p> <p>“My friend said that the higher-up, the boss-boss, told him that if he did that he’d lose his job. And I didn’t know that he was working under another name. There he worked as David and I knew him as Issac. And I said, “You have to go.” And he was like, “No man, if I go, they’re going to take my job.” Tony p. 2</p>
VISION OF LARGER SCALE CHANGE	INDUCTIVE	Believe if everyone works together they can achieve greater results. Society, laws in particular, will change for the better.	<p>“It could be nationwide if we were working in other states.” Nestor p. 2</p>
CENTER IS YOUR ADVOCATE	INDUCTIVE	Many of the companies don’t treat workers well/are oppressive. Center is the place to go for help. As opposed to Human Resources.	<p>“A very fundamental point is that when you, as a worker, you feel like trapped without someone being able to fight for your situation. It is where you notice that the WJC of Arkansas is an entity where you find solutions to your problems.” Nestor p. 2</p> <p>“So I feel like the Center’s mission is to fight for the rights of those employees whose hands are clamped by</p>

			<p>the hand of the companies around here... They stand up for the people who are oppressed.” Tony p. 4</p> <p>“But it is necessary so that the community knows where they need to go when they have a complaint, because there is always a monopoly in companies, obstacles, and those obstacles sometimes don’t have a place to be reported. Some of these companies here in Arkansas have a Human Resources Center, but it’s controlled by the company and they never help the person” Tomas p. 4-5</p>
CENTER’S ROLE FOR SOME: HELP, SUPPORT	INDUCTIVE	Center helps those who really need the help. This is first, at least for some, before workers can become autonomous/take on leadership roles.	“Sometimes my husband needed the truck and he (Abraham) would give me a ride. He helped us so much, too much.” Sara p. 5
THE UNDOCUMENTED LIVE IN FEAR	INDUCTIVE	Being undocumented makes you generally afraid. Afraid of your employer. Afraid of police. Always watching your back/keeping your head down.	“...there’s a lot of co-workers, due to the fact that they’re not legal in this country, they suffer too many abuses and they are scared to speak...I tell several friends that they should just call, they’re just scared, they don’t have any papers.” Tony p. 4 <p>“...it’s being deported also. The issue is that now in Rogers they’ve</p>

			<p>put a new police officer And she asked, “Are you here legally? Or are you not legal?” And I told her, “That’s not something you need to ask me.” And just how that happened to me, I think it happened to other people. So that’s where the fear comes from for the majority of being deported.” Tony p. 8</p> <p>“The fear, that’s a barrier. You ask people to fight for their rights, people feel a fear that all of the offices or organizations can be part of a personal information sharing database and that they can call up police or immigration.” Nestor p. 7</p> <p>“You don’t feel secure...It depresses and inhabits a community, so they don’t come forward, because simply stepping out into the street could be a problem for them.” Nestor p. 8</p>
<p>DON’T EMBRACE “MOVEMENT” DEFINITION</p>	<p>DEDUCTIVE</p>	<p>Tend to stay away from movement definition. Trying to change laws, improve rights. Don’t want to be perceived as a threat. Reform not revolution. Term could be unfamiliar to them. (Sara and Juan negative</p>	<p>“Because when you become a person with a movement, you can become like an agitator or something or the like...in knowing your own rights and defending them, it doesn’t take away from</p>

		case)	being the human being that you are, much less change your daily life. Just simply it refers to awareness” Nestor p. 10 “But no, movement can be misconstrued, well, I mean, around here sometimes when you say movement, there could be some confusion, concerning weapons” Tony p. 6-7 “Not social. No, it’s like, how do you say... Well, yes.” Juan p. 13 “Yeah, it is. They’re trying to change the way society acts.” Sara p. 13
EDUCATE THE COMMUNITY	INDUCTIVE		One of our initiatives would be to educate the community according to the labor necessities that all employees have to go through. Nestor p. 2 Part of that is, like I say, the lack of education and development of popular education. Lack of education on labor rights. Education on the many systems: the police system, the economic system. So that’s why people can’t get out of that rut. And that’s a barrier. Nestor p. 8

FOCUSED CODES: WJC STAFF

FOCUSED CODE	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	VERBATIM
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			EXAMPLE
CENTER IS A SPACE WHERE WORKERS CAN BE SAFE	INDUCTIVE	The main point of the Center is it's a safe space for workers. They are not always safe at work or in the community (retaliating employers, anti-immigration laws.) Center they can relax and be space to talk, organize.	<p>"I would like to describe it, I would like for it to be seen as a safe place for workers in our community who have faced retaliation, discrimination, who have been victims of threats in the workplace, for them to have a safe space to come and talk about the issues that are affecting them." (Esmeralda, p. 2)</p> <p>The Worker's Justice Center, it is a safe place for individuals to come and discuss, disclose, what are the working conditions that make their employment hard, the dire conditions." (Manuel, p. 2)</p>
COMMUNITY SUPPORT CRUCIAL	INDUCTIVE	Has fluctuated. Key to accomplishing goals. Really work hard for community support. Support for the workers. Seem to have quite a lot.	<p>"And also with building solidarity from the community, the broad community, faith based organizations, student organizations, labor attorneys, immigration attorneys as well, student leaders, but building that solidarity from the community to help support the struggles of the workers." (Abraham, p. 1)</p>
WORKER LED IS ULTIMATE VISION	INDUCTIVE	Right now the workers don't have the safety, education, skills, knowledge, capacity to run the Center themselves. The Center empowers them to take the lead by developing those skills, confidence, and knowledge to one day run the Center	<p>"I was always told, you know, the ultimate vision of the Center is for it to be worker-led. So that one day we can empower the workers that we serve so that they can take my position as fundraising chair or my position as grant coordinator."</p>

