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FOREIGN OR DOMESTIC?...I'LL TAKE FOREIGN!

**By
David Badalamenti**

**A Thesis Submitted to the College of Graduate Studies and Research through the
Department of Sociology and Anthropology in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Arts in Sociology at the University of Windsor**

**Windsor, Ontario, Canada
1999**

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Abstract

Migration occurs for many reasons. Most of the research focusing on this topic has been separated into micro and macro level theories analysing each of the factors involved in the supply and demand of migration. Yet, rarely have theories adequately explained both sides of the migration equation. This thesis is theoretically based in the world systems approach to migration which views it as a result of capital integration at the global level and the expansion of a split labour market in advanced countries into the primary and secondary sectors. The secondary sector, characterised by low status , poorly paid and insecure jobs experiences shortages in labour and as a result relies on imported labour. In Canada, the agricultural industry represents the secondary sector which is unable to recruit a reliable domestic labour force. Therefore growers recruit from abroad to fill their needs. Mexican migrants analysed in this thesis possess four characteristics as a result of their migrating to Canada through a regulated program. It is argued in this thesis that their unique characteristics make these Mexican migrants ideally suited for the needs of the Canadian agricultural industry. Due to the fact that they migrate mainly for economic reasons, are extremely poor, are interested in returning to Canada annually and have no social ties in Canada they are willing to work as many hours as possible. In addition to being considered reliable, the Mexican migrants can be controlled easier than domestic labourers by their employers. They accept poor working conditions and low wages without resistance.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my beautiful wife Gemma, to whom I am deeply indebted for her patience and support. I am forever grateful to her for her love and her ability to make me strive to be a better person.

I also dedicate this thesis to my parents who worked hard and sacrificed their entire life to provide a better life for me and my entire family.

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Introduction

Essex County is one of the most important fruit and vegetable producing regions in all of Canada. Migrant labourers hired by Canadian farmers to fill labour shortages in the agricultural industry play an important role in the local economy. Fruits and vegetables must be harvested when they are ready or else they will rot. This requires a *reliable* and dedicated workforce. Offshore workers recruited through the Mexican Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program seem to meet this requirement. Most Canadian farmers stress the importance of these workers arguing that without them the industry would not survive. Yet despite their importance the Canadian economy and the agricultural industry, these migrants have received minimal attention. Some research (Satzewich 1991, Wall 1992, Cecil and Ebanks 1992) has been conducted, but it has rarely attempted to explain what makes migrant agricultural workers an ideal labour force for Canadian farmers. The objective of this thesis is to address this issue.

This thesis realizes and highlights the fact that this group of migrant workers migrate through a government program which places regulations on its participants. It

will be argued that it is they possess characteristics which make them ideally suited for the needs of the Canadian agricultural industry. It is important to note that there is very little academic literature on regulated migration. This thesis will make a contribution to the field of migration studies by focusing on regulated migrants. It will be argued that the regulated nature of their migration shapes certain characteristics of Mexican migrants which makes them the labour source of choice over domestic labourers.

There are six stages in the agricultural labour process in both the greenhouse and in the field. In the first stage called 'clean-up', the labourers are required to clean the greenhouses or fields and remove the remainder of last years crop. The second stage is a 'prep' phase. This portion of the process involves laying new plastic in the greenhouses. It also includes preparing the ground and disinfecting the area in both inside the greenhouses and in the field. The third stage involves seeding. The fourth stage is unique to the greenhouse industry and involves transplanting the seeds into hydroponic containers. The final two stages of the process - husbandry and harvesting are the most labour intensive and critical of the entire process. The husbandry stage includes trimming the plants, removing leaves, watering, and maintaining the plants as they begin to produce the commodity. The final stage involves the harvesting of the crop. At this stage, it is particularly vital to have the labour force available to pick the crop at any time in order to avoid losses of the crop.

Migrants make approximately between thirty and forty percent of the labour force, and are mainly used at the final two stages of this process (Personal interview with a

grower). It should be noted that even though the growers claim that they need migrants mostly at the final two critical stages of the six-stage process, it became clear throughout the research that migrants were also involved at the other stages of the process such as clean up and prep. When employed to 'clean-up', 'prep' or harvest, offshore workers work side by side with domestic labourers hired to perform the same tasks. , offshore workers work side by side with domestic labourers hired to perform the same tasks. Yet, only domestic workers are hired at the seeding and transplanting stages. Therefore, the roles and duties of foreign and domestic labourers are very similar in both critical and less critical stages of the labour process.

The participants of the offshore program are recruited with the assistance of Foreign Agricultural Resource Management Service (F.A.R.M.S.), an agency which oversees the operations of the Commonwealth Caribbean and Mexican Agricultural Workers Program. This agency's main objective is to assist local farm owners in recruiting foreign labourers from Mexico and the Caribbean to fill agricultural labour shortages in Canada for certain times of the year. The predecessor to today's program, the Canadian Farm Labour Program, began in 1966 with an agreement between the Canadian and Caribbean governments with the intent to assist Ontario farmers with temporary labour during harvest periods. Workers recruited through this program were distributed across the three major agricultural sectors - tobacco, fruit, and vegetable - which are particularly dependent on seasonal labour. In 1987 this program was at a crossroads and went through a transformation. The Canadian government felt that the

program, which directly benefited only a small group, was too much of a burden on taxpayers. With this in mind, the Canadian government decided to discard the program. With their backs against the wall and being convinced that they could not function without foreign labour, tobacco, fruit and vegetable farmers took over the administration of the Commonwealth Caribbean and Mexican Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program, and named a new organization to be responsible for the administration of the program - F.A.R.M.S. The Foreign Agricultural Resource Management Service was established in 1987, with the mandate to assist in the processing of requests for foreign seasonal agricultural workers through the seasonal agricultural workers program. It is an organization funded exclusively through user-fees collected from participating employers. In essence, the offshore program, as it is commonly known, makes the various boundaries between Canada and countries such as Mexico and those in the West Indies seasonally elastic (Cecil and Ebanks, 1992:19). The labourers are allowed to enter Canada for specific periods of time in order to fill domestic labour shortages and work on farms. While the policy of the Canadian government is to guarantee employment opportunities to qualified Canadian citizens, where the supply of Canadian workers is determined to be inadequate, offshore seasonal agricultural workers are authorized for employment in approved commodity sectors during peak harvest activity periods, and in certain sectors, year round. The annually recurring nature of the program often results in workers returning to Canada on an annual basis.

Although as mentioned above, the program's administrative responsibilities were handed over by the federal government to F.A.R.M.S. in 1987, its roots lie a decade prior. This program began in 1966 with the arrival of Jamaican farm workers eligible to work one season in south western Ontario. Beginning in 1974, Mexican workers were allowed to join the program as well (Satzewich, 1991). An agreement with Mexico was signed as a result of a federal Manpower task force. In 1973, this task force concluded from its inquiry into seasonal migration that massive acts of exploitation and gross inhumanities were apparent in the agricultural industry, mainly with Mexican illegals, and that changes were necessary (Sanderson 1974:405). Shocked, alarmed and sickened at some of the working conditions, particularly those of illegal Mexicans, the task force called for and received an agricultural labour agreement with Mexico. The task force found that the main problems involved workers who had entered Canada illegally, and not necessarily those who migrated through the regulated Caribbean program. The task force also found that Mexicans had entered Canada illegally for many years to work on Ontario farms, and felt that by creating an agreement between Canada and Mexico federal authorities would have some measure of control over the working conditions and wages (Sanderson, 1974: 406). Currently, F.A.R.M.S. oversees the importation of temporary workers from various Caribbean countries and Mexico to fulfill contracts for farm work with a specific grower who has the ability and is allowed to choose some of his/her desired workers. The Canadian government's counterpart, the Mexican Ministry of Labour and Social Planning (Secretaría) , which selects the workers for this program aims to assist mostly day

workers (*jornaleros*), from rural areas of Mexico who have low levels of education and no steady source of income (Basok, 2000:10). Usually these workers are hired in large numbers for labour intensive agricultural production and can remain in Canada for up to eight months each year (Wall, 1994). Terms of employment depend on the commodity grown. For example, in vegetable production labourers are allowed to work in Canada between March and November at an hourly rate of \$6.90 per hour. Hourly rates are currently either \$6.90 or \$8.23 per hour. It should be noted however, that \$8.23 is paid only to harvesters of black tobacco, harvesters employed in the production of every other commodity receive \$6.90 per hour. This wage does not vary much from the \$5.00 or \$7.00 per hour which was the average wage earned in the 1980's depending on the commodity harvested, as reported by Cecil and Ebanks (1992). Cecil and Ebanks (1992), also suggests that in 1988 many migrants worked as many as 60 hours a week, earning approximately between \$300.00 and \$400.00. Today's earnings, also using a 60 hour week, are between \$414.00 and \$493. 80. Therefore, a migrant can expect to earn a maximum of between \$13,248.00 to \$15,80.00 for an eight month stay, before deductions.

Besides receiving very close to minimum wages for difficult and hazardous work, offshore workers are required to reimburse their employer for some of their travel and visa costs, in addition to mandatory Canadian government deductions. For example, a \$150.00 visa fee is to be recovered by the employer in the first month of employment. Beginning the second month, four percent of the gross earnings per pay period are

retained and recovered by the employer in order to cover partial costs of the airfare - the maximum deduction for airfare is currently \$425.00. While workers pay income tax only if they earn in excess of \$6,956.00 for single labourers and \$12,836.00 for married labourers, they are obliged to contribute to Canadian government pension and unemployment plans to specific contribution limits (F.A.R.M.S., 1998:17). Both deductions are made even though these labourers are only eligible for benefits from the Canada Pension Plan and are not eligible for Canadian unemployment insurance benefits. In addition, it should be noted that Caribbean labourers are subjected to making payments to the workers' home islands. According to Cecil and Ebanks (1992:22), the program requires farmers to hold back twenty-five percent of the Caribbean workers earnings. These sums are sent directly to the governments of the workers' home islands, where six percent is kept as pay for the services provided by the liaison officers who reside in Ontario to oversee the program for their governments. These workers retain the remaining nineteen percent as a form of forced savings as well as a source of insurance money for the farmer who may draw on these funds to help pay for workers' airfares in default situations.

Although by North American standards, the pay and working conditions do not sufficiently reflect the amount and degree of difficulty of work, F.A.R.M.S. recruits thousands of participants each year to work on Ontario farms - and are successful in meeting these requests. In fact, there are many Mexican hopefuls who are rejected entry into the offshore program or are deferred to participating in future seasons. According to

statistical reports compiled by F.A.R.M.S. in 1988 there were only 2463 participants in the Mexican Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program. Merely two years later in 1990 this number soared to 4758. Also according to F.A.R.M.S (1998) the number of Mexican participants in this offshore program reached 5037 in 1997, and in 1998 it peaked at 5801. Besides Mexico there are also other countries involved in the program. During each of the years mentioned above ,the total share of Mexican participants in the offshore program which also includes workers from Barbados, Eastern Caribbean, Jamaica, and Trinidad Tobago varied between thirty-three percent in 1988 to fifty-eight percent in 1990. In 1997 the percentage increased to sixty-seven percent and in 1998 to seventy-six percent. Therefore, because of their significant presence in the offshore program by comparison to other participant countries involved in this offshore program, Mexico and its migrants will be the focus of this thesis.

The significance of the program for domestic growers is reflected in the number of employers involved in it . Although the number of farms which have used Mexican migrants has fluctuated over the years, it continues to be quite significant. In 1988 the number of Ontario fruit and vegetable farms using Mexican offshore labour was 413. In 1990 this number soared to 687 farms using Mexican migrants. In 1991 this number only slightly increased up to 692 participating farms, and by 1998 it had dropped to 678. Although the number has slightly dropped over the past few years it should be noted that this could be the result of farms merging while the number of growers using Mexican labour remains constant. The percentage of Ontario growers who use offshore labour is

rather high. In 1996, of the total of 3444 fruit and vegetable farms (Statistics Canada, 1997:58), 465 or 14 percent employed Mexican workers (F.A.R.M.S, 1998)

An important element of this program is that before a grower can become eligible to receive offshore assistance, he/she must comply with the 'Canadian First' policy. This policy states that the requester must consult with the local Employment Center or the Agriculture Employment Service at least eight weeks before the jobs start date and be advised of the number of Canadian workers available for employment. After all attempts at hiring Canadian workers have been exhausted, the farmer may proceed to contact F.A.R.M.S. to solicit offshore workers to fill the vacancies (F.A.R.M.S., 1998:21). F.A.R.M.S. in turn, sends requests to the Mexican Ministry of Labour and Social Planning which uses the following criteria to select Mexican workers for participation in this program. First, in order to satisfy the qualifications required by the Canadian employers, Mexicans who have no prior experience in agricultural work are not to be admitted into the program. Second, since the main objective of the Mexican Ministry of Labour and Social Planning is to assist those most in economic need, those applicants who have the lowest levels of education, lack capital and are landless have the best chances of being approved to participate. Third, since the Canadian government and immigration authorities need to ensure that this seasonal migration does not result in permanent settlement, regulations are swayed towards candidates with strong family ties in Mexico. Basically, program administrators strongly prefer workers who are married and have children and other dependents such as parents or relatives in Mexico. Finally, a

minute amount of women as compared to men are granted permission to participate in this offshore program due to the fact that Canadian farmers mainly request male migrants in order to escape the provision of providing separate living quarters for women (Basok, forthcoming).

