

Tomorrow We're All Going to the Harvest: Temporary Foreign Worker Programs and Neoliberal Political Economy (Joe R. and Teresa Lozano Long Series in Latin American and L)

Leigh Binford

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From its inception in 1966, the Canadian Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP) has grown to employ approximately 20,000 workers annually, the majority from Mexico. The program has been hailed as a model that alleviates human rights concerns because, under contract, SAWP workers travel legally, receive health benefits, contribute to pensions, are represented by Canadian consular officials, and rate the program favorably. Tomorrow We're All Going to the Harvest takes us behind the ideology and examines the daily lives of SAWP workers from Tlaxcala, Mexico (one of the leading sending states), observing the great personal and family price paid in order to experience a temporary rise in a standard of living. The book also observes the disparities of a gutted Mexican countryside versus the flourishing agriculture in Canada, where farm labor demand remains high.

Drawn from extensive surveys and nearly two hundred interviews, ethnographic work in Ontario (destination of over 77 percent of migrants in the author's sample), and quantitative data, this is much more than a case study; it situates the Tlaxcala-Canada exchange within the broader issues of migration, economics, and cultural currents. Bringing to light the historical genesis of "complementary" labor markets and the contradictory positioning of Mexican government representatives, Leigh Binford also explores the language barriers and nonexistent worker networks in Canada, as well as the physical realities of the work itself, making this book a complete portrait of a provocative segment of migrant labor.



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