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**SO, WHAT CAN WE DO? WE ARE COMING HERE TO WORK
HUMAN SECURITY AND THE AGRICULTURAL WORKER PROGRAM**

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of Graduate Studies

Of

The University of Guelph

by

ALEJANDRA LETICIA ROCHA MIER

In partial fulfillment of requirements

for the degree of

Master of Science

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ABSTRACT

SO, WHAT CAN WE DO? WE ARE COMING HERE TO WORK HUMAN SECURITY AND THE AGRICULTURAL WORKER PROGRAM

Alejandra Leticia Rocha-Mier
University of Guelph, 2004

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This thesis explores how the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program impacts the various dimensions of “human security” of the life of Mexicans in Canada and in the community of Las Nubes in Mexico. Special attention is given to describe the perceptions of the Mexicans regarding the possibilities of whether they are able to transfer the technology that they learned in Canada to their communities of origin and to assess if the participation of Mexicans in the SAWP either promote, hinder, or is irrelevant to, development in Las Nubes.

Multiple methods were used to collect data. This research shows that the SAWP rather than being a vehicle of technology transfer that benefits the communities of the Mexican migrant workers is merely an opportunity for those Mexican farm workers to make remittances. The circular migration constitutes a survival practice that allows migrant farm workers the risk- management of the conditions of human insecurity that they live with in Mexico. The survival strategy is compounded by a series of trade offs of different levels of risks on the different dimensions of human security between Mexico and Canada.

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CHAPTER ONE

1 INTRODUCTION

The best way to introduce this study is by delivering to the readers a compilation of messages that Mexicans interviewed in this study wanted to share with the readers. I believe that the best place to include their feelings and thoughts is at the beginning of this document. During the interviews, I opened a special space for them to share what they considered important to communicate to the public. In most of the cases when they were expressing their thoughts and feelings they slowed down their speech, waited and confirmed that I was able to write down all of they said. In some cases they stopped talking and said: *I repeat* and said again what they wanted to communicate to the public. The messages are grouped in to four categories, according to whom they are directed: Canada, Mexicans co-workers, the Consulate and *los patrones*¹ and the Mexican government.²

To Canada:

“I say thank you to Canada because it offers us a job. I would like to ask Canadians to appreciate our work. I would like to ask to Canadians to not ignore us or look at us with anger. Canadians are people and we are also people in spite of the fact that we speak different languages. The only difference between Canadians and Mexicans is the economic level of their countries. Canada has a higher economic level than Mexico. In Canada you can see that the taxes are well invested and this is not the case in Mexico”. Pedro.

“I would like to ask Canadians to appreciate the value of the work that Mexicans do on Canadian farms. I would like it if Mexicans were allowed to drive here in Canada. I would like to live here in Canada because as a resident I would have a better life”. Jose.

¹ The employers. This word in singular is *el patron*. The employer.

² All the names used to personalize the messages are pseudonyms.

“Canadians should be grateful for having Mexican farm workers. Without Mexicans they would not be able to do their jobs on the farms. Canadians have better wages. Canadians should give more appreciation to the work that Mexicans do! They should appreciate Mexicans as people. If Mexicans perform their jobs well, [Canadians] should be grateful. Perhaps they are not conscious of the work that Mexicans are performing”. Alejandro.

“I would like to ask the Canadian government to offer English classes to us. *El patron* says something to us and because we do not understand English we do not understand him or her. He or she becomes frustrated and we also become frustrated”. Armando.

“I would like to have the opportunity to learn English so that we as Mexicans can take care of our health with the support of the employer. On other farms workers are not taken to the doctor. They are told: “You are fine to work”. They are not taken to the doctor until it is evident that the worker is shocked by pain. According to the rules we have to be given a minimum of 8 hours of work per day but in some farms, workers are only given 5 or 6 hours of work. When we are not given enough work, we cannot afford send money home. *El patron* keep telling us to wait since we will have more work soon”. Enrique

“I would like to have doctors who can speak at least some Spanish available to us. I would like to have more translators in the hospital, to obtain kind assistance and to not be treated with racism. We are human beings; we are human beings and we feel! Maria”.

“It is most important to have better housing conditions for Mexican workers in Canada. They give us a place to live but they do not give us a heater. We need to live in a room, which is in a good condition”. Alejandra.

“There are *patrones* who make us sleep in the barns. The beds are not in a good condition, and they give us only one or two sheets, so we have to sleep in the cold. To me, that is wrong. We are human beings, and they are *patrones*. We need them to treat us like human beings, and not like animals”. Natalia.

“We would like to live in Canada so we can provide a better future to our children. If they come here while they are young, they will be able to learn the English language better”. Blanca.

“I would like to learn how to obtain an income tax return”. Javier.

To the Mexicans

“I want to let Mexicans know that I have progressed a little. I want to tell them to not conform and remain as they were before they came to Canada”. Luis.

“The fellows should appreciate their work because it helps to provide the daily bread and helps to provide a future for the family”. Enrique.

“For me, the most important thing is the treatment among fellow Mexican workers. Sometimes we are treated as dogs and cats. That is the everyday life we have to put up with. Among ourselves, we have to cooperate with each other in order to avoid problems. If we do not cooperate, a fight may begin. It is a problem. How can I explain this? It is as if you are fighting with your own family, yet we are from the same people. To be able to bear all the seasonal work in Canada one has to stop this situation. It is necessary”. Fernando.

“I would like to have more support among my co-workers so that they can help when help is needed”. Alberto.

To the Consulate and los patrones

“There are workers who cannot call the Consulate because they [the farmers] will fire them. Those who say: “I will call the Consulate” receive reproaches. There are workers who cannot go and deposit money in the bank when they want”. Cristina.

“There are farms where Mexicans work a lot. The workers are asked for a quantity that is not possible to achieve. On one farm, after finishing filling the kilns, the Mexican workers were taken to harvest potatoes until they completed 10 hours of work per day for the same wage”. Luis.

“The treatment that one receives in Canada is important. [It could be better] One should not have to deal directly with *el patron*”. Fernando.

“I want to say that I want the same treatment for all of us, even if one person has been working in Canada 20 years and another for only one year. I do not want differences among Mexicans. Why is there a difference? That is what I do not like”. Marisol.

“I would like to receive the same treatment as everybody. I would like it if there were no differences in treatment among Mexicans. All of us are equals. All of us came here for the same reasons”. Andres.

“ I would like the *patrones* in Canada to treat us well and to start giving better treatment to the fellows who now receive maltreatment. There are cases in which the fellows have suffered a lot. There are places where [their employers keep] their papers to not allow them to go back to Mexico until they finish their contract”. Jose.

To the Mexican government.

“Personally, I would like the Mexican government to review the system of work of the peasants in order to improve our economic possibilities. We need better wages here [in Mexico] and there [in Canada]. We have a minimum salary here and there. We go out [of our community] to improve [our situation] and what is the support in that sense? The government can help to improve our situation. Here per one day of work in the fields by

piece rate is paid 120 pesos and for one day of work you are paid only 100 pesos, working all the day from the sunrise to sunset. The government here has made good businesses with the people of the high classes and [the government] does not help the peasants. The meat is cheaper [it is a problem for the peasants who sell their cattle]. Our situation would improve in both places [the government could help to improve our situation in both places]. The government is eliminating the peasants and the middleman too. They have concentrated all the [power] and money in their offices". Francisco.

"I know that some fellows do not come back to Canada because they were allergic to the product or felt bad when other co-workers were spraying while we were inside [the greenhouse]. I ask to continue giving workers opportunities to come to where they [can work] without being sick, and to provide for the need that one has".

"How Mexican feels is what should be used and reported in the research. There in Canada, I feel that I do not belong. I feel as [if I were] reprimanded. I have to ask for permission for everything. Here [in Mexico] I feel free. I know my language. I know that if I go out in any place people understand me. Here, if I [buy clothes] and I do not fit in them, I go [to the store] and exchange them. There [in Canada] you have to conform [with what you bought]. There [in Canada] I have to think very hard about what I want to buy before to buy it". Carolina.

CHAPTER TWO

2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

In 1974 the Canadian government signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)¹ with the Mexican government to allow Mexicans to work temporarily in Canada. This agreement is identified as the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP). Canadian farmers need foreign workers to meet labour demands that cannot be met by the domestic workforce. Most Canadian workers are not willing to accept the low wages and difficult conditions of the farm work, and those who accept to work in farms do not stay (Basok 2002, 68). Moreover, Basok argued that migrant workers have become a “structural necessity” for the Canadian agricultural sector since they are employed as “unfree” labour. She defines unfree workers as those workers who cannot change jobs and are “willing to provide labour whenever a need arises”. (2002, 14)

Conversely, Mexicans come to work to Canada looking for employment and better wages. Hernández (2000, 1) in his analysis over the years 1992, 1994 and 1996 with a projection to 2015 said that even under “relatively optimistic” scenarios of economic growth the Mexican economy would remain unable to provide enough jobs to the economically active population. Moreover, the prevalence of low wages illustrates the precarious economic situation that the majority of Mexican families are facing. The official minimum salary established per day in the best paid geographical area of Mexico on January 2003 was \$43.65 pesos. This is approximately \$5.29³ Canadian dollars. Yet

3. If the Canadian dollar exchange rate is 8.25 pesos.

the actual minimum wage paid per day is between \$80 and \$150 pesos, which correspond to approximately \$9.70 to \$18.18 Canadian dollars per day.

The rural sector in Mexico has experienced a chronic crisis that became visible on 1960's when the "import substitution industrialization" (ISI) model exhausted its economic and political possibilities. The strong orientation towards the industry abandoned the agricultural sector and peasantry. Practically, the rural and agricultural sectors subsidized industrial growth providing cheap food to the urban centres (Nef and Vanderkop 1989; Gates 1996). The crisis in Mexico has been increasing with the impact of economic globalization and liberalization of the agriculture. As a result of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) signed in 1994, by 1996 approximately 750,000 subsistence farmers left agriculture and emigrated to the U.S. (Migration news 1996, quoted by Stalker 2000, 38). As Hernandez (2000, 6) pointed out the incapacity of the Mexican economy to create employment for the economic active population in the last two decades has increased the pressure for people to migrate outside of the country. He calculates that an annual average of 300,000 people have joined the undocumented migration to the United States. Here, it is important to remark that as Mexicans need to work outside Mexico, U.S. needs workers in some of their opening sectors.

The progressive detriment of the environment in Mexican rural areas also has contributed to expel peasants from their communities. Simon's (1997, 36) thesis is that "there is a strong correlation across the Mexican countryside between erosion and migration". He supports this argument highlighting that the States of Michoacán, Hidalgo, and Jalisco are some of the most eroded areas and constitute a considerable source of migrants to United

States. Moreover, focusing his attention to Oaxaca and Tlaxcala Simon noted that in Tlaxcala half of the land has been already damaged by erosion and in Oaxaca 70 percent of the former arable terrain in the Mixteco area is damaged. (1997, 30)

The same push-pull factor between Mexico and the United States is reproduced in the temporary labour migration to Canada. As the need of employment opportunities and better wages has grown for Mexicans, the Canadian demand for Mexican workers in the agricultural sector and other sectors has grown too. The number of Mexicans coming to work to Canada each year has increased significantly since the inception of the SAWP. In 1974, Canada received 203 Mexicans. In 2002, nearly 12,000 worked in Canada in almost 1000 farms (Uribe 2002). Of this total, 80% arrive to Ontario, 15% to Quebec and 5% to Manitoba and Alberta to work in various agricultural sectors.

(<http://www.consulmex.com/programa/histptat.htm>) (retrieved October 8, 2002).

Most Mexicans are repeat migrants as the regulations of SAWP allow farmers to hire every year the workers whose performance they like. As Vanegas (2003, 6) quoting Weston (2000) pointed out, more than 70% of Mexicans who come to work to Canada are 'nominal'. This means that the employers have given to the Mexicans a positive evaluation letter and have asked for them to work again in the farm. Basok (2002, 135) found that the average number of years spent in Canada by the workers that she interviewed was of 6.5 years. Each year most of these workers spent 6 to 8 months in Canada.

This type of controlled migration gives place to a cyclical migration (Bartle 1980) that creates a periodic exchange of knowledge, customs and ways of life that impact the

community of origin in Mexico and the receptor community in Canada. Such impacts include social, cultural, economical, political and environmental aspects of both communities.

A person in the Mexican Consulate interviewed by Colby (1998, 42) told her that Mexico has three main objectives for its participation on the SWAP. The first purpose is to alleviate the poverty of families and reduce both the rural-urban migration in Mexico and the undocumented migration to the United States. The second purpose is to give Mexicans who come to Canada the opportunity to learn about agriculture, technology, and Canadian culture to bring back to their communities in Mexico. The third purpose is to use the SWAP as a model of “orderly, controlled, and just labour migration”.

This study is focused on understanding the second purpose mentioned above. An initial literature review gave me the necessary insights to further elaborate the objective of this research. I found three different positions concerning the possibilities that migrants have of using the skills and abilities acquired abroad to contribute to the development of their communities. They are: 1) The skills and abilities learned by migrants have the potential to be used in the origin communities of the migrants. 2) Some empirical cases have shown the application of techniques and knowledge acquired. 3) Sending countries have overestimated the possible use that migrants can do of skills and abilities obtained in other countries. These three positions are explained next.

1) Stalker (2000, 26) declares that the skills and abilities acquired abroad can potentially benefit their communities. Castles (2000a, 271) declares that migrants are well received in their countries as they bring capital, skills and experience that can be used for

economic development and that many countries have adopted special programs to use that 'development potential'. Zamora (2000, 2) following Barmal Ghosh (1998, 177) points out that sending communities could benefit from the international migration by the skills and abilities that migrants bring to the communities in form of human capital. Nevertheless, it would only occur if three conditions were met: a) That migrants came back to their country of origin with new labour specialisation, b) That qualifications acquired abroad correspond with the need of the sending country, c) That migrants have the will and the opportunity to use their specialisation. Nevertheless, Zamora affirms that not always migrants go back to their communities of origin specially those who are more qualified because they have more opportunities and social acceptance in the receiving country. He adds that in various studies less than 1% of migrants had jobs that required from them higher specialisation than those they had in their country of origin. Moreover, qualified and semi-qualified migrants who accepted lower positions experienced a descendant job mobility and degradation of their professional abilities.

2) There is also evidence of migrants introducing new crops and practices to improve the agricultural production of their communities in Mexico. Two cases are mentioned here. One, is in San Joaquin Queretaro, where Mexicans who worked in the U.S. introduced apple orchards into their area in the 1970's. This initiative was supported by the financial and technical support of CONAFRUT, a division of the Ministry of Agriculture (Rocha 2004). Another example is the creation of a cooperative of tomato in San Agustin Atenango, Mexico, as a result of the initiative of some Mexicans that worked in the United States (Barragán 1988, 111). However, the success and continuation of these projects is a complex phenomenon that goes beyond of the introduction of new

agricultural practices, for example, social feasibility, marketing prices, lack of technical assistance, credit schemes, and in the case of the apple orchards the uncertainty of temporal crops and rain feed plots that depends upon the weather. These are a set of problems that are not new for small producers in the agricultural Mexican sector. In addition, Zamora (2003, 3) mentions that recent studies about Mexico, Colombia, Greece and Turkey suggest that the return migration could be a powerful factor of modernization of little communities. Moreover, he adds that there are researchers that described how migrants in Ghana introduced new crops and contributed to change social obstacles to the economic transformation of their communities.

3) Contrasting with the potential use of skills and knowledge of migrants in their communities of origin and the empirical evidences of projects initiated by migrants aforementioned Papademetriou (1991, 277) affirmed that the sending countries may have overestimated the degree in which migrants enhanced their skills while abroad and the effects that such skills could have for the national development. Moreover, he added that, “an overly optimistic set of expectations about such effects is clearly an essential part of the mythology of immigration”. Supporting this argument Miller (2003, 750), following the Annual reports of the *Système d’Observation Permanent des Migrations 1972-1985* (SOPEMI), declared “temporary worker migration seems to lead to far less than hoped for transfers of skills and training which contribute to the economic development of labour-sending countries. In this respect, the promise of post-war temporary labour migrations has largely proven illusory”.

Concerning the SAWP I found the same range of opinions with respect to the different positions concerning the possibilities that migrants have to use the skills and abilities acquired in Canada to contribute to the development of their communities.

Ganaselall (1992, 184), in her Masters in Science thesis "*Technology Transfer among Caribbean Seasonal Farm workers from Ontario Farms into the Caribbean*", detected that the ideas that Caribbeans adopted and adapted in the agriculture of their communities were grafting, pruning, monocropping and experimenting with seeds from Ontario. She also observed that their new work ethic was an attitude learned in Canada.

Contrasting with this evidence Preibisch (2000, 59) quoting Basok² and Colby (1997) argued that the Canadian government is trying to vindicate the Program by saying that Mexicans acquire new agricultural techniques while they are in Canada. However, she adds that the majority of Mexicans are coming from communities that produce corn in small scale or do not own a piece of land. Even if some Mexicans own small pieces of land they do not have money to invest in buying machinery used in Canada and that also the small extension of land does not justify its use.

However, Colby (1997, 29) found a significant correlation between migration to Canada and changes in agricultural practices. She also found correlation between migration to Canada and the construction of small-scale irrigation works. This system allows families to irrigate their tomatoes, onions and other vegetables and to sell the production surplus.

Uribe (2002) pointed out that SAWP can operate as a vehicle for Technology Transfer and as a mean of creating formative systems of human capital, that technical skills

acquired by Mexicans in Canada can be used to attract foreign investment in Mexico and to help workers stay employed in the country. He illustrated this idea with a greenhouse located in San Luis Potosi in which a Canadian enterprise has invested capital and has trained in Canada for some of the Mexicans that work there. This company is an exporter of vegetables and its produce has competitive quality in the global market. Another example given by Uribe (2002) is a Canadian tomato producer who expanded her operations in the State of Sinaloa, Mexico that in 2002 employed 800 Mexicans. She also trained Mexicans in her Canadian farm. In addition Henestrosa mentioned (2003, 58) that in the state of Chihuahua there is a company producing ornamental trees with Canadian capital and technology and that some of the Mexicans who work there were trained in Canada. She adds that in the State of Coahuila, there are projects in progress which intent to reproduce the projects of Chihuahua. The scope of these projects as a means to stop the international migration based on the premise that foreign investment could grow due to the transferability of the human capital that migrants bring back to Mexico is highly questionable. Among other facts that will not be exhausted in this document is that export-oriented businesses depend in great part on the comparative advantage of low wages in order to be profitable. It is unlikely that migrants who work in Canada and have the opportunity to learn 'Canadian technology' would accept to work for lower wages even if they are in Mexico.

Contrasting with the Consulate's idea of utilising the skills and abilities acquired for Mexicans in agricultural business complexes the exploratory work conducted by the Inter-American Institute For Cooperation in Agriculture of Canada in Ottawa in 2000 analysed the possibility of using the skills and abilities that Mexicans learn in Canada to

promote productive activities for Mexican migrant workers and their families in their communities of origin (Fraser 2000). Apparently, this project stopped on the exploratory stage after the change of governmental administration in September of 2000³. Further information about this project was not obtained.

Given the ongoing discussion around how Canadian technology can be used either to promote economic growth in Mexico, to attract Canadian capital to Mexico, or to promote the development of Mexican communities, a gap is found in the literature review by which the definition of technology is reduced to the skills, abilities and knowledge that Mexicans learned.

According to Nef (1989, 4) technology generation and its outcomes are not considered “as a physical creation of gadgets alone, but as a social process”. Moreover, Fulesang (1982, 21-22) argues technology from the Western perspective has formed part of a myth, which presents it as “always desirable, clean, apolitical, efficient (and) in the long run cheap and necessary”. Technology as Fulesang affirms “is a manifestation of a specific political system, namely a society based on capitalist principles”.

Technology is understood here as a system of “know-how” for problem-solving, specifically affecting the human security -environmental, economic, political, social, and cultural— and development of those using it. This system allegedly “teaches” skills, abilities, values and attitudes that impact the life of Mexicans in Canada and in their communities. As conceived by its drafters, the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP) is supposed to promote “development” and strengthen human security of the communities from where the workers come from.

Human security is a concept that according to Nef (1999) entails five dimensions interlinked -environmental, economic, political, social, and cultural-, having as a centre the human dignity and is based on the probability of “risk reduction”: the abatement of insecurity (Nef and Varnderkop 1988 quoted by Nef 1999). The 5 dimensions are taken from the analysis of the United Nations Development Program in 1994, which clearly linked the analysis of human development to the notion of human security.

Given the conceptualisation of technology aforementioned and the ongoing debate if the skills and knowledge acquired by Mexicans in Canada can contribute to the development of their communities:

The purpose of thesis was to investigate how Canadian technology –as a system- impacts the environmental, cultural, social, economic and political dimensions of “human security”. This system allegedly “teaches” skills, abilities, values and attitudes that impact the life of Mexicans in Canada and in their communities of origin. As such, it was believed that the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP) would promote or detain “development” and would either strengthen or deteriorate the dimensions of human security of their communities.

Although the original aim of this study was to investigate how Canadian technology impacts the various dimensions of human security (i.e. environmental, cultural, social, economic, and political) for individuals in the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program, it became apparent that the transfer of Canadian technology was not an explicit function of the SAWP program. It was found that technology transfer served as a latent function in the program and was not representative of the underlying mechanisms that affected

Mexican migrant workers.⁴Due to the fact that the Mexican farm workers in this study were transmigrants and not return migrants⁵, it was found that there was a greater need to understand the transnational existence of Mexican transmigrants in the SAWP and not on how technology transfer impacted human security. While conducting this study it was found that Canadian technology was a subsystem of the SAWP program and therefore did not provide as much insight as the SAWP system itself. As a result of the aforementioned a greater emphasis has been placed on the how SAWP affects the various dimensions of human security in the lives of Mexican transmigrant workers who reside in both Canadian and Mexican communities. Based on the aforementioned, this study explores the following:

- (1) The effect of the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP) on the human security of Mexican migrant workers in Canadian and Mexican communities.
- (2) To assess if the participation of Mexicans in the SAWP promote, hinder, or is irrelevant to development in Las Nubes.
- (3) The effect of Canadian technology systems on communities of transmigrants in Mexico with special emphasis in Las Nubes.

⁴ Very little technology transfer took place and economic development was not a viable option. Instead the principal objectives involved survival strategies and earning additional money to transfer to the country of origin.

⁵ Transmigrants are defined as migrants who move back and forth between their country of origin and the country of emigration with long periods of residency within both countries. Return migrants are defined as migrants who intend to return to their country of origin and live there for a “relevant period of time” (Faist, 2000:18)

2.1 Objectives

The objectives are:

- To describe how the SAWP impacts the different dimensions of human security of the life of the Mexicans while they are in Canada and the community Las Nubes in Mexico.
- To describe the perceptions of Mexicans working in Canada regarding the possibilities of whether they are able to transfer the technology that they learned in Canada to their communities of origin.
- To link the results of my microanalysis with the structural macro-analysis emerging from the literature review.

2.2 Importance of the study

Given that migration to Canada is cyclical and will continue due to the incapacity of Mexico's economy to create well paid jobs, it is necessary to know the impact that the migrant workers have on their communities of origin in the different areas of "human security" and to know the extent to which the system of SAWP improves or decreases development of communities. Moreover, the SAWP has been considered as a model of controlled migration that Mexico could reproduce in its relations with the United States. It is thus of extreme importance to contribute as one more study of the SAWP to give inputs to this idea.

This study will add to the body of knowledge about cyclical migration and can be used as a base to implement educational projects and programs to support the migrants in their communities of origin as well as in Canada.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

This conceptual framework is mainly based on two studies of Jorge Nef: *Technology Is About People: Some Basic Perspectives and Definitions* (1989) and *Human Security and Mutual Vulnerability* (1999). Given that the process of this research redirected the original aim of the study this framework has been slightly modified. This framework situates the SAWP as a system that impacts the different dimensions of the human security of the life of the Mexicans and in the community Las Nubes⁶ rather than the Canadian farming technology. The mechanisms under the SWAP is operating are essential to shape the structure and culture of the technological systems used in the agricultural technologies of Canadian farms.

The SAWP as a temporary program of cyclical controlled migration it is an example of one of the solutions set between governments to fill the gap left in the free trade agreements which promote the free flow of capital and goods without to fully consider the free movement of people.

One of the main characteristics of the SWAP is the high level of control that the Canadian and Mexican government have had after 29 years of operations. Due to the social networks have a limited function and are not fundamental in the migratory process the SAWP cannot be explained by the framework of transnationalism. Social networks have a limited function and are not fundamental in the migratory process a fact that impedes the conformation of Transnational and pluri-local social spaces. The function of

⁶ It was the pseudonym chosen to name the town visited in Mexico.

social networks is limited and they do not determine the trajectory, success, the staying and return (Quintero 2003, 4 and 18).

The impact that the SAWP has in the lives of the Mexicans while they are in Canada and in the community of Las Nubes is assessed through the five intertwined dimensions of human security of ecology, economy, society, polity and cultural which will be defined below.

1) Environmental, personal and physical security. This dimension is mainly related to the preservation of the health and life of the people as the maintenance of sustainable environment (Nef et al 1989). In this study this dimension is assessed in terms of health and safety issues related to the activities performed by Mexicans in Canadians farms, illnesses or injuries they have had, their treatment and, the social support and recreational activities that could help them to cope with psychological stress factors of the experience. Also this dimension is explored by trying to determine which experiential learning has encouraged them to the preservation of their own health and environment of their communities of origin. In this dimension a special importance is paid to those who have come to Canada for first time.

2) Economic security. This dimension is mainly related to the employment and the access to resources in the community (Nef et al 1989). In this study this dimension is assessed by exploring the topics of the process to enter in the SAWP, causes of migration, occupation in Mexico, previous migratory experiences in search of work, aspirations, weekly expenses, remittances sent to home and their use exploring possibilities they have to stay at home instead of migrate.

3) Social security. Freedom from discrimination based on age, information, as well as an ability to associate (Nef et al 1989). The concept of social capital was considered crucial to assess this dimension. For social capital we can understand the social networks of support that a group has to help and protect each other. If people learn to trust each other they can make plausible commitments. Social capital needs time to be created if it not used can be deteriorated but it never ends for overuse (Ostrom: 1993 quoted by Roseland:1998).

Levels of trust and support among co-workers, everyday socialisation among co-workers living in the same farm, time to socialise and participate in groups with other Mexicans and, implied norms values and attitudes that affect their relationships at work are explored in this dimension as essential elements to create and preserve networks of social support. Going beyond to explore the social support that Mexicans can give to each other it is also explored the support they receive from the host society and its institutions when they are facing difficulties.

In the community visited this category is assessed by knowing if migrants see each other either in Canada or in their community of origin and its frequency, their relationship with other people of their town, levels of support and trust. Some of the questions of this category were taken from the work of Narayan and Cassidy (2001). In the community visited special attention is paid to the family as the nucleus of social networks.

