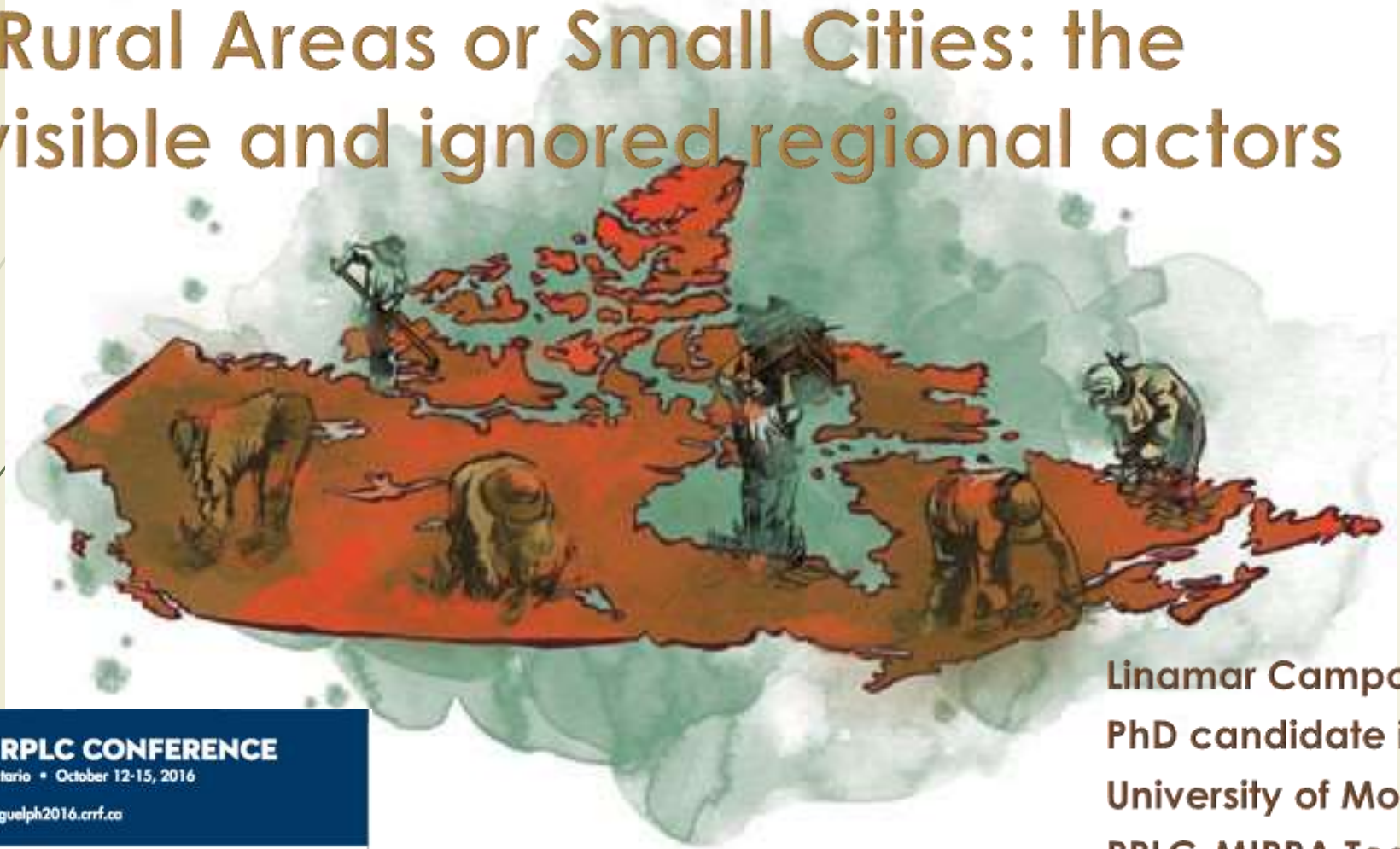


Agricultural Temporary Foreign Workers in Rural Areas or Small Cities: the invisible and ignored regional actors



Linamar Campos-Flores
PhD candidate in Human Geography
University of Montreal
RPLC-MIRRA Team support
Fellow of the FQR-SC

2016 CRRF RPLC CONFERENCE
Guelph, Ontario • October 12-15, 2016
guelph2016.crrf.ca



Canadian Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program & Agricultural Stream of the Temporary Foreign Workers Program

CSAWP - TFWP

- CSAWP – Agreement between the Mexican and the Canadian governments signed in 1974

It is a formal program of “managed” circular migration. It facilitates the temporary migration of Caribbean and Mexican agricultural workers into Canada to meet fruit, vegetable and horticulture (FVH) growers' demand for low-skilled labour (Brem, 2002)

- TFWP – Agreement between the International Organization for Immigration (IOM) and F.E.R.M.E. (Fondation des Entreprises pour le Recrutement de la Main d'œuvre étrangère) Québec

It is the agricultural stream created as a « pilot program » to bring in people from other Latin-American countries, particularly Guatemala. F.E.R.M.E. - Quebec is the main user of this program.

Modifications June 2014*

Cosmetic changes:

- ▶ High skilled = High wage
- ▶ Low skilled = Low wage
- ▶ Adjustments were made to "avoid that employers abuse of the program":
 - ▶ "Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) process is more comprehensive and rigorous" and goes from 275\$ to 1000\$
 - ▶ The work permit validity is reduced from 2 to 1 year
 - ▶ Government seeks to gradually diminish the number of low wage workers :
 - ▶ Transition from 20% (July 2015) to 10% in July 2016
 - ▶ The "four in and four out" rule (came into effect on April 1, 2015)

Recommandations, September 2016

House of Commons

RECOMMENDATION 14

- ▶ That Employment and Social Development Canada take immediate steps to eliminate the requirement for an employer-specific work permit; provided that it implement appropriate measures to ensure temporary foreign labour is only utilized within the existing provisions of the Labour Market Impact Assessment process, including sector and geographic restrictions.