		themselves. In transition to worker-led.	(Esmeralda, p. 5) “...what is the Workers’ Justice Center, well, we are a nonprofit organization that deals with case management, but we’re making a transition to make it worker-led, and advocacy as well.” (Manuel, p. 5)
WORKERS’ EDUCATION THROUGH WORKSHOPS AND WORKERS’ COMMITTEE EMPOWERS WORKERS	INDUCTIVE	Workers gain knowledge at ‘Know Your Rights’ and other workshops. Participation necessary, even required. Also learn from each other in workers’ committee. This is how the employees think that the workers develop autonomy and confidence.	Mission? OK. I look at it as being able to help workers directly in labor issues and also empower them through work, or classes. So our mission is to improve working conditions in the community and the way we seek to accomplish that is through education, and that’s where our workshop classes would come into play. (Esmeralda, p. 1)
WORKERS’ EMPOWERMENT	INDUCTIVE	A central goal through education, teaching them legal knowledge about their rights, participation in committee, actions. Building confidence. See a change in workers’ mentality. The employees feel good to see the workers become empowered.	“...you see how, uh, tenacious they are to get that benefit. And they strive for it as soon as you give them, this is how we can do something to help you, then they’ll take that and they’re whole into it. So, the greatest part about working here is the success, and when an individual comes here with nothing and walks out saying, “even Tyson can stumble”, you know, having that mentality.” (Manuel, p. 8)
SYMBOLIC VIOLENCE	INDUCTIVE	Violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity (Bourdieu 1992); Workers’ accept domination by	“We deal with a community that is vulnerable to workplace injustices, and because they don’t have a social security number, or

		employers because of fear of retaliation and deportation	whatever reason may be, they will be willing to take any job, you know, suffer any consequences, deal with any bad employer, maltreatment, whatever, just to make ends meet.” (Manuel, p. 5)
FEAR OF RETALIATION AND DEPORTATION MAKES IT HARD TO ORGANIZE WORKERS	INDUCTIVE	Elaboration on theme of symbolic violence. Fear makes it harder to organize workers. Fear of retaliation from employers and deportation, raids from ICE.	And it’s difficult for an employer (he means employee) to say, no I don’t want to work there or I want to change my working conditions, because if they see that they are organizing, then they will be fired. (Manuel, p. 5) “as I mentioned, a large majority of the people we help, their status is, they’re undocumented workers. And, um, it’s just the fear that immigration brings, it, um, it doesn’t help us fight the fear. If raids are taking place and workers are losing faith in the work that we do. So immigration is an obstacle in terms of losing worker support.” (Esmeralda, p. 8) “Organizing, of course, is the complete opposite of randomness. You are trying to concentrate whatever time available to make a change, to organize individuals who have a common issue, who have been aware, that is affecting them. So, when it comes down to us, we are an organizing, we are an awareness organization, and we try to make change by trying to

			engage our community, but once again immigration is an issue. They don't want to lose their job, they don't want to be retaliated against. And so, it's sometimes hard to really get people to get engaged because, they don't want to lose their job, they don't want to receive any sort of threat ...it's difficult sometimes to make them to participate in some of their meetings.” (Manuel, p. 7-8)
WORKERS' RIGHTS AND IMMIGRATION ARE INTERTWINED	INDUCTIVE	Intersectional issues- low-wage workers/undocumented immigrants.	But then, immigration became an issue on 2008, 9, whenever 287(g) was incepted, since then, then there was many factors that started fluctuating our work...the reason why immigration has become a very strong factor in our work is because employers have used it as a tool of retaliation. (Manuel, p. 5)
RESPECT AND DIGNITY	INDUCTIVE	Workers treated not morally worthy on the basis of being poor and immigrants. By employers and community. Don't get receive it and they demand it.	“(The mission)...to demand respect and dignity at the worksite. (Abraham, p. 1) “they would have no wealth without the workers and it's time they start respecting them” (Abraham, p. 7) “...so when I look at Alabama as an example and I see how, and migrant workers are being criminalized and how they're just being denigrated of the basic human rights and they're being compared