4) Political security. When we talk about politics we are talking about power and as it is important to know how the dimensions of the power are allocated. This is to know who has the power and who does not have it. The political capital is understood as the

accumulation of power or powerlessness of Mexicans to participate and work for their interests in both societies Canada and Mexico. It is highlighted by Nef (1999) that central to the dimensions of human security are politics which constitute the organising principle of community's life. This dimension also entails:

The right of representation, autonomy (freedom), participation, and dissent, combined with empowerment to make choices with a reasonable probability of effecting change. This includes legal- juridical security: individual and collective access to justice and protection from abuse. (Nef 1999)

The study of Narayan and Cassidy (2001) stated the political dimension rather than being considered as a dimension of the social capital it is considered as one of its outcomes.

This dimension was explored by asking how would they think the situation of their community and their situation in Canada could be improved.

5) Cultural security. Culture is defined as “beliefs, understandings, practices, and ways of interpreting experience that are shared by a number of people” (Wood & Henry, 2002:469). Culture “is like luggage we carry. From it we unconsciously lift daily needs: survival, information, interpersonal relations, goals, rules, rituals, communication style, expectations, and institutional expectations” (Dodd:1982:37). However, if culture is used as a criterion for action according to the symbolic interactionism it should be acknowledge that peoples' behavior is the result of the re-creation of their culture according to specific circumstances (Himelfarb&Richardson:1984:67). Cultural security is defined as the set of psychological orientations of society geared to preserving and enhancing the ability to control uncertainty and fear (Nef et al. 1989 quoted by Nef 1999).

This dimension is assessed in terms of the skills and knowledge acquired in the farms, the productive processes as the productive relationships among all the actors involved that shape and give meaning to their actions that give as result an specific work culture based on determined values and attitudes.

Through the perspective of the formation of human capital the transferability of skills and knowledge acquired in Canada to be applied in the communities of origin of Mexicans is explored as the transferability of skills brought from Mexico to Canada.

Once the impact of the different dimensions of “human security” has been defined another concept to be explored in this study is related to how the system of guest migratory workers will either detain or create “development”.

The definition of development can have two different variations. The first one is related to the incorporation of the communities to the market economy. Looking at this concept from this economic perspective leads us to remember the original purpose with which this term was used by Harry Truman on January 20, 1949 when he talked about development in terms of democracy and the use of scientific and technical knowledge as a means to increase production, which was “the key to prosperity and peace” (Escobar 1995:3).

The second use of the concept of development is the one used by Eade (1997 quoting Eade and Williams 1995:9):

Development is about women and men becoming empowered to bring about positive changes in their lives; about positive growth together with public action; about both the process and the outcome of challenging poverty, oppression, and discrimination; and about the

realisation of human potential through social and economic justice. Above all, it is about the process of transforming lives, and transforming societies.

In this study rather than argue for the use of one of these terms it is my intention to explore the link between migration and development so the question is left open to answer what level of development is created by the people who participate into the system of the SAWP in their communities or origin.

In regards of the analysis of the technology of the Canadian farms in Nef's framework technology can be considered as an open system where five main elements are distinguished. These elements are:

- a) A context of problems and circumstances, which the technology addresses.
- b) A culture, which gives meaning- purposes feelings, cognitions and valuations- to such technological systems.
- c) Structures of groups and individuals with resources (tools), linked by networks of communication and charged with dealing with the problems affecting the system.
- d) A set of processes (procedures, practices and techniques) whereby groups of individuals attempt to solve problems, and
- e) Effects or consequences of these actions upon the system. (1989, 4)

Nef (1989, 5) describes the effects of the system in five categories: environmental, economic, social, political and cultural. These categories are linked with the concept of human security and its different dimensions already described.

The skills and abilities that Mexicans learn are related to what is called human capital: "the acquired knowledge and skills individuals bring to productive activity. Human capital is formed consciously through training and education and unconsciously through experience". (Ostrom 1993 quoted by Roseland 1998) The unconscious part of the formation of the human capital leads us to the concept of the hidden curriculum coined by Jackson (1968) in

the educational environment. (<http://www.sociology.org.uk/tece1tl.htm#meighan> retrieved on November, 20, 2003)

Jackson (1968) understands education as a socialization process that involves the transmission of norms and values as well as a body of socially approved knowledge and behaviour. He argues that students, in order to be successful in the educational system, have to “learn how to learn”. Students have to learn to conform not only to formal rules of school but also with the informal rules, beliefs and attitudes perpetuated through the socialisation process. Basically, students learn things that are not explicitly clear in the formal curriculum but that are taught most of the time unconsciously by the teacher attitudes and expectations. The physical environment, use of the language, and the surrounding institutional structure are also factors that contribute to influence and control the normative behaviour. (<http://www.sociology.org.uk/tece1tl.htm#meighan> retrieved on November, 20, 2003)

Despite the fact that the hidden curriculum is an educational term this concept is considered in this study given that in both the school and the SWAP are socialization processes that shape attitudes values and norms which are learning in formal and informal, explicit and implicit environments.

Values and attitudes do not work alone; they reinforce each other and provide orientations to individual or groups actions. A value is defined by Latapi (1999, 31) as a judgement, which accompanies or prepares the behaviour. Using this definition emphasises the intellectual component of the value. The values filter our decision criteria and produce attitudes that bring us nearer or move us away from our objectives and gave

direction to our actions. Latapi defines attitudes as an emotional predisposition favourable or not favourable towards specific situations highlighting their affective dimension (p.31). The relationship between values and attitudes can be understood when a value is seen as: “a motive for the action underlying the emotional charge that accompany the judgement and by which it comes to be a conviction that is why a value is also defined in the favourable attitudes towards that good” (p.31).⁴ The values and attitudes will be closely related to the cultural and social dimension.

The relations of social production are the relationships among the individuals that support the technological system the *social structure* by which the technologies are applied.

2.4 Literature Review.

This chapter is divided in two sections. The first section presents an analysis of the migratory political economy of Mexico-Canada and some of the implications that they have for the SAWP. The second section briefly reviews the literature on studies related to Mexican Migrant workers in Canada.

2.5 The Migratory political economy of Mexico.

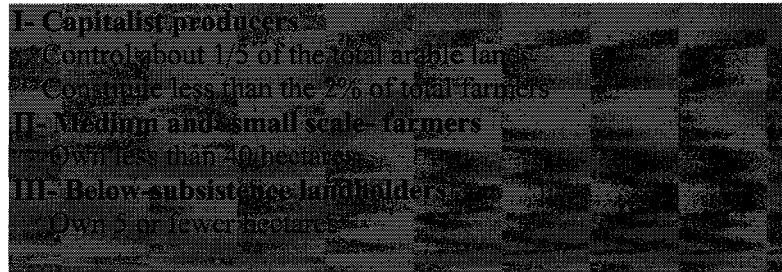
In one of the documents prepared for the Carnegie Endowment of Peace (CEP) for the eleventh session of the United Nations Conference of Trade and Development, Mexico was presented as a remarkable example of the failure of the policies of liberalisation and the imbalance between the economic promises and the realities of NAFTA results.

(Nuñez 2003) The implementation of economic policies of liberalisation of the Mexican economy was begun in the early 1980s when the country had exhausted agriculture, oil revenues and foreign indebtedness to support ambitious development programs and industry was expanded to reduce its dependency on imported manufactured goods. The ISI model. (Gates 1991)

From 1940 to 1970 a bimodal agriculture model supported the ISI. (Barry 1995,27) (See table 1). The bimodal model is based on the differentiation of commercial, medium and large farms and the small private farmers and *ejidatarios*. While the former during the Agrarian Reform received the best land with access to irrigation and high-quality rain-fed lands, the latter received rain-fed parcels and the less fertile lands where they cultivate mainly basic grains such as corn and beans. By the early 1970s, due to the agricultural sector was largely neglected, the peasantry had begun to show signs of social unrest and

the government directed part of its public expenditure on *ejidal* agricultural development (Gates 1996, 43).

Table 1. Bimodal Mexican agriculture. (Barry 1995, 27)



I- Capitalist producers
Control about 1/5 of the total arable land
Control less than the 2% of total farmers
II- Medium and small scale farmers
Own less than 40 hectares
III- Below subsistence landholders
Own 5 or fewer hectares

During the presidential period of Echeverria, *ejido* associations were created to manage collectively the administration of credit, use of machinery, purchase of inputs and marketing to increase efficiency. These organisations augmented the mobilization of the peasant sector, but the government kept control over the peasantry through the governmental apparatus of the National Peasant Federation⁷ (NPF) and through the repression of localized peasants' mobilizations in the states of Guerrero, Oaxaca and Chihuahua. Despite the fact that the state wanted to accommodate the needs of all the rural sectors, its focus was on the peasants who could produce for the market and between 30 and 50 percent of peasants who existed at the margin of the market were excluded from the populist agenda of the government. The two-tiered agricultural system of the previous three decades remained intact and the rural reforms did not restructure the concentration of land, water and capital in agribusiness⁵ (1995, 35-39).

In 1980, the government created the Sistema Alimentario Mexicano (SAM) a project that attempted to achieve self-sufficiency in basic food crops and to improve food distribution

7. Confederación Nacional Campesina. (CNC)

to the Mexican poor. This program reduced the import bill of basic food crops from around \$US 3 billion in 1980 to \$US 1 billion in 1982⁶ but its short period of success came to an end with the suppression of oil prices in 1981, a major crop failure in 1982, the debt crisis and the inadequate fiscal structure over which SAM was operationalised (1995, Nef & Vanderkrop 1989, Gates 1991). In 1981, when the international price of oil fell, interest rates abroad were raised and Mexico found itself unable to pay its external debt that by 1982 exceeded 100 billion. (Otero 1992, 6). In addition, Mexico was also incapable of continuing its support to the ISI model. Otero highlighted that the response of the government to the management of the external debt was to leave behind the ISI model, following the Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs) designed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) and to adopt an export-oriented industrialisation strategy (EOI). The EOI promoted:

The opening of the economy to the foreign trade, massive withdrawal of public subsidies in most sectors of the economy, privatization of formerly state-owned enterprises, and, not least, a policy of controlling wages downward to attract new waves of foreign investment. (Otero 1992, 7)

From 1982-1994, the government cut back subsidies and funding to the agricultural sector. The government reduced privatized and eliminated diverse agencies that in the past provided credit, fertiliser, insurance, technical assistance, and marketing services. Guaranteed prices were eliminated and the borders were opened to cheap imports. (Barry 1995, 46-47)

In 1986, following the EOI as an economic strategy of development, Mexico joined the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) to improve access for exports abroad

leaving behind its traditional protectionism. (Gates 1991; Otero 1992) Later on, Mexico signed NAFTA in 1994.

Through the implementation of neoliberal policies towards the opening of the economy (See table 2) it was thought that prices would stabilize inducing the modernization of the national productive sector and that export growth would force the companies to improve efficiency by using the comparative advantages of the country under the pressure of international competition and the concurrence and free access to the technology, equipment and inputs coming from the exterior (Calva 1993, 27). It was also predicted that the growth of the manufacturing sector would bring more employment and foreign investment, wages would rise and the agricultural sector would use its comparative advantages to export tropical fruits and vegetables having the manufacturing sector as an alternative source of employment for peasants.

Table 2. The neoliberal policies.

(Steger: 2003, 41)

1) Deregulation of public enterprises and deregulation of the economy and liberalization of trade and industry. 2) Massive tax cuts. 3) Monetarist measures to keep inflation in check, even at the risk of increasing unemployment. 4) Strict control on organized labour. 5) The reduction of public expenditures, particularly social spending. 6) The down sizing of government. 7) The expansion of international markets. 8) The removal of control on global financial flows.
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Nevertheless, these theoretical postulates were based on “ideological illusions” (Canales: 2000:410), Mexico dismissed the obvious structural inequalities among the economies of the three countries involved in NAFTA and mistakenly predicted that trade integration would reduce pressure on Mexicans to migrate to the United States. Thus, the free movement of labour was left outside the negotiations of NAFTA (Canales 2000, 410; Calva 1993). It was thought that in the long term the labour force would stay in Mexico while in the short and medium term labour migration would increase but that migrants would be retained through mechanisms of regional development in the expulsion areas. Simultaneously, the U.S. militarised the border to control undocumented migration (Sandoval 2003, 22).

Nevertheless, in reality, rather than being considered as a temporary condition, migration now can be considered as a strategy for development (Sandoval (2003, 19) and the Mexican labour force can be viewed as a comparative advantage for the North American market.

There are few programs oriented to retain people in the agricultural sector such as the program recently launched by the Ministry of Agriculture directed at landless agricultural workers (SAGARPA, 2003). However, this project could have a compensatory nature and might not succeed if the administration does not change other policies that have been pursued for the agricultural sector. The strategies of EOI have forced Mexicans to migrate and the money sent home by the migrants constitutes the second largest source of foreign currency after the revenues obtained through oil sales. Moreover, there are government programs, which encourage migrants to invest part of their remittances in

community projects such as those promoted by the SEDESOL.

(<http://www.sedesol.gob.mx/mexicanosenelexterior/main.htm> retrieved May 4th, 2004).

In 2003, remittances sent from migrants working in the United States reached the sum of 13,266 millions of dollars. (Gonzalez 2004, May). Remittances are the second source of income for the country after oil revenues and they represent 74% of oil exports and 2.0% of the Gross Domestic Product of the country.

(<http://www.terra.com/finanzas/articulo/html/fin2187.htm>) (Retrieved Feb 5th, 2004).

The number of Mexicans working in Canada through the SAWP has increased through the years. While, in 1974 Canada received 203 Mexicans, in 2002 nearly 12,000 worked in Canada on almost 1000 farms (Uribe 2002,1). The remittances they sent home increased to CDN\$90 million a year in 2001 according to the Foreign Agricultural Resources Management Services (FARMS) (Rural Migration News, July 2001, http://migration.ucdavis.edu/rmn/Archive_RMN/jul_2001-11rmn.html) (Retrieved September 2nd, 2003) Moreover, Mexicans began to participate in sectors other than agriculture. Harris (2003,1) reported that pilot projects to hire Mexicans in other sectors are in place. "In Winnipeg a meat-packaging plant has hired Mexicans on a two-year contract, and Fairmont Hotels in Alberta has brought 40 skilled workers... to work... in Banff and Lake Louise."

According to the report of the CEP (Audley et al, 2003, 5-7) in the ten years after Mexico signed NAFTA the manufacturing sector augmented jobs by 500,000 "as a result of the increment in trade, the increasing productivity and the surge in both portfolio and foreign direct investment". However, the agricultural sector lost 1.3 million jobs since 1994, real

wages are lower than they were when NAFTA began and they have not converged with U.S. wages. Thus, the exodus of Mexicans in search of jobs in the U.S has grown due to historical migration patterns, the peso crisis, and the pull of employment opportunities in the U.S.

Delgado and Mañan (2003, 2) pointed out that Mexico occupies first place in exports in Latin America and seventh worldwide due to the success of its manufacturing industry. Nevertheless, the manufacturing export-oriented industry does not give added value to the work of Mexican assembly factories. Tello (quoted by Wise and Mañan, 2003, 16) affirms that essentially what Mexico is exporting is the cheap Mexican labour force without the need of leaving Mexico. The neoliberal project for the agricultural sector has been based on the radical reconfiguration of the agrarian structure in supporting a system that favours medium, big and large agricultural operations, which perform well in the regimen of free trade (Calva 1993). In order to facilitate the concentration of land in favour of large agricultural operations Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution was changed leaving the peasants at risk of losing their main productive source: land. The facilitation of the concentration of land has also diminished opportunities landless peasants have to obtain land.

According to the National Agricultural Board⁸ (NAB 2003, 3-4) 25% of the total population of Mexico live in rural areas, which is 24,932,257 people. Of 4 million families in the rural sector only 2.5 million have land and 1.5 million do not have land.

8. Consejo Nacional Agropecuario.

Of those who have land only 15% are oriented to the market while 35% present productive potential and 50% are dedicated to self-consumption. (See table 3)

Table 3. Different types of producers in the Mexican agricultural system
Prepared with the information of the National Agricultural Board (2003, 8)

Four different types of producers in the total of 4 million families			
2.5 million family producers			1) 1.4 million landless families
2) Self-consumption	3) With potential to be inserted in the market	4) Oriented to the market	
50%	35%	15%	

78% of the area cultivated in Mexico is rain fed and from that percentage only 20% is considered to be in good condition for agriculture, 16% is considered as a regular and 64% is considered to be rain fed and erratic plots. With this data it is evident that only a minority of the families in the rural areas would form part of the neoliberal project. Moreover, neoliberal policies tend to reinforce the bimodal agriculture model already discussed. The differential of percentages between the size of the land and the remittances obtained by family unit are shown in the table 4.

Table 4. Income sources of rural families in percentages (NAB 2003,9)

Sources of income	Size of the plot					
	Total	0-2 ha	2-5 ha	5-10 ha	10-18 ha	More than 18
Total income	100	100	100	100	100	100
Agricultural activities	50.1	22.2	34.8	47.3	55.2	72.3
No Agriculture	36.4	57.8	49.6	35.8	28.5	24.3
Remittances	13.5	20.0	15.7	16.9	16.2	3.0

The introduction of the corn as part of the NAFTA has affected the majority of Mexican peasants. The neoliberal policies that try to discourage the cultivation of corn are commented by Margarito Montes, a leader of a peasant organization, who in Calva's study pointed out that (1994, 110) in Mexico:

...the production of corn can be sacrificed in terms of economic profitability but it cannot be sacrificed from the human point of view because that would harm three million producers. A fundamental criterion in the negotiation of free trade is the conservation of the sources of employment and income of Mexicans.

However, this human point of view was not taken into account when NAFTA was signed. A down turn in the prices of corn is one of the most important precipitating factors for migration. In a recent issue of the magazine National Geographic, researchers suggested that for every ton of corn imported into Mexico, two Mexicans migrate to the U.S. (Cookburn 2003,11). Gonzalez (2003) following the report of "Global Exchange" (2003) affirms that the import of corn from the U.S. into Mexico has increased from 156,000 tons per year to six million per year. The import of corn is destroying the way of life of millions of rural peasants, creating a massive migration to the rural urban centres or to the United States.

When including corn in NAFTA negotiations was considered, it was thought that only those competitive producers who sold the grain could be affected by the import of corn. It was supposed that the peasants who cultivated for self-subsistence would not be affected. However, the collapse of the competitive producers indirectly impacted these peasants by reducing the levels of agricultural employment. As a response, the government initiated a program of subsidies called Procampo to support all the corn producers of the countryside (Garcia 2002, 2).

Garcia following Zermeño (n.d.) argues that for Mexico corn is more important than it is for the United States because it is the food base of the population, while for the U.S. the corn produced is used for animal consumption. Moreover:

The existence of rural Mexico depends fundamentally on the cultivation of corn. The productivity rate and economic revenues are key indicators of the well being of the Mexican rural society. Corn is the most extensive crop in the country. From the 144 million hectares that were cultivated in the country in 1988, 68 million (47%) were in corn...it is also the cultivation with a higher social participation. 2.5 million peasants are dedicated to its production. This is equivalent to 68% of the total population in the entire agricultural sector. (2002, 2)

In addition to the problems that corn producers are facing, approximately 540,000 bean producers are facing a crisis. They cannot sell their annual production in Mexico due to the contraband and increase in imports in the last decade. The National Federation of Peasants has asked the government to recognise the production of beans as a key grain for the food security of the country (Perez 2004).

The government has continued to support the same neoliberal policies that support the EOI strategy without questioning how they will affect the lives of the majority of the population of the country. President Vicente Fox announced that his administration is following a corporate model of development. He declared that the aim of his government is to remove obstacles and to facilitate private investment in the country by giving the investors stability; capital markets, financial support and deregulation. Moreover, he offered to reform the laws related to energy and the generation of electricity (Vargas and Cardoso 2004). This situation has received the approval of the U.S., which has used the migratory agreement as an asset in its negotiations with Mexico with regard to the opening of the energy sector to private capital investment from U.S. corporations.

Throughout its modern history, Mexico has relied on the export sector to support industrialisation and development. However, the nature of the goods exported has changed. First it was agricultural products, second oil revenues, third manufactured goods and agricultural products that could find comparative advantages in the international market. However, as these products have not had a significant added value Mexico has been left with few or no possibilities of accumulation of capital (Nef, J., personal communication, June 2004). Recently, due to the failure of the EOI, Mexico has exported its cheap labour force either without it having to leave the national territory having the United States as a main destination. As Sandoval (2003, 21) pointed out:

In the last decade, the Mexican government has attached labour migration to its neoliberal economic policies within the neoliberal policies of the United States and Canada to create a regional market of a migrant labour force, where labour relations receive minimum intervention to support labour rights on the part of the States. In this, context migrant workers form an industrial army reserve subject to the production and needs of North American corporations.

2.6 Migratory Political Economy of Canada

The actual situation of the agricultural sector in Canada and the political orientation towards the temporary migrant labour force needed in this sector can be better understood through a brief historical analysis of farm restructuring that took place after World War II.

According to Bakker and Winson (1993, 508-509) the massive restructuring of farming which occurred after the WWII has negatively affected people from the rural areas in Canada as it has in other areas of the world. This farm restructuring is attributed to three intertwined forces. 1) The cost price squeeze, meaning that the increase of production inputs rises faster than the gross return. 2) A cheap food policy that is explained by

Wessel (1983, 17-18) as a means to keep the workers' wages low and the profits of factory owners high. In addition, the use of cheap surplus food in the international market to pay for foreign raw materials and goods needed to stimulate domestic industrial expansion. 3) The control of agricultural inputs by a few powerful corporations, which works against price regulations. Bakker and Winson affirmed that the result was that farmers were placed on what could be called a "production treadmill". Farmers had to work harder to stay in the same place financially. (p.509)

Two additional factors also affected farmers during the process of agriculture restructuring. First, the food processing industry was concentrated and centralized in the hands of U.S. multinationals during the 1960s. With relatively few buyers and a large number of producers farmers were bound to the prices set by the buyers (Anderson 1973, quoted by Satzewich 1991, 66). The second factor was the implementation of low tariffs on the import of fruits and vegetables that could be and are grown in Canada. (Clement and Janzen, 1978; Warnock 1978; Anderson 1973 quoted by Satzewich 1991, 67) The latter is related to the cheap food policy already described.

Bakker and Winson (1993, 508-509) also pointed out that the only options that farmers had to continue in business were to increase the volume of their production and augment the size of the farm and adopt mechanical and chemical inputs to allow the farmer to work larger tracts of land. (p.509) Within these economic problems the agricultural sector began to suffer for the lack of reliable work force. The restructuring process of Canadian agriculture entailed a reduction in the number of farms and increased farm size and capital investment. In this situation fewer family members worked on farms due to the

fact that they found better income opportunities in addition that families began to present lower birth rates. With the reduction of unpaid family members on farms and the increase of operations of some farms the number of paid labourers increased (Verduzco 2000, 331).

The mechanization of some farm operations did not decrease the demand for labour force at all. Basok (2002, 25) highlighted two factors related to this question. First, not all crops are amenable to mechanization. Second, she pointed out that it is suggested in a study by Johnston and Morse (1984,8) that farmers resist buying labour-saving technologies due to the high prices and high interest rates charged by banks. Therefore, as Nef (2004 personal communication) argues, the temporary migrant labour force in Canada has a double function: to sustain the growth and expansion of large corporate industrialised farm firms and to keep in business some farms that cannot afford a transition to labour-saving machinery.

As it happened in Mexico during the 1980s the Canadian government began to implement neoliberal policies oriented to the liberalization of the national economy. State-owned industries were privatized, the regulatory apparatus of the state curtailed, expenditures on social programs decreased, and tariff trade barriers, which formerly protected national firms, were removed. With the replacement of the Foreign Investment Review Agency by Investment Canada former attempts to control foreign investment were undermined. (Watson and Winson 1993, 187)

In 1989, Canada signed the FTA (U.S.-Canada Free Trade Agreement) and, in 1994, NAFTA. Both trade agreements have allowed Canada to increase its international trade

significantly during the 1980s and 1990s. Nevertheless, most of its exports are sold to the United States. Thus, Canada has increased its dependency on the economic cycles of the United States (Sosa and Hernandez 2002, 1). Canada ships 87 percent of its merchandise trade exports to the United States, and receives 63 percent of the goods it imports from that country. Conversely, 23 percent of U.S. merchandise exports go to Canada, and 18 percent of the goods the United States imports come from Canada (Myles and Cahoon 2004, 1).

The adoption of neoliberal policies has caused different effects across population segments. Leach and Winson (2002, 84) pointed out that the FTA and the resulting overvalued currency during the recession of the early 1990s considerably affected the manufacturing sector. Following Barlow (1990) they said that more than 400 manufacturing plants closed between late 1988 and June 1990 affecting small, medium, and large firms. Moreover, Leach and Winson highlighted that after NAFTA was signed in 1994 much Canadian production was relocated to Mexico and to the U.S. Quoting McKenna (1998) they indicated that since 1994 Canadian-owned duty-free *maquiladora* plants in Mexico grew from nine to thirty employing about 10,000 people.

The trend towards the industrialisation of the agriculture has resulted in a capitalist pattern that is described by Filson (2004, 37) following Bowler (1992) as a model, “based on high input/output, intensive farming that focuses on food quantity, penetration by international capital and elaboration of biotechnology”. This capitalist model does not affect all classes of farmers equally; as Filson (2004, quoting Filson 1983, 1993) highlighted there are two main types of farming systems in Ontario: 1) The majority of

family-owned operated farms, which produce a minority of agricultural production without regularly employed hired workers, and 2) commercial or capitalist farms, which employ farm managers and workers and also account for the vast majority of agricultural production. Thus, as in the case of Mexico, the majority of farmers are those who are suffering from the implementation of neoliberal policies in the agricultural sector and from the policies that have opened the market to orient production towards exportation.

Qualman and Wiebe (2002, 6) argue that:

When governments and corporations restructure agriculture to focus on exports-through the use of trade agreements, structural adjustment programs, or misguided domestic policies-the benefits accrue to global, multi-billion dollar agribusiness transnationals. The effects on farmers and their local economies appear to be very negative.

The industrialization of the agricultural sector has had detrimental consequences for rural communities. Filson (2004, 40) argues that there is a tendency for quality of life to decline as agriculture industrialises and also that within large-scale farming the use of migrant labour tends to increase as has happened in California and in the fruit, vegetable and tobacco farms in Ontario. In the latter case Filson highlighted that the working conditions of migrant workers are among the worst in Canada. (p.42)

According to Weston and Scarpa (2003, 2) the SAWP has become more important due to the lack of domestic labour force and the increment of pressures of the market for the horticultural and other agricultural products. The producers considered the SAWP as a key program to continue being internationally competitive. Moreover:

The growing prevalence of corporate farms has intensified the demand for hired labour and changed the nature of the relationships with foreign workers compared to those with smaller, family farms. Canada is a net exporter of six of the seven CSAWP key crops. The most notable recent

change was in the case of **tomatoes**, for which Canada shifted from being a net importer to net exporter in the last decade. There was also a major increase in **cucumber** exports, with sales to the US growing rapidly especially in the last five years. (p.3)

2.7 The Seasonal agricultural Worker Program

As it can be inferred from the former section, the agricultural sector of Canada has a bi-modal agricultural system as Mexico. Both sectors big agricultural operations and medium and small operations need reliable labour force to be able to grow in the case of the former and to survive in the case of the latter. Throughout the history of the agricultural sector in Canada the Canadian government implemented diverse programs to alleviate the lack of a reliable labour force which is needed in the agricultural sector as described in the works of Basok (2002, 26-29), Satzewich (1991, 70-83) and Verduzco (2000, 335-337). However, the government's efforts failed to fully resolve the problems experienced in the agricultural sector due to the lack of labour. Few Canadians are willing to work in the agricultural sector due to low wages, difficult and dangerous jobs and exclusion from the provincial labour legislation that covers working conditions as stated by Basok (2002) and Satzewich (1991). It was thus only through the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP) that the agricultural sector fulfilled farmers' requirements for reliable workers willing and available to work under the circumstances mentioned above. This is in conditions of unfreedom as Basok argues in her work (2002, 14).

