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# PLUS ÇA CHANGE? – A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL WORKERS PROGRAM AND THE PILOT FOREIGN WORKER PROGRAM FOR FARM WORKERS IN QUEBEC

by

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A Major Research Paper
Presented to Ryerson University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
in the Program of
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ABSTRACT

For the last 40 years, migrant farm workers from the Caribbean and Mexico have been recruited to work temporarily on Canadian farms under the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP). In 2002, the pilot Foreign Worker Program (FWP) for low skilled migrant workers was initiated in the province of Quebec and under this program began the recruitment of Guatemalan migrant farm workers. Since the program's start, the number of Guatemalan migrants has nearly tripled and there seems to be a decline in the number of workers hired under the SAWP in Quebec. This paper examines the FWP's development, set-up, consequences and operation alongside the SAWP and shows how the Canadian state is expanding the number and flexibility of temporary worker programs. This paper draws attention to the neo-liberal context of migrant farm labour in Canada, pointing to the ways in which Canada's federal policies governing seasonal agricultural migrants and the agricultural labour market are exploitative and racist.

**Key Words:**

migrant; agriculture; seasonal; temporary; racism; foreign labour; Foreign Worker Program; Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program

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## Preface

When I first arrived at the farm in Southern Ontario where I would live and work for the summer alongside migrant farm workers from Mexico and the Caribbean, I was looking for an adventure and some form of personal growth. It must have been the long hours working in the greenhouses and the never-ending bike rides through dark rural roads that numbed me enough to begin to listen and understand some of the complicated issues that migrant farm workers experience in Canada. I am forever grateful for these humbling experiences and the friendships developed, which became the driving force behind my research and activism surrounding the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP) for a number of years. I believe there are ways to better structure, monitor and administer the SAWP, protect workers and allow for a pathway to citizenship. This paper examines the pilot Foreign Worker Program (FWP), which is recruiting Guatemalan farm workers to Quebec, and its relation to the SAWP and SAWP workers.

My political and personal views, as well as my writing, are influenced by critical race theory, feminism and a political economic understanding of persistent poverty, marginalization and migration. I address the agency and autonomy of individuals under these two programs and the centrality of their resistance. I write this paper as a student and an activist, with the hope that it will stimulate further research, public awareness and action – perhaps resulting in policy changes for the SAWP and the pilot FWP.

## Introduction

In an era of globalization and neo-liberal[1] expansion, temporary work programs have been initiated in Canada as a way to secure labour and reduce permanent settlement of immigrants. As migrant workers[2] from the Global South[3] come to Canada under temporary worker programs, their contracts are structured so that they are bound to a single employer and thus they have almost no freedom of mobility in Canada and no right to citizenship or the rights that come with citizenship (Sharma, 2006). One of Canada's most established and long-standing temporary worker programs is the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP), which began recruiting migrant workers from the Caribbean in 1966. Since its establishment, the program has not only expanded in size and source country to include Mexico (1974), but it has become acclaimed as a model for temporary worker programs in Canada as well as in Europe – "a model program based on labour market complementarity and bilateral co-operation that provides benefits to all participants" (Preibisch and Binford, 2007).

Despite such praise, the program has also been critiqued by activists and academics who have brought to light major issues with the SAWP's structure, administration and monitoring. Critiques have included, and not been limited to, the working and living conditions of migrants, health and safety concerns, experiences of racism and

[1] Refers to the philosophy of economic liberalism that has been taking place over the last thirty years globally. Specifically, neoliberalism refers to increasing pressure to open foreign markets to free trade, privatization of the economy and the rejection of government intervention. In the context of labour migration, I use neoliberalism to discuss the controlled movement of poor migrants to and within Canada and the diminishing value of labour and food costs.

[2] Migrant workers are defined as "those foreign born persons who seek to relocate themselves in sites in production but whose work and stay within a social formation are subject to temporal constraints imposed by the state" (Satzewich, 1991: 34).

[3] The Global South refers to economically poor countries with a history of colonial and imperialist conquest. On the flip-side, the Global North refers to economically wealthy countries with a history of colonial expansion, capitalist development and productive growth.

isolation, and migrants' understanding and ability to exercise rights in Canada. Increasing public awareness of these problems has brought small changes and increasing accountability to the SAWP itself. There are also an increasing number of services being provided to migrant farm workers by various non-profit agencies, advocacy organizations and support groups. With these positive changes and more brewing for the SAWP and the recruited migrant workers, another temporary program was developed.

The pilot Foreign Worker Program (FWP) was initiated by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) in 2002 and then expanded to enable employers to recruit migrant farm workers from Guatemala to work in the Quebec agricultural industry. While the FWP was originally designed as a low-skilled temporary work program for the meat packing, construction and tourism industries, its expansion into agriculture is interesting as the program bears striking similarities to the SAWP and begs the question as to why the FWP would infiltrate this sector (Brem, 2006).

Where the SAWP had been the exclusive instrument to manage the flow of migrant farm workers entering Canada, the FWP has now given employers a choice of which migrants they will recruit and from where. This paper attempts to examine this new and little-studied pilot FWP in light of both neo-liberalism and the previously existing temporary worker program within Canada. Through my investigation of the FWP, I demonstrate how the program functions, why and how it was developed and how it operates in reality. With the existing body of literature on the SAWP, I

compare and critique the FWP and the implications of the two programs working side-by-side. Further, I demonstrate how these temporary migration programs involve gendered and racialized processes and reinforce white hegemony and sexism.

I have entitled this paper *Plus Ça Change?* after a famous French quote, "Plus ca change, plus c'est la même chose," originally published by Alphonse Karr as part of a satirical poem in *Les Guêpes* (1849). The literal translation of this quote is "The more things change, the more they stay the same" and is generally used to denote how history repeats itself. This paper questions whether the pilot FWP provides an improved program and situation for migrant farm workers in Canada – or whether it is simply more of the same.

## SECTION ONE – Literature Review on Migrant Agricultural Labour in Canada

Migrant worker recruitment programs recruiting foreign workers on a temporary basis are not new in Canada. A significant shift in immigration policy, from facilitating the permanent settlement of immigrants to one of recruiting temporary migrant workers without access to citizenship, took place in 1973 with the development of the Non-immigrant Employment Authorization Program (NIEAP). With the 1976 regulations which finally removed "all explicit traces of racial discrimination from Canada's immigration laws," making it so that nobody could be denied entry into Canada on racial grounds, the NIEAP was developed which restricted the settlement of immigrant labour (Kelly & Trebilcock, 2000: 351). This program "provided an overarching frame in which to bring in people temporarily to fill certain, employer-identified 'shortages' in the labour force" (Sharma, 2002: 18).

Under the NIEAP, migrant programs arose such as the Foreign Domestic Movement Program (1981) – later to develop into the the Live-In Caregiver Program (1992)-- as well as the Mexican SAWP (1976). These programs mark the early trend towards facilitating temporary migrant labour recruitment schemes as opposed to permanent settlement of foreign workers. They also represent a shift in how the boundaries of the Canadian state are reinforced in terms of which bodies can claim access to rights and citizenship.

The key researchers and theorists in the area of migrant labour in Canada, specifically in relation to the SAWP, are Tanya Basok, Kerry Preibisch, Leigh Binford, Harold

Bauder, Nandita Sharma and Vic Satzewich. While each researcher approaches the issue in a unique way, most emphasize the limited social rights of migrant workers under the SAWP. To date, there have been no academic writings dealing specifically with the FWP in Quebec.

Basok's work tends to focus on the limited rights of migrant workers under the SAWP and their conditions of work. *Tortillas and Tomatoes* (2002) provides a strong and complex argument for the basic premise that contract labour in the Canadian agricultural sector is captive or "unfree" labour. Basok (2003b, 2004) articulates how neo-liberal policies decrease actual social rights for migrant workers and examines the legal rights that exist in relation to workers' extremely limited ability to exercise these rights. She argues that we need to look at membership in communities as a means to social inclusion and rights, but does not articulate proactive ways to go about this. Basok (2000, 2003a) also focuses on the composition of the population of migrant workers participating in the SAWP and their ability to make major investments with remittances. She uses her findings to argue that the selection criteria for migrant workers compounds the problems that rural poor farmers in Mexico face in investing productively in their home communities. Finally, she weighs the social and economic costs and benefits of migration, and the dynamics of family and cultural separation to give readers a fuller understanding of the generational effects of seasonal migration from rural Mexico to Canada under the SAWP.

Binford (2003) has compared the experiences of Mexican migrants in the U.S. and in Canada, focusing on the economic aspects of migration, such as community

development with remittances. She further explores the relationship between labour-sending communities, their reasons for migration and the effects on rural development in their countries as a result of migration and remittances. Basok (2000, 2003a), Verduzco and Lozano (2003), and Downes and Odle-Worrell (2003) all focus on the development consequences within sending countries as a result of out-migration. Basok, Verduzco and Lozano focus on the impacts in rural Mexico in relation to the SAWP, while Downes and Odle-Worrell focus on the economic impacts to Caribbean communities with migrant workers in the SAWP. In these studies, the authors discuss how remittances are spent and invested, and how the next generation of children can benefit from the economic gains of seasonal migrants in Canada.

Preibisch's work explores issues of global gender inequity and how this is manifested in the SAWP (2005a, 2005b), the effects of neo-liberal restructuring in rural Mexico in relation to out-migration (2000) and, finally, processes of social inclusion in migrant worker communities in Canada (2004). Preibisch has made significant contributions to the literature on the SAWP with regards to the gendered dimensions of the program, the migrant worker communities themselves and the families left behind. In reaction to Basok's examination of human rights and exclusion of migrant workers under the SAWP, Preibisch (2004) outlines processes of social exclusion and inclusion in order to demonstrate how relationships between migrant workers and permanent community members are undergoing small positive changes, which in turn are pressuring the state to extend migrants' rights. Preibisch and Binford (2007) also look at issues of race and racism under the SAWP in terms how Mexican

migrant farm workers are gradually replacing Caribbean migrant farm workers. They look specifically at how the labour of one racial/national group is categorized and racialized by employers within the Canadian agriculture sector and community members in rural Canada and how this changes the processes of recruitment under the SAWP.

Satzewich (1991) and Wall (1992) examined the overall role of race and ethnicity in immigration policy and labour relations for migrant workers in Canada, paying specific attention to instances of racism and social exclusion under the SAWP. Satzewich's early book outlines how migrant workers are racialized as outsiders and how their temporary presence under strict mobility and employment constraints becomes justified (1991, 145-180). Connecting racism and the institutional exclusion of migrant workers under the SAWP to broader themes of neo-liberalism, capitalist expansion, he demonstrates how migrant labour is integrated into Canada and hidden within the political economy. This work forms the basis for criticisms of the SAWP as a racist policy. Satzewich (1993) is also interested in demonstrating how racism is integral to Canada's immigration policy in the way that ethnic families are regulated in their inability to settle as units. He looks at historical examples, including the SAWP, of how migrants have been deemed unsuitable for settlement, but essential as labourers in the capitalist system.