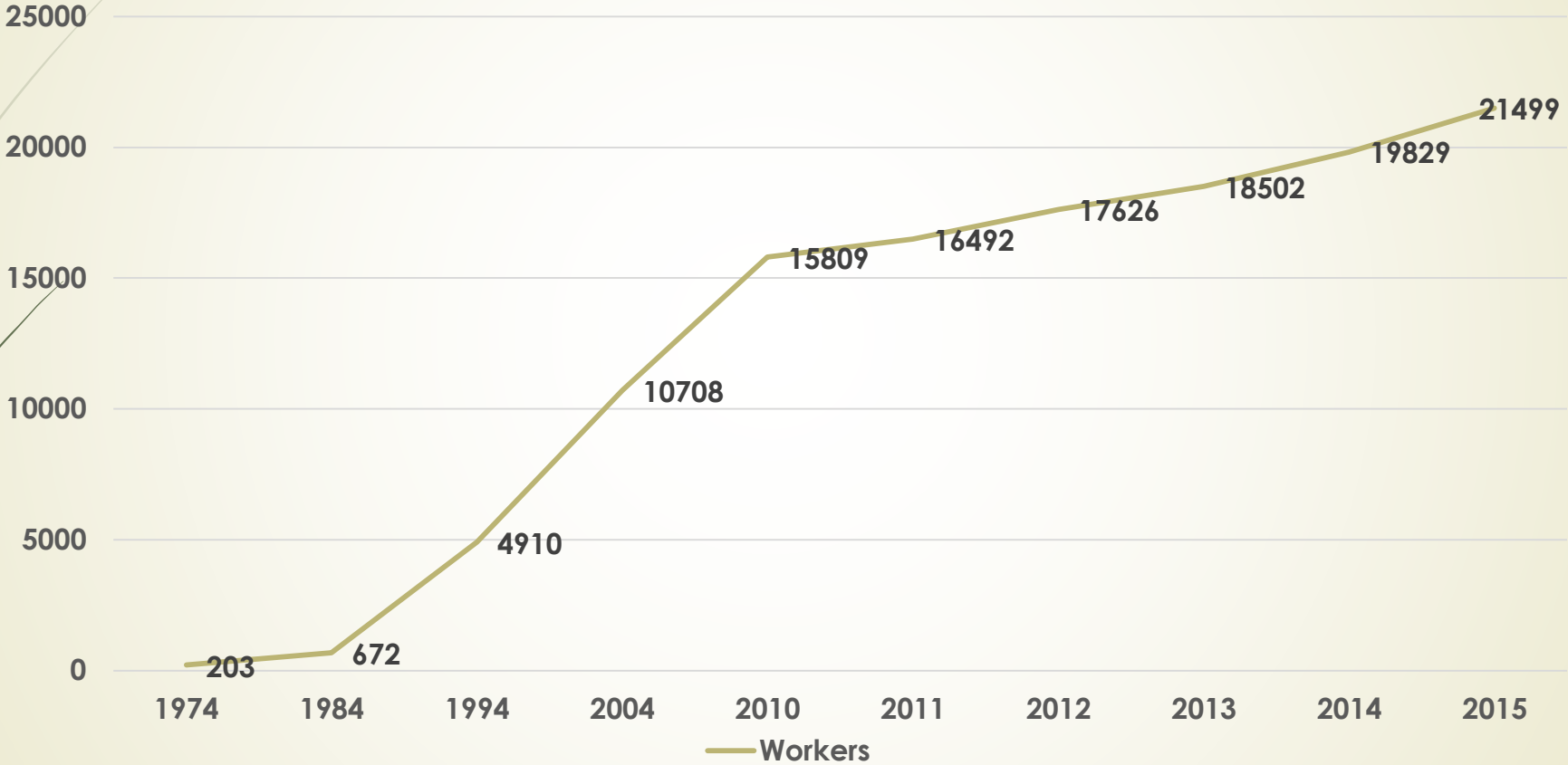
RECOMMENDATION 15

- ▶ That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada provide multiple entry work visas for temporary foreign workers employed in seasonal work, with the objective of allowing these individuals greater mobility during off-seasons; that when a work visa is extended, the multiple entry visa must also be extended so workers can continue to enter and leave Canada.