The SAWP is one of the two immigration programs that Canada has that prevent people from obtaining Canadian residency status and it is through this mechanism that farmers can access the type of labour force they need: temporary and flexible (Gibb 2002). As Sharma (2001, 6) argues, the Canadian government aspires to "strengthen the market

system in Canada” and attract capital investment, hoping to organise a particular kind of labour market in Canada by creating a category of non-citizens such as migrant workers.

Moreover, Sharma argues that the Canadian government:

...produce[s] a group of non-citizens who, because of their classification as “non immigrants”, can legally be exempted from laws on minimum employment standards, collective bargaining and the provision of social services and programs such as employment insurance, social assistance, old-age pensions, etc. This in turn cheapens and weakens the position of these workers. Citizenship, then, has become an important tool in reorganizing the labour market in Canada to the benefit of capital investors. (Sharma 2001,6 quoting Sharma 2000)

The terms of employment agreement of the SAWP are as follows: (Agreement for the employment in Canada for Seasonal agricultural workers from Mexico, Human Resources and Development of Canada,)

1-The employer agrees to hire the worker for a term of employment of not less than 240 hours in a term of 6 weeks or less.

2- The normal working day is not to exceed 8 hours, but the employer may request to the worker and the worker may agree to extend his/her hours.

3- For each six consecutive days of work, the worker will be entitled to one day of rest, but where the urgency to finish farm work cannot be delayed, the employer may request the worker’s consent to postpone that day.

4- The employer has to provide suitable accommodation and meals or furnish cooking utensils, fuel, and facilities without cost to the worker.

5-The worker has the right to have 30 minutes break for meal breaks.

The charges to the salary of the worker are: (Information Brochure for Mexican workers, 2001, Mexican Consulate in Toronto)

- 4% of operation expenses. Minimum 150 Canadian dollars and maximum \$425, including the visa.

- 3.2% for the Canada Pension Plan.
- 2.7% for unemployment insurance.
- Life insurance, accidents and medicine (3.22 Canadian dollars per week).
- Income tax above \$13,706 Canadian dollars in wages for married workers and \$7,412 Canadian dollars for single workers.

Another characteristic of this program is that each year employers send an evaluation letter to the consulate. Employers are allowed to hire the workers they like because of their good job performance. This work structure creates paternalistic relationships between the workers and employers (Knowles 1997).

The migratory political economy of Canada is following the pattern of industrialised countries to recruit a docile and cheap labour force. While entry to Canada as an immigrant is still controlled by a point system that among other controls tries to attract well prepared and highly educated people, Canada has introduced, in addition to the SAWP, a pilot Foreign Worker Program (FWP). This program recruits seasonal workers for the meat, construction and tourism industries. In Quebec, agricultural workers are also being recruited but with conditions of even greater vulnerability than those who work in the SAWP. The minimum wage in Quebec is no longer obligatory for harvesting workers and concern exist for the respect of the workers' rights (Weston and Scarpa 2004).

The model of economic development under the free market regime situates Mexico in the position of having to adopt migration as a strategy of development as one of the outcomes of the neoliberal policies implemented during decades in the country. The Canadian agricultural sector obtains a reliable source of flexible and cheap labour force through programs as the SAWP that control migratory flows. The access to flexible and cheap labour force constitutes a subsidy either to large agricultural operations or to small

or medium farm scale operations. In the case of the former the SAWP helps them to be internationally competitive and in the case of the latter helps them to continue in businesses.

CHAPTER THREE

3 RESEARCH METHODS.

3.1 Preparation for the field research

The idea of conducting a study about Mexicans who work seasonally in Canada began in September 2002 during my class of Research Methods. At the beginning of 2000 I met some Mexicans who worked in Canada near the area where some of my friends lived and that motivated my interest to learn more about them. During my class of Research Methods I contacted the Mexican Consulate in Toronto, read previous studies about the SAWP, and contacted academics and students who were doing studies about the topic. Fortunately, I obtained very supportive answers from some academics that are knowledgeable in the area. In contrast, I also obtained responses that impeded further professional collaboration.

The fact of conducting an independent research project gave me the opportunity to explore alternative and creative ways to carry on my study and to build up the research infrastructure with the help of informal networks.

In my previous experience as a social researcher in Mexico I performed participatory action research in rural communities sharing and learning the everyday life of the people that I was working with. I agree with feminist researchers who:

...question the role that power and relationship play not only at the societal level but also at the personal level between researcher and researched...(searching) to establish collaborative and no exploitative research process and reflect upon how those relationships affect the story being told (Schram 2003,36).

For this reason, I wanted to do my research sharing the life and experiences of Mexicans who come to work to Canada participating in a Non Governmental Organization (NGO) experiencing the farm work and their everyday life.

The NGO that I chose to begin my research offers English and literacy classes for Agricultural Migrant Workers during the summer. This NGO places University Students to work on farms and to offer voluntarily their free time to teach English classes during the night or on free days. When I had the interview for this Program I disclosed my desire to conduct research during the period of work with the NGO. Nevertheless, once I got the job with this NGO, I found it inconvenient to participate as a researcher and decided to fully concentrate on doing my job as well and as be professional as possible.

I worked for 20 days in a tobacco farm during the planting season and lived approximately three months in an Outreach Centre that the NGO has in Leamington, Ontario. I taught English in formal and non-formal scenarios, and I also was translator in the hospital and participated promoting a group of Mexicans who are working in Canada to support the activities of the NGO. It was particularly important to recognize that we could not set a program or a series of goals and objectives without taking into account the ideas, needs, wants and opinions of the people with which we were working. In addition, I gave Internet classes in the library, promoted and gave Spanish classes for some members of the community of Leamington, and participated on the recreational and religious activities with more Mexicans. In the time that we spend we talk, we danced, we laughed and inclusively we cried together.

Afterwards, I was really satisfied with the work that I did in the tobacco farm and Leamington despite the fact of not participating as a researcher during my summer job. The interaction and exposure that I had in Leamington to the circumstances and issues that Mexicans face in Canada enhanced my understanding and facilitated my research. Moreover the NGO was clearly satisfied with my work. My photo teaching English classes appears in their annual report as in a bulletin.

3.2 Research Design

Case study analysis and selection of informants.

The method used to select the respondents was purposive sampling. This method does not try to achieve formal representativeness but people or locations are purposely investigated because they meet some criterion for insertion (Palys 1997, 137).

The approach to this research was a case study analysis. In this study the type of population and the activities that they performed in Canada defined the boundaries of the case. This was, Mexican women and men that participated in the SAWP in two agricultural sectors greenhouses and production of vegetables in open field.

I selected two different places in Canada: Leamington Ontario because this place concentrates both the majority of Mexicans who come to Canada and the greenhouse industry. And I selected Little Town because this place has open field agricultural activities and a small number of Mexicans that significantly contrasts with Leamington.

The community on Mexico was selected because it met three criteria: 1) accessibility that allowed me to maintain appropriate relations with the informants, 2) it is a town that has

agricultural production, and 3) in Las Nubes there are more than 15 Mexicans that have participated in the SAWP.

The number of interviews was decided in terms of time and resources. In total 28 people were interviewed including three women and twenty-five men. The under representation of women was due to two reasons. First, there are very few women in the SAWP. Second, in spite of the accessibility and good relations with them I did not want to saturate this population with interviews. I am sure that important studies about women in the SAWP are forthcoming.

Type of study and rationale

The research design of this thesis was mainly qualitative due to the nature of the pursued information of this study. However, it was anticipated that the data collected would be qualitative and quantitative.

This thesis is an exploratory case study using qualitative methods. As is affirmed by Marshall and Rossman (1989, 43): “An exploratory study using qualitative methods usually does not have a precisely delimited problem statement or precise hypothesis. One purpose of qualitative methods is to discover important questions, processes, and relationships, not to test them”.

The approach of this study was eclectic. It was carried out using a semi-structured design in the sense that I had a conceptual framework before I went to the field. It contained some predetermined concepts that I wanted to explore through the in depth semi-structured interviews. Conversely, the analysis of the information is a mixed approach of

grounded theory and the analysis that emerged from the predetermined conceptual framework and the macro analysis of the political economy of Mexico and Canada related to migration.

The research strategy that allows researchers to focus their attention on some situations that interest them the most is identified by Miles and Huberman (1994) as a tight research design. They advise to use this strategy to save time during the data collection stage and to facilitate a multiple case study research. Nevertheless, they pointed out that one risk of tightly co-ordinated designs is that they could be "less case-sensitive and may bending data out of contextual shape to answer a cross-case analytic question" (Miles and Huberman, 1994, 18).

To keep flexibility throughout the research process it was considered appropriate to be able to do the changes that I considered appropriate during the data collection as it is highlighted by Marshal & Rosman. (1989). Moreover, the flexibility is necessary to allow exploration of "whatever the phenomenon under study offers for inquiry" (Patton 2002, 255).

Miles and Huberman (1994, 18) mentioned that frameworks can be "rudimentary or elaborate, theory-driven or commonsensical, descriptive or causal". In this study my framework was a mix of theory-driven and inductive research.

3.3 Participants or informants.

There is a tendency in the research discourse to call the "people who happen to be in the research setting" (Holliday 2002, 161) a '*participant*' who in reality did not participate in

the research design and will not participate in the presentation of findings. Holliday (2002, 159) explains that “the reduction of overt markers of power asymmetry between people of unequal institutional power... (is)...not the elimination of power asymmetry but its transformation into covert forms” (1995, 79). In this study the people who “happen to be in the research setting” (Holliday 2002, 161) are called interviewees or respondents. However, only at the end of this study I found a qualitative transformation of this relationship that is described in the fieldwork section.

3.4 Methods of data collection.

Semi-structured interviews

The semi-structured interview is an interactive method that is considered by qualitative researchers as "optimal for understanding the phenomenology of the respondent the best way to gather deep, rich data in the words of the respondent" (Palys 1997, 187). The intention of interviewing is to understand the other person's perspective. Performing qualitative interviews we assume that “the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit. We interview to find out what is in someone else's mind, to gather their stories” (Patton 2003, 341).

Patton acknowledges that the quality of the information obtained in an interview will depend mainly on the interviewer. The validity of this technique resides in the quality of the information produced (Palys 1997).

Winson and Leach (2002, 49) affirmed that a semi-structured interview allows the emerging of unanticipated themes beyond the knowledge of the researchers which

provides “tremendous richness for the studies (but) it sometimes presents difficulties in comparing data”.

Conducting the interviews

Bauer and Gaskell (2002, 39) consider it a sine qua non for qualitative interviewing “the understanding of the life worlds of respondents and specified social groupings”. For me the fact of being Mexican, speaking Spanish, my previous experience working in Mexican rural communities for about 10 years, and the three months that I spent working for the NGO in the tobacco farm and Leamington allowed me to establish a good level of rapport to conduct the interviews in Canada. The fact of being the only Mexican in the program in which I participated during the summer made me aware about cultural differences between Mexico and Canada that do not come to the surface until they are contrasted. I would say, “Culture is like having a second skin”.

Interview guide

I worked with an interview guide (see appendix A) with open-ended questions. The interview guide changed slightly from the original guide proposed on April 2003 before summer began. In the second stage new and more precise questions related to Mexico were added to the interview guide. However, this instrument only added questions to my original interview guide and I could not use it as a questionnaire because it broke the nature of the interview.

Interview environment.

I decided to establish the conversational style that Patton suggests and intended to have a dialogue rather than have a monologue. I told the respondents that as I was asking questions of them they could ask questions of me. Sometimes this dialogue took place in the sense that I was also “interviewed”.

Information recording.

I recorded the information taking notes during the interviews because I know that people are not comfortable talking in front of a machine. Also, as a researcher, I was not comfortable with this technique. During the answers that Mexicans considered more important they slowed down the speed of their speech giving me enough time to write it down. In some occasions they emphasized their answers and said: “repito...” (I repeat) and spoke slowly until I finished writing down their answers.

At the end of the interview guide, I asked them to talk about whatever they wanted to say or considered necessary to be known by a larger audience. This part of the interview is in the introduction of this study. When they wanted to denounce situations lived by Mexicans in Canada they said: *“esto no me paso a mi pero se que a otros compañeros”*- it did not happen to me but I know that some co-workers have had these difficulties. In some cases it could be real advocacy and in other cases perhaps it was a way in which they felt safe volunteering this information. In spite of that I did not ask for their employer’s name, the former situation it is quite similar to the anecdote related by Basok(2002:xvii) where she illustrates that after Mexican farm workers talked openly

about their problems faced at work they never wanted to give her the name of his employer, and their response was “that it was others who had these problems and that their patron es buena gente (is a good guy)”.

Length of the Interview

The interviews had duration between one hour and a half and three hours. After the interview we had a moment of feedback in which we reflected about the interview and how it could be useful for them. They told me that the time that we spent together was an enjoyable change in their routine. Sometimes the interview schedule did not take place due to the informants had the need to talk about other issues and topics related to their lives and needs and in that case my role as a friend was more important than to be a researcher.

Focus groups or group interview?

A focus group is a form of interview that allows researchers to be in contact both with collective meanings about the phenomenon of study as well as interactions among participants in relation to the phenomenon of study (Bryman 2001; Reeves and Harper 1981). As Patton (2002, 388) declares “the power of focus groups resides in their being focused”. However, Patton (2002, 388) clarifies, that not all group interviews belong to the category of “focus groups”. It is possible that during the fieldwork “unstructured conversational groups interviews” occur and they are “not at all focused”.

My intention was to conduct a focus group session with a predetermined guide of topics to discuss. Nevertheless, the field moment in which the focus group was going to take

place was very close to reaching the saturation point during the research process. In consequence, I mixed the programmed topic guide (see appendix B) with the topics that they considered more important to express to a larger audience. There were five people participating in the group interview.

The use of group interviews can be *highly valid* because it provides opportunity to meet participants face-to-face and to understand their perceptions. However, the weakness of a semi-structured group interview is that it is extremely difficult to replicate an interview session.

3.4.4 Reliability and validity

According to Meadows and Morse (2001, 197) validity is “the process of demonstrating trustworthiness, which in turn addresses both reliability and validity.... Validity implies that the findings are real and that there is little or no reason to doubt their truth”. The validity of this study was assessed through different techniques highlighted by Meadows and Morse (p.194-197). In this study I used 1) different methods of data collection: in depth interviews and a group interview, 2)the data were analysed manually cutting and pasting the different categories as well as in a data based that I created in Microsoft word to facilitate the analysis, 3)member checks, this is that I ask to some key informants for clarification of the information. The saturation of data and the searching for negative cases were also procedures that I incorporated in my analysis.

Reliability “traditionally implies that some research finding can be replicated or repeated, that is, that an outcome or findings are not unique” (Meadows and Morse 2001,

197). This study can be replicated by using the same interview guide. However, the interview group and the processes to gain access to the informants it is difficult to replicate.

3.5 Field Research

Introduction to the field

This research was conducted first in Leamington and Little Town Ontario and after that in the Mexican community “Las Nubes”. The contacts with the informants were made in public places and I simply asked them if they would like to participate in this study. It was not a snowball sampling method because it was a mix of encounters with the informants on public places and contacts made by other informants previously interviewed. The interviews were conducted mainly during the weekends when they had free time to go to the Little Town or Leamington downtown.

Some informants gave me their telephone number but I only called them to let them know I had some information and material that they needed ready. They invited me to conduct more interviews in their bunkhouses but I did not consider it appropriate. I wanted to avoid possible conflicts with the employers. Some informants gave me their address in Mexico after the interview and asked me to visit them.

In Little Town and Leamington, relationships that go beyond being researcher and respondents were developed. Mexicans before their departure called me to let me know that they were leaving Canada and during Christmas in Mexico I visited some of them in their places of origin not as a researcher but as a friend. I received e-mails from some of the people that I taught to use Internet and greeting phone calls from Mexico. My

husband and I also were invited to some family celebrations in their towns but we could not attend to all for lack of time. Now, some of them already call me to let me know that they had already arrived in Canada.

During the field stage Mexicans requested from me all types of information and support that goes from an explanation of their deductions up to confidential and personal issues.

Since the communities of Leamington Ontario and Little Town were selected for methodological reasons Las Nubes was selected by what in qualitative research is called opportunism. However, this community had at least three criteria already mentioned in the sampling section of this chapter. In addition, I asked to the MMLSP information about communities nearby my hometown that send Mexicans to Canada but the population of Mexicans coming to Canada from my state is very disperse. I only visited one of these communities because a friend of a friend is working there in projects of community development.

Access to “Las Nubes”

I visited Las Nubes due to the relationship that I established and an invitation that I received to attend to a family party. I wanted to be sure that no other researcher had gone there before. The family that invited me gave me the favour of investigating among their friends and relatives to see if another researcher had gone there before. They made a list of possible people whom I could interview. In their list there were more than 20 people. Before conducting any interview I asked them if they had been interviewed before. All the respondents said no.

I found an initial cultural resistance that came from the wives of the informants. The fact of being a Mexican married woman travelling alone from Canada to Mexico to conduct research in technology transfer in a Mexican community was not understood given the cultural parameters about how a married, young, Mexican woman is supposed to behave. They wondered, “Why did my husband allow me to go alone?”

On the first day, mistakenly I contacted one of my interviewees by phone. When I got to the informant’s house his wife was really disappointed. I explained to them the purpose of the interview and included them both in the interview to let her know my intentions. I noticed that for wives it was very important to stay since the interview was conducted for two reasons: first, to know what do their husbands do in Canada, to understand how their life is far away of their family; second, to participate in the interview and say their part. It was an indirect way to put them in a dialogue about the time that they are separated, to fill the gap that exists in their lives after months of absence. However, I lamented that I did not prepare any instrument to interview the women that are left behind in the community.

Negotiating entry. Establishing relations.

I considered it appropriate to socialize more with the women of the town, spending time with them in their everyday life. The day of the family party I collaborated, helping in the kitchen. After a while, the women in the kitchen began to ask me questions about myself and they clarified their doubts and knew that I was Mexican, married to a Mexican guy (in a Catholic wedding) and living in Canada. They learned that I worked in a farm and in a community centre during the summer in Canada. Their attitude changed and they told

me that they could now understand how somebody coming from Canada could be interested in their community. For them my role as a Mexican interested in Mexicans expressing solidarity was more meaningful than my role as a researcher coming from Canada.

A slight transition from respondents to participants.

I noticed that for the respondents certain questions and moments of the interview were more meaningful than the topic of technology transfer. That is why after some days of doing interviews in “Las Nubes” a couple of men looked for me and asked me to interview them. They thought that they had something important to say. Also a woman asked me to interview her.

Research experience to understand the culture.

The detailed narrative about how the research was carried out is provided because as Holliday (2002, 169) argues: The experience of the relations of the researcher with the respondents “increases the understanding of the culture contributing to the wide investigation”. I would add that important methodological and phenomenological information are derived from the researcher’s experience.

In Mexico, I also visited and consulted materials related to the SAWP in the Canadian Embassy in Mexico City. These materials were very valuable due to the fact that Mexicans wrote them.

3.6 Ethical issues

Once the respondents agreed to participate in the interview I properly identified myself with my credentials at the University of Guelph and followed the ethical protocol previously completed. This case study will be translated to Spanish and placed in public places to make it accessible to the respondents. I also want to present the findings in the community that I visited in the future and make a summary of findings to allow a friendly reading. I will look for the way to provide courses to learn how to make cheese that was one of the wishes of some of the informants and their wives.

Confidentiality was also an indispensable condition of the research. I asked for their names only for courtesy but I did not record them. I found that it was nicer to speak direct to them by their names during the interview. It made the interview environment warmer and recognized them as persons. To be called by their names is a little detail that is forgotten when their humanity is limited to the role of workers in a strange country.

I noticed that the word technology was intimidating and tried to explain it in easier terms. Some of the questions caused confusion as the one about farm management in Spanish “*manejo de granjas*”. The instant thought was about riding vehicles or machinery. This mistake made me realise their need for obtaining a driving license in Canada.

3.7 Saturation point

Bauer and Gaskell (2000, 43) in discussing the ideal number of interviews required for a qualitative study argue that:

a key point to bear in mind is that, all things being equal, more interviews do not necessarily imply better quality or more detailed understanding. There are two bases to this claim. First, there are a

limited number of interpretations or versions of reality. While experiences may appear to be unique to the individual, the representations of such experiences do not arise in individual minds; in some measure they are the outcome of social process. To this extent representations of an issue of common concern, or of people in a particular social milieu, are in part shared.

They added that this could be seen in a series of interviews in which the first ones are full of surprises or insights but eventually:

...at some point the researcher realises that no new surprises or insights are forthcoming. At this point of meaning saturation the researcher may depart from the topic guide to check his or her understanding, and if the appreciation of the phenomenon is corroborated it is a signal that it is time to stop (Bauer & Gaskell 2003, 43).

At a certain point I experienced the saturation point after conducting the interviews and decided to stop.

3.8 Data analysis

This case study analysis was a reiterative process in the sense that the recollection of data and data analysis including data coding were repeated throughout the research. To begin this research with a tight but flexible conceptual framework allowed me to change, adapt and make new questions in the interviews during the two stages of the research.

The information collected in the first place was catalogued with an open coding following my interview guide such that mutually exclusive common categories of responses could be identified. Later information was catalogued by an axial coding, which means new categories that I developed were rotated around their axis and considered in more detail.

With respect to the quantification of my data it is important to acknowledge that:

With a non-probability sample the range of error might be doubled.... Often reports of qualitative research include numerical details or vague quantifiers such as among the respondents, as if somehow such numbers lend weight to the interpretation and legitimize generalization to a wider population. This is to misconceive the purpose of qualitative research. The real purpose of qualitative research is not counting opinions or people but rather exploring the range of opinions, the different representations of the issue (Bauer & Gaskell 2003, 41).

In spite of the argument mentioned above some of the data was quantified. According to Berg (2001, 246) “seven major elements in written messages can be counted in content analysis: words or terms, themes, characters, paragraphs, items, concepts, and semantics (quoting Berelson 1952; Berg 1983; Merton 1968; Selltiz et al. 1959).

3.9 Limitations

One limitation of this study was the impossibility of obtaining a random sample of the population of Mexican workers because of the co-operation of farmers to allow me conduct the study in their farms was uncertain. Moreover, the convenience in terms of privacy and confidentiality for the interviewees to perform interviews at the farms was doubtful. The same problem was encountered with Mexican workers whom I wanted to interview because their co-operation could not be taken for granted in the case I would inquire a random sample.

An additional limitation I found was that I did not understand the Canadian academic culture, as it is very different from what I experienced in Mexico. I found that the competition that is fostered by the academic system is very extreme and undermines possibilities of collaboration and professional dialogue during the processes of creation of knowledge. It caused me to be unnecessarily worn-down. Also, the impossibility of conducting my research during the summer brought an unexpected delay in my schedule.

To close the methodology chapter a description of the places where the study took place and a profile of the informants are described.

3.10 Leamington, Ontario.

The greenhouse industry of Leamington, Ontario concentrates the highest population of Mexicans working in Canada through SAWP. Approximately, the Leamington area receives close to three thousand Mexican workers every year (Basok 2003a, 9).

Mexicans begin to arrive to the Leamington area in small numbers in late February, followed of a bigger group in May. Their departure to Mexico is between October and mid December.

The presence of Mexicans creates a special atmosphere in Leamington; where social and cultural expressions of the temporary population grant a certain degree of “mexicanity” that coexists with the expressions of permanent residents of various cultural groups e.g. Italian, Portuguese, Lebanese and Salvadorans. Leamington also has a strong presence of Mennonites, a subtle presence of Caribbean migrant workers and an almost invisible presence of other ethnic groups working in the farms.⁷

The Mexican population is visible in downtown on Thursday and Friday evenings. The farmers choose those days to bring the migrant workers to town for shopping, calling or sending money home among other activities. The permanent settlers choose the same evenings to stay at home and do their everyday activities other days and hours of the week. Basok describes this scenario as follows:

Leamington-area residents know that it is better to avoid the No Frills grocery store on late Friday afternoon, when about one thousand Mexican seasonal farm workers employed in the area go shopping

there. For Leamington-area residents the Mexican invasion of the local supermarket has become a part of the social landscape, as has the image of Mexican riding their bicycles along rural roads, particularly noticeable on Sunday afternoon when most Mexicans get time off work. (2002, 3)

Local residents and migrant workers visit different restaurants, bars, stores and dancing places. You can find two commercial stores one next to the other where the type of clients will be either only migrant workers or only Canadians. Generally, Mexicans do not visit places where only English is spoken. However, in spite that Caribbean migrant workers speak English they seldom go to places that Mexicans do not visit because of the language. Few Canadians go to places that Mexicans visit frequently. To illustrate this phenomenon, after conducting an interview the respondent and I went to Tim Horton's for a coffee. It was the first time that he had gone to Tim Horton's in 6 years of coming to Canada.

On weekends there are different bars and dancing places playing Mexican music, e.g. "cumbias", "norteñas", and "tropicales".⁹ There are 3 places with live music played by a group of Mexicans coming from different States. One of the better-equipped places restricts the entry to Mexicans and Caribbean people who do not bring a dancing partner and gives preference to local people.

Jose describes the exclusion by class and ethnicity found in some places as follows:

They see you poor, humble, they humiliate you, one feels very bad. Most of us do not like to go to luxury restaurants or restaurants of status. You feel better where there are not Canadian people of high class.

⁹ Types of music

He commented that Mexicans deserve better-equipped and decorated restaurants and bars to go. The ones that are available to them are not as nice as the ones for Canadians.

The farms are relatively close to each other and there are different types of public transportation, such as taxis and collective buses with a predetermined route during weekends. Whoever lives close to the downtown can go out of the farm oftener using a bicycle. The cars in Leamington contrast with the bicycles used by migrant workers as transportation.