F.A.R.M.S. (1998), outlines a list of responsibilities for the employers. For example, it is the employers' responsibility to contact the local Ministry of Health and arrange for an annual inspection of the seasonal living accommodations which are provided by them. It is also the employers' responsibility to contact the Ministry of Health office in order to provide the employees with health cards. Also, if a worker reports that he/she is in need of medical attention, the employer must make arrangements as soon as possible to provide medical assistance (F.A.R.M.S., 1998:18).

The objective of this thesis is to understand what makes Mexican migrant agricultural workers recruited through the offshore program, an ideal labour force for Canadian farmers. It is based on a combination of research methods including in-depth interviews, secondary interview data, and library research. In-depth interviews were conducted for a period of approximately two months during the summer of 1996. Growers who hire offshore labourers were contacted and permission was obtained to enter the farms and ask the migrants to participate in the study. During this period, twenty-two interviews were conducted on various farms in the Leamington/Ruthven area, usually in or near the actual living quarters provided to the migrants. The subjects consisted of Mexican migrants who took part in the regulated offshore program and were

kind enough to donate their personal time. Interviews were semi-structured and lasted approximately one half-hour and were tape recorded with the respondents' permission. They were all conducted in Spanish by Tanya Basok. I was present during these interviews. Although I cannot speak Spanish, I do have the ability to understand the language. During the interviews, I was able to suggest some questions through Tanya Basok who would translate them into Spanish. Each of the informants were given a brief explanation of the goals of the study and oral consent by the informants was obtained. The informants were told that they can withdraw from the study without risk at any time. They were all assured that their rights, privacy, and confidentiality would not be violated, and that they will not be exposed to harm. In addition, my analysis is based on seventy-eight interviews conducted by Tanya Basok and her research assistant Nicole Noel, in 1997 in the Leamington area, and during the months of December 1997 to January 1998 in a Mexican village. Also, forty-five in-depth interviews with Leamington greenhouse growers conducted under the direction of Tanya Basok are analyzed in this study. Library research, based on secondary sources was used in order to gain a better understanding of the historical-economic conditions in Mexico through various decades, as well as to gain an understanding of how the Commonwealth Caribbean and Mexican Agricultural Seasonal Worker Program developed and operates. Additionally, F.A.R.M.S. documents and statistics obtained by Tanya Basok were consulted.

In addition to the introduction, this thesis will be divided into seven chapters.

Chapter two will give a brief review of the literature on migration and set the theoretical framework upon which this thesis is based. Chapter three will demonstrate attempts made by the Canadian government to provide domestic growers with sufficient agricultural workers. In this chapter I will also examine some of the factors contributing to the lack of domestic interest in farm jobs. Chapter four is based on the analysis of the interviews conducted with farm owners and will explore the characteristics that growers require in an agricultural labourer, focusing on their definition of a *reliable* workforce. Chapter five will provide a brief historical analysis of the Mexican economy since the 1940's, as an explanation of why so many Mexicans wish to work abroad. This chapter will analyze the effects that government policies adopted since the 1940's have had on the living standards of the Mexican poor and relates them to the underlying reasons Mexicans choose to migrate to Canada. Chapter six will discuss four characteristics of the Mexican participants of the offshore program which makes them the preferred workforce of choice by Canadian farm owners. It will be argued that these characteristics are related to the fact that these workers are regulated and not free migrants. It is argued that the nature of their migration makes them *reliable* in the eyes of the growers. Chapter seven demonstrates the potential of the growers to easily control the migrant labour force. As well, chapter seven distinguishes the benefits of the program for both of the parties involved. The final chapter will consist of the conclusion, summarizing to major arguments of this thesis.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Some researchers (Massey, 1993, 1994) have argued that there is no single coherent theory explaining migration. Different theories have attempted to explain migration by examining different levels. For the most part, the study of migration has been divided into micro and macro level theories. Micro level theories focus on the individual decision to migrate, while the macro level theories focus on the 'totality' and structural effects of the pressures within the world economy on migration. Among micro level theories is the neoclassical theory of migration. This theory examines the individual factors involved in instigating migration. It focuses on the negative conditions in the home country which push these migrants away from their homeland and on those which entice them to a new location. Neoclassical theorists argue that migrants decide to migrate as a result of an individual cost-benefit analysis. Although this theory mentions a variety of factors involved in migration it is insufficient because it simply accepts that they exist without examining why. It focuses too narrowly on the individual decisions to migration without examining the larger context creating the factors influencing these

decisions. The social network theory is also a micro level theory attempting to analyse migration. These theorists (Fawcett 1989, and Boyd 1989) argue that social networks available to the potential migrants in a receiving country serve as a pull by playing a facilitating role in instigating migration. This camp postulates that although the negative or push conditions exist, it is the presence of social networks which actually foster migration. Social network theorists, similar to neoclassical theorists, only look at one single element of migration- the individuals' decision to migrate. Characteristic of all micro level theories is disregard for the structural conditions which create situations which the migrants are attempting to avoid or to embrace. They do not attempt to explain why harsh economic conditions exist in the home country, nor do they explain why some regions create a need or demand for migrant labour.

A macro level theory which discusses structural conditions generating migration is the dual labour market theory of migration. According to theorist in this camp, migration occurs not because of push factors in sending countries but rather because of the presence of pull factors in the receiving country. This theory contends that inherent in capitalism is the tendency for a split in the labour market. This split consists of a secondary and primary labour market. Due to the lack of interest and participation of domestic labourers in the secondary sector, migrants are brought in to fill the need for labour in this sector. Despite its merits, this theory lacks the ability to adequately explain both sides of the migration equation. It only focuses on demand for foreign labour while ignoring the supply of cheap workers.

A macro level theory which examines both the supply and the demand side of labour migration is the world systems theory of migration. According to this theory migration occurs as a result of global pressures. According to this theory the supply side of migration is mainly due to capital integration and exploitation by capitalist countries into poorer regions which create massive poverty and unemployment. The world systems theory also adequately explains the demand portion of migration by supporting the notion that due to global competition, some industries have become secondary sectors characterised by low wages and poor working conditions in a bifurcated economy. Although this world systems theory of migration is the theoretical framework upon which this theory is based, it is important to note that this thesis does not dismiss the importance of individual decision-making. This thesis also explores personal experiences and explanations of why Mexicans have decided to migrate to Canada.

The neoclassical theory of migration is a micro-level theory which examines the individual's decision to migrate. Within this approach, the individuals are viewed as rational actors who decide to migrate on the basis of personal cost-benefit calculations which lead them to expect a positive net return, usually monetary, from movement (Massey, 1993:434). This camp argues that the potential migrants evaluate the circumstances and conditions which act to 'push' them away from their home country, as well as the circumstances and conditions which 'pull' them to another country. For most, the lack of land/jobs and economic opportunities are examples of 'push' factors, and the favorable conditions such as a stable and adequate source of income that the host

country extends are examples of 'pull' factors. Included in this individual rational calculation is the fact that before capturing a higher wage, the individual must consider certain investments such as travel costs, costs of living in the new location, and the psychological costs of migrating such as leaving family and friends behind for extended periods of time. The neoclassical theory of migration postulates that the migrant decides whether or not to move on the basis of his/her expected higher wages and income maximization. Massey (1994:705), argues for instance, that the migration between Mexico and the United States is largely due to the fact that most Mexican workers can expect to earn three times more than they would at home. People decide to migrate to areas where they can be most productive, and their individual skills are in need, therefore capturing a higher wage than they would doing the same work in their country of origin.

Although this theoretical approach identifies and explains the major factors involved in the migration process, it is overly simplistic in so far as it fails to explain the wider context that shapes these factors. The neoclassical theory fails to take into consideration why negative conditions exist in the sending country, nor does it question what creates the 'pull' from within the host country. It simply lists that they exists.

The social network theory is another micro level theory which attempts to explain migration. This theory like other micro theories assumes that migration is due to an individual decision. Massey (1993) defines migrant networks as sets of interpersonal ties that connect current migrants, former migrants, and non-migrants in origin and destination areas through ties of kinship, friendship and shared community origin. For

social network theorists, the presence of kinship and ethnic bonds are the determining factor for migration (Villar, 1992:385). Social network theorists contend that social networks facilitate migration and in many cases their presence is the determining factor, making migration easier and to a certain degree 'pulling' them to a new location. While recognizing the importance of the context in which migration takes place, network theorists place too much emphasis on factors operating at the micro level (Villar, 1992:387) "Economic and political conditions can either hinder or support migration, but ultimately individuals make the decision to migrate on the basis of personal contacts, resources and information"(Villar, 1992:387). Social ties are an invaluable tool because they lower the costs and risks of movement before, during and after the migration process (Menjivar, 1994:337). Usually once migration begins it becomes self-perpetuating because social networks continue to grow and cause a snowball effect, continually 'pulling' new migrants to new locations. Therefore according to this theory, although other factors such as unemployment, poverty and expected wages create the desire for migration, social networks provide the tools that actually foster and initiate 'pull' based migration. Although this theory has gained wide acceptance (Fawcett 1989 and Boyd 1989) it only addresses the 'pull' portion of migration. Similar to the neoclassical theory, social network theory does not address the structural conditions that generate migratory movements.

Piore and other segmented labour market theorists (Taylor 1992, Dickens and Lang 1985), attempt to fill the void left by the neoclassical theorist and social network

theorists by explaining what actually creates the 'pull' side of migration. These theorists postulate that admission of migrants is motivated primarily by labour market needs and profits (Miller, 1986:741). It is suggested that employment is necessary because it fulfills a labour market need in society which cannot be satisfied by the domestic workforce (Edwards et al. 1973, Gordon et al. 1972, Piore 1979). Migrants do the low-paid, physically challenging, monotonous and seasonal work that domestic workers shun (Miller, 1986:746). Restructuring of advanced industrial economies create a demand for, and indeed absorb foreign labour despite rising unemployment among domestic workers (Villar, 1992: 386). According to these theorists, migration is not caused by severe poverty and unemployment in the home country, but rather by the demand for labour in the host country (Piore, 1979:9)

The dual labour market theory as adopted to the migrant worker phenomenon has gained widespread popularity and acceptance among scholars (Massey 1994, Miller 1986). This theory proposes that migration is demand-driven, and is built into the economic structure of advanced structural societies (Massey, 1994:page 715). There are inherent tendencies in modern capitalism which lead to a bifurcated labour market. This capitalistic market creates a primary sector which produces high paying, secure jobs with generous benefits and favorable working conditions, and a secondary sector typified with instability, low wages, limited benefits and unpleasant working conditions (Piore, 1979:36). Developed societies experience a shortage of workers willing to take jobs in the secondary sector. A direct result of this is that capitalist employers are faced with a

decision to make the secondary sector more appealing to potential domestic labourers, or to recruit migrants to fulfill the labour shortage. Most capitalists have opted to recruit from abroad. Recruiting abroad produces quick and 'ready to work' solution which makes it unnecessary to increase wages and improve working conditions throughout the labour market in hopes of enticing domestic labourers and is seen as a better business decision amongst capitalists than an attempt to provide better wages and conditions to one sector of the labour market, which is usually socially and economically placed at the bottom of the hierarchy. If wages were increased at the bottom of the occupational hierarchy, a mass tidal wave of pay increases across all occupations would result. Attracting domestic labourers by raising the entry level wages during times of labour scarcity is thus expensive and disruptive, providing employers with a strong incentive to seek easier and cheaper solutions such as the importation of migrant workers who will accept low wages (Massey, 193:441). In an increasingly competitive world, migrants may be more attractive to employers because they are willing to work for lower wages and under poor working conditions (Villar, 1992: 386). This effort of keeping wages low and protective legislation weak in the secondary sector further strengthens the need for foreign labour by capitalists over time. With respect to the effects of foreign workers on domestic labour Max Weber concluded that Polish temporary workers undercut the wages and working conditions of German agricultural labourers (Miller, 1986:746). Similarly, Verhaeren's study of foreign labour in the French construction industry suggests that temporary worker employment does in fact mitigate against improvements in wages and working

conditions if not depressing them (Miller, 1986:746). Through time, the depression of wages and working conditions makes it less and less likely that employers will be able to hire domestic labourers, thereby making the recruitment of foreign workers imperative. By keeping wages low and working conditions poor via the use of migrant workers, capitalists have generally reinforced the 'labour market segmentation' by fortifying the worker conditions in the secondary sector and in turn, strengthening their need for migrant labour as well as usually increasing profits (Massey, 1994: 715). Therefore, according to the dual labour market theorists, migration is not caused by poverty in sending countries (low wages and unemployment), but mainly by demand in receiving countries (a chronic and unavoidable need for foreign workers) (Massey, 1993: 441).

