Realities of Precarity in Canada's Seasonal Fields:
Struggles, Advocacy, and Restricted Spaces and Voices

by

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Declaration of Ethics and Authorship

I hereby certify that this thesis is entirely my own original work except where otherwise indicated. I am aware of the University's regulations concerning plagiarism, including those concerning consequent disciplinary actions. Any use of the works of any other author, in any form, is properly acknowledged at their point of use. Furthermore, I acknowledge that this research was performed under the certification granted by the University of Ottawa's Office of Research Ethics **S-11-23-9808-REG-9808**.

Abstract

The following thesis examines the complex reality of temporary migration within Canada's agricultural sector by investigating the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP). The relevance of this inquiry hosts far-reaching implications for not only the wellbeing of migrant workers, but for the Canadian food-system, as well as migrant sending states. Furthermore, this research contributes additional knowledge and insights regarding the evolving interconnections between the climate and migration crisis that host critical impacts for Canada and the world moreover. In analyzing the impact of the SAWP on migrant workers' lives through two case studies, the project explores the interplay between climate change, globalization, neoliberalism, and liberalization in shaping the precarity faced by migrant workers in Canada. Despite the commonly advertised benefits of the SAWP, the study finds that structural barriers and power imbalances limit the realization of these benefits for migrant workers. The study ultimately explores the divided calls for reform across the sector, revealing the influence of widespread industry malpractice, and the presence of entrenched power hierarchies that have served to dominate the scope and direction of change. The research finds that the SAWP's structure and the broader context of inequalities related to globalization and neoliberalism hinder migrant workers' ability to leverage their assets and improve their livelihoods in Canada.

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Abbreviations

CAHR	Canadian Agricultural Human Resources Council
DMW	Documented Migrant Worker
ESDC	Employment and Social Development Canada
FARMS	Foreign Agricultural Resource Management Services
FVGC	Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada
IICA	Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture
IMA	International Migrants' Alliance
IMF	International Monetary Fund
J4MW	Justicia for Migrant Workers
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean Region
LMIA	Labour Market Impact Assessment
NFU	National Farmers' Union
MW	Migrant Worker
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
RAMA	Radical Action with Migrants in Agriculture
SAWP	Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program
SLF	Sustainable Livelihoods Framework
TFW	Temporary Foreign Worker
TFWP	Temporary Foreign Worker Program
WTO	World Trade Organization
UN	United Nations
WB	World Bank

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Chapter 1- Introduction

In the current global setting, there is little shortage of crises. Instead, we find so many worsening emergencies related to climate chaos and social inequality that governments all over the world are struggling to meet the needs of populations. With focus on the migration crisis, this thesis looks at the complex reality of temporary migration in Canada's farming and food sector. Migration of this nature is a complex issue with many driving factors, and one of the critical exacerbating forces that will be discussed within the course of this project is that of climate change. The Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP) was introduced in 1966 as a means of fulfilling perceived labour shortages within the farming sector. Today, the SAWP finds itself as a subsector program within the larger Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP). Although sharing many common characteristics with workers in 'low-skilled' and 'low-wage' sectors, workers participating in the SAWP face further barriers due to the seasonal nature of the program and the fact that workers are tied to the employer that hired them. The SAWP workforce is defined by bilateral agreements with Mexico and countries across the Caribbean, which means that most of the workers are also racialized, which further compounds barriers including facing discrimination at work and in the community (See **Table 1.1**).

Table 1. 1 - Key Distinctions Between Temporary Foreign Worker Programs

Stream	SAWP	Agricultural Stream	Low-Wage Stream
Source Countries	Mexico and Caribbean	All countries	
Consular Support	Yes according to bilateral agreements	By request with serious access limitations	
Housing	Employer must provide housing on or off-site		Employer not required to provide housing but it must be available and affordable
	No wage deductions for housing	Wage deductions allowed up to $30 per week for housing	
Employment Contracts	Bilaterally negotiated between governments	Must contain what was in LMIA job offers approved by Service Canada	
Work Permits	8-month max. (seasonal) with return by December 15th	24-month max (seasonal or non-seasonal)	
	Tied to specific employer in the agricultural sector		
Wages	National Commodities List wage methodology		Job bank median wage

Source: (Borrelli, 2024, p.4)

In 2021, more than 60,000 agricultural workers were brought in to work on a temporary term basis in Canada (Statistics Canada, April 18, 2024). For decades the program has uncritically slipped under the radar of Canadian civil society (Cohen & Hjalmarson, 2020, p.5). The literature on the SAWP and seasonal migration in the transnational context is extensive. Debates across the sector are largely divided between promoters and critics. Commercial farming advocates and state representatives who craft and influence policy and reforms tend to praise the program as benefiting all parties, while scholars and allies who identify with the migrant justice movement have been raising the alarm on widespread cases of human rights abuses and structures of indentured dependency for decades. The findings of this research conclude that although the SAWP has some benefits, the structurally induced precarity of temporary migrant workers, which is fuelled by globalization, neoliberalism, and liberalization, limits their realization, especially for workers participating in the program. Additionally, fragmented calls for reform within the sector reveal the influence of power hierarchies on the scope and direction of change.

The average citizen in Canada is largely unaware of the complex reality of the modern food system on which we intrinsically depend for survival. This research explores the implications of temporary migration for various stakeholders, including Canadian farmers, migrant workers, and the governments of their countries of origin. This research seeks to challenge prevailing governmental and industry promotional narratives that neglect the human experience, especially the experience of migrant workers who are precarious. Moreover, a significant majority of critical narratives that similarly highlight the migrant worker experience concentrate on experiences confined to their tenure within the SAWP. This project provides a

formal academic analysis that focuses on their livelihood trajectories before, during, and after their participation in the SAWP. This research also further enhances comprehension of emerging related challenges, including increasing inequality, global development, and climate change.

Research Methods

This MA thesis applies a mixed methods approach to answer the following questions:

1. How has the SAWP affected the livelihoods of temporary migrant workers?
2. What do the experiences of two migrant workers who participated in the SAWP reveal about the benefits and challenges (including livelihood barriers)?
3. What strategies can be implemented to solve the program's challenges, and more specifically what are the proposed reforms?

Chapter 2 begins by examining the historical origins of the program to establish a foundation for comprehending its original intended role, while also effectively contextualizing the interests of migrant-sending states and the institutional landscape that is essential to understanding the program's creation and evolution (Sharma, 2006; Satzewich, 1991; Henaway, 2023). Chapter 3 provides a topical literature review outlining the dominant and polarized debates between promotors (state and program officials) and critics (activists, allies and scholars) of the program. The former argue that the program creates a "triple win" situation, while the latter focus on precarity and structural inequality. Chapter 4 explores the migrant worker experience, presenting two case studies with which to draw connections to the broader debates in the literature, as well as a comparative case study analysis, offering a discussion of the livelihood outcomes. Chapter 5 explores calls for reform and presents an analysis of recent efforts to overhaul the program, and chapter 6 brings the study together with a final thesis overview and concluding remarks.

Conceptual Frameworks

This research employs a mixed-methods qualitative approach, utilizing three distinct theoretical frameworks to direct the investigation. The literature review draws on a diverse variety of primary and secondary sources, academic books, scholarly journal articles, government archives and publications, newspaper articles and industry reports. The two case studies have been guided by a Story-Based Strategy, whilst the comparative analysis has been structured using a Sustainable Livelihoods approach and Precarity lens.

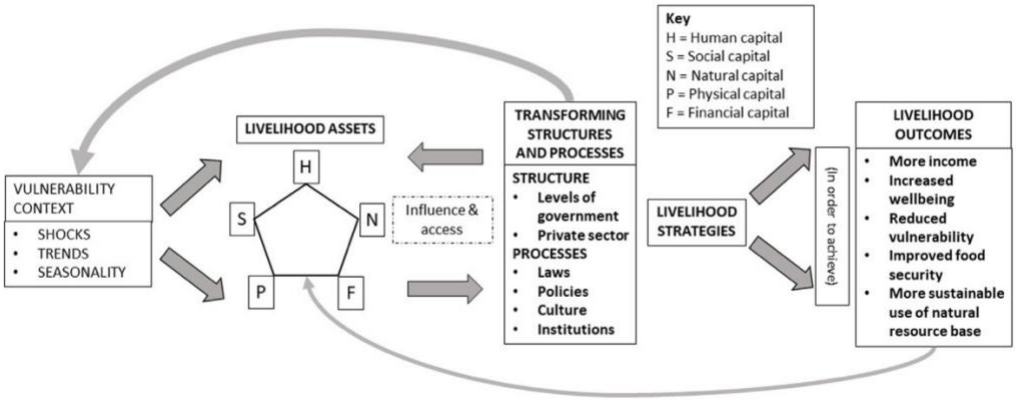
Story-Based Strategy

According to Reinsborough & Canning (2017), the story-based research method reveals that all complex issues are "intertwined with a network of existing stories and cultural assumptions that shape public comprehension" (p.19). The Story-based strategy offers a methodology to comprehend the existing narrative surrounding an issue and to bring about strategic intervention (p.19). This method offers a distinctive and ethical approach by prioritizing personal narratives and experiences in a system traditionally governed by statistics and bureaucratic evaluations which overlook lived realities of migrant workers. I have assembled these stories based upon open-ended interviews and the published autobiography of one migrant worker. Having conducted the interviews in a secure environment, the participants were able to articulate their narratives on their own terms. I chose this method for its effectiveness in addressing the concerns of members of marginalized groups (see, for example, Cadesky, 2022), such as migrant workers who have historically been excluded from policymaking processes.

Sustainable Livelihoods Approach

The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF) has been selected for the analysis of the two case studies of this project. The SLF approach focuses on the assets that individuals and/or communities possess and how they are leveraged in ways to establish resilient livelihoods (Natarajan et al., 2022). The main benefit of this approach is the ability to effectively identify assets and livelihood strategies, analyze constraints, and assess the sustainability of such livelihood mechanisms. The assets identified within this framework include financial assets (monetary income/equity/credit), social capital (networks/relationships of trust), human capital (skills/knowledge), natural resources, and physical capital (housing/infrastructure/services) (Natarajan et al., 2022). Figure 1.1 below presents an in-depth visual summary of the SLF approach used for guiding the case-study assessments.

Figure 1. 1 – Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF) Diagram



(Natarajan et al., 2022, p.3)

Although there are many benefits to the livelihoods approach including the ability to center the agency of marginalized groups in question, it is critical to acknowledge the

framework's weaknesses. Beyond issues of western bias, the framework's empirical centering of resilient strategies can serve to limit us in many contexts from bringing about long-term solutions for change. For example, analyses often fixate on the importance of workers' resilient diversification of leveraged capitals for maintaining their livelihoods. Valuable as this framing is in empowering workers and in shifting historical stereotypes and social caste norms – from these analyses, we frequently see solutions in the form of isolated policy changes. Some examples include policies to reduce the precarity of workers' assets, efforts to promote their formalization within the global economy, or otherwise, laws to criminalize those violating their rights. The limitations of these solutions are that they often remain reactive by addressing individual side effects rather than addressing the systemic root cause of what is generating precarity to begin with.

Therefore, within SLF approaches which over fixate on empowerment and agency of marginalized groups, often what results is a disconnection from deep rooted issues such as immigration and citizenship regimes, barriers and cuts to social services and healthcare, barred access to safe working and housing conditions resulting from entrenched power hierarchies, etc. In this capacity what is missing from many SLF derived solutions is the complex nature of the problems at hand, and thus, more structural scale of the solutions required to fix the problems. Respectively, with this critical understanding in mind, this research applies a mixed methods approach. This includes leveraging the precarity and story-based frameworks for drawing critical connections between lived experiences and the contextual, political, and economic driving factors shaping migrant workers' access to rights whilst simultaneously centering their agency and resiliency in its assessment.

Collectively, the frameworks were highly effective, although limitations did exist– these limitations themselves served to tell a very important part of the story. For the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework specifically, the use of capitals was very useful, as this approach allowed to structure the inquiry for capturing MWs distinct asset and status vulnerabilities. Migrant workers are so precarious that they are distinguishably prevented from leveraging their skills and assets for advancing their livelihoods in the same way that citizens and residents are. These are individuals often left outside of mainstream life in Canada, despite their central role in upholding Canada's food system. One of the examples of how the framework approach served as useful was showcasing the inverse relationship that MWs experience related to human capital. The research reveals that for TMWs, having advanced skills, education, and/or knowledge related to their rights does not present them with secure assets that they can leverage in the Canadian labour market. In other words, regardless of their resume, in practice, they are hindered from accessing promotions, establishing job security, advancing their careers, obtaining raises, let alone leveraging their labour contracts for better conditions both within working and living capacities.

Precarity Framework

The precarity approach underlying my research assessment is inspired by Landolt & Goldring (2013) who look at the access to rights by non-citizens in Canada because of state defined precarity through legal status. As they explain, precarious legal status refers to "authorized and unauthorized forms of non-citizenship that are institutionally produced and share a precarity rooted in the conditionality of presence and access" (p.3). As they argue: "The concept of precarious status captures the institutional production of multiple forms of 'less-than-full-status' non-citizenship, including authorized and unauthorized forms" (Landolt & Goldring,

2013, p.14-15). Further, I have selected this lens because as a conceptual framework it has been proven effective for connecting experiential knowledge with the greater and more complex sociological, systemic, historical, legal, and state driven policy factors shaping non-citizen rights.

Case Studies

The two case study participants selected for this research include Gabriel Allahdua and Keeno Clarke who have opted to have their full names disclosed within this project (see **Appendix A**[1] for participant profiles). The participants were chosen based on the fact that they both have secure status, location, timeframe, distinct immigration outcomes, and accessibility. Respectively, at the time of the interviews, both migrant workers were able to speak openly about their experiences without fear of immigration related reprisal. For representing variations in the experiences across different provinces, both workers were in different regions – British Columbia and Ontario— which are known for the highest concentrations of Temporary Foreign Workers (TFW) in the farming sector. In terms of timeframe, the cases represent different periods (5 years apart), which served to capture the potential for evolving differences in the program and associated practices. Additionally, both workers experienced opposite outcomes in their departures from the program— one of which was positive and the other negative. These criteria ensured that the cases would provide a diverse perspective on the long-term implications of working within the SAWP. Lastly, within the timeframes allotted for this thesis, reasonable accessibility was required within participant selection. Gabriel's active role in migrant rights as

[1] The decision to forgo interviewing employers in this research was made due to the abundance of public discourse regarding the perspectives and interests of the agri-farming industry. These perspectives are not only documented in decades of government reports and program evaluations, but they are also widely shared by agricultural coalitions, corporate marketing, and farmers' unions throughout Canada. It was determined that it was unnecessary to collect additional data or pursue insights on employer perspectives beyond what is readily available, given the abundance of publicly accessible information.

well as his proximity to Ottawa, in addition to the resources presented from his recently published book, made him a perfect candidate for this study. In the case of Keeno, after a wide search of potential research participants, given the criteria that were described above, Keeno's case was the most appropriate choice. It was also helpful to recruit him, given that I had previously met him once in 2018 in my capacity as a volunteer for Radical Action with Migrants in Agriculture (RAMA), a migrant advocacy group based in British Columbia.

Data Collection and Comparative Analysis

Data was collected for this project through semi-structured interviews conducted with the two former migrant workers in English and were transcribed and analyzed using a thematic comparative analysis approach. Interviews were guided using the three frameworks highlighted above. The interview questions themselves were structured based on the various livelihood assets outlined by the SLF (financial, physical, human, social, natural capital). Upon analyzing the interview data, the findings were categorized into sections based on pre-migration livelihoods, working & living conditions, institutional landscape, and mechanisms of resilience (**See Table 1.2 below**). These categories were drawn from research performed prior to the interviews and were selected to represent the key factors serving to influence the livelihoods of temporary migrant workers under the SAWP. The comparative component of the analysis was guided by the SLF and precarity approach and served to draw critical similarities and differences in their experiences to draw further connections with the broader literature and debates.

Table 1. 2 - Case Study Data Analysis Breakdown

Pre-migration livelihoods:	Information on the workers' lives and livelihoods prior to migrating to Canada.
Working conditions:	Experiences related to compensation, hours, breaks, health and safety, working environment and employer relations.
Living conditions:	Experiences related to housing, transportation, and social interactions.
Institutional landscape:	Broader context of laws, policies, regulations, practices and social norms that shape the experiences of migrant workers within the SAWP.
Resilience mechanisms:	Strategies leveraged by the workers to cope with challenges and build resilience.

Source: Elaborated by Author

For further details related to the semi-structured interviews, please see the interview questions found in **Appendix B.**

As this project relies on a mixed data approach incorporating both case study findings in addition to already existing data and research across the sector, it is important to acknowledge the benefits and limitations. Using different data sources is an effective way for assessing broader societal trends, and it allows to increase sample sizes for understanding systemic issues which can enhance generalizability. It also presents the ability to enhance contextual understandings of complex systems and policies such as that surrounding temporary migration. In terms of the limitations of mixed data approaches, it is important to acknowledge the possibility for data inconsistencies owing to the use of different data collection methods and research definitions, as well as challenges in valuation of different data sets and types of data. Further limitations exist when it comes to the use of data in general regarding this sector, as statistics are largely incomplete and/or inaccurate due to underreporting and data gaps due to MWs distinctly rural and precarious livelihoods circumstances.

