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Mexican Migrant Farmworkers’ Impact on South Florida: A Case Study in the Context of US–Mexican Relations

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MEXICAN MIGRANT FARMWORKERS’ IMPACT ON SOUTH FLORIDA: A CASE STUDY IN THE CONTEXT OF US–MEXICAN RELATIONS

By

José Alberto Gaytán García

A DISSERTATION

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of the University of Miami
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Doctor of Philosophy

MEXICAN MIGRANT FARMWORKERS’ IMPACT ON SOUTH FLORIDA:
A CASE STUDY IN THE CONTEXT OF US–MEXICAN RELATIONS

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The purpose of the present research is to examine data and information on the situation of Mexican farmworkers in the South Florida agricultural industry and to explore their impact on the local economy and US–Mexican Relations. The study concentrates on the Homestead–Immokalee corridor of South Florida where, during the peak of the harvest from October to May, more than 20,000 Mexican farmworkers participate in the agricultural industry. The study found that in 2010, farmers in Florida sold agricultural commodities for more than $7.6 billion, creating a positive direct and indirect impact on the state's economy.

The Mexican farmworker labor force maintains Florida as a major contributor to the nation's food supply; however, no comprehensive studies have been done on its presence or economic contribution. These data are analyzed based on existing theory on migration, historical antecedents, and on new, descriptive information about Mexican farmworkers in South Florida. The study demonstrates that without the seasonal influx of migrant farm labor during peak periods, the multi-billion dollar agricultural production would not be possible. Thus, contrary to common perceptions that there is not a large presence nor economic contribution of Mexican farmworkers in South Florida, the present study shows that they are integral to the economy. There are more than 300,000 Mexican farmworkers in the entire state, positively participating not only in local and
state economies but also in Mexico’s economy. My evidence suggests that the lack of information and comprehensive studies on Mexican farmworkers in South Florida has contributed to a lack of knowledge and little political attention to this “invisible” labor force. Therefore, in many senses, the Mexican farmworkers have become America’s “forgotten Latinos.” I conclude that the issue calls for new, comprehensive, and better-formulated domestic and foreign policies that recognize the participation of Mexican farmworkers in South Florida and requires their full integration into American society.
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CHAPTER 1

SIGNIFICANCE AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

1.1. Overview

The purpose of the present investigation is to study the Mexican farmworkers who live in Florida’s Homestead–Immokalee corridor within the context of United States–Mexican relations. The Homestead area (including the small town of Florida City) is located approximately 30 miles south of Miami at the juncture of US 1 and Krome Avenue (State Highway 27) in Miami-Dade County. This area is one of the major agricultural centers in the United States, sometimes referred as “The Nation’s Winter Vegetable Garden.” The importance of the agricultural activity in the region attracts thousands of farmworkers each year who, combined with the local farm population, create one of the largest labor markets in Florida’s agricultural industry.

The town of Immokalee is located on the Gulf Coast, 120 miles northwest of Homestead in Collier County. This rural town is also one of the largest state agricultural centers and employs thousands of farmworkers in the diverse agricultural activities of the region. These two important agricultural centers create what I call, for the purpose of the present study, the Homestead–Immokalee corridor of South Florida (see Figure 1.1). During the peak of the harvest season (from October to May), thousands of farmworkers travel between the two places to pick tomatoes and fresh vegetables produced in the region. Many others also travel between Homestead and Immokalee to trade vegetable commodities.
Within the framework of US–Mexican relations, this interesting agricultural connection has created a highly suitable academic setting to investigate the diverse angles and implications contained in the research questions addressed in this study.

Figure 1.1. Homestead–Immokalee Corridor
The corridor is one of the largest agricultural centers in the state and provides employment for thousands of workers from Mexico, Central America, Haiti, the Caribbean, and the United States. In addition, the corridor helps keep Florida a major agricultural force and contributes to Florida’s multibillion-dollar agricultural industry. For example, Florida ranked first in the US for production of oranges and ranked second in the production of sugarcane for sugar, vegetables, melons, potatoes, sweet potatoes, fruits, tree nuts and berries.¹ Florida’s agricultural industry is one of the three most important sources of income, allowing the state to be ranked as the nation's seventh leading agricultural state in value of products sold, with annual farm sales totaling 7.6 billion dollars in 2010.²

The connection here between the extent of the Florida agricultural industry and the issue of the farmworkers is very simple, in my opinion. Since the majority of the crops and vegetables are planted and harvested through human labor, without the farmworkers, it would not be possible to support the multibillion-dollar agricultural industry. In other words, the Mexican farmworker group in the corridor is indispensable to keeping Florida a major agricultural force and contributing to a solid economic base for the state.

Another important consideration regarding the significance of the present study is related to the predictions that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) signed with Mexico and Canada in 1994 would decrease emigration from Mexico to the United States. Almost seventeen years later, the trend appears to be that flows of

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immigration to the United States and Florida will not diminish for at least two basic reasons: First, the average Mexican worker does not have the technical skills required for industrial workers who are well-paid by foreign companies operating in Mexico under NAFTA; and second, the number of jobs that were created under this treaty did not meet the labor demands of the Mexican economy. Simply stated, the Mexican government did not adequately train its workers and peasants with the right set of skills to meet the prerequisites of these better paying jobs. Moreover, most foreign companies that arrived in the country settled near the northern border, in large cities and in port areas—in other words, far from rural communities that export farmworkers to the United States. For these reasons, NAFTA has not stopped the migratory flow towards “El Norte,” and it does not seem that it will in the coming years.

The serious security situation facing Mexico due to the war against the drug cartels is another aspect that has led to the displacement of dozens of rural communities; farmers living in these communities have no other choice but to seek work in the United States. The traditional paths of migration to the North have become “death routes,” where rape, assault, and recruitment by force often occur; to resist or refuse the demands of these criminal gangs more often than not results in death. In August of last year, in a border town called San Fernando in the Mexican state of Tamaulipas, a band of criminals killed seventy-two peasants who traveled to the Texas border; among those executed were also migrants from Central America.\(^3\) In spite of these dangerous and often deadly realities, the incentive to migrate will remain much the same in the short term, and the migration strategy will continue to pay off for the migrants themselves. Florida is a

common destination for thousands of Mexican migrant workers seeking jobs in the agricultural industry.

The remittances sent by migrant workers in the corridor are another aspect of the present investigation. In fact, migrant remittances sent to Mexico represent that country’s second-largest source of foreign exchange. In fact, remittances, or “envíos” in Spanish, are a source of income that Mexico desperately needs to help offset its balance of payments deficit. The Mexican government’s official estimate for the total remittances sent in 2006, based on Banco de Mexico databases of monthly transfers, is reported to be just over 23 billion dollars. In addition, these remittances represent the largest, direct positive impact of migration on the countries of origin. In the particular case of Mexico, remittances have a significant value because they go directly to the bottom of the social pyramid, contributing to the development of small, local economies. In many cases, government assistance never compares to the “fresh” and always opportune help that remittances from El Norte represent for thousands of poor peasants living in Mexico’s rural areas. In this sense, the Mexican government’s decision to extend dual citizenship to Mexicans who choose to become American citizens can be seen as an attempt to retain the growing economic and political force that Mexicans living in the United States represents, even if they choose to become American citizens. Finally, safety-valve migratory flows to the United States also contribute to social peace in Mexico.

4 Ricardo Lopez, “Remittances to Mexico rise in May to highest level since October ’08”, LA Times, July 03, 2012.


In sum, the importance of the Mexican farm labor force is increasing every day and permanently altering the economic, political, and social realities of American society.

1.2. Overview of the Issue

Mexico and the United States are two neighboring countries whose connections are complex, broad, multilayered, and intricate in a variety of areas and on a number of delicate issues. The relationship is created by flows of people, culture, technology, goods services, and labor between the two countries.

The immigration issue is one of the most direct consequences of such geographical proximity between both countries. Indeed, Mexico is one of the main migratory countries in the world, and the vast majority of its migrants travel north to work or settle in the United States. In fact, according to a study conducted by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press (PEW), Mexico is the main source of laborers to the United States. For example, as of 2010, there were 11.2 million illegal workers in this nation, and of that number, 58 percent come from Mexico. That is an estimated 6.5 million immigrants from south of the border who have established residence in the United States.7

This geographical proximity between both countries has created a deep and complex framework of interdependence. The full variety and nature of the issues that shape the character of this relationship probably do not exist in the contemporary history of other neighboring countries in the Western Hemisphere. For example, after Canada and China, Mexico is America’s third-ranked trading partner, purchasing two-thirds of its

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imports from the United States while sending about two-thirds of its exports to the north. From 1993 to 2006, trade between the signatory nations has doubled, totaling 883 billion dollars within that period.\(^8\)

The following cases, which have occurred in the last fifteen years, illustrate the complex, interdependent relationship between Mexico and the United States, with several issues related to both countries occupying the national press headlines. For example, in 1999, one of these issues captured national attention on both sides of the border. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Angel Maturino Reséndez, a Mexican farmworker, was suspected of being an extremely dangerous serial killer, known as the “railroad killer” because he attacked his victims in areas near railroads. Reséndez was one of the most wanted men in America and appeared on the FBI’s “Ten Most Wanted” list, along with infamous international terrorists.\(^9\)

On June 10, 2000, Mexican police arrested a Mexican man in the border town of Reynosa City, Tamaulipas, who openly offered 10,000 dollars to whomever killed a Border Patrol official.\(^10\)

In Florida, in the West Coast area, on October 1, 2003, Felipe Santos, a Mexican farmworker, was driving to work with two of his brothers when his white 1988 Ford hit another vehicle near Immokalee City. No one was hurt in the accident, and damage to the cars was minor. A Collier County sheriff arrived at the scene and cited Santos for reckless driving and for driving without a license or insurance. He then put Santos in the

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\(^10\) “Mexican Police Detain Raynosa Man who was Offering Bounty of $10,000 for the Death of a Border Patrol Agent,” *El Universal*, June 10, 2000.
patrol car and drove away. Later that day, Santos’ boss contacted the local jail to bail him out and found out he had never been booked. When questioned, Sheriff Calkins said he had changed his mind about taking Santos to jail and had instead given him a ride to a convenience store about a mile away from the site of the accident. Santos has never been heard from again.

After his disappearance, his brother filed a complaint against Calkins with the sheriff’s office, but Calkins was quickly cleared of any wrongdoing. Santos was in the United States working illegally at the time of his disappearance. He had been living in the corridor for three years at the time he vanished, and he frequently sent money back to his family in Mexico. His wife and young daughter live in Oaxaca, as does his father. His family is still looking for him. At the present time, the FBI keeps Santos’ case open due to other disappearances that have involved Sheriff Calkins.\textsuperscript{11}

Within the same area, near Naples City, police arrested members of a criminal organization involved in the smuggling of migrant workers who were forced to work and live in deplorable conditions. Another criminal organization dedicated to smuggling Mexican peasant women was broken up in Palm Beach. In that case, the smugglers forced Mexican women to work as prostitutes in agricultural areas with high concentrations of farmworkers.\textsuperscript{12} In the same place, Florida police arrested members of a


criminal organization involved in the smuggling of migrant workers who were forced to work and live in conditions of slavery.\textsuperscript{13}

In the city of Immokalee, tomato pickers organized by the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) went on strike over wages, working, and living conditions. In December 1997, this organization went on a month-long hunger strike that brought national attention to Immokalee's labor conditions, prompting former US President Jimmy Carter to plead for an end to the strike. These laborers also won in 2010 landmark concessions from some of the top fast-food providers such as McDonalds, Burger King, and, most recently, Taco Bell. These companies have agreed not to purchase from or deal with any farming entity that does not provide the basic working conditions demanded by law of all other industries. In addition, The Coalition of Immokalee Workers gained a one-cent-per-bucket increase for tomatoes they picked.\textsuperscript{14}

Since President Felipe Calderon declared war on the drug cartels, an estimated 50,000 deaths have occurred in Mexico.\textsuperscript{15} Adding to this cycle of violence is the recent investigation launched by the US Congress that has revealed how illegal guns were knowingly allowed to cross from the United States into Mexico in a law-enforcement operation known as “Fast and Furious.” This operation intended to crack down on major weapons-traffickers on the southwest border. Apparently, the plan was to allow the shipment to reach criminals, then monitor or arrest those individuals. However, the program came to a crashing halt with the death of US Border Patrol agent Brian Terry,


shot by an AK-47 purchased by Jamie Avila, a known gun-smuggler who had been under ATF surveillance. This issue is a serious scandal with international ramifications due to the fact that the Mexican government was not informed of this operation.\textsuperscript{16}

Numerous polls have shown that the American public feels that the issue of immigration is one that is out of control. The belief that migrants are the cause of a large percentage of the social and economic problems that we face runs as deep today as it did ten years ago. Yet these views have always been present with regard to all who happen to be part of the major migratory group of that specific time; in augmenting these historical trends one must look no further than Arizona, which became the epicenter of these sentiments when Governor Jan Brewer signed into law the nation’s toughest bill on illegal immigration. Its aim is to identify, prosecute, and deport illegal immigrants, utilizing state and local police. This trend is taking hold in other states that have pointed to the Arizona law as something they would like to implement.\textsuperscript{17}

As mentioned before, the polls in all matters dealing with immigration point to an American populous that has become more entrenched in its opposition to migration. For example, polls conducted by Rasmussen reported on several of these issues in 2010: 68 percent of people interviewed favored a border fence; 59 percent approve of the Arizona law; 53 percent trust the states to handle the issue of immigration over the federal government; and the most disturbing poll was that 61 percent oppose the automatic


citizenship of children born of undocumented workers.\textsuperscript{18} These sentiments hold, despite the fact that several studies conducted by experts on the immigration issue show that immigrants make a positive contribution to the US economy.

I must also note the resistance faced by the administration that was under George W. Bush, along with the late Senator Ted Kennedy, a Democrat, and Senator John McCain, a Republican, when, in 2007, they tried to pass an immigration bill that was tagged as amnesty by its detractors. Those who had entered illegally were going to be fined thousands of dollars, not to mention the additional fees they would have to pay to receive legal working status.

I believe that these sentiments are based on misinformation and a lack of understanding. For that reason, some of the numbers that need to be put forth by those who seek a comprehensive way of fixing the labor realities of the United States are as follows: Americans gain an average of 37 billion dollars a year from both legal and illegal immigrants, who participate in all aspects of the economy; they also individually pay on average 1,800 dollars more in taxes than they receive in benefits each year.\textsuperscript{19}

With the issue of unfunded liabilities taking center stage in Washington, it becomes imperative to point out that an astonishing 12 billion dollars went to Social Security in 2007 from undocumented workers. These are benefits that they will never be


able to claim, and the report also shows that up until that specific year, the fund gained an estimated $120 to $240 billion.\textsuperscript{20}

Per the last census, America has, in part, been able to maintain positive gains on its population, due to both legal and illegal immigration. A final interesting report from the Texas Comptroller’s office shows that both state and local governments collected a net gain of 424 million dollars from its undocumented labor force, this study also shows that the state would incur a loss of $85 billion in both income and exports if 1.4 million illegals were to be removed.\textsuperscript{21}

If one looks at studies done back in the early 1990s, one will see that the similarities to those by the above-mentioned institutions are strikingly similar. For instance, Borjas, an economics professor at the University of California, San Diego, estimates that the nation’s 20 million immigrants receive about $1.1 billion more in cash and welfare payments each year than they pay into the welfare system through taxes; yet by working and spending on things like food, rent, and clothing, Borjas clarifies, immigrants also contribute $5 billion annually to the economy. The net gain to the United States is almost $4 billion per year.\textsuperscript{22} However, the popular politicized mood is the same today as it was then. The status quo remains when one compares the Rasmussen polls in 2010 to those conducted by \textit{The Miami Herald} and the \textit{St. Petersburg Times} in 1999; indeed, 71 percent of the respondents favored the US government spending more time


\textsuperscript{22} George Borjas, \textit{Friends or Strangers: The Impact of Immigrants on the US Economy} (New York: Basic Books, 1990), 84.
and more money in preventing illegal immigration into the country. Also, 58 percent of respondents favored making legal immigration into the United States more difficult.²³

In 1996, the United States passed legislation that eliminated almost all of the welfare previously available to legal immigrants, including food stamps for children.²⁴ However, in my viewpoint, a paradox exists at this juncture. While the 1990s was an era of incredible economic growth and record low unemployment, the public’s political mood was decidedly anti-immigration, as it is today. These anti-immigrant sentiments have been increasing in the minds of many Americans because of radical groups and powerful anti-migration politicians, such as former vice-presidential candidate Sarah Palin, former speaker of the house Newt Gingrich, Arizona Governor Jan Brewer, and, interestingly enough, Senator John McCain who was one of the sponsors of the 2007 immigration bill but has recently joined the ranks of those mentioned above.

These men and women are all educated, all children of immigrants, yet they all maintain a staunch opposition to that which their forefathers were allowed to do and what those they attack are doing today—filling a vacuum that has always existed in this nation with regard to low-paying service, construction, and agricultural work. These extreme views led directly to the recent decision made by some local ranchers in Arizona and Texas to organize armed groups such as the “Minutemen” to “hunt” and arrest illegal immigrants who pass through their properties.²⁵ As a result of such actions, hundreds of undocumented workers have not only been arrested, but some have also been injured and even murdered. It is also important to point out that the US Justice Department and state

and local agencies have played a passive role in curtailing these actions. For them, these events do not represent enough evidence to proceed against these “vigilantes” and other groups, including the ranchers.

In sum, immigration is a complicated issue that provokes much political irritation and arouses passions on both sides of the border; thus, research on the situation of the farmworker labor group that lives and works in the Homestead–Immokalee corridor of South Florida is timely and contributes to a better understanding of the positive impact that this migratory group represents for America's local economies.

1.3. Summary of the Case Study

Within the framework of US–Mexican relations, the present study examines a ten-year period from 2000 to 2010 of data and information related to the Mexican farmworkers who labor in the fields of the Homestead–Immokalee corridor of South Florida (Miami-Dade and Collier counties). The present study intends to demonstrate that, contrary to common perception, the presence and economic contribution of Mexican farmworkers in South Florida is not significant, but the farmworker group studied indeed participates positively in local and state economies and also in Mexico’s economy, with fresh and opportune remittances. The examination also includes information about demographic and social characteristics of the Mexican farmworker group in the Homestead–Immokalee corridor, such as geographical location, crop activity, employment rates, income, and political status. In addition, the study intends to contribute to a better understanding of how the issue of transnational labor flows can be better developed, predicted, and planned for the benefit of all parties involved, including migrant workers.
The present research project intends to accomplish at least four things with regard to US–Mexican relations, and the model developed will serve as a framework for:

1. Augmenting information about Mexican farmworkers in the Homestead–Immokalee corridor;
2. Applying the present research to other cases;
3. Emphasizing the importance of the Mexican farmworker labor force when it is linked to local economies and Mexico’s economy; and
4. Creating public awareness of the importance of farmworker contributions to local and international economies.

The conclusions drawn from this research can be usefully applied to other cases and other US bilateral relationships to foster the improved management of other foreign labor forces. Finally, in the domestic sphere, the information collected in this study may be useful to politicians, researchers, civic organizations, and community leaders who want or need to know more about the positive impact of the farmworker group in South Florida.

1.4. Outline of Dissertation

Chapter 2 reviews, in chronological and historical order, literature related to the roots of Mexican immigration to the United States. The review focuses on the three main causes of Mexican immigration: the agrarian situation of Mexico in 1910 (when only 3 percent of the total rural population owned any land at all), the role of demographic factors (1940–1970), the cyclical devaluation of the Mexican peso vis-à-vis the US dollar (1970–2010), and, more recently, the violence and insecurity caused by the Mexican drug cartels that have been spiraling out of control for the last ten years.
Within this new era of globalization and economic integration, Chapter 3 presents a discussion of a theoretical approach to explain the importance of the farmworker issue in the broader field of international relations. The discussion is designed to contribute to a better understanding and comprehension of the theoretical importance of migratory, transnational labor flows, such as the case of the Mexican farmworkers in the corridor. The theoretical analysis is the framework with which we can understand the deep interdependence that characterizes the relations between Mexico and the United States. The theoretical discussion takes into consideration the key role played by “push” and “pull” economic factors in the immigration process between the two countries.

Chapter 4 presents an examination of the methodological framework designed to answer the main research questions (RQ) addressed in the present study. Three main research questions are addressed in the present research.

**RQ1:** *Who are the farmworkers who work in the agricultural activities in the Homestead–Immokalee corridor of Southwest Florida?*

- Where do they come from?
- What are the migratory routes they follow to get into the corridor?
- How many are there?
- What are their labor and socio-economic conditions?
- What crops employ them most?
- What is their annual income?
- Are they a strong, organized labor group?
**RQ2:** *Is there any significant economic impact of the Mexican farmworker labor force on South Florida's and Mexico's economy?*

- What is the market value of South Florida’s agricultural industry?
- What are the main agricultural counties in South Florida that employ Mexican farmworkers?
- What are the main agricultural commodities produced in the Homestead–Immokalee corridor?
- Is there any significant impact of the farmworker group on local business?

**RQ3:** *What are the international implications of the farmworker issue for US–Mexican relations?*

- How much money do the farmworkers send to Mexico?

There are two main sections or “phases” of the present study that provide the methodology for answering the research questions. Phase I addresses the first research question on the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of migrant farmworkers located along the Homestead–Immokalee corridor (Miami-Dade and Collier counties). This segment provides information about the migratory routes, as well as a calculation of the number of migrant farmworkers in Miami-Dade and Collier counties. The calculation also includes information on how the number of farmworkers is distributed in the other main agricultural counties and determines what significant distributional changes have occurred in the last ten years in south Florida. Other demographic information, such as income, migratory routes, crop activity, education level, housing, and labor information, is also offered in the first phase.
Data for Phase I comes from: 1) The Agricultural censuses conducted by the United States Department of Agriculture from 1987 to 2010; and 2) the 1998 Migrant Survey conducted by the Migrant Educational Program in Homestead and Florida City. Information was augmented with data and information collected from the two sets of interviews conducted by the author during the course of this study. In addition, for this phase, data was obtained from the US Census, one of the most extensive and reliable sources of household and housing stock data, as well as data from the Florida Department of Community Affairs, the former Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), and the University of Florida’s Southwest Research and Education Center.

Phase II relates to the analysis of the economic impact of the farmworker labor group in the South Florida fresh-vegetables industry. This section answers the second and third research questions, with the specific purpose of examining the economic impact of the Mexican farmworker labor group on South Florida’s economy. Using data and information from the 1992–2007 Censuses of Agriculture related to the main fresh-crop vegetables produced in South Florida, the analysis focuses on the relation between the market value of main agricultural commodities and its economic impact on local and state economies. The discussion also includes an estimation of final gross sales and its direct impact on the local Florida economy. Finally, Phase II also includes an annual estimate of the remittances sent to Mexico by the farmworkers who work in the Homestead–Immokalee corridor.

Chapter 5 answers research question 1 and analyzes demographic information and social characteristics of the labor group studied.
Chapter 6 answers the second research question and examines the impact of South Florida’s agricultural industry on local economies; and it also answers the third research question related to the international implications of the subject of this study, including an analysis of the remittances sent by farmworkers to Mexico.

The research concludes with an epilogue that presents information gathered ten years after the initial study and a comparison with the first set of data; a summary of the study; and a discussion of its implications and limitations; and it makes suggestions for future research.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Overview

I have divided the review of the literature into the three historical periods in which the most important and steady migratory flows of Mexican migrant workers to the United States took place. The first period encompasses the period from 1910 to 1930, during which time almost one million Mexicans immigrated to the United States in search of jobs and economic security. The second period focuses on the years 1940 to 1970, during which time more than 750,000 Mexican workers came to work in the main US agricultural and urban centers. Many of those workers came under the *Bracero* program implemented in 1942 by the United States and Mexican governments to solve a critical labor shortage. Also, during this period, the Mexican population increased from 20 million to 50 million, resulting in increased immigration to the United States. The third period covers the late 1970s to 2010. During this forty-year period, first there was a recurrent, cyclical devaluation of the Mexican peso, which led to increasing numbers of Mexican workers immigrating to *El Norte* in search of jobs. Second, high levels of violence and social instability due to the drug cartels has led to thousands fleeing to the United States in search of peace and security. In addition, the literature review includes classical works on the early history of the phenomenon of Mexican migration to the United States and a review of dissertations from several other US universities about the migrant experience faced by farmworkers in other agricultural regions of the United States. Some of those books and dissertations are classic works that should be consulted by anybody interested in migrant studies.
2.2. First Period – 1910 to 1930


Lorey’s book, for example, is directly linked to the main purpose of my research, which is to emphasize the positive contribution of Mexican farmworkers to local economies. Lorey traced the historical roots of Mexican immigration to the United States since the 1880s, when Mexicans freely crossed the border to work in Texas in a variety of jobs, including mining, farming, and ranching activities. Then, the author explains how in the twentieth century, Mexican workers have moved to the main urban and agricultural centers of the United States, including Florida.

