

# MIGRATION MANAGEMENT, DISCIPLINARY POWER, AND PERFORMANCES OF SUBJECTIVITY: AGRICULTURAL MIGRANT WORKERS' IN ONTARIO

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*Abstract.* Agricultural migrant workers, recruited to work in Canada under the Temporary Foreign Workers Program (TFWP), are disciplined to be compliant and productive. Based on ethnographic data, we draw attention to several ways in which Spanish-speaking migrants, employed in agriculture in a rural community in Southwestern Ontario, respond to this disciplinary power. Most migrants discipline themselves and others to be productive and compliant workers. We refer to these acts as “performances of self-discipline.” At other times, some (albeit, few) migrants challenge this disciplinary power either individually or collectively. We refer to these performances of subjectivity as “performances of defiance.” Another way migrants may respond to the disciplinary power is by attempting to escape from it. Coining these performances “performances of escape,” we discuss how some agricultural migrant workers drop out of the program and remain in Canada without authorization. By turning attention to these performances of subjectivity, the article fills a gap in the literature on migration management and its disciplinary practices in Canada.

**Keywords:** Temporary migration, migration management, labour rights, techniques of discipline, performance of subjectivities, Latin American migration

*Résumé.* Les travailleurs migrants recrutés au Canada dans le cadre du programme des travailleurs temporaires sont assujettis à une discipline qui exige des travailleurs qu'ils soient soumis et productifs. À partir de données ethnographiques, nous analysons comment les migrants hispanophones d'une communauté rurale du Sud-ouest de l'Ontario réagissent à ce pouvoir disciplinaire. La plupart des migrants s'autodisciplinent et participent à la discipline des autres travailleurs afin de faire preuve de leur docilité et de leur forte capacité productive. Nous référons à ces actions en tant qu'exercice de l'autodiscipline'. À d'autres moments, certains contestent ouvertement le pouvoir disciplinaire seul

ou en groupe. Nous référons à ces actions en tant ‘qu’exercice de la contestation’. Les migrants peuvent aussi réagir au pouvoir disciplinaire en tentant de le fuir. Ces derniers s’adonnent ainsi à ‘l’exercice de la fuite’ en abandonnant le programme des travailleurs temporaires tout en restant au Canada sans autorisation. En abordant les stratégies des migrants en termes d’exercice ou de mise en œuvre de leurs subjectivités, cet article comble un fossé dans la littérature scientifique concernant la gestion des migrations et les pratiques des migrants face au pouvoir disciplinaire au Canada.

**Mots clés:** Migration temporaire; gestion des migrations; droits du travail; techniques disciplinaires; exercice de la subjectivité; migrations latino-américaines

## DEDICATION

In memory of Kerry Preibisch, a sociologist who dedicated her life to understanding the lives and advancing the rights of migrant farmworkers in Canada and whose untimely death on 28 January 2016 was mourned by many scholars and activists.

## INTRODUCTION

**I**n the last couple of decades the migration management approach has become the dominant discourse among policy makers. According to proponents of this approach, when managed properly, migration can: (1) meet the labour needs of receiving states; (2) contribute to the development needs of sending states; and (3) enhance the wellbeing of migrants and their households (thus, the infamous “triple win” solutions). Within this paradigm, temporary migration, tied to specific contracts, represents an ideal type: not only does it permit receiving states to import labour at times of need and discard it when the demand disappears but it also makes it possible for sending states to ensure that migrants’ earnings are channeled into the sending countries’ economies via remittances (Ghosh 2012; Geiger and Pécoud 2010 and 2012; GCIM 2005).

Migration management relies on various techniques of disciplining migrants to comply with the images and roles they are expected to perform (Geiger and Pécoud 2013). At the same time, migrants employ their subjectivity to respond to these techniques of discipline. An exploration of the subjectivity of migrants, that is, the way they make sense of their daily world and their daily lives (Kelly 2013; Landry 2009; Reed 2012) and the ways these subjectivities are performed, offers important (and

often omitted) insight into the study of the migration management approach.

In this article, we draw attention to several ways in which Spanish-speaking migrants employed in agriculture in a rural community in Southwestern Ontario through two components of the Temporary Foreign Workers Program (TFWP)—the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP) and the Stream for Lower Skilled Occupations (SLSO)—perform their subjectivities within the context of the disciplinary power of this migration management regime. First, they discipline themselves and others by complying with the disciplinary demands these programs of managed migration place on them. We refer to these performances as “performances of self-discipline.” Second, they attempt to challenge the disciplinary regimes imposed on them, either collectively or individually. We call these responses “performances of defiance.” Thirdly, migrants also attempt to escape the disciplinary power of this migration management regime by transitioning into a different legal status. We call these responses “performances of escape.”

In the first section of the article we provide an overview of the forms of disciplinary power embedded in this migration management regime. We analyse how this disciplinary power is reproduced by sending and receiving states; consular offices; employers, and such international organization as the IOM. We then turn attention to some of the ways migrants understand this disciplinary regime and respond to it.