Leamington's dash of "Mexicanity" is mostly brought by men since considerably fewer women participate in SWAP. There are no children in this scenario. Moreover, the signs of establishments that service the migrant population e.g. "taquerias" recreate the atmosphere of a Mexican town. Mexican music is also heard when you walk by these establishments. On Sundays, the Catholic mass in Spanish, and the soccer games of the "Liga Mexicana de Futbol"¹⁰ are evident cultural expressions that contrast with the surroundings. The Church is an important centre where essential cultural-religious expressions as the festivity and visit of the Virgin of Guadalupe to different farms are celebrated. During certain months of the seasons the image of the Virgin of Guadalupe is taken to different farms for a week where the people who host this image pray the rosary everyday until they return the image to the Church again. The Church has been an important place where Mexican migrant workers find activities that nurture their spirituality. In addition, places such as the supermarket, the bank, the public phones, the

¹⁰ Mexican soccer League

currency exchange agencies, the Mexican coffee shops, the meat store, thrift stores, and the bars, offer exchange and socialisation opportunities for Mexicans of different farms.

The community of Leamington has different organisations, which are intended to meet the needs of the Mexican migrant population, but little or any effort has been made to include the needs of Caribbean workers as part of these services. Examples of these services are the English classes imparted by Frontier College, The Catholic Church and the Essex Community Centre. Basok (2003a, 13) pointed out that Mexicans cannot attend the public English classes offered by the Essex Community because during the harvest season they work until late in the evening and they need a tuberculosis test which is performed during work hours and not all the people interested on the classes want to ask to their *patron* for time and companionship to get the test done.

Another service to help Mexican Migrant Worker is the Migrant Agricultural Worker Support Centre (MAWSC) run by the United Farm and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW) this centre gives information and legal aid. It also acts as a mediator between farmers and the Consulate to help Mexicans to resolve some of their problems. The Art Centre (AC) prints a monthly bulletin to inform about events, activities, services to the community and some news about Mexico. The AC organises trips to Niagara Falls, recreational and cultural activities as guitar classes in co-ordination with the Church. The AC also offers a workshop to fix bicycles after the Sunday mass. These groups and others have organised what they called the Coalition for migrant workers. However, there is no formal representation of Mexicans or Caribbean workers in the coalition. Basok mention

that “while this coalition has an important symbolic role, it is a hardly an organisation which is concerned with the foreign worker’s rights” (2003a, 18).

Unfortunately, public services as the walk-in clinic, the public library and the optometrist close after 7 p.m. Monday to Saturday and on Sundays, the same time when Migrant workers could make use of their services. Public services in Spanish are very limited. I saw the need to be a translator to assist in filling out forms and obtaining information by phone at the hospital and at the pharmacies as part of my everyday activities in the NGO during summer.

3.11 Little Town Ontario.

This town is characteristic of rural Ontario. It has a little library, a bank, a post office, a couple of supermarkets, a couple of variety stores, a thrift store, a public park and it is surrounded by farms that produce different crops. In contrast to Leamington the presence of Mexicans is very diluted even during the days when they go shopping; not to mention the scarce presence of Caribbean workers. Some of the few visible signs that temporary workers are present in the area are the small posters in some variety’s stores indicating in Spanish that telephone cards are not returnable.

The farms are far away from each other and there is no restaurant, nor a store that sells Mexican products. Instead, independent vendors go to the farms to sell tortillas and other Mexican products. There is no public transportation but there is a taxi service that charges approximately 20-25 dollars to go from the farms to downtown. There is no hospital yet the Catholic Church organises monthly Spanish masses in town.

There are few local residents aware of the presence of Mexicans and Caribbean workers. Generally they are people involved in businesses such as owners of variety stores, bank employees, or employees of supermarkets and fast food establishments.

Workers from different farms socialise for short periods of time in commercial centres or supermarkets if they coincide during their break hours or shopping days. There is no service that addresses their specific needs in the area.

3.12 “Las Nubes” in Mexico

“Las Nubes” is a small Mexican rural community located between two main roads that connect the area with urban centers. This community has potable water, electricity and sewage. The majority of houses are built with blocks and concrete and almost all the streets are paved thanks to the money that migrants brought from U.S. and Canada. Migrant workers have built two-storey houses with sloped roof the typically kind of houses of Canada and U.S.

The agricultural fields are located relatively far away from the urban core of “Las Nubes” and the stables for the animals are located next to the houses. Most of the crops are for self-consumption and the surplus is sold either in a weekly street market in the area or in the central market of the urban centre.

The rhythm of life of the community is unhurried. People begin their everyday activities early in the morning as soon as the sun arises, milking cows, cutting alfalfa, harvesting corn and cultivating other crops. The rudimentary tools used in the fields contrast with the industrialized machinery used in Canada. To cut alfalfa they used a machete or

*guadaña*¹¹ there is also an individual manual planter that is pushed by one person.

Enrique pointed out: “here in my community one works at one rhythm and if they see you working they do not complained to you”. There is only one tractor in the community and its owner rented it charging 200 pesos¹² per hour.

Their main transportation to go to the fields is a buggy pulled by two horses. The life in this community is intense in spite of the feeling of slowlesnes. People who own a piece of land or work as a contract laborer work long hours during all day. When women are not in the field helping their husbands or relatives, they cook, do the laundry, take care of children, and contribute to the household monetary income sewing garments that are paid for by each piece, which they make at home.

There are public phones to receive international calls located in some streets and variety stores in town. The majority of men have left “Las Nubes” to work in the United States and a small proportion of them work seasonally in Canada. A woman commented to me that more and more people have migrated to the United States and that also now entire families are leaving the area.

A detailed description of the community is not being provided purposely in order to maintain the confidentiality of the place.

3.13 Characteristics of the informants

I interviewed a total of 28 Mexicans from October to December 2003. They were 25 men and three women. The analysis presented in this study is based on the data obtained from

11 Name of a labour tool.

12 \$ 25 Canadian dollars approximately.

these 28 interviews. Fifty percent of the interviews were conducted in Mexico, 25% in Leamington, Ontario and the rest in “Little Town”, Ontario. The group interview involved 5 people and took place in the Mexican community “Las Nubes”.

Age, state of origin, scholarly and occupation.

The average age of the interviewees is 36 years old and their States of origin are Estado de Mexico, Guanajuato, Tlaxcala, Michoacan, Veracruz, Hidalgo, Puebla, Jalisco, Queretaro, and the state where “Las Nubes” is located (See Table 5).The informants of Las Nubes were the most representative. The average number of years that the interviewees have been coming to Canada is 5 years.

Table 5. Place of origin of Mexicans interviewed

Edo. de México	Guanajuato	Tlaxcala	Michoacan	Veracruz	Hidalgo	Puebla	Jalisco	Queretaro	Las Nubes
3	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	13

The break down in educational level of the interviewed population is as follows: 14.3% studied the elementary grades 1st to 3rd, 46.4% studied the elementary grades 4th to 6th, 17.9% studied Junior High School, 3.6% have a technical career, 3.6% have received adult literacy classes and the last 14.3% did not answer the question. (See Table 6)

Table 6. Number of years spent in school by the respondents

Grade	1-3 Elementary School	4-6 Elementary School	Junior High school	Literacy	Technical career	N/A	Total
Number	4	13	5	1	1	4	28
Percentage	14.3%	46.4%	17.9%	3.6%	3.6%	14.3%	100%

Seventy five percent of the respondents are *campesinos* ⁸. From this percentage, 42.9% are only dedicated to agriculture, 17.9% are employees in addition to cultivating the land, and, 14.3% combine the cultivation of the land with other forms of self-employment such as commercialisation of products, taxi driving or hand crafting. The remaining 25% consists of people dedicated to masonry (7.1 %), transport truck driving (3.6%) and other forms of employment such as factory labourers (14.3%). See Table 7.

Table 7. Occupation of the respondents in Mexico

Occupation	Peasant	Constr. Worker	Employee	Driver	Peasant and employee	Peasant and self- employed	Total
Number	12	2	4	1	5	4	28
Percentage	42.9	7.1	14.3	3.6	17.9	14.3	100

CHAPTER FOUR

4 RESEARCH FINDINGS

This section is introduced by describing the perceptions that the informants have about whether or not they can transfer to Canada the skills and abilities that they bring from Mexico to Canada and if they can use the skills and abilities learned in Canada in their communities in Mexico. Following, the information recollected is organised according to the five dimensions of human security previously explained in the conceptual framework. In each section I describe first the impact that SWAP has in the lives of the informants in Canada and after it I describe the impact that the dimensions of human security have in the community Las Nubes. I chose to use five names as pseudonyms to personalise the narratives of men and three names to personalise women narratives. I used the names one after another in a rotational manner. Due to the impossibility of reproducing all the information acquired in the interviews, I had to select and synthesise the expressions, feelings, and situations of the informants as much as possible. The endnotes contain some of the information acquired in the study in words of the informants. The translation from Spanish to English was very challenging since I found words and grammatical forms that had to adapt to the English language.

Some of the most remarkable differences in the use of the language found were that in Spanish we do not have to use always the pronouns before verbs. In Spanish there are some verb conjugations that imply who is performing the action. E.g. in English one says: We work, while in Spanish, one says: *trabajamos*. The absence of an explicit noun in the Spanish phrases was also significant in the analysis of discourse while sometimes

the interviewees did not want to put a subject in their phrases. E.g. they said: “They ask us to spray pesticides without protection” but did not make reference to the subject explicitly.

Before to begin the findings report, the concept of human security will be define. Human security: “includes freedom from danger, poverty or apprehension...The United Nations Development Program notes and ‘integrative’ as opposed to merely a ‘defensive concept’, and includes security of individuals and communities as well as territories and states”.

(http://www.globalcentres.org/cgcp/english/html_documents/publications/changes/issue5/index1.htm) (retrieved September 10, 2004)

In addition to the aforementioned definitions of each dimension of human security aforementioned in the conceptual framework a brief summary of the meaning of each dimension is made:

- 1) Economic security is related with assured basic income, physical and economic access to food.
- 2) Environmental security is related with relative freedom form disease and infection...access to sanitary water supply, clean air and a non-degraded land system.
- 3) Social security from physical violence, threats, racism and access to networks of social support.
- 4) Political security is related with the protection of basic human rights and freedoms.

(http://www.globalcentres.org/cgcp/english/html_documents/publications/changes/issue5/index1.htm) (retrieved September 10, 2004)

- 5) Cultural security is defined as the set of psychological orientations of society geared to preserving and enhancing the ability to control uncertainty and fear (Nef et al. 1989 quoted by Nef 1999).

The report of the research findings begins with the perception of the interviews in regards of whether or not they can apply the skills and abilities learned in Canadian farm systems.

The obstacles reported by Mexicans in applying all the knowledge they acquire in Canada when they go back to Mexico were 1) lack of land, 2) they have rain fed plots, 3) crops cultivated are not the same as in Canada, 4) lack of money to enhance their agricultural activity or to buy machinery, and 5) not being subject to credit.

The informants suggested that some of the knowledge acquired in Canada could be applied if they could buy machinery or to have greenhouses. However, they believe that in order to be able to run a greenhouse they need to expand their knowledge, to earn more money in Canada to save it for investment, and to be recipient of the greenhouse packages that a governmental agency is promoting in their community.⁹

There were two different situations concerning with the possibility of having a greenhouse. The first is Jose's situation; he is learning how to mix fertilizers in Canada and has not received yet an answer to the application that he submitted to obtain support to have a greenhouse in Mexico. He said that even if he receives the governmental support to put his own greenhouse it is insufficient. The greenhouses that the government

is promoting are very small and it will be difficult to achieve enough production to compete with the bigger greenhouses as those in Canada.

The second situation is the case of Enrique who received a governmental support to acquire a greenhouse but he said that the technology transfer from Canada to Mexico does not exist because “they do not teach you the formula”¹⁰. All what he knows about greenhouses was learned in a technical school of the area. Moreover, some of the materials of the greenhouses have been adapted to the area with exception of the fertilizers that are brought from Germany.¹¹

In Las Nubes informants had past experiences growing different seeds that they brought from Canada that did not succeed because the plots are rain fed or the weather and soil were different. An informant showed me experiments of pots covered with plastic trying to reproduce the incubation system for germination of seeds. Some informants expressed their desires to improve their agricultural activities and to use “chemicals and fertilizers”. Others expressed their concern about the greenhouse agriculture. They said that they “cook the vegetables by force and with a lot of chemicals”.

Nobody reported to have learned how to administer and manage a farm.¹² The factors that contribute to enhancing the knowledge of Mexicans while in Canada are to have a good relationship with the farmer, to speak English or to have a *Mayordomo*¹³ who speaks Spanish and is willing to explain to them the how’s and why’s of the operations.

The tasks of fertilizing in the greenhouses, controlling the processes of machinery, and driving tractors or forklifts are reserved to the farmers, to Canadian supervisors and to a

few Mexicans. In this study four informants reported to have learned how to: drive a tractor, operate an irrigation system, mix fertilizers and incubating seeds in the greenhouses.

When I asked them if they can transfer their knowledge to their agricultural activities in Mexico they said the Canadian *system* is very different from the Mexican *system*. Their acknowledgement of different systems is not only related to the operational aspects of machinery or productive processes, but also to the work pace, personal treatment, hierarchical structures, ownership of the work, relationships with co-workers, payment arrangements, flexibility of work hours, use of time, health conditions, and explicit and implicit norms that shape their perceptions and behaviours in Canada. Thus the characteristics of the system are comprised by the culture by which the SAWP is operated. (See Table 8 appendix 3)

Having come to Canada for more than 10 years, Juan's commentary was remarkable: "I do not consider that I have used what I know from Canada in Mexico. Here in Canada the only thing you do is to work". Moreover, Jacinto commented that in Canada you only have to eat and sleep well to be ready to work long journeys of hours the next day. "What Canada gives you is an opportunity to make money; it is a system to make money".

Mexicans who are *campesinos* think that their knowledge is very useful to do their work "fine and fast" in the open fields at Canadian farms, especially when the agricultural activity is the same in Mexico than in Canada. E.g. to harvest strawberry and to perform other open field activities¹⁴. They commented that because they are used to work hard as

campesinos in Mexico they work hard in Canada. It is a transferable attitude that they bring to Canada¹⁵.

Informants who are *campesinos* but who work in greenhouses said they couldn't use all their knowledge from Mexico in Canada and had to learn new things.¹⁶ Those who are not *campesinos* or combine agricultural activities with other jobs bring skills and abilities that cannot use in Canada¹⁷. Among other occupations they are welders, accountants, traders, construction workers, and drivers of industrial machinery. In Canada, they experienced a debased status in reference with their previous occupations and expressed their desires to use their experience instead to be perceived as “weird creature” (*bicho raro in Spanish*).¹⁸ Given that specialised jobs are better paid, Jacinto commented that he would like to study apiculture to earn more money in Canada.

The informants think that their everyday experiences could be used to increase production and to save money to the farmers if their opinions were taken into account.¹⁹

The work experiences of informants are very broad. They have work in farms of ornamental trees, fruit orchards, strawberry fields, various vegetable crops of open field, tobacco, ginseng, flowers, and greenhouses. They performed activities that range from harvesting only to being part of all the production process from sowing to harvesting to packaging.²⁰ In the majority of the farm operations their activities are monotonous and repetitive. They can pass one day doing the same activities. e.g. cutting leaves, harvesting, weeding, or planting.

Other leanings and attitudes learned in Canada are illustrated in the next phrases:

“Here I learned to trust in myself and to get ahead in life”, “here I learned to pay attention in how to plant and to do the things well done otherwise *el patron* would not request me”.

“Here in Canada I have not learned anything, only what they order me. They do not let us to do more, only that [what they assign to us]. *Los patrones* do the rest. They cultivate and fertilize. They told us what to do and we did nothing but obeying”. Other skills Mexicans learned were to speak English and women learned how to ride a bicycle.

A continuation the findings related to the economic aspects are reported.

ECONOMY

Mexicans come to Canada because of economic need. The scarcity of employment, low wages, old age, and low educational levels are some of the difficulties that they have to overcome to meet the basic needs of their nuclear or extended families. The agricultural activities in the communities of the informants have diminished in their economic significance. In Las Nubes as in communities of other informants the import of corn and other crops has caused the downfall of prices, which make their cultivation not longer cost-effective in rural communities. Now peasants mainly cultivate for their families self consume.

The informants related their need of improving the economy of their household with their desires of personal and family betterment giving special attention to the need of being able to pay for the education of their children. They illustrate these desires with comments as “*Salimos para superarnos*”, “*para progresar*”²¹ “the work here [in Mexico] is only to survive not to triumph”.

For women the opportunity of finding a job lies mostly in domestic employment or low paid jobs in maquila factories in Mexico. Those interviewed in this research are the main economic provider of their household and had to look for sources of economic income outside Mexico.

In Las Nubes local producers also had difficulties selling their cattle due to the import of frozen meat in local markets. There is little land to cultivate and not all the informants own a piece of land. Where they cultivate belongs to their parents or themselves and the crops obtained are mostly for self-consumption. The agricultural work in Las Nubes is labour intensive due to the distribution of the land and the lack of organisation to work the land collectively using common machinery. All the corn is harvested by hand and there is only one tractor in town that can be rented for 200 pesos per hour (CDN\$25 per hour). Those who do not own land work as day labourers and get paid between 80 and 100 pesos per day (CND \$10 to \$12.50). Some women share the work in the field with their husbands. When the husbands are away women look after the fields, animals, and pay to labourers to work the land.

Other productive activity in Las Nubes is milk production. Milk is paid at 3 pesos per litre and sold in the store at 9 pesos. The people who make cheese can add more value to the milk. Milk producers have a small profit margin because their milk is not pasteurised. Moreover, they incur in occasional medicine costs for the cows and invest about 3 hours per day cutting alfalfa manually to feed an average of 7 cows.

The non-agricultural sources of income for men are in construction or the few factory works available in the closest urban centres. Women work from home sewing clothing

outsourced by nearby factories. The wages are 80 pesos (CND \$10)¹³ in factories and women receive 3 pesos (CND \$0.38) per sewing a dozen of baby clothes and 6 pesos (CND \$ 0.76) per sewing a dozen adult shirts. The factory of clothes does not have to invest either in equipment or in electricity since the women provide these inputs. The scarcity of money could be noticed as people counted peso cents when paying or receiving change in the local stores. This is not commonly seen in other parts of Mexico.

89% (25) of the informants learned about SAWP through their relatives and friends that had already gone to Canada. The rest 11% (3) knew about the possibility to participate in SAWP by watching the news, listening to the radio, or reading posters and newspapers in their Municipalities. The application process involved from 3 to 6 trips per year to the Ministry of Labour and Social Planning (MLSP) in Mexico City. The longest waiting period reported among the informants to be accepted in SAWP was 3 years, and the fastest waiting period was one year. However, it was commented that now the process to get into the SAWP is shorter and easier.

The informants mentioned that the MLSP prefers to hire peasants because they know how to do agricultural work but also as Maria commented peasants “are used to work hard in contrast with other people that do not come from rural areas and do not work at the 100%”. During the selection process Jose said he was worried in the MLSP because he was asked to prove that he was a peasant and his hands were without callosities.²²

Among other requirements the informants have to pass a medical examination to ensure they go to Canada healthy. In regards of this requirement Jacinto commented that the

¹³ The exchange rate is 8 pesos per CND dollar.

same medical examination should be performed to them before to come back from Canada “ to be sure that the Canadian government is also sending healthy people back to Mexico”. He also said: “What [would] happen if they send sick people?” The informants reported that now one more requirement is to get the AIDS test.

Once Mexicans are accepted in the SAWP they have to strive to ensure their employment in Canadian farms by being “good workers” and obtaining a positive evaluation from the farmer. This evaluation is given to them at the end of the season in a sealed letter that they have to deliver to the MLSP when they go back to Mexico. If they do not obtain a positive evaluation they have the risk of being “punished” in the MLSP and not being called to work again to Canada in the next seasons.

Once in Canada, informants reported to have worked an average of 10 hours per day six to seven days a week. They considered ten hours of work per day as the minimum quantity of hours that make their trip to Canada worthwhile. However, to work at least 8 hours per day is better than to have fewer work hours.

In regards of the flexibility of the work system in Canada Juan commented: “if there is work you work, if there is no job you do not work”. The work schedule could be happen to be from 12 to 18 hours per day or less than 20 hours per week.

There was no consensus among the informants about what could be for them an ideal number of work hours. They talked of a range from 10 to 16 hours per day. The factors that they considered to answer this question were: the time they had to rest and recover, their physical resistance, the type of job, the months they will spend working in Canada,

and deductions of the income tax. The combination of these variables gave different results in regards of what is the ideal number of work hours for them.²³ Women commented that they are less ambitious than men in regards of the ideal number of work hours because they were used to earn very low wages in Mexico specially if they worked in domestic service. They said that even working 8 hours per day they are earning a considerable amount of money compared to Mexico.

Informants said that in some farms and greenhouses they do not have breaks and work every day of the week. In other farms to work on Sundays is optional or a free day if the work in the farm allows it. Nevertheless, to work on Sundays is preferable than to be resting, boring, and looking at each other faces in the farm. Enrique said: “if we work on Sundays we are happy”.

Concerning with their preferred payment modality – by hour or by piece rate– those who have worked in the tobacco fields like to be paid by piece rate and also the informants who receive a predetermined weekly amount of work and do not have to be competing for getting more job. Nevertheless, other informants do not like to be paid by piece rate because “... by piece rate they ask you for a percentage and if you do not accomplished the amount assigned they can send you to Mexico”. During the group interview they agreed that to work by hours was better than to work by piece rate especially at the end of the harvesting season, when few tomatoes are left and there is no co-operation among co-workers.

The production rate is controlled by the conveyor speed, the tractor speed chosen by the driver, the production goals set by the farmer, the urgency of piece rate labourers, the

competition, and the pressure exerted by the farmer or the Mayordomo²⁴. The latter two ways to accelerate the work process and the social structure that promotes them will be discussed in the political and social sections. In the greenhouses and farms that have integrated the packaging plant the work journey is continuous. Informants reported that they work in the fields during the day and in the packaging plants during the night.

The net biweekly payment of a Mexican working between 10 and 13 hours everyday of the week is approximately CDN \$474.00. An informant earned CDN \$7,000.00 dollars during an 8-month season.

To have a paid job impacts the life of women. Maria said that in Canada she has a sense of freedom and independence that she has not had before. Maria feels “free and valuable” because she is earning a significant amount of money for the first time in her life. Now she makes her own decisions about what to buy and how to dress. At home, her husband controlled how she dressed. One difference expressed by Valeria, who had a job in Mexico, is that in Canada she does not have to take care of the house and her children’s homework after work.

While in Canada the Mexicans spend in food a weekly average of 60 dollars and in phone calls a monthly average ranging from 10 to 15 dollars. Nevertheless, one informant reported he spends only 30 dollars in his food because he wants to save money. In Little Town there are no recreational activities for Mexicans. In Leamington there are limited recreational activities yet not everybody is eager to spend money on it. Those who go dancing or hang out with friends spend between 20 and 40 dollars per week. The maximum reported amount spent for recreation was \$100.00 dollars per week. The rest

of the money is sent home and the wives of the interviewees are who are in charge of saving some of the money.

Before going back to Mexico they buy clothes, appliances, bicycles, computers, digital photo and video cameras and gifts to bring home. If they knew the prices of those items in Mexico they could avoid carrying some of these items and the respective problems at the airline check-in window.

The money they send to Mexico mainly used for food, education, health, construction, and house improvements. Sometimes they invest their money buying cattle or land. Those who have land also spend the money paying somebody to work in their plots. Only Juan reported that he bought a mobile stand to sell merchandise in the closest city to his town.

At their return to Mexico, informants reported that they have to work in the aforementioned economic activities in Las Nubes or in the nearest urban centers. They arrive just in time for the corn harvest season and they receive help from their wives who worked at home and sew clothes to obtain an extra-income.

In Las Nubes the members of the nuclear and extended family are the main beneficiaries of the money earned in Canada. In addition to spend the remittances in the family needs aforementioned the informants spent money co-operating for town festivities, town infrastructure and school improvements. Family parties and celebrations are also afforded thanks to the money earned abroad. At the town level, the effect of the remittances from Canada, but mostly from the United States, is seen in the type of construction materials

used in houses and in the number of streets that have been paved. It was also reported that traders and local business owners sell more merchandise. Some of the Mexicans who go to Canada held positions of prestige in town and are asked to look after the organisational and financial aspects of social or religious activities. In 2003, one of the informants was in charge of organising a Christmas festivity.

None of the informants reported investments in productive activities that could generate a meaningful surplus. Rather their investments reinforce survival strategies. They have bought cows but they cannot afford the equipment to pasteurize the milk nor they have the necessary social organisation to do it. One informant invested in improving the handcrafting shop of his family but their profit margin is very small. Others bought land to cultivate it for self-consumption.

In the table 8 it can be appreciated that in order to buy a piece of land and make improvements in the house they need to work at least 7 years to Canada an average of 6-7 months per year. An informant who has gone to Canada only an average of 3 months per year for 7 years has invested most of his money only in improving his house conditions.

A different informant who has come to Canada for 3 consecutive years only for 3 months a year has bought cows but he has not spent money in improving his house. Another informant has spent all the money earned in paying the medical attention of his close relative.

Due to the lack of sufficient economic activity in Las Nubes the informants commented that in spite of the fact that they like their work in Mexico they have to go back to work

in Canada.²⁵ The informants expressed their desire of find profitable economic activities in Mexico to invest the money they earn in Canada and being able to stay permanently in Mexico in the future. Otherwise they will have to keep going to Canada to survive in Mexico.²⁶

An informant said that people is abandoning the agricultural activities for other activities with which they could earn money. On one hand, an informant talked about the need to buy a piece of land for his sons and encourage them to become peasants “If they do not study”. On the other hand, he sees the need of give education to his sons to make it easier for them to find a job in the factories because “in factories they give preference to those who study”.

The economic problems faced by women who are left behind are expressed by Angelica:

When my husband goes to Canada he left me without money 15 days, almost 20 days. Sometimes he leaves and I have to help my mother so that she gives me food (*Spanish: un taco*). If there is work sewing clothes I do it. [If it is not in this way] How can I obtain money? We as women have a lot of responsibility in everything. The field, the children, we do a little bit of everything here. If my husband goes to Canada only for one month and a half or two months the money only lasts to buy food. From Canada we have not made a lot [obtained any significant improvement in our economic situation] unless, he could go to Canada for more time [we will not be able to improve our situation] We hardly survive everyday.

Table 8. Spending of remittances in relation of the time

Spending of remittances	Number of years						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Food, clothing, education, health.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Housing.					*	*	*
Cattle.			*				
Land.							*
Businesses.					*		
Agricultural inputs.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Labour wages	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Community (festivities, school, infrastructure)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

Note: Only those who own land before to migrate are who spend money in agricultural inputs and wages since the first year that they worked in Canada.

ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY.

The informants reported various problems to receive proper access to health care in Canada. Some of their fellows experienced delays to receive their health cards or social insurance number cards. Therefore, they or the farmer had to pay for medical attention and were not eligible to claim a refund. Some interviewees expressed their confidence in having the support of the farmer to go to the hospital immediately if they became sick or injured.²⁷ In contrast, other informants found difficulties getting the farmer's permission or support in terms of transportation and companionship when they had to go to the hospital during work hours or even after work hours. In these situations the farmer asked the Mexicans to continue working and diminished the importance of their health problems based on his own judgement or suggested that they take a rest for a couple of days. However, these days of rest are not paid days²⁸.