Research Limitations

Despite the many strengths of this project, limitations are inevitable. The use of only two case studies limits the generalizability of the findings. They also cannot highlight all the variables that impact most or all migrant workers. As such, they cannot represent the experiences of all migrant workers. Despite these limitations, what this project can do is present critical insights into the systemic nature of precarity that exists across the temporary agricultural worker sector. Other limitations that exist are with regards to the applicability of the case study experiences having occurred in 2012 and 2017. The time in which the workers were in the SAWP also limits their experiences from addressing the complex effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, with the workers being male and both being able to speak, read and write in English, the study is limited in its ability to connect to important issues raised by scholars such as gender discrimination, and implications associated with literacy and language barriers (Gabriel & McDonald, 2019; Lenard & Straehle, 2012, p.1).

Another limitation is differences in sources. The first case study relies upon two sources, an in-person interview, and the participant's recently published book. The second case study, however, is primarily based on information gathered from interview transcripts which may limit the capacities of the comparative analysis to present an analysis of equal depths within both cases. Furthermore, the scope and time allotted for this master's thesis in conjunction with the heightened complexity of temporary migration have served to collectively limit the ability to include many additional yet important issues that relate to temporary migrant rights. This reality has also resulted in the limited ability to perform and encompass a larger number of research participants within the study, and the ability to perform a more expansive sustainable livelihoods analysis of each participant.

Ethical Considerations

Initially, this project aimed to look at a comparison between documented and undocumented migrants in agriculture. To mitigate risks associated with limited resources and the high risks of working with vulnerability within non-status populations, the focus of the project shifted, and instead focused on cases of former temporary foreign workers (TFWs) who are no longer under the precarious circumstances associated with seasonal status. I have received ethics approval for this project and have successfully completed required ethics training for ensuring the protection of participants involved (See **Appendix C**). In this capacity, it is essential to acknowledge the ongoing implications of narratives which frame TFWs as helpless victims. This research aims to challenge victimhood narratives by centering migrant workers as powerful agents of change, despite the many geopolitical and institutional challenges working against them. My collaboration with Canadian migrant rights networks and organizations such as the *Guelph Migrant Justice Network*[2] has further supported the ethical nature of this project for prioritizing the wellbeing of the migrant workers that I have been granted the privilege of speaking on behalf of.

Positionality

My experience as a student researcher and subsequently as a volunteer for a migrant rights organization in British Columbia motivated this study. This direct exposure was crucial in introducing me to the lived realities of migrant workers, fostering empathy and comprehension of the many challenges they encounter. This was helpful in cultivating the skills and information

[2] The nature of this collaboration involved attending monthly educative interdisciplinary meetings with activists, scholars, and policy specialists to share and collaborate on migrant rights related matters and research.

required to conduct original fieldwork and understand the myriads of challenges facing migrant workers. It is important to acknowledge any biases stemming from this early involvement. To address potential bias, I conducted the research for my thesis in a new provincial context (Ontario), where I had limited contact with the migrant rights network. In this new context, I adopted an "open book" mentality, aiming to examine several perspectives on the issue. My methodology entailed actively identifying and emphasizing counterarguments while striving to contest all prior assumptions and possible prejudices on the topic. Consequently, I choose to present both sides of the argument about thorny policy questions as much as possible while centring the lived experiences of migrant workers.

Chapter 2 – Historical Context

The SAWP has its roots in historical, economic, and social contexts that have shaped the country's food production industry and its entire immigration policy structure. This story begins by bringing us back to where it all started. Agriculture within this research refers to the cultivation of land, the growth of crops and the rearing of animals for acquiring food and their by-products for human subsistence (The Canadian Encyclopedia, 2020). Although today, large-scale agriculture has become critical for the survival of modern society, agriculture did not always exist as it does now, and in the centuries preceding its establishment, humans co-existed sustainably amongst nature in an entirely different way. In fact, for 90 percent of human history, hunter gatherer societies existed by living off the land and making use of locally yielded goods for survival (James, 2021, p.1). Although hunting and foraging may not present viable solutions that can meet the challenges of the 21st century, it deserves highlighting that humans have the collective capacity to source and supply food in sustainable ways. This project is animated by the idea that alternative futures remain possible.

This chapter explores the historical origins of the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP) in Canada, tracing its roots to the Great Depression and the subsequent labor shortages faced by the agricultural sector. The chapter examines how the changing dynamics of Canadian agriculture, including the decline of family farms and the rise of corporate power, contributed to the need for migrant labor. It also discusses the role of government policy and immigration reform in establishing the SAWP as a source of temporary foreign workers for the agricultural sector. By understanding the historical context of the SAWP, we can gain a deeper appreciation for its current role and the challenges it faces in addressing the rights of migrant workers and Canadian national and farming interests.

Driving Force Behind the Canadian Demand for Migrants

Origins of the SAWP

In the context of the Great Depression in the 1930s, unemployment rates in Canada skyrocketed, and paradoxically, alongside labour shortages (Struthers, 2013; CAHRC, 2017, p.5). In agriculture, many family farms found themselves in dire circumstances surviving off cash crops[3] with little security whilst facing droughts, global market competition and recurring labor shortages during peak harvest (Satzewich, 1991, p.58-68).

Farmers' movements emerged across the country that pressured the government for policy reform (Türegün, 2021, p.193). Some of the influential groups include the United Farmers of Ontario, the United Farmers of British Columbia, and the federal Canadian Council of Agriculture (Türegün, 2021, p.193). Historians have highlighted that the governments of the time

[3] Cash crops in this context refers to the selling of one's agricultural produce/crops on the market rather than for personal consumption. This was said to be a survival mechanism for small farms to weather and adapt to the volatility of the market at the time and lack of government mechanisms in place to support the industry.

failed to adequately respond to farmers and workers calls for help. Many family businesses went bankrupt, including family farms (Türegün, 2021, p.186).

The number of small farms in Canada dropped by 41percent between 1941 and 1966. Many were bought out by private banks and large corporations, and after consolidating the lands purchased, what arose was a much smaller number of corporate farms nationwide (Falconer, 2020, p.7). The large corporations that replaced what was previously a family farm dominated industry were well equipped to fund lobbying efforts and to influence politics and government in their favour due to their greater economic capacities. The increasing corporate power in the agricultural sector would come to play a pivotal role in determining the future of Canada's agricultural and immigration policy landscape (Falconer, 2020, p.7).

As noted, one of the many troubles raised by "the farmers movement" was labour shortages. In the mid twentieth century, there was a mass sectoral shift in which many farmers' offspring— who had for generations worked on Canadian farms in unpaid capacities and were conditioned and raised to inherit the family business, began to seek employment outside of the industry (Satzewich, 1991, p.58-68). With the young generation breaking ties with their heritage of farming, a labour gap arose. Furthermore, Canadians in search of employment were reluctant to take on these often-low paying, yet physically demanding roles in rural areas. As such, what resulted was a need for alternative sources of labour (Satzewich, 1991, p.58-68). In response to this problem, the Canadian government turned to immigration as a potential solution.

Racism and Canadian Immigration Policy

During the 1950s, Canada, like other settler colonies such as the United States and Australia, began calling upon the world to migrate to their "lands of opportunity" (Troper, 2013).

This call for migration was not an open invitation, however, as it was guided by state efforts to control the flow of migration based on racial and ethnic backgrounds. White Europeans were welcomed with incentives to migrate to Canada to invest in its long-term growth by buying up Canadian land and business ventures, whilst at the same time, non-white racialized migrants were being called upon to fulfill low-skilled labour shortages in farms and factories (Satzewich, 1991, p.1-38).

During the post-WWII period Canada promoted its reputation as a society based on multiculturalism, and as a country made-up of vast natural beauty and economic opportunity (Caccia, 2010, p.3-4).[4] Despite efforts to filter immigration for satisfying labour shortages, upon arrival in Canada, migrants designated for roles in agriculture began quickly seeking employment in other industries because of the undesirable hardships and dangers associated farmwork (Satzewich, 1991, p.1-2). In response to this, in the 1950s, the government of Canada sought policy solutions that would ensure greater control over migrant labourers (Satzewich, 1991, p.1-2). Parliamentary debates in the Department of Citizenship highlight their approach stating:

> It is difficult to force immigrants to remain as farm workers as this would closely approximate to forced labour…a sounder means of control lies in facilitating the movement of races that experience has shown are likely to remain in agriculture… and tightening up on the screening of those races that tend to drift into occupations adequately provided for now (Satzewich, 1991, p.1).

[4] This reputation has since been widely discredited for its misrepresentation due to Canada's long record of racism in its cultural genocide of the Indigenous, exploitation of Chinese workers in the establishment of its railroad infrastructure, and its ongoing racialized immigration policy in years following (Choudry & Smith, 2016, 9-12; Walia, 2021, p.158).

Soon after these debates, the federal government established a policy to bring in workers for seasonal employment that confined them to one employer within one industry, and which would also ensure that they return home at the end of the season (Satzewich, 1991, p.58-68). This would later become Canada's core structure to its immigration policy which distinguished citizenship through a two-track pathway as either high-skilled prospective future citizen, or short-term, low-skilled temporary migrant labourer (Ahamad et al., 2003, p.21). The SAWP arose within this context of racialized national interests, and eventually resulted in the pursuit of formal bilateral agreements negotiated first with Jamaica, second with Mexico, followed by the remaining countries across the Caribbean. Beginning in 1966, the program brought in 264 workers from Jamaica to farms across Ontario— at this time, Jamaica was the only participating country in the program (Dunsworth et al., 2024). Fast-forward to 2023, over 70,000 farm workers from 12 different countries migrated to work for the season on farms across Canada (Statistics Canada, April 18, 2024).

As of 2023, the SAWP has grown to include agreements that welcome in temporary foreign workers from across twelve different countries, in addition to Mexico and Jamaica, other signatories include, Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, Kitts-Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, as well as Trinidad and Tobago (IRCC, 2023).

Driving Force Behind the Supply of Migrants

Historical Overview

A long history of colonialism foreshadows the many challenges faced by countries across Latin America and the Caribbean, however, throughout the 20th and 21st century, what has

further curtailed their development has been the adverse barriers of competing in a liberalized global economy. Many developing countries became increasingly restricted in their development trajectory due to competition with heavily subsidized goods from Europe and North America, restrictive monetary policies imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and economic restructuring aligned with 'free' trade (Stiglitz, 2003, p.17). This constrained development of countries across the non-Western world, has resulted in a situation where the majority of these countries are now entirely reliant on foreign aid and labor export remittances to sustain their economies (Wells et al., 2014; Henaway, 2013; Walia, 2021; Binford, 2013). Within a capacity of precarity associated with dependence (Wells et al., 2014), migrant sending countries find themselves struggling additionally with the costs associated with the climate crisis (Gonzalez, 2021). The following section will examine the relationships between climate change, migration, and agriculture within the framework of temporary migration.

While there is variation amongst them, all the signatories of the bilateral agreements that supply labour for the SAWP face challenges related to economic and technological underdevelopment, slow regional and infrastructural growth, low rates of access to education and literacy, and high rates of inequality and poverty (World Bank, 2024). The prospect of labour migration opportunities presented through the SAWP is said to offer welcome opportunities for alleviating these circumstances of underdevelopment.

One of the primary benefits associated with the SAWP is that of financial remittances for sending countries. By 2010, Mexico was bringing in over CAD150 million per year transferred from temporary migrant workers sending money home (Wells et al., 2014, p.145). As programs like the SAWP grow to accept more workers each year, the remittances transferred from migrant workers to their home countries continues to rise exponentially. Within this context of reliance

on remittances, sending states have welcomed labour exports through temporary migration as a means of responding to challenges associated with underdevelopment.

Climate Change

In addition to the already constrained economic and political circumstances of countries across Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), one of the compounding factors is that of climate change and its associated extreme weather effects. Although climate change was not one of the initial driving forces, it is one of the increasingly relevant factors exacerbating and fuelling temporary migration globally today. As previously highlighted, historically, the landscape in which migration of this nature emerged can be seen as driven by forces related to colonialism, liberalization, neoliberalism and globalization (Sharma, 2006; Stiglitz, 2003; Henaway, 2023; Had-Kaddour, Dumont-Robillard & Ndiaye, 2024; Satzewich, 1991). This history is one which is critical to understanding the driving forces of temporary migration, and it is one which has been outlined by many scholars across the field, and one which cannot be separated from the many rights-based issues discussed throughout the course of this thesis. As such, while the effects of climate change on migration are important, these effects amplify existing migration supply systems.

With devastating impacts globally, the LAC region—due to its Central/Southern geographic location—has become a hot spot for environmental disasters (UNFCC, 2022). As hurricane seasons intensify and extend, alongside rising annual temperatures— nations participating in the SAWP have faced the most severe impacts of global warming (UNFCC, 2022). It is now estimated that by 2025, 17 million people could become climate refugees as they

are forced to flee the LAC region, and almost 6 million are predicted to succumb to extreme poverty by 2030 as a result (UNFCC, 2022).

In the face of the combined threats posed by climate change and economic hardship, the governments of Mexico and the Caribbean continue to pursue trade and migration agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) (replaced by the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement as of July 1, 2020) and the SAWP with the goal of promoting critical wealth transfers and for the opening of trade and employment opportunities abroad. The state officials of sending countries play an active role within the recruitment and promotion of seasonal migration channels like the SAWP, and they themselves are often found advocating for TFWPs as an effective tool for growth and development. Comprehending the motivations of sending states in the context of the TFW exchange is essential for grasping the rationale behind the SAWP and its steady expansion over the last fifty years.

Conclusion

This chapter began with the origins of the SAWP. It described how both Canada and the SAWP have come a long way from the program's temporary establishment in the 1960s. We can see how the SAWP helped to create a steady supply of labour for the agricultural industry, which has transformed from small-scale farming at the turn of the 20th century into what is now a $150 billion dollar industry dominated by large corporations (Agriculture and Agri-food Canada, June 27, 2024). Canadian farmers have come to depend on temporary migrants. So, too, have the families in the home countries of the migrant labour force come to rely on the earnings they send home each year.

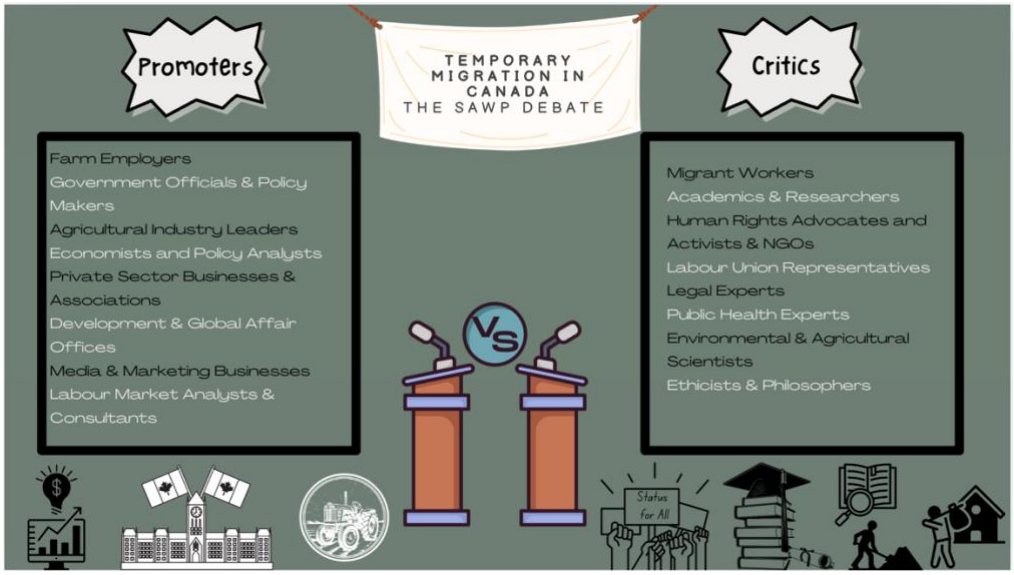
Over the years, the SAWP landscape has grown with gradual regulatory changes as well as the bringing in of more and more workers annually. The topical literature review in the following chapter will review the strengths and weaknesses from the perspective of the private sector and the state who stand largely united in supporting the program's expansion, as well as from those across the social justice sector who avidly critique it and lay concerns over its continued growth.

Chapter 3 - Topical Literature Review

The Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP) was created in 1966 in response to farming labour shortages and has since become one of Canada's most controversial migration policies. Promoters of the program highlight it as a 'triple win' model for all, while critics emphasize many unjust and adverse implications for migrant workers, Canadians and migrant sending states.

This chapter presents a topical literature review that identifies the main themes raised by contrasting schools of thought amongst different stakeholders including state and farming industry professionals, Canadian civil society organizations that advocate for workers' welfare such as migrant rights organizations, Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs), and their home sending communities and governments. Figure 1.2 below lists the groups in Canadian society who tend to either promote or be critical of the SAWP. The chapter begins by outlining the perspectives of its advocates, who contend that the program constitutes a 'triple win' for Canada, migrant workers, and sending states (Silverman & Hari, 2016). The second section articulates the perspectives of the program's detractors.