### **SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL WORKERS IN CANADA: A DISCIPLINARY POWER REGIME**

The recent intensification of production in neoliberal economies has been documented in numerous employment sectors, particularly in those employing low-skilled labour such as manufacturing and agriculture. As a result of the globalization of markets, the power of retailers, and the pressure to keep prices low, observers have documented the intensification of agricultural production in Canada and elsewhere (Rogaly 2008; Winson and Leach 2002; Preibisch 2012). The employment of flexible and compliant migrant labour, available on demand and deportable when no longer required, represents one response to the increasing global competition in Canada and elsewhere (Basok 2002; Preibisch 2007; and 2012; Rogaly 2008; Sharma 2012; McLaughlin 2009; Binford 2013; Basok, Bélanger and Rivas 2014). In fact, under pressure from growers, the recruitment of migrant workers in Canadian agriculture started in 1966 with the arrival of several hundred Jamaican workers (Satzewich 1991).

The program, named the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program, gained immediate popularity among Canadian growers and rapidly expanded to include migrants from other Caribbean islands and in 1974—Mexico. In 2002, the Canadian state added another program, currently known as the Stream for Lower Skilled Occupations, which makes it possible for Canadian growers to hire additional migrant workers. In 2013, the number of agricultural migrant workers employed through both TFWP components was estimated to be over thirty-five thousand (McLaughlin and Henneby 2013: 179).

As explained below, the manner in which the two programs are administered grants power to employers, supported by the sending and receiving states, international organizations involved in recruitment, as well as consular representatives, to discipline workers. SAWP is governed by Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) signed between sending countries and Canada (Basok 2002; HRSDC 2011). As specified by the MOUs migrants are brought to work on Canadian farms for no longer than eight months. They are allowed to reapply in subsequent years, provided that their employers provide positive evaluations of their work. In the case of Mexico, the Ministry of Labour is responsible for selecting workers for this program, receiving employers' evaluations, and (re)assigning successful migrants to specific employers (Basok 2002; Preibisch 2010). The Mexican Ministry of Labour also offers pre-departure training and orientation to instill values of hard work and obedience among the selected workers. In addition, consular representatives in Canada assure that migrants conduct themselves in this fashion (Basok 2002; Preibisch 2010; Binford 2013; Basok, Bélanger, and Rivas 2013).

The recruitment of agricultural workers under SLSO is done by private companies. In the case of Guatemala, the state outsources the recruitment of workers to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) or, in the case of Quebec, to the growers' association *Fondation des entreprises en recrutement de main-d'œuvre étrangère* (or FERME). Similarly to SAWP workers, Guatemalan SLSO workers recruited by IOM receive pre-departure orientation and IOM has the power to exclude workers who do not perform to the growers' expectations (Hughes 2012: 141; Valarezo and Hughes 2012: 97).

The two TFWP sub-programs rely on various techniques of power to produce "docile bodies" (Foucault 1984: 179-187). Among them are: deportation, replacement, and the regulation of working hours. Deportation constitutes the most important technique of discipline for workers currently employed in SAWP and SLSO (Basok, Bélanger, and Rivas 2013). Under the threat of deportation, migrants are coerced to maintain high levels of productivity and accept their working and living

conditions. This disciplinary practice is enforced by the employers and such inter-governmental organizations as the IOM in collaboration with representatives of the sending countries, including consular officials in Canada. Deportation implies not only the immediate termination of the contract by the employer and the subsequent repatriation of migrants by employers working in collaboration with consular authorities, but also to the denial of future employment. Preibisch and Henneby (2012: 55) observe that vaguely-worded employment contracts enable employers to dismiss workers arbitrarily and without the right of appeal.

Workers may be fired or denied future employment within this program for a number of reasons: low productivity, conflict with other workers, assertion of their rights, interest in joining labour unions, engaging in intimate relationships with other workers or Canadian residents, becoming pregnant, or health problems (see, for instance, Basok 1999: 205, 210-2; Basok 2002: 110-12; Basok, Bélanger and Rivas 2013; Becerril 2011b: 191; Bélanger and Candiz 2015; Binford 2013:50; Preibisch 2004: 212; McLaughlin 2010: 85; Preibisch and Encalada 2010: 305-6; Valarezo and Hughes 2012: 101-102).

In addition, the “replaceability” of workers from one country by workers from other countries has also become a particularly effective technology of power. While under SAWP, Mexico already competed with Caribbean countries for places in the program for their nationals, SLSO made that competition even stiffer by opening possibilities for migrants from a wide range of countries to work in Canadian fields and greenhouses (Preibisch 2010; Preibisch and Binford 2007; Preibisch and Henneby 2012). In fact, the diversification of the labour force is one of the key “non-technological innovations” (Guthman 2004; Rogaly 2008) which has allowed employers to boost productivity and intensify work in Canadian agriculture. Finally, some growers use other means to discipline non-compliant workers, such as: limiting hours of work, confiscating cell phones, locking workers in or out of the houses, turning off electricity, limiting access to transportation, and threats of physical violence (see McLaughlin 2010: 214-220 and Bélanger and Candiz 2015).