Sharma (2001, 2002) tends to focus her analysis on ideologies of national identity in Canada and how they function to keep and justify migrant workers as a subordinate working class. Sharma (2001) looks specifically at migrant workers' status as non-

citizens and how this perpetuates racial hierarchies in the labour force and in society. Sharma further (2006) discusses the historical nation-building project and the construction of "Canadian-ness" in light of neo-liberalism, and how the racist system of "migrant labour" becomes legitimized in both policy and public perception. In *Home Economics* (2006), she emphasizes how the Canadian state relies on the construction of migrant workers as outsiders – i.e., not at home – to pursue capitalist expansion and profits.

Smart (1998) and Colby (1997) concentrate on the limited rights of migrant workers and document specific case studies of their working and living conditions under the SAWP. Smart looks at the micro-level experiences of migrant workers in rural Alberta and the social isolation of the workers: "The presence of Mexican seasonal workers is known, but not felt" (1998: 149). By outlining the limited rights and exclusion of the workers, Smart then proceeds to connect these experiences to the state's need for a flexible labour force in the era of globalization. Colby's report compares the experiences of social exclusion for Mexican migrant farm workers in the U.S. and Canada, and concludes that they feel more racism in Canada. "In the US you have all kinds of people. Some think they are better than Mexicans. But in Canada everyone thinks they are better than us" (Colby, 1997: 19).

Bauder (2006) illustrates how migrant workers' vulnerability influences labour market dynamics as migration becomes an integral part of the neo-liberal economic regime; he provides a case study of offshore labour in Ontario under the SAWP. Bauder and Corbin (2002) examine media representations of migrant farm workers in Ontario

presenting various different interpretations of the offshore program itself and how the media assign different meanings to the workers, growers, industry, workplace and landscape. Bauder, Preibisch, Sutherland and Nash (2003) further previous research on the economic effects of the SAWP for migrant-sending communities by outlining economic and social contributions that migrant workers are making to Canada. This interesting study shifts the focus to the workers' contributions, but again, outlines their difficulties with racism and exclusion, and how this limits their ability to fully contribute to society.

Finally, general overviews of the SAWP and a comprehensive set of criticisms are presented by Brem (2006) and Martin (2003) as policy recommendations of the North-South Institute. At the end of the Brem's (2006) *North-South Institute Policy Brief*, there is a brief mention of the pilot HRSDC Foreign Worker Program (FWP) where Guatemalan farmers are being brought to Quebec. This brief overview of the pilot FWP sparked my interest in further investigating the program's development and rationale, its differences from and similarities to the SAWP, and the potential implications of these two programs functioning side by side in Quebec.

## SECTION TWO –Migrant Farm Labour in Canada: Conceptual Orientations

This section outlines the theoretical paradigms I use to examine the migrant farm labour in Canada. Part (a) describes how global and neoliberal restructuring are changing the face of agriculture and the economy as a whole and how this has been the driving force behind the creation of the SAWP. Part (b) focuses on the premise of "unfree" labour as a structural necessity for the way that the agricultural industry is set-up and running. Part (c) goes on to critique the Canada's imagined national identity, by analysing its implications for how migrant workers become racialized and how this racialized status becomes normalized or justified. Finally, this section closes with a reminder that, despite the various paradigms I use to explain the use of migrant agricultural labour in Canada, it is imperative that the autonomy and resistance of workers remain at the forefront.

### a: Global and Neo-liberal Restructuring and the Making of Migrant Workers

Global restructuring and corresponding increases in inequality and poverty[4] have limited people's options globally and widened gaps between the rich and poor. Much of the Global South has suffered tremendously from high interest payments, increasing debts to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB) and individual lenders. Many countries have been forced to accept Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs) to refinance overwhelming debts. These SAPs, aligned

[4] Before the onset of neliberalism, there existed pressures on the agricultural system in Canada, as well as on peasants from the Global South and workers supplying labour to Canadian agriculture. I focus on the intensification of these pressures with globalization and neoliberal shifts.

with neo-liberalism, force countries to open their borders for free trade and export-oriented production, to privatize land and services, and to deregulate their economies. Where rural farmers in the Global South once held property, protected by the state and used predominantly for subsistence, private entities – often representing investments from wealthy nations – have bought the land for profit-based agriculture. The shift from subsistence agriculture to cash-cropping has bankrupted millions of peasants globally and driven them from their land (Bales, 1999: 13).

Despite the promises of trade surpluses made with the introduction of neoliberal policies, many countries in the Global South continue to suffer exchange deficits. In this context, "migrant remittances fulfill a key role for securing hard currency in these countries and for the subsistence of low-income households" (Popkin, 2003: 351). Further, as Salas argues (2005), poorer nation states are lowering labour standards and wages in an attempt to promote export-oriented employment – the global "race to the bottom" – in the hope of stimulating the economy more successfully. Further, foreign investment in the Global South means that profits leave the host country rather than being reinvested locally.

While the majority of the world's population remains poor, globalization and neo-liberal restructuring have taken a different toll on wealthy nations. Primary sector jobs have become more poorly paid, insecure and devalued, and therefore no longer attractive to those with middle class aspirations. Global restructuring "stimulates demand for cheap labour to service the activities and life-styles of high-income

strata" (Basok, 2002: 10). It becomes essential for farms to reduce production costs and increase the flexibility of their workforce in order to stay afloat in a competitive market (Bauder, 2006: 4). Foreign workers have become necessary for maintaining low wages and "forestalling those wage increases has preserved the privileged income position of most nationals" (Avery, 1995: 207) as well as helping to keep production costs low.

In the Canadian agricultural sector, the demand for cheap labour is so high in that it has become impossible to attract sufficient workers from the Canadian labour pool. With global neo-liberal restructuring, primary sector jobs have become comparatively more poorly paid and insecure and "therefore unattractive to domestic workers" (Basok, 2002: 8). Temporary worker programs provide the perfect solution to the Canadian state in that cheap foreign workers can support economic growth and further, do this without altering the imagined Canadian identity[5]. In the agriculture sector, the SAWP and the FWP more recently are two options allowing Canadian employers to recruit workers from impoverished communities.

Canada is meeting the needs of its agricultural sector by drawing on a pool of vulnerable, low-paid workers who are "produced" abroad – that is, the state does not pay the cost of "raising those workers to prime working age" (Li, 1998: 76) nor pay the costs of taking care of them as they age (Satzewich, 1993). Further, even though migrant workers are an essential part of the Canadian agriculture sector and national economy, they are not afforded the right to settle permanently. Since migrant

[5] See Section C on imagined community and the racialization of migrant workers.

workers must come alone, the state is able to prevent natural reproduction and generational settlement in Canada. This helps to conceal the underlying racism in the migrant worker policies. Racism is an aspect of maintaining "the marginal status of a class of labour so that it can be used as a labour reserve capable of responding to uneven capitalist development" (Li, 1998: 37).

**b: "Unfree Labour" – Migrant Workers as a "Structural Necessity"**

The Canadian agricultural sector can experience acute labour shortages. Entire crops can be lost if the workers are not there at key periods (e.g., planting, harvesting). The uneven seasonal work load means that workers must work flexible hours. Simply put, farm work in Canada is demanding, irregular, low paid and often dangerous. Canadian workers are less and less attracted to this sector. Rather than creating better working conditions and wages, the acute shortage of reliable and dependable domestic agricultural workers, even those marginalized within society, propelled the creation of temporary worker programs.

Workers with the freedom to change jobs would, and do, find better jobs eventually. It is simply not enough to find workers for Canadian farms. Because of the working conditions and wages associated with farm labour, there exists a need to seek programs that secure worker compliance with the difficult conditions associated with the work so that crops will not be lost. As Basok (2002) argues, agricultural employers "require not merely labour that is cheap but labour that is unfree – unfree[6] to circulate in the market and unfree to refuse work when required" (16). Basok

[6] "Unfree" refers to workers who are employed under duress of poverty, unemployment, violence, detention, repatriation or any other threat of destitution (Basok, 1999).

(2002) also notes that "they [migrant workers] stay until their contract expires; they do not take time off work, even when they are exhausted, sick, or injured, because their recruitment into the employment program is rigidly controlled" (17).

Temporary worker programs such as the SAWP and the pilot FWP offer a pool of cheap, readily available and reliable, unfree workers contracted and bound to a specific employer – thus making them unable to change jobs. Due to desperate economic necessity, these migrant workers accept their conditions of unfreedom within Canada and remain a compliant workforce – a workforce that is a structural necessity for the success of the Canadian agriculture sector as it exists today (ibid). Further, Sharma (2006) notes, as Canada taps into the world market for low-cost labour, Canadian industries, in this case agricultural, are able to gain competitive advantage on both the global and local levels.

> We need this labour…and these people are used to working in the heat. They are used to working in agriculture, and they are satisfied with the pay scale… Canadians do not want to work this job – many of them do not, and have expressed this feeling in no uncertain terms – then I say that the producers of this nation are entitled to offshore competent labour from wherever it may come... if these people are willing to work under the conditions prevailing in Canada today and produce crops for Canadian consumers.
>
> (M.P. Danforth as quoted in Sharma, 2001: 423)

The SAWP's existence and justification rest on the premise that migrant farm workers are benefiting from the opportunity to work in Canada and most importantly, that their labour assists in maintaining "the livelihoods of Canadian and permanent resident workers in the agricultural industry as well as in other industries that directly or indirectly participate in and benefit from a strong and vital agricultural industry" (HRSDC, 2006a). While it is true that there is an increasing

need for jobs and income in poorer nation states, especially in rural areas, and that seasonal migrant labour programs provide opportunities for more income generation in a shorter period, it is important not to disregard the reality that (im)migration in Canada is an organized "labour recruitment mechanism" and not an act of charity on the part of the government (Arat-Koc, 1992: 238 as cited by Sharma, 2006: 136). The discourse that celebrates unfree wage labour for migrant workers stating that they are benefiting and somehow 'better off' is one that doesn't leave space for criticisms of the programs, and more importantly, for workers' issues and voices (Sharma, 2006: 136).

**c: Imagined National Identity and Racialization of Migrant Farm Workers as Other**

The Canadian state's inclusion of migrant farm workers as labourers, but not as full members of society reflects its attempts to uphold the imagined Canadian national identity. This imagined identity can, at least in part, be defined in terms of 'race' as the entry of different groups of people into Canada has been, and continues to be, regulated differently (Satzewich, 1991: 51). "Canadian-ness" has been deeply imbedded in the historical nation-building project. Racial distinctions define which "bodies can be inscribed as Canadian and the differential rights that can be accrued to these 'Canadians' and to those constructed as the 'non-Canadian'-Other" (Sharma, 2002: 3). The Canadian nation was once defined in terms of the 'white race' (Satzewich, 1991: 124) with the racism of Canadian immigration policy overt and aimed at maintaining the hegemony of the 'white race':

> The admission to Canada of natives of the West Indies has always been a problem with his Service and we are continually being asked

> to make provision for the admission of these people. They are, of course not assimilable.
>
> (Letter from director, Immigration Branch as cited by Satzewich, 1991: 172)

While Canadian immigration policy is no longer overtly racist and politicians are careful not to make racist and politically damaging comments, the process of racialization and the ideology of racism persist in the imagined Canadian national identity. This imagined identity, and the associated community, is imbedded within (im)migration policy. Racism is apparent in the development of the SAWP, which has been structured to place migrant workers in a "position in production relations as unfree migrant labour" (Satzewich, 1991: 147). As Zolberg (1981) notes, "it is the very qualities (real or imagined) that make certain groups particularly suitable for their roles as workers that make them unsuitable for membership in the receiving society" (as cited by Basok, 2000: 219). It is racialized assumptions and understandings of foreign workers that produce and act to justify a perception of migrant workers as "'just like machines,' […and hence not] deserving of the rights afforded citizens, or more specifically White citizens" (Preibich and Binford, 2007: 32).

