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Tortillas and Tomatoes. Transmigrant Mexican Harvesters in Canada. By Tanya Basok. (Montréal and Kingston, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002. Pp. 168, ISBN 0773523871)

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Conrad set out to inform against the family cell. This book is a good start, but there's more to tell yet.

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Tortillas and Tomatoes. Transmigrant Mexican Harvesters in Canada. By Tanya Basok. (Montréal and Kingston, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002. Pp. 168, ISBN 0773523871)

Basok's *Tortillas and Tomatoes* brings to light rich reflections on the problems facing Canadian agriculture, mostly in terms of committed labour shortages during specific time periods of the year. *Tomatoes and Tortillas* gets points for originality for dealing with Canada and Mexico, two countries that are rarely brought together despite the fact that exchanges of people, capital, and goods continue to expand. These two national realities are presented separately in the book, with the first part dealing more with the problems facing Canadian fresh produce agriculture and greenhouse production, while the second part analyses the migration of Mexican workers, their living conditions in Canada (Leamingford County, Ontario), and Mexican rural poverty. By the end of the book, any loose ends are tied as the author sheds light on the interdependence that has been cultivated between Canadian growers and offshore Caribbean and Mexican labour within the context of the government-led farm workers' program. Although this interdependence is not explicit in the text, the reader is led to understand how offshore labour programs offer mutual benefits (employment and income in exchange for committed labour in the fields), which allow both migrants and growers to gain while continuing to pursue their own individual interests.

Basok's deep understanding of the conditions met by migrant workers in Canadian fields has been carefully supplemented with an equally deep knowledge of the history of rural development in Mexico and the

situation that workers face back home. Thanks to her skilful intertwining of theory and fieldwork research, revealing related fragments of interviews conducted both in Canada and in Mexico, this book makes a solid contribution to the study of seasonal Mexican out-migration patterns and the dilemmas facing Canadian fresh produce growers. It undoubtedly counts among the essential readings on the new Canadian rural reality where growers are often left in the position of having to make difficult choices.

Nonetheless, it would have been hoped that the Canadian agricultural situation would have been assessed more critically, and without falling prey to the line of thinking that sees foreign labour flows as a permanent solution to labour shortages. One cannot help but see that the necessity of offshore programs may, in fact, be just a symptom of the despair of a marginalized Canadian economic sector, and wonder whether this type of "band-aid" solution can last.

The author presents offshore farm labour employment as a "structural necessity" for Canadian growers who are running short of labour in harvesting periods. As such, her use of structure-related terminology temporarily settles the above-mentioned question while obliterating the need to probe deeper in the search for answers. Structuralist explanations are often used in lieu of confronting historically-constructed realities that are hard to change or for which there exists no willpower to change. The use of the term "structural necessity", then, becomes satisfactory only if one means to say that if that specific condition is not fulfilled, the system will change. Offshore labour programs are therefore merely a temporary "band-aid" solution for a salient problem. If, on the other hand, we try to adopt a mid- or long-term vision of rural development in Canada, we can begin to address the question of the lack of interest on the part of Canadian labour in harvesting fruits and vegetables.

It has been argued by the author that the tight economic situation that some Canadian growers experience is responsible for the low salaries that they are willing to pay rural labourers. Although some growers argue that improving salaries would not prove to be a factor in attracting more committed labour, these claims can be described as debatable, at best. It seems more logical to say that the price that growers are being offered for their produce by middlemen and supermarket chains determines in large part the salaries that they are willing to pay, and, therefore, the type of labour pool available to them. Trying to answer

the question "How did we reach this point as a society?" would have provided some critical insight into the Canadian situation while bringing its values into question. Given the relatively cheap basic food basket in Canada, as compared with worldwide norms, another unanswered query that indicates the way for future of rural development research is: "Why do consumers pay so little for fresh produce while they are keeping growers in a price-cost squeeze?" In turn, this uncovers yet another uncertainty: "Why is there no national barrier in Canada to low-cost imported produce capable of protecting national agricultural production? And why is there no rule allowing for a better representation of locally-produced agricultural goods in our supermarkets?"

Judging from the questions generated through a careful reading of *Tortillas and Tomatoes*, it is obvious that Tanya Basok has touched upon a very important theme in the study of rural Canada. Her work has the potential to serve as a stepping stone for many others who would attempt to study ways in which the agricultural sector in Canada may be reformed. Turning to offshore programs may only be a means, on the part of the Canadian government, to avoid dealing with the problems of agricultural production at home, just as the interest of the Mexican government in sending migrant workers to Canada is the result of a search for pressure valves, and a way of postponing the inevitable need to deal with employment and rural development in Mexico.

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Empire et métissages. Indiens et Français dans le Pays d'en Haut, 1660-1715. Par Gilles Havard. (Sillery et Paris, Septentrion et Presses de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2003. Pp. 858, ISBN 2-84050-281-X)

L'expansion coloniale française en Amérique du Nord, à la fin du XVII^{e} siècle et au début du XVIII^{e} siècle, aboutit à l'émergence d'une nouvelle région : le Pays d'en Haut. Dans ce vaste territoire, qui s'étend du nord des Grands Lacs jusqu'au confluent du Mississipi et de la Missouri, les contacts entre Européens et Amérindiens sont nombreux et génèrent de multiples échanges, interactions et interdépendances. C'est la genèse de cet espace que décrit de manière tout à fait originale