When discussing types of discipline, Foucault distinguishes “normalizing judgment” from what he calls “hierarchical observation”. The “normalizing judgment” is related to punishment. For Foucault punishment is not about repression (although in some circumstances it too is used) but mostly about “normalizing”. As he puts it, “[T]he perpetual penalty that traverses all points and supervises every instant in the disciplinary institutions compares, differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenizes, excludes” (1984: 195). Threats of deportation and other forms of discipline, used to render migrants more productive and compliant are ex-

amples of “normalizing judgment.” As illustrated below, while in some cases deportation and replacement are used as a form of repression, in most cases it is the *threats* of deportation and replacement that are issued.

“Hierarchical observation”, on the other hand, refers to the mechanism that coerces by way of observation (Foucault 1984: 189). This form of discipline refers to detailed surveillance (a “panopticon”) that is employed to keep a person in place (209). As Foucault points out, “its functioning is that of a network of relations from top to bottom, but also to a certain extent from bottom to top and laterally” (192). It is the lateral observation—of migrant workers by other migrant workers—that is of particular interest to this article. This lateral observation is one possible way migrants can perform their subjectivities.

The literature on migrant workers in Canada has not paid sufficient attention to diverse ways agricultural migrant workers understand the disciplinary regime that subjugates them and consciously respond to it (see, Becerril 2007 and 2011a; Basok, Bélanger and Rivas 2013; McLaughlin 2009, for some exceptions). We address this gap by discussing some (albeit, not all) ways migrants perform their subjectivities, at times by disciplining themselves and others to be compliant, and at other times, by performing oppositional subjectivities, including individual and collective challenges, and yet at other times, by escaping from this specific disciplinary regime. Before we present our data, we will review conceptual debates on the role of subjectivities in relation to structures of power and discipline.

### POWER, DISCIPLINE, AND SUBALTERN SUBJECTIVITIES

There is an on-going debate on the relationship between subjectivity and structure. For structuralists like Bourdieu, subjectivity is reproduced entirely by the structure, without a possibility of disrupting it, while their critics assert that subjectivity can transcend structure and make it possible for individuals to question, resist, challenge, or transform the structural constraints. Bourdieu, for instance, contends that it is very difficult for the individuals to escape the forms of symbolic domination created by the social structures, simply because these forms of power operate through the subtle manipulation, and also through an unconscious incorporation of the domination into the individuals’ body. For Bourdieu, domination is “everywhere and nowhere, and to escape from that is very difficult” (Bourdieu and Eagleton 1992: 115). This internalized structure, or *habitus*, impels actors to feel, think, and act in ways that are consistent with the structural scripts (Bourdieu 1977).

By contrast, other theorists, such as Giddens (1979, 1984), Sewell (1992), and Ortner (2005), recognize individuals' autonomous capacity to reflect and to act on the structure and culture. Giddens (1984), for instance, points out that individuals in social life have the capacity to reflect and monitor what goes on in their social environment. Based on this reflexive capacity and monitoring of their surroundings, agents develop forms of actions and routines that provide the individuals with intellectual and physical dispositions to deal, challenge, or negotiate with structural constraints. These forms of action and routines that are based on forms of conscious reflexivity of their own actions are what Giddens calls agency (5).

Foucault recognizes reflexivity in his analysis of subjectivity. However, for Foucault, the subjectivity is enmeshed with disciplinary power. Disciplinary power is "so deeply submerged in human subjectivity that it is the embodiment of self-subjugation through self-discipline" (Caldwell 2007: 775). Foucault introduces the notions of "technologies of the self" as techniques that "permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves" in order to attain their objectives (Foucault 1988: 18). Yet for him, these techniques of the self are integrated into structures of coercion' (Foucault 1980, cited in Burchell 1993: 268). For Foucault, "Discipline 'makes' individuals; it is the specific technique of a power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise" (Foucault 1984: 188).

At the same time, Foucault also recognizes that "in order for power relations to come into play, there must be at least a certain degree of freedom on both sides" (1984a: 292). This implies that "in power relations there is necessarily the possibility of resistance because if there were no possibility of resistance (of violent resistance, flight, deception, strategies capable of reversing the situation), there would be no power relations at all" (1984a: 292). And while Foucault is more interested in the exercise of power than freedom, other authors build on his contributions to explore further possibilities for conflict and resistance.

Rafanell and Gorringer (2010), for instance, advance an "intrinsic model of power" which recognizes the reflexive nature of all participants in the power dynamics. For them, the exercise of power relies on the calculative and reflexive capacities of both those who hold power and the subjects of power. Thus, they argue that "power can continue to be exercised not because it overrides calculative agency but *precisely because of it*" (612, *italic original*). They go on to suggest that power dynamics emerge and are reinforced through both consensus and conflict, which,

for Rafanell and Gorringer should be seen not as opposed or dichotomous but as different and dyadic aspects of this power dynamics (619).

Also drawing on Foucault, Armstrong and Murphy (2012) conceptualize the relationship between power and resistance “as a complex network with multiple points of potential difference or divergence bringing possibilities for disruption to the discursive flow” (322). Understanding that resistance is not a homogenous process, they see it as “a web of potential points of resistance which may ultimately result in individuals adopting *very different stances or positions*” (323, italics added).