A fundamental difference between Leamington and Little Town is that in the latter a hospital does not exist and the opportunities for Mexicans to go independently to see the

doctor at the nearest city are very limited. Some informants, if they go by themselves, to the hospital feel threatened by having to give all their information to the receptionist of the hospital or walk-in clinic and to report if their illness is related to their job activities.

If they can get support from the farmer to go to the doctor the next problem experienced is the language barrier. In the absence of a hospital translator there is a spontaneous support of different members of the community. However, it is insufficient. It is unknown whether the nearest hospital to Little Town has a translator.

In the group interview they said that they have not received adequate health care in Canada because they cannot express what they feel and what their pains are. They have been given by the Consulate or the MSLP a drawing of the human body with the names of the body parts in English and Spanish, and have been told to bring it with them to the doctors to point where they have pain. Yet, the drawing is very small and they found it useless. They also expressed that they feel they are not treated properly in the hospital and their health problems are dismissed²⁹.

They mentioned that it is preferable to wait until they are back in Mexico before looking for medical attention. They feel that in Canada, “they check you very quickly, some times prescribe you medicine and send you back to work. In Mexico, medicines are stronger and the medical attention is different”. However, two interviewees said that the nurses in Leamington were polite with them and doctors took well care of them, having them under observation for various hours before letting them go back to work. The Mexicans who already have come to Canada are aware of the problems they could face in order to obtain proper health care services. Therefore, they bring their own medicines from Mexico³⁰.

They also try to buy medicines in Canada that they think will help treat their illnesses. However, the lack of English speaking skills can put their health at risk not knowing how to interpret the indications and contraindications of medicines.³¹

Informants who have never been sick in Canada felt lucky and fine because they have never given problems to their patron. They know that it is not convenient to get sick in Canada. "If you get sick you have to rest and you do not get paid or you can be sent to Mexico".³² Jose said that he does better in Canada than in Mexico and he does not get sick easily. Their diet in Canada relied in beans, tortillas, meat, eggs, cheese, potatoes, juice, coke and others. It is noteworthy that they eat few vegetables and fruits. They like to prepare meat and chicken because it is a heavy meal and easy to cook.

Only, Jacinto received formal training to perform his activities safely but he complained that he had to buy the safety equipment, which represented an additional expense during his first week of work. Four informants have had work accidents and one got hurt playing soccer.

With respect to the use of pesticides and fertilisers there are farms that provide safety equipment and protect the workers when pesticides are being sprayed.³³ Nevertheless, there are farms, which do not provide any safety equipment to those spraying pesticides, nor do they ask the rest of the workers to get out of the fields or greenhouses while they are spraying. The physical symptoms of exposure to pesticides mentioned by the informants are: eye irritation, nose irritation, nose bleeding, blurring vision, vomiting, rashes all over the body, allergies, general discomfort and nervousness³⁴.

As advised by his fellows, an informant drank a lot of milk before going to the hospital to eliminate the symptoms caused by the pesticides. Medicines to prevent allergies are also brought from Mexico. While in Leamington the AWSC provides printed information and occasionally gives workshops about the use of and protection against pesticides no organisation provides this information in Little Town.

The use of fertilisers also causes discomfort and different symptoms.³⁵ Respiratory illnesses occur specially to those who come to Canada for the first time without proper clothes for the cold weather. Women have special health needs, especially concerning with their reproductive health. Stress factors and mental health issues will be discussed in the cultural section of this chapter.

The impact that SAWP has in the area of health and environment in Las Nubes was explored superficially during the field research. The remittances are very important for Mexicans to afford medicines and medical attention when a family member is ill. Informants reported that the diet of the family has improved thanks to the money they earn in Canada.³⁶ However, a closer assessment into the family diets could give a better idea to what degree family nutrition has improved since families have more money. The food at home varies since the interaction with co-workers allows for the exchange of recipes that tend to be transferred home.³⁷

In Las Nubes I found a collective sense of discomfort, fear and concern for the health of the people who have gone to Canada and have been exposed to “chemicals”. Informants told me about men of the area who are sick and their illness were attributed to the exposure they had to chemicals in Canada.

In regards to the environment the interviewees said they have learned to take care of the nature as it is done in Canada and have also expressed concern for the contamination of the water table that greenhouses can create.³⁸

CULTURAL SECURITY.

Mexicans coming to Canada for the first time are immersed in a totally new experience, which begins in the airport of Mexico City and continues throughout their stay. New experiences such as boarding an airplane cause both: feelings of stress and excitement. One of the first difficulties they find is to fill out the immigration form. Once they arrive, simple but important issues have to be sorted e.g. Carlos was very hungry and did not bring money from Mexico. He had to wait hours until he arrived to the farm and was able to cook something to eat. Enrique felt emotion because he had never seen snow before but he did not bring adequate clothes and got a cold.

The initial excitement about Canada and the high expectations that informants brought with them were confronted with the reality once they arrive to Canada³⁹. “Everything was different from Mexico”. They had to learn how to: buy food, cook, do the laundry, cash cheques, make phone calls, and send money to Mexico. On top of that they have to learn how to perform their job, adjust to community life with their new co-workers, and find out how to solve conflicts or deal with the farmer if they experience maltreatment⁴⁰. The informants said that “once you know how is *system* works in Canada everything is easier”.

The language barrier is another problem which causes great concern: “The first time one arrives shy, *el patron* only speaks English and one does not understand, we understand

each other with mimic”. Mexicans said they need to learn English to communicate their basic needs, to socialise, to protect themselves from mistreatment and to perform their job.⁴¹ They consider their English bad e.g. “nothing in English sticks to me”, bad e.g. “ I know enough to understand orders from the farmer” or “my English is quite good”. Even though the need of English was recognised for some Mexicans, Jose did not want to learn English in his first year. “You are only waiting for time to pass to go back to Mexico”. Carlos also said “the first year you do not need to learn English. What you need to learn is how to survive”.

Those who know English learned it in Junior High School or from previous migratory experiences in the United States. In Leamington, some Mexicans are taught English by their Canadian or Caribbean co-workers, or by attending different classes offered in the community. Farmers interested in helping Mexicans to learn English gave books to them to study, hired a teacher, or send them to classes. The books that informants found most useful to learn English are those, which include the pronunciation in Spanish. Those who cannot read wish to learn English by an oral method. In Little Town no service exist to teach English to Mexicans. In Little Town any of these services are available.

Those who have former national or international migratory experiences and come for the first time to Canada bring survival skills that allow them to have a more endurable experience. Juan commented he helped their co-workers to learn how to buy their food in the supermarket and how to cook.⁴²

An additional challenge for the informants who came for the first time to Canada was to cope with the feelings of strangeness of being in a new country and far away of their

families. Jose said: “the first season, I was very sad, it is horrible!! One does not stop thinking about Mexico. One suffers”. Carlos said: “the first year I missed my family but compared with other fellows for me it was fine. For others was worse, they began to cry in desperation of not seeing their family. There are fellows who underwent this situation only for 15 days and they went back to Mexico”. The informants commented that once they overcome difficult situations of adaptation they felt proud about themselves and said that after all “nothing was impossible” they “keep ahead”.

The causes of stress for Mexicans are not only related to their life in Canada but also with the problems lived by their families in their communities of origin.

The stress factors lived in Canada by the interviewees were 1) To buy the food and to know how to cook because these are survival needs, e.g. Jose ate eggs during the first month because he did not know how to prepare other meals. 2) To perform well during the first 15 days in which the farmer evaluates the work of Mexicans to decide if he wants them to stay during all the season. This probationary period is particularly stressful for those coming for the first time. 3) To keep up with the rhythm of the work imposed by other co-workers. Fast working rhythms cause physical exhaustion and make it harder to perform a good job. 4) To have few hours of work and not being able to send money to Mexico. 5) To have conflicts among their co-workers, especially between newcomers and those with seniority. 6) To feel enclosed because they do not go out of the farm frequently.⁴³ 6) To fear becoming sick or suffering a bicycle or airplane accident. 7) To not being able to speak English. 8) To be sent back to Mexico, especially if it is their first time in Canada.⁴⁴ 9) To not have time to go to the bank to send money home. 10) To not

have the possibility to send more money during the first two weeks due to the expenses incurred on at the begging of the season.

The coping strategies are mainly related to endurance and conformity⁴⁵. This research only found that they rest and sleep to cope with the fatigue caused by long working hours over a long period of time.

When situations in the work place are very difficult they keep silent, conform to the situations, protest about it risking being sent back to Mexico or forced to leave SAWP “voluntarily”. Enrique said they keep quiet because “it is our ambition what makes us stay quiet and do not defend our rights. We want to progress so we better stay quiet”.

The reasons to leave the Program voluntarily are experiences of mistreatment, few work hours⁴⁶, sicknesses related to pesticide exposure or transference to another farm that they do not like. The cost of leaving “voluntarily” the program is to have to pay their airplane ticket. However, in cases of illnesses, sometimes the Consulate intervenes asking to the farmers to cover the plane ticket. They reported that after deciding to leave the program they let pass at least a year pass before going back to Canada.⁴⁷

The stress factors in regards to their community of origin are 1) problems that happen in their community. 2) Family accidents, illnesses or deceased relatives. The worst situation that Jose experienced was an accident that happened to his son in Mexico. His wife was very nervous and for him “it was a shock to find out about the accident, it is difficult to have stability with a huge worry about this situation”. 3) They are afraid that their wives

abandon them for another man. *“Estamos siempre al pendiente de que Sancho ande por allá”*.⁴⁸

In general what they miss the most is the food and their family, especially the children “the traditions of Mexico, the happiness of the parties, the warmth of the children and my wife”. The coping strategies they use when they miss Mexico are enumerated and described as follows:

1) Endurance. They let the time pass and sleep, “one feels sad and one would like that the days pass to go back to Mexico”⁴⁹.

2) When they miss Mexico they call home⁵⁰ or they cry: “The first time that I came to Canada I cried. Who would not cry? Some can tell you men do not cry but if they were alone and here, very tired after the work and far away of their country I would like to see them. I cried hiding from others. Without others looking at me”.

3) They try to distract themselves by going out of the farm to play pool and to drink. They talk to their fellows and make jokes, going for a walk to “clear their mind”, watch TV or listening to music, they write letters and songs. They think about their family to feel their dearest ones closer one of them said: “the mind is very powerful and keep you close to your dearest ones in spite of the distance. Everyone of us has a dream and a reason of being here”. 4) To be able to satisfy the economic needs of the family in spite of missing them or in spite having difficulties in Canada comfort them. Some times the informants said, “one would like to go back to Mexico but the pay day we forget everything”. “Sending money to Mexico and knowing that the family is fine, we feel

better in Canada. We compare being in Mexico without a job to being here working at least in Canada we earn some money. [This] makes worthwhile being in Canada”. 5) To continue working. Informants said they are happy when they work on Sundays instead of being thinking about Mexico all the time.

The aspirations expressed by the majority of the interviewees were to have a source of income in Mexico while few ones express their desire of living in Canada with their family to give a better future to them. An informant said: “If I would find a job here [in Mexico] I would like to stay. In Canada the way of life is very different, here in Mexico there is more happiness”. They would like to apply the knowledge acquired in Canada in productive projects as: “to have a cattle ranch”, “to have a tractor and to plant beans, corn and potatoes but the problem is the cost of the tractor”, “to build a little greenhouse to cultivate tomato, chile and nopales”, “to save enough money to raise sheep and other cattle”.

However, an informant said after expressing his aspirations that “the government does not give support to peasants and people of scarce resources. [This] obligate us to look for a job, to leave our community and go to different places [in Mexico].... where there are jobs available but the wages are very low. Thus, we have to go to Canada”. In Mexico they have the opportunity to be with their family and give the love and care children need but Canada is a secure source of income.⁵¹

I asked the informants in Las Nubes how do they describe themselves and their answer were: as Temporary Agricultural Worker. One of the most common phrases found in 70% of the interviews was: “We go to Canada to work”, “We are here to work”, “In

Canada you only have to work”. Juan said: “ I came here to make a sacrifice. I wanted to achieve something and I already got it”.

The circle of dependency to find their means of life abroad either in Canada or the United States is a survival strategy ingrained in the culture. In Las Nubes people migrate to ensure the subsistence of their families. Those who are peasants and want to preserve their agricultural activities at home need to migrate to provide money to buy the inputs and to pay labourers in Mexico to look after his plots. An informant who does not have land see that his work is better remunerated in Canada. An interviewee said: “Those who go to Canada work as hard as here. The only difference is that here they earn the minimum wage that is 80 pesos per day (CND \$ 10). By going to Canada they sacrifice their family but they earn money”

One of the cultural influences for the migration in Las Nubes was the appreciation for English as a survival strategy in what appears as an unavoidable option for the future. Children want to learn as much English as possible and in a small town nearby people is paying an English teacher to give classes to children after they go to school.

SOCIAL SECURITY

The social relations among co-workers were described by two of the informants as a very good. They considered all of their co-workers as friends where they help to each other, trust in each other and nothing gets lost in the farm neither money nor personal things. Four informants considered the relationship among them in the farm as a little bit of everything. In their farm there are different groups that get along well among themselves without to relate with other groups in the same farm. “There you can only trust in your

friends”. Socialization problems occur although there are rules to have the house clean. Some leave their beard hair in the washroom, or their dirty dishes in the kitchen sink. Some smoke and other do not. Some are playing music at very high volume and others want to rest. Tensions between those with seniority and those with less time working in a particular farm were reported. Jose said that the former only disorganised the house and did not want to clean. These conflictive relationships will be described in detail in the section of polity.

Twenty two of the informants reported that in their farm they are only acquaintances and not friends “there you cannot trust in each other and you can only trust in one or two truly friends”. An obstacle to trust each other is that “in the farms there is almost always someone that tells everything that happens to *el patron*”. For this reason Carlos said that he does not feel that his co-workers in the farm are his friends: “it is difficult to support each other because there is always a person who wants to please *el patron*”. “In this system people cannot trust each other”.

The informants reported that when they came together with a group in which all the Mexicans were new in SAWP they had desires of organisation and solidarity especially when they faced difficult situations at work or bad housing conditions. However, these desires of solidarity and friendship were difficult to preserve and contrasted with the relationships already established among co-workers who have seniority. More about this problematic will be described in detail within the section of socialization.

The contact with other Mexicans is more likely to occur during the assigned shopping days or Sundays in the outreach places described before. Sometimes the farmer prohibits

having visitors and this represents an obstacle to socialization with other Mexicans of the area.⁵² In contrast, in other areas the farmers had organized a league of soccer giving them uniforms, transportation and free time to participate.

They have little free time and few recreational activities especially in Little Town. In their free time they watch TV, sometimes in Spanish others only in English, they watch movies they bring from Mexico or listen to music. However, these activities are not enough to mitigate their feelings of boredom and monotony. The fear of being hurt during a soccer game prevents some of them to join a team or to organize a casual game. The content of some movies and songs promote a culture of violence and machism⁵³. Not having friends to visit or to spare their free time with, they end up being always with co-workers. Jose commented that he was glad to have the opportunity to talk with me in the interview instead of being at home looking each other's faces. He said he and his co-workers preferred to work on Sundays instead of thinking about the family or getting bored.

Other circumstances that prevent them from going out are that they do not want to spend money, that they need transportation, and that they cannot go out without the authorization of *los patrones*.⁵⁴

Their contact with women is limited; more so for those in Little Town since there are no Mexican women working in the area⁵⁵. Mexican women have to adapt their behavior in a dominantly male population. Valeria reported: "I only go out either in a group or with my partner who takes the responsibility to take care of me". If a group of women are with at least one man it is unlikely to see that other men approaching a group of women.

Mexicans do not have contact with children unless they have contact with them in their farm. Sometimes when Mexicans find other Mexicans they call each other *paisano*⁵⁶. This word can have either a positive or a negative meaning among them if they are in Mexico or in Canada.⁵⁷ While in Canada the word *paisano* is more likely to have the meaning of friendship and fellowship. However, depends from the context how this word can be interpreted.

The relationships among Mexicans and people of different nationalities working in the same farm will be discussed in the polity section.

When they need support in cases of emergencies they go with their *patron*, to the Church, with friends they have in the community or to “La Casa Blanca”⁵⁸. In Little Town they do not have any of the resources found in Leamington and only one informant reported to have friends in the community. A detailed list of the organizations that offer support for them in Leamington is at the methodology chapter. In spite of the organizations that give support to migrant workers in Leamington some informants reported not having anybody who could support them. Only one informant showed independence and trust in finding the help needed in case of an emergency⁵⁹.

It was reported that the Consulate is not known for helping people with their problems and the informants do not trust in asking for help from the Consulate due to former experiences of other fellows. When Mexicans complain about difficult issues that they faced in their farm the frequent answer they get from the Consulate is “do not care about it man, you continue working, be enthusiastic”. It does not help affirmed Juan. “The Consulate does not help;”⁶⁰ Only two informants received help from the Consulate.

The informants reported various situations of discrimination in the workplace e.g. when they get the hardest and most difficult job, when Canadians earn better wages than they, when they interact with people of the Canadian community, and when Mexicans are portrayed in food products.⁶¹

In Las Nubes no formal organization exists for Mexicans that come to Canada. They run into each other during the social events of the town or by chance in their everyday activities. Enrique said that to belong to a group they should spend more time in town. Only two informants reported to belong to organized groups of peasants who have common micro-economic projects in Mexico.

Informants expressed that in Las Nubes each one sees for their own needs and that it is difficult to trust each other.

Women said that they feel lonely in the absence of their husbands and are also anxious of being abandoned or left for another women. Children are who suffer the most with the absence of their father or mother. Juan said: "Children become sad. Since I came back [from Canada] my little one [daughter] follows me everywhere and if her mother tells her that I am going to Canada [she] begins to cry". A woman said: "the children grow up without the love of the father, they [our husbands] loose their love for their wives and the love for their children". Jacinto said: "I believe that when I arrive to Mexico I obstruct my wife because she got used to be alone. [With respect to my son] Do you think that he has love for me if he has not seen me?"

POLITY: POWER AND POWERLESSNESS.

The work in the farms is organized hierarchically. In small farms the farmer organizes the work and in large ones there are supervisors called *mayordomos* who, in collaboration with the farmer coordinate, the work. *El mayordomo* is “the second after *el patron* and some fellows call him *capataz*...he tell us what to do and all we need to do is to obey the orders”.⁶²

A Mexican *mayordomo* is someone who has a good level of English, seniority in the farm, and the trust of *el patron*. An informant who is a *mayordomo* commented: “In the farm, I am the one who in agreement with *el patron*, achieves the production quota. There are four of us who have the most years working here. There is another fellow who has more years working here than me but he does not want to have problems giving orders to others.

The informants expressed positive and negative perceptions about *el mayordomo*. There are those who think that *el mayordomo* demands excessive work from them without having the authority to do it. Others express that the demand on the speed of the job and the treatment of his co-workers can provoke conflicts that could result on physical aggression. When *el mayordomo* only supervises and does not work along with the crew he is not respected by his co-workers. The most repetitive comment was that *el mayordomo* “is a gossip who tells to *el patron* everything that happens”⁶³.

The *mayordomos* who provoked positive perceptions were those who work along with the people that they lead, those who take to the hospital the people who get sick or are injured and those who intervene in favour of his group when difficulties or problems arise

with *el patron*. The role of mediator that *mayordomos* take between the farmer and the group of Mexicans is especially important when the farmer does not speak Spanish. In that case, the needs, difficulties, problems or concerns of the Mexicans are only expressed through a good *mayordomo*. As mentioned several times by the informants: “those who know more English could help us tell to *el patron* what we need for example if we are sick or if we need to go to the bank but [because] they do not want problems with *el patron* they do not tell him”.

In addition to conflicts related to the relationship between *el Mayordomo* and the rest of the Mexicans, the power relationships established between Mexicans with seniority and people who come for first time to Canada were described as a source of conflict and stress for the newcomers. Mexicans who have an initial resistance to comply with the pre-established hierarchy and order imposed by co-workers with seniority enter into conflict with whom adopt and follow diligently the terms and work conditions imposed by the Mexicans with seniority.⁶⁴ Different kinds of abuses of the power that those with seniority exerted over the new co-workers in the farms were reported. E.g. They keep house spaces to themselves, they ask to the new-coworkers to make some of the housekeeping for them, taunting the new-coworkers and others⁶⁵. Enrique said: “We are coming from province and with the desire to earn dollars we oppress those who do not know much. Those who do not know [how to do the work, how to live in Canada] are ashamed and scared”.

Some of the interviewees said they had personal relationships with the farmer.⁶⁶ In contrast, in other farms the relationship that Mexicans have with the farmers is limited to

job issues. “You work for *el patron* and he pays. He is interested in one working”. The informants commented that they would like to get more support when they have to go back to Mexico for urgencies such as when a family member dies.⁶⁷

In spite of the narrow spectrum of labour mobility that Mexicans have in Canadian farms there is a well-delineated division of activities perceived to be of higher or lower status⁶⁸. Even the smallest chores such as pulling down or pulling up a lever have its hierarchy. In order to ascend in the reduced job hierarchy “you have to work very hard and win the position” and “you have to show that you are a good worker”. To have more work hours than other co-workers is considered a work benefit while to have less hours could be a measure of disciplinary control exerted by the farmer.

In addition to the methods to control the production rate mentioned in the section of technology transfer, the farmers set either individual or group production goals that have to be achieved even if Mexicans are paid per hour. An informant commented that in his farm the production goal was set after *el patron* told them that they were going to be paid by piece rate. So everybody began to run to earn more money. Afterwards, once his *patron* saw how fast they could work he told them that he could only pay them by the hour and they had to achieve the same productivity they showed when they believed they were going to be paid by piece rate.⁶⁹

The control of the speed of the production through the strategies aforementioned are complemented by encouraging the competition among the group of people working either in greenhouses or open fields and in conjunction with the control exerted by the

evaluation letter, the early repatriation, the competition for keeping their job⁷⁰, and their aspirations to perform activities that the informants perceive as of higher status.

A way to be kept away from the competition was commented by one of the interviewees who said: when one co-worker begins to run one thinks '*a poco el es más chingon*'⁷¹, and then one begins to work faster, faster... [however] you can preserve your own pace and let others kill each other.

Gestures of solidarity and help among the members of the group were also reported by only one informant e.g. Enrique who is very good in picking strawberries commented that he hurried up to help his fellows to achieve the production goal set by *el patron*.

The concept that the informants have about exploitation was commented in terms of "being forced to work at fast pace". "To finish the work of two days in one". "To spray pesticides without protection".⁷² While some informants feel that they are exploited another informants think that in their farm they have a good and well balanced amount of work. "The hard work is mixed with the light work".

There are farms whose practices of productivity control differ from those aforementioned and where the heavy and the light work is mixed. Informants reported that the work is fine in these farms and they do not need to be running all the time. There the employer tells the people to do the work slowly but well because when they worked quickly they did not do the work fine. They also work without the direct supervision of the farmer.

The competition encouraged in some farms is not only among Mexicans but also between Mexicans and people from other nationalities⁷³. It was reported that in some farms

Mexicans never work together with workers from other countries and get the heaviest work.⁷⁴

One informant reported that workers of other nationalities do not perceive Mexicans positively because:

[The workers from other countries] said that we came to take their job. We are sometimes not liked by the Mennonites. They are used to working slower and Mexicans are used to work a lot, the double of harder. When there is no job Salvadorans and Mennonites are not requested to work in the greenhouse to continue giving us our normal hours.

In spite of the potential competition among people of different nationalities to keep their job in Canada the relationships among co-workers can be good when the farmer does not exert the division among them as a way of to increase the productivity of the group. Two informants reported to have worked with Canadians and Portuguese and to have had very good relationships besides they worked with less competition. In this farm all people who work in that farm are treated equally. Mexicans learn English from their co-workers and they learn Spanish from Mexicans.⁷⁵

In spite of the differences of the treatment Mexicans receive in comparison with people working in farms of different nationalities Carlos proudly affirmed that the Mexicans have gotten to be recognized for their work and are preferred by *los patrones*. Canadians and people of other nationalities work slower and are stricter to take breaks and their lunch at the proper hour.⁷⁶

The local physical mobility of the informants is constrained by 1) the lack of transportation either a car or a bicycle, 2) the distance between their farms and the town

or other farms, where to go? 3) the lack of information about how to buy a plane ticket and the price of the plane ticket. 4) the retention of their documentation. It was mentioned by 2 informants that they know that *el patron* of some fellows held their passports with him to impede them to leave the farm, 5) the retention of their payment that did not allow them to buy an airplane ticket⁷⁷. One informant reported this fact.

The radius of physical mobility is limited by how far they can go on a bicycle. The larger distance the informants reported to bike were 45 minutes. This is approximately 20-25 kilometres.

The different opinions of how their situation in Canada can be improved were included having higher wages and the changing the attitudes of the farmers.⁷⁸ Only two informants said that their situation in Canada would improve through the unity and solidarity of Mexicans. They found their temporal status in Canada, the lack of time to socialize with Mexicans of other farms, the restrictions to go out to the farm, the lack of organization, lack of trust and pride as an obstacles to achieve the unity and solidarity they need to protect themselves of the irregularities and abuses.⁷⁹ The informants often expressed their powerlessness by saying: so what can we do? We are here to work!

To improve the situation of Las Nubes they said, “the government should look after the *campesinos*. The middleman is finishing with the *campesinos*. They have controlled the profits”. “The community should be well communicated. All the streets paved. [The community could change] if we talk with the Municipal President and asking for support”.

In the group interview they said that by going to Canada the situation in their community will not change in order to allow them to stay without the need of go to Canada again, even if the government did not support their town. For the moment they did not find another alternative to have work and employment if they do not migrate to U.S.A. or Canada.

CHAPTER FIVE

5 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS.

As indicated in the research findings, informants think that they cannot use the knowledge they acquire in Canadian farms because they neither have the material resources nor the financial means necessary to put them in practice. They also feel that, in order to make agricultural know-how transferable, they need more knowledge about the technological principles of the agricultural activities that they perform in Canada. In most of their activities they just follow orders without being given further explanations. The only informant who reportedly learnt how to mix fertilisers for greenhouse use in Canada does not have a greenhouse in Mexico.

It is noteworthy that the informant from Las Nubes who has a greenhouse learned everything he needed to run the greenhouse in a technical school in rural Mexico. The techniques and materials used in the greenhouse were adapted to the local materials existing in Las Nubes with the exception of fertilisers that come from Germany. The experience of working in Canada is not essential to learn how to operate a greenhouse. In my opinion, it could be convenient to look for alternatives to the foreign inputs and to use local materials of the area instead of relying on imported ones. From my point of view it would be better to grow vegetables without chemicals because in the long term chemicals have a long-term deleterious effect on the environment. In this particular case, what is transferable to Mexico is the idea of how a greenhouse works, by observing how to reproduce the incubation of seeds in a pot covered by a plastic bag.