Although this theory has made a significant contribution to our understanding of labour migration, it only addresses one side of the supply and demand equation explaining migration. Dual labour market theory adequately explain the demand for foreign labour, but fails to address the equally important supply side of migration. By arguing that workers go where the jobs are, these theorists ignore such important aspects of migration as the relationship between labour migration and the capital integration process in the reorganization of production on a world scale (Sassen-Koob, 1985:227).

One theory which attempts to explain both the supply and the demand sides of the migration equation is the world systems theory. Inspired by Wallerstein's world system perspective, the world systems theory of migration focuses on global structural conditions that foster both the demand and supply of migration. Building on the work of Wallerstein

(1974), sociologists have linked international migration to the structure of the world market that has developed and expanded over time (Massey, 1995:444). The world systems theory of migration assumes that population movements can only be examined in the context of historical analysis of the broader structural transformations underway in a particular social formation (Wood, 1982:302). This theoretical framework argues that international migration results from the globalization of the market economy. Core countries play a leading role in this global economy and usually dictate the direction and volume of migratory flows. These regions are the most economically developed and are usually on the receiving end of the migratory flow. On the contrary, periphery countries are the least economically developed, are extremely vulnerable to high levels of surplus expropriation by the core, and are usually on the sending end of migration flows. As capitalism extends outward from core nations, and as market relations penetrate developing countries, non-capitalist patterns of social and economic organization are disrupted and transformed. This transformation is responsible for displacing large amounts of people from their sources of income and livelihoods as peasant farmers or civil servants, which creates a large group of surplus labour prone to migration for economic survival. Usually, the result is an increase in poverty, unemployment and landlessness, a larger wage gap between the masses and the wealthy, and an increase in migration as a solution to economic survival.

Driven by a desire for higher profits and a greater wealth, capital expands to different regions in search of resources aimed at increasing profits. In turn, these new

sites of production generate a large supply of low-wage jobs which are a function of global capital integration and restructuring (Sassen-Koob, 1985:229). Sassen-Koob (1985:232) further argues that the expansion in the supply of low wage jobs can also occur in income generating sectors of core countries, and can be seen as creating employment opportunities for migrant workers. Sassen-Koob (1985) demonstrates that some major growth industries are characterized by a high incidence of jobs at the high and low paying ends of the spectrum due to the reorganization of the capital-labour relationship, resulting in the segmentation of the labour market into well paying jobs with high status and low paying low status jobs across various industries and occupations old and new.

According to the world systems theory, what occurs in any single part of the world system is related to what is occurring in the world system as a whole. The world systems approach “conveys with full force the fact that labour migration, like related exchanges, does not occur as an external process between independent entities but as part of the internal dynamics of the same overarching unit” (Portes, 1979:9). Therefore, this theory obviously stresses the importance of ‘totality’ and assumes that explanations for population movements lie deep in the pressures and counter pressures both internal and external to the national economy that lead to changes in the organization of production (Wood, 1982:302).

Therefore similar to the segmented labour theorists some world systems theorists (Sassen-Koob 1985) analyze the polarization in the labour markets of receiving countries.

They relate this polarization to global restructuring and its effects not only on countries producing migrants but on those receiving them. Global competition forces prices down which in turn lowers the wages earned in this industry whereby contributing to the creation of a secondary sector. Sassen-Koob (1985), argues that typically migrants are viewed as providing cheap labour for some split sectors of the economy, and therefore facilitating the survival of this industry. By examining the dual labour market theory through a world systems approach, both sides of the supply and demand equation are fulfilled.

Although this theory explains issues not explored by other theories, it too has its shortcomings. The world systems theory stresses the dynamics between core and periphery countries. It accounts for poverty and economic disparity which fosters migration in periphery countries as a result of their integration into the world market. By placing too much emphasis on the role of external factors, the world systems theory ignores the impact of internal changes on poverty. Moreover, this model fails to acknowledge that attempts to withdraw from the global market may result in deepening economic poverty. In addition, this theory fails to account for non-economic reasons for migration. Yet despite its limitations, this theory focuses on the important global implications which shape both the migrants' reasons for leaving their country as well as the demand for migrants in the receiving country.

In this thesis the analysis of Mexican migration to Canada is based on the world systems theory of migration. It analyses global processes which transform the Mexican

economy producing displacement and poverty and forcing many to consider migration as the only viable option. It also examines structural conditions within Canada that produce the demand for foreign workers such as a bifurcated labour market. At the same time, this thesis does not ignore individuals. It is recognized that although agency is constrained by context, the migrants still demonstrate some degree of free will and decision making. Therefore, individual views for migrating to Canada are also explored.

Chapter Three: Domestic Labour Shortages and Failed Attempts by the Canadian Governments to Provide 'Reliable' Labour Sources

Although most would agree that a basic necessity of the capitalist economy is that its labour force be of an appropriate size and be replenished constantly, the North American agricultural industry has struggled in acquiring and maintaining this condition for decades. Historically, two types of farm labour have been in demand by fruit and vegetable farmers in Ontario: permanent year round employees, and temporary seasonal employees. A major problem within this industry however, is that many Canadians feel that farming is hard work which yields little rewards, leaving the industry with a shortage of essential labourers. A woman farm worker describes her situation, “we gotta be out there in the fields in the sun and in the rain, and cold - from six each morning ‘till five, six or seven at night. We plant, weed, and when the season comes we pick the crop. At harvest time we work seven days a week” (Sandborn, 1986:5). Consequently, farmers have faced difficulties in recruiting and maintaining adequate supplies of waged labour as a result of several historically specific conditions associated with the farming industry. In general, agricultural labourer is characterized by low wages, poor and unsafe working

conditions, very long hours of work, lack of protection by the state under labour standards legislation, and the lack of habitable living accommodations. Although over the years, wages have slightly increased they continue to lag far behind the wages of industrial workers.

In most provinces, the lack of the labour standards for those employed in agriculture have contributed to the shortage of adequate domestic labourers. Agricultural labourers are for the most part exempt from three major pieces of legislation: the Labour Relations Act, the Employment Standards Act, and the Occupational Health and Safety Act. These three acts are very important to all labourers - including those in agriculture - because they are a safety net ensuring that workers will be treated fairly, humanely, and with dignity. The Labour Relations Act deals with issues such as job security and collective bargaining (Stultz, 1987:293). This act is important because it outlines labourers' rights with respect to creating and joining unions. Currently, agricultural labourers cannot legally unionize. In the past, Bill 91, proposed by the previous provincial NDP government extended the right to unionize to agricultural workers for the first time ever (Brennan and Schmidt, 1995:A15). This Bill was quickly repealed by the PC provincial government on October 31, 1995, with the passing of Bill 40 which allowed the use of scab labour. The PC government claimed that Bill 91 would keep jobs and investment away from Ontario and threatened the survival of family farms. Although the provincial government maintains that the repeal of Bill 91 is good for the province, and will aid in fostering growth and employment, many disagree with the logic

presented by the PC government and believe that their ulterior motive is to produce greater profits for domestic growers.

The Employment Standards Act deals with issues such as minimum wages, and vacation, overtime, and sick pay. According to the Ontario Ministry of Labour (1993), there are two major types of agricultural labourers: farm workers and harvest workers. The Employment Standards - Fact Sheet 1999 defines a farm worker as a person employed by a farmer to do work such as planting crops, cultivating, pruning, feeding and caring for livestock, and transporting produce to market. Farm workers are protected by the pregnancy and paternity leave, notice of termination, and regular payment of wages provisions. They are not covered by the minimum wages, overtime pay, or hours of work provisions. Harvest workers are defined by the Employment Standards - Fact Sheet 1999 as labourers who pick fruits, vegetables or tobacco. These workers are protected by all of the provisions covering farm workers and in addition they are covered by the minimum wage, vacation pay, and public holiday pay provisions after having been employed as a harvester for at least thirteen weeks (Ontario Ministry of Labour, 1994:15). The minimum wage for persons employed in the harvesting of fruit, vegetables or tobacco is \$6.85 per hour (Employment Standards - Fact Sheet 1999). Of these employees, those who have worked for more than thirteen weeks in harvesting are entitled to a vacation pay of four percent of their wages earned in harvesting (Ontario Ministry of Labour, 1994:15). These workers are not covered by laws dealing with overtime pay and hours of work. In

cases where the worker does both harvesting and production - related farm work, how most of their time spent determines under which group the labourer falls.

The Occupational Health and Safety Act is concerned with the issue of safe working conditions. This act is also very important to the agricultural industry because it is one of the most hazardous industries in all of Canada. While farming remains the third most dangerous industry in Canada in terms of work related injuries, with the exception of Saskatchewan, provincial health and safety legislation does not apply to agricultural labourers (Satzewich, 1991:63). Moreover, it is the case that various levels of the state appear to be unwilling to introduce health, safety and labour legislation in this industry mainly due to the greater political power of the growers as compared to agricultural workers (Satzewich, 1991:64). Therefore, with respect to current legislation, agricultural labourers can be expected to work twelve hour days, seven days a week, doing difficult backbreaking work for minimal pay in hazardous conditions.

Under the current working conditions it is no wonder that domestic workers are not interested in these jobs. Moreover, current employment laws may facilitate the difficulties in recruiting domestic labourers to agriculture. It has been claimed by some agricultural producers that the provisions of the amended Unemployment Insurance Act, assented to on June 23, 1971, serves to deter persons from seeking employment in agriculture (Food Prices Review Board, 1975:11). This amendment asserts that in order for an individual to qualify for unemployment insurance he/she must be capable and available for work. They do not, however, have to accept any jobs which are deemed not

suitable (Food Prices Review Board, 1975:11). According to the Unemployment Insurance Act, unsuitable employment is,

employment of a kind other than employment in his usual occupation either at a lower level rate of earnings or on conditions less favourable than those that he might reasonably expect to obtain, having regard to those conditions that he habitually obtained in his usual occupations, or would have obtained (Satzewich, 1991:63).

Therefore, the act asserts that the individual does not have to accept any employment that offers a lower rate of pay than he/she received in previous jobs. Given the wage differential between agricultural and non-agricultural employment, the result is that unemployed people would prefer to collect unemployment insurance, rather than accept a difficult agricultural job. As stated in Larkin (1989), most farmers blame the current state of affairs on the Canadian government and its welfare and unemployment policies.

Larkin (1989), found the following sentiments expressed by Canadian farmers,

How many people want to do stoop labour....like bending over and picking tomatoes, picking cucumbers....? Not everybody. They'd say: 'Hell....I'd rather go on unemployment or you name it, but I'm not gonna pick it!' And basically, I think what's wrong is that there are too many programs....I think a lot feel that the taxpayers owe them a living and they don't have to do these kinds of jobs.

Larkin (1989), found that most growers had a common complaint with respect to people who try not to work:

Now if you go into the workforce, like Canada Unemploymentyou get the rif-raft that wanna put in their six weeks and collect pogy and then they are gone....Or better yet, they'll come in here and they'll get a free ride for a whole year in the manner of

Workman's Compensation....What better way to get workman's comp that hurt your back....We've had cases like that.

Farmers interviewed by Larkin (1989) believed that the availability of workers is controlled entirely by the state of the larger economy. Once farmer interviewed stated in her study the following sentiments,

When times are good in the city, then people aren't so interested in coming and working on the farm. And then things get tough, then people'll start coming out....People, generally speaking, consider working on the farm as one of their last choices....

Therefore, a major problem with this industry is that most Canadians feel that farming is hard work which yields little rewards.

The major reason why Canadian farmers have to pay low wages to farm labourers is the low prices that they receive for their product. This is a result of the Canadian government's cheap food policy and directly related to it, the low tariffs on the import of fruits and vegetables that could grow in Canada (Satzewich, 1991:67). The state has tended to pursue a cheap food policy to keep inflation down and to dampen pressures placed on employers by the urban-based working class for increased wages. It has been able to pursue this policy and keep the prices of Canadian farm products low because of the availability of low priced fruit and vegetable imports from South Africa, California, Mexico, and South Korea. Growers in these countries can produce agricultural commodities which cost less than those produced in Canada because they have access to cheaper labour, lower costs, possess economies of scale, and have a longer growing season (Satzewich, 1991:76). With food prices kept low non-farming industries have

been able to offer their workforce higher wages, safe and more comfortable working conditions, year-round employment, and protection under federal/provincial laws, at the expense of Canadian growers. However, the cheap food policy makes it hard for Canadian farmers to pay decent wages that would attract a sufficient number of workers to farm jobs. Another reason why growers pay very low wages to their workers is because of the fact that the prices paid to them by large grocery store chains and food processors are low. These large corporations enjoy vast influence over contract conditions as well as the prices growers receive for their products (Winson, 1993:209). The increasing concentration of these corporations forces growers to deal with an oligopoly, and a limited amount of buyers for their primary agricultural products such as fruits and vegetables. This uneven relationship leaves the corporations holding most of the cards (Winson, 1993:209). One of the consequences of dealing with an oligopoly is that the growers must accept the low prices they receive for their products (Winson, 1993:107).