The complexity of subaltern subjectivities vis-a-vis hegemony is captured in Gramsci’s discussion of the “common sense” (or the “spontaneous philosophy of the multitude” – see Gramsci, 1999: 771). Gramsci recognizes that common sense is a “chaotic aggregate of disparate conceptions” (773) and while it is “crudely neophobe and conservative” (774), it also contains seeds of confrontation and transformation (Gramsci 1999: 633; also see, Crehan 2011: 281; Reed 2012: 564).

In the analysis of migrants’ responses to disciplinary power that subjugates them, we recognize migrants as knowing and reflexive individuals who make sense of the disciplinary regimes and exercise their agency to attempt to transform themselves, others, or their environments in an effort to secure their well-being. They perform their subaltern subjectivities in a number of different ways, including what we call performances of self-discipline, performances of defiance, and performances of escape.

## THE STUDY

The analysis presented in this article relies on ethnographic observations at social and sporting events and interviews collected in the town of Leamington, located in southwestern Ontario, during the summer months of 2010 and 2011. Leamington receives approximately 25% of all foreign, temporary agricultural workers in Ontario, the largest concentration in the province (unpublished data provided to the authors by Service Canada). We also participated in the Pilgrimage to Freedom march organized by migrant workers in collaborations with a grassroots organization called Justicia for Migrant Workers. Detailed notes on informal conversations were compiled and analyzed. In addition, this project relied on formal interviews with fifty-six Mexican migrants legally-employed through SAWP and two Guatemalan workers employed through SLSO. An additional 21 workers who were or had been unauthorized at some point of their lives were also interviewed in this study. In order to reach



the unauthorized migrants, our research assistant spent numerous hours socializing with the migrants in order to earn their trust and gain acceptance. Among the 21 unauthorized migrants, eight (two Guatemalan and six Mexican) had participated either in the SAWP or SLSO but chose to drop out (others had come as tourists and overstayed their visas). The experience of these “drop-outs” is particularly relevant for the analysis of subjectivities of escape. While we hoped to find more of such “drop-outs” to interview, it was not easy. Some of them had moved to other parts of Canada and others were fearful of being “outed” by the researchers.

Reflecting on in-depth interviews, Fontana and Frey (2005: 698), observe:

Increasingly, qualitative researchers are realizing that interviews are not neutral tools of data gathering but rather active interactions between two (or more) people leading to negotiated, contextually based results. Thus, the focus of interviews is moving to encompass the hows of people’s lives (the constructive work involved in producing order in everyday life) as well as the traditional whats (the activities of everyday life).

It is this subjective “constructive work”—of whats, hows, and whys—that our interviews attempted to capture. All the interviews and informal conversations with these migrants focused on migrants’ understanding of the working and living conditions within the context of the two migration management programs or within the context of being an unauthorized migrant in Leamington. The interviews explored migrants’ perceptions of the disciplinary power of the employers, the Mexican consulate, and other actors, their sense of job (in)security within this disciplinary regime, and their understanding of the transformations within themselves, their co-workers, or the working environment they felt were necessary to secure their well-being within this disciplinary regime. Some study participants were recruited at the Agricultural Workers Alliance Centre, a union funded workers’ support centre that assists migrant workers. All the other participants were recruited through a snowball technique.

### **DISCIPLINARY PRACTICES ON ONTARIO FARMS**

Consistent with the literature discussed above, we found that migrants interviewed in this study identified certain ‘normalization’ techniques used by the growers to render migrants more productive. Among them are: (1) deportability; (2) replaceability of workers from one country with workers from another country; and (3) regulation of working hours.

Among the 58 migrant workers we interviewed in this study, as many as 32 (or 55 percent) mentioned fearing deportation and/or having received threats of deportation. In reality, very few migrants get deported to Mexico (Preibisch 2004: 212). According to the data obtained from the Mexican Ministry of Labour, as few as 1.5% of the workers were sent back to Mexico before the end of their contract between 2004 and 2011. Furthermore, a high percentage (close to 80% in some years) of workers employed in the program were nominated by their employer to return in the subsequent year during the same period (see Table 1). However, a few deportations that do occur leave a profound imprint on the temporary workers' psyche. As Peutz & De Genova observe with respect to unauthorized migrants, "*Deportation regimes are profoundly effective, and quite efficiently so, exactly insofar as the grim spectacle of the deportation of even just a few, coupled with the enduring everyday deportability of countless other millions ... produces and maintains migrant illegality as not merely an anomalous juridical status but also a practical, materially consequential, and deeply interiorized mode of being – and of being put in place*" (2010: 14). This observation also applies to *legally* employed migrants. Rodolfo, for instance, is aware of the fact that workers who do not work well and fight among themselves can be fired and subsequently sent back to Mexico. He explains: "Many people should know or they already know that there were problems on a certain farm and some workers were fired and deported and that they won't be brought back anymore. And this can happen to your farm any moment." Spectacles of job termination and the subsequent return to home countries, reinforced by recurring threats of deportation, serve as an effective disciplining mechanism to increase migrant workers' productivity and keep them docile (Basok, Bélanger, and Rivas 2013) or, in other words, to "normalize them."