The origins of the SAWP are predicated in racist ideology as a 1966 memo of the Assistant Deputy Minister of Immigration outlined clearly:

> It should be mentioned here that one of the policy factors was a concern over the long range wisdom of a substantial increase in Negro immigration to Canada. The racial problems of Britain and the United States undoubtedly influenced this concern, which of course still exists today.
>
> (Verma, 2003)

The racism is embedded in the rules of the SAWP and the FWP because migrant workers' labour is integral to the economy, "but the rest of their selves are not seen as integral to society" as they are the "eternal throwaway people" (Inter Pares, 2006: 3).

> What [is] being restricted is not the entry of people of colour but their access to certain jobs, programs and protections once inside Canada. And with the organization of the "migrant worker" category what [is] restricted [is] their access to remaining permanently in Canada and their mobility, both geographically as well as their labour market mobility.
>
> (Sharma, 2002: 24)

Further, the boundaries drawn between citizens and non-citizens, or temporary and permanent residents are "drawn upon particularistic criteria (race, ethnicity, gender) that simultaneously reflect both global and national relations of power" (Bakan and Stasiulis, 1997: 44). Thus, even as neoliberal economic and social reforms disproportionably affect poorer non-white countries and communities negatively, decisions on which groups of people are "economically more 'desirable,' more 'assimilable,' and allegedly better suited to life in Canada" are "still racist and ethnically selective" (Jakubowski, 1999: 123).

As migrant farm workers continue to harvest the fields of Canada, their physical presence becomes defined by their work – which is considered dirty and undesirable by Canadians. The physical and cultural characteristics of migrant workers become equated and reproduced in public discourse with their undesirable work, and migrant workers become inseparable from their subservient position – thus reinforcing racism and marginalization, rather than challenging it (Bolaria & Li, 1988: 29). When migrant workers are constantly positioned as Other, outside of the Canadian identity

and imagined community, the Canadian state justifies its policies affecting migrant workers, and the public complies[7].

**d: Autonomy and Resistance**

Often underemphasized in the literature on migrant workers, specifically the SAWP, is the agency and autonomy that migrant workers employ, even while restricted by conditions of unfreedom. While global restructuring, persistent poverty and inequality, and the marginal status of migrant labour in the Canadian agricultural industry exist, people entangled in these situations are not pawns or sheep. Migrant workers, while crippled by economic restructuring, poverty and the conditions of their work and stay in Canada, are still struggling to make change. It is essential that workers' resistance be accounted for and that we recognize that even those positioned as 'unfree' hold agency and resist.

Migrant workers use the very instruments of power used against them in strategic ways in order to resist. For example, language barriers (Preibisch, 2004; Basok, 2002), while a clear disadvantage, also allow secret spaces for the workers to protest, discuss, joke, gossip, etc., about their lives in Canada while excluding non-Spanish-speaking English (or French) speakers in power. Other forms of resistance on farms are countless, ranging from forming romantic relationships to sabotaging equipment or products on the farm (Basok, 2002: 110). In fact, participation in these programs is a form of resistance – to poverty.

[7] This is not to say that there are not numerous concerned people in the public, activists, academics, service providers, etc. working on changing and improving the situation for migrant workers in Canada.

## SECTION THREE – Contextual Country Overviews

This section explores the socio-economic and historic factors in Canada, Mexico and Guatemala that have led to the development of migration under the SAWP and the FWP. The country overviews are useful in that they explain the demand and supply sides of migrant farm labour in Canada and present concrete examples of how neo-liberal reforms and globalization have affected agriculture and poverty levels in these countries.

### a: Canada

The agricultural sector in Canada has historically, and to date, faced acute labour supply problems and difficulties retaining labour. Agricultural work is unattractive to most Canadians and the sector is labour-intensive. There has been a steady decline of the rural populations as more and more people relocate to urban centres in search of more attractive work. This means that farmers face a depleted labour pool of domestic workers (Satzewich, 1991: 82).

It has been argued that poor agricultural working conditions and pay exist because of low food prices maintained by the state and increasing input prices. Under such circumstances, farms cannot afford to provide better working conditions. Further, as trade liberalization takes place, the Canadian rural landscape is changing and the family farm – which represents an image of Canadianness that seems important to maintain – is becoming more vulnerable. The Canadian state does several things to protect the family farm; it buys up surplus food, puts up protectionist tariffs or import quotas to protect local agricultural goods, prohibits the organization of farm

workers – making it impossible to negotiate better working conditions – and finally, creates temporary worker programs to solve labour shortage problems (Basok, 2002: 17; Wall, 1994).

While the image of the family farm is romantic, it ignores the "fact that some agricultural sectors are not vulnerable but have enjoyed stability and growth" (Basok, 2002: 17). Increases in technological and mechanical production and the corporatization of farms have allowed many farms to prosper – and reap the benefits of the protections and programs put in place to support family farms. As businesses seek to produce competitively, the search for cheaper inputs, such as labour, becomes necessary. The SAWP was implemented to benefit the Canadian agricultural industry – whatever the farm size – and provide "disciplined and flexible labour at the lowest possible cost to Canadian growers" (Bauder, 2006: 157). The SAWP aims to assist in maintaining "the livelihoods of Canadian and permanent resident workers in the agricultural industry as well as in other industries that directly or indirectly participate in and benefit from a strong and vital agricultural industry" (HRSDC, 2006a).

**b: Guatemala**

Guatemala is plagued by a legacy of lack of access to education and health care and by extreme land inequality, labour exploitation, violence and ethnic discrimination. These factors, along with crippling neo-liberal reforms have contributed to some 6.4 million Guatemalans living in poverty with extreme poverty continuing to rise (See Appendix A, Table 1). Poverty in Guatemala is unevenly distributed by region, with over 60% of the population living in rural areas – 72% of whom are poor, compared

with the urban areas, which experience 28% poverty. This disproportion is higher between the Indigenous and non-indigenous population, as 72% of the Indigenous population are poor compared with 44% of the non-indigenous population" (See Appendix A, Table 1) (Krznaric, 2004: 3). The push to liberalize trade and focus on export-oriented agriculture for growth, poverty persists. Even the World Bank (2003) notes: "The poor do not seem to be benefiting from the existing pattern of growth" (47, as cited by Krznaric, 2005).

In order to understand the continuation of high levels of poverty and their persistence in Guatemala, it is important to briefly note elements of Guatemala's history. Guatemala has seen a long history of racism against Indigenous Mayans, around 45-50% of the population, which has resulted in their present-day marginalization and poverty. With regard to the agricultural sectors of the Guatemalan economy, in the late nineteenth century, the state expropriated communal land holdings and inflicted forced labour laws upon the Indigenous population. Even after forced labour was legally abolished in the mid-twentieth century, the legacy of this history is still apparent in the enormous disparities in rural land ownership, the low wages for most plantation workers, and the extreme income inequality. Unlike other Latin American countries, the Guatemalan government has never implemented any sort of land redistribution policy. In addition, the numerous protests led by peasants against the concentration of land holdings have been met with violence and armed suppression.

As neo-liberal reforms have further exacerbated disparities in rural land holdings, favouring wealthy large estate holders and multinational agribusiness, it is only the smallest land holdings that the majority, 77% of rural inhabitants (mainly Indigenous) can access (Smith, 2006). It is estimated that 2% of the population owns over 72% of agricultural land, "which is used mostly for plantations of sugar, coffee, bananas and rubber, in addition to cattle ranches" – almost exclusively export oriented activities (Krznaric, 2005: 4). Since rural inhabitants lack access to adequate land, they are forced to continue the legacy of working as piece-rate labourers on plantations or seek other sources of income– often though migration.

It is not simply a case of unequal land ownership and neo-liberal reform in Guatemala's history that has lead to the extreme poverty facing the rural population today. The collapse of the Guatemalan agricultural sector is instead a "combination of government neglect of rural development, neo-liberal reforms, natural disasters and droughts followed by an extreme collapse of international coffee prices" (Popkin, 2003). Given Guatemala's dependence on coffee exports, "this development proved to be devastating, costing some 600,000 jobs according to the Inter-American Development Bank" (ibid, 2002: 353).

The history of civil war, government corruption and general economic instability has left Guatemala in shambles with over 40% of the population underemployed (Smith, 2006). Even as peace was established in Guatemala, the country had incurred large debts and a bad image for foreign direct investment. Agriculture was particularly hard hit, and unemployment skyrocketed. Further, industrialized countries

maintained protectionist measures for their agriculture sectors, which hurt the economies of poor countries like Guatemala – especially the poor farmers who had little to no access to these markets (Krznaric, 2005). It is a result of extreme poverty that more and more poor rural Guatemalans depend on emigration as a strategy to escape poverty.

**c: Mexico**

Small farm plots are one of the most important national symbols of Mexican independence. *Ejidos*, or community land holdings, were developed out of the land reform policies that followed Mexico's peasant-led revolution in 1910 (Lewis, 2002: 403). At the heart of the *ejido* policies was the fundamental idea that natural resources such as land and water belonged to the nation and its people (ibid). The *ejido* land distributions and reform policies were furthered with the radical Cárdenas administration (1934-40), which returned 20 million hectares to approximately 800,000 people and decreased the landless population by over 50% (ibid). By the late 1960s, "Mexico became not only self-sufficient in basic foodstuffs, but also a net exporter of agricultural produce" (Wiggins, et al., 2002: 181).

Until a few decades ago, the state played a crucial role in supporting the *ejidos* by "supplying almost all inputs, credit and crop insurance, and in buying up output at guaranteed prices" (Wiggins, et al., 2002: 181). Thus, by the early 1980s, small farms in Mexico had become heavily reliant on government subsidies and support, and the social importance of Mexico's national identity as a rural peasant country had been solidified. This was all shaken with the increasing prevalence of neo-liberal ideology, including free trade and market liberalization, in the face of globalization.

The World Bank and the IMF gave large low-interest loans to Mexico during the 1970s which facilitated much of the nation's economic growth and its ability to support the *ejidos*. With the fall in oil prices in the early 1980s, the abandonment of the gold standard and rising interest rates, in 1982 Mexico threatened to default on its loans (Wiggins, et al., 2002: 182). Quickly, the IMF and the World Bank implemented SAPs in Mexico, forcing Mexico to meet stringent conditions in order to maintain access to credit and pay off its debts. The SAPs required that Mexico reduce government social programs, slash investments, and run trade surpluses to repay the interest. A further blow was that the IMF and the World Bank restructured their lending policies and decreased the amount of credit available to Mexico, thus decreasing the peso credit available to *ejidos* by 20 percent (de Janvry & Sadoulet, 1995).