RECOMMENDATION 18

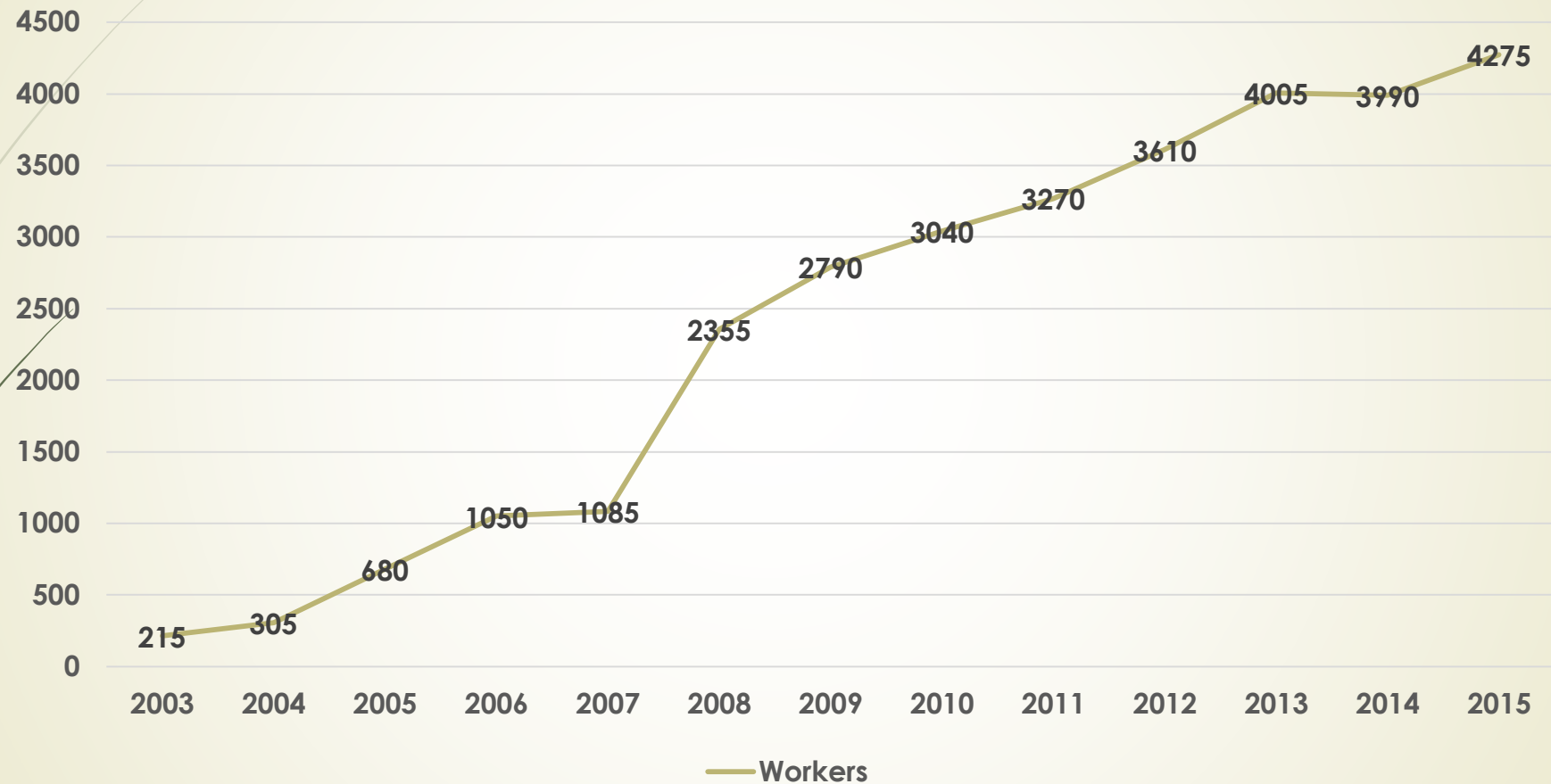
- ▶ That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations to remove the relevant provisions with respect to the “cumulative duration” rule (Four in - Four out)

Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (México) 1974-2015



Source: Ministry of Labour, Mexico 2016

TWFP-Agricultural Stream Guatemala 2003-2015



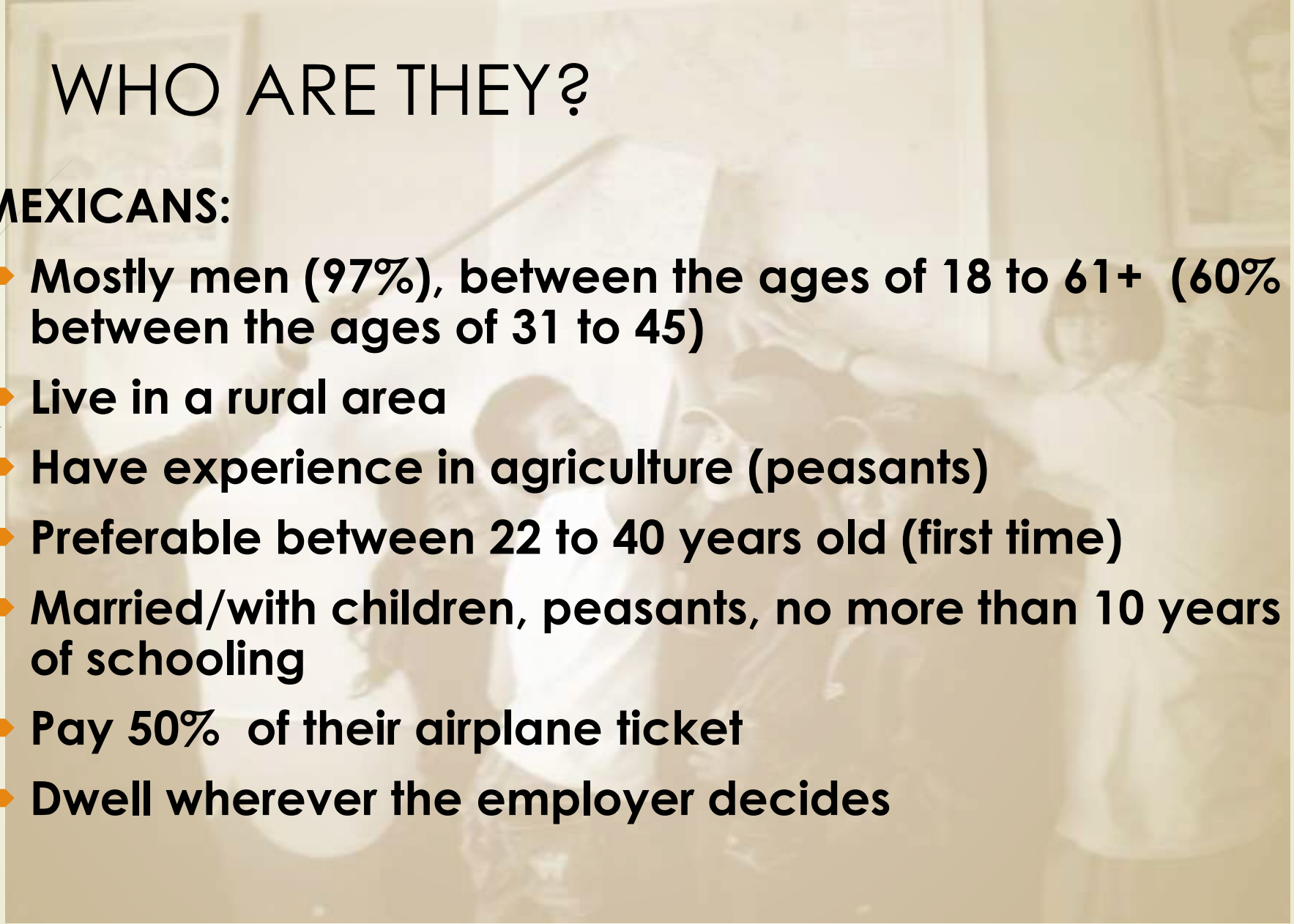
Source: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.