Furthermore, in order to increase workers' productivity, employers threaten to replace workers with migrants from other countries. Most employers who own medium and large agricultural businesses and for whom our interviewees worked or had worked in the past, hire workers from various countries (such as Mexico, Guatemala, various Caribbean countries, and Thailand). These workers labour side by side. This technique generates a tense environment amongst the workers who develop a fear of being replaced in the event they do not perform well enough. Employers can use the arrival of the new workers to generate tension, competition, and faster performance amongst workers from different countries and regions.

For veteran workers, the ethnic diversification of the labour force is a key change they have witnessed since the 1990s. Mexican work-

ers see it as a major form of competition, as Ernesto reflects: “Well, what we think is that at any time they can bring other people over. Our boss used to threaten us that if we did not work well, if we did not do our best (*le echamos ganas*), he would switch us for people from other countries, Guatemalans or Jamaicans, for instance... He used to say it to us to pressure us to work faster.” Gerardo, a Guatemalan worker, reports a similar type of pressure, “When they [supervisors] talk to a group of [Guatemalan] workers, they say “if you don’t give us the percentage we expect, there are Hondurans who want to work, or Mexicans who want to work... So if you don’t give us the percentage we want, we can just send you home and bring other workers.”

In actuality the Ontario data show that the number of Mexican temporary workers employed in the SAWP program has remained stable or even increased slightly (see Table 1). Thus, unlike Quebec, where Guatemalan workers have actually displaced many Mexican seasonal migrants (see, Bélanger and Candiz 2014; Preibisch 2012: 72), in Ontario, it is the fear of ‘replaceability’ that creates such a competitive climate more than the actual replacement of workers. Thus, just as the threats of deportation, the threats of replacement are used as “normalizing judgments” more frequently than repression.

Finally the extension or reduction of working hours is used as another technique of “normalization.” Tiburcio explains this technique, “I see it as a pressure tactic. People who work very hard (*le echan ganas*) they get a bit more hours. And that is why people don’t fall behind (*no se deja*). They give it their best. But if they don’t work so fast they are left out: on Saturday they don’t get to work.” Similarly Samuel comments, “They give us limited time to finish a certain amount of work and if we don’t do it, our working hours are cut”.

#### PERFORMANCES OF SELF-DISCIPLINE

Analyzing the precarization of work under neoliberalism, Papadopoulos, Stephenson, and Tsianos (2008) draw attention to what they call “precarious subjectivities” that “simultaneously evoke the contingent intensities of the production process and the intrinsic possibilities for overcoming its oppressive structures” (231). Self-exploitation is one of the expressions of precarious subjectivity. As Papadopoulos et.al. contend, “[t]his exploitation of the self can be understood as the extended exploitation of one’s own body and social relations required in order to remain active and potentially employable in conditions of structural insecurity in the labour market” (233).

Self-exploitation was a prevalent “technique of the self” employed by migrant workers in our study in response to the conditions of employment insecurity fuelled by constant threats of deportation and replacement. ‘Working as hard as possible,’ ‘outpacing others,’ and ‘showing the boss that Mexicans are really the best workers’ were strategies repeatedly mentioned by our interviewees (also, see McLaughlin 2010). Eduardo explains how workers in a flower greenhouse responded to a threat of deportation: “Those who put clips on the flowers and take off leaves, they are under tremendous pressure (*les tienen una presión bárbara*). A few weeks ago, their boss tells them, ‘If you don’t work more efficiently (*si no rendían más de lo que estaban rindiendo*), I will send you all back’. So given the economic need, one says, ‘I still want to work for at least another year’ and so because of that one says, ‘I better give more than I can.’” Not only do migrants work very fast, they make themselves available for work on demand. Alejandro comments, “It used to be easier to tell the boss that we didn’t want to work on Sundays. But now we have to please the boss and the manager, and half the world in order to be able to come back to work here.”

Working fast comes with practice. One worker, known by his nickname El Zorro describes how Mexican migrants train themselves to be fast, competitive, and uncaring workers. He starts off by describing a type of worker whom he calls a “tiger”: “A tiger does not have any compassion to a Filipino, Black, or Mexican co-worker. No one! Do you understand? He is not going to have any compassion at all. So if you are a slow or new worker, I am not going to waste time allowing you to work by my side... [Q: so you don’t help your co-workers?] You can’t. It’s not that one doesn’t want to do it. You can’t. [Q: Why?]. If you teach them and tell them do this and that and you do this and that for them, you can teach them, but you can’t work with them at their speed. You have to work by yourself at your own speed. [Q: Why?] Because otherwise I would be seen as a slow worker. So he would be kicked out and so would I.” Identifying himself as a “tiger”, he describes his evolution: “You go through stages. The first stage for a Mexican worker is to understand that he is a meek cat who walks slowly. So the employer comes and scolds you a bit. So you start going faster. Then you want to run like a coyote.” He explains that a coyote is in the middle stage between a cat-type of a worker and a tiger. He then depicts the tense relationship between the coyote and the tiger:

The coyote runs behind the tiger. He is trying to outsmart the tiger, to make him slow down. But the tiger who walks ahead of the coyote has no pity for anyone. He goes flying, understand? Goes flying. So, say, we have to remove leaves. The coyote tries to remove leaves and stems at the same

time, so that he would be ahead with the other task. But the tiger who goes very fast is not letting him do both jobs at the same time. And the coyote learns his lessons... The coyote is learning how to become a tiger.