			<p>to animals or even worse than animals...we want to make sure that every person is treated like a person, and not worse than that .” (Esmeralda, p. 11)</p> <p>“I envision a system where every employee has respect and dignity in the workplace.” (Manuel, p. 9)</p>
MARXIST VIEW OF LABOR	INDUCTIVE	<p>Both Manuel and Abraham expressed this. View workers as creators of wealth, the money. They deserve respect on this basis. Employers as sometimes totalitarian. Both gave this Marxist view in response to the question “Why is this work important to you?”</p>	<p>“...what I’m saying is we are important because we’re the workforce. We are what makes the companies grow. We are the money. We are, we are those that help this economy strive... and when one is exploited, you know, or self-esteem is just damaged, because an employer seems to have this totalitarian attitude against them, it’s just kinda, it’s not right.” (Manuel, p. 7)</p> <p>“Abe Lincoln, Honest Abe, where he says, “Labor is superior to capital”. Without labor there can’t be any capital. So, I mean, and that’s another reason that we’re supporting the Occupy Movement, is because we need to send a message to the 1 percent that they would have no wealth without the workers and it’s time that they start respecting them.” (Abraham, p. 7)</p>
SOLIDARITY WITH WORKERS’ RIGHTS MOVEMENT	DEDUCTIVE/ INDUCTIVE	<p>All describe network and ties to other organizations as helpful. Nothing negative</p>	<p>“We try to stand, through the network, we try to stand in solidarity with what other worker</p>

		expressed about connections and relationships with other orgs. Learn strategies and tactics. Helps them not feel isolated. Helps workers learn from others workers.	centers are doing. If it's a picket and they're boycotting, let's say a restaurant food chain, we try to advocate for our allies to do the same, standing in solidarity with each other. (Esmeralda, p. 11)
DISTINCT FROM LABOR MOVEMENT	DEDUCTIVE/ INDUCTIVE	Inconclusive. Manuel went out of his way to distance WJC from labor movement because it sounds 'union' and political. Abraham said mainstream unions do not organize low wage workers and have different organizing philosophy.	<p>"I would not want to call it labor movement, because that ties into unions, I would like to more likely emphasize it on workers' rights, workers' awareness. (Manuel, p. 9)</p> <p>"Unfortunately, some of the main stream unions don't really focus on low-wage workers, who we are working with. And unfortunately, they won't go into the jobsite and organize them, if they don't think they can get 50 percent plus 1 of the votes to form a union. So that's why we adopted a different organizing structure as well and we based it on Solidarity Unionism... where you don't need 50 percent support from workers to create change. And workers don't need a union representative to solve their problems for them. They're the ones organizing to form a union in the first place so they have the ability to solve their own issues collectively without the need of a union representative." (Abraham, p. 8)</p>
ULTIMATE VISION OF LARGER	INDUCTIVE	Case management is just meeting a need.	I envision a system where every employee

CHANGE		Through organizing, working with others, educating the community, can bring about “institutional” “systematic” change.	has respect and dignity in the workplace, where they’re entitled to the benefits that they strive for and that there’s not exploitation happening based on arrogance or character or just totalitarian actions from the corporations. In this case, where do I see it going? Well, I can honestly not give you are right answer. It’s just, my vision is just to, um, create a systematic change when everybody has a fair standard of living, um, wherever that may go, I have no idea. (Manuel, p. 9) So that’s why I’m just trying to kind of connect the dots. Cause if we don’t, I mean, we’re not going to be able to create institutional change for the community... (Esmeralda, p. 10)
IN-VIVO: 287(g)	INDUCTIVE	Policy that allows local law enforcement to act as immigration officials if they pull someone over and then reasonably suspect they are undocumented. Similar law is Secure Communities. WJC employees argue it leads to racial profiling and makes communities less safe because immigrants afraid to report crimes.	“We are members of a coalition to stop 287-g, which is an agreement between local law enforcement and federal immigration, where a task force within local law enforcement can act as immigration officers. (Abraham, p. 2)
IN-VIVO: RIGHT-TO-WORK STATE	INDUCTIVE	Prohibits agreements between labor unions and employers that would require employer to hire only union employees. The consequence to WJC	“Arkansas is a right-to-work state and there are very few rights that workers can use to, or that protect workers in the workplace.” (Esmeralda, p. 7)

		employees is workers have less rights and it makes it harder for workers to organize.	“I mean for our organizing campaign is that we are in a “right-to-work” state, so it makes it easier, I mean, sorry, it makes it harder, it makes it harder to work and organize. (Abraham, p. 6)
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Example of Memoing:

Larger Structures of Moral Exclusion

The staff members of the Northwest Arkansas Workers’ Justice Center feel that they are working against the moral exclusion that low-wage, undocumented workers face at both the jobsite and in the community. Choo and Ferree (2010: 145), in their analysis of two qualitative studies on working class people, argue that in their discourse about self-respect and dignity, the workers in these studies speak to the “larger structures of moral exclusion” to which the working class is subjected. The lack of respect and dignity the low-wage workers experience is a recurring theme in the interviews with the Workers’ Justice Center employees.

These larger structures of moral exclusion include classism, racism, nativism, and for female workers, sexism. Each of these discriminatory social institutions works to deny respect and a sense of dignity by claiming the inferiority of the group it oppresses. This denial of respect and dignity results in the moral exclusion of the workers in their workplace, the community, and the country.