Figure 3.1 - Temporary Migration in Canada: the SAWP Debate



Source: Elaborated by author

Program Benefits: 'Triple win'

From state narratives we see a range of positive reviews of the program from both migrants' sending state consular offices (i.e. Mexican consulate) to local Canadian Government offices. In Canada, these promotional perspectives come largely from research, reports, statistics and statements funded and published on behalf of departments such as the Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) who directly manages the program, as well as Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), and Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). Non-state actors within this sphere come largely from Western based economic and migration policy backgrounds (Falconer, 2020; Ruhs, 2013; C.D. Howe Institute, 2024), and some of the mainstream promotional media include the National Post and the Ottawa Citizen (National Post, 2023; Schaer, 2024). Some of the dominant voices across

industry organizations include the Foreign Agricultural Resource Management Services (FARMS, 2020), and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA, 2017) amongst many others. From those of the promotional SAWP evaluation side of the debate, some of the dominant approaches they apply for assessing the program include *Optimizing Immigration for Long-Term Growth*, *Market Efficiency*, and *Temporary Migration for Promoting Development*. These views will be explored in the following sections as a means for better understanding the interests behind the variation in perspectives relating to the SAWP's functioning.

Benefits for Migrant Workers: The Promise of a Brighter Future

Narratives that stress the benefits for migrant workers and which highlight the overall efficacy of the SAWP have remained relatively consistent over the years. Although there is widespread acknowledgment of the necessity for policy adjustments in specific areas, according to promoters, the SAWP continues to be advantageous for all parties involved (IICA, 2017, p.2). Since its inception, proponents describe the SAWP as an effective model that fosters numerous advantages for Canada, ensuring mutual benefits for all stakeholders involved (IRCC, 2023). Consequently, while addressing the program's benefits for migrant workers, advocates assert that it addresses the requirements of at-risk populations by providing essential employment opportunities when they are unable to secure work in their home nations. In this context, they emphasize that migrant workers are not compelled to migrate to Canada; however, should circumstances necessitate their relocation for employment, they may do so via the SAWP, which ensures government-regulated conditions in a country renowned for its leadership in immigration, multiculturalism, and human rights (OECD, 2019).

This aspect of the program is a highly attractive feature for migrant workers themselves. Workers participating in the program avoid many of the risks associated with crossing borders without documentation and working with non-status and non-guaranteed employment. The opportunity to migrate through the SAWP is most often extended through the medium of private recruitment and hiring agencies. When presenting the program, they inform prospective applicants on the array of additional benefits ranging from standardized wages, legislative protections, health benefits, included living accommodations and an attractive travel abroad experience within a new and diverse culture and country (IICA, 2017, p.17-26; FARMS, 2020). This journey is articulated to benefit migrant workers most especially for tackling poverty and underemployment, whilst also for skills enhancement and capacity building that they can acquire by working within a technologically advanced farming industry (IICA, 2017, p.17-26; FARMS, 2020).

This opportunity is sold to migrant workers as having the ability to grant them financial security and transferrable knowledge/skills that they can then bring home with to invest towards their longer-term livelihood sustenance (World Bank, 2006). Defenders of the program often emphasize migrant success cases to highlight this reality (Schaer, 2024). Defenders advocate the advantages of the program as a mechanism for migrant workers struggling to support their families across the global South to alter the course of their future as defined by circumstances of underdevelopment. With access to these farming jobs in Canada, they can work hard for the harvest season, and then return home in the winter months in between to rest and spend quality time with family and friends. By bringing home their hard-earned wages, as well as new knowledge and skills, they can start a business of their own back home and send their children off to school with a prospect of a brighter future for their families overall (Wells et al., 2014).

When it comes to evaluating the SAWP, common promotional narratives center around the gratitude of migrant workers for the opportunities presented through labour migration, and how without them, they would face much harsher alternative realities of poverty and unemployment back home (Schaer, 2024; Ruhs, 2013; IICA, 2017; FARMS, 2020; CAHRC, 2024; ESDC, 2021).

Benefits for Canada: Optimizing Immigration for Long-term Growth and Market Efficiency

From initial days in Parliament when discussions were being first raised about the prospect of adopting a seasonal worker program, some of the primary intentions were to support the Canadian agrifood-industry to survive the impacts of labour shortages on farms and in factories across the sector with a flexible pool of labour (Satzewich, 1991). Despite the temporary context under which the program began, such a fulfilment of labour shortages continues to be a major factor in how the program serves Canada's long-term growth interests today (CAHRC, 2017, p.6). This historical shift marked the establishment of optimizing immigration policy for solving market inefficiencies by fulfilling labour gaps with cheaper foreign labour that could maximize productivity and significantly scale up production capacities (Falconer, 2020, p.3-5).

The flexible nature of temporary migrant labour has been highlighted to be one of its greatest strengths, and resultingly, some have referred to the SAWP as the "keystone of modern agriculture" in Canada (Preibisch, 2007). Falconer (2020) explains the metaphor as a depiction of modern agriculture as the architectural structure of an arch holding up Canadian society, and that within that arch, TFWs are in the middle bearing the weight of the entire structure (p.10). In this

capacity, advocates connect how the SAWP has played a central role in the historical transformation from small-scale subsistence farming which had little to record in terms of contributions to national economic profit, into an industry that is now recording exports of over $60 billion CAD annually (USDA, June 21, 2023; CAHRC, 2024 p.12). Not only do they articulate historical growth, but projections declare that the industry is on target to grow another 50 percent by 2050 (USDA, June 21, 2023; CAHRC, 2024 p.12). With rapidly growing production scales, another factor that is growing with equal vigor is that of global population. Since the 1950s, the population has tripled in size. From what was once estimated at 2.5 billion people in the mid 20th century, we are now on track to hit 8.5 billion by 2030 (United Nations, 2024b). Altogether, with rising pressures associated with commercial production demands, as well as the steadily increasing number of mouths to feed in Canada and across the globe, programs like the SAWP are particularly well reviewed for their ability to satisfy the steady supply of necessary labour that is not being fulfilled by the local labour force (Falconer, 2020).

The displacement of Canadian jobs by immigration has long worried Canadians. However, the ESDC reports that in contrast, "The program helps to protect jobs for Canadians and permanent residents… [and that] … Overall, there is no evidence pointing to a risk for job displacement or wage suppression at the national level in Canada" (ESDC, 2021, p.7). State promotors explain that the seasonality of the SAWP combined with LMIA (Labour Market Impact Assessment) processes for ensuring that the food industry is marketing employment opportunities to Canadians before approving increased numbers of TFWs, they can mitigate the risks of negatively affecting the local labour market (ESDC, 2021, p.7). From a Market Efficiency perspective, the SAWP's strengths include the ability of the program to fill gaps in the

labour market and its ability to lower the costs of agricultural products. As Falconer (2020) puts it:

> Without the employment of foreign workers in Canadian agriculture, addressing the labour gap comes at a cost, either in additional capital or higher labour costs. In that case, without external support, including subsidies, producers will be forced to choose between raising prices and losing market share, or accepting a lower level of productivity. In both scenarios, Canadians may be faced with … higher prices and a greater reliance on imported food (p.15).

In a globalized world, employers in the agricultural industry face ongoing pressure from overseas competition, rising production costs, and market-set pricing, leading many to use TFW workers to stay profitable (Falconer, 2020). Despite the complexity and lengthy history of seasonal migration in Canada, its benefits to economic growth remain at the top of agenda (Preibisch, 2007; ESDC, 2021).

Benefits for Migrant Sending States: Migration as Development

In addition to benefits to migrant workers and Canadian consumers, the third pillar of the promotional story emphasizes migration as progress. This approach is based on the idea that the SAWP presents opportunities for lowering un/underemployment rates, fighting poverty, and promoting economic growth in the sending countries that have signed onto seasonal migration programs (cf. Wells et al., 2014; Henaway, 2023). SAWP supporters frequently focus on wealth transfer remittance benefits for labour sending states.[5] This perspective posits that the program

[6] Human Capital: Skills, knowledge, and health.

enables Canada to choose its labour force under specific conditions that guarantee their return home at the season's conclusion, thereby ensuring that the earnings generated in Canada are repatriated and reinvested in their home economies. To highlight the significance of this global remittance economy from programs like the SAWP, in 2023, Mexico brought in $66 billion USD from global temporary labour migration remittances (Migration Data Portal, June 27, 2024).

Becoming a global trend in the 21st century, the exportation of labour has grown into a staple policy for development both incentivized and applauded by many across the international development community (Preibisch, 2007). According to the World Bank (WB), globally, the total amount of money transferred from migrant workers to their home countries was just under $800 billion dollars USD in 2022 (Broom, 2023). This reality is one that program advocates highlight significantly, as it demonstrates the substantial impact that seasonal migrant workers can provide in addressing the challenges related to poverty and underdevelopment.

Proponents also highlight the potential long-term advantages of strengthening diplomatic relations between Canada and signatories in the non-Western world. In this regard, the program is viewed within signatory countries as helping to expand trade relations with other "more developed" nations in a way that can support their own battles with economic growth (World Bank, 2006, p.iii-v).

Criticisms of "triple-win"

Critics of the program offer an assessment that draws largely opposing conclusions, even while highlighting many of the same features and policies of the program. The body of critical writers addressing the topic of temporary migration in Canada is extensive, and it is beyond the capacity of this inquiry to thoroughly engage with the full range of literature that is available.

Critics include academics, labour unions, human rights lawyers, and social justice activists amongst a variation of others. Some of the prominent names that consistently reappear amongst reference lists include activist and writer Dr. Harsha Walia, professor and international migration researcher Dr. Janet McLaughlin, migrant rights expert Dr. Jenna Hennebry, and the widely praised sociologist and professor Dr. Vic Satzewich. Amongst organizations within advocacy, some of the many include the National Farmers Union (NFU), Justicia 4 Migrant Workers (J4MW), the Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR), and the International Migrants' Alliance (IMA) .

This section will address some of promoters' assertions related to the program's history from the critical perspective informed by scholars and organizations mentioned above. It addresses the limited rights and protections afforded to migrant workers, the displacement of Canadian labour and decline of family farming, the development trajectories in migrant sending economies, the dependency on temporary migration, and the disproportionate burden of climate change faced by migrant sending countries.

Limited Rights and Protection

In broader disputes over the SAWP and migrant workers, precarity and inadequate rights and protection are key concerns. Scholars highlight widespread barriers faced by migrant workers, including limited access to healthcare and support services due to the risk they face as precarious workers. Farming can be dangerous work, which is often made more dangerous by competitive pressures that demand long intense hours of labour to increase productivity (Hennebry & McLaughlin, 2012). While the SAWP contracts and agreements supposedly guarantee wages, health services, safety training, standardized living conditions, access to

support in cases of abuse/or violation of labour standards, activists and scholars report that there is a gap between rhetoric and reality. Migrant workers' experiences in Canada often differ from what they are sold when they are recruited to the program. Historian of labour and migration Dr. E. Dunsworth (2023) explains that this is not a simple side-effect, rather an intended structural outcome:

> [T]he structures of the SAWP serve to marginalize workers…. Beyond the question of permanent status, workers in the SAWP are tied to a single employer, unable to freely choose or change who they work for. Those employers wield an immense amount of power over workers, and not only during the workday… but also [after hours as] their landlords and immigration agents (Allahdua & Dunsworth, 2023, p.xv).

Scholars indicate that despite numerous policies aimed at safeguarding workers' rights and protections, the persistent power imbalances that characterize their precarious situations have led to prevalent instances of employer abuse, discrimination, exploitation, and dire working and living conditions on farms throughout Canada (Bridi, 2020; Goldring & Landolt 2013; United Nations, 2024b; Walia 2010). A 2024 policy brief titled *Essential but unprotected: Migrant farmworkers in Canada* reports that migrant farmworkers precarity exists due to exclusions and barriers to legal protections, lack of national standards and ineffective inspections, weak enforcement of laws and regulations, jurisdictional ambiguity, ineffective reactionary and complaint-driven models for addressing malpractice, as well as an overall lack of employer incentives for compliance with legislation (Borrelli, 2024).

Restricted Agency and Choice

When it comes to evaluating the SAWP, common promotional narratives center around the gratitude of migrant workers for the opportunities presented through labour migration, and how without them, they would face much harsher alternative realities of poverty and unemployment back home (Schaer, June 3, 2024). The broad response to claims of this nature involves concerns over lack of context, in addition to concerns regarding choice and agency, as well as the complexity of the many costs and risks associated with accessing the basic right to maintain a sustainable livelihood. As Walia (2010) explains it:

> Today, the denial of legal citizenship through temporary migrant worker programmes ensures legal control over the disposability of labourers, which, in turn, embeds exploitability of labour as an inherent feature of such programmes. Migrant worker programmes allow for capital to access cheap labour that exists under precarious conditions, the most severe of which is the condition of being deportable. This assures a pool of highly exploitable labour, excluded from the minimal protections of the welfare state, and readily disposed of without consequences (p.73).

Research concerning exploitation of migrant workers within the SAWP present large numbers of reports of discrimination on the basis of race, gender, age, and health, wage theft, and abuse both physical and psychological (United Nations, 2024, p.5-6). A recent report issued by the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery Dr. Tomoya Obokota and published by the United Nations General Assembly and Human Rights Council in 2024 similarly reveals concerns relating to unfree labour, barriers to rights protections, as well as concerns over lack of job

security, barriers to improvement of labour conditions, barriers to legal aid, lack in collective bargaining avenues and pathways to citizenship (United Nations, 2024, p.5-6).

Satzewich (1991) explains this further by describing the circumstances surrounding what it means to become a temporary migrant worker in Canada.

> Migrant Workers are those who are not granted the right of permanent settlement by the state in which they sell their labour power. They do not possess the rights and obligations of citizens of the nation, nor are they allowed the possibility of ever acquiring those rights in the receiving nation. They are not defined as members of the political community. Among other things, they do not possess the right to participate in the bourgeois democratic political process, the right to family formation, the right to social, educational and welfare services. In other words, they are not defined as members, or future members, of the imagined community which constitute the Nation (p.39).

Critics emphasize the resilience and agency of migrant workers who choose to embark on this journey to Canada through programs like the SAWP rather than seeing them as victims. Workers are viewed as warriors of survival in a world that actively undermines and exploits them (Cohen & Hjalmarson, 2020, p.6). However, despite said resilience, they argue that there is a systemic issue at hand that is embedded in both the globalizing historical context as well as program structure that has played an undeniable role in forcing the hand of these communities (Sharma, 2006, p.168). Canada's TFWP has been called many things by its critics, including "unfree labour migration," "deportability regimes," "disposable labour regimes," "trapped labour systems," "cheap labour supply systems," "unprotected worker regimes," "involuntary servitude," "modern-day slavery," "legalized trafficking," and so on (Dépatie-Pelletier, 2018, p.15-16).

Reports across critical literature also reveal the significant distress reported by TFWs from the very decision to leave their family & friends, their culture, language and entire life back home—they highlight that in most cases, seasonal migration is a last resort option (Silverman & Hari, 2016). The fact that there is a lack of alternatives is the result of neoliberal globalization and climate change, which according to this view are some of the main push factors that lead workers in the global South leave home (Binford, 2009). Others do not agree with the picture that shows the benefits of temporary labour movement in a way that does not include the serious risks that come with the way the program is set up. From the lens, the focus is on examining the genuine mutuality of the labour exchange, and whether the touted benefits warrant such acclaim when considered against a backdrop of numerous potentially life-threatening risks. This contestation occurs with the raising of the question of whether temporary migrants are truly given a choice as to whether they migrate for work in the context of a globalized world (Binford, 2009). These harmful implications are one of many ethical concerns relating to the functioning of the program.

Displacement of Canadian Labour

In response to promotional narratives on the benefits of the SAWP for market growth and efficiency, as well as the "harmless" implications for affecting Canadian labour, critics articulate several areas of contention. One of the claims that is highlighted is the historical displacement of transient communities who for generations worked on Canadian farms prior to the arrival of TFWs. A study by Dr. E. Reid-Musson (2014) explored the displacement of Canadian workers in Ontario's tobacco farming. The study reveals that long before institutionalized temporary migration channels existed, farms across Ontario relied on informal channels of migrant labour from Atlantic/Quebecois workers during the harvesting rush each year (Reid-Musson, 2014).

Complimentary studies also show that historically, Canada is no stranger to seasonal migration, and that dating back to the 19th century, migrant indigenous communities alongside other travelers from across the globe have been working Canadian farming jobs for over a century (Dunsworth et al., 2024). Although coming largely from marginalized and low-income backgrounds, many traveling workers were entitled to basic rights because of their Canadian citizenship status (Reid-Musson, 2014, p.164-169).

Dr. Reid-Musson's research shows that these transient workers leveraged their rights and began protesting for better working and living conditions, which ultimately resulted in their criminalization and outright rejection from the communities that they were directly supporting economically. She quotes a grower, who explains why they prefer to hire SAWP workers over locals: "I like Caribbean labor because I hold something over him. If he chatters too much or stays out too late at night I can send him home. You have no control over Canadian labor. You can't force them to stay" (Reid-Musson, 2014, p.168). This case is an important component of the current inquiry because it reveals that although labour shortages justifying the creation of the SAWP may have existed even with the transient working community present, the claim that Canadian jobs are and have been unaffected negatively is up for debate. What critics raise is the claim that this is not just about a shortage of labour, but rather a lack of a specific type of labour that is disposable and cheap (Binford, 2019, p.361-362). This debate is particularly relevant in drawing out the *harmless nature* of the SAWP as it is a foundational claim presented by promotors in defending its continuous growth and positive evaluation (ESDC, 2021, p.7).