Under the conservative Salinas administration (1988-1994), the *ejido* sector was further slashed as Salinas saw farming as excessively "protected by the state at unjustifiable cost, a sector where private initiative was throttled by state controls and investment stymied by collective tenure" (Wiggins, et al., 2002: 182). *Ejidos* were now permitted, even encouraged, to dismantle, rent and sell the land and many peasants saw this as "a government attempt to make the *ejido* sector disappear" (Lewis, 2002: 414) During this time there was a clear increase in poverty, most of which was located in rural areas. The percentage of poor in Mexico rose from 19.5% to 23.6% during these years and by 1989, "close to 70% of the poor were in rural areas" (McKinley & Alarcón, 1995: 1575).

The economic crisis forced Mexico to devalue its currency, which had the effect of widening the U.S.-Mexico wage gap ratio from 8-1 to 12-1. The Mexican "economy shrank by 6 percent and about 10 percent of formal sector jobs were lost, reflecting the most severe recession in over half a century" (Andreas, 1998). Then, with the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994, market liberalization eliminated both subsidies and guaranteed prices for local agricultural products.

In recent years, 70-80% of the poor in Mexico living in rural areas on small land holdings (McKinley & Alarcón, 1995). As the role of the welfare state decreases and poverty persists, many peasants have been forced to migrate is a search of a livelihood and to "create anew what has been lost" (Inter Pares, 2006: 10). The neo-liberal ideology that has pushed trade liberalization, privatization and led to the implementation of the NAFTA has changed agricultural structures in Mexico. The dismantling of the *ejidos* and the tariff-free importation of cheap maize has pushed small-farmers in rural Mexico into greater poverty and marginalization. Despite decreasing social programs, peasants have resisted leaving their farms and instead, sought supplemental forms of income – many through migration and worker remittances (Wiggins, Keilbach & Preibisch, 2002).

## SECTION FOUR – Expanding Migrant Worker Programs in Canada: SAWP to FWP

This section explores the historical debates leading up to the SAWP as well as the actual policy set-up of the SAWP (Part a) and the major criticisms of the SAWP as cited by researchers and academics (Part b). Finally, Part (c) describes the set-up and functioning of the FWP in relation to the previous discussion and critique on the SAWP.

### a: History of the SAWP

Before the introduction of the SAWP in 1966, the Canadian government made several attempts to recruit domestic labour to fill vacancies in the agricultural sector. Each attempt to recruit and maintain domestic workers failed as workers would demand pay increases, quit during peak harvesting stretches and "lack[ed] discipline and commitment to the farm" in the eyes of the employers (Basok, 2002: 18). Nonetheless, early attempts to recruit Caribbean migrant workers, which began in 1947, were met with hostility and debates (Satzewich, 1991: 179). Thus, farmers lobbied for a program to recruit foreign contract labour – not just for a pool of cheap labour, but for a pool of captive and reliable workers (ibid). The challenge was to create a program that would "maintain docile labour at a low cost so that even undesirable work can be performed efficiently" (See Chapter 1, Section c) (Bolaria & Li, 1988: 28).

Politicians in favour of the SAWP argued that creating a program to draw upon domestic unemployed workers would mean employers would have to "improve wages, accommodation and working conditions, and offer to pay the transportation

costs of the workers from where they lived to work" (Satzewich, 1991: 158). Instead, they argued that recruiting temporary migrant workers would offer a solution to these costs by making them disappear – as migrant workers cannot claim these privileges/rights.

As the original Caribbean-Canada SAWP was being discussed, the acceptance of the program eventually became justified on the basis of the economic benefits to Canadians and that:

> By admitting West Indian workers on a seasonal basis, it might be possible to reduce greatly the pressure on Canada to accept unskilled workers from the West Indies as immigrants. Moreover, seasonal farm workers would not have the privilege of sponsoring innumerable close relatives.
>
> (Minutes on Bill C-86 as quoted by Avery, 1995: 204)

The idea was that the workers are needed to maintain profitability in the agricultural sector in Canada, but migrant workers integration within the Canadian national identity was not welcome. The SAWP began with the recruitment of 264 Jamaican workers in 1966, and expanded over the next ten years to include "the citizens of other Caribbean countries: Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados in 1968 and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) in 1976" (Preibisch and Binford, 2007). While the development of the SAWP acted as a political and ideological solution to the challenge of providing a pool of temporary, cheap labourers for the agricultural industry without increasing the Black population of Canada, workers from the Caribbean were "defined as a qualitatively different 'race' of people" and their presence in the country in substantial numbers was seen as a threat (Satzewich, 1991: 179).

In 1974, the SAWP was extended to include Mexico. With 208 arrivals in the first year, by 2001 the SAWP involved close to 20,000 participants from the Caribbean and Mexico (Preibich and Binford, 2007). The SAWP sends migrant workers to Ontario, Quebec, Manitoba and Alberta, and more recently, Nova Scotia (1999), New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island (2001), Saskatchewan (2003) and British Colombia (2004) have entered the program (ibid). With Ontario and Quebec receiving 90% of workers recruited under the SAWP, workers in the agricultural sector "can no longer be considered a minor part of the work force; in fact, if present trends continue, it is likely that [non-]Canadian workers will account for a larger share of total hours worked than Canadian workers" (Weston and Scarpa de Masellis, 2003: 26 as cited by Preibisch and Binford, 2007).

While the program touts that it is temporary and seasonal, the reality is that migrant workers are present in Canada from mid-December or early January and individual contracts are often up to eight months (ibid). The SAWP was originally intergovernmental in a purer sense, with HRSDC managing the administration of the program on the Canadian side in collaboration with the sending countries' governments. In 1987, due to lack of resources, the Canadian government threatened to abandon the SAWP and to the rescue came the F.A.R.M.S/ F.E.R.M.E. in Quebec, which volunteered to administer the program so it could continue (Brem, 2006). Clearly, the agricultural industry benefits greatly from temporary worker programs like the SAWP and in the three years following F.A.R.M.S/ F.E.R.M.E.'s takeover of administration, the SAWP doubled in size. During this same period, the

proportion of Mexican participants grew to 49% of the total, where their previous proportion of all workers was 19% with Caribbean workers dominating the SAWP (Preibisch and Binford, 2007).

Today, the SAWP is a complex program, managed and implemented within a three-tier institutional framework. At the federal level, the SAWP is carried out within the framework of the Immigration Refugee and Protection Act and Regulations. At the provincial level, the SAWP is governed by laws relating to employment standards, labour and health. Finally, there is a bilateral government-to-government managed program of migration between both sending and receiving countries (Verma, 2003: viii; Preibisch, 2004). HRSDC funds the program and F.A.R.M.S./ F.E.R.M.E. administers the program on behalf of private agricultural businesses and sending government agencies. Under the SAWP, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is established between governments of Canada and the sending country. The MOU formalizes the objectives, steps and roles expected of participants under the SAWP. Through the MOUs, Canada is able to distance itself from exploitative practices associated with private contractors (Brem, 2006).

Under the SAWP, farmers in Canada apply to HRSDC with requests for foreign workers. In order to make this request, they must prove that there is a shortage of available domestic workers – by demonstrating that they tried recruiting locally[8] – in keeping with the "Canadian's First" policy. HRSDC then sends the request to

[8] Employers simply need to put an ad in the local paper and say they couldn't find anyone in order to be eligible to hire migrant labour.

F.A.R.M.S. / F.E.R.M.E, which organizes all the paperwork and administration and sends out the requests to the Mexican and Caribbean governments to recruit workers. Potential migrant workers are lining up at the doors in Mexico or the Caribbean for a chance to come to Canada and work (Interview, 2007)[9]. Once a worker is contracted by the sending country, their documents, including medical clearances and passport, must be sent to the Canadian immigration office for a work permit (HRSDC, 2006a). In Quebec, the papers and work permit must also be processed through Immigration Quebec (Interview with HRSDC, 2007).

Migrant workers hired under the SAWP are required to pay $450 towards their transportation costs and $150 to process the work permit (HRSDC, 2006a). The SAWP's contract further outlines that employers must provide accommodations free of charge for the migrant workers. Wages are annually agreed upon and negotiated between the sending country's government agency and HRSDC, which requires that employers pay a minimum wage for a particular type of employment based on pay equity with Canadian citizens employed in the same job.

**b: Major Criticisms of the SAWP**

Based on a survey of the literature about the SAWP, the major issues with the program are the bounded nature of the contracts, the monitoring and regulation of the SAWP, and the inability of migrant workers to unionize and access pathways to permanent residency. In practice, these issues translate into the potential for

[9] Anonymous interview with Mexican migrant worker conducted as a part of this paper in Saint-Rémi.

exploitive working and living conditions, isolation, racism and segregation. Further, the SAWP strengthens stereotypes of certain workers as more suited to certain jobs, and thus reinforces racism within Canada and globally.

Since agricultural growers and manufacturers want workers with strict restrictions on their mobility, thus preventing high turnover or the possibility of departure during critical harvest times, migrant workers recruited under the SAWP are bound "to a single employer and residential location" (Preibisch, 2004). As a structural support to the Canadian agricultural industry, "unfree" migrant labour is created when workers are bound to their contracts – if the contract is broken, he/she can no longer be a participant in the program (Basok, 2002). Therefore, the SAWP functions to secure worker compliance through fear of job loss, repatriation and potential blacklisting. Contracts between Mexico and Canada require that at the end of employment, migrant workers be evaluated by their employer and "named" to return next season or "unnamed" and potentially blacklisted or suspended from the program (Basok, 2002: 15). In 1996, 2,934 out of the 4,187 Mexican workers selected to participate in the Canadian program – roughly two thirds – were specifically requested by their employers (F.A.R.M.S., 2005). Essentially, the employer holds control over the migrant worker's visa, which places the worker in a state of economic peonage:

> The worker maintains his or her legal status at the sufferance of the employer, who determines whether the worker returns again next year. To the extent the worker wishes to retain legal status, he is bound to do as the employer wishes.
>
> (Basok, 2002: 15)

Because of migrant workers' vulnerable economic and social position, employers in Canada are able to exercise power over them in a variety of manners. For example,

while employers have no "legal basis to restrict workers' movement off the farm, they do hold the power to dismiss and, therefore, repatriate workers" (Preibisch, 2004). This fear of being sent back is often enough to keep workers compliant with employer demands – even when these demands are unreasonable or violate their rights.

> Mexican [seasonal agricultural] workers do not exercise several of these rights. At times they are unaware of their entitlement. Even when they know their rights, they find it extremely difficult to navigate within the Canadian social protection system because they are deprived of the knowledge necessary to access the benefits.
>
> (Basok, 2004: 54)

Part of accessing rights and benefits is having proper representation set up to help address workers needs. Migrant farm workers, like all farm workers, are not able to unionize and collectively bargain. Despite this fact, the SAWP does not assist workers by providing a neutral body to negotiate the conditions of their contracts, or to monitor, regulate and advocate for workers. Since migrant workers are supposed to be represented by agencies and consulates of sending governments, which work directly with Foreign Agricultural Resource Management Services (F.A.R.M.S.), F.E.R.M.E. in Quebec, and have a vested interest in the program's success,[10] workers are generally left without such support (Preibisch, 2004). In addition, the HRSDC staff touts that it "works with employers, not employees" (Personal Interview, 2007) and F.A.R.M.S. / F.E.R.M.E are clearly looking out for the profitability of the farms. Further, although the consulates claim to represent workers, they do not employ staff to visit workers on farms, attend to their needs, check-in, etc. Thus, through the

[10] The remittances sent back to Mexico and the Caribbean are a major contribution to the economy – these countries benefit financially from their continuation.

structure of the program and the lack of representation and voice, migrant workers are denied the tools to claim and access rights and benefits (Basok, 2001).