Labour shortages in this essential industry is not a recent phenomenon. Shortages have been present for decades and were exacerbated during W.W.2. This period between 1939 and 1945 was the first era in which the government had to deal with agricultural labour shortages and it in turn experimented with various programs aimed at alleviating this deficiency. During this fragile period the Canadian government made various attempts to mobilize internal pools of labour which were not yet tapped into and to a certain degree experimented with external labourers. For example, as Satzewich (1991),

points out, labour shortages were so severe that by 1943, postponement orders could be issued in order to keep men of draftable age in essential industries such as agriculture. In 1941, the Ontario Farm Service Force was formed. This organization's objective was to ensure that the production of food in Canada was sufficient to feed the allies. During the war, the Ontario Farm Service Force consisted of all persons between the ages of 12 and 85 who were not eligible for various reasons to fight in the military but were willing to work for any length of time in agriculture. The recruitment efforts of this group were very atypical and innovative for the times. The organizers of the Farm Service Force experimented by conducting a 'Patriotic National Service Campaign' to encourage people to volunteer. They began publicity campaigns which included newspaper and radio advertisements aimed at tapping into new sources of labour such as women and children. The organizers of this force were able to convince school board authorities to allow students who joined a work brigade to delay the start of school terms since children were needed to harvest and work on farms (Satzewich, 1991:71). In addition, the Ontario Farm Service Forces mobilized all available resources including German prisoners of war and Japanese Canadians.

Years following WW2 marked a period which saw agriculture in Canada become big business. The number of farms decreased, while the size of the farms increased. It was an era that witnessed a reduction in the number of 'family farms'. The notion of farmers working and earning their livelihoods on the land which they owned was replaced by large farms, big business, and waged labour. The consolidation of holding meant that

there were fewer farm operators in the province and fewer family members engaged in unpaid farm work (Parr, 1985:102). The 1950's were characterized by a return to the use of market mechanisms for the distribution of labour. However, the state did continue in its efforts to recruit farm labour from within Canada for the Ontario fruit and vegetable industry. In 1953, the Ontario Farm Service Force focused its activities on the recruitment of students for work on farms (Satzewich, 1991:77). Students were enticed to enroll in the Ontario Farm Service Force program by use of government sponsored advertisements. Although students continue to be utilized in the agricultural sector in the 1990's, especially in the summer months, this particular program faced difficulty recruiting participants. This difficulty was mainly the result of a growing stress on the importance of school and education. Later, in the 1960's and 1970's, after all other domestic alternatives were exhausted, the state attempted to use psychiatric patients and even made use of convicts from penitentiaries (Satzewich, 1991:81). After all other efforts proved to be unsatisfactory, the state and farm owners' only recourse was to begin to entice agricultural labourers from outside of Canada's boundaries.

The problems that Canadian farmers have faced with respect to filling labour shortages are also characteristic of other industrialized countries. The United States, for example, has depended on two programs to recruit foreign labour similar to the Canadian offshore program - The Bracero Program and the British West Indies Temporary Alien Labour Program. The Bracero Program was agreement between the United States and Mexico, and went into effect on August 4, 1942. This program, also known as the

Mexican Farm Labour Program Agreement, was managed by several government agencies, including the Department of Agriculture. It was created as a temporary war-related effort to supply much needed agricultural labourers during WW2 up until 1964. By the 1950's, it has been estimated that the United States imported as many as 300,000 Braceros (Spanish for arm-man manual labour) annually in order to alleviate domestic labour shortages in this critical industry (Handbook of Texas Online, 1991:1). Due to the rise of illegal migration, the introduction of new machinery, and pressure from labour and human rights activists, the program was terminated in 1964. After its desolution, a representative of the U.S. Department of Labour described the program as a system of 'legalized' slavery (Craig, 1992:2).

The British West Indies Temporary Alien Labour Program(B.W.I.) was initiated during roughly the same period as the Bracero Program. This program was initially developed to allow Florida sugar can plantations to replace the American labour force which had moved north to work in war-related industries and continues today because Florida growers keep successfully arguing that a *reliable* and adequate workforce is not available in the U.S. Contrary to its Canadian counterpart, the B.W.I. program is available only to the Florida sugar cane industry and the east coast apple growers. Similar to the Canadian offshore program, the B.W.I. program requires potential employers to demonstrate that there are no domestic workers available and willing to do the work in which the foreign labourer will be hired. This clause is very similar to the "Canadians first" policy outlined in F.A.R.M.S. documents (F.A.R.M.S., 1998). This

provision does not prevent growers in either country from hiring foreign workers since there are few domestic workers interested in farm labour.

Canadian farmers and proponents of the Mexican Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program argue that the only reason why they use foreign labour is because there are shortages of *reliable* and adequate pools of domestic labour. Both Canadian and U.S. growers have been successful in demonstrating the necessity of the program based on the fact that the number of domestic workers interested in farm jobs is not sufficient, nor are these workers as *reliable* as foreign labourers (Larkin, 1989). Farm owners and lobby groups, such as multinational corporation Gulf of Western, feel that migrant workers are necessary because of their work ethic and reliability (Larkin, 1989:9). The Growers' associations publish annual reports showing that, of domestic workers whom they hire, between seventy percent and eight percent leave in the first five days of the harvest (Griffith, 1986:877). In a report entitled, "The Quest For a *Reliable* Workforce in the Horticultural Industry", prepared by the Foreign Agricultural Resource Management Services (1995:1), the argument is put forth that only ten percent of the jobs in this industry are filled by migrants and only because *reliable* Canadians cannot be found. The report continues to state, "the Ontario Horticultural industry provides direct employment for approximately 99,876 people per year. Most of these jobs are seasonal, lasting an average of ten weeks. All of these jobs are offered to Canadians and would be filled by Canadians, if enough Canadians were available"(1995: 1). This same report also contends that due to this lack of *reliable* workforce, the entire industry is not working at a

one hundred percent efficiency rate, resulting in lost crops, lower profits, and lost jobs. Although the term '*reliable worker*' is never defined, it is the basis of growers' argument defending the use of offshore programs. Even with the Human Resource Development Canada policy of 'Canadians first' hiring, agricultural growers have been successful in using the lack of "*reliable workers*" argument. The F.A.R.M.S. (1995) report mentioned above states that agricultural employers would much rather prefer to hire *reliable* Canadians rather than offshore workers if such workers were available.

Mexicans are among the *reliable* migrants who fill agricultural jobs in Canada. F.A.R.M.S. (1995) states that the Caribbean Commonwealth and Mexican Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program has a proven record of delivering workers that are ninety-eight percent *reliable*. Seasonal offshore workers constitute a safety valve that assures a successful and profitable harvest. With alien labour, growers are assured of having an adequate labour force throughout the harvest period and thus experiencing little or no crop loss due to lack of labour or high turnovers of labour. Chapter four will explore the definition of *reliability* as perceived by the growers in the industry. It will explain why Canadian growers do not view local labour as *reliable* and why they prefer to hire Mexican workers. Chapter six will examine four characteristics of Mexican migrants that make them *reliable* in the eyes of the growers.

Chapter Four: What Do They Mean: Reliable Workers?

As outlined prior, the main reason for the existence of the Mexican Seasonal Agricultural Program is the growers claims that there is a serious shortage of *reliable* and adequate pools of domestic labour. It must be noted that domestic growers are not simply claiming that there are not enough available Canadians to fill their labour needs, but rather that the great majority of local workers available are not cut out for the vigorous demands of the agricultural industry. A report produced by the Foreign Agricultural Resource Management Service (1995) states that all jobs are first offered to Canadians and would be filled by Canadians if they were available. This same report continues to state that due to this shortage of available and reliable labourers, the agricultural industry and the entire economy are suffering. F.A.R.M.S. (1995), Bezaire (1965) believe that due to this shortage, this industry is not working at one hundred percent of its capacity, and as a result, some crops are not harvested completely, new investments are curtailed and Canadian employment is restricted. Most of the growers interviewed echoed this sentiment and stated that agriculture is a very unique industry with respect to its needs for

a *reliable* labour force when the crops are ready, and that if this necessary resource is not available, the grower risks losing his/her entire crop. One grower interviewed in Basok's study uses this analogy: "When you get up in the morning, you don't know who's coming in, and the tomatoes don't wait, it's like a pregnant woman ... you got to go when you got to go!" Another grower states the following: "And the nature of our business, working with perishable goods, it can't wait. If you don't get the work done, the things will rot!" This sentiment was very consistent throughout grower interviews. The following two comments are representative:

if it was a piece of wood, piece of steel, yes, I could leave it outside until tomorrow, but with vegetables, if you don't take care of them today, tomorrow it's too late!

When a doctor has to deliver a baby, someone has to be there, a doctor, whoever ... and when the vegetables are ready, you've got to pick them. If you don't, they'll die ... 9 months of working and nothing.

Similarly, one grower in Pfeffer's (1980:29) U.S. study of the Bracero program stated that "he uses migrant labour because he knows they will be there when he needs them, and that the labour must be on hand to harvest the crop when it has reached its proper stage of growth and maturity. The economic importance of this is such that the farmer cannot afford the cost or uncertainty".

Earnest Bezaire (1965:9) stated in a report written on behalf of the Essex County Associated Growers before the offshore program was implemented, that attempts have been made to supply the agricultural industry with available domestic labour had failed because the workers were unskilled, not *reliable*, and not willing to work. Bezaire

(1965:9) also stated that these available Canadian labourers were not physically able to perform the tasks required, lacked experience and dexterity, and could only pick half of the tomatoes experienced pickers could pick. Farmers who have invested vast amounts of time and money feel that the only way they can be productive is through the use of a strong, *reliable* and experienced work force, who will come to work each day and be productive. Despite much emphasis that both Bezaire's 1965 report and F.A.R.M.S. (1995) reports have placed on the issue of *reliability* this concept was not defined clearly in either of these reports. Many agricultural growers interviewed in the Leamington/Ruthven area expressed sentiments similar to the ones expressed in the two reports mentioned above when they talked about the need for a *reliable* labour force. These interviews will be used to shed some light on what these growers actually mean by "*reliable workers*" using their own words and terms.

Of the forty-five interviews conducted with Leamington greenhouse growers, only three growers stated that they had not had any difficulties hiring and retaining domestic workers. Most of the growers described Mexican workers as reliable, dependable, and conscientious, and added that the industry would fold without them. When one grower was asked why he used offshore workers, he gave the following response:

I have the highest regard for them ...they are reliable ... they are here 7 days a week and they work under difficult conditions, particularly in the summertime. And they generally don't complain about the work and they are very good workers. They get into a routine, they know their routine, and you can pretty much be sure that the job will get done when you tell them to do the job, and you don't have to supervise them hourly. Reliability is the key. We have to harvest tomatoes. You can't wake up one morning and

find nobody around. Days like today, it's so hot that if you miss picking, you can pretty much throw everything away because they'll overripe. You have to have reliability, you have to have a core group that it can either rain or shine, whatever"

Another grower gives the following response to the same question:

They are good people, they're reliable. First of all, you got them on your farm 7 days a week. I don't work Sundays. If they are behind, I ask them, do you want to work half a day? They say, "Sure!" There is no problem with them working 6.5 days. 6 days. Like right now, they're putting in good hours. I have no problems with them. They are putting in 127-138 hours in a two week period, that's the hours they are putting in. So, if you had a business, would you give up your business and go look for a job, or would you go this route?

Other growers gave very similar statements:

I hire offshore labour so I can have *reliable* help who will show up for work everyday...that's the major reason.

They are *reliable*. They are here 7 days a week and they work under the conditions.

They are *reliable*. Produce don't take a break...it's impossible to get anything done if you can't get the crop off.

Some growers interviewed in Calavita's (1992:60) study on the U.S. Bracero program similarly stated the following reason he uses offshore labour:

Offshores are more *reliable* in that they permit growers to plan ahead with assurance that his crop demands for labour will be taken care of

Under the Bracero program growers can feel confident that they will have labourers of a good quality when and where needed

Growers interviewed for the current study also described Mexican workers as dependable. In fact, in most cases the terms *reliability* and *dependability* were used in

conjunction with each other to refer to the same characteristics. When asked why they hired offshore labourers, some growers gave the following responses:

Dependability, willingness to work. I guess dependability in that they show up for work everyday. And the nature of our business, working with perishable goods, it can't wait. If you don't get the work done, the things will rot!

Dependability. They don't have to take Jonny to a baseball game or soccer practice, or they have a hockey tournament going on...

When we first moved here we had people from both Canada and Mexico. We found that our offshore workers, first of all...they are more dependable, they work on Sundays, if necessary. We have to find out, which a lot of people don't understand is, tomatoes and cukes, they don't wait for holidays or Sundays

They like to work...they like the hours. So they are there every day and the job gets done.

This belief that offshore workers being more dependable than domestic labourers is shared by U.S. farmers, one of which clearly stated, "The Bracero is a much more dependable worker" (Calavita, 1992:57). Therefore, this definition of *reliable* is strongly based on the fact that the commodity of interest is perishable and that the migrants are available to work immediately when the time for harvest comes. Besides being needed due to the perishability of the crop, the growers also included other aspects in their definition of *reliable* such as trustworthy, productive and manageable, which are directly related to increased profits on the part of the growers.