Beyond the displacement and damage inflicted on the livelihoods of transient workers in the formalizing of the SAWP, critics also articulate that globalization and associated policies established in the pursuit of long-term growth and market efficiency has resulted in the

commercial rise of Transnational Corporations (TNCs) and their domination of the industry. This greater economic shift actively pursued by government and farming lobbies has been criticized for the pushing out of Canadians in farming (Basok, 1996; Jessop, 1993; Lenard & Straehle, 2012; Sharma, 2006). Critics argue that there has been a transformation in farming: it was once an industry owned by local families that depended on family labour and immigrants who intended to permanently settle to one that is now dominated by temporary workers and foreign investors. In this context, critics contend that job displacement is an undeniably significant factor. In the 1940s, 28.6 percent of the Canadian population was employed within agriculture (Satzewich, 1991, p.58). By the late 1960s, the farming sector dwindled to 7.2 percent (Satzewich, 1991, p.58), and by 2023, the remaining Canadians in farming and food production was merely 1.6 percent of the population (Statistics Canada, August 25, 2023).

The Canadian government relies on LMIAs to assure the public that no Canadian jobs are affected in the use of temporary migration programs. The current reality largely mirrors the findings of impact assessments, indicating that Canadians are not sufficiently pursuing picking and harvesting jobs in agriculture to meet demand. What critics across the arena highlight however, is a problem with how we define and understand labour shortages. As Dr. Sharma (2006) explains, the term 'shortages' has a double meaning:

> Shortages do not always refer to *quantitative* or actual lack of workers but the shortage of a particular *kind* of work force, that is, cheap, politically repressed, and so on. Robert Miles (1987) expands on this insight by arguing that 'the precondition for labour migration was a shortage of labour within the capitalist economies of Western Europe which could only be "solved" by recruitment within the various social formations by increasing wages to attract workers from other economic sectors. Such a solution would

> have obstructed the capital accumulation process, and so another source of labour power from outside these social formations was sought' (1987:167) (Sharma, 2006, p.67).

Foster (2012) also addresses a rise in unemployment among other groups in Canada such as new immigrants and indigenous communities throughout the mid 2000s who formerly sought work in agriculture as they found themselves in competition with TFWs who were being paid 15 percent under the minimum wage of Canadian labourers (p.41). From this perspective, critics highlight that with the combination of competition with TFWs, downward pressure on already low wages, health risks associated with the harsh conditions of commercial farming, and the ability to seek employment in other industries, it is inevitable that labour shortages would remain high within the sector. Overall, critics claim that the reality is that there is both a misperception around the actual historical and ongoing displacement of Canadian labour, and further, that there is a missing context that showcases the lack in any real choice for Canadians to undertake these jobs even if they wanted to.

The Effects of Free-Trade on the Displacement of Development Trajectories in Migrant Sending Economies

Countering claims of promotors who accentuate temporary labour migration as offering a pathway to development for labour exporting countries, one of the major issues raised by critics connects back to geopolitics relating to market liberalization. Looking at the SAWP, they argue that the neoliberal market efficiency pursuit of labour market flexibility, privatization, the failure of government to protect small businesses such as family farms, and the transition to market and employer driven immigration in Canada, has ultimately been at the cost of the rights, wellbeing

and future of the migrants it employs (Bridi, 2020; Cohen, 2019; Satzewich, 1992; Walia, 2010; Silverman & Hari, 2016).

This perspective echoes across the field as a foundational critique which views SAWP migration policies as a policy trap that provides far greater benefits to big agri-business and adjacent private sector industries as well as Canadian state interests related to economic growth, rather than to the sincere benefit of TFWs and their sending states (Green, 2004; Sharma, 2006). Advancing this critique, the example of Mexico is often invoked. According to this view, the bilateral migration agreement could not have become what it is today without first the adverse effects of liberalization via NAFTA which caused the "[t]he historic transformation of the Mexican agrarian sector from self-sufficiency to an importer of basic foods" (Green, 2004; Sharma, 2006; Silverman and Hari, p.93). Despite having been signed in 1966, the marked growth of the program did not occur until late 20th century/early 21st century. In this capacity, critics highlight the displacement induced by free trade such as NAFTA as critical for the SAWPs mass expansion (Bridi, 2020; Cohen, 2019; Satzewich, 1991; Walia, 2010; Silverman & Hari, 2016).

Critics associate the historical damage experienced by current labor-exporting economies with the rise and enforcement of free trade liberalization in the 20th century, driven by the Bretton Woods institutions, and advanced industrialized countries such as Canada, which has contributed to the deterioration of un/underemployment rates in the global South. (Stiglitz, 2003; Walia, 2021; Henaway, 2023; Choudry & Smith, 2016). In this capacity, critics highlight parallels within historical colonial power structures, and the reality that migrant sending states were forced to rid themselves of protectionist tariffs, and once their industries were wiped out, they were then left dependent on temporary labour remittances from high-income countries and

the international aid community as had been the case in the decolonization era following the domination of formal empires (Stiglitz, 2003, p.6; Binford, 2009; Cohen, 2019). Respectively, in the ongoing push for free trade, critics claim that neoliberal immigration and trade policies that give structure to temporary labour migration programs in Canada find themselves within a much larger pursuit of globalized expansionism that has played a critical role in producing a demand for temporary migration within countries across the global South (Walia, 2013).

Temporary Migration Dependency

One of the big claims used to promote TFWPs is its benefits for labour exporting countries, and within this capacity, it is said that wealth transfers that occur as a byproduct of labour migration hosts the capacity to promote sustainable and self-actualized development within labour sending countries; in the case of the SAWP; advancing development for Mexico and the Caribbean isles (World Bank, 2006). Research exploring claims of this nature articulate another sincere lack of context regarding the social, economic, and political implications for labour exporting countries long-term. The World Bank's recent (2024) development report claims that poverty rates across Latin America and the Caribbean have failed to show signs of any significant progress, having remained stagnant over the course of the last decade (World Bank, 2024, p.142-145). Remittances as explored earlier in this chapter, make up a multi-billion-dollar generating industry each year for labour exporting countries (Migration Data Portal, June 27, 2024). These upfront financial benefits present undeniably critical support for many struggling nations across the global South. However, critics argue that this system of labour exchange is cyclical in a way that has ultimately proved to have limited capacity in advancing development (Banerjee et al., 2009; Wells, et al., 2014). Instead, they argue that this cycle has only served to exacerbate conditions of economic dependency and enhance barriers to investing

into the establishment and expansion of their own local infrastructure and industries (Binford, 2013, p).

These barriers are said to emerge due to a variety of complex reasons, some of such include the displacement of a critical labouring workforce, the separating of families for extended periods of time each year, whilst simultaneously incentivizing long-term migration of high-skilled sectors. What critics call 'brain drain', is a phenomenon that explains the mass-emigration of the highly educated and skilled individuals from countries across the developing world and into countries across the Western world (El Saghir, et al., 2020). A recent report highlighted that "Canada has not only the largest in terms of numbers, but also the most elaborate and long-standing *skilled* labour migration system in the OECD" (OECD, 2019, p.13). Canada's two-track migration system divides citizenship pathways by skill-capacity, placing migrant applicants with little financial security, education, or formal skills certifications into the low-skill stream, which includes the general low wage stream, the SAWP, and the domestic care stream (ESDC, May 2024). Since workers must return home at the end of their contract, the low-wage stream does not grant citizenship. By contrast, 'high-skilled' workers such as doctors, engineers, and professors are encouraged to migrate to Canada through the high-wage migration stream, which offers pathways to long-term citizenship and permanent residency (OECD, 2019). Critics argue that by draining export labour economies of both their working class and their professional class of "high-skilled" workers, sending states are further from reducing unemployment and poverty by missing a critical labour force and the trained professionals needed to advance healthcare, education, and local infrastructure (Wells, et al., 2014; Henaway, 2023; Walia, 2021).

Disproportionate Burden of Climate Change

In addition, within the capacity of advancing development, with the ongoing rise in threats posed by climate change, many scholars highlight the interconnections between environmental struggles and the exploitation of temporary migrant workers. Some of their main concerns include globalization-induced climate displacement and climate crisis accountability. Through their symbiotic relationship, climate justice critics across the field link their SAWP evaluations to globalization. Both temporary migration and international expansionism that led to commercial agriculture are interrelated, since one has influenced the other. The National Farmers Union explains as follows: “the farm crisis and the climate crisis share many of the same causes, and many of the same solutions” (2019, p.5).

This symbiotic relationship is also highlighted through the experience of the masses of climate displaced migrants who are frequently forced to leave their homes in search of work abroad due to climate related disasters in their home countries across the global South, to then come to work within the commercial agribusiness sector in countries like Canada that are found exacerbating and worsening climate change to begin with (NFU, November, 2019). Once working on Canadian farms, migrant workers are again faced with extremes related to climate change, working amidst toxic conditions induced by fire seasons, extended droughts, as well as extreme temperatures and storms (Ramsaroop, 2023). Scholars note that state policies have long promoted commercial farming and seasonal migration, which are linked to international commercial expansionism and climate change (House of Commons, 2016, p.30; NFU, 2019; NFU, 2023; Boano, Zetter & Morris, 2007; Walia, 2021).

As mentioned in the historical context, migrant sending states have also faced notably heightened climate related impacts ranging from record high temperatures, atmospheric rainfalls, strong winds, tornadoes, extended periods of mega-droughts, and worsening hurricane seasons increasing both in frequency and strength (UNFCC, 2022). Many critics within this capacity charge their evaluations of temporary migration for extended liability caused by the damages associated with industrial agriculture (Ramsaroop, 2023; Gonzalez, 2021). Some of the most discussed disadvantages involve the exacerbation and rapid worsening of climate change in a way that further disadvantages migrant sending countries across the global South. They argue that effects induced by corporate agricultural farming involve harms extending to both planetary and societal health through increased pollution effecting air quality, toxic chemicals, fertilizers, and pesticides, increased CO2 emissions and ozone decay causing a worsening of global warming and extreme weather systems serving to heighten global poverty, global conflict and fuelling of the migration crisis (Ramsaroop, 2023; COP28, 2023).

From a climate change and class struggle perspective, critics claim that countries across the developing world who export temporary labour are also being disproportionately affected by climate change—a crisis that has been fuelled by high-income CO_2 emitting countries like Canada who then profit from the displacement of climate enhanced un/underemployment and poverty (Walia, 2021; Gonzalez, 2021; Ramsaroop, 2023). Critics also highlight hypocrisy at the heart of narratives presenting temporary migration as an avenue for development and alleviating the side effects of climate change. This perspective argues that the broader socio-economic implications within industrial agriculture and interconnected climate change should be understood in direct correlation with the exploitation of TFWs within the SAWP.

Conclusion

The Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program has created a complex and tangled web of socio-economic, environmental, and political implications for all involved. Ultimately, we find a diverse spectrum of perspectives and voices with a range of differing opinions on the program. Promoters of the program argue it creates a *win-win-win* scenario. It provides a critical source of labour, and it supports market efficiency for Canada's food and economic security and long-term growth. Critics, on the other hand, claim that the SAWP is exploitative and perpetuates systemic inequality, offering limited rights and protection to workers in practice. These critics tend to emphasize the historical relationships of colonialism as well as how geopolitics have played a big role in exacerbating systemic inequality between Canada and sending countries. According to them, migrant workers are brought here to provide cheap and disposable labour.

Although both sides of the debate present persuasive arguments, one conclusion that can be drawn is that the issues are complex. There are no simple solutions that can equally serve the sought interests of all stakeholders. One area of mutual agreement is that change is necessary, although there is little agreement on what change should look like.

The following chapter will present the case studies of two temporary Caribbean migrant workers (MWs) to further expand on their lived experience.

Chapter 4 – Case Studies

The following chapter presents case-studies that assess the experience of two migrant workers within Canada's Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP). Applying a sustainable livelihoods approach combined with a precarity lens, this assessment addresses the

unique set of barriers that undermine the maintenance of migrant worker's assets and livelihoods because of their innate deportability. Each case study will begin by exploring the lived experiences of the workers prior to migrating to Canada, followed by exploring their livelihoods within the capacity of *Working Conditions, Living Conditions, the Institutional Landscape, Mechanisms of Resilience,* and lastly their *Post-SAWP Outcomes.* Following the overview of the two individual cases, I will present a comparative case study analysis whilst drawing connections with the broader debates in the literature.

Case Study A: Gabriel Allahdua

Livelihood Prior to SAWP Migration to Canada

Gabriel Allahdua was born in the Mabouya Valley of St. Lucia in 1971 (Allahdua & Dunsworth, 2023, p.7). After living a long and happy life in the Caribbean isles, at the age of forty, a series of disastrous events led him on a journey that would change his life forever (p.7).

Gabriel describes his childhood to have been filled with beautiful memories, strong academic encouragement and unconditional love from his family. Despite the challenges he endured growing up within a former slave colony—unlike many of his MW peers, Gabriel completed high school and even went on to complete a post-secondary certification in agriculture in the 1990s in Guyana (p.46). In the years following his higher education, Gabriel describes the 1990s as his savings era in which he made a good living financially through beekeeping. This time was short lived, however, as Gabriel refers to the economic devastation incurred in the aftermath of the 1997 World Trade Organization's (WTO) free-trade ruling (p.48). In this ruling, the WTO ended the formerly guaranteed preferential access of Caribbean banana exports to

European markets (which had been issued as a post-colonial reconciliation policy in the years following independence) (p.48). This decision was prompted after the United States put forth a formal complaint to the WTO with claims that the policy fell in violation of the principles of free trade, thus inhibiting market efficiency.

Despite the hard times, Gabriel persevered, and come the 2000s, he started a family (p.49). In the face of economic instability across the region, he took on multiple entrepreneurial ventures including beekeeping, running a greenhouse, owning a local shop for buying and selling goods, as well as working as a farm-supplier (p.49). Although Gabriel had set himself up with a diversified income that could arguably withstand the turbulence of any storm, what would serve to dismantle his livelihood stability was the double blow of the 2008/09 financial crisis, followed by the wrath of Hurricane Tomas in 2010 (p.50).

He describes the night of the storm to have changed the entire course of his life, leaving the whole region wiped out by landslides, roads impassable, crops flattened, and being effectively cut off from the rest of the world in one fell swoop (p.50). It was under these conditions "staring desperation in the eye", with a family to feed, and no other options left that Gabriel went in search of opportunities abroad that would ultimately lead him to Canada (p.50). In his interview, Gabriel states "I was satisfied with life, I was living self-employed, I was comfortable…the hardest thing was to leave my country, my friends, my children" (1:20).

Gabriel's pathway to the SAWP in a capacity of forced choice induced by the adverse effects of free trade and climate change connects to the broader claims made by scholars who highlight realities of the disproportionate burden of climate change and hindered agency and choice resulting in forced displacement as discussed in Chapter 3 (Sharma, 2006; Silverman &

Hari; Binford, 2009). In this capacity, Gabriel's experience presents a vivid example for discrediting perceptions that migrant workers are in general desperate to come to Canada and entirely free to choose whether or not they apply to programs like the SAWP.

Working Conditions

Dangerous Work and Limited Recovery

Arriving in Canada on January 17th, 2012, the working conditions that awaited Gabriel reveal several areas for concern relating to heightened health and safety risks, limited rest periods throughout and between shifts, targeted discrimination and racism, and intense pressures associated with efficiency mechanisms used for monitoring worker's mobility and productivity. He describes his first impressions of the farm to be filtered through disbelief at the unbelievably large nature of the operation. He explains that the farm at which he was hired was one of the largest and most successful in Canada— owning greenhouses and grocery suppliers/distributors across North America (Allahdua & Dunsworth, 2013, p.62). "Even though it's owned by a family, [he says], this is not a 'family farm' in the way we normally think of it. This is a big business" (p.62). Within this large operation, the tasks that Gabriel was responsible for involved preparations for harvest in the winter months, and as the temperatures rose, tasks came to center around maintaining the crops and harvesting tomatoes. In a repetitive line-work structure— picking, de-leafing, clipping, and frequent cleaning to reduce risks of crop pests and disease (p.67).

Agriculture in North America has long found itself at the top of statistics as one of the most dangerous professions caused by fatalities and injuries on the job (Foulis, 2021). Gabriel's experience reflects this reality, describing injuries on the job to have been a common occurrence:

“Every year, between the scissor carts, ground conditions, and risky tasks, there were multiple reports of workers suffering injuries of varying degrees” (p.78). One of the exacerbating factors that he says increased the risk of injury was due to the long hours, limited breaks, lack of days off for recovery, combined with intense weather conditions such as extreme cold in the winter, and extreme heat in the summer, all whilst pushing one’s body to its utmost capacity (p.77).

In terms of his work schedule, in Gabriel’s first year he reports having worked sun-up until sun-down, Sunday to Sunday (p.77). With the immense size of the greenhouse, he records having barely enough time to reach a bathroom, let alone being able to reach the bunkhouse for a meal— and being only given two 15-minute breaks within 14-hour days (p.61-75). Amidst this context, with the added pressures to maximize productivity, he explains it as common for workers to get injured due to exhaustion, over-exertion, and extreme dehydration to satisfy employer expectations (p.77).

This lived reality re-iterates concerns that temporary farmworkers experience increased layers of risks that are often missing from promotional narratives regarding dangerous working conditions amidst access to limited labour rights and protections which are argued to ultimately contribute to the undermining of financial gain benefits (Hennebry & McLaughlin, 2012).