The author emphasizes that before the 1930s, the border was almost a no-man’s land, largely unmonitored until the US Border Patrol was created to control illegal crossing activities. The author also examines how during the periods of US industrialization, such as the rail-system boom, and during critical times such as World War II, cheap Mexican labor has been necessary to supply the US labor market. In Lorey’s view, while economic inequalities exist on both sides of the border, the immigration from Mexico will continue fueling some of the problems along the border, including the spread of disease, drug trafficking, the rise of crime rates, and the impact on the environment. At the same time, people along the border continue to develop mutual benefits.
Daniel’s *Bitter Harvest* is another classic historical book that should be consulted by anybody interested in knowing more about the enormous difficulties experienced by Mexican farmworkers who labored in the fields and orchards of California from the late nineteenth century to the end of the 1930s.

In 1933, more than 15,000 (most of them Mexican) cotton pickers from the San Joaquin Valley demanded that California cotton growers meet a series of “minimum needs,” including a minimum wage of fifty cents per hour; an eight-hour work day; overtime; equal pay for men, women, and young workers; free, sanitary housing; water; transportation; and the right of the workers to organize into the union of their choice, to strike, and to picket.

In chapter 5 of Daniels’ work, entitled “Agricultural Unionism and the New Deal: The Cotton Strike,” the author explains how the farmworkers’ demands were immediately rejected by cotton farmers. Thus, on October 9, 1933, more than 5,000 farmworkers went on strike in the San Joaquin Valley, leaving millions of dollars’ worth of maturing cotton in the fields. In response, cotton farmers publicly collected firearms at a small town called Pixley and openly attacked the strikers, killing two farmworkers and seriously wounding many others. When the police arrived at the scene, they accepted the growers’ allegation that a Mexican striker had fired the shots that killed the Mexican protesters. The police arrested several strikers on murder charges and many others on rioting charges. Later, the charges were dismissed after an investigation revealed that the strikers had carried no firearms and that all of the shooting was done by growers. The author emphasizes that no attempt was ever made by the authorities to determine which of the growers had fired the shots that killed and wounded the Mexican protesters.

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The author also explains how this tragedy attracted nationwide public attention. He also highlights the intervention of the federal government, which sent a small army of investigators and mediators, especially because one of the Mexicans killed at the Pixley strike was the Mexican government’s honorary representative in Tulare, California. After many strikes and serious confrontations with cotton growers, the farmworker movement achieved only an increase of 25 percent in their wages; the rest of their demands were ignored.

Relevant dissertations for this period are John Carey’s “Progressives and the Immigrants, 1885–1915,” LaWanda Fenlason Cox’s “Agricultural Labor in the United States 1865–1900 with Special Reference to the South,”, and Cindy Hahamovitch’s “In the Valley of the Giant: The Politics of Migrant Farm Labor, 1865–1945.” This last investigation is a complete and valuable piece of academic research done on the issue of migrant labor supply during some of the most important historical periods of the United States, such as the Civil War, the Progressive era, the Depression, and the New Deal era. Focusing on New Jersey, Georgia, and Florida between 1865 and 1945, Hahamovitch’s study offers a description of the political and economic conditions of the East Coast migrant stream, which was made up of African-American sharecroppers from the South, Mexicans from south of the Rio Grande, Italian immigrants from the tenements of Philadelphia, and eventually Caribbean and Puerto Rican “imported workers.” The author makes the case that from the Civil War to the end of World War II, immigrant workers have been necessary to supply the US labor market’s demands, but at the same time, they have been excluded and ignored in federal labor legislation.
2.3. Second Period – 1940 to 1970

The second period of the literature review runs from 1940 to 1970, during which time Mexico’s population increased from 20 million to 50 million. This tremendous population growth, among other factors, caused Mexico to become one of the main migratory countries in the world, with the United States as the primary destination. Relevant literature from this period includes Erasmo Gamboa’s *Mexican Labor and World War II: Braceros in the Pacific North West, 1942–1947*, Ueda Reed’s *Postwar Immigrant America: A Social History*, Silvia Pedraza-Bailey’s *Political and Economic Migrants in America: Cubans and Mexicans*, and Juan Gonzales’s *Mexican and American Farm Workers: The California Agricultural Industry*. Gonzales’ book features many similarities with my research. For instance, the author conducted his research on a Mexican farmworker group, using an ethnographic approach and social and economic analysis—that is, he used participant observation and in-depth interviews, as well as analysis of government statistics and historical data. The author spent three years collecting data and information (1977–1980) in five agricultural counties of Northern California: Contra Costa, Glenn, Yolo, Solano, and Napa. This study was centered on the overall view of the lives, work, and social attitudes of the Mexican migrant farmworkers who lived in Northern California. The author concentrates his research on a highly skilled farmworker group that specialized in the farming techniques used in the agricultural valleys of California. The author points out that the Mexicans were the first group to develop the skills and advanced techniques that underlie the burgeoning agricultural economy of the Southwest.
In Gonzales’ opinion, despite the fact that these “professionals” were indispensable for Northern California’s agricultural industry, they were underpaid and overworked. A farmworker of the group studied had an average family income (in the late 1970s) of $8,900 per year. In order to make such an income, a farmworker had to work more than seventy hours per week for nine-and-a-half months. In my research, I found that today, in Florida, a highly skilled farmworker—a tractor driver, for example—easily makes twenty-five dollars per hour (over $25,000 per year), but these workers are few; most of the workers are low-income crop pickers, as is explained in Chapter 5 of my dissertation.

In conclusion, Gonzalez argues that few Americans find such remuneration and working conditions attractive, especially since other alternatives are possible for English-speaking citizens with better skills and education. Therefore, he firmly believes that Mexican farmworkers, in general, do not take jobs away from American citizens. Instead, they provide an enormous service by working skillfully and cheaply in the most basic industry.

Charles Keely’s excellent article about the immigration debate entitled “An Immigration Policy for America in the Twenty-First Century” examines the effects of the addition of the nearly 15 million immigrants that have entered the United States since 1965. Keely says that we do not know for sure if the 15 million immigrants represent a negative burden for the nation. In his opinion, there is a lot of rhetoric about foreigners displacing American jobholders that distracts attention from the real impact of immigration.

Keely argues that despite all the rhetoric about this issue, the truth of the matter is that US employment has grown during these last twenty-five years, despite a lackluster

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economy, occasional stagflation, and high inflation in the late 1970s; he adds that research from the National Bureau of Economic Research and the Urban Institute indicates that immigrants stimulated job growth. In Keely’s view, America needs to focus on immigrant policy, not immigration policy; that is, for Latino and Asian immigrants, the United States has to keep open channels of mobility. If any group is systematically excluded, it would alter the country’s pluralistic ethnic composition. Thus, the author suggests that if we wish to preserve America as a pluralistic nation that benefits from immigrants’ contributions, we should not restrict immigration. On the contrary, opportunities for immigrants should be kept open, facilitating, for example, programs of temporary stays for migrants in the United States, even though they might last for years.

Recommended dissertations for the second period include Larry Manuel García y Griego’s “The Bracero Policy Experiment: US–Mexican Responses to Mexican Labor Migration, 1942–1955.” This investigation covers three important historical phases: wartime and cooperation (1942–1947), conflict punctuated by cooperation (1947–1954), and the period related to stability and the demise of the Bracero program (1947–1964). García y Griego’s study examines the international implications that the Bracero years had in Mexico and the United States and describes the policy responses of both governments during the above-mentioned periods. It should be noted that many of the farmworker families living in the Homestead–Immokalee agricultural area came to South Florida for the first time during the Bracero program years.

2.4. Third Period – 1970s to Today

Regarding the last and most important period (1970–2010), there are other works that not only reinforce this segment emphasizing the role of the “push” and “pull” factors
in the migratory process between Mexico and the United States. It should also be noted that during this period (1970s–2010), Mexico’s financial problems worsened, including the inflation rate, the balance of trade, the cyclical devaluation of the Mexican peso to the US dollar, as well as the escalation of drug-related violence.

Another excellent and useful work is *The Challenge of Interdependence: Mexico and the United States.* The Bilateral Commission on the Future of the United States–Mexican Relations is composed of a group of private citizens (academicians, civic leaders, and businessmen) from both countries, including Héctor Aguilar Camín, Carlos Fuentes, Robert S. McNamara, and others. The main function of the commission is to make policy recommendations for private and public leaders (from Mexico and United States) on how to improve the main topics that shape the nature of the relations between the two countries, especially in the areas of economics, debt, trade, immigration, investment, education, and drug issues. To make such recommendations, the commission consulted the works of the main experts on these issues. For example, in the case of immigration, the report includes the works of Wayne Cornelius, Jorge Bustamante, and Rodolfo de la Garza, to name just a few.

In Chapter 3 ("The Process of Migration"), the commission provides a good account of the importance of traditional “sending” communities in the migratory process. In this segment, the commission examines Cornelius’ *The United States Demand for Mexican Labor* and Bustamante’s *Undocumented Immigration: Policy Options for Mexico.* In particular, the commission extensively analyzes data from El Colegio de la Frontera Norte on monthly apprehensions of Mexicans along the border during the 1980s.

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The chapter explains how, throughout history, international immigration has occurred in all parts of the world and has continued into the twentieth century. For example, Turkish workers have moved to Germany, Algerians to France, Commonwealth citizens to England, Salvadorans to Honduras, Colombians to Venezuela, and, of course, Mexicans to the United States.

According to the commission, the results of such international flows have been a mixed record of costs and benefits for sending and receiving countries. In most cases, migration has become a serious source of political tensions, including the case of Mexican migration to the United States. The report also focuses on the causes and consequences of Mexican migration to the United States. In the commission’s opinion, US policymakers see the Mexican influx as a result of strong “push” factors deriving from unemployment and lack of opportunities. On the other hand, Mexican analysts, academicians, and officials stress the role of “pull” factors deriving from higher wages and the abundant demand for cheap migrant labor in the United States.

There is also a segment about the role played by traditional, small “sending” communities in the Mexican migration process to the United States. The commission reports that about 70 percent of all migrants come from only eight states out of the thirty-two within Mexico: Baja California, Chihuahua, Guanajuato, Guerrero, Jalisco, Michoacán, Sonora, and Zacatecas. The most substantial and ongoing patterns of emigration belong to Jalisco and Michoacán. In the commission’s opinion, the result is abundantly clear: specific rural communities within Mexico have built up their own traditions of migration, and these traditions exercise a crucial role in the present-day process. The farmworkers in the Homestead–Immokalee corridor of South Florida
illustrated such a migratory tradition, since most of them came from rural communities of Michoacán, as discussed in Chapter 5.

Díaz-Briquets and Weintraub’s *The Effects of Receiving Country Policies on Migration Flows* is an excellent reference closely related to this investigation. In chapter 4, Thompson and Martin analyze how the liberalization of trade in fresh tomatoes led to increased production in Sinaloa (Mexico) and a decline in production in Southern Florida. In the author’s opinion, this liberalization of policies in the short and long term would also lead to job losses in Florida and a rise in labor demand in Sinaloa.

The authors examined how, since the 1960s, Florida tomato-producers have promoted diverse initiatives before the US Department of Agriculture to limit tomato and fresh vegetable imports from Mexico. For example, in 1969, Florida producers successfully imposed dual size restrictions for Floridian and Mexican tomatoes. Dual-size restrictions mean that relatively small, Mexican, vine-ripe tomatoes were subjected to larger minimum size requirements than were Florida’s mature green tomatoes. The authors also explained how Florida tomato growers are organized under the Federal Marketing Order No. 966, which provides size and quality standards for all domestic and imported fresh, marketed tomatoes within the United States. According to Section 8e of the Agricultural Act of 1954, all fresh tomatoes (domestic and imported) must be marketed under the same federal marketing order regulations. In most cases, the authors consider that these order regulations about size, quality, and shipments, are oriented to make the import of Mexican agricultural commodities more difficult.

The discussion also includes a review of the role played by the Florida Tomato Committee in the agricultural production between Florida and Sinaloa. The Florida
Tomato Committee is a growers’ committee that supervises federal tomato industry regulations. Additionally, all changes in size, grade, container, and inspection regulations are proposed by the Florida Tomato Committee for the approval of the US Department of Agriculture. The Florida Tomato Committee also manages marketing and promotional campaigns, allocates production research funds, directs legislative activities, and provides legal assistance to members.

For the last four decades, Florida growers have sustained a well-organized lobbying effort at diverse Washington levels to prevent further expansion of Mexican tomatoes and fresh vegetables in the US market. As part of this campaign, Mexico frequently has been accused of “dumping” tomatoes in the US market and following unfair competition practices like selling tomatoes below the official price. To combat Florida growers’ charges, Sinaloa growers hired and maintained in Washington a full-time lobbyist to advocate for their interests.

In chapter 3 of *Regional and Sectoral Development in Mexico as Alternatives to Migration*, Wayne Cornelius offers an examination of a household survey conducted in 1988–89 in three Mexican communities located in the west-central part of Mexico: Tlacuitapa (Jalisco), Las Animas (Zacatecas), and Gómez Farías (Michoacán). These three communities traditionally have been sending workers to the United States for more than one hundred years. US-bound migration from all three communities began in the first decades of the century, was briefly interrupted in the 1930s by the Great Depression, and became a mass movement in the 1940s and 1950s, when many residents of these rural communities participated in the *Bracero* program.
The research includes relevant information about migrant remittances and their utilization that is related to Chapter 6 of my investigation. A total of 798 respondents from the three rural communities were interviewed (over a period of eighteen months between 1988 and 1989) on diverse questions related to their experiences as migrant workers in the United States. The study found that 73.4 percent of migrant workers sent money to their relatives in Mexico during their latest sojourn in the United States.

Most migrants sent remittances to their families on a monthly basis, using money orders sent through the mail. According to the household survey, the average amount remitted by a worker in the United States during the twelve months preceding the interview was 150 dollars per month. Those who were in the States as unauthorized workers remitted an average of 128 dollars per month. The money was used by their families in Mexico to buy food, clothing, rent, and to cover medicines and everyday needs. House construction was the second most frequently cited principal utilization. Two-thirds of the respondents mentioned that they have saved up to 2,000 dollars for their annual vacation expenses in their communities. The vacation money is spent on general living expenses while in the home community, as well as on social activities such as religious celebrations, parties, and gambling. Although this study was conducted targeting a different group, at a different time and place, it is still very helpful to compare its results with my research.

For example, we can easily see the enormous contrast between this well-organized migration group and the case of the farmworkers in South Florida. In the case of Cornelius’ research, most of the workers interviewed are members of a three-generation family that has worked in the United States. In my first set of interviews, I
found that more than 50 percent of all respondents had fewer than five years of experience as migrant workers, not only in the corridor but also in other agricultural centers of the United States. This situation is also reflected in the economic power of both groups. While the first group is so well-organized that they can afford to save up to 2,000 dollars for their annual vacation in Mexico, the group I studied faces enormous difficulties finding housing accommodations in the corridor. Moreover, while Cornelius’ group ten years ago sent home an average of 150 dollars per month, farmworkers in South Florida sent the same amount ten years later (Cornelius’ research was conducted between 1988–89 and my research between 1999–2000).

The book *Open Borders? Closed Societies?: The Ethical and Political Issues* is a good reference for recent sources focusing on the moral and political implications of the immigration debate. In Scanlan and Kent’s chapter, entitled “The Force of Moral Arguments for a Just Immigration Policy in a Hobbesian Universe: The Contemporary American Example,” the authors center their discussion around the assumption that we live in a Hobbesian world where nations pursue their own versions of their “national interest.” According to them, an integral feature of the Hobbesian universe is the well-accepted principle that nations have absolute control of their borders. Under this “border control principle,” several important issues are examined: moral considerations, the cost-benefit analysis, and the political implications of US immigration policy. The authors recognize that the United States cannot close the door to immigrant workers since the nation benefits enormously from their contributions. Scanlan and Kent consider that the immigration debate will continue while the forces that shape American immigration policy agree on the political
and moral bases for an immigration policy that satisfies all parties and while border pressures remain on countries like Mexico, Honduras, Zaire, Rwanda, and Pakistan.

A book that highlights how almost nothing has improved in the conditions and attitudes towards farmworkers, and in some cases has worsened since my initial study, is Rick Nahmias’s *The Migrant Project: Contemporary California Farm Workers*. Nahmias includes a collection of first-hand accounts of the hardships of day-to-day life endured by migrant farm workers. The disregard for human wellbeing and exploitation by those profiting from this cheap labor source is, at times, numbing. It takes a close look at the world-famous Californian wine industry, which relies on manual labor because the grapes cannot be picked by machine. The author also mentions how Vincent Fox, the former president of Mexico, caused an uproar and accusations of racism with his speech to a group of Texan businessmen in Mexico when he said, “there is no doubt that Mexicans, filled with dignity, willingness, and ability to work, are doing jobs that not even blacks want to do there in the United States.”29 Racism and discrimination are issues faced daily by these workers, and these issues are complex and multifaceted.

In this segment, there are also other books related to the immigration debate included, such as Nicolaus Mills’ *Arguing Immigration: The Debate Over the Changing Face of America*. In his chapter called “Immigration Dilemmas,” Richard Rothstein analyzes the difficulties faced by industrialized nations in controlling the “immigration problem.” According to Rothstein, not only the United States but also other industrialized nations such as Japan, Germany, France, and Spain, have enormous difficulties in regulating their immigration policies. He also says that, in all cases, the reasons that lead

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to migratory flows are always the same: the enormous economic inequalities between industrialized and poor nations. To illustrate that observation, the author compares the wages and living standards of the United States and Mexico: as of 1994, the ratio of US to Mexican wages was about seven to one, and the ratio of living standards was about three to one.

In Rothstein’s opinion, the immigration problem is complex and difficult to regulate, and there are probably five million undocumented workers in Western Europe, while in the United States, there are perhaps three-and-a-half million undocumented workers. For that reason, the author argues that total border control is an unrealizable dream for industrialized nations, suggesting that the United States should reorient its immigration policy to slow down the “push” of immigrants from countries like Mexico. He says that if we truly want less Mexican immigration, it would be necessary to develop economic programs beyond the scope of free trade. In Rothstein’s view, an excellent initiative oriented in this direction would be a US financial program supporting the Mexican government by subsidizing small industries in rural areas where peasants are being displaced, such as Michoacán and Guerrero, as well as in other “sending” states. Rothstein considers that funds spent on such initiatives would be more effective than hiring more Border Patrol agents.

The book *The California–Mexico Connection* features an excellent discussion about how the diverse transnational and interdependent ramifications of the immigration phenomenon between Mexico and California have intensified in the 1990s. In this context, the issue of Mexican farmworkers in South Florida is, without a doubt, a clear
example of the interdependent and transnational ramifications, as I explained in my discussions in Chapters 1 and 3 of this dissertation.

James Rosenau’s chapter, called “Coherent Connection or Commonplace Contiguity? Theorizing about the California-Mexico Overlap,” is a recommended reference for theoretical discussions about the impact and dimension of transnational labor forces. In Rosenau’s view, the dynamism of change of the “California–Mexico Connection” is moving toward a greater interdependence among individuals, families, flows of people, groups, municipalities, economies, and cultures on both sides of the border. Within this framework of interdependence, the author examines interactions and changes that characterized the transnational activities of the “connection.”

In doing so, the author examines the theoretical perspectives that facilitate an understanding of the dimensions of the “California–Mexico Connection,” such as integration theories, state-making, regime theory, world cities, global policy, etc. The discussion presents many useful links with the theoretical approach used in my research. For example, in both cases, the structure of the “California–Mexico Connection” and the Mexican farmworker group studied in my dissertation is a direct result of the deep interdependence and interactions (labor flow, in this particular case) that shape the structure of US–Mexican relations.

In comparative theoretical terms, the “connection” also has other similarities to the case of Mexicans farmworkers in South Florida. Both the “connection” and the current study are rooted in “international trans-boundary problems” like flows of labor that originate in one state (Michoacán, in this case) but that have ramifications and a strong impact in other states like California and Florida. Rosenau’s chapter has other
similarities that help one to better understand the theoretical discussion offered in this investigation. For instance, the interactions between public and private actors presented in the “connection” are very similar to the role played by public and private actors in the “corridor,” such as Sinaloa growers, Florida tomato growers, INS, and farmworker leaders.

In another interesting article in the same book entitled “Mexico and California: The Paradox of Tolerance and Dedemocratization” Jorge Castañeda analyzes the cultural impact on both sides of the border, caused by traditional migratory flows from rural Mexican communities. Illustrating the case of Gómez Fariás, a small town located in Michoacán with a migratory tradition to the United States stretching back more than one hundred years, the author examines how, since the beginning of the century, migrant workers from Gómez Fariás have traveled to California’s Watsonville Valley. These young farmworkers were received with hostility by the “northern cholos,” young Chicanos born and raised in the United States. Castañeda explains that, in order to defend themselves from the northern cholo, the new Mexican workers banded together in other new cholo gangs. When the Michoacán farmworkers return to their rural communities, they bring back with them new ways of dressing, a new language, and a new way of seeing the world and life itself.

Additionally, the literature review also includes other books directly linked to the central concerns of International Political Economy (IPE) in the field of international relations and its impact on the world market economy, trade, interstate relations, etc. These works include: Blanca Torres’s Interdependencia: Un enfoque útil para el análisis de las relaciones México-Estados Unidos?, William Glade and Cassio Luiselli’s The
Economics of Interdependence: Mexico and the United States, and Thomas Lawton et al.’s Strange Power: Shaping the Parameters of International Relations and International Political Economy.

Recommended dissertations for this segment are Jorge Octavio Mariscal’s “The Economics of International Migration: Mexican Undocumented Migrants in the U.S.” and Kofi Adu-Nyako’s “Apple Harvesting and Non-Immigrant Alien Workers in West Virginia: An Economic Analysis.” Mariscal’s research is a helpful guide for studies about the relationship between undocumented migration and macroeconomic variables, such as employment, wages, and market prices. The author offers an economic analysis of impact between migration levels and the economic conditions in Mexico and the United States. In the author’s view, less migration has strong, negative economic effects for the US agricultural industry and for the economy in general. Mariscal’s research found that less migration of undocumented workers reduces the production of non-durable agricultural commodities, thus affecting the total sales category of fresh crops and vegetables.

Regarding taxes paid by undocumented workers, according to Mariscal (26–29), approximately 60 percent of all taxes paid by undocumented workers go to the federal government, 30 percent go to the states, and only 10 percent to the county governments. From a policy perspective, the research suggests that the optimal US immigration policy regarding Mexican immigration is the establishment of a large guest-worker program. This investigation was very helpful for designing some of the economic calculations that are presented in Chapter 6 about the economic impact of the agricultural industry in South Florida.
Adu-Nyako’s research focuses on the positive impact of migrant farmworkers. His research analyzes the impact of foreign migrant workers in the H-2 program in the apple-harvest labor market of West Virginia. The results obtained in this investigation indicated that the supply of domestic labor is inelastic, lending support to the West Virginia growers’ argument that domestic workers are difficult to attain. In this case, the situation is aggravated by the fact that the tight domestic labor market is being interlinked with the non-farm-sector labor market, which attracts labor from the agricultural sector. The main conclusion from this study is that (as in the case of the farmworkers in the corridor) higher wages in the non-farm sector impact the agricultural industry, making the farmworker labor force even more indispensable for local economies.

Reading Adu-Nyako’s dissertation was very useful, allowing me to review information on the “H-2 guest workers” program, which was initiated in 1952 and still exists. This program is another example of a foreign agricultural work program that utilizes alien workers in certain agricultural enterprises, particularly in vegetable, fruit, and nut production. Most of the labor employed in this program is seasonal in nature, filling the excess labor demand during the harvest season. The background and nature of this work are, in some respects, similar to the topics of my dissertation, since many Mexican farmworkers in the corridor are alien workers, too, work at seasonal agricultural jobs, and are indispensable in filling agricultural labor demands in South Florida.

2.5. Florida-Specific Literature

Carlene Thissen’s Immokalee’s Fields of Hope focuses specifically on stories of immigrants in Immokalee and was a useful reference for my research. I have many of the same questions that the author presents in the book: Who are these people? Why do they
come here? Why do they send money home? How much do they send? Do they just come to take and not give anything? Why Immokalee? The answer to that last question, Thissen says, is because the word spread that “there is work in Immokalee,” work that no one else wants to do. The author presents these immigrants as what they are—real people with real needs and struggles—to give us a view of this culturally rich social group and its struggle to rise up from the bottom of the economic ladder.

Regarding Florida, there are several important dissertations related to the situation of the migrant farmworkers, including Yolanda Martinez’s “Narratives of Survival: Life Histories of Mexican American Youth From Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker Families Who Have Graduated from the High School Equivalency Program.” The author conducted her study in central Florida and focused on the socio-economic conditions faced by migrant and seasonal farmworker families who have spent much of their lives working under extremely difficult climatological conditions and living in chronic isolation and poverty. In Martinez’s opinion, despite the attention given to issues related to the difficult lifestyle and socio-economic conditions of migrant and seasonal farmworkers, virtually no research has focused on the life perceptions of young adults from migrant backgrounds. Therefore, the main purpose of the study is to help fill this void by presenting a collection of four life histories of young adults who spent a considerable part of their childhood and adolescence working in the fields and who were labeled “migrant students” during their school careers. As the author emphasizes, for a population greatly ignored and misunderstood, this study is highly valuable, not only because it collects valuable information but also because it allows migrant workers to speak for themselves about their experiences growing up as migrant children.
Another important dissertation conducted in Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina is Pearl Johnson Logan’s “Examining the Characteristics of Resettled Migrant Farm Workers and Factors That Influence Them to Leave the Migrant Stream.” This research is an exploratory and descriptive study conducted in migrant communities and examines the personal characteristics of resettled migrants to determine what factors influenced them to leave the migrant stream. The main research objective formulated in the study is to identify personal characteristics of resettled migrant farmworkers and the factors that influenced them to leave the migrant stream. The study concludes that, although the statistical data are insufficient to generalize to other populations, migrant workers who have a strong social-support network can resettle and function within the larger, literate society as employable and productive citizens. These findings are useful for future researchers who are looking for innovative frameworks from which to investigate the phenomenon of the migrant worker’s transformation from “migrant worker” to “sedentary wage earner.”