Many of the growers went on to add an element of trustworthiness and that Mexicans take pride in their work to describe why they hire these migrants and why they feel they are a *reliable* workforce:

Reliability, security, and trust...is why I hire offshore help. I have a Mexican worker who does all of my fertilizer mixing, he operates all of my machinery, and even my computers. I would never give it to a Canadian.

In August, I go to Florida and leave the Mexicans...and one of them caught a mistake I made the week before.

They take pride in their job. These two guys that I have are very ambitious, like if they see that they are falling behind...they'll pick up the pace. I am very happy with them.

All of these elements and themes described above summarize the characteristics growers are looking for in their labourers.

Apparent in the interviews conducted with growers and consistent with existing literature (Bezaire 1965, F.A.R.M.S. 1998) a vast majority of the growers expressed their view that Mexican offshore labourers are a necessity for this industry, which would fold without their use. Growers argued that the entire industry would die without the offshore workers:

Everybody's operation is dependent on them. It's come to a point where it's totally impossible to do without offshore labour. I don't know anybody that does...I wouldn't even be here if I didn't have offshore labour...I would sell it at a loss and go do something else.

If I didn't have offshore labour I couldn't survive...close shop...who's gonna replace them.

When asked how important offshore labour was to their farm operation, other growers stated:

I mean survival. If you take the offshore program away from this area, you can effectively shut down this industry 'cause you won't get the labour force.

We couldn't survive without the program...we'd be done. The busiest time is in the summer and you wouldn't find anybody to do it because we are short on local workers.

A similar sentiment was expressed by a farmer who stated the following:

We would be screwed, in plain English...it wouldn't work without them. Mainly because what most Canadians do is use you as a last resort, to work, or they don't want it at all.

An extension of this argument is the general consensus among the vast majority of growers that overall they are not content or satisfied with the caliber of domestic labourers. The growers questioned the Canadian's attendance, work ethic, and productivity. Upon comparisons between offshore and domestic workers, growers consistently ranked offshore help higher.

They are good and honest people. They put an honest day's work in... We know, if we separate crews, if we put 4 Mexicans or something, it will take a minimum of 8 double...and the quality of workmanship is not there with Canadians because they don't take any pride in their work.

I will say this, just for your own interest...and I think just about any grower would agree with me on this, to tell you how good the offshore worker is, it takes 1.5 Canadian growers to do what one offshore does and that's forgetting that the offshore would work more hours, you know.

I hire Mexicans to get the job done right. They realize why they are here. They come in the morning and leave at night, and they are here again the next day. You harvest on Sunday and local people won't come...you can tell them to come but you know. They (Mexicans) are more dependable because they are here. You get a lot of excuses from Canadians but they are just excuses, you don't get that from Mexicans. I can't remember the last time an offshore didn't show up for work.

If they take the program away from us, I won't like it because local people can't be relied on

I just have to have a dedicated workforce. They are here everyday, they are good workers.

On the contrary, Canadian labourers were described in a negative light. The growers questioned their attendance, work ethic and productivity. This became very evident throughout the interviews by comments such as the following:

When you get a domestic worker the first thing they ask is 'How much are you paying?'. When you get an offshore worker, the first thing he asked is how many hours you gonna ask him to work. That's the difference.

It's a joke. You take them into a greenhouse and you show them the work. And they tell you, 'you better not trust me to do that because I'll break something'. So what do you do? They don't want to do it but they are made to come out here. And when you're made to come out here you say 'kiss my ass'...if I can get just as much money sitting under a tree drinking beer as going to work.

Poor. Poor attitudes. They think they are owed a wage no matter if they work or not. Their work habits are poor...just reporting to work is a struggle, to get people to come, and if they don't come that they would call and tell you that they aren't coming...they are not a dependable workforce. A lot of people start and 2 days later or a day later or an hour later would say, "I don't want to do this."

They just don't wanna work. They don't wanna do physical work. There is a lot of physical work, a lot of hand work, especially in July and August...they just find it too hot. Whereas the offshores, they come from a warm country and they are used to the weather.

Virtually every grower expressed difficulties with respect to finding domestic workers and getting them to show up for work on a consistent basis.

Oh yeah. Most of the time they don't show up for work consistently...and basically trying to get people here is impossible. Sometimes they come around looking for a job and we say, "O.K. start tomorrow", but they never showed up!

They [domestic workers] are not available. Lots of people say they want to work, you tell them to show up and then they end up not showing up anyway. You tell them to come tomorrow morning...what happens is that they don't show up and you're stuck.

Many of the farmers felt that the Canadian government was a major contributor to this labour problem and that it wasn't doing enough to help growers. They added that most Canadians only worked on their farms just in order to receive welfare:

They are very lazy, they are not willing to learn and they just want their benefits. They come out and you show them the work and they say I'm not up to it! ... Then they say, 'Can you sign my forms so that I can take them back to the office?'

The problem is with the government. You cannot force a marriage. You cannot put a husband and wife together if they don't want to be. And that's what they are doing here ...

We as farmers are competing with our own government in providing wages and benefits. If I was in a labour situation, I would take benefits before the work. I'd make more and I'd have more time for recreational activities. On the other hand, looking at it from a farming point of view the government is hurting its own country by allowing this.

The farmers also voiced the opinion that the availability, and quality of help is controlled by the state of the economy.

I asked, "Can you start Monday?" ... I don't know what Monday he is coming or what year! It happens all of the time. I can tell you why it's happening. Because there is no help. Everyone is short on help. Because whoever wants to work is working, today they are in factories, they are paying more money than we can pay and that's the problem ... if I could pay \$12/hour, I would have help coming out my ears.

You have to realize that we are in Essex County, close to Windsor with big jobs in the auto sector, and with all of those spin-off jobs...they are paying \$12 to \$20 plus per hour, how can I compete against that?

I wish the government would help us a little more. I wish they weren't so pig-headed. I understand we have to hire Canadians first, but at what cost. I can't pay what the auto industry pays. People don't want to pay \$2.50 for a pound of tomatoes, you want to pay \$ 0.99 .

Oh, there is no question about it, you know, all kind of construction work out there, and then there are those small tool and die shops.

This is also very related to arguments by some growers that they cannot compete with the wages offered by other industries due to Canada's pursuit of a cheap food policy. The government's commitment to keeping food prices low in combination with rising costs in other sectors causes growers to face a cost-price squeeze. In the long run, the costs of farm inputs have tends to outpace the prices received for the commodities produced causing them to pay lower wages and in turn pushing potential labourers away from choosing farming as a vocation (Satzewich, 1991:65). One grower in Larkin's (1989) study stated the following:

When you're dealing with farm labour...we don't get paid for the product that we should...with the government policy of cheap food and everything else, so therefore our prices are subdued, so we, as a rule, pay a lower wage. So therefore, you tend to deal with the low-lives

Similarly some growers interviewed in the current study argues that if they were able to pay higher wages they would be capable of recruiting suitable domestic labourer:

Some people say you've got to pay them [domestic labourers] more! But remember, this is a farm...I don't know how much higher I can go!

I have one lady that I pay \$9 an hour which is good for this industry, but she has three kids...even \$9 an hour is not enough. I should pay \$12 an hour to keep her, but then I am out of pay myself

Canadians look for better jobs, especially when they have to support a family and pay a mortgage. I know how they feel, but my boss says there is a limit as to what he can pay

I've got one local that's been here 2 years. I pay him more, give him a ride to work, and provide him with housing...but how many can I afford to do this for?

Therefore, it is apparent that the cost of the labourer plays an important role in the growers notion of *reliability*.

Although a vast majority of the growers were satisfied with the offshore program and its ability to provide *reliable* workers, some growers had complaints. It should be noted that some felt that Mexican labour was very capable of producing 'bad apples', but it was much easier to control and replace these workers as opposed to domestic labour.

For the most part, they are better. I mean they show up for work every day, that's something you can't knock them for...but you get

bad apples too. The few guys that work out and do the job as they are told , you call them back every year.

When I hire offshore workers they come here on contract. With some of them there is a problem, they can't do it or they don't want to do it. We can send them back and get a replacement

Therefore it is evident that when growers use the term "*reliable*" they are actually describing a labour force that is willing to work 7 days a week under very difficult conditions in any weather with no complaints and without constant supervision. In addition, they must be trustworthy, productive, and take pride in their work. It can be clearly seen that only some of these characteristics are vital for the industry made vulnerable by the perishability of the crops. Given that the industry needs a labour force to be available on any given day to productively harvest the crop during this critical period, a labour force that is ready for work 7 days a week and is willing to work as many hours as possible is vital. Yet, other characteristics such as trustworthiness, high productivity, dedication to employers and working with little resistance have more to do with control over the workers (to be discussed in chapter seven) and the profitability of the farm. In sum, the notion of *reliability* only partially reflects the physical constraints of the horticultural industry, and in part, the notion of *reliability* is socially constructed by the growers who wish to maximize their profits and control their labour force.

Chapter Five: Historical Economic Overview of Mexico(Supply)

In order to understand why so many Mexicans migrate, it is important to first examine Mexico's history and its current economic crisis. This chapter will focus on the combined effects that import-substitution-industrialization (ISI), the 1982 debt crisis, and the structural adjustment policies which followed this crisis, have had on the standard of living on Mexico's poorest people. This chapter will demonstrate how most of Mexico's masses have become forced off their lands and become unemployed or underemployed waged labourers. Many of these people wish to migrate and this, in turn, provides Canada with an experienced and available reserve labour pool of people who are eager and ready to work.

During the period of 1940-1970, the make-up of the entire nation became transformed as a result of the introduction of the policy of import-substitution-industrialization. This policy deepened class divisions allowing the elite to accumulate even more wealth and converting many rural producers into landless wage labourers, while assisting Mexico in achieving economic growth rates which had been

unprecedented in its history. Politicians and economists around the world proclaimed the period of ISI as Mexico's economic miracle, while the country's masses reaped little of the economic benefits. Stimulated initially by increased U.S. demand for food and raw materials during WW2, and aided by a supply of labour, the Mexican economy enjoyed substantial growth rates during this period. Mexican businesses and industry flourished under government protection from foreign competition by the use of high tariffs and the prohibition and quotas of some imports of goods. With respect to agriculture, emphasis was placed on producing products for export to the U.S. Between 1950 and 1974, Mexico's real growth rate averaged a phenomenal rate of 6.4 percent per year, and the industrial and manufacturing sectors grew rapidly (Warnock, 1995:39). The agricultural sector also expanded mainly as a result of a government financed irrigation program. Yet, ironically, state investment facilitated capital accumulating in the private sector but only rarely aided the daily needs of Mexico's masses. The relentless promotion of ISI, in conjunction with its unequal impact on various sectors of the economy, led to an unprecedented deterioration in the distribution of income. The Green Revolution brought about the introduction of modern, often imported, technologies in agriculture and industry - tractors, hybrid seeds and the assembly line automobiles generated unprecedented economic growth, and sharpened class cleavages between workers and owners (Cockcroft, 1983:145). The state built dams to control flooding, improve agricultural productivity and to aid the exploding industrial sector by providing a stable source of electricity. Yet as Ramirez (1989) points out, many of the government's investments in

the agricultural sector were confined to the North and Northwest regions of the country where medium and large private holdings were more prevalent than *ejidos* (indigenous communities). A consequence of the government's prevalence to support medium and large scale private agriculture in the north at the expense of small *ejidos* in the south was the creation of a bi-modal structure of agricultural development. The majority of Mexico's small private farmers and *ejidatarios* - who specialized in the production of staple foodstuffs for internal consumption - received minimal support in terms of access to credit, technical advice, and adequate water supply systems. Very little irrigation was developed for *ejidos* lands. Also, the effects of the technology gained from the Green Revolution did not benefit *ejidos* because it focused on high-yielding products which required constant and adequate irrigation, fertilizers, and pesticides, all of which were not readily accessible to *ejidos*. Emphasis was being placed on maximizing yields of agriculture destined for U.S. markets. Large private farms using advanced technology and machinery displaced small-scale farmers from their land and means of earning their living. This bi-modal strategy of agricultural development generated high rates of agricultural production at the expense of the pauperization of the rural masses.

Immediately after the war, U.S. capitalists increased their investment and began to purchase many of Mexico's new industries, continuing to displace many agricultural labourers. The large amount of foreign and state investment made possible the installation of newer technologies causing the agricultural sector to experience an unprecedented degree of concentration as the greater productivity and higher levels of

profit generated by this process facilitated a centralization of capital in the hands of the bourgeoisie and foreign capitalists. But the large new modernized farms armed with machinery and advanced technology could not absorb the unemployed and under-employed who continued to live in the rural areas and were forced to become waged labourers. Dispossessed peasants trekked into the cities, and by 1960, Mexico was fifty percent urban (Cockcroft, 1983:151). Warnock (1995:168) defines poverty by the failure to provide a basic minimum standard of food, clothing, and shelter. This definition characterized and continues to characterize the vast majority of Mexico's population. In fact, according to Ramirez (1989), by 1970 at least thirty-six percent of the total agricultural labour force could not eke out an existence from their tiny plots of land and had to work as temporary workers in other activities or migrate to new areas.