Some of the major human rights concerns raised with regard to migrant workers hired under the SAWP relate to working conditions and living conditions. Because of the bounded nature of employment under the program, the limited support available to workers and the lack of accountability for employers, unsafe and exploitative work practices are common (Basok, 2002). From working long hours without breaks or overtime payment, to frequent accidents related to pesticides and farming equipment, migrant workers are vulnerable to labour injustices. Further, these issues, among others, are exacerbated by lack of health, safety and equipment training, language barriers, extremely long work hours and worker compliance due to fear of punishment or blacklisting from the program. For example, workers who are sick or injured often do not report it or seek medical attention out of fear of looking weak, missing work and finally (if Mexican), not being "named" next season. The situation of sick or injured workers not seeking medical attention is worsened because many employers withhold migrant workers' documents such as health cards (Basok, 2002).

In terms of citizenship rights, the introduction of the SAWP has represented a "major shift in overall Canadian immigration policy. Following its introduction, the overwhelming majority of (im)migrants recruited for the Canadian labour market have come to enter Canada as 'migrant workers' rather than as 'landed immigrants' with permanent residency rights" (Sharma, 2002: 19). According to Stasiulis and Bakan (2005), modern discourse on citizenship stipulates that freedom, democracy

and equality of treatment will protect individual citizen's rights. However, (im)migrant policies and programs such as the SAWP undermine "the emancipatory promise or equalizing promise of the evasive grail of citizenship" by making certain categories of migrants ineligible for citizenship and the rights that accompany citizenship (Stasiulis and Bakan, 2005: 11). Without access to a pathway to citizenship, migrant workers hired under the SAWP are left as foreigners within conceptions of imagined Canadian national identity and their inferior status thus becomes normalized and justified and racism persists (See Chapter 1, Section c) (Sharma, 2006).

**c: FWP as an evolution of the SAWP**

While the SAWP has been the main provider of migrant farm workers since the 1960s, in 2002 a pilot FWP was established as a means to recruit low- and medium-skilled workers for the meat, construction and tourism industries. Subsequently F.E.R.M.E. found a way to recruit migrant farm workers from Guatemala to Quebec under this new program (Brem, 2006). The two year pilot FWP was developed as a way to hire low-skilled temporary workers classified under the federal government's National Occupation Classification (NOC) as code C or D. According to NOC, classes identify skill type and skill level (HRSDC, 2006b, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores Guatemala, 2006):

- C skill level positions usually require secondary school and/or occupation specific training, or up to two years of on-the-job or specialized training courses, or specific work experience.

- D skill level positions generally require on-the-job training, short work demonstrations or no formal education requirements in order to perform the job.

Essentially, the government created in the FWP a program that requires migrant workers to have little to no skills and training to work temporarily in Canada. Previously, the only process that an agricultural employer could use to hire a migrant farm worker was to recruit using the SAWP. It would be interesting to know why the government allowed F.E.R.M.E. to recruit migrant farm workers outside the SAWP using the pilot FWP. My attempts to access policy discussion papers on the development of the pilot FWP, and my attempts to talk with those in government who would understand how the FWP for migrant farm labour began and was justified, were met with silence.

The set-up of the FWP for Guatemalan farm workers is similar to the SAWP set-up with Mexico with a few small differences in the administration of the programs. The pilot FWP has help with administration, recruitment and arrangement of travel in Guatemala from the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The IOM is an intergovernmental organization which aims to curb irregular migration by promoting regular migration through programs such as the FWP. The IOM, in coordination with the Ministry of Work and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs recruits workers "con experiencia en el tipo de cultivos de las empresas que solicitan esta mano de obra," workers that have direct experience in the types of work that employers in Canada are looking for (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores Guatemala, 2006: 6). Essentially, the Guatemalan government waits for information regarding what types of workers

are needed (and preferred) on each farm and then the IOM and the ministries select workers.

The pilot FWP functions very simply in Quebec for employers wishing to hire migrant workers from Guatemala. As with the SAWP, employers must first apply to HRSDC for approval to hire abroad. Under the FWP, employers must also apply for a Quebec Certificate of Acceptance (QAC) to the Ministère de l'immigration et communautés culturalles (MICC) (Interview with HRSDC official, 2006). Once employers have submitted the original application and it is approved, the rest is taken care of for them and, as with the SAWP, they are guaranteed the number of workers they requested for the time periods they request (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores Guatemala, 2006).

The FWP recruitment program is known as the Projecto de Trabajadores(as) Agricolas Temporales a Canada in Guatemala and participation in the program is increasing rapidly (See Appendix A, Table 2). In 2003, the first year that the pilot FWP was able to recruit Guatemalan farm workers, 25 workers were initially contracted. With increasing employer demand and the help of the IOM, 215 Guatemalans ended up coming to Quebec to work. In 2004, 320 Guatemalan farmers headed to Quebec to work as migrant workers and in 2005, 675 headed to Quebec under the FWP (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores Guatemala, 2006). By comparison, the number of Caribbean and Mexican workers recruited under the SAWP has declined from 3,912 in 2004 to 3,113 in 2005 (Brem, 2006:16), indicating a movement of employer preference from the SAWP to the FWP.

While a temporary worker hired under the FWP can stay in Canada for up to 24 months (HRSDC, 2006b), under the pilot FWP recruiting Guatemalans, migrant workers rarely stay for such long periods due to the seasonal nature of most agricultural work. The FWP is more flexible than the SAWP in that workers have the possibility of having their contracts last for up to two years, or extending a shorter contract. While the SAWP limits workers to an eight month stay, in 2005, 37.6% Guatemalan migrant workers stayed for six months to a year, 33.0% worked four months, 17.5% worked five months, 9.8% worked three months and 2.1% worked in Canada for two months (See Appendix A, Table 4). (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores Guatemala, 2006: 21).

To date, Quebec is the only province recruiting farm workers through the FWP. However, discussions are taking place on the expansion of the Guatemala program to other provinces (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores Guatemala, 2006: 6).

## SECTION FIVE – Research Findings

This section outlines the research I conducted in Saint Remi, Quebec on the FWP. In Part (a) I discuss the specifics of my field methodology, interviewing migrant workers from Mexico and Guatemala, service providers, researchers and public service members, as well as the difficulties, strengths and weaknesses of this research. Part (b) outlines observations and research findings from the field. In Part (c) I discuss the research findings in light of the critical academic literature on the SAWP (see Section Four).

### a: Field Methodology

I chose to conduct my field research of the Quebec pilot FWP in Saint-Rémi, Quebec, a small town and central farming community where the majority of Quebec's migrant workers gather on a weekly basis. Every Sunday and Thursday evening Saint-Rémi's landscape is transformed as Mexican, Guatemalan and Caribbean workers enter the quiet, predominantly white, Francophone community to grocery shop, do their banking, run errands and socialize. About 45 minutes outside of Montreal, Saint-Rémi is also where the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Migrant Worker Centre is located every Thursday and Sunday (See Appendix C, Figure 1).

I spent one full day in Saint-Rémi interviewing migrant workers and the staff at the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW). Had it been possible,[11] several visits to Saint-Rémi could have strengthened this paper, by allowing me to form

[11] I have a three month old son and we live in Toronto, not Quebec.

trusting relationships with people before interviewing them. Also, had it been possible, interviewing employers would have contributed to a deeper understanding of the differences between the SAWP and the FWP as well as the motivations to recruit under one, the other or both. Still, during the one day of interviews in Saint-Rémi, I talked at length in Spanish with five Mexican migrant workers and two Guatemalan workers about the SAWP and the FWP and their experiences in Quebec. All of those I interviewed were men who worked in lettuce farming on three different farms (see Appendix B, 1).

I also interviewed UFCW staff members. They drive from Montreal to Saint-Rémi each Thursday and Sunday with a trailer[12] that serves as their Saint-Rémi office. They introduced me to many migrant workers and shared their own experiences working with migrants. Because of the precarious status of migrant workers in Canada under these programs, workers could be in jeopardy if their employers found out they were participating in this research. I therefore needed to be extremely careful in conducting my research. I needed to approach workers to request an interview without their employer's knowledge. I thus decided to recruit migrant workers for interviews through the UFCW Migrant Worker Support Centre in Saint-Rémi which deals with them directly and where employers tend not to go. Further, I conducted interviews on a Sunday because this is a shorter work day for migrants, sometimes

[12] The trailer also acts as the Migrant Worker Support Centre because nobody in Saint-Rémi will rent or sell to the UFCW union – they now cannot even park their trailer in the grocery store parking lot as farmers have told the grocery store management they will stop bringing migrant workers there to shop, which would be a considerable loss. Therefore, they park on a public street beside the mini-mall where workers are taken to shop.

even a day off. Also, on Sundays employers do not take workers to town – they come in groups on bicycles instead.

The centre[13] proved to be a good place to meet migrant workers. It provided a private area where I could sit and interview workers outside the centre. Those I interviewed were each provided a fully translated (into Spanish) version of the consent agreement and the questionnaire. Further, being fluent in Spanish myself, I read aloud the consent agreement in full and answered any questions before conducting the interview in order to avoid any potential confusion or misunderstanding that might arise from lower literacy skills. Throughout these interviews, I was careful to obtain workers' consent, mindful of the need to conceal their identity, and respectful of whether and how they wanted me to include their contributions in this paper.

I also conducted interviews in Ottawa and Montreal with two researchers and one person working in the government on the FWP (see Appendix B, 2). I interviewed a number of HRSDC staff dealing with the FWP in Quebec and staff at the Guatemalan Embassy – both HRSDC and embassy officials were cautious and vague in responding to questions. I also attempted to contact the International Organization on Migration (IOM) as well as F.E.R.M.E., but no one returned my calls or answered my e-mails. All of these key informants were directly recruited by e-mail and by telephone. I stated my position as a graduate student doing research and asked if they would agree to be interviewed.

[13] I will refer to the UFCW Migrant Worker Support Centre in Saint-Rémi as "the centre"

All of the interviews followed a semi-structured framework. While I had a list of set questions prepared, I encouraged the interviewees to talk freely about their experiences and opinions. This more open-ended interview process led the research in unanticipated directions and allowed for a structured, more relaxed conversation to take place. The material gathered in these interviews has added experience, examples and depth to the theory and criticisms of migrant farm labour in Canada in earlier chapters of this paper.

**b: Observations**

According to one interviewee from the centre, as was the case historically with similar programs, the FWP was created in response to employer pressure on the government about the need for more flexible workers to service capitalist expansion. The hiring of Guatemalans as migrant farm workers is interesting because all migrant farm workers are technically supposed to be hired under the SAWP – as it is considered a special application process (HRSDC, 2006a). Still, because of the pressure that F.E.R.M.E. put on the government to hire Guatemalans and "maximize productivity," the FWP made an exception to the rule that all migrant farm workers should be hired under the SAWP (interview).

According to one interviewee working in the government, the Consulate of Mexico blacklisted a particular farm because of exploitative labour practices; this farmer simply applied the next season for Guatemalan workers under the FWP. With no

regulation of temporary worker programs, "private companies can do as they please, and F.E.R.M.E. is waiting to help."