The obstacles that the informants face in applying their knowledge in their communities of origin are related to the old problems that the micro economic projects dedicated to small producers have faced for decades in the Mexican agricultural sector. Moreover, the predicament of small producers and landless peasants has worsened with the NAFTA. The agricultural sector in Mexico will not improve by the importation of piecemeal techniques if structural problems are not resolved. This problem goes beyond the solutions that the classical technology diffusion theory predicts. In this respect Maurer and Warner (1989, 16) argued that the model of technology diffusion: "... assumes that factors affecting adoption are under individual's control. However, the increasing influence of economic and market conditions on the farmer's decision making must now be considered".

The evidence found in this study coincides with what those researchers who think that the "sending" countries have overestimated the possible use that migrants can make of skills and abilities obtained in other countries. The same position is held by some researchers who have analysed this issue in the SAWP (Colby 1997; Basok 2000b; Prebisch 2000).As it was argued by Papademetriou (1991, 277):

...receiving countries usually need workers who are able to perform mundane services, agricultural work and repetitive tasks at the lower end of highly articulated industrial hierarchies. Thus, it is not in the employers' interest to offer most of the foreign workers either skill-enhancement opportunities or formal technical training...

As far as the formation of a skilled base of social capital is concerned, it tends to benefit Canada more than Mexico. Canada receives skilled labour that through the years becomes specialized; the workers who bring skills and abilities from Mexico that cannot

be used in Canada notice that their capacities are diminished because their skills suffer a process of degradation.

Given that none of the 28 informants learned skills or abilities related to the administration of farms it is worth noting that there is an important separation between the management activities and the farm operations. “Responsibility, problem-solving, and decision making are removed from the ranks of the employees by the systematic division of labour”. (Broom and Selznick 1970, 13). Moreover, Braverman (1974, 68) argued that “control is indeed the central concept of all management systems”. In the farms the work is organised either by *el Mayordomo* or by the farmer. Only four informants occupied positions that allowed them to learn how to use machinery and how to incubate seeds and use fertilisers. These informants had a higher educational level, good relationships with an employer or a *mayordomo* who speaks Spanish, or a good level of English.

In the problem statement it was argued that technology is a system that cannot be reduced to a set of discrete practices or techniques (Nef 1989, 4). This assertion was reflected in the conception that Mexicans have about the differences that exist between the Mexican and Canadian *system*. Throughout the interviews respondents regularly referred to dimensions of the system that went beyond the differences of agricultural techniques. Their definition of “*the Canadian system*” entailed all the aspects mentioned in Table 8.

A knowledge-generating experience entails explicit and implicit contents as it is analysed from the perspective of the hidden curriculum. While it is alleged that Mexicans learn skills and abilities that can be transferred to their communities of origin it has been

omitted, that they also learn attitudes and values related to their whole experience in Canada. As identified by Dwivedi, Nef and Varnderkop (1990, 226) “a technological system involves more than the know-how about tools...and behind any piece of ‘hardware’ there is social ‘software’ and a sense of purpose and meaning”. Moreover, “technology is not value-neutral or culture free; it reflects the interests, priorities and worldviews of its creators. Technology embodies these values and tends to reproduce them...” (Cebotarev 1989, 52). As it was mentioned before in the technological systems there is a manifestation of the society based on capitalist principles. (Fulesang,)

In the capitalist system as indicated by Teeple (1995, 181), there is a continued tension between the working class and the employers. While the working class depends on selling its labour, employers need to keep wages as low as possible to reduce costs of production and increase their profits. In this way they can be competitive in the market. The competition among corporations in the process of accumulation of capital produces two main tendencies in the history of capitalism. First, corporations look to reduce the competition and to expand their operations to control as much as possible of the market. Second, corporations look for ways to increase the productivity of labour, which is achieved through the intensification of the existing labour processes and technological changes that allow the replacement of workers with labour saving machinery.

In the Canadian context these two tendencies are noticeable, albeit with peculiarities. The decreasing number of farms and the increasing size of the operations follow the first tendency. The second tendency reflects the need that farmers felt to reduce the labour force required due to the scarcity of it. However, the operations of Canadian farms will

try to intensify the labour processes and increase the workers' productivity either if they are mechanized or not. The intensification of the workers' productivity is part of the culture and values of technological organization in a capitalist system.

In the *Canadian system* Mexicans learn attitudes related to retain their job, to continue having an opportunity to come to Canada. Such attitudes are framed by the implicit and explicit norms and practices of the SAWP. In Canada, as Mexicans reported in this study: "all you have to do is work"; "to be a good worker"; "to obtain a good evaluation letter to come again to Canada". They show attitudes of conformity, acceptance, learned hopelessness, distrust among co-workers, powerlessness, hardiness and as contradictory as it may appear, they also show attitudes of empowerment. Such attitudes will be analysed further in the culture section of this chapter.

They conform to the explicit and implicit norms that govern their everyday life in Canada. "If you get sick you are going to be sent to Mexico" thus it is better not to get sick or to tolerate in silence the pain that an illness or injury can cause. If they speak up they won't have a good evaluation letter at the end of the season so it is better to stay quiet. They attribute a high value to the fact of being considered a good worker and to the opportunity they could have to continue earning money in Canada. Moreover, they expressed pride for having as Mexicans the reputation of being hard workers "like a Mexican there are not two" "Mexicans do not give up" (*Spanish: como el Mexicano no hay dos, los Mexicanos no se rajan*) "Mexicans are distinguished by the job they do".

The SAWP, more than being a vehicle for technology transfer that will bring development to the rural areas is "...an opportunity that we have to make money, it is a

system to make money”, as it was expressed by one informant. Under these circumstances, as it is highlighted by Verma (2003, 38):

...while both workers and the sending country identified benefits to the program, the characterisation of those benefits may sometimes come into conflict. That is, the state's interest in the return of remittances may override the individual worker's grievances relating to his or her non-wage working conditions.

The objectives that Canada and Mexico have with respect to the SAWP can be better understood in their international context and economic situation which have lead them to adopt different policies towards migration. As it was analyzed in the literature review of this study due to the failure of the Mexican economy to create enough jobs peasants have no had more alternatives but to migrate. As it was mentioned in the literature review the dependency of both countries Canada and Mexico have augmented with respect to the United States. This is one of the NAFTA outcomes. Canada is highly dependent from the economic cycles of expansion and contraction of the U.S. due to a great percentage of the goods that Canada exports go to the U.S.

On the other hand, Mexico has become dependant on the imports that U.S. send to Mexico and to the remittances sent by Mexicans from abroad. Mexico has become a pool of cheap labour supply that sustains the processes of growth and expansion of some sectors of both the U.S. and Canada. Migration thus has constituted a strategy of development for Mexico while the border control of the U.S. and Canada has constituted a strategy to obtain a docile and cheap supply of labour force.

In this context both Mexico and Canada find SAWP a convenient vehicle to satisfy their needs. As it was mentioned by Verma (2003, 60) following Andre (1990) :

The current restrictions on migrant agricultural workers serve the employers' and the supply country's interests, but not the workers' interest. That is, employers receive a "reliable" labour supply and the supply country receives a "reliable" source of remittances.

As it is argued by Weston and Scarpa (2003, 1) employers consider the SAWP essential to keep the Canadian horticultural sector internationally competitive. One thousand and six hundred employers in Ontario and two hundred in Quebec now use the program, under which 18,146 workers came to Canada in 2001. Weston and Scarpa also noted that employers said that the SAWP has represented an important complement to the Canadian labour force. If the present trends towards the employment of migrant workers continue they could account in the future for a larger share of hours than the Canadian workers.

For Mexico it has been so important to preserve the SAWP that the country provides since May 2002 financial support of \$3,000.00 pesos to process the applications of first-time workers. In 2003, 2,341 workers received such support, which means \$7,023,000 pesos (around \$702,300 USD). In addition the MLSP received in the 2002 season \$23,396,454 pesos (\$2,339,645 USD). (Verduzco and Lozano 2004, January) The money that the government of Mexico spends can be considered as a subsidy for Canadian agriculture.

The SAWP is a system of temporary controlled migration. It is a system that reduces the worker's possibilities of permanent residence, by imposing various mechanisms of control. These include: 1) contracts tied to the same employer, 2) development of paternalistic relationships, 3) the evaluation letter, 4) black listing, 5) early repatriation that does not allow workers' ability to enforce their rights under the Employment Agreement or laws of Canada, (Basok 2002, Verma 2003, Preibisch), 6) competition

among the officers of the countries that participate in the SAWP (Verma 2003), 7) and competition among workers from different nationalities working in the same farm, as mentioned in the findings of this research. Another mechanism of control found in this study is that employers as a disciplinary measure punish the workers giving them less work hours or giving them some unpaid days off.

The system of circular migration allows farmers to use the wages comparison as one of the main motivations that Mexicans have to work in Canada. Mexicans come to Canada not only with aspirations of improving their material family conditions of life but also aspirations of social mobility in Mexico. As one of the informants said, “work in Mexico is only to survive and not to triumph”.

According with Massey, Durand, Malone (2002,16):

...the demand of flexible and cheap labour is also augmented by the social constrains of motivation. Employers need workers that do not care about the social status or prestige conferred to the work performed by them. Furthermore, workers perceived their work, as a mean to obtain a wage that in comparative terms is higher than in their homeland.

This study suggests that Mexicans trade-off the gain in Mexican social status with the loss of potential to gain social status in Canada. While in Canada their social status seems not to be as important for them as the money they earn, at home it means not only a way to solve material needs but also having made money in Canada will confer on them a high social status. However, research evidence showed that despite the narrow spectrum of labour mobility that Mexicans have in Canadian farms, there is a well-delineated division of activities perceived to be of higher or lower status. And Mexicans compete for them.

Having as a framework of reference the international context in which the SAWP takes place I will discuss how the five categories of human security in the life of Mexicans who come to Canada and in Las Nubes are impacted. The separation of the dimensions of human security is made to facilitate their analysis. However, it is important to remark that these dimensions are systemically interrelated.

5.1 Economic security.

This study found that remittances are one of the outcomes of the SAWP that has the major impact in the life of the migrants in Canada and their communities as in Las Nubes. The conditions of economic insecurity obligate Mexicans to migrate. Las Nubes provides a good example of the circumstances faced in a rural community that obligates their members to migrate. As it was mentioned in the analysis of Mexico, NAFTA has affected all types of agricultural producers. On one hand, agricultural imports especially corn have left the national competitive producers out of the market. On the other hand, this collapse has affected peasants by reducing the levels of agricultural employment (Garcia 2002, 2). Thus, the model of development that Mexico is following and its integration in the NAFTA has increased the levels of economic insecurity for the population.

The informants of this research are either landless peasants or peasants who oriented their production to self-consumption. Those who in the past commercialized their products, who could be situated between the third and fourth category mentioned in the table 3, were obligated to trim their operations because they were no longer cost-effective.

Obtaining employment in Canada helps to mitigate their economic needs but does not represent the attainment of economic security. The mechanisms of recruitment and operation of the SAWP often put Mexicans in a very vulnerable situation that exposes them to insecure working and living conditions, as the evidences of this research and other studies pointed out (Basok 2002; Prebisch 2003; Verma 2003).

In addition to the control mechanisms already mentioned there is a legal vacuum that exists for the protection of agricultural employment and labour rights in Ontario (Basok 2002, Satzewich 1991). As part of the recruitment process the HIV test that is performed to Mexicans before coming to Canada was also a motive of preoccupation among informants. It is unknown weather they are receiving counselling before to be tested of HIV and what could be the outcome in the case they test positive. As the study by Merck Sharp and Dohme points out it is important to have psychological counselling as an integral part of the process of the HIV test due to the intense emotional reactions it can cause. People need adequate preparation in case they test positive and those who have a negative result need information about how to prevent and reduce the risk of being infected in the future.

(http://www.msd.com.mx/content/patients/sida/teprueba_print.html retrieved June 22, 2004)

In addition to the mechanisms of the recruitment process that renders Mexican agricultural workers in a very vulnerable situation, Mexicans are exposed to the flexible regime of work imposed in Canadian farms. As the evidences of this research support, they can have very long journeys of work or only few work hours this issue has been also

studied by different researchers (Basok 2002; Prebisch 2000 ; Verduzco and Lozano 2003; Gibb 2002).

As it has been highlighted by Venegas (2003) the workers live permanently in the farms and do not have freedom of movement. Thus, employers can take advantage of the availability of labour force in any moment because the work processes must give continuity for the technologies used. In the greenhouse it is possible to work all the time, even if its raining. In some farms packaging facilities and crop fields are in the same location, so people can work all day and during the night.

The informants considered 10 hours of work everyday as the minimum amount of work hours that make their trip to Canada worthwhile. It is 50% more hours than the work schedule of 40 hours. It is noteworthy that they do not receive higher pay for the extra-work hours. Moreover, as the research findings indicate those informants who have come to Canada for the shortest periods of time are more exposed to being exploited because they will try to take the maximum advantage of the short period of time while they stay in Canada. However, the agricultural work in Mexico also demands hard work and long hours of work. The findings of this study suggest the hypothesis that Mexicans also trade off a low paid exploitation or self-exploitation as peasants in Mexico with better-paid exploitation in Canadian farms.

The payment structure --being paid by piece rate or by hours having to accomplish a production goal-- and the social organisation of work are two situations that contribute to enhance farm productivity, even if it is done at the expense of the workers' exploitation.

This study found that in Las Nubes the economic impact of the participants of the SWAP is relatively insignificant because it is a small group of Mexicans who work in Canada. However, it was reported in Las Nubes that local businesses sell more merchandise thanks to the money that migrants bring. To completely assess this category in Las Nubes it would be necessary to distinguish between the money of migrants from the U.S. and from Canada.

Remittances helped the respondents to mitigate conditions of economic insecurity mainly at the nuclear and extended family level. As it was found in this study and other studies (Basok 2000 and 2002; Quintero 2003; Verduzco and Lozano 2004) remittances are mainly spent on family consumption food, clothing, education and health care. In Las Nubes those who owned or shared a piece of land spent part of the remittances in buying agricultural inputs a stipend were also reported in the Basok and Quintero studies.

In Las Nubes, the investments of remittances help to reinforce the household system of survival strategies of the migrants. The investments in cows and land do not surpass the level of subsistence. If the informants were to invest in growing crops to sell them in the market they would face the same difficulties that peasants have had to compete with the prices of imported crops and frozen meat in local markets. This situation was mentioned by the informants as a one of the causes that obligates them to migrate. As it was reported in the findings the possibilities for decreasing the cost of the agricultural inputs by owning a tractor instead of renting it or having the means to pasteurise their milk to add value to it could be done through organisations of producers that up to now do not exist in Las Nubes.

Basok (2000a) in her study that analyses the obstacles that participants of the SAWP face to invest in productive activities highlighted similar scenarios as the one found in Las Nubes. In addition to the structural factors that the Mexican agriculture is facing she mentioned two more factors including the absence of males from the households. This is a fact that can be linked to the absence of cooperatives or organisations of producers and the criteria that are used to select the participants in the SAWP in relation to their low levels of education and the impoverishment conditions of their communities of origin. This situation gives, as a result a low potential among the workers to invest in remittances productively. Moreover, another study conducted by Basok (2003b) in reference to the acquisition of land as a mean of productive investment, established that Mexicans who participate in the SAWP are more likely to acquire unirrigated marginal land in the worst endowed communities, a fact that would hardly allow them to grow crops to be sold in the market.

An informant said that people are abandoning agricultural activities for other activities with which they could earn money. On one hand, an informant talked about the need to buy a piece of land for his sons and encourage them to become campesinos “If they do not study”. On the other hand, he sees the need to give education to his sons to make it easier for them to find a job in the factories because “in factories they give preference to those who study”. This situation as it is described by Calva (1993) leads to the collapse of the way of life of people of rural areas (*Spanish: el derrumbe del modo de vida de los hombres del campo*). Thus, this fact is related to one of the dimensions of economic security that is oriented towards the access to the community resources.

The time that the informants from Las Nubes needed to invest their money in productive activities has been summarized in the table 7. In Basok's study (2000, 91) those who went to Canada an average of 8.4 years were those who invested their remittances in productive activities. Verduzco and Lozano (2004, 12) pointed out that Mexicans have to go to Canada at least 10 consecutive years to allow them to accumulate money to make other expenditures rather than directing their remittances only towards their self-consumption.

The reproduction of the labour force takes place in Las Nubes. In some families the reproduction of the labour force is achieved at the cost of the exploitation of the members of the household. In this case, the role of some women was outstanding. In addition that they have to do all their everyday household activities to help their husbands in the fields and also sew clothes to earn an extra income.

The research findings support the perception that the informants who come to Canada mitigate the effects of the poverty in Mexico (Verduzco and Lozano 2004, 13) by increasing the insecurity of other aspects of their life while they are in Canada. In Las Nubes, the economic security is not being strengthened through the participation of Mexicans in the SAWP. The neoliberal policies applied in the agricultural sector have increased the vulnerability. The option of being a peasant is disappearing and with this the access to the resources of the communities is also disappearing. Following the dimension of environmental security will be discussed.

5.2 Environmental security.

This section covers the impact in the environmental security dimension of the life of the informants while in Canada and the community Las Nubes. This study confirmed some of health risks that have been already assessed by different researchers (Colby 1997, Basok 2002, 2003a, 2003b; Sullivan 2002; Verduzco and Lozano 2004; Prebisch 2004). Issues related to the health of migrant workers not mentioned in this study and mentioned by Sullivan (2002) are: 1) traumatic and repetitive injuries from work, 2) HIV and other STDs transmitted to migrant workers from soliciting prostitutes, 3) Cycling accidents and 4) infectious diseases from crowded living conditions. However, Sullivan (2002) and Henestrosa (2003) considered the health care in Canada satisfactory. The evidences of this study confirm it but also provide the insights of other informants who perceived maltreatment, racism and the fact that doctors diminish the importance of their health problems. Moreover, as Preibisch's (2003 3) pointed out " ...the research ... heard allegations that doctors have colluded with employers to avoid compensation claims".

Three outstanding aspects of the framework operation of the SAWP that put at risk the health of the Mexicans are the lack of protection of agricultural employment and labour rights in Ontario, the absence of formal training in Canadian farms and the absence of formal programs in both places Mexico and Canada to assist migrant workers in their special needs concerning with their health. The first two issues are also mentioned by different researchers (Basok 2002; Verduzco and Lozano 2003, 10; Prebisch 2003).

Moreover, this study found that those informants who lived in Little Town were more vulnerable than those who lived in Leamington since the former group depended entirely

from the will of their employer to be taken to the hospital. Informants from Little Town do not have any centre or source of information to learn how to protect themselves from the pesticide exposure or other illnesses related to their stay in Canada.

In Las Nubes the environmental security was mainly related to the preoccupation that people have with respect to illnesses that result from pesticide exposure. There is a perception of health risk and illnesses that the informants had had as a result of their exposure to pesticides. On the positive side remittances have improved the nutrition of the family and have allowed to afford the medical expenses.

With the findings of this study and other research it is clear that the system of the SAWP, technologies and operations of Canadian farms represent a threat for the health of Mexicans working in Canada. The lack of information that Mexicans have about how to prevent STDs and HIV while they are in Canada is also a potential threat for families in Mexico. As Sullivan (2002) argued “while allowing industrious individuals to improve their lives financially, it is a tragedy when it entails risks to one’s personal health or influences the spread of a deadly disease”.

This research did not explore the issues related to the maintenance of a sustainable environment. The issues concerned with the mental health will be analysed in the next section of culture.

5.3 Cultural security

Temporary migration to Canada has been adopted as a survival strategy to cope with the economic insecurity that the informants experienced in Mexico. Such survival strategy

situates migrant farm workers in a very vulnerable situation. Their “permanent temporality” of working in Canada year by year defines them as a “sojourners” it is “as one who is mentally oriented toward the home country, though spending most of their life abroad” (Watson 1977, quoted by Scott and Scott and Stumpf 1989, 4). The research findings suggest that informants are torn in two. When they expressed their aspirations the majority of them said they would like to have a good job in Mexico to be with their families. What they miss the most is their families and the food. Their worries and stressful events are always related to two places: Canada and Mexico. Not having their families in Canada they are unable to express their roles as husbands or fathers. In the case of women they are less able to express their role as mothers.

In order to make of migration a useful survival strategy they need to learn in Canada a set of know-hows related to their everyday life needs, their job performance, and explicit and implicit norms. As the time passes and they learn how to survive in Canada they accumulate what it is defined by Van Hear (1998, 51) as “migratory cultural capital”.

In this study it was remarkable the different levels of vulnerability among first time migrants and Mexicans who have had previous migration experiences (even if they came for the first time to Canada) and those who have been coming to Canada for several years. The absence of introductory programs of information, assistance and community support to help them in their adaptation to Canada situates them in very stressful situations. The informants commented that they feel that they came to Canada “with bands across their eyes” as if they were “blind people”. Verduzco and Lozano (2004, 3) highlighted that more than three fourths of the Mexicans that they interviewed received

information before their trips to Canada about the types of jobs they would do in Canada, the rules of behaviour on the farms, and the rights of the workers. However, none of the Mexicans they interviewed could tell them what their rights are while in Canada. They did not mention it but it is quite likely that Mexicans neither received information that could prepare them for how they could expect to feel arriving in Canada.

Language is one of the issues that causes preoccupation and anxiety for the Mexican farm workers when they need to communicate their essential needs, socialise and performed their job. Their poor language skills is one more factor that isolates them from the Canadian society and makes them more vulnerable. Cultberson (<http://home.snu.edu/hculbert.fs/shock.htm> retrieved July 31, 2004) said that the refusal to learn the language of the host country is one of the characteristics of “culture shock”.

During the process of acquisition of “migratory cultural capital” Mexicans pass through a process of cultural adjustment known as “culture shock” (Oberg 1960 quoted by Scott & Scott and Stumpf 1989, 16). Their life in the new country is full of encounters with stressful life events that are new or unexpected. The findings of this study recorded three moments of the W graphic that Dodd (1998, 159) uses to represent the stages of the “culture shock”. The informants illustrated the first stage as a moment of euphoria in which they had high expectations about their life in Canada. As Enrique said: “I always dreamed about these places since I was a child”, Jacinto got excited when he knew the Canadian dollars. Jose was very happy for having the opportunity to travel in an airplane. In their arrival to Canada the informants related that they found difficulties and that “everything was different from Mexico”. The second stage is described as a depressive

moment by Dodd (1998, 159) it is when the informants commented that after their arrival in Canada they saw “that everything was different from Mexico”. They felt that they were not prepared to face the challenges of their new life. They felt helpless, as Jacinto commented:

First, you do not know the type of job. You are not used to preparing your own food in Mexico. Here, you suffer because you do not know how to cook. You do not know the place, you came with the bandage in the eyes, you do not know what is up, you are coming [here] to work and that is all. He commented that once you arrive to Canada: there is nobody who helps you. If your paisanos lend you a hand it is fine if not you are in *las mismas*.

The third moment is identified by Dodd (1998, 159) as the rebuilding moment in which “most of us emerge back into a level of higher satisfaction having learned from the pain of dissatisfaction how to see the good and the bad in the new culture and therefore how to adjust”. I identified this moment with the conformity that Mexicans expressed about their life once they get to know how the system operates- in Canada. When they understand how the Canadian system works they already know the expectations that they can have and how they have to behave. This answer coincides with the reactive responses that people use as coping strategies that are identified by Cultberson (<http://home.snu.edu/hculbert.fs/shock.htm>) (retrieved July 31, 2004). The reactive responses that Cultberson enumerate are to criticise, to rationalise and to withdraw. According to him these responses have as a result alienation and isolation.

They learn that they come to Canada to work and under this premise other dimensions of their person are subjugated to their condition of workers. The fragmentation of their life results in alienation of their existence in Canada. Their life in Canada and the work they

do are instrumental to achieve the economic betterment and the goals that they have planned to achieve.

They learn that in order to preserve their jobs in Canada – a survival strategy for their families in Mexico and their opportunity for social mobility– they have to conform and follow the explicit and implicit rules. Through the different messages that they receive their existence as workers is confirmed while their existence as human beings is not confirmed. If they call to the consulate to complain a common answer that they receive is: “You do not worry, you only work”. Informants express that here in Canada “you only have to work and that is it”. “The farmer is interested in us to work and to take care of the products”. They also said that “You are not coming to have fun or visit different places, you are coming to Canada to work”. Moreover, when an informant who came to Canada for the first time was talking about how difficult his new life was he repeated this six times during the interview. “So what can you do, we are here to work”. The consideration of the SAWP as a system for making remittances that solve the problem of reliable work force for Canadian farms limits the existence of Mexicans to their role of workers. The process of the culture shock is not linear, it is an iterative process that can be repeated many times. This research only documented the first three stages. However, it is known that in addition to the culture shock suffered by migrants in the host countries the re-entry process to their community of origin causes levels of stress similar to the cultural shock already experienced (Dodd 1998, 167).

The informants showed attitudes of self-confidence and empowerment despite the difficulties that they experienced in Canada. They commented with pride that in Canada

they learned “how to trust in ourselves and to keep ahead”, they learned that to stay in Canada “was not impossible”, they expressed that “they came to Canada following a dream and that they are achieving it”. There is a trade-off and a cost that they are willing to assume being in Canada for the benefits that they see in the future in Mexico. While in Canada the informants said they can feel depressed but when they receive their pay cheques, they are happy to know that their families have the means to afford their basic needs and that they can hope to have a better life. As Jacinto commented: “My life here in Mexico is fine. We are with our dearest ones. There in Canada one feels depressed but happy about earning money. Here [in Mexico] one is ‘rejudido’ (without money) and there one gets enthusiastic about making money”.

According to the study of Guendelman and Perez-Itriago (1987) they suggest that the seasonal lifestyle of migrants is made up of trade-offs. Temporary migration has two functions. First, migrants obtain a job and higher wages than in their country. Second, migrants obtain social prestige, strengthen their self-esteem, and are able to perform their roles as providers. The hard time that they pass away from their families and community is compensated by the affective refuelling that they receive in their arrival to their community of origin and for the material achievements. Moreover, Guendelman and Perez-Itriago suggest, “trips across the border seem to enhance men’s standing in the eyes of the family and peer networks”. (p.710) The possibility of being able to do something to improve their situation at home empowers them even if they have to bear difficult situations while abroad. In Las Nubes Mexicans who have gone to Canada are perceived examples to follow because others can see that they are progressing, they are invited to participate in town festivities and to be the godfathers in family celebrations.⁸⁰

By coming to Canada Mexican farm workers are exposed to mental illnesses as one response to acculturation as some researchers have identified. (Scott W., Scott R. and Stumpf 1989, 17). They use various coping strategies that in some cases put their health at risk. I found that most of the time their coping mechanisms are mainly related to endurance which is facilitated by the psychological division that they make of their two worlds. They rationalize their staying in Canada as a reactive coping strategy (Cultberson (<http://home.snu.edu/hculbert.fs/shock.htm>) (retrieved July 31, 2004). Rationalize means “to defend, explain, clear away, or make excuses for by reasoning”. (<http://www.hyperdictionary.com/search.aspx?define=rationalize++>) (retrieved July 31, 2004) As Enrique commented in the interviews: “Our mind is very powerful and maintain us close of our dearest ones. We are coming here pursuing a dream and we are going to get it”. The psychological mechanism that it is determined by the nature of the cyclical migration offers to Mexicans the possibility of the eternal return to Mexico. Mexicans who have come to Canada year after year for up to 7 months each year in reality spend more time in Canada than in Mexico. Their orientations and motivations are directed towards their lives in Mexico but once they are in Mexico they are looking forward to go back to Canada to continue working to earn the money needed by their families.