Note: People with a work permit emitted during the same year, which could mean the presence of more workers with a permit issued the previous year



WHO ARE THEY?

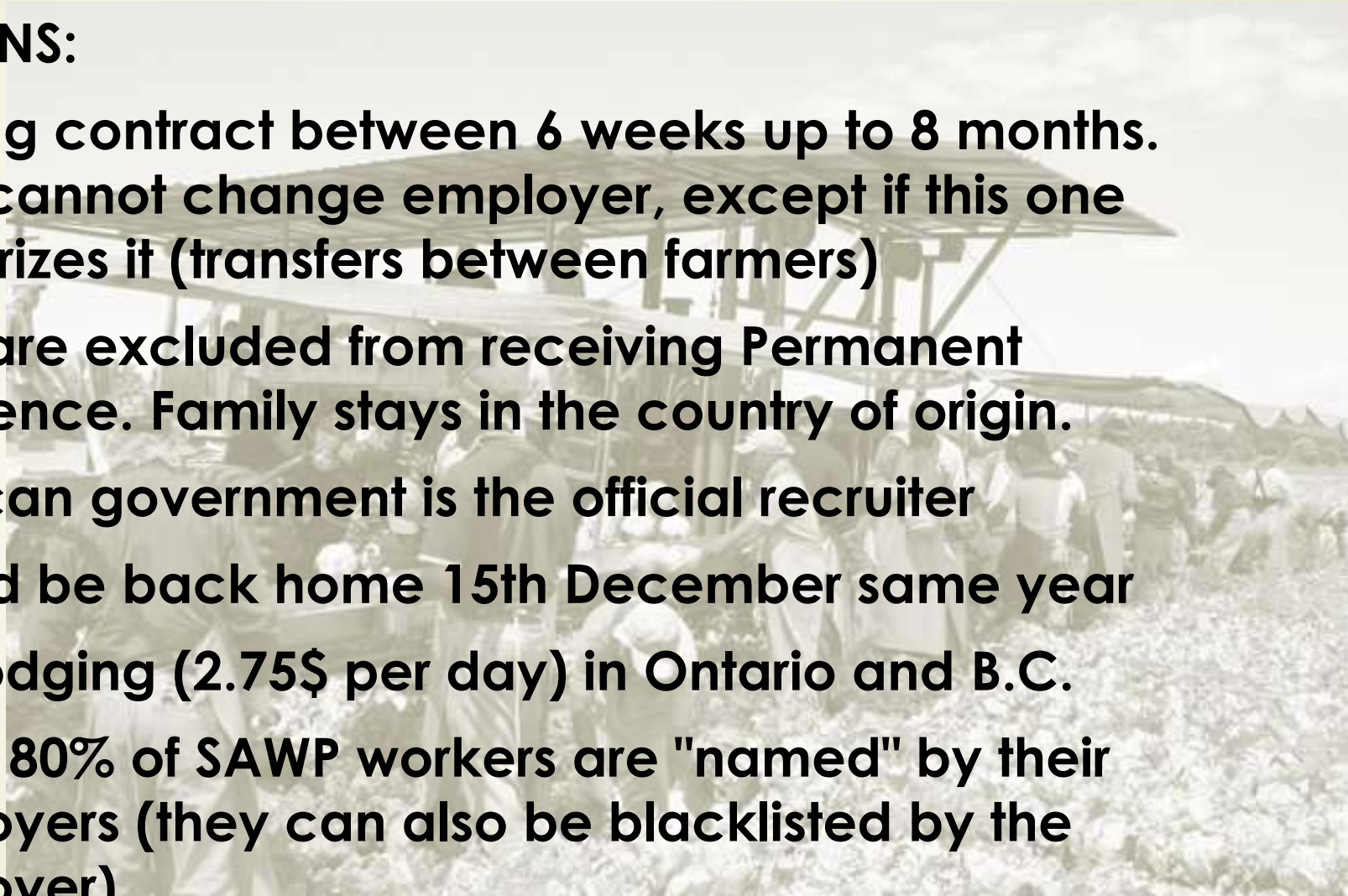
MEXICANS:

- **Mostly men (97%), between the ages of 18 to 61+ (60% between the ages of 31 to 45)**
 - **Live in a rural area**
 - **Have experience in agriculture (peasants)**
 - **Preferable between 22 to 40 years old (first time)**
 - **Married/with children, peasants, no more than 10 years of schooling**
 - **Pay 50% of their airplane ticket**
 - **Dwell wherever the employer decides**
- 

Who are they?