During the interviews I conducted in Saint-Rémi, migrant workers pointed to two main differences in the programs from their perspective: 1) Guatemalan workers (FWP) pay rent while Mexican workers (SAWP) do not and 2) Mexican workers pay airfare while Guatemalan workers do not. The workers all contended that these were just slight differences in the programs that didn't seem fair, but seemed to balance each other out. Still, all those I interviewed stated that they didn't fully understand the terms of their contracts, the deductions on their pay checks and the differences between the FWP and the SAWP.

According to one of the Guatemalan workers, they are required to pay $35 a week rent "para vivir juntos con gente que no pagan."[14] Over the course of a four month contract, Guatemalan migrant workers will pay approximately $560, which is already more than Mexican workers must pay for their airfare. This difference widens with longer stays in Canada. The Guatemalan migrant workers I interviewed were staying four months and five months respectively. It is interesting that Guatemalans pay rent because it makes them subject to contradicting laws. They are bound to their FWP contracts with employers and thus must reside and pay rent for the accommodations that are provided. However, renters in Quebec are protected under the Quebec Tenants Law and Rental Board (Regie du Logement) and can change their place of residence freely with notice.

[14] "to live with people who don't pay [rent]"

The FWP for skilled workers hands out "open work permits" while the FWP for low skilled workers, which Guatemalans are hired under, contracts migrants to single employers. According to one academic that I interviewed, "there is no leverage or ability to change under this new program [FWP]" and "people of colour are the ones hired as low-skilled temporary workers with restricted mobility, while white people are granted open work permits."[15]

The staff at the centre confronted more difficulty dealing with the Guatemalan embassy than with the Mexican embassy, possibly because the program is new and people don't yet know how to address workers' concerns. According to the staff, since the Mexican program has existed much longer, it is much more organized and straightforward to help Mexicans. Most of the major concerns identified by the staff of the centre applied to both the SAWP workers and the FWP workers. One issue is that migrant workers who want to take a course or study part-time are not entitled to access education or schooling because they come to Canada on work visas. This is especially punishing because many of the workers are in Canada for most of the year, and thus can't avail themselves of educational opportunities in their home countries. That this is happening "in a country that claims better opportunities for immigrants and believes in education for all is crazy!" (Personal Interview, 2006)[16]. Further, as has been documented in detail by scholars (Basok (2002), Preibisch (2004)), migrant workers are not entitled to Employment Insurance (EI), despite the fact that they

[15] Personal Interview, 2007
[16] Interview with UFCW staff in Saint-Rémi

contribute to the EI scheme. Recently, migrant worker support and advocacy groups discovered that migrant workers are entitled to parental benefits and Canadian Pension benefits. Still, it is only a recent discovery and, according to the UFCW staff, mostly only Mexican workers hired under the SAWP take advantage (Personal Interview, 2006).

The UFCW staff also described ways in which people in Quebec take advantage of the workers for profit, both on the farms as labour and as consumers in stores – increasing prices during the months that migrant workers most frequent the town and even more so on the nights workers come to town to shop. The support worker staff also emphasized a major problem with employer's withholding workers documents so that workers need to ask for permission before receiving medical care, claiming their entitled benefits, etc. According to one staff member at the centre, "this is a form of trafficking" (2006) as employers regulate migrant workers activities.

In Guatemala, according to one Guatemalan worker, "people are told to dress to look poor and go to the poorest regions to get accepted into the program." Much to my surprise, many of the Guatemalans in Saint-Rémi are Indigenous and speak Spanish as a second language. The language barriers, according to one Mexican worker, can become strange and separate them. The workers all emphasized how Guatemalans and Mexicans alike were countrymen and friends. However, I observed that Mexicans and Guatemalans seemed to cluster in separate groups in town and seemed wary of one another.

Still, while there are notable differences in the experiences of Guatemalan and Mexican migrant workers, the migrant experience is similar under both programs. The FWP, in relation to the SAWP, was "lo mismo"[17] to migrant workers, and to the staff at the centre, the FWP was simply another program created so that "all the hard work we have done is restarted as standards are lowered and we need to start all over in terms of gaining rights and raising awareness about the issues." According to the frustrated staff at the centre, the FWP is simply more flexible and thus, "the Guatemalan migrant workers are more disposable under this program" (Personal Interview, 2007).

**c: Discussion and Analysis**

> The Canadian state legitimizes our system of production and distribution and serves the general interests of the bourgeoisie. The general role of the Canadian state is to help the capitalists in the accumulation process and to assist them to increase their profits. The Canadian government's immigration [migration] policy is to facilitate this process by providing a cheap labour force as required.
>
> (Bolaria and Li, 1983: 11)

With the expansion of a competitive global market, migrant workers are recruited and hired to take the "socially least regarded jobs, which are the worst paid and least secure" (Smart, 1997: 142). These precarious jobs – "temporary, part-time, contract, and casual work with low pay, no benefits, no job security, and poor working conditions" are becoming increasingly more common and previous "racial and gender inequality based on systemic discrimination" are exacerbated (Galabuzi, 2006: 10). These inequalities and differences further existing hierarchies as there is increasing competition between workers, and this, in turn, undermines unity of

[17] "the same"

labour and the ability to organize (Bauder, 2006). In the case of Quebec, by creating a new migrant worker recruitment program (FWP) and maintaining the old one (SAWP), employers and the Canadian state are able to maximize productivity by pitting vulnerable working groups against one another, thereby maximizing profits.

As my research demonstrates, workers have little understanding of the differences between these temporary worker programs. The slight, and poorly understood differences between the SAWP and the FWP made workers in each program fearful of the possibility that workers under the opposite program would replace them. Language barriers also served to limit communication between Mexicans and Guatemalans, and hence to limit passing on knowledge of rights and support in Canada. There seemed to be animosity between Guatemalan and Mexican workers, that was exacerbated by comments and threats made by employers about certain types – nationalities – of workers performing better or faster in order to increase productivity through fear (Personal Interview, 2007)[18]. In a research study done by Preibisch and Binford (2007) on racial/national labour replacement within the Canadian agriculture sector, they document how employers search for the most vulnerable and hard-working labour force in a similar manner:

> […] in a quest for the most docile, exploitable labour force, and blatant racist beliefs that make Mexicans "naturally" more desirable employees than Caribbean participants. In specific cases, however, some growers' country surf, playing source country representatives off against one another in order to ensure the most hardworking, reliable labour force, regardless of origin.
>
> (Preibisch and Binford, 2007: 16)

[18] Interview with staff at the centre.

The terms of entry for the SAWP and the FWP are different, but very similar in that they seek to ensure return migration. The Mexico-Canada SAWP agreement requires that participants in the program: be farmers, journeymen or workers in agricultural activity; be between the ages of 22 and 45; live in a rural area; "hold a minimum third year of primary school education and maximum of third year of secondary school [grade 9] and be men and women, married or in a de facto union, preferably with children" – generally proving that they have dependents (Consular de Mexico, 2004). The aim is to ensure that workers return to Mexico. The Commonwealth Caribbean SAWP agreement does not have rigid requirements for who is admitted; rather, it requires compulsory deductions of 25 percent of their wages as part of the compulsory saving scheme – "a portion is returned to the worker when he/she returns home, another portion may be allocated for liaison office administrative costs and other expenses relating to the program" (Verma, 2003). Again, the aim is to provide workers with a strong incentive to not overstay their welcome in Canada.

The Guatemalan Project recruiting through the FWP to Quebec gives preference to campesinos[19] between the ages of 25-40 who have some knowledge of agriculture – especially the specifics the employers in Canada are seeking – and that they be married or in common-law relationships with dependants (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores Guatemala, 2006: 10). This repeats the successful formula for ensuring that Mexican SAWP workers do not try to stay in Canada.

[19] Refers to countrymen / farmers/ agricultural workers/ rural folks – generally denotes poor rural peasants.

Repatriation is at the heart of both the SAWP and the FWP. HRSDC outlines that one objective of the programs is to facilitate the return of the workers to their home countries at the end of their employment in Canada. The ties with family (in the case of Mexico and Guatemala) and the economic incentives (in the Caribbean) demonstrate clearly that the SAWP and the FWP operate with the intention of keeping these migrant workers temporary and without access to a pathway to citizenship and settlement. Further, in the case of the newly developed FWP, the recruitment bodies, the IOM and the Guatemalan government within Guatemala are said to prefer the poorest and most vulnerable Guatemalans to participate in the program. As Stasiulis and Bakan (2005) note, poor migrants are not able to negotiate the better terms of entry that wealthier migrants may be able to obtain. Thus, by recruiting the most vulnerable people, the Canadian state is able to safeguard against the permanent settlement of those deemed unworthy of citizenship while maximizing productivity in the agriculture sector.

Canada, through the recruitment of poor migrant workers under the SAWP and the FWP, presents these migrant recruitment programs to Canadians as providing opportunities to the world's poor. Claiming that the SAWP and the FWP function in the interest of facilitating economic development for the rural poor in the Global South (a form of foreign aid), the Canadian state is able to mask the true beneficiaries of these programs – capitalist expansion for Canadian farms, the state itself and a more competitive position in the global market. While those recruited under the SAWP and the FWP do benefit from the chance to work in Canada and

are grateful for the opportunity, the fact remains that Canada, in collaboration with Guatemala and the IOM, appears to be recruiting the poorest migrants possible, which allows for the possibility of a more captive, vulnerable and exploitable workforce. This means more profit in the Canadian agricultural sector, and thus, the Canadian economy.

Even before the introduction of the FWP, employers were given choice with regards to which nationality, between Mexico and the Caribbean, of migrant workers hired under the SAWP would be recruited and for what work. This, according to Preibish and Binford (2007) acted as a:

> […] powerful mechanism for disciplining both workers and their representatives […] When employers are dissatisfied with the workers from a specific country or the service provided by the labour supply country representatives, they can switch countries the following year.
> (Interviews findings: 23)

The trend of replacing Caribbean workers with Mexicans because they are seen as less troublesome and more 'docile' than Caribbeans is illustrated by one employer's quote: "Jamaicans, I had heard that a couple people had gotten into trouble with them, so I just thought to avoid that" (Preibisch and Binford, 2007: 17). Over the last 20 years, it appears that there has been a shift in growers' preference toward employing workers from Mexico, rather than the Caribbean (see Appendix A, Table 5).

A set-up where employers can choose between various workforces creates competition through both the switching of labour supply countries and employer threats to do so (ibid). Further, when one country "decides not to supply [workers to] an employer due to poor labour relations, other countries will step in to offer

their workers" (ibid). This was an issue within the SAWP that produced a migrant labour recruiting system based on competition in a segmented labour market – according to racist stereotypes about worker performance, which pitted workers against one another and facilitated more docile and efficient workforce. In Quebec, with the introduction of the FWP and the recruitment of Guatemalan migrant farm workers, employers have the ability to chose a third group of workers and create intensified competition between them all. Further, when migrant workers under the SAWP push for more rights or there are labour disputes, employers can simply switch the country they recruit from – and now, the program they recruit under.