Related also to my research is Martha Celeste Murphy’s “An Empirical Study of Farm Workers in South Florida: Environmental Injustice in the Fields?” This study was conducted in Palm Beach and Indian River counties to research the migrant farmworkers’ exposure to pesticides and environmental hazards. Murphy’s study addressed four research questions:

1. Do the demographics of the sample population represent a marginalized subculture vulnerable to exposure to environmental hazards?
2. Is there a relationship between those who have worked in the fields in two South Florida counties and exposure to pesticides?
3. Are the current federal and Florida laws that protect farmworkers from exposure to pesticides being properly implemented?

4. Is there any relationship between the health of those who have worked in the fields in two South Florida counties and their exposure to pesticides?

The investigation found that federal and state laws that are currently in place, laws that supposedly protect the farmworkers from pesticide exposure, do not adequately protect them from exposure to such harmful chemicals. The author concludes that additional research is needed to perform a longitudinal study of the health of farmworkers over a period of five to ten years. A study over time would help to determine health problems associated with long-term exposure to pesticides. Murphy’s study also demonstrates that there is a need for further research in many areas regarding farmworkers’ situations. Indeed, farmworkers are among the least statutorily and constitutionally protected occupational groups in America. The research concludes that farmworkers are subject to unequal protection under the law in comparison to other occupational groups, which in turns leads to environmental injustice.

Another dissertation conducted in Florida and Virginia is Monica Heppel’s “Harvesting the Crops of Others: Migrant Farm Labor on the Eastern Shore of Virginia.” The central research question Heppel posed in this academic investigation is: In what ways are black migrant crews and Mexican migrant crews on the Eastern Shore of Virginia similar, and in what ways are they different? Related to this basic question were several others: Are these differences primarily superficial, relating to language and appearance, or are there differences in the way crews are structured, in terms of their social structure and organization? Are there differences that separate the two groups in terms of attitudes, values, goals, and perceptions of themselves and their work? And finally, is there a sense of being a
migrant farmworker that transcends racial and cultural differences that are shared by members of both groups?

Heppel gives an account of the many features characteristic of migrant life (low wages, isolated living places, health problems) of the thousands of migrant farmworkers who come to the Eastern Shore of Virginia each year to live and work. Heppel also conducted fieldwork for her dissertation in Florida in 1978–1979. She breaks her account of the migrant labor system down into the perspective of three categories of participants: farmers, crew leaders, and workers.

“Strategies for Effective International Environmental Conflict Resolution: The Case of the Lower Colorado River Basin” by Joseph Milan investigates international environmental conflict management strategies and contains lessons that can be applied to other contentious issues, such as immigration between Mexico and the United States. In the theoretical realm, Milan’s work is also a useful guide on how to design theoretical approaches for both low and high levels of analysis. Of particular interest is its application of the structural realist model of international relations as an explanatory and predictive tool of international relations. Additionally, Professor Fritz Roka from the University of Florida’s Southwest Research and Education Center has been studying the diverse economic angles of the citrus and vegetable harvest in Southwest Florida counties. In particular, Roka has focused his research on economic aspects of the harvest process of citrus and fresh vegetables produced in Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, and Lee counties. Roka’s research also includes information on the basic demographic characteristics of the farmworkers who work and live in the above-mentioned South Florida counties.30

Another interesting aspect is the changing role of immigrant Mexican women and the part they play in local economies. In Mexican culture, women maintain a more traditional role than in the United States, with home-keeping and child-raising taking priority over education and wage-earning. Carmen Castellanos Meeks’ dissertation, “Ethnic Markets and the Empowerment of Immigrant Women in America: A Case Study of the Redland Harvest Market Village in South Dade, Florida,” explores the socio-economic experience of immigrant women in South Florida, posing questions such as, “Is the ethnic market an instrument of exploitation and subordination for immigrant women due to demand in the US labor market for cheap labor?” This parallels my own investigation, even though the majority of migrant farmworkers are men. I found this study useful in gaining a wider view of the issues faced and economic achievements of migrant groups in the United States and particularly in South Florida. I was also interested in her methodology, using case studies and the ethnographic approach, as will be mentioned in Chapter 4.

The Internet contains several resources on the subject of migrant workers, as well. The United States Department of Agriculture’s Economic Research Service (ERS) is one of the better sources. Among other interesting topics linked to the issue of farmworkers is the USDA’s economic and social science research agency’s wealth of information, data, and analysis on farm commodities, the farm economy, agricultural trade, natural resources, food marketing, and rural economies. I used the ERS data to address many aspects of the research questions formulated in my study.

2.6. Films and Documentaries

Regarding films and documentaries about the migrant life in the United States, an excellent documentary film called “A Sheepherder’s Homecoming,” produced by Werner
Works, tells the incredible history of Tomas Ballato, a sheepherder born on a ranch in the Mexican rural state of Hidalgo. The film goes beyond data on apprehensions at the border to reveal the circumstances, dreams, and frustrations that compel individuals to leave their homes and their families to travel north in search of better opportunities. “A Sheepherder’s Homecoming” tries to capture the hopes and frustrations of Ballato who, with the help of a “coyote” (paid immigrant smuggler), crosses the border to travel to Utah in search of work as a sheepherder. He is granted a lucrative, five-year contract to work as a sheepherder with a herd of 2,000 sheep at a Utah ranch. The five-year contract ends once he delivers his last herd. With almost no contact with civilization, his dog and his horse become his indispensable companions in the loneliness of the huge sheep ranches. In this solitary life, Ballato develops a sixth sense about sheep and becomes an expert at this work. After an anxious five years of waiting to return home, he goes back to Mexico but learns that his family had moved to a different place and that things are not the same in his hometown as they were when he left. For that reason, he leaves Mexico once more and is smuggled back to the United States. In conclusion, the film points to the difficulties that migrants face in a foreign land and simultaneously shows the cultural, familial, and socio-economic consequences caused by a decision to leave their country. It also reveals that immigration is a complex phenomenon that defies simple categorization and easy solutions.

“Which Way Home,” produced by HBO, is a documentary that presents the experiences of various young people and children, mostly from Central America, who undertake the perilous journey to the United States in search of a better life. It is tragic that those so young should have to face such dangers at the hands of the desperate adults with whom they cohabit an existence at the outer edges of society. In one scene, the filmmakers
interview a border agent who describes how children are raped, beaten, and at times murdered by the same smugglers their families have paid to safely transport them across the border. The officer cannot, in a logical manner, comprehend how a parent could give his or her child to such an individual. Yet, we also see the issue through the prism of parents in a state of such desperation that the only way out they can see for their children is to pay a stranger to take them to a land that is known to them only by movies and the products we see advertised in even the smallest of towns.

Yet, despite these dangers, the desire to realize their dream of the good life in America overcomes all fears, and for that they gamble their lives. The film introduces us to a gentleman who runs a religious house, which caters specifically to migrants. There is a scene that shows him giving them the facts about what their chances are of making it, not to mention that they will more than likely never see either their homes nor loved ones; yet, after passionately giving them this speech, he asks if they still want to go to the United States. All in unison, both children and adults say yes. It is the strength of convictions like these that fuel the constant stream of migrants from the south traveling to the north, which in turn provides the seemingly endless pool of cheap migrant labor for those willing to take advantage of it.

Of particular interest to this dissertation is a documentary film titled “Immokalee U.S.A.,” produced by Substream Films, which documents the daily experiences of migrant farmworkers in Immokalee. The director, Koszulinski, does a good job of representing the lives of those who live and work in this small community without adding personal bias. This film communicates the hardship and sadness that is reality for many—yet also the hope and feeling of community that exists there. The view presented by the film corresponds with my
own observations and experiences of Immokalee, and in that way, it does not really add to this research, although it reinforces and reconfirms that which I had already theorized.

The dissertations and works mentioned above were very helpful in guiding the structure of the design of the research questions addressed in my dissertation. I closely studied the literature review chapters, as well as the methodological, theoretical, and hypotheses sections. I paid special attention to the main issues involved and the reading was productive and helpful in clarifying how to approach certain sections of my research, such as economic calculations and data analysis. In particular, reading about the diverse angles and topics contained in the books and materials examined gave me a broader and more in-depth knowledge of the issues of the Mexican farmworker labor force.

In conclusion, a review of the literature reveals that there is a vast amount of literature on diverse topics linked to the immigration phenomenon between Mexico and the United States, but, at the same time, the review finds that the economic contributions of the Mexican migrant farmworker labor force to South Florida’s and Mexico’s economies have not been the focus of in-depth analysis and that scholarly research and serious studies on the subject are lacking. Therefore, the main purpose of the current research project is to contribute to a better understanding of the positive contribution of the farmworker labor group to South Florida’s and Mexico’s economies.

2.7. Roots and Evolution of Mexican Immigration to the United States and Florida

The purpose of the present section is to analyze the agrarian situation, demographic factors, and the cyclical devaluation of the peso to the US dollar as the three main traditional causes of Mexican migration to the United States. Mexican immigration to the United States cannot be understood without having an insight into the three leading causes that
traditionally force Mexicans to immigrate to *El Norte* in search of jobs and better opportunities. The first factor is the uneven distribution of land in Mexico at the beginning of the century, when only 3 percent of the total rural population owned any land. A second factor is related to the demographic explosion started in the 1940s, and the third aspect is connected to the cyclical devaluation process of the Mexican peso to the US dollar that began in the late 1970s. In the last decade, the drug-related violence that has resulted in approximately 50,000 deaths has also been a major factor in people leaving their homes and traveling to the United States in search of a new life, particularly those from the North of Mexico.

**2.8. Mexico’s Agrarian Situation in 1910**

When Porfirio Díaz came to power in 1876, he began a series of profound legal changes in the Mexican law oriented toward facilitating foreign investment in all sectors of Mexico’s economy. Due to this “open policy,” an extensive modernization program was dedicated to the transformation of the country. For example, the railroad system was extended and modernized, as were the mining, petroleum, agricultural, communication, banking, and industrial sectors. The telegraph, telephone, and mail systems were introduced. The Mexican economy, for the first time in the contemporary history of the country, was able to pay off its foreign debt. The Díaz government (1876–1911) was also able to balance the federal budget and increase exports to the United States by 600 percent. In addition, to make commercial and investment activities more attractive, the Díaz administration did not establish taxes or regulations of any kind, becoming an attractive “fiscal paradise” and a land of enormous opportunities for American and European companies. In particular, American investors benefited enormously from these opportunities. The economic progress
achieved by the Díaz regime is clearly described by Professor Clint E. Smith, one of the most important experts on US–Mexican diplomatic history. He points out that, by 1910, Mexican reserves had risen to the huge sum of 70 million gold pesos and writes that “More than 3,000 mines—840 of them foreign, mostly American—were producing silver, gold, copper, zinc, iron, and lead, making Mexico one of the world’s top producers of mined ores. Electrical plants were built, and electric lights and streetcars became common in Mexico’s major cities.”

However, the progress and health brought by the economic boom were enjoyed only by the generals, the governors, the hacendados (rich men who owned enormous properties during the Porfirio Díaz dictatorship), and the small elite loyal to Díaz. The majority of the Mexican population, in particular those people from rural areas, did not benefit from progress at all. Indeed, they continued living during the Porfiriato (Díaz regime) very much as they had for the previous one hundred years, largely unaffected by the economic boom of 1880–1910 and in the most complete poverty and abandonment.

From 1900 to 1910, wages in the rural areas were paid in token coins or recorded as a kind of symbolic notation in the tienda de raya (the hacienda store). Factory workers labored from twelve to fifteen hours daily and earned, at most, five dollars per week. Protective labor legislation at that time was not a priority issue for the government and, as a result, safety conditions in labor centers were poor, and industrial accidents and deaths were common in all parts of the country. If someone protested about the labor conditions or made

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32 La tienda de raya was the only place in which the peon could spend his “salary.” Peasants could not trade anywhere else, even if they had wanted to, because their token coins were not acceptable in any other place. For more information about this epoch, see the classic book written by Frank Tannenbaum, México: The Struggle for Peace and Bread (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951).
any public complaint regarding the social and economic situation prevailing in the country, the orders given by the government officials to los rurales (military police) on how to act against complainers or revoltosos were very clear: “Mátenlos en caliente,” meaning “kill them quickly.”

Under such a repressive system, it is understandable why the land in Mexico was owned by the same hacendados who traditionally had controlled it and why enormous properties were found in all parts of the country. For example, in the northern state of Chihuahua, half of its extensive territory was held by foreigners and the rest by local hacendados. Such was the case of Luis Terrazas, the richest of the hacendados who owned a tract of land comparable in size to the states of Maryland and Massachusetts combined. Another extreme case is that of Ramón Corral (minister and vice president during Díaz’s administration). His properties were the size of Hawaii and Connecticut combined.

There is also the case of a rich and famous Englishman named William Benton who was very well known not only for his enormous properties but also for exploiting and killing peasants for the most minor of provocations. Using force and intimidation, Benton amassed enormous properties such as the famous Hacienda Santa Gertrudis.

According to Mexican writer and intellectual Jesus Silva Herzog, these immensely rich hacendados were “powerful men similar to the British nobility of the seventeenth

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34 Chihuahua’s area is 94,831 square miles. It is almost equal in size to the state of Oregon, which has 97,073 square miles. Hawaii has 6,471 square miles, and Connecticut has 5,018 square miles.

35 In 1913, Francisco “Pancho” Villa occupied Ciudad Juarez, in the state of Chihuahua. Because of Villa’s presence, many peasants whose lands were confiscated by Benton, tried to recover them. Villa offered to pay a fair price for the land; however Benton got infuriated and openly insulted Villa and his people. He was arrested by Villa’s bodyguards and killed. This incident provoked a delicate international conflict known as the “Benton Case.” See Ivan Lavretski, Pancho Villa, 92-94.
century. The most impressive case was that of General Terrazas, owner of fifteen enormous haciendas.” As an example of such wealth, Table 2.1 lists the names and extent of six enormous properties. In the opinion of Frank Tannenbaum, a respected writer and researcher on the agrarian situation of the Mexico of the 1910s, the situation in those days was completely unequal. Large parts of the country’s land had been permitted to fall into the hands of foreign companies whose properties were found in all parts of Mexico. Figure 2.1 shows that the Díaz regime highly favored foreigners regarding distribution and ownership of the private land, which was approximately one-third of all land in the country. For example, Americans owned 51 percent of the private land (16,558,000 hectares), Spaniards 20 percent (6,000,000 hectares), British 17 percent (5,000,000 hectares), and Germans, Italians, and Mexicans 12 percent. Of this 12 percent, Mexicans only owned one quarter of it—a total of 3 percent of the land in Mexico in 1910.36

Table 2.1. Typical Haciendas in Mexico During the Early 1900s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HACIENDA</th>
<th>HECTARES</th>
<th>ACRES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corralitos</td>
<td>335,000</td>
<td>827,450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Gertrudis</td>
<td>175,000</td>
<td>432,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Miguel</td>
<td>317,300</td>
<td>783,731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Diego</td>
<td>123,250</td>
<td>304,428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encinillas</td>
<td>702,224</td>
<td>1,734,493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hormigas</td>
<td>175,561</td>
<td>433,636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,828,355</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,516,037</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


36 Tannenbaum, *México*, 141.
Figure 2.1. Land Distribution in Mexico, 1910


As a result, increasing numbers of Mexican peasants were forced to migrate to the United States in search of land, work, and security. According to the US Immigration and Naturalization Service, from 1910 to 1930, approximately one million Mexicans migrated to the United States, with 750,000 entering legally and the rest entering illegally. Additionally, another 750,000 Mexicans died during the Revolution, out of a population of some 15 million. In a sense, the land distribution situation was one of the leading causes of the Mexican Revolution, which erupted in November 1910.37

Therefore, conditions prevailing at that time in Mexico and the prosperity brought by the industrial era on the northern side of the Rio Grande resulted in a massive and sustained migration flow that became necessary and permanent on both sides of the border until 1920. These immigration flows were seldom accompanied by significant social

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friction, and with few exceptions, the Mexican immigrants tended to find jobs and acceptance in the new urban and agricultural centers of the United States. This rapid accommodation, in part, was due to the thousands of well-paid jobs and opportunities that new industries in northwestern and midwestern states offered.

The United States experienced profound changes in its economic, social, and demographic structure during this time. For example, during the first decade of the twentieth century, almost nine million new immigrants arrived from Europe, China, and Mexico, contributing to the growth of the country’s population from 75 million to 92 million.38

The origin of this flow was, in most cases, the same: violence and poverty in the immigrants’ homelands and the hope that a well-paid job would provide a better life in America. From an economic standpoint, the country also experienced a deep industrial transformation. This industrial transformation was possible due to the emergence of the most powerful business families in the history of the United States, including the Fords, the Morgans, the Rockefellers, the Vanderbilts, and others. Their big industrial corporations would later dominate and control the world industrial and financial markets. A clear example of such big corporations is the case of the United States Steel Corporation, which started operations with one billion dollars, a sum that had not been reached since the Civil War, even by the largest textile mill companies that dominated the industrial panorama of the country.39 In this way, the US Steel plant at Lorain, Ohio, became America’s largest corporation, next to the Rockefeller oil monopoly, which was able to control the world’s oil production at that time.


Additionally, the powerful and emerging Detroit automobile industry also grew rapidly, and the Ford Company built 1,000 cars daily in 1908. This impressive production was possible, in part, due to the successful opening of assembly plants. Sears Roebuck and General Electric were also large employers at the time, along with the Bethlehem Steel Corporation and the fish cannery industry of Alaska. Indeed, at that time, the use of the telegraph and the telephone were common in all parts of the country, and many people could enjoy the comfort of an electric sewing machine, a vacuum cleaner, and later, the Ford Model T, which in those years came onto the market for 850 dollars.\textsuperscript{40}

On the other hand, in Mexico, the economic and social situation was completely different in terms of progress. For example, only in Mexico City and in two or three of the most important cities did a few people (of high economic level) begin to know the benefits and comfort of electric power and the pleasure of driving a Ford car. Transportation was mainly provided by peasants and beasts of burden. The rest of the country was living in the same conditions that had prevailed a century before. In conclusion, with a population of 100 million people at the end of 1920, the United States had transformed itself into a major industrial power (bigger than England and Russia) with an immense and attractive labor market that produced hundreds of new jobs every day.\textsuperscript{41} The industrial expansion attracted thousands of jobless Mexican peasants who were suffering from the economic consequences of twenty years of violence and social dislocation caused by the Mexican Revolution. As a result, in the late 1930s, there were an estimated 750,000 Mexican workers who were legally

\textsuperscript{40} Ron Chernow, \textit{Titan: The Life of John D. Rockefeller, Sr.} (New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2004), 71.

\textsuperscript{41} For a detailed description of the economic and social characteristics of the United States during the period known as “The Progressive Era,” see Lois Gordon and Alan Gordon, \textit{American Chronicle: Seven Decades in American Life 1920-1989}.
admitted to the United States. If we add undocumented migration, the 750,000 figure easily increases to one million. Therefore, to a certain extent, the Mexican workers flowing to the United States were fortunate in that they could be rapidly integrated into the American labor market where wages ranged from one dollar and twenty-five cents to four dollars daily, depending on the difficulty of the job.

By the end of 1930, the situation had changed for the Mexican migratory flows because of complaints from conservative groups that protested the apparent lost control of the border and the serious economic situation caused by the Great Depression. The United States began a “voluntary repatriation” program that eventually sent some 300,000 Mexicans back to their country.

A few years later, the outbreak of World War II again changed the migrant picture dramatically. The US government and Mexico negotiated a Bracero (laborer) agreement in 1942, which, for the first time in the history of the two countries, brought more than 300,000 farm and transportation industry workers to the United States, not only with legal status but also with a guarantee of decent wages, health care, and good working conditions.42

Then, in a thirty-year period between 1940 and 1970, another million or so Mexicans were legally admitted to the country. Then, from the late 1970s to the 1990s, almost four million Mexicans legally migrated to the United States. In summary, according to INS data, from the beginning of the century to 1995, the official number of Mexicans who have legally migrated to work and live in the United States is some 5.4 million. Moreover, as was mentioned in Chapter 1, Mexico, with its 2.7 million (as of October 1996)

42 During the 22 years of the Bracero program, 4.6 million contracts were issued to Mexican workers coming to the United States for temporary employment. It was a period of extraordinary economic growth and great labor demand in the States, in which the Mexican labor force was vital for covering the US labor shortage. For a detailed discussion of the Bracero program, see Erasmo Gamboa, Mexican Labor and World War II: Braceros in the Pacific Northwest,1942-1947 (Austin: University of Texas, 1990), 22-47.
undocumented migrants to the United States, is the leading source country of such illegal immigration north of the Rio Grande. In total, there are 12.7 million Mexicans (both documented and undocumented) living and working in the main urban and rural centers of the country. This historical trend of Mexican migratory flow serves to underline two observations. First, Mexicans come to the United States “pushed” by economic factors deriving from the lack of employment and opportunities in their rural communities and “pulled” by the economic opportunities in the United States. In understanding the structure of this migratory process, it is important to know that certain rural communities in Michoacán, Zacatecas, Jalisco, and other “sending” states have built their own social and cultural traditions of migration. These social networks have expanded every day, playing a major role in the migratory decision to leave the country. Second, despite US immigration policy and efforts to prevent more Mexicans from crossing the border, data show that there has been and continues to be a significant and steady flow of Mexican workers entering the United States, altering the social, economic, and political character of the immigration issue on both sides of the border.

2.9. Demographic Factors and Cyclical Devaluation of the Mexican Peso in the Immigration Process

An additional factor resulting in increased immigration is the question of population growth in Mexico. As we can see from Figure 2.2, the Mexican population increased from 20 million in 1940 to 90 million in 1990, and then to 112 million in 2010. The strain of this population growth on Mexican resources was, and continues to be, overwhelming and has

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driven many Mexicans of lower socio-economic status to emigrate in search of better opportunities.

According to Mexico’s former minister of social development, Esteban Moctezuma, there are 40 million Mexicans living in rural and urban areas who are marginalized from the rest of the country. In Mexico’s rural areas, the rate of underemployment and unemployment is close to 50 percent. Out of those 40 million, 26 million (25 percent of Mexico’s population) live in extreme poverty. In Moctezuma’s view, there is national shame in the fact that Mexico’s economy is ranked thirteenth in the world but, at the same time, the World Bank ranked Mexico as the world’s twelfth poorest country.44

Another salient issue within the context of immigration has been the worsening exchange rate of the Mexican peso to the US dollar. As Figure 2.3 shows, from 1976 onwards, Mexico’s financial problems, such as inflation, the exchange rate, the current account, and balance of trade, continued to worsen. Due to the corresponding drop in living standards, the number of people leaving Mexico increased, as well. As was explained before, from 1940 to 1970, one million people migrated from Mexico to the United States. Then, from the late 1970s, when the process of the peso devaluation started, to the 1990s, another four million Mexican immigrants were legally admitted into the United States.

On June 18, 1992, the Mexican government created a new monetary system, authorizing the circulation of a “new peso” that eliminated three zeros from the former currency. As of September 12, 2012, the exchange rate of the Mexican peso to the US dollar was 13.01 per dollar.45


Thus, the impact of higher population growth and the cyclical devaluation of the Mexican peso led to higher rates of immigration from Mexico to the United States. It is important to mention that higher wages in the US labor market historically have motivated
this immigration flow, not only from Mexico but also from the rest of the Latin American countries.

As a summary of Mexican immigration to the United States, Figures 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3, illustrate three of the most important factors that have provided the “push” forces that prompted many Mexicans to emigrate from their homeland. By the time of the Mexican Revolution of 1910, land ownership in Mexico had become highly concentrated in the hands of a relatively few wealthy families. In fact, Figure 2.1 shows that most of Mexico’s land was owned by foreigners. As Mexican peasant farmers became increasingly disenfranchised from their land during the government of Porfirio Díaz (1876–1911), they looked for alternative ways to support their families, and many opted for immigration to the United States. In addition, Figure 2.3 shows that throughout the half-century period between 1940 and 1990, Mexico experienced a population explosion. To relieve the resulting strains on the nation’s labor force capacity, additional Mexicans looked for work in the rapidly growing American economy. More recently, the drastic devaluation of the Mexican peso relative to the US dollar since 1975 has proven to be an accurate indicator of Mexico’s economically disadvantaged position compared to that of the United States. As the economic gap widened between the United States and Mexico, the attraction of the United States as a new home intensified for many cash-poor Mexicans. As a result of these three factors, INS data disclosed the total official estimate of the Mexican population living in the
United States in 1999 as 8.1 million. Finally, there is the increased violence caused by the drug cartels and people fleeing the insecurity in Mexico for America, with the latest available figure for Mexicans living in the United States at 12.7 million in 2008, according to the Pew Research Center.