MEXICANS:

- ▶ **Binding contract between 6 weeks up to 8 months. They cannot change employer, except if this one authorizes it (transfers between farmers)**
- ▶ **They are excluded from receiving Permanent Residence. Family stays in the country of origin.**
- ▶ **Mexican government is the official recruiter**
- ▶ **Should be back home 15th December same year**
- ▶ **Pay lodging (2.75\$ per day) in Ontario and B.C.**
- ▶ **Some 80% of SAWP workers are "named" by their employers (they can also be blacklisted by the employer)**



Who are they?

GUATEMALTECS:

- ▶ **Mostly men (94%), between 18 and 45 years old**
- ▶ **Married/with children, peasants, no more than 10 years of schooling , 80% aboriginal people**
- ▶ **Binding contract from 6 weeks until 12 months (4x4 Ruling)***
- ▶ **Pay the lodging (45\$ per week)**
- ▶ **The employer pays the plane ticket**

*It means that they can only accumulate four years working in Canada, and once that happens, They should « rest » during four years to come back




WHO ARE THEY?

GUATEMALTECS:

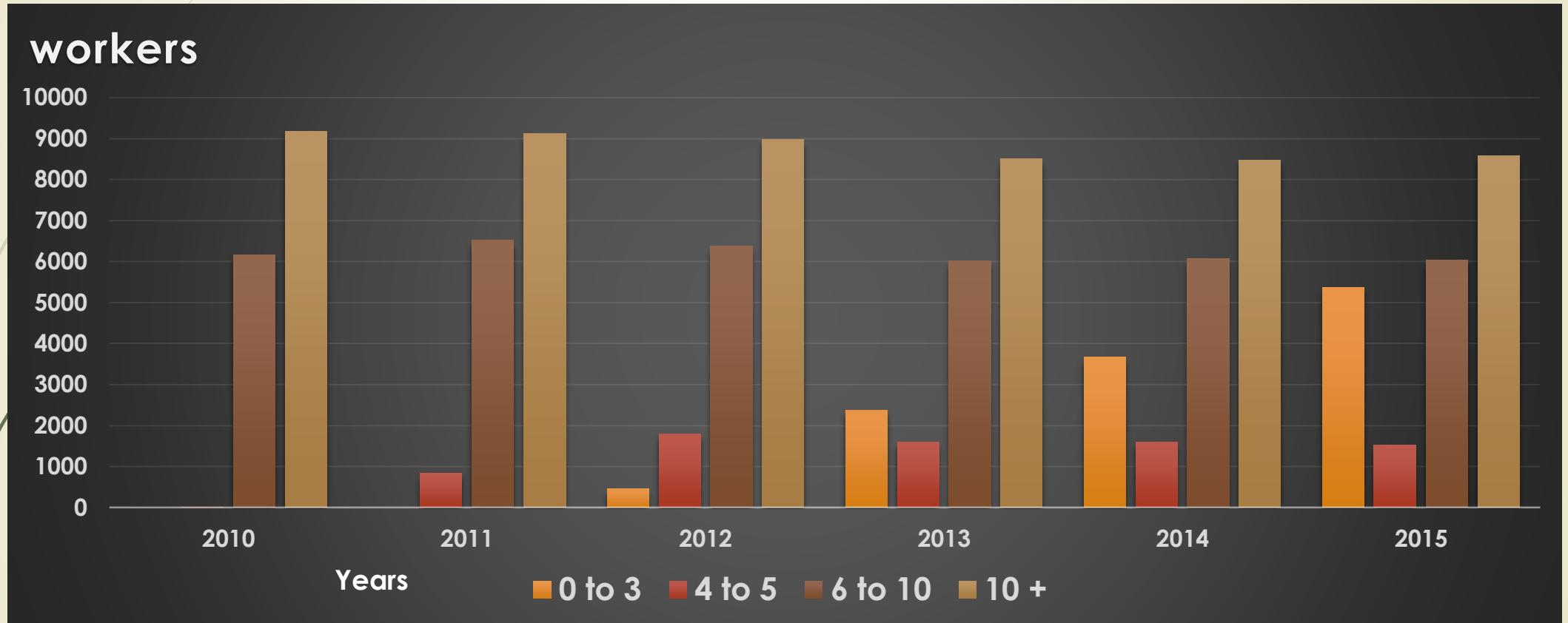
- ▶ They could theoretically change employer, but without networks or support they cannot do it
- ▶ Most workers live at or near the employer's residence.
- ▶ They are also excluded from receiving Permanent Residence. Family stays in the country of origin.
- ▶ They are predominantly hired in Quebec
- ▶ Recruited through agencies (*Amigo Laboral, Comuguate-CDR, Human Ressources Outsourcing, ACADEC, ACADECGUA*)



WHERE ARE THEY?