Mexican workers are beginning to gain more economic and social capital as the inequities of the SAWP are exposed, and the SAWP participants are gaining slightly better conditions and greater access to rights in Canada. According to Basok, "recent initiatives among local residents and union and human rights activists to include Mexican workers in their communities as citizens […] are likely to enhance the Mexican workers' ability to claim their rights" (2004: 47). With the increase in Mexican migrant workers' ability to know and claim their rights, they become a less exploitable group of workers. Further, the threat of organizing and unionization that has been brewing, if won, would mean that workers could negotiate better wages and conditions of work, which is less profitable to the agricultural industry and the Canadian state (Basok, 2002: 17).

Research done by Stasiulis and Bakan (2005) on domestic workers in Canada demonstrates how increasing resistance and objection to abusive working conditions

led to declining preference for workers from the given nationality group. This same phenomena applies to migrant farm workers. Speaking of the SAWP, one consulate liaison officer stated "[voicing rights] causes some employers to switch to Caribbean migrants, because a lot of them don't want backchat or voicing of rights" (Basok, 2002 as cited by Preibisch and Binford, 2007: 24). Further, Mexicans' limited capability to speak in English or French restricts the voicing of rights — "or relegates it to a language that most employers do not understand—as a result of which the workers experience a higher degree of vulnerability" (ibid).

With Mexican migrant workers dominating the SAWP, they have been able to accumulate knowledge and experience in Canada, and have begun to obtain some benefits and rights and access to support. The FWP initiative recruiting Guatemalan migrant farm workers may be a response to this development. Guatemalans recruited under the FWP appear to be very poor, often Indigenous and speaking Spanish as a second language, less knowledgeable of their status and rights in Canada – and thus more vulnerable than Mexican SAWP workers. Further, since the program is new, there is little public or academic knowledge of its structure, the major issues and the vulnerability of the migrant workers hired under the FWP. This is a setback to the fight for public awareness of the issues that face migrant workers and for obtaining the support and advocacy that migrant workers need to make real changes to the terms of temporary worker programs in Canada. Thus, Guatemalan migrant workers recruited under the FWP become the more vulnerable and exploitable migrant worker force, and at the same time, they constitute a threat to the efforts of Mexican

and Caribbean SAWP workers to better their situation.

I have touched on the limited support for the SAWP participants from their consulates and the community above (Section Four, part b), and it appears that there is even less support for Guatemalan workers under the FWP. The Guatemalan Consulate liaison officers are supposed to meet with incoming workers at the airport, and to periodically visit their farms to see the conditions they live under and whether they need anything. Guatemalan interviewees indicated that this is not happening at all and that they have yet to meet the consulate staff.

The "naming" of workers under the SAWP has been mimicked for the Guatemalan participants in the FWP through a letter, written by their employer, that workers must present upon their return to Guatemala. The letter indicates whether they have been recommended to return to the same farm and further, whether they are recommended to participate in the program itself (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores Guatemala, 2006: 9). This "naming" process is more intense than the naming process for Mexican participants under the SAWP in that workers are not only "named" or blacklisted from a farm (as with the Mexican SAWP agreement[20]), but the Guatemalans are "named" or blacklisted from the FWP itself. The FWP not only imitates, but also exaggerates this problematic aspect of the SAWP.

[20] Even though this naming process doesn't technically blacklist Mexican participants from the SAWP, in reality, it has a similar effect.

## SECTION SIX – LOOKING AHEAD

This final section concludes with observations and critiques of the FWP, outlining and summing up this paper and its major findings (part a). In part b I present policy recommendations in relation to human rights and citizenship rights for workes recruited under the FWP and the SAWP. Finally, part c makes specific recommendations for further research and action on the part of researchers and activists, calling specifically to the imminent expansion of temporary foreign worker programs and the need for action.

### a: Concluding Observations

In the Canadian agricultural sector, unfree migrant labour has become essential for farms and capitalist expansion. As the 40 year old SAWP is exposed and criticized, both the program and the situation for workers have begun to change. The arrival of Guatemalan migrant workers hired under the FWP may replace Mexico (SAWP) as the preferred nation supplying migrant farm workers.

The FWP, either by accident or by design, worsens working conditions for migrant workers compared to its predecessor, the SAWP. In particular, the fact that Guatemalan FWP migrants' must pay rent and the possibility that they can be blacklisted from the program itself by employers means that these workers are bound to unfair elements of the program and have even less ability to express rights – for fear or punishment or blacklisting – than the SAWP workers.

The FWP also functions to worsen the conditions for workers under the SAWP. In particular, the initiative of the FWP in Quebec has created competition between the

SAWP migrant workers and the newly introduced Guatemalan migrant workers. The unknown differences between the programs and the conditions under which migrants are hired raise fears and suspicions, and function to push workers to compete, thereby increasing productivity on the farms. Further, the competition and lack of trust that the FWP and the SAWP functioning side-by-side instill in the workers hinders their willingness to unite and organize for change and better conditions.

Canadian (im)migration policy remains racist by supporting and even enforcing the notion that some jobs are beneath Canadians and that those who do these jobs are not worthy of the rights of citizenship. Further justifying this racism is the belief that the SAWP and the FWP are forms of charity and that those who come are "charity cases" who are lucky to come to Canada.

In this regard, the FWP is another step backward in that it recruits workers – Guatemalan peasants – who are even less prepared to participate in Canadian society than the Mexican SAWP workers. The workers recruited under the pilot FWP from Guatemala are less educated and many have a more limited understanding of English or French. Further, most are very poor, and relatively more so than the workers recruited under the SAWP.

**b: Policy Recommendations**

All immigration and migration policy should be reviewed, with a view to bringing coherent human rights framework to both areas. This would require, at minimum,

allowing migrant workers to negotiate the terms of their contracts, creating a better system of accountability and monitoring of migrant farm worker programs and the participating employers, eliminating the "naming"/ blacklisting ability that employers hold over migrant workers from Mexico and Guatemala, creating accessible ways to change employers without repatriation or punishment, making support, outreach and educational programming a necessary and provided part of these migrant worker initiatives in rural areas. Further, there should be a pathway to citizenship for migrant farm workers employed under any scheme (SAWP or FWP) and a pathway to bringing their families to Canada. Ideally, migration and immigration policy could be interrogated to the point of creating a single policy framework for welcoming new Canadians – including migrants.

**c: Recommendations for Further Research and Action**

Due to time limitations, the research I have presented is preliminary and further research is necessary to understand the FWP and its impact on migrant farm workers. I hope this paper is a springboard to further research and action. Further in-depth research investigating the FWP itself and the relationship to the SAWP is necessary. This should include interviews with a larger sample of workers, and interviews with employers. It would be beneficial to look at the gendered dynamics of migration, work and family of female migrant workers hired under the FWP and compare this to experiences of male migrant workers. Further, a longitudinal study of the impact of the FWP on the SAWP, examining number of workers, length of stay, wages, and progress and access to rights would be valuable.

Interviews which document employers' rationale for choosing to hire through the FWP or the SAWP would also help develop a fuller understanding of the dynamics of these migrant worker programs and their operation side-by-side. Further, an investigation into F.E.R.M.E.'s reasoning for pushing for the expansion of the FWP into agriculture would be beneficial. Finally, an investigation using the federal government's Access to Information and Privacy (ATIP) program could lead to an understanding of the policy rationale for including migrant farm workers in the FWP when the FWP was not developed for this purpose and the SAWP already existed to fill this need.

Activists have helped to mobilize change and improved conditions for migrant farm workers under the SAWP. In Quebec there are fewer organizations advocating for migrant workers than in Ontario, although both provinces host large number of migrant farm workers. In Quebec, the UFCW centre in Saint Rémi was the only organization doing outreach directly with migrant workers, while in Ontario, the UFCW has five centres in different areas and Enlace, Justicia for Migrant Workers, Frontier College, among others, are committed to bettering conditions for migrant workers. More of this kind of outreach and support work is needed in Quebec. Finally, there is a need to extend the current activism surrounding the SAWP to the FWP as the FWP will be expanded to other provinces within the next two years (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores Guatemala., 2006).

# APPENDICES

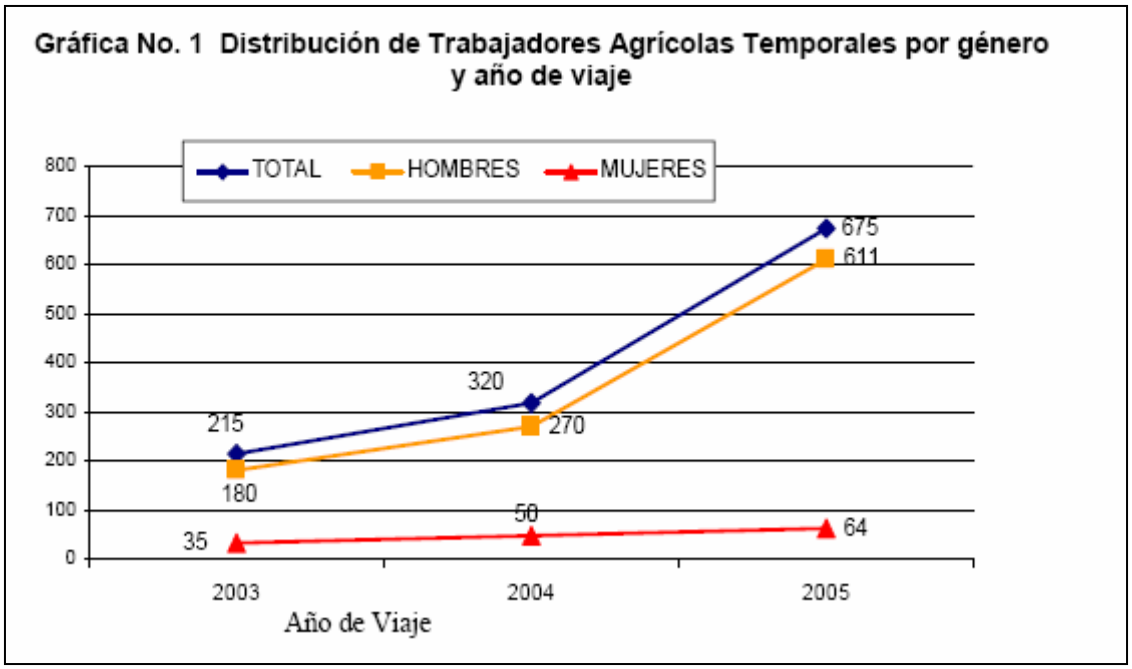
## APPENDIX A – Tables

### Table 1 – Poverty in Guatemala from 2000-2002

| POVERTY AND EXTREME POVERTY IN GUATEMALA | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Extreme poverty (%)** | | **Poverty (%)** | |
| | 2000 | 2002 | 2000 | 2002 |
| **Total** | 15.7 | 21.5 | 56.1 | 57.0 |
| **Urban** | 2.8 | 4.9 | 27.1 | 28.1 |
| **Rural** | 23.8 | 31.1 | 74.5 | 72.2 |
| **Indigenous** | 26.4 | 30.8 | 76.0 | 71.9 |
| **Non-indigenous** | 7.7 | 12.9 | 41.4 | 44.0 |
| **Male** | 16.7 | 23.0 | 57.7 | 56.7 |
| **Female** | 9.8 | 15.0 | 47.4 | 52.9 |