Other matters pertaining to health that are highlighted by Gabriel’s experience is exposure to chemicals and pesticides on the job. Having noticed that his employer was spraying pesticides within the rows that Gabriel and colleagues were stationed to work— with no special training, nor health and safety equipment provided, it was under these circumstances that Gabriel first raised concerns regarding the rights and wellbeing of himself and his coworkers (p.77).

He explains that the fear of being sent home for displaying any form of non-compliance or underproduction serves as a critical factor in promoting conformity regardless of the harmful implications to their livelihood (p.77). Having witnessed fellow colleagues be sent home for less, Gabriel strategically brought his concerns to one specific supervisor who had been the only one in management that had shown signs of empathy when it came to matters relating to health and safety of the workers (p.77). Framing the issue as something that could in fact hinder workers' productivity by harming their health, Gabriel was able to successfully bring about a positive change within his workplace. From that day forward, policies were put in place to conduct spraying outside of the hours in which workers were working on the line.

The outcome of this matter was a remarkable success for he describes the risks associated with being flagged for non-compliance. He ties this to the intense hierarchal structure and power imbalances at the core of the management structure that rendered him at great risk of worsening his circumstances had his supervisor been unwilling to advocate on his behalf to upper management in such a way that framed the matter as promoting growth and efficiency (p.70). Within this capacity, Gabriel's experience further supports concerns relating to heightened health and safety amongst TFWs in which matters pertaining to working environment become reflective of whether seen as in contribution or obstruction of capital gains (Hennebry & McLaughlin, 2012; Basok, 2002).

Discrimination and Racism

Under constant pressure to produce and remain in the employers' good books, Gabriel reports the emotional toll of being witness and victim to regular instances of discrimination and racism both on the farm and off (p.111-115). Respectively, Gabriel reports one instance in which

his manager boasted about the extent of power they wielded over him stating: “If you only knew how much money I’m making off you…we own you all” (p.70). Racist comments were also a common hazard, as he recounts one of his managers referring to him and his colleagues as “monkeys” while working under their authority (p.111-115). In addition to harassment on the farm, he also tells the story of painful interactions with local community members on grocery days, often treated as a nuisance in town, people would even target them directly telling them to “go home” to where they came from (p.111-115). Another capacity in which Gabriel highlights discrimination was via the distinctions between how Canadian workers were treated and compensated in contrast with migrant workers working the same roles (p.75). For the few locals who filtered through the farm, him and colleagues would often make jokes about whether the Canadian would last longer than the morning (p.75). Canadian workers were paid based on higher national minimum wages, and beyond pay, he explains that they faced significantly less pressure to produce, better overall treatment from management, and that they worked under significantly more relaxed conditions overall.

Gabriel’s experiences of racism and discrimination within his working environment support literature that view the program as a product of Canada’s historically racist immigration landscape which from the beginning sought to control immigration for the purposes of promoting long-term growth interests and market efficiencies associated with the pursuit of liberalization and commercialized farming, whilst simultaneously designed to prevent mass-migration from non-white communities (Satzewich, 1991; Walia, 2013; Green, 2004, p.112).

Living Conditions

Crowded Housing and Limited Access to Basic Amenities

Gabriel's experience whilst working on the farm indicates that above and beyond his working environment, he also had access to very difficult living conditions due to crowded rooms, lack in privacy, and limited access to basic amenities. His living accommodation were in what was called the "Caribbean bunkhouse", and he describes it as being a large, single story concrete building of approximately 5,000 square feet (Allahdua & Dunsworth, 2023, p.82). The building housed 62 workers who were split into 8 rooms filled with bunkbeds (p.82). He recounts that the rooms were small, the spaces between bunkbeds were tight, and privacy was non-existent (p.83). In effect, many workers caged in their bunkbeds using sheets and cardboard for generating a semblance of comfort (p.83). One of the greatest challenges of the bunkhouses he says was "sleeping in a room with seven other men, the most common enemy and complaint of all workers was snoring" (p.83). With a lack of sleep, workers face the risk of falling behind in their pace in the greenhouse, and effectively risking their job and status security. Life in the bunkhouse, he describes to have been riddled with challenges due to lack in space and limited amenities (p.85). And there was additional friction and competition between workers for basic access to facilities such as using the bathroom, kitchen and laundry room (p.85).

Within the capacity in which promotional narratives highlight the benefits of program issued housing, Gabriel's experience displays another example of the adverse implications of employer driven migration, for employers are granted authority over worker's livelihoods' not merely during working hours, but rather in all capacities of their life while in the SAWP. The simple decision of whether to provide comfortable beds, privacy, functioning amenities, proper

heating and cooling, all these decisions are removed from migrant workers' control and left in the hands of their employer to decide. Nonetheless, in describing Gabriel's living conditions, he ultimately serves to unpack the concept of blurred lines between life and work when they happen to occur under the same authority, at the same place, with the same people— and more particularly, when that place happens to be located on a rural farm that is almost entirely isolated from the outside world.

These harshly competitive environments and societal isolations serve to support claims such as those iterated by Cohen (2019) who claims that

> Farmworker housing, especially on the larger farms, is often racially segregated, with the worst housing usually allotted to the black workers…segregation extends beyond the farm to the wider community as well. The requirement that migrants live on-farm, their long working hours, and lack of access to transportation, combine to create racially segregated communities… (p.140).

Bridi (2020) expands on these segregations referring to them as structured "alienation" resulting from interests to maintain the deportable and high producing nature of migrant workers. He explains that within this context:

> [H]uman labor power becomes a source of profit for farmers in the Canadian agricultural industry. Operating in a highly competitive market, farmers rely on the availability of migrant workers to achieve greater flexibility in their labour arrangements and employment practices beyond those possible with a domestic workforce (p.137).

Gabriel's working and living situations were influenced by elements beyond his farm life, thus the following section will examine the institutional landscape that shaped his experience.

Institutional Landscape

Looking at Gabriel's livelihood conditions on the farm from an institutional landscape approach, some of the many issues can be seen as side effects of Canadian farming and immigration laws, SAWP specific policies/practices, as well as neoliberal productivity and surveillance mechanisms. In addressing dangerous working conditions, Canadian farming laws provide no protections to farmworkers whether they are Canadian or a seasonal worker, they "do not have mandated breaks, maximum hours of work or guaranteed rest periods in between shifts" (Allahdua & Dunsworth, 2023, p.66). Within Ontario specifically, legislation further outlines no rights to collectively organize, no mandated time off between shifts (i.e. weekends), no mandatory periods to eat, and no overtime pay (p.66-67). This legislative context in combination with growth-oriented frameworks for enhancing farming productivity, combined with Gabriel's experience lends evidence to claims that suggest that Canadian labour and immigration policies perpetuate conditions of exploitation of temporary migrant workers by nature of maintaining their deportability for maximizing capital interests (Vosko, 2019; Sharma, 2006).

Competition and Productivity

In a context of status precarity, fear of retribution, health risks at every turn, and on the receiving end of recurring harassment, the added layer of harm Gabriel raises is regarding competition to produce to safeguard one's spot in the program. When it came to productivity on the job, Gabriel explains that as a TFW, in contrast with Canadian workers, they were pressured to work at significantly higher rates of output. He explains this saying that it was often said "that

it takes five or more Canadians to do the work of one migrant farm worker" (Allahdua & Dunsworth, 2023, p.75).

Promoting this higher level of output was a mechanism called the *variable piece rate model* through which MWs productivity was tracked (p.72). Forced to wear magnetic bracelets, MWs were monitored in all capacities including their location, breaktime, their daily outputs, and the speed at which they performed tasks (p.73). At the end of each week, everyone was scaled in competition with their former statistics, as well as the yields of their colleagues, and the results were then displayed at the end of the week on a chart for everyone to see (p.74). Either you fell under the green, yellow or red category depending on your output that week (p.74-75). In describing the *piece rate model*, Gabriel refers to it as the "modern whip" that served to keep them running all day long (p.72). The weekly results, he says, were leveraged by his employer as a mechanism for constantly reminding them of their disposability. He reports his employer reminding them, saying:

> Look here, you see that there are guys at the top? That means that the work can be done. I want you to be there at the top of the list. And remember, in St. Lucia, there's a hundred guys who are willing to take your spot (p.68-69).

Gabriel explains that the piece rate model was an effective tool to maximize productivity amongst the workers as many fought recklessly through extreme fatigue and injury to be at the top of that list that was said to grant them bonuses (p.75). However, he states that in the times that he and colleagues reached the top, they saw no increases reflected in their pay (p.75). He highlights that Canadians were never included in the tracking scales, which enhanced their

understanding of the labour hierarchy that existed, and which served as a reminder of their place at the bottom of the class system.

The extralegal mechanisms of power and control embedded within Gabriel's experiences of the SAWP serve to support claims surrounding the harmful effects of invasive tracking mechanisms applied within neoliberal market efficiency models at the heart of commercial farming (Binford & McLaughlin, 2021; Cohen, 2019; Sharma, 2006). Within a context of Canadian immigration and SAWP specific policies that grant heightened power to employers who themselves are pressured by global market competition, critics highlight the unique circumstances of migrant workers' role for bearing the brunt of the weight of an entire system pushing down on them to be fast, cheap, compliant, and easily replaceable (Basok, 2002; Hennebry & McLaughlin, 2012; Dépatie-Pelletier, 2018).

Family Separation

One of the other factors that Gabriel connects to the institutional landscape is related to the seasonal structure of the program that separated him from his family. One of biggest challenges described by Gabriel through the feat of temporary migration was in fact not the working or living conditions at all, rather, he claims the hardest part to have been the separation from his children during their most vulnerable years of development (Allahdua & Dunsworth, 2023, p.92). Unique to the temporary migration stream programs, migrant workers are not afforded family reunification rights that are offered to high-wage migration streams (Basok, 2002). In addition, he describes the barriers that he faced in the basic ability to call home throughout his months on the farm in Canada. Although phones and other forms of communication are widely accessible to most Canadians, living on rural farms as a migrant

worker, the barriers were plentiful. In Gabriel's case, he explains that within his living quarters there were only two phones provided, and that they required expensive long-distance calling cards, that often would fail to last the number of minutes they were promoted to offer. Sharing these two phones with over sixty workers, combined with no internet or computers, and with the high cost of Canadian phone plans, he describes it to be common that he was unable to connect much at all with family throughout his time on the farm (Allahdua & Dunsworth, 2023, p.85).

In my interview with Gabriel, he describes the aftermath effects of being separated from his kids explaining his migration as his sacrifice to give his children a better life (G. Allahdua, personal communication, March 13, 2024, 1:20). However, he articulates the complex opportunity cost, in so far that the money he sent home could never make up for his absence. Now he describes the uphill battle of trying to heal fractured bonds, whilst hosting limited influence over his children due to his absence in their formative years. This reality sheds light on the long-term damage of family separation determined by SAWP policies that prevent TFWs from bringing their families with them to Canada. It also supports studies that argue that parental absence via migration has many negative effects on migrant workers, their families, and their home nations, offsetting the claims that migration has net positive effects due to remittances (Henaway, 2023; DeWaard, Nobles & Donato, 2018).

Mechanisms of Resilience

Beyond the many struggles associated with Gabriel's time in the SAWP, his and his colleagues shatter the perceptions that portray victimhood and complacency in migrant workers. He explains that no matter how hard and long the days may have been, him and colleagues managed to find creative ways of coping through humour, friendships, social gatherings and

playing soccer after working hours (Allahdua & Dunsworth, 2023, p.88). ‘They call us low-skilled workers” he says, yet in the bunkhouses, almost everyone had a side hustle; there were barbers, mechanics, musicians, DJs and more (p.88). For Gabriel, he describes his skill and role to have been that of the “teacher”, for he was consistently sought out for his education, literacy and distinct skill for helping and informing others on their rights (p.101). The rarity of Gabriel’s education and literacy amongst colleagues serves to support research which address concerns regarding the program’s recruitment criteria that calls for workers with low education, low levels of literacy and English language proficiency as a mechanism for maintaining precarity and compliance (Cohen, 2019,138).

Distinct from most of Gabriel’s MW colleagues, he describes his education and literacy to have enabled him to be informed of his rights and the greater geopolitics surrounding his situation in such a way that allowed him to better navigate hostile situations. Respectively, Gabriel asserted his independence by making efforts to connect with Canadians and to explore beyond the confines of the farm outside of his working hours. One Sunday he stumbled upon a garage sale, and through none other than chance, Gabriel sparked a connection with a local Canadian named Denis who displayed curiosity and kindness in learning about the circumstances under which Gabriel was brought to Canada. What Gabriel would later find out is that Denis happened to be a member of local law enforcement, and not only would he become a life-long friend, but one who would assert his knowledge, privilege and influence in his allyship for Gabriel’s pathway to citizenship in the years to come. This allyship began with welcoming Gabriel into his home, circle of friends, and by providing him the precious gift of a radio (Allahdua & Dunsworth, 2023, p.109). With no access to internet or a tv, Gabriel used the radio as a lifeline to remain informed of the outside world as well as to gain a better understanding of

the circumstances surrounding his rights within the SAWP (p.109). To counter loneliness and emotional strain, he also used the radio as a coping mechanism— listening to tapes on stress-management and for exploring his spirituality (p.109). These mechanisms of resilience displayed by Gabriel and his colleagues that unified them, despite extreme forces pressuring them to be divided, serve to support what Cohen & Hjalmarson (2020) highlight saying that "these acts of resistance, carried out on farms and orchards across the country, constitute the heart of the greater movement for migrant justice" (p.15). Nonetheless, although migrant workers voices often appear silent or are presented as supportive and appreciative of the program, within a context of unfree labour, scholars iterate the many creative ways in which migrant workers enact daily resistance as powerful political agents of change, despite their difficulties in speaking out or to formally denounce realities associated within the SAWP (Cohen & Hjalmarson, 2020; Choudry & Smith, 2016).

Post-SAWP Livelihood

Gabriel's distinct understanding of his situation sparked a fire to defy the fate imposed upon himself as a temporary migrant worker. In Gabriel's first year, he was connected with J4MW (Justicia 4 Migrant Workers) at a vigil held for the death of ten migrant workers in a car accident on their shuttle back to their bunkhouses (Allahdua & Dunsworth, 2023, p.116). At the vigil several MWs spoke sharing heart wrenching stories regarding the unjust realities for SAWP workers, one of such speakers was Gabriel (p.116). In speaking, Gabriel marked critical ties to the activism community that would unknowingly serve as a new path into his chapter ahead. After the vigil, Gabriel shares the story of one of the surviving workers from the crash. Severely injured and fighting for his life in hospital after the accident, Canadian immigration officials were quickly found at his bedside pushing the injured worker to return to his home country

(p.118). Witnessing the inhumanity displayed by Canadian authorities, Gabriel marked the beginning of what he calls his "turn to activism in Canada" (p.119). He began covertly attending local protests, and using his social networks established within activism and the local community (p.118). Then, at the end of his second season he took a leap of faith and did not board his flight home to St. Lucia. (p.118).

For the next thirty months that it would take for Gabriel to achieve residency, he relied on the support of his allies to help him move forward his application for residency (p.119). With SAWP workers technically banned from pathways to citizenship, this journey was one that he explains was seldom achieved by others before him, and one which required strong legal representation that is most often out of reach for low-income farmworkers (Dépatie-Pelletier, 2018). With four stages of immigration hurdles over the course of 30 months, he describes the many barriers including the costs associated, English competency and literacy for filling forms and passing immigration exams, as well as large amounts of documentation (financial records, family history, work history, local references etc.) that are equally means by which most TFWs are unlikely to be deemed eligible. Ultimately, Gabriel was successful in his application under humanitarian and compassionate grounds, and today he has been reunited with his family and has pursued a life in Canada as a leading activist for temporary migrant rights. The distinct barriers that Gabriel faced in his journey to becoming a Canadian, however, indicate support for critics who highlight how unachievable this outcome is for the majority of MWs within the SAWP (Dépatie-Pelletier, 2018).

Case Study B: Keeno Clarke

Livelihood Prior to SAWP Migration to Canada

Keeno Clarke was born and raised in west-central Jamaica's Golden Run district in the parish of Manchester. In describing his childhood, he speaks fondly about growing up in a family with both his mother, father and two siblings (K. Clarke, personal communication, March 26, 2024, 4:00-14:00). Supported by his parents to prioritize his academics, he explains never missing a day of school as a child and learning to read and write at a young age with the help of his mum. Despite Keeno's scholarly dedications, he describes the emotional hardship that unveiled in high school when his school administration pushed him to enter a lower standard course stream. Feeling that his educational capacity was being degraded and preventing him from higher achievements that he knew he was capable of, Keeno left his school and went on to complete his coursework through night classes. Despite reportedly completing all the necessary subjects required, he was ultimately unsuccessful in acquiring his formal high school diploma.

Living in a farming region, in the years throughout and following high school, Keeno had already been working in agriculture growing and picking yams, sugar canes and bananas prior to working in the SAWP. After getting married to his wife, Keeno went on to secure higher wage employment that would allow him to support his and his soon to be growing family's livelihood. During this time, Keeno encountered the devastating realities of under/un-employment in Jamaica, coupled with the barriers of not having a high school diploma.