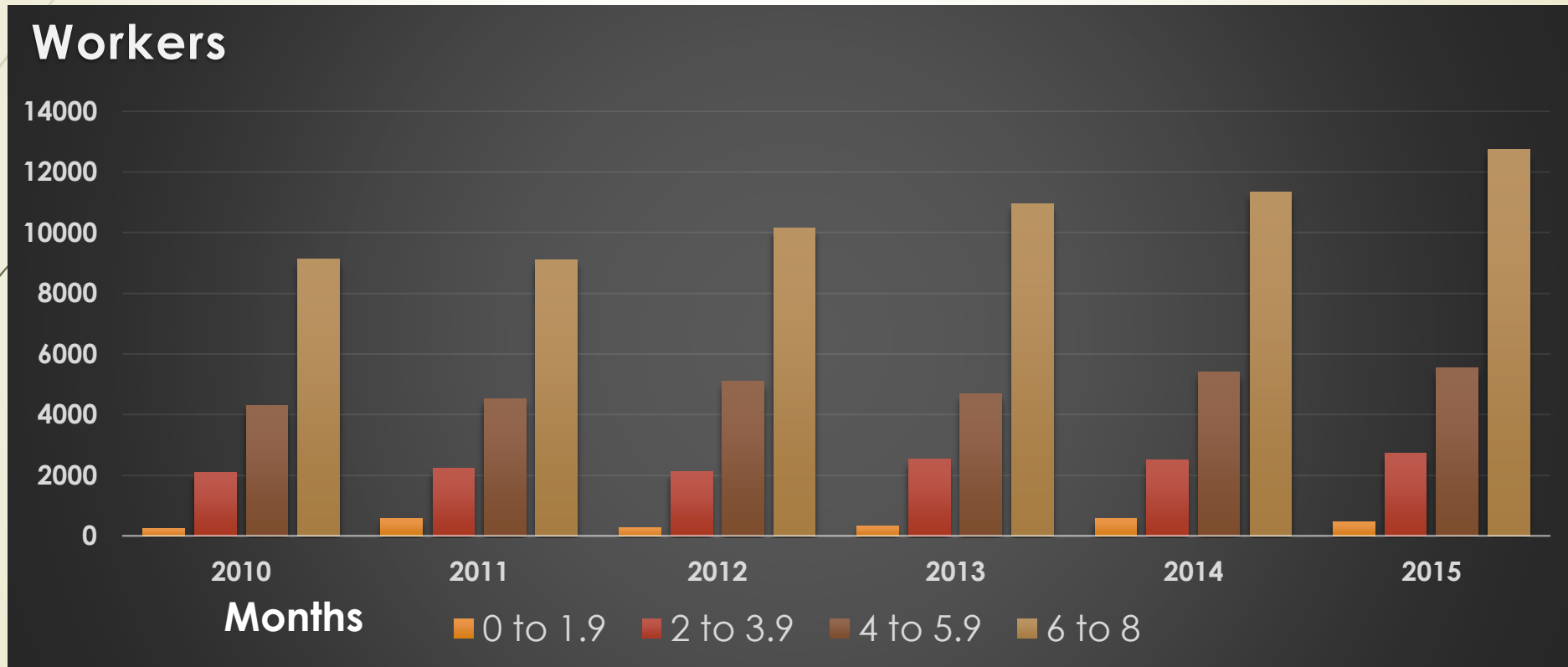
- 
- ▶ **Quebec: Montérégie, Capitale Nationale, Estrie (Regions)**
 - ▶ St-Rémi, Shefford, Salaberry, l'Île d'Orléans, Portneuf, Waterville, Lennoxville.
 - ▶ **Ontario accounts for over 80% of all migrant farm workers**
 - ▶ They work particularly in Leamington, Simcoe, Waterford, Delhi, Essex, Niagara and Oxford

Years of participation in the SAWP 2010-2015



We have an average of 80 % workers with more than 6 years of participation

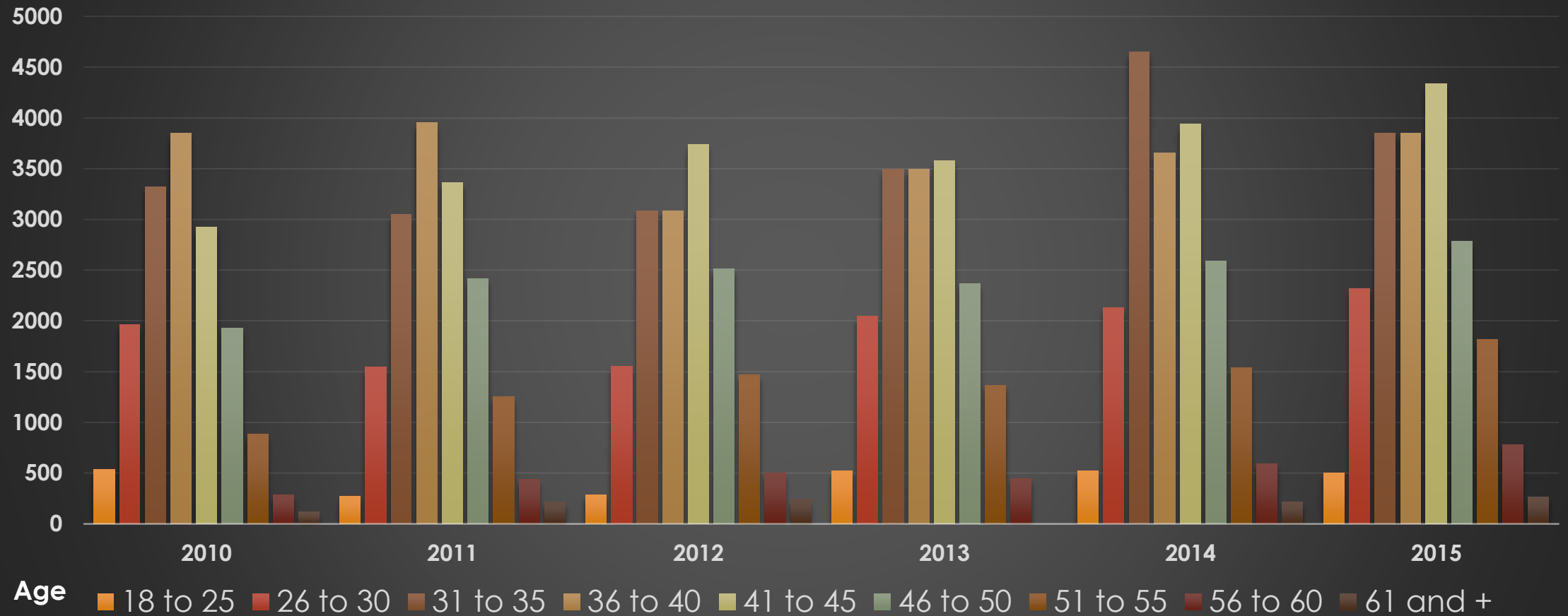
Contract length (in months)