2.10. Mexican Farmworkers in Florida

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, millions of Mexican workers have emigrated in search of a good job and a better life in the traditional farming communities and urban centers of the United States, such as in the case of California, where the lettuce and strawberries fields in the Watsonville/Salinas area each season attract more than 30,000 farmworkers. Cattle ranches in Texas are another well-known source of hundreds of jobs. Mexicans also travel to the Midwest and to northern states, searching for jobs on the milk-cow ranches of Idaho or in the pork slaughterhouses of Iowa. Traditional producers of farming jobs are also the Virginia apple industry, the Pennsylvania mushroom-growing operations, and the Ohio pickle industry. The tobacco industry in North Carolina and the vegetable crops produced in South Carolina are also safe places for finding jobs, not only for Mexicans but also for farmworkers from southern states and from Central America and the Caribbean countries.

Many Mexicans also work in the fishing industry of Maryland and Alaska, in the construction industry, building houses and buildings in Atlanta and Houston, and, of course, in the restaurant industry of the main metropolitan areas of Los Angeles, Dallas, Chicago,

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46 See also Cristobal García, “Viven en EU 8 Millones de Mexicanos: Conapo,” La Jornada, December 21, 1999, 8(A).

Denver, Detroit, New Jersey, and New York, just to mention some of the jobs held by members of the Mexican labor force.

Now, in the case of Florida, since the Bracero years, the state has attracted one of the greatest concentrations of Mexican farmworkers in the United States who, for more than fifty years, have followed, with their families, the annual Florida migratory cycle that begins in Miami-Dade and Collier counties and ends on the border with Canada, with the migrants then returning to South Florida. During the harvest season, Mexican farmworkers work in the state’s different agricultural areas—at nursery greenhouses, preparing the land for the fall vegetable crop, and planting and caring for citrus groves. After that, in the winter, they pick tomatoes, fresh corn, snap beans, watermelons, oranges, and several other fruits and vegetables produced in the state.

According to data collected by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the United States Department of Labor’s National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS), and the University of Florida’s Shimberg Center for Affordable Housing, in 1995 there were 171,000 farmworkers exclusively engaged in field activities in the different agricultural areas of the state. Moreover, according to the University of Florida’s Southwest Research and Education Center and the Florida Department of Labor (FDOL), there are more than 40,000 seasonal farmworkers in Southwestern Florida counties.


49 It is important to mention that the 40,000 figure includes Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, and Lee Counties. Miami-Dade County is not included, and thus the total figure is actually higher. In Chapter 5, detailed and extensive information about the farmworker population by counties is offered. See Fritz Roca, “Seasonal Farmworker Demographics,” (Southwest Research and Education Center, Immokalee: University of Florida, 1998).
According to Professor Thomas Boswell, a University of Miami expert on demographic studies, Mexican farmworkers have become Florida’s “Forgotten Latinos.” In Boswell’s opinion, there are at least two reasons for this. First, in Florida there are two other Latino groups, Cubans and Puerto Ricans, who live in the state in much larger numbers than the Mexicans and, as a consequence, have received much more attention. Second, whereas by far the majority of Florida’s Cuban and Puerto Rican populations live in urbanized areas, Mexicans live outside cities in rural and isolated areas where they work in agricultural activities. In these isolated rural environments, they are less visible to the general public, creating a common perception that Mexicans have no significant presence and make no economic contribution in South Florida.

2.11. Research Questions

Therefore, based on the importance of the topic and the literature reviewed above, and in an effort to contribute to the knowledge about the Mexican migrant farmworker group in South Florida and its international character, I will present a theoretical and methodological framework to approach the issue from an international relations standpoint. After the theoretical and methodological discussion, I will answer the main research questions addressed in the present study:

RQ1: Who are the farmworkers who work in the agricultural activities in the Homestead–Immokalee corridor of Southwest Florida?

- Where do they come from?
- What are the migratory routes they follow to get into the corridor?
- How many are there?

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• What are their labor and socio-economic conditions?
• What crops employ them most?
• What is their annual income?
• Are they a strong, organized labor group?

RQ2: *Is there any significant economic impact of the Mexican farmworker labor force on South Florida’s and Mexico's economy?*

• What is the market value of South Florida’s agricultural industry?
• What are the main agricultural counties in South Florida that employ Mexican farmworkers?
• What are the main agricultural commodities produced in the Homestead–Immokalee corridor?
• Is there any significant impact of the farmworker group on local business?

RQ3: *What are the international implications of the farmworker issue for US–Mexican relations?*

• How much money do the farmworkers send to Mexico?
CHAPTER 3
THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO MIGRANT FARMWORKERS
IN THE CONTEXT OF US–MEXICAN RELATIONS

3.1. Overview

The purpose of the present chapter is to develop a model for measuring the issues raised in the research questions related to the Mexican migrant farmworker labor force in South Florida. The discussion is based on theory that is relevant to migratory, transnational labor flows in the new era of globalization and economic integration typical of the late twentieth century. The issue of the transnational migratory labor forces is growing and becoming more relevant as various regions of the world move toward free trade zones and economic integration. However, theory on transnational migration flows is not well developed, and data on low-skilled workers is lacking and inconsistent, leading to an enormous lack of comprehension of the issue at most levels of American society. In part, this is caused by the lack of information about the real economic contribution of migrant labor forces to local economies, as well as sending countries.

Thus, the present chapter contributes to a better understanding of South Florida’s farmworker labor force by developing a theory-based approach to analyzing the issue. The present chapter is divided into four parts. The discussion begins with a brief overview of the current status of international relations theory; then, the discussion focuses on an explanation of why a structural realist approach best describes the position, nature, and implications of the migrant farmworker group in South Florida. Next, a description of the components of a “migrant labor scenario” based on the structural realist model is offered. This segment also includes an analysis of the most important patterns of
interaction between variables related to this issue, such as the Mexican economy’s
sending of farmworkers to the South Florida economy and the international foreign
policy implications of that process. The chapter concludes with the corresponding final
considerations regarding how international relations theory guides my study.

In the sphere of international relations, the issue of migratory flows is growing
and becoming more relevant as various regions of the world move toward free trade
zones and economic integration. In this era of the globalization of economic markets,
there is a new conception of the function of national borders, which are no longer
perceived as exclusionary boundaries but as “channels of communication” or “interfaces”
that assure the free flow of goods, capital, information, culture, technology, and labor.
Another feature of this new global order of frameworks is that economic linkages are
growing both among states and between states and non-state actors, such as cities, private
organizations, subnational administrative units (e.g., Florida and California), and even
individual businesses (e.g., farming operations, in the case of South Florida).

In the sphere of US–Mexican relations, Mexican immigration is one of the
greatest social movements of the past one hundred years not motivated by ethnic conflict,
epidemic causes, violence, or war, but rather by economic considerations. During the
twentieth century, Mexico sent almost one quarter of its population to the United States,
and a key factor in this immigration process was and continues to be the structural
economic differences that divided the two countries. Indeed, during the history of Mexico
and the United States, the flow of labor has been one of the most important socio-
economic issues attributable to geographical proximity and economic structural
differences. Within these structural differences, a factory worker in the United States has
an average hourly wage of ten dollars, while the same worker in Mexico makes, at the most, fifty cents per hour. Also, within this scheme, the US per-capita income is nine times higher than Mexico’s; regarding labor force development, Mexico, with a population growth that adds thousands of people to the labor force each year, creates strong pressure on the lower social classes to emigrate in search of better work opportunities.

Therefore, the flow of Mexican migration to the United States can be categorized as economic migration due to a disparity in the levels of income between the United States and Mexico. Based on this economic orientation, a discussion is offered on what kind of theoretical approach best explains the location, economic nature, and importance of the farmworker issue in the international arena. In doing so, it is necessary to discuss the theoretical foundations, as well as the interaction between the migrant farmworkers and South Florida’s economy. To augment the discussion, a “theoretical migrant scenario” is offered.

3.2. Review of Theoretical Approaches

3.2.1. Realism

The history of world society is a history of inequalities that to a great extent have consistently shaped foreign policies and economic systems to alter the lives of millions of people in all corners of the world. In particular, inequalities have affected not only human values but also the way people have lived throughout history. The case of Mexico and the United States is an example of how the economic inequalities and the structural differences between two countries help explain the origin and motivation of traditional Mexican migration flows to the north. In the next section, I will review some relevant
aspects of international relations after World War I and then discuss the progression of IR theory from realism to some of its more contemporary interpretations.

Inequalities have also created frictions and social tensions that in the worst cases have led to war. For both politicians and academicians attempting to study the phenomena of international politics, the accepted view was that, since war had occurred through such misunderstandings and inequalities, the goal of international relations should be to devise ways to reduce misunderstandings. An integral assumption within this scheme was in keeping with a liberal view of human nature that good men and women would never want war.

Later, realist thinkers mounted a major attack on the idealist’s view. According to the realists, people should see the world as it is rather than as it could be. In particular, realism was seen as a critique of the way in which utopian thought had dominated international relations in the inter-war years. In this way, realism became the dominant theory in the history of international relations. It became known as “the power politics model” because of its emphasis on the political situation of the state as the central determinant of its own interests. Its dominance was not confined to the academic world and, indeed, it became the intellectual framework for US foreign policy throughout most of the Cold War.

Realism provided a justification for the kind of foreign policy that US leaders believed they had to implement during the period immediately after the Second World War. In this sense, realism offered a way of showing why the United States had to be so involved in global affairs. The lessons of war, death, and destruction on both sides provoked major attacks on realism and the emergence of new approaches. For example,
in the 1970s, neo-realism emerged, asserting that the state was no longer the dominant actor it had once been. Therefore, “national security,” the favorite symbol or “siren song” of those who favored increased American involvement in world affairs, was questioned in its applicability.

3.2.2. Neo-Realism

Before going any further, it is important to discuss the impact of neorealism briefly, which has theoretical affinities with realism while, at the same time, rejecting realism’s simpler canons. Robert Keohane, in his study *After Hegemony*, argued that neorealism, as a modified version of realism, could help to explain international economic issues. In doing this, Keohane introduced notions of hegemony and international regimes as correctives of realism. In particular, realism was criticized for ignoring economic factors. The critical mechanism employed by neo-realism is known as hegemonic stability. According to this approach, if an economic power could sufficiently dominate the international economy, it would provide a hegemonic stability, enabling other states to cooperate with it, as well as with one another. Neorealism sees states as being able to control international economic transactions in a way that restores explanatory power to realist assumptions about the role of the power-maximizing state. International economic regimes are embodiments of structural power in the international system, and their existence allows states to control one area of the international agenda that goes beyond the scope of realism.

In *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition*, Keohane and Nye assert that the world had entered a new era of interdependence or mutual dependence. Interdependence in world politics refers to situations characterized by reciprocal effects
among countries or among actors in different countries. Even the noted realist Henry Kissinger claimed, “the world has become interdependent in economics, in communications and in human aspirations.”

Keohane and Nye mention that those effects often result from international transactions, such as the flow of money, goods, and people across international borders. Such transactions, and the general proliferation of interrelated issues and events all across the foreign policy spectrum, have been increasing dramatically since World War II.

This new era of economic internationalization has brought an increased interdependence among states and non-state actors, creating a widespread perception that the traditional, theoretical notions inherent in realism are inadequate in their explanatory capacity. In other words, as a result of enormous changes in global issues and their growing complexity, a resulting paradigm shift has occurred, which moves beyond the explanatory boundaries of realist theory. Still, there are elements lacking in the neo-realist model that need to be incorporated in order to better explain the situation of farmworkers in South Florida.

There have been important global changes linked to profound machinations associated with the political, economic, ethnic, and social restructuring of the global order during the twentieth century. These changes, in turn, have led to a decrease in importance of realist notions inherent in US foreign policymaking, such as sovereignty, power, and diplomacy. In brief, they are no longer the sole foundations on which to formulate foreign policy in a climate of global change and reordering. That is why neither realism nor neo-realism remains the most adequate or viable theoretical perspective for

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understanding current world affairs. In this context, I would like to mention the particular case of Mexican farmworkers in the United States. Realism, as a state-centric perspective, fails to describe the position of migrant workers in the international arena and, in addition, it is clear that international migration issues blur the conventional realist distinction between world politics and domestic politics. On the other hand, neorealism fails to account for the complexity of the issue because it does not account for non-state actors and is unable to accurately describe much of the complexity of the international system at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

In a sense, the growing complexity associated with international and domestic politics has resulted in the increasing theoretical importance of structural realism as a tool for explaining issues such as regional interdependence, multiple channels of communication, international regimes, including those within environmental, political, and economic spheres, as well as providing us with a more responsive approach to global change as we know it today.

In summary, realism and neorealism do not apply to the case of migrant flows. Economic internationalization of markets has brought with it an increased interdependence among state and non-state actors, creating a wide perception that the traditional, theoretical realist notions of state behavior are inadequate. Keohane and Nye argue that transgovernmental ties and transnational actors, while not displacing states, are viewed as challenging the explanatory value of the realist state-centric paradigm under some conditions, including in the case of migratory flows. They note that migration has contested state sovereignty since the emergence of the territorial state. Yet, politicians and academicians conceive the state’s role in immigration regulation along traditional
lines, even though the state itself has undergone, and is undergoing, a significant transformation characterized by a reduction in its size and power.

3.2.3. Structural Realism

In *The Logic of Anarchy: Neorealism and its Critics*, Buzan, Little, and Jones have developed a lucid critique of neorealism and formed a new approach that is parsimonious, yet still able to deal with the complexities of the post-modern international system. Their approach is called structural realism. The structural realist approach is valuable in the context of Mexican farmworkers in South Florida because it:

1. Does not deny the presence or importance of the “deep structure” of the international system;
2. Takes into consideration the importance of interaction capacity and the flow of goods, information, and human resources across international borders;
3. Explains process formations that develop in specific international systems—military, economic, or otherwise;
4. Does not explain power strictly in military terms, but rather allows for various definitions of power; and
5.Uses a multimethod approach to measuring international phenomena, including analogy and metaphor, as well as quantitative measures.

The structural realist model of Buzan et al. is necessarily more complex than other realist explanatory models when used to describe international situations such as that of Mexican farmworkers in South Florida. There are two main components to the
organization of the international system, according to structural realism: levels of analysis
and explanatory variables.

The levels of analysis are:

1. The international system of states.
2. Regions or subsystems.
3. States or other significant actors.
4. Domestic-level organizations.
5. People.

Explanatory variables fall into three general categories;

1. Interaction capacity.
2. Structure (either anarchy or hierarchy as the organizing principle of the system).
3. Process formations—or enduring patterns of interaction in the system.

Combined as a matrix, levels of analysis and sources of explanation create a model
that explains almost all international phenomena. Figure 3.1 is a representation of the structural realist model in its basic form.

3.3. A Structural Realist Model of the Mexican Farmworker Group in Florida

The migrant farmworker issue, in general, is a practical issue and is grounded in events that shape the lives of several million people daily on both sides of the US–Mexican border. It makes the discussion of the economic orientation of this issue easier. Indeed, some of the principal “pushing and pulling forces” in the situation of the immigration process have a strong economic orientation. As was discussed earlier, the realist paradigm clearly puts economics in a “low priority” category, meaning that only
political explanations are left and that there is not much room to explain the immigration phenomenon.

In addition, the point that the Mexican government does not want to cut off its second largest supply of foreign exchange—that is, remittances from Mexicans working in the United States—is an example of the influence of economics on the political sphere. The decision to migrate is directly determined by geographic, demographic, political, and economic factors.

The migratory flow of farmworkers can be considered a form of investment in human capital. In this sense, the decision to migrate comes as the result of a cost-benefit calculation in which the benefits are a better job, higher income, and a better life.

Figure 3.1. Representation of the Basic Components of Structural Realism

Source: Buzan, Little, and Jones, The Logic of Anarchy

Another important aspect to consider is that the “structure” that affects immigration is related to exchange rates, unemployment, NAFTA, globalization, technology, trade flows, balances, demand of workers, and markets. The economic foundation of the issue gives a better understanding of the nature and origin of Mexican migrant flows.

A competing theoretical framework for this study is International Political Economy (IPE). However, it is important to mention that IPE, as a sub-discipline within international relations, is not as well developed as structural realism, in the sense that it is
weighed down by a debate not only over substance (e.g., what IPE is) but also method (e.g., how to study international phenomena that are both economic and political at the same time). Moreover, the purpose of my study is less theoretical and more practical. Therefore, structural realism, in this particular case, offers a valuable framework for this analysis without suffering from the controversy that typifies the IPE community. I am not saying structural realism is not controversial, for there are certainly many power realists who vehemently disagree with its precepts. However, in my opinion, it is more comprehensive and solid both in its definition and methodology than IPE and, therefore, better serves my purpose for the present chapter to develop a framework informed by good theory and sensible methodology that will help extend knowledge about Mexican farmworkers in South Florida.

The flexibility of the structural realist model makes it well-suited to the situation of Mexican farmworkers from the standpoint of levels of analysis. The international system serves as the main backdrop for the action. The prevailing international system in the late twentieth century, particularly after 1989, was, from the military point of view, a developing unipolar world—the “New World Order” announced by former President George H. W. Bush. The United States found itself in a position it had worked to create, where it was virtually unchallenged in both the military and economic spheres. However, even as this new, two-pronged “empire” (although Washington repeatedly disavowed all aspirations to create any such thing) began to coalesce, paradoxically, Washington found itself more dependent than ever on its foreign connections and sources of supply. Some of the very features that constitute such an overreaching political entity also began to blur and erode.
Today the United States maintains its position as the only military superpower of the world; however, its economy is no longer looking quite as invincible. In 1999, Clinton signed the Financial Services Modernization Act, removing the walls separating the activities of banks, insurance companies, and securities firms that the 1933 Glass-Steagall Act provided. This resulted in the booming derivatives market, which along with the burst of the housing bubble and other factors, many hold responsible for the continuing global economic crisis.52

With bank bailouts totaling at around $14 trillion as of November 16, 2009,53 many are worried about the devaluing of the dollar and the slowing of the US economy. In contrast to the situation that existed when this study began, recent developments indicate that the “push-pull” factors are shifting. The Mexican economy and standard of living have been improving, with reports of thousands of Mexicans returning to live in Mexico and of Mexico’s unemployment rate being at 4.9 percent in the main urban centers, compared with 9.4 percent joblessness in the United States in July 2011.54 PEW Research Center data confirm that unauthorized immigrant populations have been dropping in certain states, including Florida, as can be seen in Table 3.1. However, this comment should be taken with reserve and in any case need to be clarified with new research because the good numbers of the Mexican economy do not correspond in any way to the difficult situation in which thousands of peasants/migrants are living in rural


communities. There, the absence of employment in rural communities makes peasants and migrants easy prey for criminal gangs who use them for “good or bad,” meaning that if someone refuses to enlist with them, the criminals immediately kill them. Other peasants have no choice but to emigrate to the United States to seek safety and work.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>Change</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Decline (in thousands)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>1,050</td>
<td>825</td>
<td>-230</td>
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<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>825</td>
<td>625</td>
<td>-200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>-65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AZ-UT-NV</td>
<td>850</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>-160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Increase (in thousands)</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>TX-LA-OK</td>
<td>1,550</td>
<td>1,800</td>
<td>+240</td>
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The *New York Times* reports that illegal border crossings are decreasing, as it becomes more expensive and more dangerous with increased security and technology on the part of Border Patrols and the out-of-control violence caused by the drug cartels that populate the border area: “Douglas S. Massey, director of the Mexican Migration Project at Princeton, an extensive, long-term survey in Mexican emigration hubs, said his research showed that interest in heading to the United States for the first time had fallen to its lowest level since at least the 1950s.”

Borders became more porous in the 1990s, as the United States found it needed a growing supply of cheap, foreign, largely unskilled labor to keep its economic boom going. The most readily accessible source of this new labor supply was, of course, Mexico. However, after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, border security

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became a topic of increased interest in Washington. On March 1, 2003, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) was established, and the US Border Patrol became part of the US Customs and Border Protection, a component of DHS. Since then, the Obama administration has dramatically increased the number of agents. In a speech given at El Paso on May 10, 2011, the president stated that “The Border Patrol has 20,000 agents—more than twice as many as there were in 2004, a buildup that began under President Bush and that we have continued.”

3.4. Levels of Analysis

Actors at the regional level include commissions and regulatory bodies sanctioned through the North American Free Trade Agreement, such as the binational branch of the US Commerce Department and the Mexican Ministry of Commerce. The nation states involved in the process are primarily Mexico and the United States. For political reasons, Washington does not like to regularize the economic and legal situation of immigrants. On the contrary, it is deporting them, especially those who enter the country illegally.

Deportations are split into two types, the first being “removals,” defined as “the compulsory and confirmed movement of an inadmissible or deportable alien out of the United States based on an order of removal.” The second is “returns,” defined as “the confirmed movement of an inadmissible or deportable alien out of the United States not


based on an order of removal.” Most of the voluntary returns are of Mexican nationals who have been apprehended by the US Border Patrol and are returned to Mexico.58

In Figure 3.2, we can see the large increase in removals since 2003, contrasted by the decrease in returns.

Figure 3.2. Aliens Removed or Returns, 1930–2009

![Graph showing removals and returns from 1930 to 2009.]


This increase, along with other factors, is due to the following change in policy:

From April 1997, to November 2002, expedited removal only applied to arriving aliens at ports of entry. In November 2002, the Administration expanded expedited removal to aliens arriving by sea who are not admitted or paroled. Subsequently, in August 2004, expedited removal was expanded to aliens who are present without being admitted or paroled, are encountered by an immigration officer within 100 air miles of the U.S. southwest land border, and cannot establish to the satisfaction of the immigration officer that they have been physically present in the United States continuously for the 14-day period immediately preceding the date of encounter.59

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The Mexican government, on the other hand, does not have the political or economic power to negotiate a better situation for migrants; it cannot pressure the United States to make legislation more protective for migrant workers. Also, powerful anti-migrant groups play a key role on the national stage in influencing American public opinion, especially during election years. Ironically, however, economic forces during the year 2000 in the United States were the opposite of election-year rhetoric. With the economy booming and unemployment at historic lows, illegal immigrants were meeting a desperate demand for workers in agriculture and the service industry.

Domestic level organizations included the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and the Border Patrol, both of which carried out orders from the US government. However both have now been absorbed by the Department of Homeland Security, formed by the integration of 22 different federal departments and agencies in total; and their roles are now represented by US Customs and Border Protection (inspection functions and the US Border Patrol), US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (immigration law enforcement, including detention and removal, intelligence, and investigations), and US Citizenship and Immigration Services (adjudications and benefits programs).

The Mexican Growers Organization for the Mexican State of Sinaloa is an example of a Mexican domestic organization with strong interests in the migration process.60 Finally, the Mexican farmworkers themselves and the individual farmers in South Florida are examples of the individual level of analysis.

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60 The Mexican state of Sinaloa is one the leading agricultural exporters of fresh vegetables to the US market. Most of the tomatoes and fresh crops consumed in the United States in the winter come from Sinaloa.
A graphical representation of the levels of analysis probed in the context of US–Mexican relations examined in this research is shown in Figure 3.3. It clearly shows the position of overall patterns involved.

Figure 3.3. Graphic Representation of Levels of Analysis

3.5. Explanatory Variables

Interaction capacity is the key explanatory variable, according to structural realism; and the migratory flows of workers are a quintessential example of such interaction. Regarding the organizing principle of the system, the first response might be that it is, indeed, anarchical in a true realist sense—that Mexico and the United States are truly sovereign, independent nation states with strict interests in self-preservation and protection from harm by the other actor. However, a deeper analysis suggests that the
relationship is, indeed, more hierarchical than anarchical. Each country is rather dependent on the other for assorted requirements, including money, steady supplies of cheap labor, agricultural commodities, military protection, and petroleum, to name a few.

Process formations, which are patterns of interaction that recur frequently and create predictable scenarios, are especially common in the context of US–Mexico relations with regards to immigration. For example, historical, demographic, and economic factors have spurred a permanent flow of Mexican migrant workers to the United States, as expectations of higher economic rewards and better opportunities have increased. Additional examples of process formations are the “pull force” of the US economy and the “push force” of the Mexican economy. Traditionally, the United States has been unable to fulfill its labor-force demand with a domestic supply of labor. Basically, the migrant labor force represents not only a short-term process formation, in the sense of its contribution to local economies, but also a long-term process formation from the standpoint of the naturalization process of getting political power, registering to vote, and fighting for basic rights. In the next ten to fifteen years, Mexicans will become an important political force in the United States when many of them who are legally entitled to become American citizens apply for the naturalization process. Figure 3.4 shows the structural realist model adapted to describe the scenario of migrant workers from Mexico in South Florida.

In addition, Figure 3.5 shows a graphical representation of the variables involved in this issue. These patterns of interaction between and among variables related to this issue are delineated, such as the Mexican economy sending farmworkers to the South Florida economy and the international foreign policy implications of that process.
The labor flow between the two countries will continue for as long as they maintain the degree of structural diversity and interdependence that now characterize them, and while the United States continues to be unable to supply its own domestic labor market. Thus, an approach
to the study of migrant farmworkers in South Florida that is based on the structural realist framework will contribute to answering the research questions in the present study because it will help to:

1. Describe the group at a local level;

2. Explain the economic variables; and

3. Account for international aspects of the issue.
CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

4.1. Overview

The purpose of the present chapter is to outline the methodological framework used to answer the research questions developed from the review of the related literature. In the first section of the chapter, I discuss the data collection approaches used and justify how they answer the research questions. In the second section, the three approaches to data collection are outlined, again with an emphasis on the research questions that guide this study.