Migrants take part in this intensification by monitoring each other's productivity and reporting slow and non-compliant workers to their bosses. Alejandro observes:

You have to mold yourself to be like the group; it's mandatory. Why? Because if one worker works fast and is killing himself and at the end of the day he is exhausted (*rendido*), you also have to go at the same speed because if you don't, then when the boss comes, some of your co-workers go and tell him, "you know what? This one is not moving forward fast enough, he is not like the rest of us." And for the boss this is not acceptable and so he says, "you know what? You are not coming back next year". And so you are kicked out of the program."

Similar techniques of the self are found in the literature on unauthorized Mexican workers in the U.S. Harrison and Lloyd (2012), for instance, illustrate how under the threat of deportation unauthorized Mexican workers train themselves to become "workaholic" migrants (377) who accept exploitation and are willing to self-exploit by performing entry-level positions at low wage and putting in long hours. For Gomberg-Muñoz, self-exploitation among Mexican workers is rooted in their social construction of moral values. As she puts in, "Emphasizing the idea that Mexican workers have an ethical approach to getting ahead renders hard work a moral activity that is worthy of dignity and respect. By equating willingness to work with integrity and bravery, workers convert socially degraded work into a source of self-esteem." (Gomberg-Muñoz 2010: 302).

Similar to the Mexican workers discussed by Gomberg-Muñoz (2010), Mexican workers in our study were performing their socially constructed ethnic identity and contributing to the escalation of pressure to work faster so their jobs would be protected, not only as individuals but as a national group. Mexican workers constructed their identity as hard and competitive workers in relationship to other groups that they identified as potential threats. El Zorro provides his insight:

We Mexicans, we do it [work hard and compete with others] simply because we are Mexican. You know, for a Mexican, no one can beat me. This is the mentality of a Mexican... So the boss just says, "You just give Mexicans a push and they themselves kill themselves working." There is no need to herd them. The Mexican is number one in the world – remember this! The boss never says to a Mexican "hey, hey". No way. Because

he says that it's just by nature that a Mexican would have to beat everyone. So when the boss receives Mexicans he can relax. Because when Blacks come it's not the same.

Mexicans saw themselves as the most experienced, toughest, and fastest workers, while they saw Jamaicans as slow and inconsistent and Guatemalans as inexperienced. Mexicans do not only present themselves to recruiters and employers as "ideal workers" but they also see themselves as such. Reacting to his employer's threat to replace Mexican workers with Guatemalan or Caribbean workers, Gabriel challenges him:

'Well, what are you waiting for? Bring them. If you think that they will produce more, then bring them. Why don't you do it?' There are farms that are complaining about the Guatemalans for the same reason. I mean, there *are* differences. If you try to ask the blacks to work at the same rhythm that the Mexican works, they won't."

Ironically, while trying to secure their own employment, workers participate in the overall escalation of pressure and the increase in labour insecurity. Thus, migrants become caught in a vicious circle whereby they contribute to the deterioration of their own working conditions which, in its turn, forces them to work even faster (Binford 2013: 57). In this climate, workers' solidarity and collective organization are extremely difficult to achieve (Mysyk et al. 2008: 392). Migrants who attempt to challenge the disciplinary power of the two migration management programs are fired by the employers and removed from the programs by consular officials or recruitment organizations (Basok, Bélanger, and Rivas 2013). However, as discussed in the following section, despite the obstacles, collective "performances of defiance" have also taken place.

### PERFORMANCES OF DEFIANCE

Given the sanctions imposed on migrant workers who dare to challenge their employers, it is hardly surprising that among the migrants we interviewed in Leamington who were still employed in one of the two programs in 2010 and 2011, hardly anyone had engaged in individual or collective performances of defiance. Consequently, the collective action discussed in this section is based on secondary data, our previous research (Basok 2002) or our participant observation at the Pilgrimage to Freedom March.

In the town of Leamington workers organized two wildcat strikes. The first one took place in 2001 and the second in 2003. In both cases, migrant workers denounced exploitative work (particularly the piece-

work payment system in the case of the 2003 strike) and inadequate living conditions. In the first case, 21 workers identified as the ringleaders were deported. In the second case, 30 of the total of 60 Mexican workers were sent home, yet, they were able to return to Canada to work on a different farm (Basok 2002: 148-149; Becerril 2007: 168-170; Encalada 2006).