In the 1980s-90s, Jamaica underwent a period of Structural Adjustments (SA) during which the IMF and the WB imposed a full restructuring of the country's trade and finance

policies (Handa & King, 1997). This restructuring was catered to liberalization and privatization that were argued to be the key to long-term growth and development (Handa & King, 1997). The drastic shift to free trade combined with high-interest development loans resulted in remarkable damage to local industries, stifled infrastructural growth, as well as spikes in unemployment, inequality, and poverty that have led the country towards dependence on aid, imports and migration remittances (Wells et al., 2014). In this context, Keeno was unable to source stable employment despite endless attempts to apply for jobs across the region. Nonetheless, come 2016 when Keeno and his wife found out that they were pregnant, it was under conditions of extreme financial insecurity and a lack of employment alternatives that Keeno applied to the SAWP. On June 25th of 2017, Keeno would find himself boarding a flight to work on a farm in the Okanagan valley of BC, at the very same time, he found himself missing the opportunity to be present for the birth of his first child (K. Clarke, personal communication, March 26, 2024, 13:00). As highlighted by critics in the forced nature of temporary migration, from the beginning of Keeno's journey, we see hindered agency and choice, as well as the destabilizing impacts of liberalization and privatization on a smaller developing country (Henaway, 2023; Stiglitz, 2003).

Working Conditions

Dangerous Work and Limited Recovery

Keeno's experience working on the farm indicates harsh and unsafe working conditions with little training, no days off, bare minimum breaktime, and little indication of any health and safety measures, despite conditions working exposed to extreme weather and other elements including chemicals and farming pesticides (31:00). On his first day, Keeno describes the training he received to have been a brief overview on ladder use, in which a safety manager

informed them how to set it up and to avoid using the top step. He explains this to be the extent of any workplace related training offered (26:30). In terms of breaks, he explains that in arriving in Canada, his liaison officer had informed him that he was entitled to two 15-minute coffee breaks, and one 30-minute lunch break each day (27:30). However, he says that on an 8–10-hour shift, they never got more than one 15-minute break, and no lunchbreaks were ever given (27:30). In terms of days off, he explains that in the first two weeks on the farm, work began gradually, as him and his housemates were required to perform renovations on the bunkhouse that they would be living in. On the third week once they began harvesting, from then on it was seven days a week and no days off (32:00).

In terms of tasks, Keeno was responsible for working up and down rows of fruit trees, picking apples and cherries as fast as he could in order to keep his boss from targeting him in front of the others for underproduction (32:00). In describing his relationship with his employer, he says that "there was no relationship, because… they did not care if we were hungry, or if we were sad, or even if we were sick, they just wanted the work to be done" (40:00). Conditions experienced by Keeno echo concerns related to the additional health risks associated with working under the SAWP in a capacity of dangerous work, long-hours with limited recovery.

One day on the farm whilst picking apples, Keeno's employer began treating the orchard with pesticides where he was stationed to work. In a context of no health and protection gear such as a chemical suit and/or respiratory masks, nor any formal safety training, Keeno found himself being exposed to potentially life-threatening health risks from breathing in and working amongst toxic chemicals. Widely accessible, there is an international scale of research on the many health risks associated with skin and respiratory exposure to pesticides, some of said risks include long-term degenerative conditions such as "increased probabilities of developing

Parkinson's disease, and… non-Hodgkin's lymphoma" (IRSST, 2019, p.1). Despite the wide-ranging information available to growers, in addition to the legislative mandates that require growers to abide by national standards for health and safety in farming and most especially the workplace, Keeno's employer proceeded to spray the field regardless of workers presence and lack of safety gear (K. Clarke, personal communication, March 26, 2024, 47:25).

After Keeno raised concern requesting to be stationed away from the toxic spray since he and his coworker both had asthma, his employer responded by spewing discriminatory names at him, and accusing him of refusal to work (48:00). Following this, Keeno's employer confiscated his passport and left him with no clear indication of what was to happen next. Keeno's experience within this instance showcases the extent to which employers' priorities over business interests can easily translate into extreme sacrifices of workers' health and livelihoods under the SAWP.

Productivity and Compliance: Discrimination and Competition

Keeno's experience with productivity management in working conditions showed that employers encouraged rivalry amongst workers to boost productivity. He explains the ways in which management installed fear and competition amongst workers by leveraging five top performers as the standard set for both productivity and performance compliance (32:00). This group of favoured workers was reportedly given preferential treatment by the boss. However, the group was constantly evolving, as others found new creative ways to impress management, or when/if workers were to step out of line according to an unclear set of management defined compliance standards (34:00). In one scenario, Keeno describes a top five worker who had witnessed an injury of a fellow MW falling off a picking ladder. Respectively, when he raised

concerns that the injured worker should be brought to seek medical attention, Keeno describes the manager turning on the worker, and from then on targeting him as a troublemaker and no longer offering him preferential treatment, nor responding to the health needs of the injured worker (34:45). In this case, Keeno's experience validates claims about the double-edged sword of increased health risks and impediments to access to healthcare despite legislative frameworks that should guarantee workers' rights (Hennebry & McLaughlin, 2012 p.125).

This reality also connects to the greater concept of employer control mechanisms used for maintaining precarity and productivity of workers (Reid-Musson, 2014). Keeno explains that every other day, his employer would hold a meeting after work during which he would address concerns relating to workers' performance by verbally disciplining them amongst their colleagues. This practice can be seen as a mechanism of installing fear and hierarchy within the workplace. By fear of being the next target for non-compliance, workers were in competition with one another to get in the good graces of their employer by maximizing their daily picking yields.

During this time, Keeno expresses the emotional warfare that was involved in witnessing his fellow co-workers being targeted as lazy, being called names and discriminated against with limited ability to stand up for themselves without fear of further retribution (K. Clarke, personal communication, March 26, 2024, 32:00). Views and understandings of MWs who fail to meet commercial industry standards are often labelled as under-performers, as lazy and ungrateful for the opportunities that many are desperate to gain hold of. It is important to note the falsehood surrounding this perception, and that despite working to their utmost capacities, MWs are under extreme levels of employer control and micromanagement with clear fixations on market efficiencies. This power imbalance and market driven management style serves to bring about

extreme pressure to produce, and extreme competition as experienced by Keeno and his colleagues. He explains the pain associated with the abuse of power to emanate the feeling of being treated like a "monkey or a slave" (33:00). As highlighted across critical literature which evaluate temporary migration as a form of unfree and indentured labour, Keeno's experience lends support to concerns over the risks associated with the SAWP's legal landscape that transfers extreme amounts of power into the hands of employers who host primary interests in capital gains (Dépatie-Pelletier, 2018; Binford, 2013). With economic interests most often driving employer decision-making, not only can workers face harsh realities whilst on the clock, but as previously highlighted in Case Study A, their living conditions provided under employer authority can be seen to present similarly challenging conditions.

Living Conditions

Unsafe Housing and Limited Amenities

Keeno's living conditions during his time in the SAWP reveal additional concerns relating to health, safety and an array of other challenges which served to negatively impact his wellbeing. From the outset when Keeno arrived on the farm, his bunkhouse was reportedly not liveable. The attic of an old building was designated to be his living quarters, and it was to be shared amongst 8 fellow workers. Reportedly in rough condition, he describes it having birds living in the walls, regularly flying in and out due to holes in the side of the structure (K. Clarke, personal communication, March 26, 2024, 28:00). In the first few weeks, Keeno and his housemates were required to apply their limited collective building and renovation experience to create some semblance of a safe and functional living quarter. For the duration of their stay, they patched holes and decaying floors using scrap wood panels and drapes. Further, with a broken

plumbing system, Keeno and his housemates were required to source water directly from an outdoor piping system throughout their stay (28:00). These factors play an important role in further indicating his employer's limited priority for the wellbeing of the workers, and further, they support concerns regarding low-standard housing across SAWP employers, and the limited effectiveness of regulatory enforcement structures supposedly serving to ensure adequate housing standards (Borelli, 2024). These concerns similarly can be tied to growth centered interests in which employers are disincentivized to invest more than the bare minimum when it comes to TFW housing, as such investments provide little in terms of upfront investment returns (Borrelli, 2024).

Isolation on the Farm

One of the hardest parts that Keeno describes about his living conditions was resulting from employer practices that resulted in forced isolation. Keeno describes that his employer installed mechanisms which monitored workers' movements in Canada by setting rules against leaving the property without permission, rules against interacting with Canadians, and rules against hosting visitors (K. Clarke, personal communication, March 26, 2024, 42:00). This reality meant that the workers were bound to the farm except for Friday shuttles into town for collecting groceries and depositing and sending home money. This not only held an impact on the extreme control asserted by Keeno's employer both on and off the clock, but it echoes the concerns of critics who raise the issues of isolation and arbitrary mobility restrictions as mechanisms used to maintain control, fear and compliance from workers within a capacity that further ensures their deportability and disposability (Dépatie-Pelletier, 2018; Reid-Musson, 2017). Researchers also highlight the practice of monitoring and limiting MWs interactions with Canadians to be a mechanism leveraged for preventing the likelihood that TFWs establish

connections to advocacy organizations and/or local members of the community that might present them with knowledge and support regarding their rights, and/or pathways to citizenship (Reid-Musson, 2017).

Institutional Landscape

Family Separation

Looking at Keeno's livelihood conditions from an institutional landscape approach, some of the many issues he faced related to the Canadian legal and policy framework, as well as employer and state official malpractice. In the context of policies and immigration restrictions that impacted Keeno's livelihood, one of the factors that similarly deeply affected him was being separated from his family, and the limited access to means of communication. Missing the birth of his child is a trauma that he iterates as rendering his choice to come to Canada to have been the hardest decision he has ever made (K. Clarke, personal communication, March 26, 2024, 13:00). This supports research that demonstrates that migrant workers also face heightened risks to their health because of burdened mental health, depression and anxiety induced by family separation (Basok, 2002, 60, 122; McLaughlin, 2007; Preibisch, 2004). Being caught between finances, a growing family, and limited choices, migrating from the beginning was with extremely mixed emotions. While many of the issues highlighted by Keeno could be understood by some to be part of the experience of immigrants in general, there is a distinction that must be highlighted between the "immigrant experience" and that of temporary migrant workers. Amongst many distinguishing factors, workers under temporary status are not granted the right to have a future in Canada, they are at constant risk of deportation and are at the mercy of extreme power imbalances yielded by their employer. TFWs are not recognized as members of

the host-society nor are they granted the same rights as Canadians, they are presented lower wages, limited protection and justice mechanisms, and within extreme circumstances of precarity, they are then additionally at increased risks of exploitation, abuse, and of getting injured in the workplace (Satzewich, 1991; Dépatie-Pelletier, 2018; Henaway, 2023).

Further investigating the institutional architecture, Canadian farming regulations, employer productivity and compliance systems, and isolation tactics helped form Keeno's challenging SAWP experience. Keeno faced hardships within his working conditions not merely due to the challenging tasks associated with harvesting in desert like conditions, but within a legal framework which provided no mandated breaks nor time off between shifts. Keeno's working environment became at the mercy of his employer's good will. The nature of Keeno's working conditions was challenged by management practices which leveraged authority over workers' status precarity and installed fear of replacement and retribution. Outside of working hours, workers' mobility was then monitored and controlled through rules against interactions with Canadians, and the inability to leave the farm or host visitors without employer permission. These compliance strategies, although technically in violation of Canadian legislation, and a practice defined by state representatives as a form of employer non-compliance within the SAWP, was a practice that Keeno and his fellow workers endured.

From the beginning of Keeno's journey, he was assigned to a Jamaican liaison officer who claimed to be a point of contact in the case of any concerns or issues that may arise during his time in the SAWP (K. Clarke, personal communication, March 26, 2024, 41:00). She also assured that she would visit the workers in person once every two-weeks to ensure their wellbeing (41:00). Keeno explained that the liaison officer not only failed to visit entirely, he explains that in his time on the farm, if there was one thing he would do differently it was to

document the circumstances with more physical evidence, but most importantly, it would be to have kept the liaison officer entirely out of the loop, because by the end it was clear that her interests served solely to cater to the needs of his employer (1:00:00). Corruption and mobility restrictions imposed on TFWs has been documented by many researchers across the field. Dr. Reid-Musson highlights this in her work which revealed not only employers to install monitoring and movement restrictions, but that even state consular officials and liaison offices were complicit in enforcing unlawful curfews and rules against leaving farms and interacting with host communities (Reid-Musson, 2017).

Blacklisting

In the week following Keeno's passport confiscation, he explains that nothing was communicated to him regarding his status of employment until suddenly in the days following, he was accused by his employer of breaking the rules once again. At this time, Keeno was informed that he had been allegedly caught leaving the property at night when he was not given permission to do so by his employer (K. Clarke, personal communication, March 26, 2024, 48:00). This prompted Keeno's employer to inform him that he was being terminated and sent home as a result (48:00). Although several workers reported to the boss that Keeno was in bed at the time that he was being accused of being off the farm, Keeno pleaded with his employer to the point of begging him to reconsider and even reminded him that he had a newborn son at home that was depending on his ability to maintain this job (49:00).

Ultimately, despite efforts to convince his employer to reconsider, Keeno was brought to the airport by his liaison officer the very next day and ordered to return home. This reality was one that Keeno struggled to accept, and which would prompt his decision not to board his

scheduled flight home, and instead, remain to seek justice for himself. Although many institutional factors contributed to hindering Keeno's livelihood whilst working and living on the farm, that which ultimately led to his termination was the SAWPs legal landscape that granted his employer the right to terminate without notice and without measures in place for preventing wrongful terminations, let alone any viable appeals process (Dépatie-Pelletier, 2018). Although Keeno was never issued a formal notice that he had been "blacklisted" from the program, his outcome in which he has never been considered as an applicant again serves to support concerns raised regarding the ongoing existence of blacklisting even though the practice is discouraged and frowned upon by government officials.

Critics claim that reforms are needed regarding this policy landscape, as the right-to-return for MWs is merely granted to workers who are called back from their original employer, or in the case that they are granted an open-work-permit that is either court ordered, or in the rare case that it is signed off willingly by the employer (Bridi, 2020, p.141). Open-work permit pathways in cases of employer abuse are said to be an avenue available to temporary workers to ensure the protection of their rights and livelihoods. However, critics raise concerns over the many barriers to its functioning in practice. They argue that unreasonable amounts of physical and eyewitness evidence are required, which is often not achievable with colleagues facing similar risks of deportation (Dépatie-Pelletier, 2018). They also highlight an array of other factors such as literacy and language barriers, high financial costs, and that ultimately, fear of filing a report and failing to satisfy the burden of proof, many workers avoid heightening the risk of termination and deportation by opting not to report abuse altogether (Vosko, 2019). Collectively, critics argue that these factors stand in the way of this avenue as an effective means for policing employer misconduct and ensuring MW justice (Bridi, 2020, p.141).

Ultimately, Keeno's outcome which resulted in wrongful termination and blacklisting echoes the concerns raised across migrant rights scholars who highlight practices such as blacklisting and terminations-without-cause which serve primarily to maintain the deportability of TFWs (Vosko, 2019). In *Disrupting Deportability* (2019), Vosko summarizes several scholars who connect the concept of deportability and power imbalances, highlighting that the institutional landscape allows for ""extra-economic coercion"— made more salient by employers, who in the presence of vague state-sanctioned employment contracts that make arbitrary dismissal permissible, use the threat of deportation as a fear tactic to encourage high productivity at low wages" (Vosko, 2019, p.31-32). This perspective is supported by the experience that Keeno underwent, whether it be in the capacity of his working environment, housing, and/or transportation and mobility rights, his employer prioritized capital interests above and beyond his responsibilities as an employer to ensure rights, safety, and wellbeing of his employees. In the end, regardless of the extremely precarious circumstances in which he was under, and despite the unfavourable imbalance of power and economic disadvantage, Keeno defied the odds and sought justice, nonetheless.

Mechanisms of Resilience

In the face of a toxic and competitive work environment, similarly harsh living conditions, Keeno's response to the institutional landscape surrounding him reveal signs of extreme resilience by standing up for his and his coworkers rights, despite the many factors rendering his circumstances to be highly precarious. At the airport on the day of his early termination flight home, Keeno begged for support from his liaison officer, but to no avail, he ultimately ended up refusing to leave the country and instead leveraged the few Canadian social networks he had covertly established while on the farm. The covert nature of relationships

established while in Canada is a critical factor for many MWs who find themselves with designated employers or state officials who impose monitoring restrictions for maintaining their deportability, productivity and compliance. Having connected with some local migrant rights activists from Radical Action with Migrants in Agriculture (RAMA), upon termination Keeno reported his circumstances, and in doing so, RAMA coordinated accommodations, food, and transportation until a human rights case could be built. RAMA then connected Keeno to funding and pro-bono legal support through which he went on to have his story shared across the province for raising awareness on migrant rights issues, as well, he was able to put forth a successful BC human rights tribunal case. In the end, the case dragged on over a year's time, and ultimately, Keeno was advised to avoid court and settle in mediation (K. Clarke, personal communication, March 26, 2024, 55:00). The employer was forced to pay a settlement of which Keeno received approximately CAD $2000, and otherwise, no other reported sanctions nor penalties were issued to the employer moving forward (55:00).