4.2. Research Questions and Summary of Methodology

Since the research questions form the backbone of the methodological framework, I feel it is worthwhile to review them again briefly here before continuing:

*RQ1*: Who are the farmworkers who work in the agricultural activities in the Homestead–Immokalee corridor of Southwest Florida?

- Where do they come from?
- What are the migratory routes they follow to get into the corridor?
- How many are there?
- What are their labor and socio-economic conditions?
- What crops employ them most?
- What is their annual income?
- Are they a strong, organized labor group?
**RQ2:** Is there any significant economic impact of the Mexican farmworker labor force on South Florida’s and Mexico's economy?

- What is the market value of South Florida’s agricultural industry?
- What are the main agricultural counties in South Florida that employ Mexican farmworkers?
- What are the main agricultural commodities produced in the Homestead–Immokalee corridor?
- Is there any significant impact of the farmworker group on local business?

**RQ3:** What are the international implications of the farmworker issue for US–Mexican relations?

- How much money do the farmworkers send to Mexico?

4.3. General Framework

The phenomenon of Mexican farmworkers in South Florida is one that is well-suited to a multimethod approach because there are both quantitative and qualitative aspects to the problem. A multimethod approach is one that incorporates both quantitative methods and qualitative methods to study a particular problem where each approach is most appropriate and provides a triangulation of sorts that strengthens the findings and conclusions of each method. Moreover, a multimethod approach is well-adapted to the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 3 because, as Buzan and other authorities suggest, international relations have traditionally been studied, using a variety of methods, with an emphasis on qualitative, metaphor, and analogy approaches.  

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Regarding my study, I not only consulted the typical sources about migrant workers (e.g. books, periodicals, journal articles, videos, and reports) but also several other dissertations on the subject, specifically those related to migrant farmworkers in South Florida. It is my understanding that such an extensive examination of relevant material enriches my dissertation a great deal, not only from reviewing the results of those investigations but also by studying their methodological approaches. Therefore, the purpose of the next section is to briefly review those methodologies to further substantiate the approach that was used throughout this work. The review also helps frame my contribution to the knowledge on the subject by identifying how it differs from previous studies.

In “Narratives of Survival”, Martinez used two qualitative procedures for obtaining information: life histories and key informant interviews. During the first phase (September 1992 to January 1993), narratives were gathered to reconstruct the life histories of informants in migrant labor camps in Central Florida. During the second phase (January to March 1993), the narratives were arranged into individual documents and shared with each participant for final approval of information to be used in the final draft. Informants included young adults, school administrators, teachers, and migrant advocates. Martinez argues in her methodological section that, according to Bernard, participant observation “is the foundation of anthropological research, and yet it is the least well-defined methodological component of the discipline.”62 According to Martinez, Bernard does not even consider participant observation as a formal methodology but as a strategy that facilitates data collection in the field. One of the reasons why participant observation is such a helpful strategy in data collection is that it facilitates rapport

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between the researcher and a particular cultural group. In addition to rapport-building, the act of becoming a participant-observer in a cultural situation gives the researcher an insider’s point of view on the situation, while at the same time allowing him or her the necessary distance to intellectualize what was learned. In other words, particular observation allows the researcher to speak the language of the people and to extract meaning with confidence. I think this is a very good observation that, in many senses, is linked to my research and background, since most of my life I have been an “inside observer” of the migrant life as a migrant myself.

In addition, Martinez also says that, although anthropologically speaking, participant observation usually refers to a long-term, continuous stay in the field, in her case, she became a “participant observer” in the culture of the Mexican–American migrant farmworker through the use of stories. She went to the migrant labor camps to live there. In my case, I am also not only a “participant observer” but an “active member” of the Mexican–American migrant cultural group, because my family arrived in the United States forty years ago as farmworkers.

In “Harvesting the Crops of Others: Migrant Farm Labor on the Eastern Shore of Virginia,” Heppel used participant observation to answer her central research question. She also went to migrant camps and became a migrant worker for an entire season in 1979. She interviewed main participants involved in the migrant labor system: farmworkers, farmers, and crew leaders. In summary, Heppel explains that while this type of field anthropological work limited the kind of data to qualitative sources, she could establish a long-term relationship that allowed her to gather reliable data that she used to compare and contrast crews on the Eastern Shore. She clarifies that she did not
trust information that could be obtained through brief encounters with workers in camps where she was not known, either by interviewing or passing out questionnaires. Thus, it was necessary for her to spend as much time with a particular crew as possible. Yet, to answer the questions she had, it was also necessary for her to move around, staying in different camps and working with different crews.

In this particular case, even though Heppel does not describe in a clear, academic way the methodological model and phases followed to answer her main research questions, it is clear to me that here we have another interesting case of participant observation as an effective methodological tool. She decided to stay a long period of time with workers in order to develop a more reliable relationship with them.

Murphy’s “An Empirical Study of Farm Workers in South Florida” is closely related to my research from a topical standpoint. However, methodologically, Celeste Murphy relied solely on statistical analysis. She used a “Worker Survey” during the interviewing of the sample population. The questions focused on pesticide exposure, laws, legal rights, and health problems. The survey was pretested in Belle Glade at the Okeechobee Housing Center on January 29, 1997. The final draft of the worker survey consisted of seven sections and seventy-nine sub-sections related to general demographic and occupational information, individual and household income, pesticide exposure, working conditions, etc. The final section pertains specifically to women and contains questions regarding birth defects.

There were 128 variables used in Murphy’s study, and data were collected during the first four months of 1997, but the questions pertaining to what the farmworkers
experienced in 1996 were formulated before that. Therefore, Murphy’s investigation is a cross-sectional study.

Murphy argues that South Florida is an ideal place to gather data on farmworkers since it is one of the top three agricultural states in the United States, and Palm Beach County has the largest number of farmworkers of any county in Florida. Additionally, she mentions that more pesticides are used in Florida than in any other state, due to the large number of insects in the subtropical climate. Individuals interviewed in this study were mainly agricultural workers in Palm Beach and Indian River counties.

Logan’s “Examining the Characteristics of Resettled Migrant Farm Workers” used qualitative methodologies, specifically in-depth interviews, to produce descriptive data about resettled migrants in the East Coast migrant stream. According to Logan, the descriptive nature of the investigation negated the need for the formulation of a set of research hypotheses.

The settings in which Logan’s study took place are migrant communities in South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. These settings were chosen mainly because these areas along the southern Atlantic Coast have become hosts to a number of migrant workers, as opportunities for resettlement have presented themselves. The study was conducted between July 1989 and December 1990.

A total of twenty-six participants made up the sample for this study. Twenty-eight individuals who met the study criteria were contacted. The twenty-six participants included eighteen black males, one white male, and seven black females, all of whom were English-speaking, American-born citizens. All participants in this study met the
following criteria: (a) they were part of the Atlantic Coast migrant stream, and (b) they had resettled along the Atlantic Coast between 1989 and 1994.

The author also used snowball sampling, a technique by which each person who was interviewed was asked to recommend other resettled migrants. An interview guide was used for gathering data. Similar to the present study, the selection of an interview guide over the questionnaire was based upon discussions with officials from agencies that work with migrant farmworkers and migrant education programs. Interviews in this study were designed and conducted to promote in-depth probing by both the researcher and the participant, allowing each participant to give a verbal description of him or herself.

The interview guide also allowed Logan to examine the experiences and perceptions of participants, allowing for clarification of responses and development of areas of investigation that were not previously identified. Logan used open-ended interviews. As Bodgan and Bilken (1982) have suggested, “The purposes for doing an interview include, among others, obtaining here-and-now constructions of persons, events, activities, feelings, concerns and other entities, reconstructions of such entities as experienced in the past; and projections of such entities as they are expected to be experienced in the future.”

In summary, Logan used an interview guide, pad and pencil, and the telephone as instruments in her study. The data gathered included demographic, occupational/career goals, future goals, and reasons for leaving the migrant stream.


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the methods consisted mainly of participant observation and in-depth interviews of a
group of thirty-six women from various countries of origin. Truly open-ended questions
were posed, giving the respondents the opportunity to reminisce on their personal
experiences as immigrants. The author used the ethnographic method, with the main goal
of understanding the women’s interactions with the culture in which they were partaking.
Ethnography is the art and science of describing a group of people, and this method can
require a great deal of participation on the part of the researcher, as well as the ability to
experience the studied group closely, with the type of information gathered often being
very much of a qualitative nature. Castellanos, citing Alexander Massey, suggests, “The
researcher should be immersed in the culture in order to better understand what is going
on around them.”64 To maintain naturalism, the women were studied in their everyday
contexts rather than in experimental conditions.

The form of data collection was flexible, in the sense that it did not follow a
detailed plan set at the beginning of the research. Focus groups were used as a
methodological instrument to establish an initial contact from which a group of
individuals was selected to discuss personally experienced issues. Castellanos explains
how interaction between the participants allowed for a lot of information to be obtained
in a short amount of time. Body language and facial expressions were observed in detail,
in order to try to further interpret reactions and opinions. The author goes on to explain
how the establishment of a personal rapport was formed to ensure a sense of trust,
allowing the researcher the necessary close contact, as well as ensuring the reliability and

64 Carmen Castellanos, “Ethnic Markets and the Empowerment of Immigrant women in America,”
(University of Miami, 2010), 74.
accuracy of the data collected. Yet, importantly, neutrality was maintained toward the specific content of the responses so as not to “color” the responses.

A small sample size was used, as the intention was not to gain a representative of the whole of south Florida’s immigrant female population but rather to focus on the Redland Harvest Market Village for geographic and cultural reasons. It was easily accessible and provided a great variety of ethnic entrepreneurial niches.

Overall, based on the dissertations reviewed, the prevailing methodological framework is one that relies primarily on qualitative data and emphasizes observation, participant observation, and in-depth interviewing. The present study maximizes all of these characteristics by combining quantitative and qualitative analysis to answer the research questions and by using participant observation to its fullest extent. This dissertation makes a contribution to knowledge about the issue, for several reasons. Since I am Mexican and my family used to be a migrant farmworker family in South Florida, I utilize these factors to bring a level of reliability to the collected data, because of the detailed nature of my knowledge and experience. More importantly, credibility is imparted to the study because of the rapport that was established with all the interviewees.

For the present study, there are two main factors that fall into quantitative and qualitative categories, respectively. The first objective is to find out what the economic impacts are locally and abroad in Mexico, and to obtain some specific information about demographics and crop production. These types of phenomena are well-measured with quantitative methods. Second, I am also interested in the social conditions of the labor force and its international impact. These are aspects where qualitative methods have an
advantage because they capture real-life information in its own environment. Finally, many of the concepts will be appropriate to both approaches. Therefore, the methodological design is structured around the three research questions, with an emphasis on in-depth interviews in the field, as well as personal experience gained during almost three years I spent working as a teacher for the Migrant Education Program in Homestead, Florida between September 1998 and June 2000. My work at the Redland Labor Camp was mainly tutoring migrant students. The Redland Labor Camp is one of the six main labor camps located in the Homestead and Florida City areas, where an important segment of the local farmworker population lives. The Migrant Education Program has educational centers in the labor camps and in the Miami Dade-County public schools located in the area.

During those three years working for the MEP, I was able to get unique access to documentation relevant to my research, take notes while talking with farmworkers, and observe several aspects of the migrant life experience, as well as participate in several educational and community projects with the Migrant Program Director, Cipriano Garza, and other local farmworker leaders. This allowed me to acquire a clear perception and understanding of the multiple elements that make up migrant life.

In summation, the methodology for this study is a combination of statistical analysis and economic modeling, in conjunction with an ethnographic approach of interviewing, participating in, and observing the migrant farmworker community in South Florida.

In order to obtain additional qualitative information about the three research questions, two sets of interviews were conducted between 1999 and 2000. First, a series
of interviews were conducted in the Homestead–Immokalee corridor with strategic people involved in the migrant labor process: Farmworkers, community leaders, and consular level officials. The sample of informants was purposeful and designed to give additional explanatory information about the three main research questions of the study. Only the farmworker’s answers were recorded for the quantitative data presented in this report as they are the focus of the study. I would like to clarify that seven of the farmworkers were married with families, who I have identified as analysis level one in Table 4.1, from them I was able to gain more detailed information such as the education level of the members of the family, what kind of government assistance they receive, housing access and general information about migrant life. It is important to mention that it was the head of the household who was interviewed, therefore each family counts as one interview, making in total 7 families plus 25 single farmworkers resulting in 32 interviews. The interview matrix in Table 4.1 shows the interviews by level of analysis. Ten years later, I conducted a second set of 26 interviews, using the same questions and methodology, in order to compare the findings and see if labor conditions or demographic information had changed after this time.

With regards to the farmworker interviews, only men were interviewed because there are very few women working in the tomato fields due to the very physically demanding nature of the work. During my research I found that the majority of woman will be working in the greenhouses. However there is a small percentage of families working in the tomato fields known as pinteros because they pick unripe tomatoes which are half green. This is a different kind of work and they usually deal directly with the
farm owners and not through contractors. They pay the farm owner for what they pick and then sell the tomatoes directly to the local market.

All names used are fictitious in order to preserve the anonymity of those interviewed, except for those of officials and farmworker leaders who have agreed to have their real names used.

4.4. Approaches to Data Collection

The first research question is based on demographic and socio-economic characteristics of migrant farmworkers located in the Homestead–Immokalee corridor of South Florida (Miami-Dade and Collier counties). The first segment identifies the migratory routes farmworkers follow to get to the Homestead–Immokalee corridor and discusses the number of migrant farmworkers in the corridor, including presenting information on how the numbers have increased in the last ten years. This section also includes information about the concentration of farms in the main agricultural counties in the corridor, expenses for hired labor, housing, education, leadership, political power, income, and information about the main crops.

In addition, the first research question involves analysis of existing statistical data from the censuses conducted by the US Department of Agriculture, as well as information from the migrant census conducted by the Migrant Educational Program in Homestead and Florida City. Finally, these data were augmented with the US Census. Using the interview guide (available in the appendix), I conducted in-depth interviews with workers at the individual level of analysis with seven farmworker families and twenty-five individual farmworkers from the Immokalee, Homestead, Redland, and
South Dade Labor Camps, as well as tomato-field workers in Homestead, Florida City, and Immokalee. In other words, I used the interview guide as a source of “main topic questions” to develop a more in-depth interview strategy. As the interviewees gained confidence, more detailed questions on the diverse aspects of migrant life were asked, for example, to obtain information on how, where, and when they crossed the border to become migrant workers; the route followed until they got into the Homestead–Immokalee corridor of South Florida; and their incomes earned in various crop harvests—in general, to get all possible information about the labor conditions in which they work in the fields. This allowed me not only to compare wages but also to get a first-hand perception of the entire harvesting process, as well as valuable information on the diverse aspects of the migrant labor experience.

All the interviews were conducted in Spanish. I tried to avoid the use of a tape recorder to make the interviewing process more fluent and natural. I also asked the interviewees about their affiliations with union groups, voting registration, and participation in various censuses (e.g., Agricultural, Migrant, Housing Authorities, etc.).

I also talked to them about the year they came to the United States to see if, for example, there was any relationship between the decision to migrate and the Mexican peso devaluation of 1994.
Table 4.1. Matrix of Interviews by Level of Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Level One (Farmworkers)</th>
<th>Level Two (Leadership)</th>
<th>Level Three (International Mexican Consulate)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>La Familia Sanchez</td>
<td>Cipriano Garza</td>
<td>Miami</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>La Familia Martinez</td>
<td>Lucas Benitez</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>La Familia Garcia</td>
<td>Arturo de Leon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>La Familia Lopez</td>
<td>Mr. Baldemar Velasquez</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>La Familia Ramirez,</td>
<td>Maria Garza</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>La Familia Alvarez</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>La Familia Puente</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>An additional 25 interviews with single Farmworkers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
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Research question 2 used a “benefit-impact analysis” that focused on the economic impact of farmworkers in the corridor. Focusing specifically on the extent of the agricultural industry in South Florida, this section examines the market value of the agricultural commodities produced in the region to show the contribution Mexican farmworkers make to South Florida’s economy. This benefit-impact analysis focuses on the relationship between the value of the labor force employed and the market value of agricultural production, including their direct and indirect impact on the local economy. Finally, Phase II also includes an annual estimate of the remittances sent to Mexico by the farmworkers who work in South Florida.

In-depth interviews regarding the second level of analysis were conducted with six farmworker leaders: 1) Cipriano Garza, director of the Migrant Education Program in Homestead, Florida, 2) Lucas Benitez, leader of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, 3) Arturo de Leon, a local farmworker leader, 4) Maria Garza, president of the Mexican–
American Council in Homestead, Florida, and 5) Baldemar Velasquez, leader of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) from Toledo, Ohio.

Research question 3 looks at the relevant data from the first two phases that help identify what the international implications of the Mexican migrant labor force are in South Florida. An in-depth interview that contributed to this aspect of the research was conducted with the Mexican consul in Miami, Mr. Oscar Elizundia, during which he discussed migratory policy implications, farmworkers’ problems, official foreign policy related to migration, and remittances to Mexico from the United States.

4.5. Data Collection: Ten Years Later

In updating the study by conducting an additional 26 interviews in 2010, I hoped to gain an insight into what changes had occurred in the corridor for the farmworkers after ten years. For example, economically, what were the wages like, as well as the expenses? Had things improved? What about the working conditions and the use of pesticides? Were laws to protect the health of workers being implemented and respected by the employers of migrant workers? Was the level of education and English any different? How was their social standing? Are they a strong political force? How had life changed for immigrants after the increased security of the United States following the changes in laws and attitudes after the Twin Towers attack?
CHAPTER 5

FARMWORKERS IN THE CORRIDOR

5.1. Overview

The purpose of the present chapter is to answer the first research question formulated in this study. This section uses a combination of census information and qualitative methodologies—specifically, in-depth interviews—to produce descriptive data about the respondents selected for the research. The chapter is divided into three sections. First, there is a discussion of demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the farmworker labor force in the Homestead–Immokalee corridor. Then, the discussion focuses on the labor conditions, with an eye toward political and labor organizations. The chapter concludes with a summary of relevant findings and information.

The main premise underlying the present study is contrary to common perceptions, there is an important farm labor force positively participating, not only in local and state economies, but also in Mexico’s economy through remittances.

5.2. Research Question 1

RQ1: Who are the farmworkers who work in the agricultural activities in the Homestead–Immokalee corridor of Southwest Florida?

- Where do they come from?
- What are the migratory routes they follow to get into the corridor?
- How many are there?
- What are their labor and socio-economic conditions?
- What crops employ them most?
- What is their annual income?
- Are they a strong, organized labor group?

5.2.1. Description of Respondents, 1999–2000

The thirty-two respondents I interviewed for this study consisted of farmworkers who work and live in the Homestead–Immokalee corridor. Figure 5.1 shows that seven of the respondents were married and twenty-five were single males. Fourteen (44 percent) of the unmarried respondents were between seventeen and twenty-five years of age. Six (19 percent) were between twenty-six and thirty-five years of age. Five (16 percent) were over thirty-six years of age. The age of the married respondents ranged between twenty-five and forty years. Four of the married respondents had children between two and fifteen years of age.

Figure 5.1.Age and Marital Status of Group Studied

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65 The United States Department of Labor has defined a migrant farmworker as one who travels more than 75 miles to obtain a job in US agriculture. A seasonal agricultural worker is defined as a person employed in agricultural work of a seasonal or other temporary nature who is not required to be absent from his permanent place of work.
All of the respondents had worked in the Homestead–Immokalee corridor, mainly picking tomatoes, watermelons, oranges, lemons, limes, snap beans, malanga, okra, avocados, mangoes, and fresh corn. Of the respondents, 20 (63 percent) revealed that the first job they had in the corridor as farmworkers was picking tomatoes. The interviews also revealed that 22 respondents (69 percent) were born in Mexico, and 10 (31 percent) in Guatemala. Of those born in Mexico, 13 were from the state of Michoacán and 9 from the state of Guerrero.

Figure 5.2. Ethnic Composition of the Corridor’s Farmworker Group
Sixteen respondents (53 percent) mentioned that they arrived for the first time in South Florida after 1995. Fifteen (47 percent) of them had more than eight years experience as a migrant farmworker, not only in the corridor and in the eastern migrant stream, but also in other agricultural states such as Texas, North Carolina, New Mexico, and California.

Figure 5.4. Experience as a Farmworker
The interviews also revealed that 24 respondents (75 percent) were engaged in agricultural activities in their countries before becoming farmworkers in the corridor.

5.2.2. Migratory Routes

Regarding the migratory routes they followed, the data revealed that once they decided to leave their rural communities and migrate to the US in search of job opportunities, they traveled to northern Mexico to cross the border and take the traditional migratory routes to the main urban and agricultural centers of the United States. For example, in the particular case of those from the Mexican state of Michoacán, it takes approximately six months to plan a trip to South Florida and about the same amount of time to collect enough money for expenses. Migrant farmworkers must travel more than 2000 miles from the rural communities of Michoacán to Florida. The trip takes more than three weeks and requires between $2000 and $3000 for expenses. When everything is ready for the trip, the future farmworker travels from Michoacán to some point between the cities of Reynosa and Matamoros in the northern Mexican state of Tamaulipas.

The first leg of the trip takes two days and is mainly done by bus. Some workers who travel in groups of four or five drive a truck that they sell at the border to help with the payment to the pollero or “coyote” (paid smuggler) who assists them in crossing the Rio Grande, or Rio Bravo, as it is called in Mexico. However the majority travel by passenger bus.
Once at the border, it takes at least three days to contact one of the aforementioned polleros and to become acquainted with the area and make final arrangements to cross the border. Depending on contacts made by the workers, and on their luck, the pollero may charge up to $2000 per person for the complete service. Complete service includes la pasada (the crossing), which is the first phase of the journey. The hazardous Rio Grande crossing is done by walking and swimming, as well as riding an improvised raft for women, children, and for those who do not know how to swim. The Rio Grande looks more like a canal than a river, because it is no wider than twenty meters (sixty feet) during normal flows. Its waters, however, are extremely dangerous due to constant changes in speed and force; any sudden change can easily pull down and drown anyone crossing it. In addition, this area along the border is not only
infested by bandits, drug traffickers, and rapists, but also by the Mexican police who frequently attempt to extract a bribe from people caught crossing the border.

The second phase, *la llevada* (the ride), begins on the other side of the river and ends in a safe place (e.g., Houston, San Antonio, Austin, or Dallas). If there are no complications, the second phase takes about two days. It is extremely dangerous because it takes place in the middle of the Texas desert and is done at night when surveillance is minimal, but the chance of being attacked by bandits or bitten by snakes is greater. In fact, the roads are infested with rattlesnakes and all kinds of poisonous reptiles. Moreover, due to the fact that in most cases the *pollero* fee should be paid in advance, the possibility that the *pollero* will abandon or rob the group in the middle of the trip is always there. Also, if there is a young woman traveling with the group, the chances of being attacked by criminals increases substantially, because women are frequently raped and killed in the course of these journeys.

After they cross the Rio Grande, the immigrants travel by truck for approximately four hours; then they have to stop and continue the route by walking several hours at the night on a road that evades the strategic checkpoints established by the former Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and the Border Patrol between the main cities close to the border, such as San Antonio, Houston, and Dallas.

After reaching the end of their dangerous path, workers must ride on yet another truck and travel about two more hours to get to a larger city such as Houston. Once they arrive at their city destination, they are taken to a safe place where friends or relatives pick them up. If they do not have friends or relatives, they are instructed on how to resume their trip until they reach their final destination (e.g., South Florida).
Of all the stories that I have heard, seen, and read about the traumatic experiences faced by those who cross the border in search of work and a better life in the United States, there is one in particular that stands out and was told to me by a farmworker named Rodolfo Martinez who was interviewed as part of my research about the migratory routes and the experiences of the migrant life in South Florida. This interview was conducted on February 25, 2000, at a twenty-acre tomato field located on 187th Avenue and 168th Street near Homestead, Florida. I found this story especially interesting, mainly because its content symbolizes and represents in many ways all the negative and crude aspects of the migrant experience, such as abandonment, fear, terror, hunger, thirst, anxiety, and in many cases, death.

Rodolfo, a twenty-five-year-old worker from the state of Michoacán, along with three other friends, also from Michoacán, were part of a group of ten people who crossed the border four years ago, hoping to find work in Florida. While traveling by foot, a member of the group named Julio Mora was bitten by a rattlesnake that he accidentally stepped on in the middle of the road. Rodolfo described in detail the horrific experience and how it was dark and they did not know what was happening to Julio, that everything was in a state of confusion and people were screaming, until one of them heard the typical noise made by rattlesnakes. They helped Julio as best they could; they bandaged his leg and carried him along in order to move faster and seek help as quickly as possible. However, a couple of hours later, Julio began to have convulsions and eventually lost consciousness, alarming and scaring his companions. In view of the fact that his situation was worsening by the moment, they asked the “coyote” who led the group to seek help at a nearby ranch whose lights could be seen not far away. The “coyote,” with Rodolfo and
two other immigrants took Julio to the ranch. They spoke with the owner of the ranch, who luckily for them spoke fluent Spanish. The “coyote” narrated the story in detail to the man about what had happened to Julio—that they were good people going to Houston in search of jobs, that to avoid the Border Patrol they had to walk during the night on alternative routes, and that they feared the condition of their friend might be irreversible. After examining Julio, the ranch owner decided to call for help. He offered the migrant workers water and some fruit and asked them to leave his property quickly because help, and likely the police as well, were on their way. They thanked him several times. Before they left the ranch, Rodolfo wrote on a piece of paper some names and telephone numbers of friends from Houston who could help Julio in case he needed additional help, and he placed it in Julio’s pocket. After that, they quickly left the property, grateful to the owner of the ranch but extremely concerned for their friend’s condition. Julio remained at the ranch. The only thing that the pollero did not do was reveal his identity to the ranch owner, who was not aware that he was a pollero trafficking illegal workers.