The prevalent migration and the lives of the migrant workers torn in two is related to the cycle of transmigration known as the migrant syndrome a term coined by Reichert (1981) quoted by Basok (2002).

It seems as if the life of temporary migrants cannot be a complete one. On one hand, informants said that they would like to be in Mexico but they cannot stay due to the fact that they are worried about having a job to maintain their families. On the other hand being in Canada they miss their family but are reassured because they are earning money. Thus they suffer from alienation, from having the feeling of not belonging. Next the dimension of social security will be explored.

5.4 Social security.

The social networks of support explained in the framework can be explained as if they were in a scheme of three concentric circles interlinked. At the core of such scheme are the relationships among co-workers living in the same farm in Canada. In the second concentric circle are the relationships among Mexicans of different farms. In the third are the relationships of the Mexicans with their receiving communities and the institutions of social support that exist or do not exist for them.

This study found that the mechanisms of control that threatened the future participation of the Mexicans in the SAWP create high levels of distrust among co-workers who live in the same farm and this destroys the solidarity among them. These mechanisms help employers to obtain a high productivity from the Mexican labour or as Venegas (2003) points out this is the super exploitation of small groups. The research findings clearly presented how the behaviour and solidarity among co-workers differed between a whole group of Mexicans who came for the first time to Canada and a mixed group of Mexicans with and without seniority and are new. While in the first group they show high levels of solidarity and desires to help each other in the second group the learning processes of the

Canadian system had had its effects in the power relationships and ways that they find to preserve their jobs. The informant commented: “In this system you can not trust everybody” “it is difficult to trust in each other because there is always a person who wants to please el patron”. This situation reflects a social disorder called anomie:

...[a] sociological term –in which common values have been submerged in the welter of private interests seeking satisfaction by virtually any means which are effective. Drawn from a highly competitive, segmented urban society our informants live in a climate of reciprocal distrust which, to say the least, is not conducive to stable relationships... The very same society that produces this sense of alienation and estrangement generates in many a craving for reassurance... (Merton 1946, 143 quoted by Seeman 1970, 381)

Due to the long work journeys, transportation constraints, physical dispersion of the farms, and prohibitions of some employers who do not allow visitors in the farms, the socialisation among Mexicans of different farms takes place mainly during the shopping days in the outreach places mentioned in the methodology chapter. While these spaces give them the opportunity of exchange greetings, rumours and news it is unlikely that the coincidental encounters lead them to the creation of friendship that allows them to create social support among them. The relationships among Mexicans and co-workers of other nationalities are undermined by the competition that some employers encourage. Moreover, some of the local immigrants do not perceive Mexicans positively because they think that Mexicans came to Canada to take their jobs. In addition, the communication among each other is difficult because of the language barriers and in some farms Mexicans never work with people of other countries.

While in Leamington there are different institutions to support Mexicans in Little Town no service directed to Mexicans was found. There is only Spanish mass once a week.

Basok (2003, 12) pointed out that Mexicans are isolated from the rest of the Canadian communities and that their participation in the society is reduced to their role as consumers and producers. She argues that Mexicans have been “denied membership in local communities, Mexican migrant workers are thus also denied knowledge and resources required to exercise the legal rights granted to them by the Canadian state”.

(p.18) The institutional support needed by Mexicans from the Consulate is poor. Verma (2003) argued that “the Mexican consulate currently lacks resources to effectively manage the administration of the program. There were 7,633 Mexican workers under the CSAWP in Ontario in 2002 and only five Mexican officers and some volunteers to serve them”. In addition as Verma (2003, xvi) pointed out: “the ‘dual’ role of [the consulate officers] as diplomats and worker representatives, which creates potential for conflict of interest and may undermine the independent representation of workers”.

The social life and recreation activities for Mexicans are very limited. Almost all their interactions are always among men. The absence of social commitments (Basok 2002) provoke that the alternative use of time while the Mexicans are not working, as Nef (2004, personal communication) observes has a zero value. That is why informants said that they preferred to work part of the Sunday or the whole Sunday instead of thinking about their families or getting bored. Any value superior to 0 is a benefit. There are no children around except for the children of their employers and there are few or no Mexican women working in the area. For women the socialization in a predominantly male population conditioned their social life. As one informant said: “I only go outside if I go with my friends or a male partner who could take care of me”.

In regard to social security Mexicans are constantly exposed to racism as related in the findings and they are not allowed to bargain collectively or go out on make strike.

Moreover, solidarity and trust among co-workers is undermined by the mechanisms of control of the SAWP. In the political section this mechanism will be discussed further.

In Las Nubes, the same three categories of analysis were used to assess social capital. It was found that the family as a nucleus of the social fabric is disturbed by the migration of a family member. In Las Nubes, women live with the constant fear of being abandoned by their husbands and children suffer from the separation of their fathers or mothers. In Canada, informants commented that a situation that causes them stress is the fear of being abandoned by their wives. Informants who live in Las Nubes do not have any association or informal groups of migrants who come to Canada. The social networks in this experience of controlled migration as it is mentioned by Basok (2003b), Verduzco (2003) and Quintero (2003) are determined in the community of origin and are more likely to exist among relatives. Differently from the experience of the U.S., the emergence of what Delgado and Ramirez (2001, 1) have called “the collective migrant “ have not taken place in Las Nubes. Delgado and Ramirez as describe the “collective migrant” as:

the highest level and relatively permanent migrant organizations which function on a binational basis fostering both social and cultural solidarity between Mexicans and their hometown constituency with mutual social, political and economic benefits.

Only two informants, who were living in the community for one year or more without go to Canada, belong to organisations of peasants. These organisations are very important to foster and maintain microeconomic projects.

In regards of the levels of trust and support that Mexicans from Las Nubes found in town the common answer was that everybody looks after their own needs.

In conclusion, the long periods of absence and the recruitment process of the SAWP do not allow the creation of the social organisations of peasants or of the “collective migrant” in Canada and Mexico respectively. Moreover, the situation of the Mexicans in the countryside is worsening as a result of the discriminatory neoliberal policies adopted that are directed to favour the 15% of producers that are in a condition to be in the market. Furthermore, by all the mechanisms of control imposed through the SAWP the potential solidarity and organisational capacity of Mexicans to form social capital is systematically undermined. Thus, this study suggests that the participation of Mexicans in the SAWP is not reinforcing the levels of social security of Las Nubes.

5.5 Political security.

This category will be discussed according to eight indicators that Hashemi, Schuler and Riley (1996) used to assess the empowerment of individuals and groups.

- 1) Economic security. If there is no economic security there is not politic security. As it has been discussed Mexicans have to leave the country due to the prevalent conditions of insecurity.
- 2) Freedom from domination and violence. Given the mechanisms of control imposed in the SAWP and the explicit and implicit rules that govern this experience Mexicans are exposed to the power that their employers and co-workers with seniority can exert over them.

- 3) Relative mobility. The evidence of this research indicated that there exists a determined ratio of action reported by the informants. Ratio of action is understood as the maximum distance that Mexicans can go by their own means. Typically their main transportation is the bicycle so their mobility is limited to the largest distance that they can bike. In this study it was reported to be about 45 minutes of biking what it is the equivalent of 20-25 kilometres approximately. Their mobility is also constrained by other factors such as not having the option to get an airplane in any moment due to the regulations of the SAWP, its cost, the retention of both the passport and payment. The last two issues were reported to have happened to two and one acquaintances of the informants respectively. While the access of public transportation in Leamington is more accessible in Little Town it is constrained by its cost and availability.
- 4) Ability to make purchases on one's own. This is the only indicator that is positive in the indicators of empowerment about the experience of Mexicans in Canada. Their wages gives them the possibilities of not only to purchase things that they could not have in Mexico but also to help them to improve the material conditions of their family. This indicator is particularly important for women who are being used to not receiving a wage for their domestic activities in Mexico where they receive little money for their work.
- 5) Political and legal awareness. Mexicans who go to Canada do not know their rights and are more likely to show attitudes of powerlessness to the problems that they face everyday. The way in which informants commented on how their situation can improve were focused in external factors to them as the increasing of

wages and changes in the attitudes of farmers. Only two informants said that their situation in Canada could improve by unity and solidarity among Mexicans. Moreover, the impediments highlighted by Friedland (1981,359-36) to the development of consciousness among agricultural workers in the U.S. are the same found in Canada. They are a) the maintenance of oversupply of labour, b) systematic use of coercion, c) the exceptional character of American agriculture, this is that agricultural workers were exempted from coverage of the National Labour Relations act for minimum wages and social security until the 1970's. In Canada for agricultural workers, as it is pointed out by Verma (2003), there is a "legal vacuum that exists for the protection of agricultural employment and labour rights in Ontario" d) Geographical mobility. Related to the dispersion of the population and temporality e) Social mobility. In spite of the fact that the reference of the author is about the social mobility of the migrant workers to other jobs in the U.S., thinking about the situation in Canada, the promised social mobility that Mexicans are looking by coming to Canada can contribute as Friedland remarked to retarding one's consciousness. And I also add f) the competence to obtain hierarchy and status in the work even that the hierarchical spectrum is very narrow.

- 6) Participation. The social participation of Mexican migrant worker is limited and their possibilities of solidarity and unity are undermined through of the control mechanisms exerted.

- 7) Political campaigning. Mexicans in their migratory status do not have any influence in the politics of the country. They cannot vote for candidates that could look for improving their conditions (Verma 2003).
- 8) Public protests. Regarding the public protest which occurred in 2001, illustrated by Basok(2002, 147) the mechanisms of control of the SAWP prevent Mexicans to protest in public. If they do it they can be repatriated immediately.

Given the situation in the rural areas of Las Nubes, as is argued by Friedman (1981, 361), informants are more concerned with escaping the crisis via urban and international migration than dealing with the difficult internal conditions and or asking the government to change its neoliberal policies towards the agricultural sector. The formation of their political consciousness is delayed because the informants are searching for social mobility. While informants talk about improvements or changes of policies that the government has to do they do not see the way in which they as peasants could make it happen.

Thus, the political security of the peasants as a group is not strengthened through the participation of the informants of Las Nubes in the SAWP. Their absence from their towns undermines their participation in the community and consequently the political influence they could have.

CHAPTER SIX

6 CONCLUSIONS

The free market driven economies have established unequal relations of commercial exchange among countries. NAFTA is a good example of an integration process in which a low-income country, such as Mexico, becomes a pool of cheap and reliable labour force for high-income countries, chiefly Canada and the U.S. While the processes of commercial integration are producing conditions of insecurity in the population of Mexico that entices them to migrate to U.S. and Canada these countries are employing that labour force to sustain and expand the operations of different economic sectors, as it is the case of the agricultural sector in this study. While the policies of international trade promote the free flow of capital and goods across the world they do not promote the same freedom and fluidity of movement for people (Stalker: 2000, Castles and Miller, 1998).

SAWP is acting as a subsidy for both the Canadian agricultural sector in expansion and small and medium farms that without the availability of labour force would not survive in the economic environment regulated by the free market. The subsidies consisted on the expenses that Mexican authorities incur to maintain the SAWP in Mexico, the money that the Mexican farm workers spend during the process of recruitment, and the availability of “unfree,” reliable, flexible and docile work force.

The system of migratory guest workers program, rather than being a vehicle to transfer technology that will contribute to the rural development of Las Nubes is used by the informants as a survival strategy, “as a system to make money”. It is clear that Canada is the country, which obtains more benefits as a result of the skills, abilities, and work

attitudes that Mexicans bring to Canada, specialized through the years that they participate in the SAWP.

The participation of the Mexicans in the SAWP is oriented to administer the risks and vulnerabilities that are the result of the human insecurity lived by the majority of the population in the rural areas of Mexico. While the participation of the informants in the SAWP impacted for the most part the economic dimension of the human security by strengthening the survival strategies of the households (as observed in Las Nubes) it is also observed that other dimensions of human security were sacrificed in order to attain such economic benefits. In our case study, the economic benefits have not impacted the development of the town given the fact that there is a small number of people who have come to Canada and most of the remittances have favoured the family's members.

The spending of remittances in the rubrics of health and education are remarkable contributions to the well being of the families. However, such contributions highlight the inability of the Mexican government to provide these services to the population; this is so despite the fact that in theory at least health and education services are provided by the government without cost.

Given the viability of migration as a survival strategy, people from Las Nubes are abandoning agricultural activities. The prolonged absence of the informants from their communities in this case study from Las Nubes, undermines their organizational capacity either to protest for the neoliberal policies applied to the agricultural sector or to join forces to initiate micro economic productive projects. Women and children left behind suffer from the separation of their family.

In Canada, the informants of this study have been exposed to different risks relating to their health, social life, culture and political vulnerability. The fact that the informants have the opportunity to work in Canada and earn a significant amount of money compared to the low wages in Mexico is an empowering situation that gives them prestige in their home town and allows them to meet the basic needs of their families. However, their participation in the SAWP does not necessarily mean that their conditions of economic insecurity are significantly reduced; rather, a trade-off of insecurities tends to occur. The recruitment processes, the mechanisms of control, and the workplace itself expose them to insecure living conditions, this in addition to be subjected to long and often exploitative schedules of work. The mechanisms of control imposed by the framework under the SAWP is operating allows the intensification of the labour processes and productivity that reach levels of super exploitation of the workers. The exploitation of the Mexican farm workers as it was define for themselves consist on being forced to work at their maximum capacity, “to have to perform the job of two days in one day”.

The exploitation of the labour force is facilitated by the technological systems in which the social relationships among workers are shaped by the explicit and implicit norms of control. Such norms create an environment of hierarchical positions of competition and prevalent distrust that undermines the solidarity and mutual help among co-workers.

Mexicans while in Canada face serious obstacles to receiving proper medical attention and their health is in constant risk due to the abovementioned unsafe working conditions, exposure to pesticides, coping strategies that damage their health, and the proclivity to

remaining silent while they are suffering illnesses or injuries, for fear to be sent back to Mexico. The cultural adaptation of the informants while they are in Canada is subjected to the inhibition of most of the dimensions of their humanity. They learned that they are in Canada to work and that is it.

In regards to their security in the social sphere, Mexicans are constantly exposed to racism. They do not receive the same payment that Canadians receive to perform the same job, they are mistreated and in some farms they never work with people of other nationalities. Their relations with the people of the receiving communities are characterized by little or no personal contact. In spite of the fact that in Leamington there are different institutions dedicated to assist migrant workers in need, such organizations are still insufficient. Undoubtedly, more organizations such as the UFCW (United Farm and Commercial Workers Union) are needed to help them to defend their rights. In one case, however, those informants who worked in Little Town did not have any kind of service or social support from the community.

I suggest that despite the fact that circular migration constitutes a survival practice that allows migrant workers to manage the risks associated with some of the conditions of human insecurity, on the whole this coping mechanism does not deal with the structural causes of such insecurity. If suddenly, the option to migrate seasonally were eliminated there would be no option but to face the dysfunctional and unresolved circumstances present in rural Mexico.

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APPENDIX A

Semi-structured Interviews Questionnaire #1

English version.

1. Name
2. Have you been interviewed before?
3. Age
4. Scholar level
5. Is you married, divorced or widow?
6. Community of origin? Data will be coded.
7. Number of sons and daughters
8. Family that live with your spouse and sons and daughters
9. Occupation in Mexico
10. Which process did you follow to come to Canada?
11. How many years do you have working in Canada?
12. Is any year in which you did not come?
13. How many months do you work in Canada each year?
14. Which works have you been doing in Canada?
15. Have you work with fertilizers and pesticides in Canada? Did you work with them in Mexico before?
16. How many years have you been working for the same farmer?
17. What have you learned about management of farms, here in Canada?
18. What knowledge or skills learned here use in Mexico?
19. Have you worked in U.S.A. before?
20. Could you tell me about the first time that you came to Canada?
21. What did you learn?
22. How is the environment in the farm in which you work?
23. How is the work organized?
24. Are different work positions in the farm?
25. Are more workers from your community working in the same farm?
26. How is the relationship with your fellow workers?
27. How is the relationship with the farmer?
28. Do you go to the Spanish mass every Sunday?
29. When you have problems, how do you solve it? Who helped you?
30. Have you ever been sick or injured? How did you get better?
31. What do you do with the money that you earn here?
32. Do you save some of your money?
33. Could you describe me a normal day of your work?
34. Could you describe me days of a lot of work?
35. How would you like to be your life?
36. What do you miss from Mexico?
37. What do you do in your free time in Canada?
38. Which places do you know from Canada?
39. Where did you buy your bicycle?

40. Where do you buy your food?
41. How do you send the money to Mexico?
42. How much English have you learned?
43. How do you communicate with the farmer?
44. Do you realize some agricultural activities in your community? Which?
45. Do you have any land to cultivate?
46. Do you have cows or sheep?
47. Have you applied some of the knowledge acquired in Canada in Mexico?
48. Have you teach to the people of your community some of the skills and abilities learned in Canada?
49. If you could find work in Mexico Would you like to stay there instead to come to Canada?
50. Do you have friends in the farm where you work?
51. Do you have some friends working in other farms here?
52. How is your life in your community of origin?
53. How do the people of your community receive you after being in Canada?

Thank you for your participation.

APPENDIX B

Focus Group and group interviews.

- 1- What have you learned during all the years working in Canada?
- 2- Did you find any practical use of this knowledge in Mexico?
- 3- What was your previous job in Mexico?
- 4- Did you apply some of your skills and knowledge from Mexico in Canada?
- 5- What kind of activities do you do in your community in Mexico?
- 6- Do your family and friends learned something from your experience in Canada?
- 7- Have your friends and you exchanged the knowledge acquired in Canada?
- 8- What is for you the most important learning in Canada?
- 9- What would you like to learn?
- 10- If you could begin a business in Mexico what would you like to do?
- 11- What can you do to improve the situation of Mexicans in Canada?
- 12- What can you do to improve the situation of your community?
- 13- What do you want to communicate to others?

APPENDIX C

Table 9. Differences between the Canadian and the Mexican System.

	CANADA	MEXICO
1) AGRICULTURAL TECHNIQUES.	The plant grows in a closed environment in a sponge. We plant in a cone.	The plants grow in the open field and in the soil. We use the <i>yunta</i> to prepare the soil.
Greenhouses – Open field	The tomato grows with heating.	Here the tomato grows naturally.
Irrigation	The farms and greenhouses have irrigation.	In Mexico we have rain feed plots.
Machinery	Canada is more developed for the machinery.	In Mexico I use the pale and hoe.
Fertilizers	Here without chemicals the plant does not grow	In Mexico we do not use a lot of fertilizer.
Growing of crops	The corn grows between 2.5 months and 3 months.	The corn grows in 7 months approximately. We plow in March and harvest on September.
2) GOVERNAMENTAL SUPPORT	Here I see that if el patron do not have money he goes to the bank requests it and obtains it. That he wants to buy a car or a tractor. The same the bank supports him The farmers go to the bank and immediately obtain money for they needs.	We are no subjects of credit in Mexico.
3) MARKET SIZE.	In Canada you have to pack the product.	The product goes directly to the market.
4) WORK ORGANIZATION		
Hierarchy	Who have seniority tell us what to do. I do not believe that it can change.	N/A
Number of hours	The system is: if there is work you work, if there is no job you do not work.	See ownership of the work.
Rhythm of the work	The rhythm of the work is quicker and there is no breaks.	In Mexico you work at your rhythm and while they see you working nobody complains to you.
Ownership of the work	In Canada they demand us to work the time that they believe that it is necessary, 13 or 15 hours.	Here I am not a hired worker. I work my own land. I can work from 8 until 10 hours or more if I am in a hurry.
4) SOCIALIZATION		
Use of the time	In Canada you only work all the time.	In Mexico you have time to hangout with your friends, play soccer or go around.

Relations among co-workers	In this system you cannot trust in everybody	In Mexico we have more fellowship.
Health	If you are healthy in Canada it is very good. If you get sick the send you to Mexico. There is like that.	N/A
5) PAYMENT	We are paid by hours Who go to Canada works the same as here [in Mexico] the only difference is that here [in Mexico] they earn the minimum that is 80 pesos per day.	We are paid by day

END NOTES

CHAPTER TWO. PROBLEM STATEMENT.

- ¹ According to Vanegas (2000, 324), in the strict sense of the international right, this memorandum is not an international agreement. It is an administrative intergovernmental agreement. It is an agreement of the two wills of the countries that is subject to annual revisions and that can be modified through consultations and approvals of both governments.
2. The document of Basok quoted by Preisbich does not have a date.
3. Information obtained via e-mail with Tom Beach.
- ⁴ “También el valor es el motivo de la acción subrayando en este caso la carga emocional que acompaña al juicio y por la cual este pasa a ser una ‘convicción; por esto se define al valor también en las ‘actitudes’ favorables para ese bien”. Latapi (1999, 31

CHAPTER THREE LITERATURE REVIEW.

5. The failure of the government of Echeverría to set up new bases for economic and political stability in Mexico have been attributed in part to the opposition of the private sector. While the government did not withdraw its support from the agribusiness sector the labour organisation of the peasantry represented a threat to it and this was one of the reasons for the lack of support from the government. (1995)
6. *Business Week*, Dec. 20, 1982 cited by Nef & Vanderkrop: 1989:27.

CHAPTER FOUR METHODOLOGY

- 7 For a detailed description of the ethnic composition of Leamington, see Basok 2002:42-47
- 8 Campesinos: people who cultivate the land but that not necessarily have land and some times their agricultural activities are as one more survival strategy rather than commercialize their products.

CHAPTER FIVE FINDINGS

⁹ If I had had money, I would build a grinado. With what I learned here and 2 years studying for agronomist engineer I could do it. If Mexicans come to see how tomato is produced, they could make something in Mexico. I know about it. They have the theory but they need the practice.

In Canada I learned to drive the tractor and to plant different crops. Here in my community they rent one tractor by paying 200 pesos per hour. If I want to buy a tractor, I need to go to Canada for many years and not send money to my family.

The government has promoted the construction of greenhouses as a micro-productive project for the communities in the area of Las Nubes, but Juan said: those going to Canada could not receive support to obtain a greenhouse. We did not know how the grants were allocated. The technician advised one of my friends, who got a greenhouse, to ask for help from people who went to Canada.

¹⁰ ...There in Canada they do not teach you the formula. There they tell you, "you will take out the leaves." They only order you, to do things, period!. Cut this, period! In Canada we follow instructions, they do not tell you, "you will cut that branch because this or that reason". A lot of people cut the branches but they do not know why. They do not tell one how to take care of the plant.

¹¹ ...Here, there is a school of agronomist engineers and they teach how to grow tomatoes with hydroponics. Here [in Mexico] I learned through that school, From the germination to the harvesting. The tezontle rojo¹¹ is used because it is insulated and the seed of the coconut is used instead of glass fiber. To nurture the plants you have to apply a formula where you divide the parts per million and you put 5 types of fertilizers. Potassium, calcium, ammonium, iron and magnesium. They are fertilizers which dissolve in water. It also needs phosphoric acid. The fertilizers are from Germany and I go to the closest big town to buy them.

¹² Only one informant knew about a Mexican in another area who saved the harvest of a season by taking responsibility of all the farm management when el patron had an accident.

¹³ This is the name informants give to the supervisor on farms. This word will be explained in the section of polity.

¹⁴ My knowledge of Mexico has been very useful here. Because of the agricultural job that I do in Mexico I already knew how to pick different crops. The difference [I found between Mexico and] here [Canada] is that here the planting is with machinery.

El patron said, “here, I want peasants.” [He said this] because we learn quickly and know how to do the activities faster... one has more knowledge being a peasant. One knows the parts of the plant. It helps a lot, to be a peasant. Those who are not from the countryside do not learn how to work until some time has passed.

Here I applied my knowledge in how to pick strawberries. I have come from Michoacan. There they pay you nine pesos per basket [of strawberries] so here [in Canada] I pick strawberries very fast. I pick them very fast. El patron said to me: “I want you to pick the strawberries fast because people are coming to buy them”. He want us to pick at least 4 boxes per hour. [Because I know how to pick strawberries] I showed my fellows how to pick the strawberry: do not squeeze them when picking them.

¹⁵ As mentioned earlier an informant expressed this as follows: It is useful in Canada if you are used to working hard. Other people that do not come from rural areas, do not work as hard as the people that come from the countryside”.

¹⁶ “Everything was different here. In my town, I planted potatoes, cabbage, beans and flowers with irrigation canals. Here they use hydroponics”.

¹⁷ In the construction work, I learned about placing stones to assemble a building. To interpret a blueprint, you have to take measures to see what cuts are here and there and to know what are the scales: from 1 to 10 every 10 mm is a metre and from 1 to 100 a centimetre is a metre.

Carlos is a welder and makes fences, doors and windows but cannot use his knowledge in Canada because he said: “I am only an agricultural worker in Canada and I only work in the greenhouses. In Mexico he also decorates frames of aluminum and doors.

¹⁸ I would like to use the knowledge that I brought from Mexico here. Here they see you as ‘bicho raro; they never let you show your skills and abilities for the job. They see you as if you do not know anything. They do not let you drive a tractor or machinery. They do not allow you until one takes initiative and begins to drive or get on to the tractor. In Mexico I did not know how to drive the tractor but it was easy to learn here.

In Mexico I drove the tractor and managed everything in the ranch. I had cows and knew how to plant and harvest. I knew everything about a ranch. I do not apply my knowledge from Mexico because here there is a different system and I have not found the opportunity.

¹⁹ In Canada with some of my knowledge, I saved money for el patron. Before we tied the trees circulating them with double knot. I told el patron to only circulate the trees with one knot and we saw that it was O.K. Now we circulate 30 trees, with the same amount of string in took to circulate ten trees before.

Here, I work in the greenhouse and I learned things that can be improved here [because of] the experience that I acquired through my job. [But] it is not possible [to give my opinions to improve the production here] because they do not listen to you...I have ideas but without knowing English I cannot express them. I can have a good idea about how to arrange the strings in the plants in the opposite direction [as we do now] because the majority of us use our right hand, but the fellow who could translate to the farmer [this idea] has a problem with me and does not tell my good ideas to the farmer.

Juan commented that if farmers knew Spanish they could tell them all their good ideas about how the production can be improved because the workers have had the experience of knowing the production processes every day during the years.

²⁰ Cauliflower. We have to carry the trays with the plants and put them in the towed vehicle. In the field we plant the cauliflower with the planter. I was in the planter for up to 12 hours. Somebody is following us re-planting. Once it is planted we install the irrigation pipes but el patron controls the [water] pump. After a while we have to take out the pipes, weed with a hoe and when the cauliflower grows we have to tie them and to put elastic bands on them. To pick the cauliflower we used a knife and at the same time that we were picking other fellows were packing. We had to work at the speed of the packaging band. Almost one cauliflower per second. El patron in Quebec had the tractor in fourth gear and if we were not able to work at that speed he left us behind and complained back at us. His heart became softer when he slowed the tractor to the third gear. The winter cabbage is the last to harvest. We had to pick it and put it into the boxes 16 or 14 per box .There you can go at the speed that you want.