In addition to the validation presented in winning a settlement against his employer, Keeno expresses remorse for having given in to the pressure to settle in mediation, as his former employer continues to expand their business at the cost of the many migrant workers livelihoods feeding and fuelling their growth. In 2019, a local news outlet reported the story of three Mexican seasonal workers working for the same farm with photographic evidence and descriptions of their formal complaints involving similar experiences to Keeno of decrepit and overcrowded housing conditions, as well as reports of chemical exposure whilst working on the farm (Strachan, 2019). Validation and financial settlements for cases of employer malpractice must be regarded as an anomaly within the grand scope of MWs who experience similar and even worse conditions of employment within the SAWP. However, validation and a couple

thousand dollars after a lengthy legal battle, shattered home life and crumbling financial livelihood, must be recognized for its bear minimum capacity to reconcile the damages incurred.

Never letting fear stand in the way of advocating for himself, Keeno to this day chooses to share his name and his story with pride and hope for a better future. In his final words he says:

> I don't know when it's going to stop…you can see a person, and you don't value them, in spite of their skin colour, right? … For me, I would never have the heart to do a person like that. For money, or for whatever it is. And so, the system it needs to fix that part of it. Because… we Jamaicans, we are dedicated people to what we love. And we are not different than Canadians… It's the same blood that's running through everyone…the system should[n't] let this go on any further, it should put plans in place to value people. Especially the ones that you import for work… I have shared my story, and a person came out of the blue sharing their story, saying that they were in Kelowna, working for the other brother, they had to stand up in water every day, some of them they said that their feet felt like they were starting to rot… we have been experiencing this for quite a while now, and it's no time for modern-day slavery. Jamaicans are willing to work, the job will be done, you will be happy, you don't have to discriminate or treat people like that to get us to work (K. Clarke, personal communication, March 26, 2024, 1:02:00-1:05:00).

Post-SAWP Livelihood

Keeno's case stands out for many reasons, one of which is his defiance to let fear guide his response to circumstances of extreme injustice. Despite his resilience and seeming success in asserting his rights within a legal capacity, the funds that would be paid offered little remedy in

the face of the long-term psychological harm, the post-rejection from his home community, and the uphill financial battle that awaited him following his return home. Keeno found himself faced with the harsh rejection from his family and community because of his early return home. He describes the pain of being judged for coming home with nothing to show for the golden opportunity he had been handed. He explains the lingering burden of his post-Canada livelihood stating:

> [E]very single person in Jamaica has this burden when they go overseas and come back to Jamaica, everybody expects them to have this certain amount of money, this change financially right? … I had to leave my parish to go outside because even the persons in my community… they started looking down on me… what have I done wrong? How many of them needed these opportunities, and I got mine... It was really hard, it still is (14:00).

Recently, Keeno reported the devastation associated with watching his wife and children leave him to stay with family due to financial precarity. He explains that the limited jobs that existed prior to his migration, were now farther out of reach under his circumstances of return. This he also attributes to the fact that having been granted opportunities to seek higher wages abroad, he finds himself often at the bottom of the pecking order behind those who haven't migrated abroad. In the years following Keeno's return, he has engaged in whatever means possible to support himself, including building a greenhouse, and now having recently acquired a certification in masonry (22:00). He explains the precarity of these mechanisms for maintaining his and his family's livelihood, as farming requires money that he does not generate, and that regardless of any certification, construction jobs are often slow, projects are sparse, and generally at long distances from home with limited transportation (22:00).

Furthermore, an additional livelihood barrier that has affected Keeno's life is that of the recent climate disaster left behind by Hurricane Beryl. In the wake of the hurricane, Keeno experienced mass flooding, significant damage to his family home, and found himself now within a further disrupted environment for achieving financial stability. He describes struggling to cover basic costs of life, in addition to costs of post-disaster repairs, the burial of his sister who recently passed, and his children's annual education fees. In asking Keeno to describe his overall health and physical well-being when he first went to Canada and now, he says "I was 80 percent coming to Canada, young vibrant and hungry. And I would probably say…25 percent now" (25:45). The outcome that Keeno experienced is one which indicates support for critics who raise issues regarding the many additional negative long-term risks associated with temporary migration. In this context, critics such as J. McLaughlin highlight the cyclical and disposable structure of the SAWP. She explains:

> It's win, win, everyone's happy, well, actually they're not. And I'd say the most unhappy workers are those who have had a serious concern and are sent home. And can't earn anything for their families, and some of these families are destitute. They have no way to support themselves, and then… their children grow up and migrate to Canada to support the parents who can no longer work. And so, it's like a cycle that continues (J. McLaughlin, personal communication, March 20, 2024, 0:18:15).

In *Essential Work, Disposable Workers*, M. Henaway (2023) further explains the complex cycle of MW disposability to be not merely a byproduct of bad apples, but rather a critical reality for supporting Western globalization.

> These racialized migrant workers generate great wealth for capitalists inside the rich countries because of being rendered exploitable through xenophobic policies… designed to ensure they remain vulnerable, docile, deportable and disposable… These forms of work are essential to all of us and underlie our interdependent condition (p.6).

Together, the case studies of Gabriel Allahdua and Keeno Clarke provide compelling illustrations of the complex factors that serve to drive migration from developing countries to the global North. Their experiences highlight many of the devastating impacts of climate change, trade liberalization, and economic instability on livelihoods of displaced peoples across the LAC region. Their journeys within the SAWP highlight the need for a more nuanced understanding of the motivations and circumstances that lead individuals to seek work abroad. In the following section, a comparative analysis of Gabriel's and Keeno's experiences will be conducted to explore the broader patterns and trends within the SAWP. This analysis will delve deeper into the experiences of migrant workers and the factors that influence their livelihoods and wellbeing.

Comparative Case Study Analysis

This analysis employs a sustainable livelihoods framework and a precarity approach to examine the multifaceted factors influencing the experiences of migrant workers in the SAWP. Ultimately, this livelihoods analysis is limited in its scope as a result of temporary status precarity, which research reveals to render their livelihoods and assets to be structurally inhibited and with constant risk of injury, health decline, loss of status, and loss of employment in such a way that is not sustainable, and instead, promotes unfree labour relations (Miles, 1987; Choudry & Smith, 2016; Wells et al., 2014). As a result, when examining the financial, human, social, physical, and natural capital of the two case studies, these categories of inquiry have been

grouped together for facilitating the limited scope analysis. Nevertheless, through this inquiry we will gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by migrant workers and the ways in which these factors intersect to influence their livelihoods. This analysis will also provide insights into the potential for reform within the SAWP, which is the subject of the following chapter.

Financial & Human Capital

From a financial capital perspective, in both cases, unemployment and financial insecurity served as a central motivating factor driving both Gabriel and Keeno into the SAWP. This iterates the claims that MWs welcome the financial opportunities presented within temporary migration. However, based on their lived experiences, what can be deducted is that low wages, high program and travel costs, lack of a pension, lack of job security, inhibited labour bargaining power, alongside the seasonal nature of their work and employer malpractice, ultimately served to inhibit the relative benefits associated with SAWP earnings. From a human capital[6] approach, both Gabriel and Keeno can be seen as having held unique skills and assets resulting from previous experience in agriculture, as well as having English literacy and a background of education. Gabriel distinctly having a high school diploma and post-secondary degree in Agriculture served to further distinguish him amongst the two cases, as it is most common that workers in the program are selected based on factors such as low literacy and lack of high school education (Ahamad et al., 2003). Both of their cases reveal that literacy, higher education and farming skills presented them with not only little in terms of opportunities for

[6] Human Capital: Skills, knowledge, and health.

advancement of their roles/responsibilities/career, but rather served to undermine their livelihood and job security.

This reality unveiled as their skills and knowledge, which could easily translate into resistance, assertion of rights, and/or vocalizing injustice, served to put them at greater risks of being targeted/retributed/terminated by their employer as a source of productive inefficiency. Within the context of gaining transferable skills, the nature of repetitive basic work such as produce picking, cleaning and pruning, in addition to the alienation from all decision-making power within their work, further served to undermine the advancement of human capital (Bridi, 2020). In terms of health-related issues, their experiences showcase extreme risks and harms associated with mental and physical health due to dangers associated with farming, which are further exacerbated due to high-stress factors including barriers to accessing healthcare, productivity and mobility surveillance, constant fear of termination/deportation, employer abuse, discrimination and racism, exposure to chemicals and pesticides, unsafe farming practices, as well as lack of adequate health and safety practices and training.

Social, Physical, & Natural Capital

This section will combine three categories of capital under the sustainable livelihoods framework for addressing the implications for their social capital[7], physical capital[8], and natural capital[9] under the SAWP. From this collective approach, the workers' experiences reveal livelihood barriers faced due to their temporary status and deportability. This can be seen in their rural isolation, inhibited community engagement, limited transportation, lack of pathways to

[7] Social Capital: Social networks, relationships of trust
[8] Physical Capital: Transportation, shelter, water, communications
[9] Natural Capital: Use/ownership of natural resources

citizenship and barriers to resource ownership in Canada as temporary workers. In Keeno's case, he was distinctly given strict rules against leaving the farm and speaking with Canadians, whereas Gabriel's experience involved less overt barriers on mobility imposed by his rural location combined with limited time off necessary for community access which are critical for acquiring and leveraging social networks/capital. Respectively, both also showcase the livelihood barriers associated with isolation. Additionally, being tied to one employer and denied a future in Canada, their experiences reveal how TFWs are limited in the ability to leverage social connections within the Canadian farming industry for career advancement. Similarities within Gabriel and Keeno's experiences related to competition in the workplace, serves to indicate additional barriers via strife amongst colleagues when being pinned against one another in order to maintain good standing in the program and employer satisfaction. In terms of physical capital, both cases reveal the livelihood harms associated with employer provided housing, as they report unsafe, overcrowded and under functioning amenities within their living quarters. Transportation and communication barriers, as already highlighted serves as severely limiting factors, weakening any ability to better their circumstances, assert basic independence, or to choose where and under what conditions they were living. Lastly, in terms of natural capital, the case studies indicate a reality in which TFWs seasonality, low wages, and precarious job security, serve to undermine their ability to use and leverage land/natural resources as a mechanism of advancing their livelihoods altogether.

Post SAWP Livelihood Outcomes Comparative Analysis

Ultimately, both Gabriel and Keeno faced contrasting livelihood outcomes following the SAWP. Gabriel achieved permanent status in Canada and is now in pursuit of a career in activism which has allowed him to get a stable job, bring his family to Canada, and write and

publish a successful book. In Keeno's case, despite his human rights tribunal case in which he was able to gain some form of compensation and validation, ultimately, he faced deportation, blacklisting from the program, fractured social relationships with family and his community upon returning home, battles with unemployment, poverty, climate related hardships, and severe decline in his health correlated to his experience. Despite the many similarities intertwined between the two case studies, the distinctions can be highlighted within factors related to chance, social networks and higher education. In Gabriel's case, when exposed to pesticides on the job, he was lucky enough to have a supervisor who was empathetic to matters pertaining to health and safety as having an effect on long-term productive efficiency. In the case of Keeno, the negative response of his employer in the exact same scenario can be seen as a major determining factor that led to his premature return home from the program. Social capital played a big role in both cases as it was covert ties to Canadians that supported both in their pathways to justice. In the case of Gabriel, we see that although he managed to achieve citizenship, the array of barriers he faced rendered this path not one attainable by the majority of TFWs. This is supported by statistics which highlight that only 2 percent of TFWs have ever been able to pursue successful pathways to citizenship (Walia, 2021, p.157). Gabriel's distinct avoidance of early termination, combined with the leveraging of social networks, combined with his distinct education and understanding of the circumstances that perpetuated his precarity and exploitation, can be seen as having collectively served towards his unique pathway to citizenship. The process of achieving residency in Canada, Gabriel reports hosting many layers of trauma, and risk to his livelihood, related to fractured family bonds due to further extended periods of separation, precarious status, reliance on social networks for support and representation, and multiple years of high-stress and fear associated with the immigration process.

Conclusion

The case studies at hand reveal some of the complex lived realities that serve to undermine temporary migrant worker livelihoods. Upon comparative analyses of the case studies, in conjunction with the broad spectrum of literature that exists, what is revealed is a harsh reality in which SAWP workers' livelihood assets (financial, social, natural, physical and human capital) are rendered highly precarious and at the mercy of their employer's good will, who are themselves driven by market and long-term growth interests. Within a capacity in which employers hosts not only authority over MWs lives at work, but also host authority as a landlord and immigration representative, these experiences related to unsafe work, unsafe housing, discrimination and racism, combined with leveraging fear and competition for driving productivity, all collectively support criteria defined by unfree and indentured labour (Dépatie-Pelletier, 2018; Choudry and Smith, 2016; Miles, 1987). These lived experiences and circumstances of precarity are not only connected to program structures and industry practices, but they are enabled by racialized immigration policies and driven and perpetuated by globalization and its associated neoliberal market efficiency frameworks (Dépatie-Pelletier, 2018; Sharma, 2006).

In the case of human capital, what the findings of this study reveal is a distinctly inverse relationship between knowledge, skills and education, and the advancement of TFWs livelihoods. In instances of standard immigration, human capital assets generally host a positive relationship with one's livelihood; with higher skills and knowledge, workers face the ability to qualify for job promotions, growth in wages, advanced labour bargaining power and thus advancements in adjacent relative assets (i.e. social networks, advanced financial stability etc.).

What is indicated by this investigation is that the opposite is true for many migrant workers. Workers who have higher education, literacy and farming skills are not only unable to leverage these assets for getting higher paying jobs when working within the SAWP, but what the case studies reveal is that having these assets can also serve to further heighten their precarity and risk of facing deportation and termination. This can be seen in both cases, but even more so in the case of Keeno in which his knowledge of the unjust nature of his circumstances, combined with his distinct ability to communicate concerns regarding his rights and wellbeing, led to his ultimate termination-without-cause.

Lastly, what can be drawn from these case studies is that pathways to justice and/ or citizenship are critically dependant on the chance that MWs cross paths with an empathetic social connection who is both able and willing to help them. This reality further reveals the distinct barriers working against MWs livelihoods, whilst also highlighting the relative advantages that both Keeno and Gabriel have had, despite the unimaginable hardships involved in these processes. It is important to acknowledge in this capacity that countless TFWs have been unjustly terminated, deported, critically injured and/or abused, and many continue to face abuse and exploitation with no support, renumeration, justice, let alone acknowledgment of wrongdoing. These case studies confirm that the financial and skills/knowledge benefits that are highlighted by promotors of the program do in fact exist to some extent. However, in practice, TFWs isolation and deportability, in the presence of profit-driven employers, which is widespread, means that these benefits are easily undermined and overshadowed by the additional implicated risks. Within the context of the findings of this case study which reveal multiple areas in which the program is serving to perpetuate harm and risk for migrant workers, the following chapter will explore action areas for improving the SAWP, the current overhaul proposal put

forth by the government of Canada, and in what capacity the concerns reflected across migrant rights literature studies may or may not be reflected.

Chapter 5 – Reforming the SAWP: The Current Pathway Forward

The following chapter will begin by exploring the various calls for reform as well as present a summary of some of the reforms that have evolved the program since its initial inception. The chapter presents an overview and analysis of the current TFWP overhaul proposal presented by the ESDC in spring of 2024. This analysis will address the implications for the program's current trajectory and identify whose voices are being represented in policy-making environments.

Promoters' Action Areas for Reforming the SAWP: A Model Program, Despite Need for Improvement

Despite the advantages of the SAWP, promotors of the program do articulate areas for improvement. A formal list of these program flaws is articulated in many federal reports conducted over the years, as well as in the recent restructure plan which was accompanied by the allocation of over $50 million dollars to fix said weaknesses (ESDC, 2024, p.4). The main problems are described to be that the program needs to grow respective to the gaps in labour, and that it should become more accessible for both prospective labourers and employers. These barriers currently constraining its effective functioning are identified as administrative and financial barriers, bureaucratic inefficiencies, as well as underfunded and underenforced laws and policies (ESDC, 2024). In terms of ineffective enforcement structures for instances of legal and rights violations— they explain that the industry involves a number of bad employers who take advantage of the system in such a way that exploits the rights of some migrant workers

(House of Commons Canada, 2016, p.25-26). In response to the concerns raised surrounding migrant rights, the government proposes enhancement of emergency tip lines as well as increased fines and oversight mechanisms for holding non-compliant employers accountable, they also suggest increasing employer inspections and communication lines for ensuring clearer policies and guidelines (p.33-34). State officials emphasize that persistent policy violations are the result of ineffective law enforcement (Binford, 2019, p.355). Other issues addressed are a lack of consistency within rules and regulations and that the program limits employers to hiring farm workers year-round, in addition to heavy administrative and financial burdens on employers (ESDC, 2021). In the governments most recent evaluation report, the main recommendations based on the program weaknesses involved the following issues outlined in **Table 5.1** below.

Table 5.1 – Government of Canada SAWP Reform

Recommendations
1. Better engage employers and key stakeholders on the objectives of the program. 2. Explore alternative approaches for application-based processing for returning or frequent program users who maintain good track records in the program. 3. Clarify processes to help program officers assess labour market impacts and shortages more consistently.