Decline in subsistence farming necessitated an increase in the importation of basic foods. Mexico's masses could not afford to purchase these imports which resulted in malnutrition amongst Mexico's poor. In addition, Mexico's rural-to-urban migrants also faced extreme poverty due to the inability of industries to provide significant employment.

Realizing that rural landlessness and unemployment/underemployment rates were out of control and that changes were necessary, the Mexican government attempted to implement a Keynesian program of social and economic reforms including land redistribution. Ironically, before the effects of the reforms began to solidify, the debt crisis of 1982 struck, resulting in the Mexican government and the World Bank agreeing

to drop their Keynesian social welfare approach to agriculture in exchange for a free-trade model of development (Warnock, 1995:60). Slightly left-wing policies were exchanged for hard-nosed right-wing neoliberal alternatives. The Mexican government continued to sell off the livelihood of a huge number of its inhabitants in return for favourable economic numbers, and life became extremely difficult for most of Mexico's population.

In every year between 1964 and 1980, the regional economy grew by more than four percent, making the recession that hit in 1982 all the more painful (Green, 1995:62). Like the rest of Latin America, Mexico experienced this debilitating debt crisis when it defaulted on its debt payment. The effects of this major debt crisis were intense and its consequences are still felt today, especially by the vast majority of Mexico's population - the poor. This default marked the end of the era of import-substitution in Latin America, and was dubbed by many as 'the lost decade'. Green (1995:62) believes that the main causes of the massive recession was due to the two following factors: (a) the sudden end to foreign capital inflows which led and sustained the Latin American economy throughout the 1970's, and (b) a sharp rise in debt interest payments or world interest rates rose.

Mexico's debt was too high. The country was paying out in the form of interest payments much more than it was generating in revenues. As expected, in reaction to this situation, the Mexican government attempted various measures to cut public spending. It also put its monetary printing presses on overdrive in a desperate attempt to regain control of its economy. These actions consequently resulted in hyperinflation and a

devaluation of the strength of the peso. Consequently, the purchasing power of many of Mexico's citizens dropped. This made life especially difficult for the majority of Mexico's population - the poor. Realizing that Mexico's economic situation was in critical condition most banks ceased lending Mexico money forcing the government to turn to the IMF. The IMF provided a loan conditional on the adoption of its austerity programs which included a reduction in government support programs, agricultural credit and subsidies, and price supports (Warnock, 1995:168). The mandate of the IMF includes such positive intentions as to 'encourage the growth of international trade', and 'to provide members with loans under adequate safeguards when they get into balance of payment difficulties' (Green, 1995:33). Yet, with its generous intentions of lending a helping hand to those in need and providing safety net services to countries in economic need, the Fund has become, as Green (1995:33) states, an institute of misery and famine in the eyes of much of the developing world. Although the IMF and World Bank foster international trade and assist countries facing difficulties meeting balance of payment costs, they believe that neoliberal policies entail a 'no pain, no gain' sentiment, the pain is very evident amongst Mexico's masses and the gains are not (Green, 1995:47).

As the Fund is called upon by economically challenged countries who ask for loans, the IMF grants the loans and in return imposes strict conditions aimed at eliminating balance of payment problems. According to Green (1995:38), the Fund believes that balance of payment problems occur when a country's domestic demand is too large for its domestic production capability. This results in imports increasing,

creating a trade deficit and eventually a balance of payment crisis. The conditions which the IMF imposes in return for the loan usually include a smaller role for the government, a switch in power resources to the private sector, the privatization and deregulation of the industry, and the opening up of the economy to foreign trade and investment (Green, 1993:42).

The 1980's were especially difficult era for most Mexicans. This period witnessed a sharp decrease in their standards of living, and an increase in the number of people living in poverty and indigence. In fact, in the early 1980's Mexico's economy shrunk for the first time since WW2 (Green, 1995:62). According to Ramirez (1989), the burden of neoliberal policies implemented by the government fell hardest on the working class and the poor- the overwhelming majority of the Mexican population. Real wages dropped and inflation rose, resulting in a deterioration of the purchasing power of the working poor and an actual decrease in wages. When the peso crisis struck in the early to mid 1990's, Mexico again was left little options besides borrowing even more money in order to pay its debts. During this peso crisis, Mexicans saw their buying power fall by approximately 30 percent (Gingerich, 1998:1). By April 1992, the World Bank concluded that 46 percent of the Latin American population lived below the poverty line, an increase from 35 percent in 1980, and that a huge amount of Mexicans were living in extreme poverty which included malnutrition (Warnock, 1995:68). Warnock (1995) believes that much of the poverty and indigence was attributed to the rise in the number of people living on small production units, the growth of landless peasants, and the lack

of alternative employment. The most serious problem facing Mexico during the 1990's continues to be the lack of adequate jobs, many of which disappeared due to structural adjustment policies. As the government attempted to follow strict austerity programs and implement the sale and liquidation of thousands of public enterprises that were deemed to be inefficient or an intolerable economic drain on revenues, the wage gap broadened. After protections were eliminated, many places closed down, state enterprises got privatized and budget cuts destroyed. As a result many jobs were lost (Warnock, 1995:177). Real unemployment rates, which were much higher than those reported by the Mexican government due to the fact that the government considered a person who worked as little as one hour a week as being employed, continued to be high during this decade.

Another difficulty facing Mexico due to its weak economy is its increasing incapacity to integrate its own growing population into the formal employment sector (Peters, 1988:61). Peters (1988:61), states that after the 'lost decade', the 1990's have produced the strongest fall in the rate of GDP in Mexico since the 1930's. The period from the 1988 to 1995, for example, GDP grew at an average rate of 1.7 percent, which was slightly below the level of population growth (Peters, 1988:61). The 1994 report indicates that in order for the Mexican labour force to absorb the incoming youth ready to enter the labour force, the Mexican economy needs to grow by at least 3 percent, which has rarely occurred since the debt crisis. The 1995 Mexican Country Report, states that the creation of approximately 800,000 to one million new jobs are required each year in

order to accommodate potential new arrivals into the labour force and that this lack of employment opportunities has encouraged large numbers of Mexicans to emigrate.

Having produced poverty and massive unemployment and underemployment, ISI and IMF imposed neoliberal policies, have undoubtedly contributed to an increased potential for migration as a source of livelihood for Mexico's masses.

Chapter Six: Four Characteristics of Mexican Migrant Workers

Most studies of international migration have focused on 'free migration'. This term refers to those migrants whose presence in a new country - whether temporary or permanent - is not subject to restriction imposed by the government of a receiving country. The migratory movement discussed in this thesis is of a different type. It is regulated in the sense that workers are contracted to work for a specific employer for a specific term after which they are required to return home. It will be argued in this thesis that the regulations to which Mexican migrants are subjected affects their labour performance in Canada, making them the labour pool of choice by Canadian farmers. There are four major characteristics which distinguish this regulated migration from free migration making them an ideal and preferred labour force for domestic growers. First, unlike free migrants who move to a new country for a variety of reasons, Mexican contract workers come to Canada for strictly economic reasons. Second, whereas free migrants are often members of the middle class, most Mexican migrants are extremely poor. Third, contrary to free migration which may or may not be recurring in nature for

various time periods, Mexican seasonal migration is of an annually recurrent nature. And fourth, contrary to social networks in a receiving country playing a major role in free migration they have no role in the movement of these Mexican migrants.

Students of free migration have emphasized economic factors which propel it. As evidence, one must simply observe the research and literature on migration focusing on economic factors and their role in instigating migration (De Jong and Gardner, 1981). Yet there are many other non-economic reasons which lead to migration. When a person becomes dissatisfied with his/her home location for whatever reason, the desire to migrate will be generated. Whether this person will migrate or not is affected by his/her needs, constraints, and strength of dissatisfaction (Lewis, 1982:99). For example, Lewis (1982, 99) states that the vast exodus of labourers from rural districts into England in the 19th century was not due only to greater prosperity and the general rise of wages in the manufacturing districts, but also to a growing disinclination to farm work, to an absence of opportunities for advancement, and to a desire for greater independence and freedom. Jansens (1970, 21) also acknowledges the fact that migration occurs for various reasons besides economic factors. He states that in 1955 Rossi found that migrants gave the following reasons for migrating to Paris: issues concerning the labour markets in both sending and receiving countries, a desire to be closer to family and friends, a desire to acquire adequate housing, health motives, marriage, adventure, studies/academic factors, and being due to political/social events such as escaping from wars, dictators, and avoiding military service. Therefore as demonstrated, finding work and earning money is

not the only reason for migration. Jansens (1970:22) states that the reasons for at least one quarter of all migration tends to be linked in some way with family. For example, some people migrate at the time of marriage, while others migrate due to the lack of offers of marriage in their place of origin. Jansens (1970:22) also indicates that a larger proportion of people migrate in order to rejoin their family and relatives. In addition, at a moment of death, divorce, or separation it is not uncommon for one of the partners to rejoin members of his/her family which may include migrating. As well, families are known to move in order to improve opportunities in schooling, training, and jobs for every member of the family (Jansens, 1970:22). Individuals or families may also migrate due to the damage caused by a natural disaster in their place of origin. A student may decide to migrate in search for better education. There are also people who migrate simply in order to gain certain experiences each new destination has to offer. This is the case of many people recruited to serve in the military. Therefore, there are many possible reasons why people might migrate. Many times the reason for migration is based on a number of factors which could include both economic and non-economic.

By contrast, the major, if not the only reason for the migration of the subjects studied in thesis is strictly financial. They come to earn money. "They are good workers. They come to Canada strictly to make money so they can improve their standards of living at home" (Cecil and Ebanks, 1991:399). They decide to leave their families for extended periods and to work and earn money in Canada. This is spelled out very clearly in the contracts which the Mexican migrants agree. These contracts between Canadian

growers and the migrants allow the migrants to enter Canada for a specific time period in order to conduct agricultural work for specific growers. One Canadian grower interviewed in Basok's study stated:

Things are economically just getting worse in Mexico. There is an economic crisis and the minimum salary is only 15 pesos. Things are expensive and the situation will never get better. Everything is getting worse.

Other growers similarly state:

They come here to work...they don't stop. They want to work and that is what they are here for.

When it's 110 degrees you can't get anyone to work in here. These guys [Mexican migrants] have a contract to work that they have to uphold.

When they come here they know they have to work. They want to work and they want a lot of hours so they can take a lot of money back to Mexico. They get \$1 a day there and they get \$60 a day here. So for them that's an incentive to do the work.

When I hire offshore workers they come here on contract...with those guys you tell them "look we have to work 10 hour days", they won't say no because they need the money, they come here on contract to make money and they need money so they work...they don't have welfare.

When one migrant was asked why he decided to migrate to Canada rather than the U.S. he reinforced the fact that this migration is strongly economically based by responding:

It's better in Canada than in the U.S. because we can work longer hours and earn more money.

Other migrants stated:

I come here with the same mentality as everyone else...to make money.

I come here for the same reasons as everyone else...for economic necessity.

In fact, all of the migrants themselves stated during the interviews that they migrate solely for financial reasons. None of the one-hundred migrants interviewed gave any other reason for their migration and temporary separation from their families and friends. When directly asked why they migrate, many of the participants simply stated “por las necesidades económicas” or for economic necessity. Others stated they migrated due to the critical economic situation or “situación económica es crítica” in Mexico. These migrants also went on to specify how they intended to use the money they were earning in Canada. Most stated that they intended to build a home. Other popular responses were to finance their children’s education or to pay for medical and other expenses. When asked why they decided to migrate, seventy one percent of the migrants stated that their main reason was so that they could earn enough money to build a house. The subjects added that the cost of land and materials were very high in Mexico, and that they did not have the means available to them in Mexico to earn enough money. Many stated that by taking part in the offshore program they estimated that it would only take them approximately three to five years to earn enough money to reach this goal. Twenty five percent of the migrants interviewed stated that they decided to take part in the program because they needed to earn money in order to finance their children’s education. Most of the migrants had children who were attending secundaria (high school), or university, which are very expensive especially when other necessities such as books, supplies, in some cases uniforms, and transportation are factored in to the financial equation. One of the Mexican

workers stressed the importance of his sacrifices when he stated that his main reason for migrating was to earn enough money to pay for his children's education so that they could have a better standard of living in the future, and not be subjected to the same grueling conditions. Four of the subjects stated that they migrated to Canada in order to finance unexpected medical operations of very close family members. They felt that their migration was the quickest way to pay for the necessary medical treatment their loved ones urgently needed. Most migrants added that they could not accomplish their objectives without migrating because there were no jobs available in Mexico and that the few jobs that were available did not provide sufficient wages:

I came to Canada because I could not earn enough money in Mexico to support my family.

I came to Canada because having just one job in Mexico was not enough to support my family.

In Mexico I only earned 200 pesos a week and that wasn't enough to support my family.

I came to Canada because of the economic crisis in Mexico...Salaries are very low right now.

Another migrant expressed a similar sentiment stating the following in an attempt to convince his wife to allow him to take part in the program:

Look, I keep working in Mexico and we are not getting anywhere...let me try!