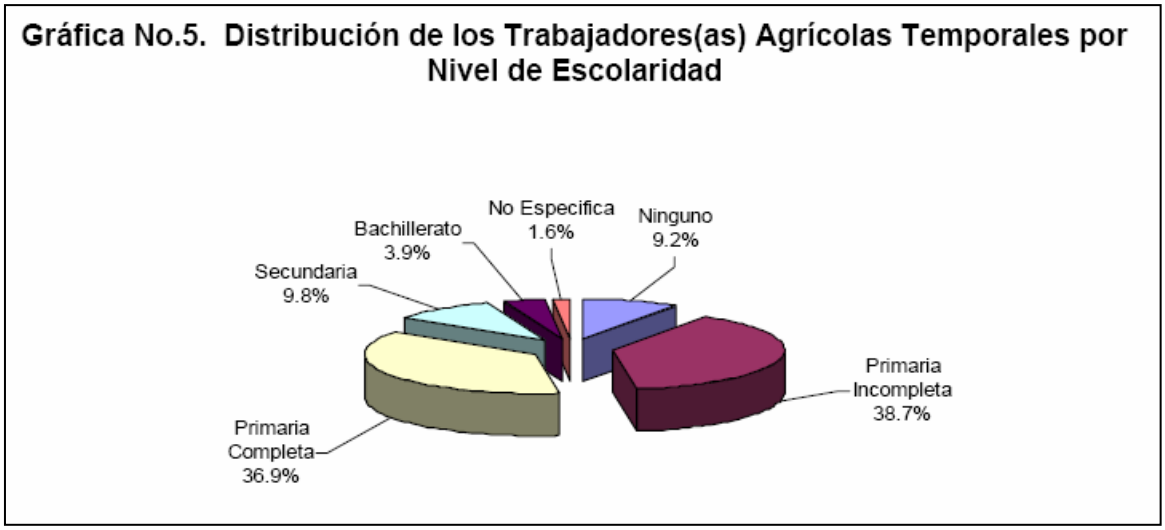
*Source: United Nations Development Programme in Guatemala (2003: 228)*

**Table 2 – Gender Distribution of Guatemalan Migrant Farm Workers, 2003-2005**




*Source: Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores Guatemala (2006: 11)*

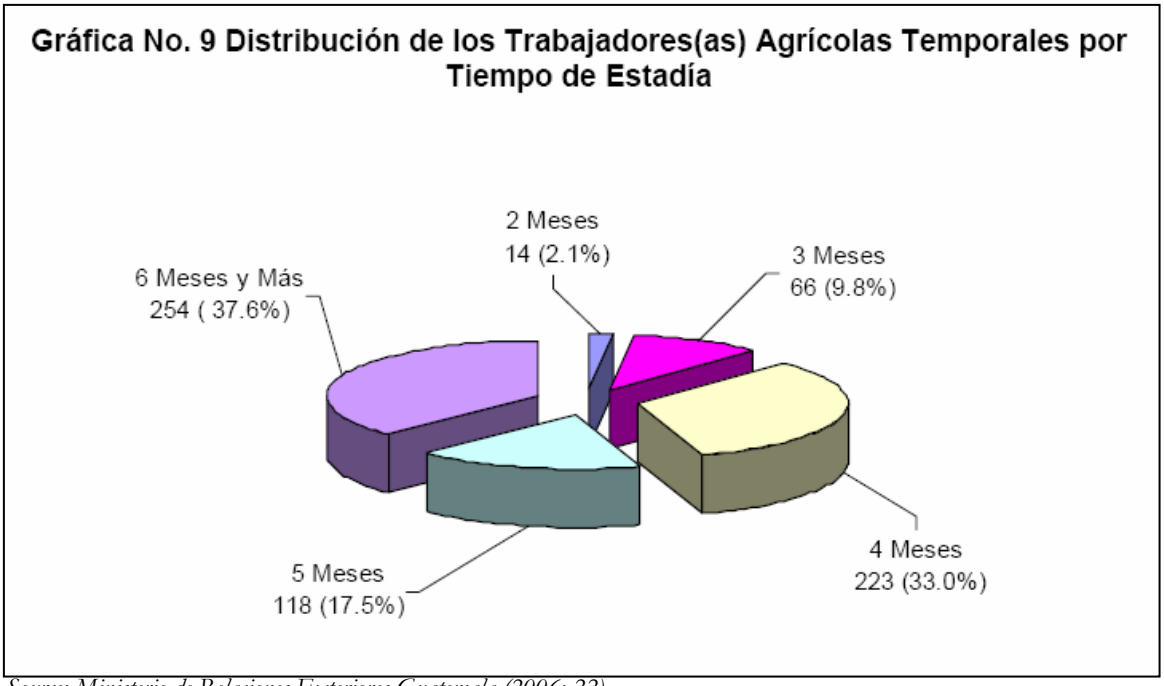
**Table 3 – Distribution of Guatemalan Migrant Farm Workers' Educational Level**




*Source: Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores Guatemala (2006: 22)*

Translation of Graph from Left to Right -- [Primaria Completa: All of Grade School; Segundaria: High School; Bachillerato: Pre University (similar to SEGEP in Quebec); No Especifica: Not Specified; Ninguno: No schooling; Primaria Incompleta: Grade School incomplete]

**Table 4 – Distribution of Guatemalan Workers' Contract Periods in Canada in 2005**




*Source: Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores Guatemala (2006: 22)*

Translation of Graph from Left to Right – [5 meses: 5 months; 6 meses y mas: 6 months or more; 2 meses: 2 months; 3 meses: 3 months; 4 meses: 4 months]

## APPENDIX B – Interview Questions

### 1: Interview Questions for Migrant Workers

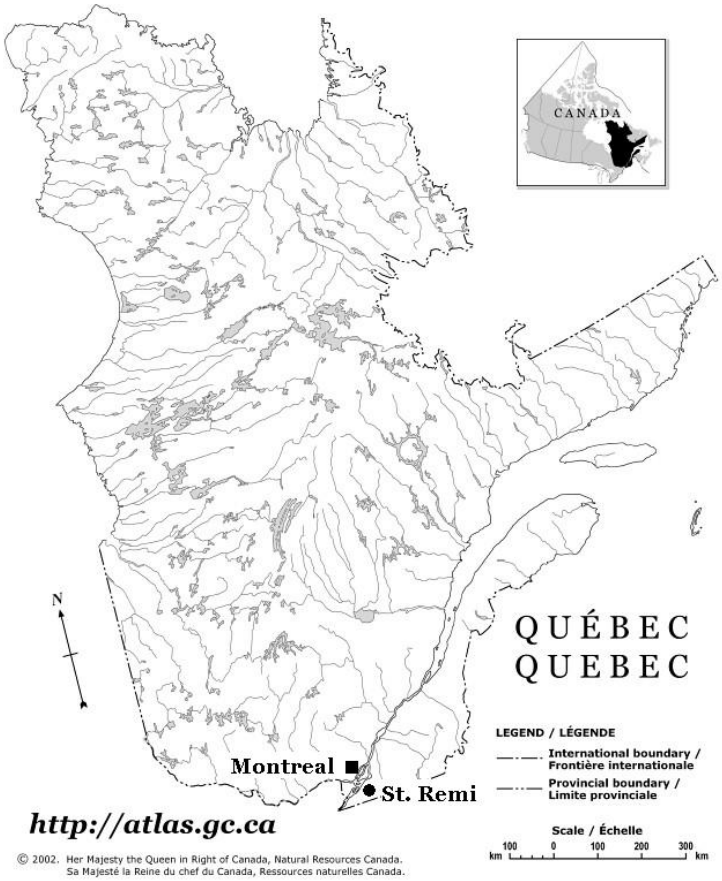
1) Can you tell me when and where you were born? How many years did you live there?
2) Do you have family (wife/husband/partner/children) back home?
3) Can you describe a typical day for me in your community (work and leisure) before coming to Canada?
4) When did you first think about going abroad? When did you first travel abroad?
5) Can you tell me about how you found out about the Foreign Worker Program and the application process to come to Canada? Do you find the program easy to understand? What kinds of resources were available that explained the program to you?
6) Were there any difficulties (financial, location, etc.) in coming to Canada under this program?
7) What were some of your expectations before coming to work and live in Canada? How have those expectations been met or changed since your arrival?
8) Can you tell me about your first day in Canada? Did you come alone? Who met with you at the airport?
9) Were there any people or services available to help you get settled?
10) How did you find accommodation and where?
11) When did you begin to work? What type of work? Did you find the work challenging?
12) Can you describe a typical day for me in Quebec (work and leisure) since your arrival?
13) What are some of the struggles you deal with here in Canada? Have you had experiences of racial discrimination or exclusion?
14) Do you have any contact with Mexican migrant farm workers? If so, how or when? Can you tell me about their position in Canada as farm workers compared to yours? Do you see them as having more or less rights? Why or why not?
15) The program you are in Canada under is overseen and monitored by the International Organization for Migration. Did you know that? Have you had any contact with that organization? If so, how?
16) If there were things about the Foreign Worker Program or your work experiences in Canada that you could change, what would they be?
17) Is there anything you would like to add or to ask me?

**2) Interview Questions for Service Providers, Professionals and Researchers**

1) When and how did you first hear about the Foreign Worker Program?
2) Can you tell me why you think the program was implemented?
3) Can you explain how the Foreign Worker Program functions?
4) The program was initially targeted to fill vacancies in the meat, construction and tourism industries. How was it that workers were brought to Quebec for agricultural work?
5) Do you know why workers are specifically being recruited from Guatemala?
6) Can you tell me something about the low- and medium-skilled worker levels (C and D according to the National Occupation Classification system) and what category the Guatemalan farm workers fit into?
7) How do farm employers find out about this program? How do potential workers in Guatemala find out? What is the application process?
8) Can you tell me a bit about the contract that workers come under, and the rules and regulations of their contract?
9) Do you notice any differences between the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program that workers from Mexico and the Caribbean come under and this pilot program? If so, can you tell me more about those differences?
10) Do you see this pilot program as a better program that the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program? Why or why not?
11) This Foreign Worker Program is overseen and monitored by the International Organization for Migration. Can you tell me anything about their responsibilities and roles?
12) What kind of farm work are workers hired under the Foreign Worker Program generally doing? Is this different from workers in the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program?
13) Do you have direct contact with Guatemalan workers hired under this program? If so, in what capacity? Can you share any insights into their experiences in Canada under the program?
14) Do you see the program as a success thus far? Why or why not? Is there anything about the Foreign Worker Program operating in Quebec that you think could be changed or adjusted? If so, what and how?
15) Is there anything you would like to add or to ask me?

## APPENDIX C – Maps

### Figure 1 – Map of Saint Rémi




*(Source: Natural Resource Canada 2002)*

**APPENDIX D – List of Acronyms**

FWP – Foreign Worker Program

SAWP – Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program

F.A.R.M.S. / F.E.R.M.E. – Foreign Agricultural Resource Management Services

HRSDC – Human Resources and Skills Development Canada

IOM – International Organization of Migration

MOU – Memorandum of Understanding

NOC – National Occupation Classification

MICC – Ministère de l'immigration et communautés culturalles

QAC – Quebec Certificate of Acceptance

UFCW—United Food and Comercial Workers

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