(ESDC, 2021, p.8)

Looking further at these administrative processes associated with the program, for employers to become approved for hiring temporary workers, they are required to perform an LMIA (Labour Market Impact Assessment) to prove that a labour shortage indeed exists. Once this is done, then they can apply to hire workers, however, this is an annual process which

requires them to fill out a significant amount of paperwork on a yearly basis. What is argued is that from the outset, this complex process presents unfair barriers for smaller businesses to enter the market. With the established farming industry competing based on labour inputs defined by temporary labour pools, for businesses to compete, they equally must hire from low-wage labour pools. Due to high fees and upfront administrative obstacles, in the face of the current Canadian circumstances of high inflation and entrenched large corporate grocery monopolies, there have been concerns raised regarding the barriers to small businesses in accessing SAWP labour to have affected Canada's market competition overall as bigger corporations can navigate these costs/barriers with greater ease. In response to such concerns, the Government of Canada admitted the presence of unfair barriers and claimed them to have in fact played a damaging role contributing to industrywide monopolies, and that reform to the program for rendering it more accessible is a priority in the 2024 overhaul (Competition Bureau Canada, 2024).

Critical Calls for Change amongst Scholars and Activists

Since the dawn of the SAWP, critics have been calling for reform. Some of the many calls for change by the sector of critics include immigration reform for presenting pathways to citizenship for temporary migrant workers, the establishment of open work permits, the setting of living wages, union reform for removing barriers for temporary status workers to organize without the risk of being blacklisted, the implementation of job security structures, as well as laws and procedures for prevention of wrongful terminations are some of the many calls for reform across the sector (Borrelli, 2024; Vosko, 2019; Depatie-Pelletier, 2018). One of the challenges that critics highlight is the denial of state officials to acknowledge the gravity of harm being perpetrated within the confines of programs like the SAWP. Dr. Janet McLaughlin

describes the ongoing calls for reform amongst the activist and academic migrant rights community stating that it has emulated the feeling of screaming into an echo chamber with zero proportional response other than the echoes of our own calls for action (McLaughlin, personal communication, March 20, 2024).

Critics emphasize that none of the reforms implemented since the program's inception have effectively addressed the rights and concerns of migrant labourers. The Canadian government gradually implemented measures to regulate industry standards to address concerns relating to recruitment, wages, health services, and general minimum working and living standards amid an increase in reports of rights abuses across the sector (ESDC, 2015). In an effort to enhance the protections afforded to workers, emergency contact lines were established to facilitate the reporting of grievances and disputes in the context of abuse (p.17-24). Keeno and Gabriel's cases, as well as scholarly research, demonstrate that communication monitoring is a well-known tactic for employer exploitation, as are corruption and employer-favored biases within state offices that manage tip lines, despite claims that tip-lines can support regulatory enforcement (Reid-Musson, 2017; Dépatie-Pelletier, 2018). Overall, critics claim that the state has catastrophically failed in addressing the structurally exploitative core of the program, and that the solutions have been isolated from the in-practice reality. Instead, they articulate that reforms have answered only to the needs and demands of the private sector with accessible cheap labour, whilst downplaying the long list of devastating implications for migrant workers, their home countries, and the greater Canadian populous (McLaughlin, personal communication, March 20, 2024; Dépatie-Pelletier, 2018).

For the reforms that have been enacted; such as the instalment of regulatory frameworks to ensure the protection of migrant workers, critics have claimed that within a context of extreme

precarity induced by power structures and lack of a secure immigration and working status, combined with rising market competition and profiteering, the regulatory frameworks have done little to reduce rates of exploitation and abuse, across the sector (United Nations, 2024). Although reforms associated to the historical expansion of the SAWP has provided many more migrant workers with jobs each year, these reforms are said to have equally led to higher numbers of workers' facing abuse and life altering health related injuries including death (CCR, 2018; United Nations, 2024). This they say is also congruent with a sincere lack in infrastructure for enforcing such regulations and a sincere lack in expansion of funding for legal-aid and for local non-profit organizations who take on the heaviest burden of advocating on behalf of and supporting TFWs. Amongst years of protest, movements such as the 2016 *Harvesting Freedom* march in which TFWs, activists and allies travelled from rural farming communities in Ontario all the way to the heart of policymaking in Ottawa, continue to protest for reform and to raise awareness of the exploitations occurring on Canadian farms. They have been met with little response in terms of effective policy change (Allahdua & Dunsworth, 2023, p.147-156). In sum, call for reforms across critics has been a long and uphill battle for many years in which the state has largely failed to effectively apply any of the number of solutions presented by the sector. This history of contentious debate brings us to a current day context of a polarized arena and contrasting evaluations of how the program is functioning and what is necessary for fixing it. The following final section will explore the current proposal for overhauling the program.

SAWP Overhaul Proposal

In the wake of the pandemic, much was learnt regarding the fragility of Canada's food production system. In response to this reality, pressure arose in order to further secure and

enhance migration programs such as the SAWP that serve a fundamental role in maintaining the industry (Vosko et al., 2022). As a result, the government of Canada announced in Spring 2024 its new plan to "overhaul" the SAWP (ESDC, March 2024). As iterated by Figure 5.1 below, this proposal involves several components including the restructuring of the TFWP as a whole, in order to enhance program consistency, to clarify governance responsibilities related to bilateral agreements and to expand the occupational umbrella for the temporary agricultural stream to include the fishing sector and allow for year-round permits (ESDC, March 2021; 2024). Within this, there will be an implementation of sector-specific permits which is said to allow for migrant labour mobility from one employer to another, so long as they remain within the same sector (ESDC, March 2024). They are also proposing the use of new market-based indicators for determining wages, deductions, and program fees, as well as an update to migrant housing standards relating to health and safety concerns for migrant workers (ESDC, March 2024). The proposal specifically seeks to increase fees associated with being a part of the program and will implement measures in order for the market to determine compensation (ESDC, March 2024). One of the most critical features of this overhaul involves the transition from closed permits to that of sectoral ones. This shift is argued to be a groundbreaking solution for migrant workers being tied to one employer and is claimed to ultimately reduce risks of abuse and exploitation across the industry.

Figure 5.1 - Government Overhaul Breakdown

(ESDC, March 2024, p.8-10)

SAWP Overhaul Analysis

The overhaul proposals are a critical element within this inquiry as they serve as a roadmap for analyzing representation and prioritization within the trajectory in which the program is headed. At first glance, the name "overhaul" itself serves to indicate that major foundational restructuring is taking place. However, upon further investigation, what becomes clear is that this term is not effectively represented within the scope of changes being proposed. Instead, what is found within the proposal are expansions of the program and SAWP policies already in place, administrative changes for facilitating continued expansion, expansions on the terms of contracts, clarifications of existing policies, easing the costs and administrative responsibilities of employers, and allowing for the market to determine wages and deductions.

Nonetheless, concerns arise regarding the biases towards neoliberal market efficiency pursuits and advancement of farming industry and national economic interests.

In the context of sector-wide permits, it is important to note that the distinction between open work permits and sector permits has a series of negative implications, despite the fact that it is presented as a means of protecting migrant rights and allowing labour mobility. Open work permits would allow a worker facing abuse to transfer between employers. Nevertheless, these permits do not allow employees to seek employment outside the agricultural sector. Therefore, in a situation where the farming sector is dominated by a small number of large corporations, it is probable that workers will continue to be exposed to the same severe realities of precarity that they encounter under tied work permits, even if they are technically able to switch employers within the same sector. Consequently, the current chances of modifying the character of unjust labour practices and unfreedom are limited if there is no restructuring of employer-call-back policies and no solution to blacklisting practices incorporated into the program's structure.

What appears to be absent from these reforms are the many concerns raised across Chapters 3 and 4 regarding the constant deportation risks faced by migrant workers including both Keeno and Gabriel. There is no restructuring nor mentioning of the racist history of the program, there is no mention of the adverse implications of market driven employer power dynamics. There are also no effective measures for tackling widespread abuse and exploitation as revealed by both case studies, nor any meaningful pathways to justice and citizenship for temporary foreign workers. Overall, this leads to a conclusion in which no fundamental shifts in the original structure of temporary migration beyond growth and expansion are deemed necessary by state authorities. This overhaul ultimately highlights the heart of the dilemma of

migrant rights, where decades of calls for program revision and restructuring have ultimately failed to be prioritized and translated into policy change.

Conclusion

This chapter examined the SAWP's development through reforms and addressed the prevalent demands for change in the industry. The chapter then critically engaged with the current government's proposals to overhaul the TFWP, which is presently in the initial phases of implementation. It underscores the persistent existence of structural defects that restrict the efficacy of the current government's proposals for change, despite the substantial efforts to reform the program.

It is important to acknowledge that the current proposal to overhaul the SAWP is a response to decades of dedicated advocacy work and pressure for program revisions by migrant rights groups. Nevertheless, it is equally important to emphasize the reality that the overhaul, despite articulating some of the concerns expressed by critics, ultimately fails to respond to calls for fundamental change. The overhaul prioritizes the interests of employers and industry over concerns for the rights of migrant workers, underscoring power imbalances among stakeholders, particularly capital and labour. In the final analysis, the SAWP is not only crucial for the livelihoods of migrant workers, but also for the entire Canadian food system and for communities in home countries who depend on annual remittances. Ultimately, the future of the SAWP is contingent upon the collective engagement of all stakeholders, not just those in positions of authority and political influence. This study seeks to amplify the voices of the migrant workers upon whom Canada relies, since these voices are largely absent from policy-making settings.

Chapter 6 - Conclusion

This thesis focuses on the rights of temporary migrant farm workers in Canada. But far beyond that, it is looking at social justice and sustainability. As outlined in the mapping of the historical context presented in Chapter 2, it is addressing the history of racialized and colonial injustice that has brought about seasonal migration in Canada. As raised by the evidence and debates outlined in the critical literature review in Chapter 3, it looks at the unjust nature of liberalization historically undermining migrant sending economies across Latin America and the Caribbean. As supported by the case study findings in Chapter 4, it addresses the exploitation of these displaced migrants in such a way that renders them deportable, hard-working, cheap and dependent. And as iterated in the critical engagement with reform in Chapter 5, it is looking at the lack of representation of migrant rights concerns within the continued expansionary policy track on which the program is headed. Furthermore, it is looking at the unsustainability of the globalized system of food production that is further exacerbating climate change and mass migrations. It is addressing the unsustainable core of a system that lives with the main intention of satisfying greed and market interests. This research has explored the history in Canada that has resulted in the emergence of advanced commercial farming, globalized economies, liberalized trade and market priorities at the costs of human rights, and the lived realities that migrant workers have come to suffer as a result.

The research indicates that while the SAWP is often promoted as a win-win-win for sending states, receiving states, and the workers themselves, many of these potential benefits are hindered by policies connected to the advancement of globalization, neoliberalism and liberalization. These associated policies and practices result in migrant worker precarity, that ultimately serve to undermine migrant rights and wellbeing. Additionally, the study indicates

added layers of precarity with regards to the distinctly limited ability of MWs to leverage human capital for the advancement of their livelihoods. Ultimately, despite wide ranging disagreements across promoters and critics of the program, there is a consensus across the sector that the SAWP needs reform. However, the fragmentation of those calling for change and the influence of power hierarchies raises serious questions about the viability of proposed reforms and whose voices are truly represented within them.

The average Canadian is largely unaware of the intricate workings of the modern food system upon which their survival fundamentally depends. While migrant rights may seem relevant only to those directly involved in the SAWP, the reality is far more interconnected. This research contributes to understanding the complexities that have led to temporary migration and commercial farming, which connect to issues like rising inequality, rights injustice, and climate change as demonstrated throughout this paper.

The limitations of this study include a small sample size, reliance on different data sources for each case, and a limited scope due to time constraints. These factors may affect the generalizability of the findings and the depth of the comparative analysis. The time and wordcount constraints have limited this research from addressing critical impacts related to the COVID-19 pandemic which have posed additional layers of risk that must be addressed within the context of determining the future of the program. Additionally, the study's focus on male workers who are literate in English limits its ability to address issues related to gender discrimination and language barriers. Future research related to the long-term implications of climate change and migration is needed for gaining a more accurate understanding of what reforms are needed for adaptation strategies, policy responses, and the threats posed for insecurity of the Canadian food system with heavy reliance on precarious labour.

Overall, the SAWP finds itself on the brink of a new chapter filled with many proposed changes that will have global impacts for agriculture, migrant workers, migrant sending countries, as well as the Canadian population as a whole. The question that remains is: *what would it take for the concerns and voices of migrant farmworkers to be heard and integrated into policies that result in real and effective change*? At the beginning of this research, it was highlighted that alternatives to the current global food system exist, however, the current trajectory on which we find ourselves, little consensus exists on the most basic identification of the extent to which the current system is failing us. It is in this context that this project aims to contribute to growing research necessary for paving a path towards a more equitable and sustainable future that prioritizes the humanity of migrant workers and which lives in harmony with the planet on which we are critically dependent for survival.

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Appendix A: Interview Profiles

Participant Name	Place of Origin	Participant Title	Date of Interview
Gabriel Allahdua	St. Lucia	Former temporary migrant worker (SAWP)	March 13, 2024
Keeno Clarke	Jamaica	Former temporary migrant worker (SAWP)	March 26, 2024
Dr. Janet McLaughlin	Canada	Academic Field Expert	March 20, 2024

Appendix B: Semi-structured Interview Guide

Interview Questions
Initial Questions - Can you start by telling me your name, age, where you are from/born, and how you would describe your childhood? - How old were you when you started working? What kind of jobs were they? - Can you also tell me a little bit about your family? - Why, and how did you come to work in Canada's seasonal agricultural sector? - When and for how long did you work in Canada?
Financial Capital (financial resources, income, savings, credit, equity, stocks, bonds) - How would you describe your financial circumstances from when you left for Canada, while working in Canada, and now having returned home? (Savings, property/land ownership, equity, investment, pensions etc.)? - What was your average annual income working in Canada vs. in your home country? - How do you support yourself and your family since your return to Jamaica?
Human Capital (Skills, knowledge, ability to labour and good health important for livelihood) - What level of education have you been able to achieve? - What skills, knowledge and labour expertise would you say you feel strongest in? (i.e. agriculture, physical labour, office work) - What tasks did you perform when working in the Farms in Canada? - What would you rate your overall health and physical wellbeing when you first migrated to work in Canada, and what would you describe it to be now? - What measures were being taken to ensure your health and safety on the job by yourself and your employer? - What training or safety measures were in place, if any, when operating heavy machinery and/or working with dangerous pesticides and chemicals? - What are were working hours, and how often do you get access to breaks, food, water, and use of bathroom facilities? - What would you rate your overall mental/emotional health and wellbeing when you first migrated to work in Canada, and what would you describe it to be now? - How many times did you access healthcare (Doctor or nurse) throughout your time as a migrant worker in Canada?
Physical Capital (Transport, shelter, water, energy, necessary to sustain oneself) - What were your living circumstances on the farm (How many people, bathrooms, cleanliness, size), and what are they now? - If you do pay for your accommodations, how much do you pay and to whom? - What was your access to transportation whilst in Canada, and what would you describe your current access to transportation? - Did you feel limited in your ability to mobilize yourself while in Canada? - What were your experiences entering the local community?

Natural Capital (Ownership or livelihood maintenance via natural resources e.g. land, water, wildlife, biodiversity)

- Do you currently, or otherwise, have you in the past owned any natural resources i.e. land, water, wildlife, biodiversity or otherwise environmental resources that have had an impact on the sustainability of your livelihood today?
- Have extreme weather/climate disasters had any impact on your livelihood, if so, how?

Social Capital (Social memberships in groups, trust relationships, societal institutions networks)

- What would you describe your relationship with fellow workers while in the program?
- What was your relationship with your employers and supervisors like whilst in Canada?
- How would you describe your interactions/relationships established (if at all) with Canadians?
- When you were in Canada, did you feel that you were welcomed into any local community environments? if so, who made up that community for you?
- How would you describe your relationship/experiences interacting with state and immigration officials in Canada?
- How would you describe your access to support services while you were here?
- How would you describe your relationship with your boss?
- Was the person you reported to the owner of the farm? (What was the management structure like?)
- Were you provided with a person with whom you could contact should you face any problems whilst working, if so, how would you describe that relationship?

Post-SAWP Livelihood Outcomes

- How do you feel about your migration experience, and what factors are the most challenging in maintaining your daily livelihood after having been blacklisted from the program?
- Can you describe what led to your eventual departure from the program?
- How did this impact your life? (Mental and physical health, economic standing etc.)
- How did you respond to the news that you were going to be sent home and what actions did you take in response?
- What was your biggest fear about returning home?
- Do you know of other workers who similarly faced deportation orders, if so, what was their experience like?
- If you could go back and do it all over again, would you change anything about the decisions you made? Why or why not?
- How has this experience changed your life?
- Do you have hope for the future? Would you ever migrate again for work if you could?

Appendix C: Ethics Certificate

12/12/2023

Université d'Ottawa
Bureau d'éthique et d'intégrité de la recherche

University of Ottawa
Office of Research Ethics and Integrity

CERTIFICAT D'APPROBATION ÉTHIQUE | CERTIFICATE OF ETHICS APPROVAL

Numéro du dossier / Ethics File Number	S-11-23-9808
Titre du projet / Project Title	Precarity in the Fields: A Comparative Study of Documented and Undocumented Migrant Work in Canada's Seasonal Agricultural Sector
Type de projet / Project Type	Thèse de maîtrise / Master's thesis
Statut du projet / Project Status	Approuvé / Approved
Date d'approbation (jj/mm/aaaa) / Approval Date (dd/mm/yyyy)	12/12/2023
Date d'expiration (jj/mm/aaaa) / Expiry Date (dd/mm/yyyy)	11/12/2024

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Conditions spéciales ou commentaires / Special conditions or comments

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