They returned to the rest of the group and kept walking, now even more afraid. Hours later the group finally arrived in Houston, tired, hungry, and exhausted after many sleepless days and nights. Rodolfo told me that he had met Julio at the border when he and his friends were looking for the “coyotes” and polleros to cross the border. They had become friends there and promised to help one another in every way they could once they arrived in the United States. Julio had told him that he was from Oaxaca, that his family had sold its cows and other properties to finance his trip, which he had truly hoped would lead to a good job in America, thus allowing him to send money and help his family in Oaxaca. Rodolfo never heard from Julio since the day he was left in the care of the Texas
rancher four years earlier in 1995. Sometimes he calls his friends in Houston to find out if
Julio had seen the paper that he left in his pocket and had called any of them.

However, what impressed me the most about Rodolfo’s story was not what
happened to Julio, but rather what he told me next. According to him, there is a persistent
and widespread rumor among immigrants who travel on this route, asserting that “la 
migra,” as Mexicans call the Border Patrol and the INS, buy rattlesnakes in substantial
quantities from a rattlesnake farm located in the area to let them loose on the roads used
by the illegal workers. It is believed by some that la migra does this to discourage
workers who attempt to cross the border and also to gain revenge against Mexicans
because they aren’t able to arrest all of the illegals who travel down that road.

I confess that I did not pay much attention to Rodolfo’s rumor about the
rattlesnakes. The area is naturally populated by rattlesnakes and all kinds of poisonous
animals. Thus, it seemed highly likely that the snake that bit Julio was part of the desert’s
wildlife and not an animal introduced on purpose.

Later, while interviewing farmworkers in the labor camps of South Florida and
recalling Rodolfo’s sincerity and determination when he told me his story, I decided to
ask other farmworkers if they had heard anything about it. To my surprise, at least five of
them from different labor camps in South Florida confirmed Rodolfo’s version. One of
them, in particular, a worker named Carlos Sanchez who was interviewed in a tomato
field in Immokalee, Florida, substantiated Rodolfo’s story explicitly. He told me that
when he was traveling from Michoacán to South Florida, he ran out of money in Texas.
Therefore, he remained in Texas and worked in a ranch near a town called Victoria.
There, he met a friend who had worked for three years at a rattlesnake farm. This friend
told Carlos that he heard numerous times, from various and different workers that once in a while the Border Patrol would send people to buy a large number of snakes to be later let loose near the roads immigrants had to travel.

I decided to include Rodolfo’s story in this study for the sole purpose of documenting the information concerning the migratory routes followed by farm workers from Mexico. Rather than express an opinion about the truth or falsehood of Rodolfo’s story, it would be better to emphasize that this case illustrates the extent to which the volatility of the immigration issue can influence the minds of the people involved in the immigration process. For example, in the event that it was true that the Border Patrol uses poisonous snakes to deter undocumented workers on their way to the United States, it is probable that such an action would be the result of individual initiatives without official authorization. Additionally, racist acts should not be ruled out either. Texas has a long and sinister tradition as one of the states where racist acts against Mexican workers have been documented.

On the other hand, if the accusations are untrue, we may regard them as the consequence of the trauma and anxiety associated with illegal border crossings. The Mexican–American border is the only place in the world where one immigrant dies every day trying to reach his or her destination. Figure 5.5 illustrates the migratory route followed by many peasants from the Mexican state of Michoacán to the Homestead–Immokalee corridor of South Florida. It is an expensive journey, long, and extremely

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66 From January to October 20, 2000, 410 Mexicans had died in their attempt to cross the border. Most of them drowned in the Rio Grande or become dehydrated in the extreme temperatures prevailing most of the year in the desert areas along the Mexican-American border. See Ruth E. Salgado, “Produce 300 mdd Anuales el Tráfico de Ilegales,” Unomásuno, October 23, 2000, 15.
risky, and it frequently takes a harsh toll on those who attempt to travel it, such as the price paid by Julio Mora.

5.2.3. Number of Farmworkers and Labor Conditions

It is not easy to find a reliable source on demographic data regarding farmworker populations in the Homestead–Immokalee corridor. The main agencies that collect information, such as the US Census, the US Department of Agriculture, and the Department of Labor, have great difficulty collecting adequate information about the thousands of migrant and seasonal farmworkers who work and live in South Florida. There are many factors underlying these data collection problems. For example, the very nature of the farming activities requires constant mobility in search of new and more lucrative vegetable crops. As soon as farmworkers finish picking tomatoes, which lasts no more than three months, they move to a new tomato field in a different place. When the tomato harvest is over, farmworkers have to search for work with new crops.

Then, when the entire harvest season is over in the Homestead–Immokalee area, they move to northern counties in search of jobs. Data shows that nineteen of the respondents (59 percent) had traveled outside of Florida in search of jobs in the last three years and that thirteen (41 percent) had stayed in the area looking for jobs with nursery plants and in the construction industry. All of the respondents clearly expressed the desire to earn more money from different crops or in different farming activities.

Those who had traveled outside of the state in search of jobs when the harvest season had finished in Florida mentioned that the most frequent places they had traveled to work during the summer were: Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Ohio, Virginia, Illinois, and Michigan.
The majority of vegetables with which they worked at those destinations were: tomatoes, oranges, pumpkins, tobacco, apples, pickles, and fresh corn.

As was mentioned earlier, regarding the eastern migrant stream route that farmworkers follow after they finish picking crops and vegetables in the Homestead–Immokalee corridor, the journey that begins in South Florida and ends at the border with Canada takes place in early June and ends in September when farmworkers with children have to come back to South Florida for their children to begin classes.

Single migrant farmworkers return to the corridor later in October when the harvest season in the corridor is almost ready to start.

Many workers remain in the area, finding employment in different jobs until the next harvest season begins in late October. Farmworkers who follow the eastern migrant stream that begins and ends in the Homestead–Immokalee corridor will most likely be on
the move when census officials try to interview them. The possibility also exists that many others may be in Mexico visiting their families, others may reside in difficult-to-find housing, and still others may have difficulty participating or may be reluctant to participate in the census due to linguistic and cultural differences or concerns related to their legal status in the country. Unlike other typical employment, agricultural activities do not keep a worker in the same field for more than three to six months in one county or state. These aspects have provoked substantial difficulties for researchers trying to design reliable counting studies of farmworker populations, not only in South Florida but also in other parts of the nation that have high populations of migrant farmworkers.

The University of Florida’s Southwest Research and Education Center at Immokalee has developed diverse studies on the farmworkers and agricultural production in the Southwest Florida counties of Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, and Lee; but unfortunately, for the purpose of this section, its research does not include Miami-Dade County.\(^{67}\) In addition, most of these studies focused more on the agricultural economic activities than on the economic importance of the farmworker labor force to the local economies.

Despite these difficulties in making accurate counts of migrant workers, we can make accurate approximations of their numbers by using other means. For example, the Census of Agriculture, conducted by the Department of Agriculture, is a reliable source based on payroll records and crop acreage that helps in estimating the number of farmworkers in South Florida. Table 5.1 represents hired farm labor and shows that in 1997, there were 124,969 hired workers engaged in farm labor activities in Florida. In

\(^{67}\) See, for example, Fritz Roka and Dorothy Cook, “Farmworkers in South Florida, Final Report” (Immokalee: University of Florida, Southwest Research and Education Center, September, 30, 1998).
1992, there were 161,047; this means that the state lost 36,078 hired farmworkers in a five-year period. This data also includes paid family members who were employed in Florida farms. It’s important to clarify that the number of farms mentioned in the table corresponds only to those farms that employed farmworkers in the years cited. It is not the total number of farms. By 2007, as can be seen in Table 5.2, the number of workers had dropped even further to 115,306. This means a loss of 9,663 workers in a ten-year period, but that is not nearly so drastic a loss as in the previous five-year period.

In 1997, in Miami-Dade and Collier counties, where the corridor is located, there were 8,695 and 9,054 farmworkers, respectively. In 1992, there were 13,406 and 11,848 farmworkers in each respective county. This gives a clear idea that the corridor’s area attracts annually at least 17,000 farmworkers who are directly engaged in the farming activities of the region. The 17,000 figure is higher if we take into consideration the fact that it is difficult to collect accurate estimates of the farmworkers who are constantly moving. In other words, the number is likely an underestimation. Moreover, this information reveals that in a five-year period, the corridor lost over 7,000 workers, 4,711 from Miami-Dade County and 2,794 from Collier County.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Florida</th>
<th>Collier</th>
<th>Miami-Dade</th>
<th>Hendry</th>
<th>Hillsborough</th>
<th>Lee</th>
<th>Manatee</th>
<th>Palm Beach</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population, 2007 Estimate</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18,277,888</td>
<td>313,463</td>
<td>2,453,567</td>
<td>39,399</td>
<td>1,169,910</td>
<td>633,426</td>
<td>314,027</td>
<td>1,264,648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hired Farmworkers, 1997</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>124,969</td>
<td>9,054</td>
<td>8,695</td>
<td>5,253</td>
<td>13,611</td>
<td>4,235</td>
<td>6,926</td>
<td>10,707</td>
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<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>161,047</td>
<td>11,848</td>
<td>13,406</td>
<td>7,163</td>
<td>17,717</td>
<td>3,954</td>
<td>11,384</td>
<td>21,903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expenses for Hired Labor, ($ Thousands), 1997</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>925,607</td>
<td>45,008</td>
<td>87,939</td>
<td>40,300</td>
<td>65,051</td>
<td>42,072</td>
<td>32,070</td>
<td>122,042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>937,571</td>
<td>38,662</td>
<td>78,991</td>
<td>43,526</td>
<td>55,028</td>
<td>29,419</td>
<td>42,329</td>
<td>197,184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Rank, 1997</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Farms with Hired Labor, 1997</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>12,199</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>779</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>995</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>13,151</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>920</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>884</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>547</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.2. Hired Farm Labor – Workers and Payroll, Florida / Leading Counties, 1997–2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Florida</th>
<th>Collier</th>
<th>Miami-Dade</th>
<th>Hendry</th>
<th>Hillsborough</th>
<th>Lee</th>
<th>Manatee</th>
<th>Palm Beach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population Estimate,</td>
<td>18,801,310</td>
<td>321,520</td>
<td>2,496,435</td>
<td>39,140</td>
<td>1,229,226</td>
<td>618,754</td>
<td>322,833</td>
<td>1,320,134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011/2010</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hired Farm Labor, 2007</td>
<td>115,306</td>
<td>4,690</td>
<td>11,866</td>
<td>4,822</td>
<td>15,237</td>
<td>2,948</td>
<td>7,007</td>
<td>10,070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>124,969</td>
<td>9,054</td>
<td>8,695</td>
<td>5,253</td>
<td>13,611</td>
<td>4,235</td>
<td>6,926</td>
<td>10,707</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Labor Expenses</td>
<td>1,208,631</td>
<td>62,376</td>
<td>154,160</td>
<td>73,303</td>
<td>97,537</td>
<td>36,687</td>
<td>51,960</td>
<td>131,153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>($ Thousands), 2007</td>
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<td>1997</td>
<td>925,607</td>
<td>45,008</td>
<td>87,939</td>
<td>40,300</td>
<td>65,051</td>
<td>42,072</td>
<td>32,070</td>
<td>122,042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Ranking, 2007</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farms with Hired Farm</td>
<td>10,081</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>982</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>583</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor, 2007</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>12,199</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>779</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>995</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>528</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2007, as illustrated in Table 5.2, the balance of workers in the two counties shifted considerably to Miami-Dade. The number of workers in Collier practically halved, decreasing from 9,054 in 1997 to 4,690 in 2007, while Miami-Dade increased to 11,866. Taken as a whole, the number of workers in the corridor has decreased since 1997 by 1,540.

Table 5.1 shows how, in 1997, both counties had almost the same number of farmworkers. However, the payroll in the Miami-Dade County was almost $88 million, while in Collier County it was almost half, at $45 million. The main difference between both counties is in the number and structure of the farms that provide employment to the farmworkers. While Miami-Dade County had 779 registered farms, Collier had only 102 farms. The explanation for such a big difference in the number of farms is that in Collier County there are big farm companies that control operations, while in Dade County, farms are smaller and less concentrated.

However, data revealed that this situation in Miami-Dade and Collier counties does not benefit farmworkers so much in terms of wages. The interviews revealed that in both counties, farm wages stay the same. The only difference that I found was that in one place the jobs are concentrated in the hands of a few companies, while in the other, they are in the hands of many medium and small farm corporations. This results in a discrepancy that needs to be explained: why, if both counties have almost the same number of workers and the same type of jobs and wages, does one county have a payroll almost double that of the other?

By 2007, the number of farms in Collier had decreased by 14, to 88, and in Miami-Dade had increased by 203, to 982. The payroll discrepancy would appear to
have been resolved; taken as a whole, Collier has 28.3 percent of the workers, along with 28.8 percent of the labor expenses.

Table 5.1 shows that in a ten-year period, both counties, while decreasing their number of workers, have almost doubled expenses for hired labor. For example, Dade County increased from $45 million in 1987 to $88 million in 1997, and Collier County went from 25 million dollars to 45 million dollars in the same time period. In ten years, the entire state increased its expenses for hired labor from $722 million in 1987 to $925 million in 1997.

Table 5.2 shows that, ten years later, in Miami-Dade, the expenses increased, yet not so much as previously, even though the number of workers had increased, rather than decreased. Labor expenses were $154 million. In Collier they increased to $62 million, while the number of workers almost halved.

Palm Beach, one of the largest and most productive agricultural counties in Florida, showed a negative balance in both sections (i.e. in the number of workers and payroll for hired labor expenses). As Table 5.1 shows, from 1992 to 1997, it lost almost 50 percent of its hired farmworkers (Manatee also shows a large decrease of 40 percent of its labor force in the same five-year period).

In 1987, Palm Beach spent $162 million on hired labor, while in 1997 it spent $122 million, a decrease of $40 million in expenses for hired labor in a ten-year period. In 1987, Palm Beach was ranked as the fourth county in the nation in terms of expenses for hired labor, but ten years later it was ranked thirteenth, declining nine places. Miami-Dade and Collier counties both increased their rankings in this section, from twenty-ninth and fifty-second to seventeenth and thirty-ninth, respectively.
According to the US Department of Agriculture, expenses for hired farm labor include the total amount paid for farm or ranch labor, including regular workers, part-time workers, and members of the operator’s family if they received payments for labor. It includes social security taxes, state taxes, unemployment taxes, payment for sick leave or vacation pay, workmen’s compensation, insurance premiums, and pension plans.\textsuperscript{68}

Meanwhile, according to the 2007 Census of Agriculture, an estimated 115,306 farmworkers worked in crop agriculture in Florida in 2007, the most recent year for which full data is available. These include greenhouse and nursery workers as well as field crop workers. This total represents a drop of 9,663 workers in a ten-year period, if one considers that in 1997 there were a reported 124,969 workers laboring in farm activities in the state.

In the same period, Collier County lost 4,364 workers, while Miami-Dade gained 3,171. The lower number of farmworkers reflects a recent decline in citrus crop activity. The citrus industry is facing a long-term decline due to the spread of citrus canker disease in Florida, and the 2004-05 hurricanes both spread the disease and caused other temporary damages to citrus groves and tomato plantations. This trend appears to be continuing and may account for the dramatic decrease in farmworkers in Collier.

Twenty-six (82 percent) of the farmworkers interviewed mentioned they had not been previously interviewed or asked personal information about demographics, housing, or income. Six (19 percent) of them said they did not remember if someone had asked them or interviewed them about it. Twenty (63 percent) respondents had never seen any government official inspecting field crops or asking about labor conditions. Twelve

respondents (38 percent) mentioned that, while they were working in Michigan and Virginia, they had only once seen an inspector asking if they had water, cups, toilets, and other amenities. Regarding this aspect, I asked them twice if, while they were working in the corridor, they had seen any inspector or government official supervising safety and sanitary conditions, and their answer was “no.”

When I asked them if they had been previously interviewed by any agency from the government or by anyone else about their migrant life experience, the respondents told me, basically, that they only knew about the survey conducted by the Migrant Education Program of Homestead. In the interview with Raquel Ramirez, conducted at the Redland Labor Camp in Homestead, she said she clearly remembered that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), besides the Migrant Education Program of Homestead, had asked them information about their income and other personal information after local people affected by natural disasters had applied for relief funds. She remembered when FEMA opened a relief program in Homestead to assist the victims of Hurricane Andrew in 1992, as well as the recent victims of hurricanes that hit the area. Most of them were migrant workers from Homestead and Florida City who lost their agricultural jobs as a result of the hurricanes’ destructive effects.

The survey revealed that none of the respondents have medical insurance or labor benefits, and most of them do not have a clear idea of what exactly they have to do in order to get information about the different social programs related to medical protection for them and their families. The migrant families mentioned that when they need to see the doctor, they go to the Martin Luther King Community Clinic in Homestead, where

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69 The main purpose of the MEP is to improve programs of education for children of qualifying migratory workers. Depending on the season, the Migrant Education Program at Homestead serves up to 3,000 migrant students from pre-school to high school ages.
they pay only between ten dollars and twenty dollars for the visit, plus the costs of the medicine. Single farmworkers from Immokalee mentioned that they work under the *ley del monte* (law of the jungle) that rules the crop fields. It means that *El que se enferma sólo, sólo se cura* or “the one who gets sick should solve the problem by his own means.”

Figure 5.7 illustrates that, contrary to the perception that migrant workers have not attended school beyond the eighth grade, the respondents in the present study had a higher level of education than is typically associated with farmworkers. Sixteen of them (50 percent) had an average education of ninth to twelfth grades. However, none of those had completed the GED diploma in the United States. Sixteen of them (50 percent) had an average education between sixth to ninth grades, and five of them (16 percent) did not have an opportunity to complete elementary education in their countries. Yet, despite this slightly higher level of education, the educational level of the corridor is still lower than the national average of 12.1 years.

Only one participant, the wife of a migrant farmworker from the Redland Labor Camp in Homestead, Florida, had attended GED classes at the South Dade Skills Center in Homestead.

The interviews also reflect that all of the respondents had a strong desire to learn English in order to continue their studies in South Florida. Additionally, only five (16 percent) of the respondents knew basic English, and twenty-seven (84 percent) never had an opportunity to learn English. In this sense, all of the respondents were aware that the lack of English limited their opportunities to find a better job outside the corridor.
They emphasized many times during the interviews that they did not want to remain picking crops in the corridor. The main reasons expressed were low pay, lack of legal and medical protection, dangerous activity, and constant travel. They would prefer to work in a nursery or in the construction industry rather than in the corridor.
In fact, 13 (41 percent) of the respondents mentioned that nursery plants and construction jobs are the other main activities in which they prefer to work, instead of in the corridor’s agricultural activities. Data revealed that after five years in the corridor, those from Homestead and Florida City move to Palm Beach and Broward counties in search of work in the nursery and construction business. Those from Immokalee moved to Naples and the Fort Myers area to search for work in the construction business. Respondents mentioned that by picking crops, they make between forty dollars and fifty dollars a day for six to nine months per year, resulting in an annual average income of $9,720. In contrast, they make $50 daily in the nursery business throughout the year. Table 5.3 shows a comparison of wages in the corridor versus those in the construction and nursery businesses.

Table 5.3. Wages in the Corridor with Comparisons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Wage</th>
<th>Days</th>
<th>Salary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Crop Field Activities</strong></td>
<td>$45.00</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>$270.00/week $1,080.00/month $9,720.00/9 months (typical year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plant Nursery</strong></td>
<td>$50.00</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>$300.00/week $1,200.00/month $14,400.00/12 months (typical year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Construction Work</strong></td>
<td>$80.00</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>$480.00/week $1,920.00/month $19,200.00/10 months (typical year)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


For these reasons, the corridor’s farmworkers prefer work in the nursery business which, besides offering better payment, does not require travel and does not require family and school dislocations. Many of them clarified to me that even though construction pays much better, as Table 5.3 illustrates, they prefer the nursery work
because construction requires enormous physical exertion. Construction work is done under extremely high temperatures, there is a constant risk of suffering a serious accident, and it requires frequent mobility from one construction site to another.

Twenty-eight respondents (88 percent) were not registered to vote in the United States. Six respondents (12 percent) were registered to vote but they did not vote in the last election nor had they voted in any election since becoming American citizens and registering to vote. All of the respondents lived in rental housing; the participant farmworker families mainly lived in labor camps, while all of the single men lived alone in rental apartments, trailer homes, or houses on small rural ranches.

The data also showed that none of the respondents is formally affiliated with any labor or union organization. Three of the single men who work in Immokalee mentioned that they had heard about an organization that helps farmworkers get better wages and labor benefits. Two of them did not remember the name of such an organization. The third one said that such organization was the “Organization of Workers from Immokalee.”

5.3. Emerging Themes

In October of 1999, while organizing the final part of the interview section for this study, an unexpected natural event changed the course and approach of this part of my study. Hurricane Irene hit South Florida on October 15, 1999, provoking heavy flooding that seriously affected more than 40,000 residents of Miami-Dade County. Among those most affected were the farmworker population who lost their employment due to the destruction of crops and vegetable fields by the intense rain. This natural disaster provided me with a greater understanding of the difficult situation facing the
migrant farmworker group in the corridor. Consequently, many interesting lines of research emerged, such as the vulnerability of the farmworker group in South Florida when a natural disaster hits the area. I also collected valuable information about the role played by local farmworker organizations in migrant life in the corridor, the role played by Mexican consular representatives in the empowerment of the weakened farmworker leadership, and many aspects of the difficult migrant experience in the corridor. The following section is included, because it augments the descriptive data of the present investigation.

5.3.1. Natural Disasters

On October 23, 1999, the Mexican consul in Miami, the Honorable Oscar Elizundia, visited the area to evaluate the damages to the agricultural business. He invited local farmworker leaders to accompany him. With him were Maria Garza, a longtime, active farmworker leader; Cipriano Garza, director of the Migrant Educational Program in Homestead and a farmworker leader; and Arturo de León, a businessman and community leader. I was also invited. It was an excellent opportunity to take notes for my research and to talk to them directly about the situation of the farmworkers. We reviewed the main agricultural fields located in Homestead and Florida City, in particular, and we visited the Everglades area where the enormous tomato, corn, malanga, okra, and citrus plantations were totally destroyed by the flooding, resulting in the loss of thousands of agricultural industry jobs. This area is the location for hundreds of small farms and

70 She is president of the Mexican-American Council of Homestead, a volunteer, nonprofit organization that serves as an advocate for farmworkers and the Hispanic community in South Dade County. In particular, this organization is committed to providing a better education for migrant children, while working with cultural and community projects. Mrs. Garza is also a board member of the Miami-Dade United Way.
ranches where hundreds of people directly engaged in agricultural activities live and work.\footnote{Draeger Martinez and Martin Merzer, “Convoy leads to rescue in flooded Everglades,” \textit{The Miami Herald}, October 19, 1999, 1(A).}

Very close to this area, at the edge of the Everglades, the Salvation Army installed a relief registration center on Krome Avenue and 168\textsuperscript{th} Street to help victims who live in this western part of Miami-Dade County. People who live in this area were most affected by the flooding and for that reason had priority in receiving help in the form of water, hot food, ice, clothing, rice, and a voucher of twenty-five dollars per person for food. The Salvation Army relief center was different from others requiring demonstration of legal status in the country. The Salvation Army only required a driver’s license or other identification to verify that the person receiving help lived in the affected area.

The first day FEMA opened operations in Miami-Dade County, they processed more than 3,000 applications for relief funds, the majority of which were from Homestead and Florida City. When I asked Mr. Elizundia, the Mexican consul, about his impression of the disaster, he told me that he was very concerned about the situation for the Mexican farmworkers, because he had information that many of these people had recently arrived from the northern states of Ohio, Michigan, North Carolina, and South Carolina where they had also been affected by Hurricane Floyd.

At the end of the inspection, there was a work meeting at the Migrant Education Office in Homestead. At the meeting, Cipriano Garza explained to Consul Elizundia the importance of immediately seeking official help for the farmworkers, since many of them depended on agriculture for their daily income. Mr. Garza explained to him that local
farmworkers live day-to-day and that if they do not work, they do not have money to buy food, gas, rent, or pay bills.

Mr. Elizundia offered to call Governor Jeb Bush and Miami-Dade Mayor Alex Penelas to express his concern about the difficult situation faced by local farmworkers and to request immediate official help. He also offered to contact the media to develop an intensive campaign to divulge the difficult situation of the farmworker group. Maria Garza and Arturo de León agreed and promised to join efforts immediately to organize a relief campaign with the rest of local groups that work with farmworkers. A follow-up meeting was scheduled for October 29, 1999.