The need for economic relief is so severe in Mexico that one migrant stated that he

had risked his health and possibly his life in order to provide for his family by taking part in the program. This migrant told his story about having become very ill and hospitalized due to being exposed to pesticides used by his Leamington employer. He continued to say that in 1993 he did not return to Canada due to his health, but in 1994 he had no choice due to economic necessity to migrate. A common sentiment of these migrants and amongst the other migrants interviewed is that they can earn much more money in Canada on a consistent basis, and that this injection of money is worth temporarily leaving their families due to the immediate necessity of finances:

In 3 - 4 months in Canada I can make a lot of money...it is a big help because in Mexico it is more than I can make in a year.

If I stayed in Mexico I would not be making enough. Even together with my wife working we would both combined not be making enough to survive.

I came to Canada realizing that I will suffer...not for a vacation. Since I've come my family has had better dishes, cloths and I can provide for my children.

A second characteristic of Mexican workers is closely related to the economic basis of this migration. These migrants have been subjected to extreme poverty. Although some researchers (Alejandro et al. 1991, and Massey 1994) argue that people who migrate are in fact not from lower classes, but rather from the middle classes, the opposite is true for Mexican seasonal workers. The logic behind the argument put forth by Alejandro et al. (1991) is that some money is required in order to pay for migration related expenses such as transportation costs. Those from lower classes cannot afford

these costs and use their money to provide necessities to themselves and their families. This argument may hold some merit with respect to free migration, but when applying it to regulated migration this argument is not as solid. The main defect is that with regulated migration, Canadian employers cover part of their workers' transportation costs and, the migrants are not expected to pay for any of their accommodations when in Canada. In fact, with these economic supports in place, the program has an internal requirement to recruit amongst the poorest of Mexico and is very successful in soliciting participants. Many migrants interviewed stated that they sacrifice being with their families and come to Canada "por mi pobreza" - because of their poverty. One migrant stated that he comes from a very poor region of the country, which is so dry and mountainous that there is no good land for agriculture... so he left Mexico because of his family's poverty and inability to get a job. Others stated:

My community is very poor. We used to have pine trees producing resin for export to the U.S.... but then we cut all the trees for lumber and the paper mill companies. There are no laws to protect the forest and eventually the forest was gone... so were the jobs.

I was very poor when I decided to join the program and I worked as a jornalero. I would only earn little money and struggled to buy shoes for my family. The prices are very high and my poverty was very large. I want to keep coming as long as I can.

Others commented about their poverty and gave examples to illustrate the problems they had encountered in earning a living. It should be noted that a majority of the participants stated that their occupation was *jornalero*. One migrant stated:

I work as a jornalero when ever I can... as mechanic... a driver or in agriculture.

Many also tried other occupations to make ends meet. Other migrants stated:

Here [in Mexico] there is no work for anyone between May and October. I'm a jornalero and only earn about 20 pesos a day when I can find work.

I work when I can as a jornalero, but it is difficult. I migrated to provide my children with a better life... I wanted to at least be able to dress my children.

Others described their extreme poverty and economic situation due to unemployment and underemployment as follows:

I used to work for the railway as a brake man, but it was privatized and I lost my job... I came to Canada because I couldn't find any work in Mexico. I don't like coming to Canada but I have to so that I can provide for my kids.

I lost my job in a state owned casting facility when the company was sold to a U.S. enterprise... I needed to support my family.

I came to Canada because I lost my job at PEMEX... I used to go door to door looking for work, it's either feast or famine.

Due to the fact that they come solely to make money and because they need to earn a relatively substantial amount, migrant workers are willing to work as many hours as possible. This fact makes them very desirable in the eyes of Canadian growers who need this commitment from their workers, as described in chapter three. Virtually every grower interviewed stated that the major advantage to having Mexican labourers was that they wanted to work weekends, holidays and very long hours. In fact some growers stated that their Mexican migrant labourers would become angry if their overtime was limited. Growers stated the following:

If they [Mexicans] only get their 40 hours they get pissed off, with at least 50 they are happy.

These guys come to work...and if they can't work Sundays they get upset. They'll work an average of 70 hours per week.

They want to work until 12 in the afternoon on Sundays. On Saturdays they're here 'till 9 p.m. if we let them.

The third characteristic of Mexican seasonal migration workers related to the two characteristics mentioned above is its recurrent nature. Most of the participants take part in the program every year, whereas with free migrants migrate on a more sporadic basis. Some of the migrants have worked in Canada for as many as 15 years or more. For the migrants this ability to return is critical because it allows them to make solid and lasting improvements to their own lives and the lives of their families, given that most were so desperately poor when they initially began migrating to Canada. Many migrants stated that in order to achieve their main goals of building a home or financing their children's education, repeat migration was necessary due to the high costs involved. Many also felt that the economic situation in Mexico was not improving and that in order to have a stable and sufficient income, they had little other choices than once again participating in the Mexican Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program. Obviously this repeat migration benefits not only the migrants but also the domestic growers in-so-far as it provides growers with an experienced labour force. This experienced workforce already knows the rules with respect to issues such as safety, proper demeanor, hours of work and procedures. Also by receiving a 'ready to work' and already trained labour force, the growers can easily maintain their levels of production and quality without missing a beat.

Once the migrants get off the bus, they can go right to work on the farms. Growers are not forced to spend time training and re-training new labourers. By acquiring an experienced labour force, domestic growers inherit a work force which clearly understands what will be expected of them. This eliminates any confusion with respect to how many hours of work will be available and how much equipment or machinery they will be expected to operate. In essence this eliminates any surprises for both parties and can reduce any conflict or intentional negative sentiments. Another positive aspect of the recurring nature of the program for the growers is the fact that it displays that most of the migrants value their offshore jobs and will not quit or abandon their duties before their contracts are fulfilled. This lifts a great burden off the minds of the growers because they can be confident that they will have the same work force for an extended period and that they will not lose any crucial workers half way through the critical harvest period. By obtaining such a work force in adequate numbers, a large amount of stress and added work are avoided by the growers. These growers can simply guide their offshore labourers with little supervision and insure that they are properly paid, and in return receive a preferred labour force. One farmer strengthened this argument by stating:

When offshores come, they do their job... they do their job and go. You don't have to tell them how either. I don't have to be there always and supervise, none of the farmers around here have to be there constantly... this guy has worked at other farms in the past and he runs this place here.

A fourth characteristic which makes these migrants a preferred labour pool to Canadian growers is the lack of social networks available to them in Canada. Most

research (Menjivar 1994, Massey 1993, Fawcett 1989) dealing with the role that social networks play for free migration stresses their importance as an instigator and resource. Social ties transmit information about places of destination and sources of settlement and assistance. Traditionally this network of information transmission in effect increases the likelihood of migration, which in turn causes additional movement, which in turn expands social networks. Many times this is set off when family members become role models through their achievements in a foreign country (Fawcett, 1989: 697). Boyd (1989) suggests social networks both transmit and shape the effect of social and economic structures on individuals, families, and households. In essence, social ties are important and can affect migration because they have the potential of lowering costs and risks of movement. What makes Mexican migrants unique is that social ties in Canada do not exist. By not having social ties in Canada, these migrants were left in a foreign country with no other Canadian contact than their current employer. This condition makes these migrants dependent on their Ontario employer and makes them more vulnerable than their Canadian counterparts, or those who might have migrated freely. By not having contacts in Ontario, these migrants are more vulnerable because their alternatives are limited. These regulated migrants do not have the luxury of asking a friend or relative for help with finding a new job or a new source of income. This very strongly reduces the likelihood of these migrants fleeing and becoming illegal residents or even legal citizens and leaving the program. By not having this ability, these workers have no choice but to depend on the growers for their employment and livelihood. This ensures their constant

participation in the program and their loyalty to the employer to whom they are assigned. It can be strongly argued that this availability of social networks in the host country is a strong reason why many participants in the American Bracero program eventually became illegal immigrants. Many of the Bracero program participants who entered the U.S. took advantage of their American social ties by relying on them for assistance with housing, financial assistance and employment, which lowered their dependence on program participation and eventually the abandonment of the program (Hansen, 1988:99; Reichart and Massey, 1982:5-6; Pfeffer, 1980:39). This important issue is realized by the growers who stated the following:

The disadvantage of legalizing Mexicans would be that they would be free to leave the greenhouses and go work elsewhere.

By keeping these migrants docile and dependent, Canadian growers prefer them over a Canadian more independent labour force.

The four characteristics mentioned above make Mexican seasonal workers a preferred labour pool for Canadian growers. They provide the grower with a *reliable* work force with very little additional training required. These workers show up for work every day, do their job with little supervision and training and are very eager to work many hours. Also, each of these characteristics gives the grower the upper hand and a certain element of control which is not as strong in the case of domestic labourers. In addition this allows the farmers to possibly take advantage or get away with more than they would with Canadians. These issues will be examined in the next chapter.

Chapter Seven: Perfect Marriage?

Participation in the offshore program has inherent benefits for both parties involved. Although most benefits are reaped by the growers, the migrants also receive some rewards. One of the most obvious benefits for the growers is that they receive a *reliable* workforce. In addition to the workers being *reliable* they are also preferred because they can be easily controlled. According to Edwards (1979) workers' control is inherent in the capitalist process. He believes that since capitalists purchase and own labour power from workers for a specific period of time a day, they can attempt to stretch the amount of labour extracted from their workers within this specific period of time. However, Edwards (1979) also argues that in most cases, labour power is not a neutral and weak commodity. He believes that workers do have the ability to restrict or limit the amount of labour power extracted out of them by their employers. It is this element of limits set by the workers with respect to labour power extracted out of them that the migrants studied in this thesis lack. They have very little leverage or power to counter the

demands of their Ontario bosses due to the characteristics mentioned in the previous chapter as well as their expandability and ease of their replacement.

Edwards (1979:34) outlines different forms of control for various industries. The form of control that best explains the agricultural sector and migrant labour is what he terms as 'simple modern day periphery control' (Edwards, 1979: 34). According to Edwards (1979:43) this form of control is based upon the immediate supervisors ability to directly watch over his/her staff. In most cases this is achieved when hired labourers work along side their employers, which was typical of the farms visited in the current study. By working along side his/her employees, the employers often plays the role of chief workman constantly monitoring and assessing the workforce. This form of control, which is based on the observations of the employers, results in the labourers being either rewarded or penalized strictly based upon their supervisors' decision. This ability of the employer to be both judge and jury pressures the workers to maintain good relations with their bosses or risk facing dangerous repercussions. It is this fear of the negative repercussions which leads to and drives the consent by the employees. With respect to the Mexican migrants' position in the agricultural industry, these repercussions mean being banished from the program. Therefore, due to their 'expendability' these migrants accept wages and conditions with little resistance in order to gain acceptance from their *patróns*.

As demonstrated in the previous chapter the vast majority of these migrants reapply to the program each year with the hopes of being re-selected. This re-selection

process by the Ministry of Labour and Social Planning in Mexico (Secretaría) is dependent on the employers' previous evaluations of the worker. At the end of each season, employers complete the 'notice to the employer' questionnaire, and give it to their workers in a sealed envelop which is to be handed in to the Ministry of Labour and Social Planning upon their arrival back to Mexico (F.A.R.M.S., 1998:12). It is usually this information given by the growers regarding the migrants which determines if they will be once again allowed to participate. It is obvious that the results of this questionnaire can clearly affect the lives of these migrants, their families and other dependents. It affects not only their ability to provide necessities but also their goals, dreams, and 'life chances'. A poor evaluation or disapproval from their *patrón* (employer) can cause a disqualification from further participation in the program. If the *patrón* disapproves of the migrants for whatever reason, they may not be invited to return next year. This clearly gives the growers the upper hand with respect to 'stretching the amount of labour from their workers' and this may be the major reason for the growers' failure to provide adequate living conditions to their workers. For example, six migrants interviewed in this study lived in an old converted walk-in cooler with a small 2 room addition and a bathroom. If a worker would express dissatisfaction with the living conditions and builds up enough courage to ask his employer to improve them, there is the possibility that he could be risking losing his job the following year. Many workers are afraid they might be deported if they complain about their working conditions (Bolaria, 1988:112).

The same could happen if a worker decided to return to Mexico before his contract was fulfilled. Even though this migrant may have a good reason to return to Mexico either permanently or temporarily, the *patrón* may choose to not request this particular migrant in the following year as a form of punishment and as a display of his power to the other migrants. One migrant interviewed in Basok's study stated that in 1995 he came to Ontario and got sick. He kept getting headaches and had high blood pressure and suffered from nerves. He asked his *patrón* if he could leave because his wife was sick, and the next year he was not approved into the program. Another migrant faced a similar experience. He had been coming to Canada for 11 years, on and off. He also missed a few years because he got sick and consequently was not named the following year. Yet another migrant was subjected to the same insensitive treatment. This migrant informed the interviewer that he did not come to Canada the last two years because of problems he faced at the Secretaría. He added that if the *patrón* did not ask for a worker, the Secretaría punished him/her by not giving the worker a job the next year. It should be noted that not being named by the *patrón* does not necessarily mean that the migrant will be banished from ever participating in the program again, but it does make it more difficult to continually be selected into the program on a continuous annual basis (Basok, 1999).