Most workers (60%) come between 6 to 8 months yearly

Age range of Seasonal Agricultural Workers Mexico 2010-2015

Workers



METHODOLOGY

- 30 INTERVIEWS WITH WORKERS
- 12 INTERVIEWS WITH FAMILY MEMBERS
- 3 VILLAGES, 1 IN MEXICO AND 2 IN GUATEMALA
- THEY SHOULD HAVE COME AT LEAST 5 YEARS* (if not, the interview is over)
- WE MAKE OBSERVATION IN QUEBEC



*Minimum of 5 years was judged to be sufficient time to evaluate impacts on families (Wells et al., 2012)

Economic Impacts

- ➔ ***“The SAWP is thus a very important factor underpinning about \$5.4 billion* in economic impact in Ontario (in 2014)” (F.A.R.M.S. 2014)***
- ➔ ***“ Between 2003 and 2008 the TFWP has generated \$57,7 Million* ” (Consulate of Guatemala, 2009)***
- ➔ ***“For each \$7 Mexican pesos (MX) the Mexican government invests, it gets \$93 MX back... 152.6\$ Million* in 2010” (Muñoz 2012)***

*Canadian dollars



EMOTIONS DEFINED AS:

- ▶ “Emotions are considered both as phenomena of affective life (feelings, emotions, moods, sensations) and as a mode of collective and social approach (practices, representations, norms, values, ethos, stratification, etc.) which have a reciprocal influence on our spatial concept of the world, our spatial interactions and our relationship to territory.” Bernard et al. (2011)
- ▶ «Les émotions étant considérées à la fois comme des **phénomènes de la vie affective** (sentiments, affects, humeurs, sensations), comme un **mode d'approche des collectifs et du social** (pratiques, représentations, normes, valeurs, ethos, stratification, etc.) qui ont **une influence réciproque** sur notre notion spatiale du monde, nos interactions spatiales et notre rapport au territoire» Bernard et al (2011)

When not working...
Where are they?





NO ACCOMPANING SERVICES

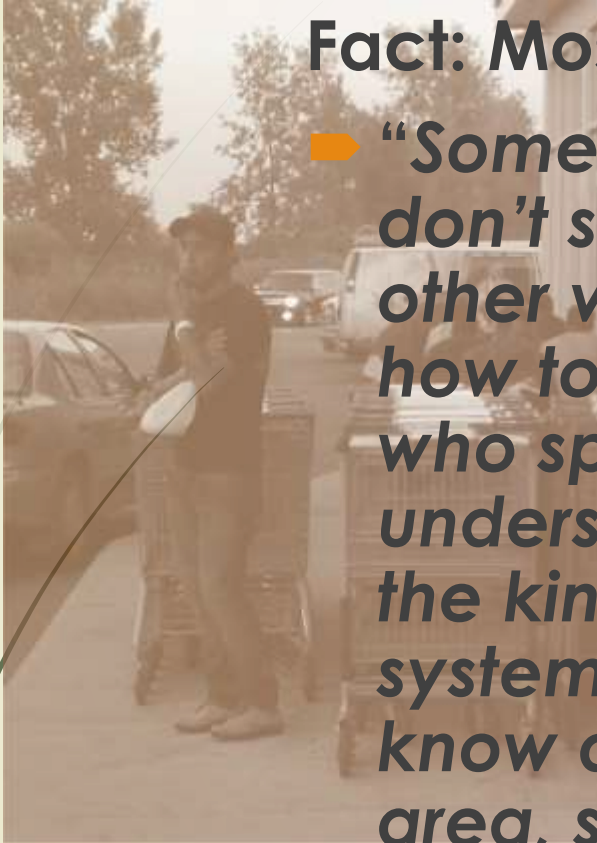


➤ **THERE IS NOT ACCOMPANING SERVICES FOR THIS CATEGORY OF WORKERS**

➤ **"We have an agreement with the Ministry of Immigration, so we receive refugees, high skilled workers, permanent residents, international students... but no, we don't have services for agricultural temporary foreign workers..." Mercedes Orellana, SANC, Sherbrooke**

➤ ***"it's a kind of understanding that they (the employers) will look after us... someone takes us to the bank, to obtain the health card, to do groceries...we need to wait until they decide to take us to the doctor, which is unbearable when you have had an accident or feel really sick, but we don't have a choice... We have been told that we shouldn't receive support from other people, notably those related with Unions or Support Centers..." (Nico, TFWP)***