Within the next two days, Mayor Penelas and Governor Bush visited the area with local, state, and federal officials, promising to immediately authorize help for the hurricane victims. I also attended the follow-up meeting to continue taking research notes and to help in the relief efforts. At the meeting, Consul Elizundia reported that he had called Governor Bush and talked extensively about the issue and that Bush’s response was very positive, promising immediately to authorize help for the farmworker group affected by Hurricane Irene. Mr. Elizundia also mentioned that Mayor Penelas responded in the same way—that he was very concerned about the situation of those affected by the natural disaster, also offering immediate assistance from Miami-Dade County. In addition, Mr. Elizundia commented that the media responded promptly and effectively in covering the issue extensively.

Maria Garza reported that she got an important donation of $200,000 for the relief fund. She contacted the Miami Dade United Way, which donated $100,000, while the other $100,000 dollars was donated by Miami-Dade County’s Human Services. Cipriano
Garza and Arturo de León reported that they worked to organize a volunteer team to help victims with filling out application forms for assistance from local and federal agencies. They also assisted them by providing information on other social services available for the victims.

Depending on income, family size, and other personal information, farmworkers received a one-time assistance payment of between $100 and $800. For many of them, this help was vital to survive for at least thirty days. Meanwhile, the water receded from the fields and the work began again. The money was used to pay basic needs such as rent, food, and bills. Many others also applied for federal loans and grants from FEMA, the American Red Cross, and other state agencies.\footnote{Maria Lynch, “Flooding hurts migrant workers,” \textit{The Miami Herald}, October 23, 1999, 2(B).}

5.3.2. Farmworker Leadership and Mexican Consul’s Role

Other local advocate groups also effectively worked in getting such help. Among those groups were Centro Campesino, which mainly works in housing projects for farmworkers; MUJER (Women United in Justice, Education and Reform), an organization that helps women farmworkers; and the Coalition of Florida Farmworkers Organization (COFFO), which helped farmworkers with diverse social services and employment issues. As always, local churches such as the Sacred Heart Church of Homestead were a valuable resource in providing help for victims of natural disasters.

The role played by consular officials is a key component in the empowerment of the farmworker group. Traditionally, consular and diplomatic officials do not get involved too much with farmworker groups from rural areas. Instead, they develop connections with Mexican elite circles that live in urban areas. Fortunately, in South Florida this was not the case. Recently, Mexican foreign services sent to the Miami
consulate diplomatic representatives who were very aware of the importance of the farmworker group for the Mexican government and local economies. Ambassador Luis Ortiz Monasterio, who served as consul in Miami from 1994 to 1998, was one of these officials. During his term, he was in permanent contact with the South Florida farmworker community, always able to help and attend to their needs. The situation improved a great deal with the arrival in 1998 of Consul Oscar Elizundia who openly dedicated his efforts to closely work with South Florida farmworkers groups. In particular, he is dedicated to building a strong relationship with Immokalee, Homestead, and Florida City groups.

A clear example of his actions was the decision to move the official celebration of the Mexican Independence Day from Miami to Homestead. This event is the most important celebration for Mexicans and contains a high level of patriotism and pride. It is a very symbolic recognition for people from Homestead and Florida City, because the event was traditionally celebrated in Miami where a prominent Mexican community lives, one that contrasts starkly with the low-income farmworker groups of Homestead and Florida City.

On September 15, 1999, during the celebration in Homestead, Consul Elizundia recognized the efforts of the farmworker leaders Lucas Benitez, from the Immokalee Coalition of Farmworkers, Cipriano Garza, Arturo de León, and Maria Garza from the Mexican-American Council of Homestead, awarding them with the Ohtli award, one of the highest recognitions offered by the Mexican government to outstanding individuals.

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73 Lucas Benitez, leader of the Immokalee Coalition of Farmworkers, is gaining national attention in his struggle for improving wages and a better treatment for farmworkers. On October 14, 1999, in New York City, Benitez was awarded the 1999 Brick Award for America’s Best Young Leader. The $100,000 prize is funded by the Rolling Stone Magazine/Do Something Foundation.
who work for the Mexican community abroad. Without a doubt, these awards will contribute to the empowerment of the farmworker leadership in South Florida. With the death of Cesar Chavez in 1993, the farmworker movement lost not only its spiritual leader but also a great part of its power. Since then, the farmworker leadership throughout the nation has gradually weakened. Therefore, the recognition of South Florida farmworker leaders serves a vital purpose of reinvigorating the farmworker movement, at least in the corridor. Mexican consuls in other parts of the United States who serve communities with high concentrations of farmworkers should imitate the actions of Consuls Elizundia and Ortíz Monasterio.

On the other side of the corridor, in Immokalee, Florida, there is a farmworker organization called the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW). This group gained national attention for organizing a hunger strike in 1998, demanding higher wages and better labor conditions for the approximately 2,500 tomato pickers who work in the region. According to the CIW, wages in the tomato fields have stagnated for twenty years.

In Immokalee, one of the largest tomato growing areas in the state of Florida, farmworkers were paid thirty-five to forty cents per thirty-two-pound bucket of tomatoes. At issue in this case is the low pay system devised by growers who claim that workers earn between six dollars and twelve dollars per hour. The workers and CIW said that growers’ numbers are not accurate. They argue that if farmworkers were paid at least ten cents more per bucket, it would be closer to a fair wage.

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74 Cesar Chavez was a Mexican–American labor union activist who headed the National Farm Workers Association. In the 1970s Chavez organized strikes, marches, and boycotts against California grape and lettuce growers, seeking to improve payments and labor conditions for migrant farmworkers. His actions gained national attention as he became a national hero for the farmworker union labor movement.
According to Lucas Benitez, leader of the CIW, the ten-cent increase would only cost consumers one cent per pound at the store. In his opinion, farmworkers deserve this minimum increase, since they participate in producing about 29 percent of the state’s tomato production. Lucas mentioned to me in 2000 that nearly 14 million twenty-five-pound boxes of tomatoes were shipped from Immokalee to main markets in the nation and that such production is an important economic contribution to the economy of Florida. The problem is that the tomato growers and the state officials do not recognize the value of farmworkers’ participation in the agricultural production.

Lucas thinks that without the farmworkers, the agricultural industry could easily collapse. He also added that they would continue the “fighting” until they get better wages and labor conditions for the workers. In Immokalee, as in other parts of the corridor, farmworkers’ wages are low, and labor conditions in the fields are very poor. For example, farmworkers who pick tomatoes were paid the minimum wage for eight hours of labor at $41.25 per day ($5.15 an hour). The farmworkers had to pick more than 100 buckets of tomatoes per day to make forty-five dollars.

Immokalee is also a very expensive place for the farmworkers to live. Typical rent for a trailer home was $250 a week ($1,000 a month), almost twice what other workers pay in the rest of the state. An average tomato picker earns about $9,000 per year at the most; and considering that the majority of the farmworkers do not receive any benefits whatsoever apart from wages (no pay for overtime work, no health insurance, no sick pay, no paid holidays, no paid vacation, and no pension plan), they believe that their call for better wages and dialogue with the growers is reasonable. However, in the growers’ opinion, it would be very hard to meet CIW demands due to international agricultural
competition in their industry—cheap tomatoes and vegetables from Mexico will not permit them to pay better wages.

The Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) from Ohio is another important organization closely linked to the corridor, since many farmworkers from South Florida also work in Ohio and northern states when the harvest season is over in the Homestead–Immokalee corridor. FLOC is a migrant-farmworker union created and led by farmworkers from Ohio, representing more than 7,000 workers in Ohio and Michigan. This committee is organizing a national boycott against the Mt. Olive Pickle Company of North Carolina as a way to bring the company to the bargaining table. The union has attacked the North Carolina-based Mt. Olive Pickle Company for its actions toward migrant farmworkers. In FLOC’s opinion, the pickle company enforces twelve-hour workdays, does not provide toilets for employees, and has no minimum-wage standards.

The farmworkers, who are not technically Mt. Olive employees, work on private farms that sell cucumbers to Mt. Olive factories, which then process the vegetables. The company rejects entry into labor discussions with FLOC, claiming they only buy and process cucumbers from the growers. Additionally, the company has also rejected increasing prices to private growers.

Approximately 7,000 workers pick cucumbers in North Carolina where the company is based and earn between five and six dollars per hour, working under severe labor conditions, including sickness from pesticides and hot, intense working conditions.

On March 1, 2000, I had the opportunity to meet Baldemar Velásquez, president of FLOC, at a meeting organized by his union in Homestead, Florida, about the farmworkers’ situation. At the meeting, we openly discussed the reasons behind the low
wages and poor labor conditions of the corridor’s farmworkers who are in a very similar situation to the North Carolina cucumber pickers. In Velásquez’s opinion, part of the problem is that in Florida, as in North Carolina, wages remain very low due to the unfair practices set by the giant agricultural corporations that control labor conditions and the marketplace. They set the prices, labor conditions, and wages; and worst of all, companies like Mt. Olive do not acknowledge the right of the workers to organize and improve their income and living conditions in the pickle industry.

Under this unfair system, workers are at the mercy of whatever Mt. Olive is willing to pay for their crops. South Florida tomato and crop-pickers and North Carolina pickle farmworkers are perhaps the poorest and most oppressed in the nation. In his opinion, it is crucial to organize farmworkers to have access to better pay, greater protection from pesticides, the right to bargain over the conditions of their employment, and better health and housing conditions.

At the meeting, Mr. Velázquez, told the audience of the sad tragedy of a Mexican farmworker in North Carolina named Mr. Hernandez. For Velasquez, it is one of the main motivations that bring him strength to continue his struggle for a better life for farmworkers. He tells Hernandez’s story every chance he gets so that people may understand what goes into the jars of Mt. Olive pickles.

In 1995, Raymundo Hernandez, a poor Mexican laborer from the village of Tamazunchale, in the central state of San Luis Potosí, was recruited through the US Labor Department’s guest-worker program and ended up in Sampson County, North Carolina. One hot day in the summer of 1995, as two coworkers testify, all three were exposed to pesticides being sprayed in the tobacco field where they worked. Later that
day, Hernandez complained of headaches and dizziness and was helped into the back of a grower’s pickup truck. The grower drove Hernandez away, presumably for medical attention. That was the last time Hernandez’s coworkers saw him until they identified his remains at the Sampson County Sheriff’s office four months later. Four years later, it was still not known exactly what happened to Hernandez. His remains, which were found in his house, were returned to his widow and four children. Velásquez, accompanied by eight high-school students from the Toledo, Ohio, area, traveled to Tamazunchale, Mexico, in May of 1999 to let the Hernandez family know that they had not been forgotten and to deliver $2000 they had collected for them. I think that Velasquez’s story perfectly describes and exemplifies the lack of protection with which farmworkers work and live in the United States.

In Velasquez’s opinion, even though Hernandez was working in the tobacco fields when he was stricken, the tragedy is ample warning to all, because the same farmworkers pick tobacco, sweet corn, cucumbers, and tomatoes, and the conditions are regrettably the same almost everywhere. Velásquez said another good reason for citing Hernandez’s death is because he came to work under the federal H2A program, used extensively by Mt. Olive Co. and other members of the North Carolina Growers Association to import low-cost labor during harvest seasons.

Because of what happened to Hernandez—and what continues to happen to the farmworkers who harvest Mt. Olive’s crop—FLOC kicked off a national boycott in March of 1999 to force the company to bargain a contract to improve wages and conditions for an estimated 5,000 migrant workers.75

75 The Mexican government has also awarded Baldemar Velasquez with the “Aztec Eagle” medal for his efforts to improve farmworkers’ labor conditions. Currently, FLOC represents 7,000 farmworkers in the
5.3.3. The Migrant Education Program

During the three years that I worked for MEP as a teacher at the Redland Labor Camp, I had the opportunity to directly participate, observe, and document several aspects of the migrant farmworkers’ lives. This allowed me a clear perception and understanding of several aspects that compound the migrant lifestyle in this part of the corridor. In particular, I could appreciate that perhaps the most difficult part faced by the director is not the administration and supervision of the migrant program itself, but it is his permanent struggle with local, state, and federal political figures to maintain the program and get funds for improving the quality of the services offered to migrant students.76

The Migrant Education Program (MEP) is authorized by Part C of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965 (ESEA), whose main purpose is to improve programs of education for children of qualifying migratory workers and to ensure that their children have access to the same public education, including preschools and high schools.77 To achieve this purpose, MEP helps state and local educational agencies support high-quality and comprehensive educational programs for migratory children that help them overcome educational disruption, cultural barriers, linguistic barriers, and social isolation. MEP also concentrates its efforts on reducing other factors (e.g., low enrollment, poor attendance, health problems) that inhibit the ability of such children to

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76 This is from the interviews conducted with Mr. Garza on educational aspects of migrant workers. On May 11, 2000, he told me that many times he felt alone and frustrated in getting help for the migrant farmworker community. In his opinion, there are many politicians who prefer to support campaigns and initiatives like “Save our Manatees” rather that support migrant farmworker initiatives.

do well in school and preparing them to make a successful transition to post-secondary education or employment.

 MEP’s eligibility policy requires that two main conditions be met for migrant families to have access to the free benefits of this program: 1) being engaged in any agricultural activity related to the production or processing of crops (dairy products, poultry, or livestock) for initial commercial sale or as a principal means of personal subsistence; and 2) they must have traveled outside the area in search of a job within the last thirty-six months.

 In the Homestead and Florida City areas, the Migrant Education Program has organized thirteen tutorial/homework assistance centers at the housing migrant centers to assist migrant students during and after school hours. For example, when students finish their regular classes, they go to the tutorial/homework centers located in the migrant labor camps, which are open daily from 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. This operational schedule allows migrant families to do their work without having to worry about their children who, instead of remaining alone and unsupervised at home, are kept doing homework for the rest of their academic subjects. In most cases, school buses take students to the migrant camps where they walk to the Migrant Tutorial Centers.

 At the Redland Center in Homestead, Florida, there are approximately one hundred students from preschool to sixth grade. When high-school migrant students need help, they go directly to see migrant program tutors, located in the public schools, during regular school hours.

 At these centers, migrant students are always under supervision. They have free access to dental services, health services, medical attention, and nutrition services,
including meals, snacks, drinks, and fruits. Among other educational services, MEP provides tutoring assistance to help migrant students do their homework and improve reading and math skills. In my opinion, the Migrant Education Program at Homestead is perhaps one of the better organized programs in the United States. It offers a strong academic program that includes innovative uses of technology, extended day-care for preschool migrant students, counseling programs, tutoring, clothing, homework assistance, plus extra-curricular activities such as team sports, scouting, and a chess club.

Perhaps the most important academic activity related to my research that I participated in during my experience at the Migrant Education Program was the recruitment survey that they conducted each year to identify eligible students. Six different teams did the 1999 survey; each team was composed of six to seven migrant program employees.

It is difficult to maintain a reliable census of the farmworker population in South Florida. For that reason, each year, personnel from the Migrant Education Program conduct an identification survey in the main labor camps of the Homestead and Florida City areas. The purpose of the survey is to identify migrant families and their children in order to determine their eligibility for the program.

The basic steps followed during the interview and identification process are as follows:

1. Migrant program team members visit each home in the assigned area;
2. Meet the parents;
3. Introduce themselves;
4. Explain the benefits of the migrant education program; and

5. Describe the services offered.

If the family chooses to participate in the program, a twenty-five-question survey called the Certificate of Eligibility (CEO) form is filled out. The CEO is divided into four sections. Section 1 (Current Parent Data) refers to parent information such as names, current address, and telephone. Section 2 (Eligibility Data) is perhaps the most important part because it refers to information on what city, state, and country the interviewees come from, their arrival date, and the last type of agricultural work, such as temporary work, seasonal work, agricultural or fishing-related work, the interviewee did. It also asks if the worker moved or traveled alone or if he or she was accompanied by family. This part is what determines their eligibility to qualify for the migrant program benefits. For example, if they have traveled outside the area in the last thirty-six months in search of an agricultural job, they automatically qualify. Newcomers also qualify if they are engaged in agricultural activities. Section 3 (Child Data) refers to race, sex, birthplace, and school status of the children. Finally, Section 4 (Authorization/Certification) is related to the parent’s permission for their children to participate in the migrant program.

After the CEO is completed, it is handed to the Migrant Supportive Services Offices to be processed, to register the new migrant family, and to update the farmworkers database. After the registration has been completed, the migrant family receives notification that their children were accepted in the program.

The Migrant Education Program is not only a valuable program for low-income migrant families, but it is also a valuable source of demographic and educational information for anyone interested in gathering data on the number of farmworkers. For
example, Table 5.4 shows that, as of June 4, 1999, the migrant program had registered 2,995 migrant students from the time of birth to the age of twenty-one. The 2,995 figure (if we subtract 995 students who may be brothers or sisters and may belong to the same family, which is approximately one-third) indicates that there are more than 2,000 migrant families in the area. Now, if we consider that the average migrant family has four members (2,000 x 4), there are 8,000 people. This confirmed the estimates, mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, that in Homestead and Florida City, there live approximately 10,000 farmworkers directly engaged in agricultural activities.

Table 5.4. Migrant Student Profile as of June 6, 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>COEs</th>
<th>Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall Raw Count, Duplicates, No Children, NULLS, (1, 2, &amp; 7s)</td>
<td>3,017</td>
<td>4,986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never been migrant, duplicates, overage, no children</td>
<td>1,686</td>
<td>1,432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FINAL COE COUNT M.E.P. (1, 2, &amp; 7s)</td>
<td>1,331</td>
<td>3,507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrant Status (1,2) Age Group (0-21)</td>
<td>1,148</td>
<td>2,995</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


5.4. Summary of Findings

The farmworker labor force employed in the Homestead–Immokalee corridor of Southwest Florida is a young and vital labor force. Almost half of them (44 percent) are on average twenty-five years of age. The fact that most of the workers found in the corridor are single can be explained, in my opinion, by a single reason: It is very expensive to travel to South Florida accompanied by a family, and it is even harder to afford the expenses that a family implies. In addition, the very nature of the agricultural jobs requires frequent mobility from one place to another and from one state to another, making it difficult to care for a family.

Speaking about agricultural jobs, the state of Florida lost 45,741, hired farmworkers engaged in farm labor activities in the fifteen-year period between 1992 and
2007. The two counties that make up part of the corridor, Collier and Miami-Dade, lost within the same period of time 1,540 workers. It is important to state that these reports of hired farmworkers are official numbers taken from payrolls and accounting reports of medium and large farm corporations. However, we do not know if those farmworkers that I interviewed in the corridor are part of the number analyzed in this chapter, because many of these laborers work with tomato contractors and independent businessmen. Thus, additional research is needed in order to ascertain a complete and clear understanding in both the participation of those who are reported and those who work with independent field contractors and freelance business. It is sad to say, but the truth of the matter is that if we see many single farmworkers living and working alone in the main agricultural centers of the United States, it is because they do not make enough money to afford the expenses that a family creates.

Most of them (63 percent) mentioned that they began their farmworker experience picking tomatoes in the corridor. There is also a simple explanation for this: picking tomatoes does not require high skills, the ability to speak English, or a legal permit to work in the fields. The rules are very simple to follow: pick only the ripe tomatoes and no leaves, stems, or dirt. In order to pick the tomatoes aligned in long rows, the picker has to bend down on his knees and pick as many ripe tomatoes as each plant has. Good pickers fill up buckets in five minutes when the row is new or unpicked. However, the work becomes frustrating when the tomato field has rows with fewer tomatoes. In South Florida, workers are paid forty-five cents per thirty-two-pound bucket picked. Crop-picking is a very demanding and stressful activity that requires a lot of human labor.
Another important finding was that most migrant farmworkers who earn their living in the corridor are Mexicans (69 percent) who come from the Mexican states of Michoacán and Guerrero. Many others have arrived from the states of Jalisco and, more recently, from the southern states of Chiapas and Oaxaca. There is also an important population from Guatemala (31 percent), and I also saw many Haitians picking beans along the plantations located between Homestead and Immokalee.

In the case of the Mexican group, it is not at all easy to get into the Homestead–Immokalee corridor of Southwest Florida. It is an expensive and dangerous journey that many times ends with tragic results. For Mexicans, it is hard to travel to South Florida. We can easily imagine that for Guatemalans and other Central Americans, it is even harder, for the simple reason that they have to travel almost twice the distance.

All of the workers I interviewed about migrant life in the corridor had the same opinion about their future as farmworkers, namely, that they do not want to remain picking crops in the corridor because the pay is low (they have an average annual income of $9,720), there is no legal or medical protection, the work is dangerous, and one must travel. Instead, they prefer to work in a nursery or at construction sites where they feel payment is much better. In addition, respondents do not like the idea of their children becoming migrant workers when they grow up.

Interestingly, they have never been interviewed before by government officials. For example, during the interviews, they said that no one had told them about the National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS), which is done every year by the US Labor Department. They have never seen an inspector from the Labor Department asking them about safety and legal conditions in the corridor’s fields.
Information I had not expected came up during the interviews; for example, in the Homestead–Immokalee corridor, there are hundreds of people from Guatemala. It is very important to develop more extensive research in the corridor to determine with exactitude the number and country of origin of the farmworker labor force.

In my perception, these new Guatemalans are taking the jobs that many Mexicans abandoned when they decided to leave the corridor and the migrant eastern stream and settle permanently in Homestead or Immokalee. Moreover, in terms of money, the Guatemalans I met were thriftier and better organized than the Mexicans I observed. Many Guatemalans saved large amounts of money to send to their country. For instance, a Guatemalan farmworker named Carlos showed me copies of several money orders totaling $3,000 that he sent to his family. With that money he is buying cows and rebuilding his little ranch in Guatemala. On the other hand, I saw small groups of Mexicans at the labor camps of Florida playing poker, throwing dice, drinking, and betting large sums of money. However, I also saw a great number of Mexicans working hard and saving money.

In particular, 1999 was a very bad year for most of the farmworkers who work in the agricultural industry in South Florida. This time, it was not an economic reason but a natural one. The hurricane season was very active in the region during 1999, and South Florida was the target of many of these phenomena. For those who used to travel the migrant eastern stream, the situation was even harder. If they were not affected in Florida by one of the tropical storms, they were affected in other eastern states. Such was the case with Hurricane Floyd, which in 1999 affected all of the eastern states, provoking

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78 These observations are mitigated by the fact that many of these Mexican farmworkers were single. Still, the Guatemalans I observed tended, in general, to manage their money more efficiently.
devastating effects to the agricultural sector. Therefore, natural disasters in the corridor are a new factor that should be added to the complex components of the migrant life prevailing in South Florida.

Thousands of farmworkers faced up to two months without work, while crops recovered from devastating floods provoked by Hurricane Irene. Local aid was vital: the money provided up to $500 a month for 1,000 families who could not otherwise pay rent and utility bills for the sixty days it took to replant damaged crops. The relief center was operated by the Sacred Heart Church of Homestead, where private and government organizations managed assistance efforts.

This help becomes more important when one considers that government funds can only be used to help documented workers. Private money collected by the United Way and local groups is unrestricted and may be extended to the large population of migrant workers without papers. The farmworkers received similar emergency funding after a winter freeze destroyed crops in 1997, which tells us that this is a cyclical situation that sooner or later hits farmworkers in South Florida.

History repeats itself again. When I was giving the final reading of the present study, a single storm, not big enough even to have a name of its own, hit the Miami-Dade farm industry, which was still recovering from last October’s Hurricane Irene, causing enormous losses. Agricultural losses in Miami-Dade totaled more than $250 million, with the nursery industry suffering the most damage. Also hit were the vegetable and fruit plantations.79 As always, the people most affected by these natural disasters were the farmworkers who had to wait forty-five to sixty days until the water receded to plant

79 As a result of the intense rains, 3,000 acres of malanga were drowned. Not a single squash survived, and the avocado plantations were also seriously damaged in Miami-Dade County. See Frances Robles, “Storm Hits Dade Farmers Hard,” *The Miami Herald*, October 6, 2000, 7(B).
crops again. For somebody who lives from his daily salary, forty-five days without a job is too long—and worse if he is married with children.

To make the picture even more dramatic, there is also another unexpected natural phenomenon, the “citrus canker,” that affects the South Florida citrus industry. Citrus agriculture has been fatally damaged by the disease during the last two years. Miami-Dade and Broward counties’ citrus were placed in quarantine and later destroyed to avoid possible contamination of other central and northern counties’ groves. Overall, we are speaking about a multi-million dollar impact to the local agricultural industry, if we consider losses in salaries, services, equipment, chemicals, and the packing process. Thousands of farmworkers in South Florida depend on the citrus business for their livelihood, whether it be by managing a grove or working in a business plant. Others have come to rely on the harvest for steady work between October and November in one of the thousands of jobs generated by the powerful citrus agricultural industry in South Florida.

Due to enormous vulnerability of the farmworker group to natural disasters, the role of farmworker organizations is crucial in the corridor’s migrant life experience. In the case of Homestead and Florida City, there are strong farmworker leaders (like Cipriano and Maria Garza) with highly valuable and effective connections at the local, state, and federal level, as well as in the private sector. I think that if they decide to join forces with other local groups to create a strong coalition, the interests of the farmworker community would be better defended.