Another instance of collective action involved a 2010 50-km march called the 'Pilgrimage to Freedom: Breaking the Chains of Indenture-ship' between Leamington and Windsor. Over 150 migrants and their supporters participated in this march organized by temporary migrant workers with a help of a grassroots organization called *Justicia for Migrant Workers*. The March called for changes in the program, including demands for permanent residency and citizenship status, an end to repatriations and deportations, labour law reform, and equal access to social entitlements (<http://www.justicia4migrantworkers.org/ontario/pilgrimage2/pilgrimage.html>).

Another example of migrants' performance of defiance involves a formation of a migration organization in Guatemala, called the Association of Guatemalans United for Their Rights (or AGUND). Started by some twenty-five former and repatriated migrant workers in 2010, the association grew to over sixty "blacklisted" workers by 2011. Among AGUND's objectives are the defense of the rights of workers blacklisted from the program to re-enter the program, the promotion of changes in the administration of the program. On September 1st, 2010, AGUND staged a large-scale protest in Guatemala City. With the support of UFCW Canada and other Canadian and transnational migrant rights organizations, hundreds of Guatemalan migrant workers took to the streets of Guatemala City, marching to the Canadian embassy, protesting the discrimination and mistreatment migrants had faced under the program. Most of these workers had been fired, repatriated, and blacklisted, some for having challenged the power of their employers. The protestors hoped to raise awareness concerning their plight among the program administrators and voice protest against the exploitative aspects of the program (Valarezo and Hughes 2012; UFCW 2014).

The above-mentioned examples do not exhaust the list of performances of defiance taken by migrant workers in Canada to challenge the power of the employers and of the administrators of the program to impose exploitative conditions on the workers, pressure them to increase their productivity, expose them to occupational hazards, and deport them if they do not meet these demands. By engaging in these forms of activism migrant workers illustrate that their performances of subjectivities are not limited to the forms of self-discipline but they are capable of con-

structing themselves as subjects with rights and power to change their conditions. In the last section, we will discuss yet another response to the disciplinary power of the two migration management programs, that is, escape from it.

### PERFORMANCES OF ESCAPE

As some researchers and activists have argued, state-produced vulnerability pushes some SAWP (and other migrant) workers into abandoning their legal status in order to protect their lives or integrity (McLaughlin and Hennebry 2013). These workers engage in what we call “performances of escape.” Stan Raper, an organizer with the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Canada observes:

The guest worker programs... force people to go AWOL [absent without leave] and become undocumented workers... They assign workers to one individual employer. If that employer is an asshole, then their life is hell for the next umpteen months while they're working there. And there's no escape, there's no appeal process, there's nothing. The only escape is to go AWOL or to go home... They need to make money, and therefore their only option is to go AWOL and become undocumented workers (Interview with Stan Raper by Kerry Preibisch 2007: 124).

In response to the growing pressure placed on the migrants to increase productivity and threats of being replaced by other workers, some migrants subverted the disciplinary power of this regime by dropping out. Gracian explained his decision to drop out:

Then I feel pressured about the farm work, and I say “Well. I want to try my hardest; I want to work.” But they continue to pressure, and I think it is better that I disappear, that I go to another place. I start to work there – however I can – under the table.

In this study we interviewed eight unauthorized migrants who had once worked in one of the two programs. All of them chose to liberate themselves from the constraints imposed by the temporary migration programs and the unbalanced power granted to employers. It is noteworthy that El Zorro, who saw himself as a “tiger” and engaged in competitive games on the farm in order to come out the best was among the eight “drop-outs.” In his case, his decision to leave the program was a result of his boss’ threat to deny him future employment, following El Zorro’s insubordination. Growers strictly prohibit migrant workers to form sexual relationships with other workers or with Canadian residents (Preibisch



and Encalada 2010: 305; Becerril 2007: 170). Not only had El Zorro broken the rule by spending a night with a woman, he also overslept. When he showed up for work after 9 a.m. (at least two hours later than expected), his boss told him that he would not request him in the following year. El Zorro responded that in that case, he was going to stay in Canada. Instead of boarding a plane to return to Mexico, he took a bus and came back to Leamington.

Marianita is a Mexican woman who was employed through SAWP to work in Canada as a seasonal worker for six years. Over the six years she witnessed sexual harassment, unhealthy working conditions, and was asked to perform extra-contractual duties (e.g. clean her owner's house). She complained to the Mexican consulate and the Mexican Ministry of Labour but each of her complaints was ignored. During the last season she was treated unfairly by the supervisor. The supervisor assigned lighter duties to women who were willing to have sexual relations with him. But Marianita ignored his sexual advances and as a result was always asked to perform heavier tasks. Additionally, Marianita was often hazardous work activities without adequate protection. When she attempted to question his practices, the supervisor would assign her work that was even heavier. Exasperated by the situation, she deserted her employer and began to work without authorization. Marianita explains her decision:

I started opening up my eyes more this year and I was saying to myself, "they are not going to manipulate me; nor are they going to try to do the same to me as to others, that is, pressure me to go out with them and punish me if I refuse." So I told the supervisor, "If you want, punish me but then I will report you. And I am not going to report you to the Ministry of Labour but to the boss." So he started getting really mad at me and giving me heavy work. So, what I had to do is leave the job. I didn't have support either from the Ministry of Labour or from the Mexican Consulate. What was left for me to do? It was best to escape. So if you don't have anyone's help, you say, "I better go somewhere else where I will be treated better". So unfortunately I had to leave my job precisely because there was so much manipulation there.