LINGUISTIC BARRIER

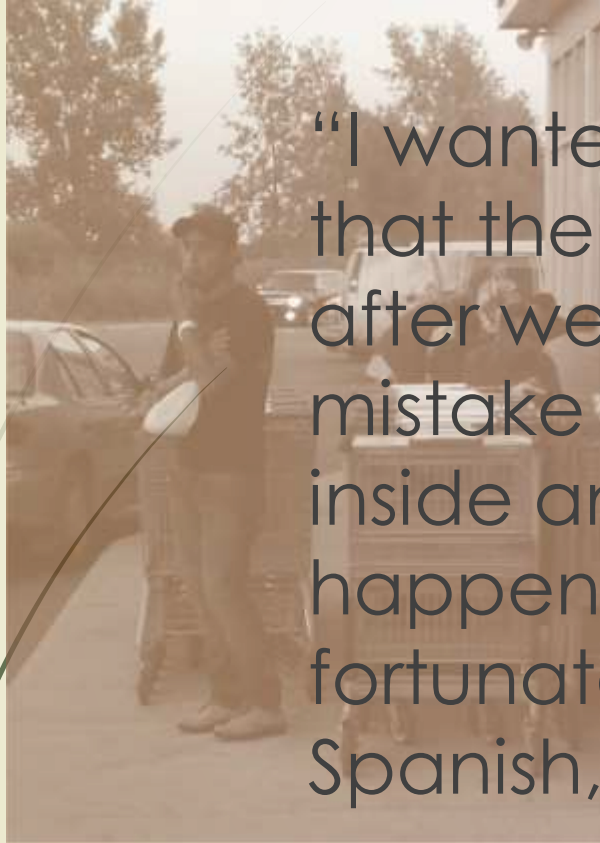


Fact: Most Workers don't speak English nor French

▶ ***“Sometimes we receive agricultural workers who don't speak French...They come from Compton or other villages around Coaticook. We don't know how to serve them, because we don't have people who speak Spanish and most of the time we cannot understand what they need... another thing is that the kind of card they have doesn't go through the system... if I am present, I can be helpful because I know a little Spanish, but, you know this is a rural area, so our resources are limited... nobody has explained to us what to do in these cases...”***

(A functionary of the Health System in Quebec)

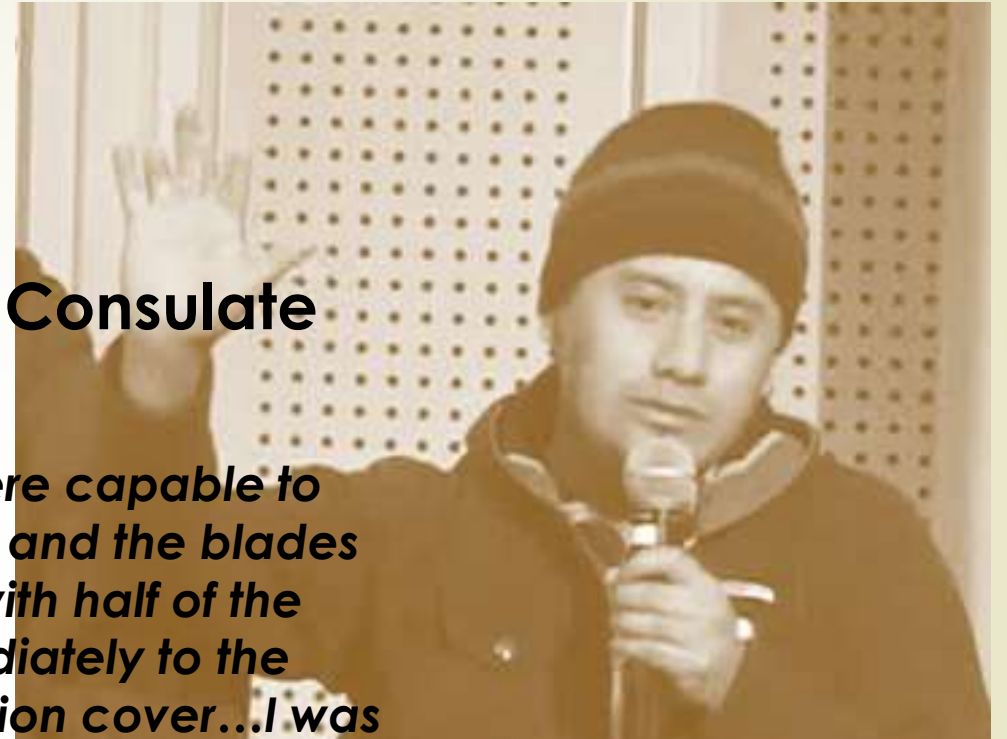
LINGUISTIC BARRIER



“I wanted to change my NIP, because I noticed that the accountant was jotting down each NIP after we have obtained our bank card... I made a mistake and the ATM retained the card... I went inside and tried to explained what was happened... nobody understood me... fortunatelly a client –a woman- knew a little of Spanish, so she helped me...” Noé, ex ATFW

No confidence in the Employer nor the Consulate

“The machine hadn’t the protection cover, so we were capable to work faster... I sent the broccoli in a wrong direction and the blades cut the tip of my fingers (he showed the right hand with half of the fingers left)... The boss didn’t want to take me immediately to the doctor, he was more concern replacing the protection cover...I was taken to the hospital by the people from the Support Center. Later, when we explained to the Consul that our employer wasn’t behaving as expected he said that I was exaggerating and wanted to send me back home immediately... the boss and the insurance company didn’t want to pay the insurance arguing that I did it intentionally, and the Consul didn’t help me... I am a musician in Guatemala, how could I have wanted to cut the fingers of my right hand? (Pedro, 28 years old, Guatemalan ex AFW)



Unknown tragedies

✦ The empathy-sympathy of co-workers is not enough

“I remember this young fellow... he came once to the Church, because he was feeling home sick... Some of his companions said later that he cried in different occasions because he wanted to go back home, but he owed the money he used to come here to work, and that would dishonor him, so they encouraged him to continue... he was found drowned in the pond, he tied a stone to his feet... there has been two or three cases of suicide here...” (Manuel, religious volunteer, St-Remi)



Why Emotions Matter...



- ▶ **There is a contrast between material benefits and emotional costs... they risk to lose the cohesiveness of their families, when in paradox they are coming here because they want to ameliorate their quality of life**
- ▶ **Repeated and prolonged separation :**
 - ▶ **affects their security and their physical and psychological integrity**
 - ▶ **Tears and fissures family tissue**



Why Emotions Matter...

Diminishing, putting aside, ignoring, silencing:

- **Affective needs**
- **Sexual behavior (even less regarding women left behind)**
- **Addictions (alcohol, drugs and gaming)**
- **Suicidal thoughts, depression**
- **Disabling accidents, Death rate**
- **Malnutrition, excessive working hours**
- **Effects of the structural inequities and minimal rights on their health and well-being**



We cannot continue seen them as a 'labour commodity'. They are not lonely individuals, they are human beings with families that care for them, and they care for, too.