The cucumber is sowed in the field. There are some plastic sheets in the soil and a machine is making the holes where you have to put two seeds per hole. You are walking as fast as you want. The cucumber begins to grow inside the plastic until it gets to a certain height, then you take the plastic out and the cucumber begins to grow. It is like a little greenhouse. Once the cucumbers grow we cut them and pack them in the packaging plant. We planted the chile in a planter [you put] one [plant and] your fellow puts one after you. You are bend all the time but you get use to it. Now I have experience with everything related to planters.

What I do here is to plant, to spray, to fumigate the plant, to roll it, to put a clip, to cut the leaves, to pull down the plant, debudding the plant. In eight months we make approximately 100 cuts from every tomato plant. Every year the plant goes to the garbage. The plant is taken out to the greenhouse and the greenhouse is disinfected. Then one puts the plant [in the greenhouse] again. El patron is in charge of applying the fertilizer. In this farm we get safety equipment, [but] in other farmas they do not. In the packaging plant I select the tomato based on color and size.

²¹ “We left home to develop ourselves...to progress”.

²² He said: “Yo estaba preocupado porque me pidieron que comprobara que soy campesino y como en mi cartilla no dice y tenia tiempo de no trabajar en el campo, tenia mis manos lisas”.

²³ E.g. the informant who commented that for him it could be ideal to work 16 hours per day is one that has been coming consecutively to Canada for the shortest periods of time. Another example of these combinations was the Jacinto’s opinion who said that they should work from May to June between 10 and 11 hours and in November and December only 8 hours to prevent the physical wearing out. Informants reported that it is preferable to them to have the hard and light work combined.

²⁴ The Spanish work that came from the time of the haciendas in Mexico that the informants use to refer to their supervisor.

²⁵ Jose: We came here [to Las Nubes] and we do not like to go again [to Canada]. In fact, I like [working with] the cows more. The truth is that I spent a lot [of time] in greenhouses and only one or two years in tobacco. The need is what obligated us to be in greenhouses [but] if after one year we are again in the same situation [bad economic situation] we have to go back to work [to Canada].

²⁶ My idea is to improve here in Mexico [and] to try to look for the means to survive there in Canada. If we [already] depend on Canada, how are we going to survive here if we do not go there [To Canada]? If you go there all the time, it is okay. [So that one continues earning money]... In Mexico it is important to look for something cost-effective as an agricultural activity to leave in the community [since one is working in Canada]. In the first place we do not have anything here and from there we [can] bring money to invest. I need to think about what I can do in order to survive in Mexico.

²⁷ Enrique hurt his waist and el patron did not want to take him to the doctor. He rested two days and he was not paid for these days. Enrique said: anyway, you are here [in Canada] to work!. He did not call the Consulate because he did not know the number. He said: “I worked 3 weeks injured and with pain. I felt very bad [Spanish translation: de la patada] . I could not even take a shower; two fellows helped me. They shook me to see if I could get my waist adjusted”. He only took some pills to relief the pain.

Jacinto said that they are not important to the farmer. His fellow injured his leg. He had a muscle strain and the farmer had not taken him to the doctor .One day the farmer told him to get ready to go to the doctor, so the fellow got ready, took a shower and changed his clothes. He said that el patron picked him up and took him to work in another place, not to the doctor.

I would like to have doctors that could speak Spanish at least a little. I would like to have more translators in the clinic and to receive kind attention. I would like them not to be racists with us, we are human beings, we are human and we feel;

I have never seen a patron like the one we have. He has never left us ...if an accident happens or somebody gets sick I do not believe he would leave us unprotected” Carlos commented: “In case of any urgency I go directly to el patron and he really supports us to go to the clinic or to go back to Mexico before [the contract period expires]. In this case el patron is really conscious [about our needs]”. Jacinto said that in his farm a fellow hurt his ankle and el patron took him immediately to the hospital.

²⁹ Vicente went to the clinic because his eyes were irritated after he was exposed to the pesticides while their co-workers were spraying. When he went to the hospital the doctor did not examine his eye carefully and only prescribed him some drops for the eye irritation. He felt that the doctor was bad-mannered. The nurse advised him to look for an optometrist to follow up on the problem with his eye but all the optometrists are open only during office hours and he did not want to bother el patron to take time off to go to the doctor during working hours.

³⁰ With respect to the illnesses, there is the example of my fellow. He came for two months and has not yet received either the green or the white card and he is sick. He is getting better with pills that we brought from Mexico. If you have a headache, you take a “tabcin”. If you have a stomach-ache you take a “sal de uvas”. My friend who recently went back to Mexico was ill all the time and we shared the medicines that we brought from Mexico.

³¹ When he went to buy a cream to treat infections he was lucky to have found a Colombian woman who helped him to read the instructions and she told him to take care with this cream, she said, “if you touch your eyes you can get blind”, so he decided not to buy the cream.

³² There is no protection equipment in the farm. El patron does not think that the pesticides could affect us. I am paying for health insurance but if someone gets sick, they are sent to Mexico. My fellow was sick and did not go to the doctor. It took me three months to receive my green card. My fellow came here for a short time, for two months. Practically el patron told him that he would not get the health card. If he had gone to the doctor, el patron or my fellow would have had to pay. So...[what can we do], we came here to work.

What I know is that if a fellow has an accident los patrones do not help. A man was in the hospital 15 days and los patrones did not take interest in him. If my fellow was from their family, they would treat him differently. They demand that we work and they do not take care of us. I have seen fellows that are not taken care of if they are sick. I believe that it is necessary to make this information public. Los patrones are not interested in us [our well being] because they think they can send a sick man to Mexico and from Mexico they can

send us 3 or 4 more Mexicans. Also, I think that if they send us healthy from Mexico to Canada, they should send us healthy from Canada to Mexico. You see, now they are asking for the AIDS test. Fortunately, I have never been ill.

³³ Juan expressed with relief that he was on one of those farms. He commented: "Here el patron takes us inside of the packaging plant when they are spraying. Thank God!"

³⁴ In my farm we fumigate without protection. Do you think that el patron will give us masks? Some of us protect our mouth and nose with a bandanna, but when we sweat all the pesticides come into our faces.

With the pesticides you can have allergies. One is at risk of getting cancer. I got an infection in my nose for working inside the grinado³⁴. Here in Canada I did not go to the doctor. I did not go to the doctor because el patron was a bad person. He never said to us: I will take you to the doctor. He did not have time. If at the next day you feel bad, they send you to Mexico. In Mexico I saw the doctor, here in Canada I did not. The doctor who saw my nose said that the problem in my nose was related to the absorption of a lot of microbes and dangerous chemicals. He told me that it was the reason why Canadians do not like to work and they contract Mexicans. I did not get other illnesses, only the one in my nose. If I had a headache I took an Alka-Seltzer. I worked three years with that patron. (Now he is in a different farm)

El patron is who is in charge of spraying the pesticides. Sometimes we are in the field and nothing happens. Sometimes one feels dizziness, or one feels nervous. You do not feel fine after time passes. El patron do not say anything. The air is poisonous and one feels bad. We are mistreated in Canada and in Mexico. They do not treat us well but one comes to Canada because of need. I am not going to continue coming. The secretaries in the MLSP reprimand us if we complain in Canada or in Mexico.

³⁵ "I know how to use fertilisers and I also know that they affect our hands, which get itchy and irritated. The powder goes into our eyes and throat".

³⁶ "I came to Canada because I want to improve my household, to improve my home and the food for the family. If before (coming to Canada) we ate a chicken and one kilogram of beef once a month, now we eat beef once a week."

³⁷ For example, Enrique said he now prepares at home chicken with mushrooms.

³⁸ In Canada I had learned to take care of nature. In Mexico (they) only cut trees and do not replace them. In Canada (they) have the fixed idea of trees. I said to myself: we should do the same in Mexico. In Mexico everything is seen as if it was [made of] concrete. I have a piece of land there. Perhaps it could be only to plant trees.

In Canada they are asking farmers to avoid contaminating the water table ... I know that they have to plant with different techniques.

³⁹ The first time that I came to Canada everything was very beautiful. Since the moment which I boarded the plane, I saw that everything was different. I saw that Canada was very beautiful. Nevertheless, the work difficulties are very different in this country (Canada).

[One of my relatives], who already passed away came to Canada before. That is why I had an idea about how it was here in Canada. He told us how the work was on tobacco farms. The opportunity of coming to Canada makes you come with enthusiasm, to come with the mentality that it is possible. The first year when the problems of the work began, I dreamed that my [relative] came to be with me and to give me advice.

The first time that I came to Canada I thought this was the first and last time. I was happy to come to Canada. Since I was a child I dreamed of these places. Once I worked here, I saw that everything is different than in Mexico.

⁴⁰ First, you do not know the type of job. You are not used to preparing your own food in Mexico. Here, you suffer because you do not know how to cook. You do not know the place, you came with the bandage in the eyes. You do not know what is up, you are coming [here] to work and that is all. He commented that once you arrive to Canada, there is nobody who helps you. If your paisanos lend you a hand, is fine. If they do not you are in the same situation.

At the airport in Canada I was very nervous. I was wondering: Where will I go? I did not know anybody. The Consulate was in the airport and they told me that I was coming to Leamington and that el patron with whom I would work would call my name. In Leamington el patron picked me up and some co-workers told me: that is going to be your house, where you will live. El patron gave me 200 dollars for my food. I did not know Canadian dollars and felt a lot of emotion. After that we went to the supermarket and we began to work the next day. I knew how to cook a little bit because in the United States I had to cook. I did not know how to use the washing machine and the dryer. I had a very hard time. In my hometown, we did not have a shower. In Canada when I went to take a shower, I opened the tap and the water came out from below. So I thought, how does one take a shower? Once in the shower, a co-worker went to help me and he taught me how to use the shower. Everything was sad and funny. To come to this country has taught me a lot of things that I did not know in Mexico.

⁴¹ Some of the phrases they wanted to learn were how to say: I am hungry, I am sick, I need a doctor, I need to go to the washroom. They also wanted to learn phrases related to their work to understand the farmer's instructions.

⁴² All the time that I had worked outside my town I prepared my own food. I began to cook in the United States. There I learned how to prepare my food. In Canada many persons did not know how to cook. Because I knew how to cook, I told them in the supermarket to buy simple things like potatoes, beans, meat and chicken. They wanted to buy pre-cooked that only needed to be heated. We put our money together to prepare the food

together and they bought coke and juice. We had 600 dollars to pay for the food and on Friday we did not have food. I knew in advance that they wanted to buy processed food that is the most expensive. I still had some money, some American dollars [I brought from Mexico] that I did not use because the currency exchange was inconvenient for me there. There was potatoes and eggs left but nobody wanted to prepare them. I said lets prepare it together. Because I was the only one that knew how to cook, the others wanted me to cook for them during all the week, but I did not accept it. The next Saturday everybody bought their own food. It was better. [Afterwards] at the middle of the season, I got together with a friend to cook and share the food. We have been preparing our food together for three years. If we buy a coke we share it... if we buy pork hoofs [we eat them] between the two of us.

⁴³ We felt as if we were in jail. From the plants to the house and then [we go] to the tomato plants again. We dream about the plants.

⁴⁴ “One time el patron was [a] very bad [person]. He wanted us to be working very fast. He left our lines and said to us: “If you are left behind, nobody will help you and you will have to go [back] to Mexico. He wanted to see who of us worked, as he wanted. If he was not satisfied with your work, he called the Consulate and said that you are not a good worker and the Consulate said Que se vaya. We felt very sad, very bad, very humiliated. We thought it would have been better not having come. A guy from Hidalgo had a very hard time and cried. I asked him why he cried and the informant answered me: “why? You do not understand why he cried?! He was ashamed of having to go back to Mexico. He said: “What is my family and my brothers going to say? They will say that I came back from Canada with nothing”. After a brief pause the informant continued, “In that farm they did not give us safety equipment”.

⁴⁵ The work with the strawberry is very hard but I am used to it. We worked between 10 to 11 hours...one gets used to being enclosed [in the farm]. One only arrives at the house to sleep...nobody supports each other. They prefer to put up with the [difficult situations]. Those who have more time and are close to *el patron* do not want to take a risk.

⁴⁶ Sometimes there is not enough work in the farm since other times workers are punished by having fewer work hours. It is a disciplinary measure exerted in some farms.

⁴⁷ Three co-workers of an informant saved their wages to pay their airplane ticket and just left the farm one morning. Before leaving, they began to complain and the farmer gave them less hours of work. They left that farm because they said that they did not want to suffer mistreatment against their dignity.

An informant explained why he decided to go back to Mexico: The pesticides made me feel bad. We did not have protection and all that powder [from the pesticides] went to the nasal conducts and began to pus. I put on my pride and I came back. There [in Canada] I did not receive any kind of attention and if it is I better that I came back to Mexico. There are fellows that have suffered more than me. I let one year pass [after this incident]. The

past year I did not go [to Canada] and let it pass. This year I worked in a farm where *el patron* treated us as people and not as animals.

Other informant commented: They wanted us to go to another farm where they were going to begin the hard work again. So I said I want to go back to Mexico and they told me: “if you want to go back to Mexico you have to pay your ticket and I said okay”.

⁴⁸ We are always worried that somebody is there

⁴⁹ My uncle who came to Canada before told me, “the same way that the time to go to Canada came, the time to leave will come. I only had to work hard and to endure until the time to leave came”. The only thing I have to do is to work hard and to endure until the time to leave comes.

Enrique related that in a day of a lot of work he ended “tired, fed-up, bored”. He considered a day of 12 hours a day of hard work and when he has muscle pains the only thing that he wants is to sleep. “When I have pain in my muscles, I only sleep”.

⁵⁰ When I miss my family a lot I call them. I miss everything from Mexico. When I miss the family I call them, what else can I do? I am the kind of person that calls home more than the rest [of my co-workers]. I call home two days per week from Thursdays to Sundays and in this space [while I talk in the phone] I am not feeling bad for being here. My family heard me by phone. I have two children and lately the girl has been very intelligent. She tells me “hello daddy how are you? Children encourage us to keep going.

⁵¹ My life here in Mexico is fine because we are with our dearest ones. There in Canada one feels depressed but happy about earning money. Here one is *'rejudido'* (in a very bad economic situation) and there, one gets enthusiastic about making money.

The fact that we go to Canada for work affects children. They feel alone, sad without the father and the mother. It is not the same for them to receive the love of parents than to receive the love of the aunt or the grandmother, it is not the same. Mexico cannot give opportunities. If Mexico would give those opportunities, we would not leave the family. Perhaps the boy does not need money, does not lack anything, he has enough, but he does not have the most important thing that is love. The people that migrate, build their house, buy a piece of land or acquire different things. For me the main reason to go to Canada is to build my house. One as a migrant suffers and learns to value our sons and daughters but see the things that we need. If we could have opportunities in Mexico, there would be no need to leave our children or our family.

⁵² Something that I do not like is that they do not allow us to have visitors. A fellow invited a neighbour to his farm one Sunday after we came back from shopping. When they came to the house they put their bags down on the floor and told the invited fellow to feel comfortable. The farmer arrived and asked the visitor, “what are you doing here?” The fellow said he is my paisano and the farmero said paisano or not paisano I do not want

you to bring people here. The visitor felt very bad. Now the farmer has security cameras on his property.

⁵³ Some of the movies and songs are the same that men watch and listen to in rural communities where I worked in Mexico.

⁵⁴ Staying with one patron one cannot go outside wherever one wishes. If he does not take us out we are enclosed *like lions in a cage*. We cannot go out until *el patron* tells us. We have to go from the fields to the house. A man went (back to Mexico) because he felt sad and bored.

⁵⁵ I, as a Mexican woman, understood the need they have for a female friendship and had to learn and adapt to some of the implicit rules of behavior that one has to adopt in a dominant Mexican male environment. I found out how important was for them to have a friendly relationship with a woman since during some interviews they communicate to me worries and things that happened to them and that they were unlikely to tell to a male friend.

⁵⁶ Country fellow

⁵⁷ For some, *paisano* is a very old word (and he began to laugh). A lot of people take this word as somebody very humble and very low. Going there (to Canada) to be *paisano* means to be from the same country. In the same country to be called *paisano* is offensive. People feel less, with low grades of studies, very low in resources. It can be a very humiliating word. I am a migrant. An immigrant leaves his country to go to another.

The Mexicans in the area say hello to each other. We say *hola amigo*⁵⁷ and if one gets along one makes a friendship with them. If you call somebody that you do not know a *paisano* they can take it the wrong way. Some say: *paisano* do not call me *paisano*. I found 'a oaxaquita' and he told me *paisanos* are those who wear *huarachote*⁵⁷. I think that *paisanos* are everybody. For me the word *paisano* means to come from the same country and state.

⁵⁸ The local of the agricultural support centre has a house of white color and it has been named by Mexicans as La Casa Blanca. The White House.

⁵⁹ If I have an urgency I look for help. I am no longer coming with my eyes closed. I have almost finished my years in the program. (If you have an urgency) you look for the way to gather the money to buy your plane ticket. One has to defend oneself with cape and sword. I had a good patron. He was not racist. Others are racist.

⁶⁰ When there are difficulties sometimes one says: with the consulate and say: they mistreat me, they tell me things that I do not like. And he says: "do not care about it man, you continue working, be enthusiastic". It does not help. The Consulate does not help.

In Quebec *el patron* punched the head of a fellow. The Consulate did not speak up for him. *El patron* kept our passports and did not want to give it back to our fellow. He threatened him to talk with human rights if they did not give the passport to him and finally he gave it to him. The guy spoke English. The guy paid his ticket and left. The Consulate came after two or three days, too late! I did not speak up. After all, when the help was needed, it was not received. *El patron* said to us, you see they do not hear you.

We need support in Canada. We need support from the Consulate. It does not support us. We need our authorities take care of us. The Consulate has to hold hands with us, the Mexicans, and not with the farmers. I said to the Consulate, "Why do they treat us like this? They are affecting our physical body [with the pesticides]."

⁶¹ The discrimination is what I do not like. Sometimes they look down on them and some treat them as animals and not as people or as a worker. In my work I saw a piece of wood in the floor and when I told that to *el patron* he said "you do not worry about it, there are more donkeys to do the work (he called the Mexicans donkeys)".

Here there is racism, one time about 10 Canadians were running after about 5 Mexicans beating them. Mexicans were running trying to protect themselves covering from the beating. In the telephone they give you a big push and kick the phone cabin. In the stores there are good people and people that is very bad.

One is discriminated here sometimes, if you see carefully, the tortilla packages have the image of a Mexican sleeping. They (the tortilla packages) have the logo of a Mexican sleeping and this is discrimination for our country, we purchase to whom produced the tortillas and this is the way in which they pay to us.

⁶² The origin of the work *mayordomo* is explained by one of the informants: In times of the haciendas the *caporal* was who rode on horseback and gave orders and directed the workers. *El mayordomo* is who gives orders instead of the boss. His name comes from being 'major', superior, or having a higher status. *El mayordomo* is who has more influence with the boss.

⁶³ In Quebec *el mayordomo* was Mexican. He demanded work and production from us. He was rearing us. Those that rear people get paid more. There is a production goal. Those who go after us want to *quedar bien*⁶³ with *el patrón* by achieving a lot of production. To delight *el patron*, [*el mayordomo*] demands work from us. To select *el mayordomo*, *el patron* sees who has more years and knows English. If we do not follow him there are problems. We ask him, why do you demand so much from us?

One day a visitor came to the farm and a co-worker stopped working to see who had arrived. *El mayordomo* humiliated him by telling him. "And what do you see?" They do not want us to stop even for a moment. Otherwise they threaten you, with sending you back to Mexico. They threaten us. There are places where *los patrones* are after us to be sure that we are working.

There are Mexicans that support each other. Others do not [support each other]. Those having seniority hurry us up. *El patrón* can give them more money to push the people to hurry up.

⁶⁴ "In the farm there is a person who has 16 years of experience with *el patron* and he knows the job very well. He is the one that directs the new workers. I followed his instructions since the beginning and the other fellows got angry with me for that".

⁶⁵ The first year that I came to Canada there were 115 Mexicans in the same farm. In one of the bunk houses fourteen of us had to share one washroom upstairs while four of our co-workers, who had worked in the farm between 12 or 13 years, had the downstairs washroom all to themselves. The same happened with the stove and the washing machine.

One occasion, fellows that had more time in the farm stayed resting in the apple trees while the others that were new were working. After work they asked us to prepare food for them.

The first time that I came to Canada I was very sad, it was horrible. The co-workers behaved very badly. One does not stop thinking about Mexico. One suffers.

⁶⁶ In some farms the farmer greets everybody by their names, invites them to participate in family parties, takes them to visit different places, supports them in case of sicknesses or problems and allows them to finish their contract earlier if they require to go back to Mexico.

⁶⁷ An informant commented: "Years ago a family member of a fellow died and *el patron* told him: "You are not leaving today, you are leaving the day after tomorrow! Imagine how this fellow felt".

⁶⁸ To work in the planter is considered to have more status than to be replanting walking behind the planter. Enrique told how he won more work hours: "I worked very hard and I won the position in the packaging plant. During the day we pick [the vegetables] and in the night with the light we pack [the vegetables]. Those who come to Canada only for the tobacco harvesting consider it an achievement to stay after their contract expires to harvest tobacco. All these activities and even the smallest chores such as pulling down or pulling up a lever have their hierarchy. I asked the informant who is in charge of pulling down and pulling up the lever of the machine if this activity was a difficult one and he answered me that it was not "solo una manotada y se para, otra y se arranca".

Juan commented: "The first year I was replanting. You have to do merits to go up [in the planter]. If you are new on the farm, you do not go up into the planter. As the time passes, you can be up in the planter. The newcomers get less hours [of work] and if you are lazy, you will even less hours. To be in the packaging plant instead of being working in the open field is considered of higher status and also as Carlos commented, that to get

more work hours is considered a benefit. Jose who worked in the packaging plant commented, "In one of the farms I feed the bands for the co-workers that packed the fruit. I did not go to the field, I was already selected to be in the packaging plant. *El patron* finds out who is more intelligent".

⁶⁹ Juan commented that they are asked to achieve certain kilograms of tomatoes per box but that they do not fully understand the correlation between the weight that corresponds to a box of tomatoes and the weight given by the scale.

Another informant said: "it is fine to know how to cultivate the strawberry, but the pressures are what do not fit in the work. I do not like that everything that one does has to be checked. They ask for quantities and pay you by the hour".

⁷⁰ They want production. If not, they threaten one by telling us "we will send you back to Mexico".

They threaten one. There are places where *los patrones* are following you to be sure that one is working.

El patron of a farm where I worked years ago said to us: "*compren carne de venado y no de tortuga, porque aqui se trabaja rapidito*". (Buy deer meat and not turtle meat because here you have to work fast) *El patron* entre más rindiera quería que rindiera más. The work with vegetables is the heaviest work. But, if I do not take care of myself, who is going to take care of me?

We compete because we want to be called the next year. They make us compete among each other. When we are competing, we think, I am not going to allow them to let me fall behind because they want to come [to Canada again] and to get my [employment] position. There are men of 56 years that are working here. I will come until I will be 40 years and I will not continue coming when I get older. The old men want to have the same work rhythm [as the group] and those [who are] new also [want to have the same rhythm as the rest of the group] [Fortunately] I began to drive the tractor immediately.

⁷¹ Is he really more capable?

⁷² In some places they are forced to work. Here [where we work], it is the contrary. They change the job for us. When it is very hot, they give us more breaks. If it is raining, they take us out of the fields. If the work is very urgent and it is not rain a lot, we work with raincoats under the rain.

Some fellows say that they are very exploited; they finish the work of two days in one. *El patron* requires the work. I think that we have to work at a fair rate.

The former patron asked us 10 dozen onion sets. We had to do 10 or 12 sets by force. There are places where they forced us.

Do you think that you are exploited? Yes, the truth is yes, but one has to bear it due to need. They put us to spray pesticides without protection and el patron says that it is not harmful for us...

⁷³ El patron told us one time: "Mexicans only want to sleep. Caribbean people work harder. The next year I will not ask for Mexicans. I will bring only Caribbean people". Here they have you at their convenience. When you no longer serve them they threaten you by saying that they will send you to Mexico.

⁷⁴ Mexicans get the heaviest work and they get the lightest work. For us there is the hardest job and the least less remuneration, for them the lightest work and better remuneration. People from this country mostly do not work in the field. If *el patron* has the urgency to finish a job, it does not matter whether it is cold or it is raining, *el patron* is interested in his product. I have worked while it is raining or snowing, also during Sundays. Nevertheless, if one works on Sundays one is content".

⁷⁵ In Jacinto's farm Jamaican and Mexicans take turns to be in sitting in the planter and in replanting behind. In this way "the work is less monotonous and heavy". They also learn each other's languages.

⁷⁶ Mexicans are less lazy than the *morenos* because they are very strict at their lunch hour and Mexicans are not that strict. Also, if one day we need to stay working one more hour to finish the job, Mexicans prefer to stay and finish the job and to bear the hunger one more hour so they do not have to come back after eating. The Jamaicans do not want to wait [working one more hour]. They want to eat immediately

In Enrique's farm, some Jamaican people came to work with them and he sees that they are having a hard time adapting to the work. Some of them already went back to Jamaica. He sees that *el patron* is not satisfied with the performance of Jamaican people. He said the Mexicans are given better results.

El patron had workers from Trinidad and Tobago but they did not function. They are people of color. If it is freezing, raining or it is cold they cannot work. The Mexicans work whether it is freezing or raining.

The informants affirm proudly that as the Mexicans there are no equals and that Mexicans do not give up. (*Los Mexicanos no se rajan*)

⁷⁷ This fact was reported only by one informant who said this happened to one of his fellows.

⁷⁸ Juan said: More than anything, *los patrones* should look after the people. We go to [Canada] for work. They do not want to give [us better treatment], to see things from our perspective. We are human beings like them. They pressure us a lot and we get stressed.

Carlos said: It is very difficult to improve the situation of the Mexican when *los patrones* mistreat you. It is difficult to communicate due to the [difference in] language. When a *patron* does not treat you well, it is difficult to communicate with him.

⁷⁹ It is difficult to improve the situation of the Mexicans in Canada because we are only seasonally [in Canada]. It is about 4 months that one cannot go outside [the farm]. There [in Canada] one does not have the contact of companionship that one has here [in Mexico]. It is difficult but perhaps it will get better as the time passes”.

There is always irregularities [in Canada] but for me to trust in others I have to see that we are organized and in that way there could not be so much abuse. We are disorganized and the co-workers do not support each other. It is the pride which does not allow us to help each other.

CHAPTER SIX DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS.

⁸⁰ Usually godfathers sponsor the family parties. This is so that the spendings of the celebrations are divided among different people. One can be in charge of buying the cake, the other to pay for the musical band, and so on.