Norma's story provides another interesting illustration. Norma, a Guatemalan woman, was hired to work in a mushroom plant near Guelph, Ontario. Soon after her arrival, she and her co-workers realized that they were earning considerably less than the amount specified in the contract. Many unanticipated deductions, such as high rent and telephone and uniforms costs, made dents in their salaries. Furthermore, claiming that the company was near bankruptcy, the managers began to send migrant

workers home, starting with a group of some one-hundred Mexicans of whom all but eight were repatriated. The Guatemalan workers were beginning to feel insecure about their employment. Although the IOM, the agency that recruits Guatemalan workers for the province of Ontario, had explicitly prohibited migrant workers to make contact with Canadian unions or any other activists, Norma disobeyed their orders. When most Guatemalan workers were told that their contracts were terminated, she discussed her situation with members of a grassroots migrant rights organization. These activists explained to Norma that she was not obligated to return to Guatemala when her contract was terminated because her Canadian working visa had not expired. They promised to help her with housing and jobs if she chose to stay behind. Encouraged with the promise of assistance, Norma stayed in Canada and eventually moved to Leamington where she was able to find a job. Unlike Marianita, Norma did not leave her employer out of her own accord. Her contract was terminated. However, instead of returning to Guatemala and requesting a new assignment, she chose to drop out of the program. Norma thus rebelled against the subordination that was structurally embedded in this temporary migration program. Like El Zorro and Marianita, she remained in Canada in defiance of the established rules. Similarly to unauthorized migrants in the U.S. who expressed their defiance with a slogan “¡Aquí Estamos, y No Nos Vamos!” (“Here we are and we are not going away”) during the 2006 mass demonstrations (De Genova 2010), El Zorro, Marianita, Norma and other similar migrants challenged the exclusive right of Canadian employers and the state to determine who is allowed to stay and work in Canada, and for how long by escaping from deportation.

## CONCLUSION

Human mobility is disciplined by a number of state and non-state actors using a variety of techniques. In this article we have explored three technologies of disciplining seasonal agricultural migrants in Canada: deportation, replacement, and the regulation of working hours. Furthermore, we suggested that it is important to explore migrants' subjectivities within this disciplinary regime and the way these subjectivities are performed. In this article we discussed three possible ways in which migrant workers' subjectivities can be performed, namely performances of self-discipline, defiance, and escape. The performance of self-discipline include the “techniques of the self” that produce productive and docile subjects as well as techniques of disciplining other through “hierarchical

observation.” The performance of defiance comprises various forms of individual or collective action that aims to undermine the disciplinary power of the two migration management programs. And finally, the performance of escape is illustrated by migrants dropping out of the programs and remaining in the country without authorization to live or work there. With respect to the latter, it is important to recognize that by escaping from the disciplinary power of the migration management programs, migrants re-ascribe themselves to the disciplinary power of another regime. As unauthorized workers, they often find themselves working on the same or similar farms that hire program workers and they are still required to be productive and obedient, despite the migrants’ perceived freedom to change employers. Furthermore, when migrants lose legal status in Canada, they submit themselves to the disciplinary power of immigration authorities to deport them if caught. In other words, for non-citizens migrants, such as temporary migrant workers or unauthorized migrants, it is extremely difficult to challenge the disciplinary power of migration regimes without risking severe consequences (e.g. deportation and/or loss of income). Within this context, it is the responsibility of civil society supporters (e.g. migrant rights activists, labour organizations, researchers) to attempt to dismantle this disciplinary regime.

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Table 1. Temporary Mexican migrant workers in agriculture in Ontario

|      | Arrivals | %<br>Nominated | %<br>Repatriations | %<br>AWOL |
|------|----------|----------------|--------------------|-----------|
| 2003 | 7405     | 57.1%          | 6.8%               | 0.9%      |
| 2004 | 7219     | 64.8%          | 5.9%               | 0.5%      |
| 2005 | 7341     | 75.2%          | 5.6%               | 0.7%      |
| 2006 | 7806     | 76.0%          | 4.7%               | 0.6%      |
| 2007 | 8211     | 75.1%          | 4.8%               | 0.6%      |
| 2008 | 8475     | 65.3%          | 4.9%               | 0.6%      |
| 2009 | 8124     | 85.2%          | 4.1%               | 0.5%      |
| 2010 | 8182     | 88.1%          | 4.1%               | 0.2%      |
| 2011 | 8281     | 90.2%          | 4.3%               | 0.2%      |
| 2012 | 8820     | 85.5%          | 4.8%               | 0.1%      |

Source: Unpublished data provided to authors by Service Canada.

Nominated: Workers who are recalled from a previous year by their employer.

AWOL: Absent without official leave. This refers to workers who desert their workplace.

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