

Who, How and How Much? Private Recruiters and the Temporary Foreign Worker Program in Canada

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- Professional mobility, international division of labour and migratory policy
- Low-wage temporary foreign workers in Canada (TFWs):
 - Profession-specific program: the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP)
 - Exists since 1966
 - Bilateral state-agreement between Canada and Mexico and some Caribbean countries
 - Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP)
 - High-wage stream (if the employer is offering a wage that is above the provincial or territorial median hourly wage)
 - Low-wage stream (if the employer is offering a wage that is below the provincial or territorial median hourly wage)
 - Agricultural stream

- Guatemalan TFWs in the agricultural sector in Quebec
- Our research: unpacking the “transnational human supply chain” (Gordon, 2017) and understanding the regulatory gaps
- Our data:
 - 3 focus groups and 8 individual semi-directed interviews with Guatemalan workers hired through the “Agricultural Stream” of the TFWP
 - A survey conducted with 87 respondents (unionized and non-unionized workers)
- Partner organizations: Justice in Motion, Agricultural Workers Alliance, UFCW-Canada, UFCW-Québec, section 500
- Research assistants: Andréanne Thibault, Caroline Dufour, Sarah Gouin, Nina Monjean and Éloïse Moses

- The research highlights:
 - All of the respondents signed their employment contract in the office of the recruitment intermediary in Guatemala
 - Only 48% said that they were presented a Spanish version of the contract

“They make an X and you have to sign and sign and sign...But you cannot read... If one wishes to read, they will be told: “Gentlemen, here is the X.” And that is it for the paperwork (FG-1)

- The research highlights (cont.):
 - The respondents paid an average amount of 3500Q (+/- 400,00€) to the recruitment intermediary
 - 11% paid a “middle person” amounts that can go up to 15 000Q (1750,00€)

“In the office [of the recruiter], they say, workers should not have to pay money [to a middle person]. But one is forced to pay [a middle person], because if you go to the office [of the recruiter] looking for information, they won't give it to you. You must go as recommended by “x” persons”

- The research highlights (cont.):
 - 56% of respondents stated that they had to take out a loan, either from a friend (20%), a family member (15%) or a financial institution (11%)
 - 32% of the workers paid interest on the loan
 - 18% also stated that they had to provide the lender the deeds to their property as a guarantee

- The regulation of the recruitment of temporary foreign workers: a normative conundrum
 - The Canadian legal framework: a fragmented landscape
 - The Guatemalan legal framework: from the existence of formal standards to a compliance assessment

- What are the impact that former “socializing experiences” may have on an individual’s “wellsprings of action” (Lahire, 2001):
 - The impact of workers’ pre-employment experience shapes the context in which labour violations are voiced
 - The recruitment process reinforces a feeling of “conditionality” (Goldring, 2014)
 - The lack of transparency in the hiring process along with the practices engaged in by the recruiter mean that workers are casted as “passive subjects” who must abide by the process imposed by the recruiter and avoid voicing their discontent

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