Obviously most workers have a strong desire to be named by the *patrón*. If the growers are impressed with a certain labourer, they can make a written request to F.A.R.M.S. to have a specific labourer return to his/her farm the following year, virtually

ensuring them work and a stable source of income. By being named, these migrants have in a sense gained the support of their employer which eases their struggle for economic survival. They have been reassured by their bosses that they are basically good workers and that they should continue working in the same manner. To these migrants, who as previously demonstrated, come from extreme poverty and economic instability, being named by their employer is very important. This situation to a certain degree keeps all of the migrants in direct competition with each other to impress their bosses.

The control is also facilitated by the nature of the relationship between the employers and their workers. Since migrants do not have any social ties in Canada besides their *patrón*, they experience a relatively high level of helplessness. They have very little choice but to depend on their *patrón* in many ways. For example, when a migrant is in need of an English translation of a letter the *patrón* is usually called upon by them for help. Also, for many migrants the *patrón* is the only source of transportation for doctor or bank visits, and particularly grocery shopping. In addition, it was found in the in-depth interviews used for this study that many migrants used their *patrón*'s personal phones for communicating with their families back home. For most, the *patrón* becomes a friend and someone they can turn to in times of need (Basok, 2000:21). In a study conducted by Cecil and Ebanks (1991:398) most growers stated that they developed a special social relationship with the migrant workers. In addition some farmers agreed that they had a sense of responsibility for their workers, who found themselves on rural farms without their families and hundreds of miles away from home. As a result this delicate

interaction of dependence puts the migrants in an awkward and difficult situation. Given this situation, most migrants realize it is in their best interests to win the respect of their employers because they are the only people or resource available to them. This aids in creating a less confrontational and convenient workforce for the growers. Most of the growers interviewed realize that coercion and fear are not the best tactics for getting the most out of these migrants, nor are they necessary. One *patrón* stated that migrants were hard working, and that they came here with an understanding that they had to be cooperative. Some of the growers stated the following:

These people are hard working. They come here with an understanding that this is work and you have to be cooperative. They cooperate with you, and they don't make demands and you have to understand that they are people too, not just workers

I treat them like family and they treat me like family. It's their farm. I give them cash on top of their contracts...I tell them to buy gifts for their kids in Mexico...\$400 to \$500 per person

I know the guys...they bring their cameras and they take pictures to send home and hopefully, we sort of treat them a little bit like family and hopefully they appreciate it.

This greater manageability and control as well as their *reliability* are very attractive for Canadian growers. But equally important are the benefits derived by Mexican workers from this program.

Although the bulk of this thesis has focused on the benefits and possibly necessity of these migrant workers for domestic growers and the agricultural industry, it is only one half of the equation involved in this phenomenon. It must be noted that there are positive

benefits of the offshore program for both parties involved, and that these mutual benefits are the reason for the program's success and popularity among the Mexican workers manifested by the severe competition applicants experience at the Mexican Ministry of Labour and Social Planning. Obviously the financial gains made by these participants, play an important role in their decision to participate in the program, Mexican migrants are presented with an opportunity to earn wages much higher than what they could earn in Mexico, and they also are entitled to a Canadian pension. The higher wages they earn are used to feed and provide necessities for their families such as housing, clothing and food. According to Cecil and Ebanks (1992:21), the recurrent nature of their migration to Canada, assists the migrant workers in securing a stable income and allows them to plan their life strategies such as business investments, building a home, and financing their children's education. Looking at it in these terms, it is easier to understand why people who usually have many dependents and thus financial responsibilities take part in this offshore program and subject themselves to the conditions stated prior.

Not only do these migrants value their experience working in Canada in relation to working in Mexico, they also strongly prefer the Canadian program to an alternate option available to them, that is, illegal migration to the U.S. One reason is that with the program studied in this thesis the migrants are able to remain in close contact with their families through phone calls, letters and yearly returns. Most of the migrants stated that they phone Mexico on a weekly basis. In addition their contracts are usually only for part of the year allowing them to return to their families and stay in tune with their villages

and cultures. Many migrants also stated that they had a fear of 'becoming lost' and detached from their families if they were to illegally migrate to the U.S. which is an option chosen by many Mexicans similar to those interviewed for this thesis. The following quotes illustrate how Mexicans employed in the Canadian program feel about migration to the U.S. and the advantages of the Canadian program.

When one goes to the U.S. one has to stay there for many years, being separated from one's family

For me it would be difficult, and for my family and children as well because they would not know anything about me, because one never knows where there will be a job. But here, on the other hand, we come on a contract. And from here I can keep in touch with them by phone and they know my address and in case I cannot write them or my letters get lost, they can go to External Relations in Mexico and get our address

Therefore this is a preferred alternative for many people living in Mexico. Due to the mutual benefits to both parties involved, the program has been successful for many decades. Although the benefits are obviously slanted towards the growers, the migrants are benefiting to some degree, and attempting to make the best of their situation.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

Most research on migrants has focused on either the individual and structural factors involved in the production of the supply of immigrant labour or the structural conditions which necessitate the demand for labour. Rarely have theories adequately explained both sides of the supply and demand equation creating migration. The world systems theory is an exception in-so-far as it adequately identifies the importance and creation of both sides of the migration equation. Therefore it is this theoretical approach which has influenced the present study.

Canadian growers believe that the demand for migrant workers is due to government policy which reduces tariffs on imports and thus increases global competition for their product. This increased competition forces the growers to pay their workers less money. The result is that agriculture has come to form a secondary labour market characterized by poor working conditions and low wages, unlike the primary sector which provides good wages and favorable conditions. A consequence of this is that Canadian growers cannot find an adequate amount of *reliable* labourers willing to work in the

agricultural industry. In order to survive, these growers resort to recruiting labourers from abroad. The participants of the offshore program, which are seen by the growers as a pool of cheap unused labour, or a reserve army of labour, come from poor regions of the world, or from what world systems theorist would call 'periphery' regions. According to the world systems theory of migration these peripheral regions have become and will remain debilitated because of capitalist integration and exploitation by 'core' countries, or countries of strong economic and political power. The residents of the peripheral country face extreme poverty and little governmental assistance aimed at improving their standard of living. Many of them opt to migrate abroad. This reserve army of labour is able to supply the demand for agricultural labourers in Canada.

By having available to them an experienced workforce which is willing to work long hours to earn a living, growers claim that the need for a *reliable* workforce is met by the migrants who take part in the offshore program. Most growers feel confident that the migrants will be available and willing to work for wages provided to them when their perishable product reaches its critical period of harvest. This confidence is not extended towards Canadian labourers who are not seen as *reliable* mainly due to the fact that they have other options available to them such as welfare or other, possibly higher paying jobs for their economic survival. For growers to be a *reliable* worker means to be willing to work 7 days a week, as many hours as possible under difficult conditions and with no complaints. The definition of *reliable* presented by the growers partially reflects the physical constraints of the industry related to the perishability of agricultural crops. The

other portion of the definition is socially constructed by them in order to maximize their profits and control their labour force.

This thesis identifies four characteristics Mexican migrants possess by virtue of their participation in the regulated offshore program which make them ideal for Canadian growers. First, unlike free migrants who move to a new country for a variety of reasons, Mexican contract workers come to Canada for strictly economic reasons. In all of the in-depth interviews conducted for this study, the migrants themselves stated that they only migrate because they are in need of money. Second, whereas free migrants are often members of the middle class, most of the Mexican migrants are extremely poor. Because of various economic crises, arguably due to capital integration by core countries, Mexico is a nation with massive poverty. In addition, Mexico's poor receive little government assistance and are left facing few options for economic survival. Third, contrary to free migration which may or may not be recurring in nature, Mexican seasonal migrants return to Canada on an annual basis. Most migrants continually re-apply to take part in this program year after year, mainly due to their extreme poverty. Fourth, contrary to free migration, social networks play no role in regulated migration. In other words, social networks in Canada are virtually non-existent and play no role in initiating this form of migration. This absence of social networks is ideal for Canadian growers because it helps to tie the migrants to the grower. Usually with free migration, the migrants have a base of family and/or friends which can be used to help them get better paying jobs. With regulated migrants this option is not available. These four characteristics make the

migrants *reliable* in the eyes of the growers because they show up for work everyday, do their job with little supervision or training, are very eager to work long hours, and are very loyal to their contractual obligations and employers.

In addition to being preferred due to their *reliability*, as a result of the four characteristics the Mexican migrants used in the offshore program are also easier to control by comparison to domestic workers. Therefore, from the growers' point of view by participating in the Mexican offshore program, they receive workers willing to work for low wages in poor conditions who are *reliable* and easily controlled. From this point of view it is easy to see the benefits available to the growers using the program. It is also important to point out , however, that the Mexican migrants do receive some benefit from participating in the program as well. These migrants are paid higher wages in Canada than they would earn in Mexico and have the ability to provide themselves and their families with a stable and sufficient source of income.

In sum, the agricultural industry in Ontario is facing a dilemma. Growers in this industry argue that they cannot find adequate numbers of *reliable* Canadian labourers. The shortage of domestic workers interested in this type of work is due to low wages, lack of protective legislation and poor working conditions. These characteristics are typical of jobs on the secondary sector. As a result, this industry has experienced difficulty in competing with the primary sector characterized by good wages and working conditions with respect to luring an adequate domestic labour force. Consequently, the growers have depended on the offshore program to fill their labour needs. By doing so

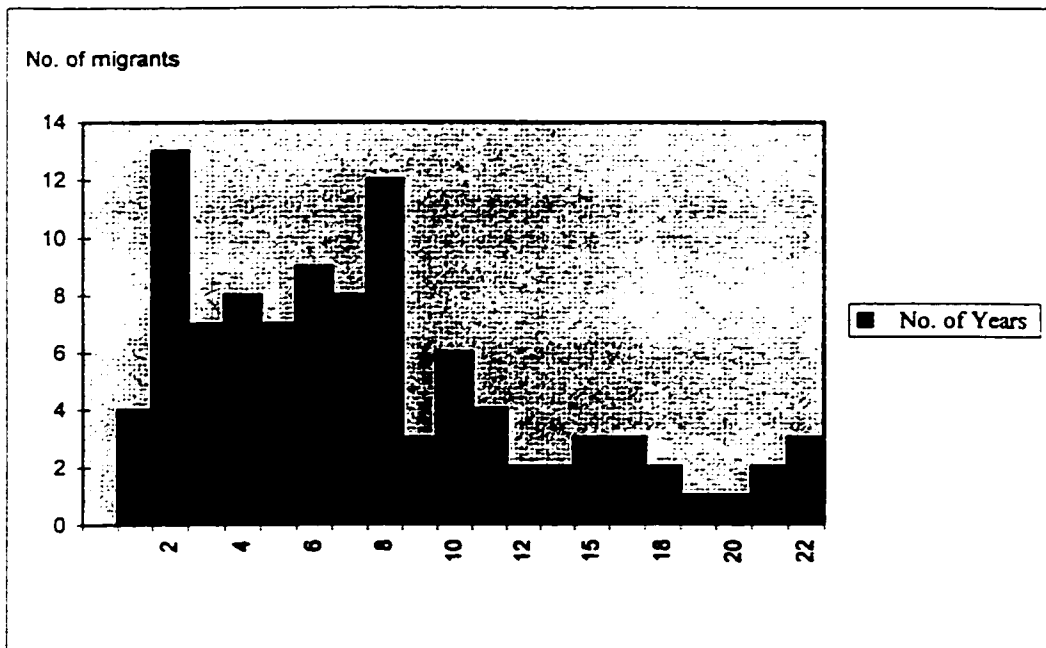
and not focusing on improving the wages and conditions of the industry, they have reinforced the negative elements of this industry and secured a position for it within this secondary sector.

Even though the role the government plays in this industry and its conditions may seem minimal, it must be highlighted that the government plays an integral part of both the problem and solution. The analysis of this study points to a contradiction in the Canadian policy making stressing that the government plays a major role in fostering the current situation. On the one hand, the government is concerned about providing jobs for Canadians, as evident by its 'Canadian first' policy. On the other hand, by neglecting farm workers and making it difficult to compete at the international market. The Canadian government insists that Canadians must be given domestic jobs prior to using any foreigners, yet the government does not make any attempts to improve the conditions of the industry required to entice Canadian labourers. In order to show its commitment to the employment of Canadian workers, changes must be made. Rather than providing the domestic growers with foreign labour as a band-aid fix, the government should focus on the real problem and consider providing growers with the tools necessary to improve the wages and conditions of the industry and attempt to bring it into the primary sector. The Canadian government must begin by introducing policy interventions such as subsidizing some of the growers income. This action would provide the growers with some financial relief and lessen the 'squeeze' felt due to the low prices they receive for their products. These income increases could be used to pay higher wages and improve conditions.

Another positive action would be to include this industry in all three of the major pieces of legislation dealing with labour. This would lead to significant improvements in the working conditions and salaries of the farm workers.

Graph
Number of Years in Program

No. of years in Program	No. of migrants
1	4
2	13
3	7
4	8
5	7
6	9
7	8
8	12
9	3
10	6
11	4
12	2
14	2
15	3
17	3
18	2
19	1
20	1
21	2
22	3



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