The Mexican consular service is an important component in the empowerment of the Mexican leadership and plays a key role in strengthening the deteriorated relations
between the farmworker community and the Mexican government abroad. It is important to mention that, traditionally, Mexicans in the United States have seen Mexican consular officials with suspicion and mistrust. For them, the Mexican government was directly responsible for the country’s economic situation, thus they blame it for their decision to leave the country. This perception also contributed to a political isolation that, in general, does not benefit them at all. Thus, the work of the consuls like Mr. Elizundia is very important to the empowerment of the Mexican community at large.

Data collected reveals that farmworkers do not vote nor are they affiliated with a farmworker organization. Voting participation is perhaps the only effective way to make their voice count. It is necessary to start a voting registration drive in migrant field and labor camps. Most of them are legal residents who are entitled to apply for the naturalization process to become US citizens. Others, possibly, are US citizens who perhaps do not know the importance of registering to vote. Future labor surveys should include voting information. It is estimated that there are two million farmworkers in the nation, and I am certain that in five years (if farmworkers organize and register to vote) they will be a powerful labor group, and politicians from Washington and Tallahassee will have to travel to the crop fields to attract the farmworker vote. On the other side, thanks to the dual nationality law, farmworkers will also be an influential group in Mexico’s political arena, thanks to their remittances and influence in local communities.

The Migrant Education Program is an effective and valuable educational service that ensures that migratory children get at least the opportunity to meet the same standards and performance that all children are expected to meet in the US public school system. There is no reliable census of the farmworker population in South Florida.
Therefore, the Migrant Education Program database is an important source to consult for future demographic studies. Moreover, the hard work of partnership initiatives among the Migrant Education Program, the Mexican-American Council, and the Dade County Public Schools has made a measurable difference. For example, as a result of these efforts, the number of graduating migrant seniors from Homestead and Florida City has almost quadrupled in the past decade. In 1999 more than one-hundred migrant students graduated from high school. Many of these students have become positive role models for other students in the community.
CHAPTER 6
THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF MEXICAN FARMWORKERS

6.1. Overview

The purpose of this chapter is to answer the second and third research questions formulated in the study. The chapter is divided into four sections. The first part is an overview of diverse aspects of the South Florida agricultural industry related to acreage, production, market value, and the main commodities harvested in the region. Then the analysis focuses on the tomato industry that traditionally employs most of the labor force in the corridor. The third part answers the last research question about the international implications of the issue. The chapter concludes with a summary of relevant findings and information related to the farmworkers who work in the Homestead–Immokalee corridor of South Florida.

6.2. Research Question 2

*RQ2: Is there any significant economic impact of the Mexican farmworker labor force for South Florida’s and Mexico’s economy?*

- What is the market value of South Florida’s agricultural industry?
- What are the main agricultural counties in South Florida that employ Mexican farmworkers?
- What are the main agricultural commodities produced in the Homestead–Immokalee corridor?
- Is there any significant impact of the farmworker group on local business?

As can be seen from Table 6.1 on market value, in 1997, Florida farmers sold their agricultural commodities for more than $6 billion, creating a positive direct and indirect impact on the state’s economy. Florida ranked ninth in the nation, behind California, Texas, Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, Illinois, Minnesota, and North Carolina, for the market value of its agricultural products sold. However, with respect to vegetables harvested for sale, it ranks third in the nation.

According to the Florida Department of Agriculture, the value of vegetables, watermelons, potatoes, and berries produced in Florida during the 1997-98 season totaled $1.68 billion, up 11 percent from the 1996-97 value of $1.51 billion. All values of production increased except for cabbage, carrots, sweet corn, cucumbers, and radishes. Acreage planted in vegetables, watermelons, potatoes, and strawberries during the 1997-98 season totaled 326,500 acres, up 1 percent from the 323,300 acres planted during the 1996-97 season. Producers showed increased plantings in the 1997-98 season for snap beans, escarole, Irish potatoes, squash, tomatoes, and strawberries.

Regarding the corridor’s counties, as Table 6.1 also explains, both Miami-Dade and Collier Counties accounted for $693 million of agricultural products sold in 1997. Miami-Dade County contributed $416.5 million, representing an increase of 17 percent in the five-year period between 1992 and 1997. Miami-Dade crop sales accounted for 98 percent of the market value, and livestock sales accounted for 2 percent of the market value. In the case of Collier County, sales increased 6 percent to $277 million in 1997.
Crop sales accounted for 97 percent of the market value, and livestock sales accounted for 3 percent of the market value.\(^8o\)

Table 6.1 also illustrates that the total market value of the agricultural products sold by the seven leading counties accounted for more than $2.5 billion, representing more than 40 percent of the total six-billion-dollar market value produced, along with the other 60 counties in the state of Florida. Figure 6.1 shows the location of the seven leading agricultural counties in 1997.

The connection between this category and the issue of the farmworkers is simple, in my opinion. Since crop sales account for the majority of market value in the state, and since these crops are cultivated by farmworkers, then without them it would not be possible to support the multi-billion dollar fruit and vegetable industry in Florida. It is precisely the purpose of the present examination to emphasize the valuable participation of farmworkers in agriculture, which, in turn, is important for the overall local economy, as in the discussion of market value of agricultural products sold and commodities prices.

There is a decline in the actual number of farms. The state as a whole lost 495 farms, bringing the total down to 34,799, which is reflected in all seven of the leading counties with the exception of Hendry, which increased by 14 new farms. The county with the greatest loss was Miami-Dade, which lost 315 farms in the five-year period (63.6 percent of Florida’s losses), followed by Hillsborough, which lost 121 farms.

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\(^8o\) For detailed information about percentages of crop sales and livestock products, see the 1997 U.S. Census of Agriculture, Table 1, County Summary Highlights, 1997, 166-170.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Florida</th>
<th>Collier</th>
<th>Miami-Dade</th>
<th>Hendry</th>
<th>Hillsborough</th>
<th>Lee</th>
<th>Manatee</th>
<th>Palm Beach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Market Value of Ag. Products Sold</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Sales, 1997</td>
<td>6.04</td>
<td>276.9</td>
<td>416.5</td>
<td>323.4</td>
<td>332.7</td>
<td>116.3</td>
<td>239.6</td>
<td>872.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>5.26</td>
<td>260.7</td>
<td>356.9</td>
<td>273.3</td>
<td>259.2</td>
<td>81.5</td>
<td>209.8</td>
<td>891.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Farms, 1997</td>
<td>34,799</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>1,576</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>2,639</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>697</td>
<td>855</td>
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<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>35,204</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>1,891</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>2,760</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>728</td>
<td>924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvested Cropland Acres, 1997</td>
<td>2,435,702</td>
<td>55,213</td>
<td>62,693</td>
<td>183,206</td>
<td>60,333</td>
<td>25,025</td>
<td>64,302</td>
<td>462,690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>2,400,704</td>
<td>65,021</td>
<td>61,342</td>
<td>178,124</td>
<td>60,092</td>
<td>19,673</td>
<td>61,950</td>
<td>510,263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veg. Acres Harvested for Sale, 1997</td>
<td>250,562</td>
<td>17,070</td>
<td>40,108</td>
<td>9,936</td>
<td>10,549</td>
<td>6,938</td>
<td>24,947</td>
<td>58,002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>299,867</td>
<td>31,646</td>
<td>37,170</td>
<td>6,197</td>
<td>14,395</td>
<td>8,751</td>
<td>21,695</td>
<td>84,624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Ranking of Ag. Products Sold, 1997</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, Table 6.1 reveals another aspect closely related to the situation of farmworkers in the corridor. For example, in a five-year period, Collier County lost 10,000 acres of harvested cropland and 14,000 acres of vegetables harvested for sale (a decrease of more than 50 percent in this category). In total, from 1992 to 1997, the county lost almost 30,000 acres of agricultural production, so Collier County lost twenty-one places in the national ranking of acreage for vegetables harvested for sale.

There is a large difference between the two corridor counties in terms of acres of vegetables harvested for sale: Miami-Dade had 40,108 and Collier 17,070—that’s 23,000 acres more, placing it second after Palm Beach, which had 58,000.

The situation of Palm Beach is notable since, in a five-year period, the county lost $20 million in sales of its agricultural products. It lost 69 farms, 47,573 acres of harvested cropland, and 26,622 acres of vegetables harvested for sale. In 1992, Palm Beach was ranked as the third county in the nation in acres of vegetables harvested for sale, and it fell to eleventh place in 1997. Among the leading counties, Palm Beach was also number one in the value of agricultural products sold, with 872 million dollars, followed by Miami-Dade with 416 million dollars. Combined, Miami-Dade and Collier counties showed an increase of 76.1 million in agricultural products sold from 1992 to 1997.

Table 6.2 shows a more in-depth explanation of the situation of the main crops harvested in Florida from 1992-1997. As the table illustrates, the seven leading crops in acres harvested in the 1997 agricultural season were, in descending order: sweet corn (43,595 acres), tomatoes (39,900 acres), watermelons (30,328 acres), snap beans (30,275 acres), cucumbers (16,651 acres), squash (10,932 acres), and lettuce and romaine (3,092 acres).
acres). In total, the seven leading crops in acres harvested in the 1997 agricultural season consisted of 174,773 acres.

Figure 6.1. The Seven Leading Agricultural Counties, 1997

Table 6.2. Florida Main Crops in Acres Harvested, 1992–1997

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crops</th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>1992</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sweet Corn</td>
<td>43,595</td>
<td>50,907</td>
<td>-7,312</td>
<td>-14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomatoes</td>
<td>39,900</td>
<td>63,423</td>
<td>-23,523</td>
<td>-37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watermelons</td>
<td>30,328</td>
<td>38,770</td>
<td>-8,442</td>
<td>-22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snap Beans</td>
<td>30,275</td>
<td>23,899</td>
<td>6,376</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cucumbers/Pickles</td>
<td>16,651</td>
<td>17,656</td>
<td>-1,005</td>
<td>-6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squash</td>
<td>10,932</td>
<td>13,292</td>
<td>-2,360</td>
<td>-18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lettuce and Romaine</td>
<td>3,092</td>
<td>6,680</td>
<td>-3,588</td>
<td>-54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>174,773</strong></td>
<td><strong>214,627</strong></td>
<td><strong>-39,854</strong></td>
<td><strong>-19%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: USDA, National Agricultural Statistic Service, 2007 Census Publication State Data, Table 30, 452-470.*

As Table 6.2 explains, sweet corn, the leading crop, shows a decrease of 7,312 acres, representing a negative 14 percent. A decrease was also found in the number of acres of tomatoes harvested—23,523 acres fewer—representing a negative balance of 37 percent. Watermelons are also in a difficult situation. The data shows that in the five-year period from 1992 to 1997, there was a decrease of 8,442 acres. Only snap beans showed an increase in this period, from 23,899 to 30,275 acres harvested, resulting in an increase of 6,376 acres (27 percent). Cucumbers and pickles showed a negative situation, with a decrease of 1,005 acres harvested. Squash was in the same situation, with a decrease of 2,360 acres harvested, representing a negative balance of 18 percent, while lettuce and romaine lost 3,588 acres, representing a negative 54 percent.
In total, from 1992 to 1997, the seven most important fresh crops lost 39,854 acres harvested. The negative balance affects the farmworkers for the simple reason that fewer acres harvested means fewer jobs, fewer opportunities to find better jobs, and less economic opportunity for local communities.

In crops harvested for sale in 1997, Figure 6.2 shows that Palm Beach was the leading county in sweet corn, with 21,770 acres harvested. Miami-Dade followed with 17,138 acres of snap beans harvested. Third was Manatee County, with 8,596 acres of tomatoes. Miami-Dade County also led in squash, with 6,451 acres. Manatee came next, with 4,360 acres of cucumbers and pickles. Manatee also showed 2,792 acres of watermelons harvested. Finally, Palm Beach came next, with the leading production of 2,454 acres of lettuce and romaine harvested.

We can conclude that, for crops harvested in 1997, Palm Beach was the leading county in sweet corn and lettuce and romaine, with 24,224 total acres. Miami-Dade County led in snap beans and squash, with 23,589 acres harvested, and Manatee led in tomatoes, cucumbers, pickles, and watermelons, with 15,748 acres harvested.

Looking at Table 6.3, we can see that by 2007 Florida’s agricultural commodity sales total at more than 7.7 billion dollars, an increase of 1.7 billion dollars, or 30 percent since 1997. According to USDA Census of Agriculture data, in that year, Florida ranked first in the US in the value of production of oranges, grapefruit, tangerines, and sugarcane for sugar and seed; it ranked first in value of production of snap beans, fresh market tomatoes, fresh cucumbers for market, squash, bell peppers, watermelons, and sweet corn; and it ranked second in value of production of greenhouse and nursery products, strawberries, and cucumbers for pickles.

In terms of total value of production, Florida accounted for:

- 73 percent of the total US value for oranges ($1.5 billion)
- 65 percent for grapefruit ($184.6 million)
- 55 percent for snap beans ($217 million)
• 53 percent for tangerines ($75 million)
• 50 percent for sugarcane for sugar and seed ($446 million)
• 36 percent for fresh market tomatoes ($464 million)
• 39 percent for bell peppers ($183 million)
• 31 percent for cucumbers for fresh market ($72 million)
• 32 percent for watermelons ($152 million).

USDA Census of Agriculture data for 2006-07 confirms that the value of production for the seven major vegetable crops, potatoes, berries, and watermelons totaled $1.83 billion, up 10 percent from the 2005-06 value of $1.67 billion.

Snap beans, cabbage, potatoes, squash, watermelon, strawberries, and blueberries showed increases in the value of production from the previous season’s value. Sweet corn, cucumbers, bell peppers, and tomatoes showed value of production decreases when compared to the previous season.

In terms of harvested acreage of the seven major vegetable crops, potatoes, berries, and watermelons totaled 210,400 acres during the 2006-07 season, up 11,200 acres or 6 percent from the revised 199,200 acres harvested during the 2005-06 season. Acreage harvested increased for all selected vegetable and berry crops, except for tomatoes, watermelons, and potatoes.

In 2007, Florida had 47,000 commercial farms, using a total of 10 million acres. There were 6,350 farms with sales exceeding $100,000. The average farm size was 250 acres.
### Table 6.3. Florida Agricultural Industry Market Value of Products Sold County Data, 1997–2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Florida</th>
<th>Collier</th>
<th>Miami-Dade</th>
<th>Hendry</th>
<th>Hillsborough</th>
<th>Lee</th>
<th>Manatee</th>
<th>Palm Beach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Market Value of Ag. Products Sold</strong></td>
<td>$Billions</td>
<td>$ Millions</td>
<td>$ Millions</td>
<td>$ Millions</td>
<td>$ Millions</td>
<td>$ Millions</td>
<td>$ Millions</td>
<td>$ Millions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Sales, 2007</strong></td>
<td>7.785</td>
<td>278.8</td>
<td>661.1</td>
<td>567.4</td>
<td>488.2</td>
<td>116.0</td>
<td>311.8</td>
<td>931.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>6.004</td>
<td>276.9</td>
<td>416.5</td>
<td>323.4</td>
<td>332.7</td>
<td>116.3</td>
<td>239.6</td>
<td>872.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>All Farms, 2007</strong></td>
<td>47,463</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>2,498</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>2,843</td>
<td>944</td>
<td>794</td>
<td>1,263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>34,709</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>1,576</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>2,639</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>697</td>
<td>855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Harvested Cropland Acres, 2007</strong></td>
<td>2,112,129</td>
<td>35,288</td>
<td>49,065</td>
<td>190,473</td>
<td>44,661</td>
<td>18,308</td>
<td>58,920</td>
<td>401,524</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>2,435,702</td>
<td>55,213</td>
<td>62,693</td>
<td>183,206</td>
<td>60,333</td>
<td>25,025</td>
<td>64,302</td>
<td>462,690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Veg. Acres Harvested for Sale, 2007</strong></td>
<td>224,837</td>
<td>12,622</td>
<td>21,810</td>
<td>9,713</td>
<td>11,177</td>
<td>3,298</td>
<td>31,093</td>
<td>62,462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>250,562</td>
<td>17,070</td>
<td>40,108</td>
<td>9,936</td>
<td>10,549</td>
<td>6,938</td>
<td>24,947</td>
<td>58,002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Ranking of Ag. Products Sold, 2007</strong></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the seven leading counties, Palm Beach remains the leader in terms of market value of agricultural products sold with $931.7 million, followed by Miami-Dade with $661.1 million. All counties showed an increase in market value over this ten-year period, with the exception of Lee, which lost $300 thousand. The greatest increase was in Miami-Dade with $244.6 million, followed by Hendry with $244 million, an increase of 37 percent and 43 percent, respectively.

The number of farms has increased for all of the seven leading counties. In the corridor, Miami-Dade and Collier combined, there are 2,820 farms, an increase of 1,009 or 35.8 percent. Harvested cropland showed a decrease of 323,573 acres for Florida as a whole, which is a 13.3 percent decrease. Of the seven leading counties, it was Palm Beach that lost the most, with a decrease of 61,166 acres; the second county in this situation was Collier, which lost 19,925 acres.

Vegetable acres harvested for sale in Florida also showed a decrease in 2007 compared to 1997 figures, from 250,562 to 224,837, a loss of 25,725 acres or 10.3 percent. This loss, however, is not distributed evenly, with a number of counties showing increases. The most pronounced of the seven leading counties is Manatee, with an increase of 6,146 acres. The greatest loss is shown by Miami-Dade, which has fallen from 40,108 acres harvested to 21,810 acres, a loss of 18,298 acres or 45.6 percent. Collier also showed a loss of 4,448 acres harvested. This decline will signify greater difficulties for farmworkers in the corridor.

In terms of acres harvested in Florida for 1997 and 2007, as represented in Table 6.4, sweet corn, which was the leading crop in the earlier data, shows a decrease of 3,973 acres, which translates to a minus 9 percent difference.
Table 6.4. Florida Main Crops in Acres Harvested, 1997–2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crop</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sweet Corn</td>
<td>39,622</td>
<td>43,595</td>
<td>-3,973</td>
<td>-9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomatoes</td>
<td>40,437</td>
<td>39,900</td>
<td>537</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watermelons</td>
<td>20,418</td>
<td>30,328</td>
<td>-9,910</td>
<td>-33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snap Beans</td>
<td>39,897</td>
<td>30,275</td>
<td>9,622</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cucumbers/Pickles</td>
<td>24,411</td>
<td>16,651</td>
<td>7,760</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squash</td>
<td>5,512</td>
<td>10,932</td>
<td>-5,420</td>
<td>-50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lettuce and Romaine</td>
<td>7,239</td>
<td>3,092</td>
<td>4,147</td>
<td>134%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>177,536</td>
<td>174,773</td>
<td>2,763</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: USDA, National Agricultural Statistic Service, 2007 Census Publication State Data, Table 30, 452-470.*

Tomato production has increased slightly by 1 percent, which, along with the decrease in sweet corn, means it became the leading crop in Florida. Watermelons however, have declined, losing 9,910 acres, which results in a 33 percent drop. Snap beans have had a considerable increase of 32 percent, gaining 9,622 acres harvested. Cucumbers and pickles have almost doubled in production, up 7,760 acres, representing an increase of 47 percent. Squash production has halved and is now down to just 5,512 acres, making it the lowest of the seven crops. Meanwhile lettuce and romaine have had an increase of 134 percent due to an additional 4,147 acres harvested. In total there has
been a 2 percent increase in production, which is not a great change overall; but there has been considerable change in the particular crops produced.

One possible reason, a speculation which falls beyond the scope of this study, is that perhaps this is representative of a change in eating habits of consumers. Lettuce, cucumber, and tomato are the common bases for salads, and healthy eating has been a topic of increasingly widespread attention. This would illustrate how consumer choices have a real and tangible effect on farmworkers. However, as stated, this is purely speculative, as the reasons could be multitudinous—weather, climate changes, prices, market behavior, and competitors, to name a few. Further research needs to be conducted in order to ascertain the reasons behind the changes and whether they are only local or more widespread. Also, it is hard to know how these changes would affect farmworkers—for instance, how reliant on manual labor is the production and harvest of lettuce and romaine in comparison with that of squash or watermelon? Again, this falls beyond the scope of this particular study.

6.5. Tomato Industry in the Corridor, 1992–2001

There are three main reasons behind the importance of the tomato industry for the present investigation. First is its economic impact on Florida’s economy. Second is that the tomato industry is a major employer of Mexican farmworkers, not only in the corridor but also in the rest of the state. Third, it is an issue with international implications, since cheap imports from Mexico provoke irritation for Florida growers.

Tomatoes are one the most important vegetable crops in production value in South Florida. Tomatoes, along with citrus, are the foundation of Florida’s multi-billion dollar agricultural industry. Florida Department of Agriculture data show that the value
of the 1997-98 fresh market tomato crop totaled $473.3 million, up almost $30.9 million or 7 percent from the 1996-97 value of $442.4 million.

From December to May each year, Florida produces about 50 percent of all the domestically produced fresh market tomatoes in the United States. Due to the cold climate in northern states in the winter, the corridor is one of Florida’s principal areas of tomato production.

The tomato industry is a traditional source of employment for Mexican farmworkers in the corridor. Interviews revealed that, because tomatoes must be harvested by hand, they are the first crop with which most workers begin their migrant life in the corridor. As mentioned previously, harvesting tomatoes is a demanding physical activity—for example, in the Homestead and Immokalee tomato fields, pickers place the tomatoes into plastic buckets, which hold up to fifty pounds of tomatoes. Then they carry the filled buckets to field trucks and empty them into pallet bins, or gondolas. Pallet bins hold between 800 and 1,200 pounds of tomatoes, and gondolas hold between 16,000 and 24,000 pounds of tomatoes. The pickers may have to walk up to fifty yards to empty their buckets. Once the field trucks with the pallet bins or gondolas have been filled, they are transported to the packing house where tomatoes are continuously washed, waxed, sorted, graded, and packed into twenty-five pound cartons, then later shipped to main markets in the nation.

In the corridor, as well as in the rest of the main production areas, tomato imports from Mexico are a permanent source of irritation to Florida growers. They argue that since the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) went into effect in 1994, the
local tomato industry has been in a critical situation because they cannot compete with cheap imports from Mexico.

As Table 6.5 shows, the total acreage of fresh tomatoes in the state of Florida from 1992 to 1997 decreased more than 23,000 acres, which is approximately a 37 percent decrease in this category. The same trend can be seen in the number of farms dedicated to tomato activities in the state, which decreased from 311 in 1992 to 192 in 1997, a decrease of 38 percent. Regarding Collier County, the situation is also negative in that during the above-mentioned, a decrease in a five-year period, of 11,716 acres of harvested fresh tomatoes in the county—more than 50 percent. The same situation is noted in the number of farms, where the county also decreased more than 50 percent. In 1992, Collier County was ranked fourth in the nation in terms of tomato acres harvested, but in 1997 it fell to the tenth position. In Miami-Dade, the corridor’s other county, the trend was also negative. In terms of acres dedicated to fresh tomatoes, the county decreased from 8,195 in 1992 to 4,023 in 1997, resulting in a 51 percent decrease. The number of tomato farms in Miami-Dade decreased by 28 percent.

During the 1997-98 crop harvest, the value per carton at $8.57, was $0.49 higher than the $8.08 per carton growers received for the 1996-97 crop season. Average prices during 1997-98 ranged from a high of $11.24 cents per carton in November to a low of $6.60 per carton in January. During the 1996-97 seasons, the monthly prices ranged from a low of $6.23 per carton in April to a high of $14.35 in March.
Table 6.5. Florida Tomato Industry, Leading Counties, Acres Harvested, 1992–97

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Florida</th>
<th>Collier</th>
<th>Miami-Dade</th>
<th>Hendry</th>
<th>Hillsborough</th>
<th>Lee</th>
<th>Manatee</th>
<th>Palm Beach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fresh Tomatoes Harvested for Sale</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acres, 1997</td>
<td>39,900</td>
<td>8,573</td>
<td>4,023</td>
<td>2,461</td>
<td>3,607</td>
<td>4,447</td>
<td>8,596</td>
<td>3,960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>63,423</td>
<td>20,289</td>
<td>8,195</td>
<td>1,760</td>
<td>6,236</td>
<td>4,781</td>
<td>10,533</td>
<td>7,748</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance Acres</td>
<td>-23,523</td>
<td>-11,716</td>
<td>4,172</td>
<td>701</td>
<td>-2,629</td>
<td>-334</td>
<td>-1,937</td>
<td>-3,788</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage Acres</td>
<td>-37%</td>
<td>-58%</td>
<td>-51%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>-42%</td>
<td>-7%</td>
<td>-18%</td>
<td>-49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rank, 1997</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Farms, 1997</strong></td>
<td>192</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance Farms, 1997</td>
<td>-119</td>
<td>-16</td>
<td>-11</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-14</td>
<td>-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage Farms</td>
<td>-38%</td>
<td>-64%</td>
<td>-28%</td>
<td>-9%</td>
<td>-49%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>-41%</td>
<td>-62%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The negative situation was also observed in the other five leading counties. In both categories, both acres of fresh tomatoes harvested and the number of tomato farms decreased. Palm Beach County also observed a large decrease in both categories examined.

The negative trend is a bad signal for the farmworkers because fewer acres and fewer farms dedicated to tomatoes mean fewer jobs in the corridor. Fewer jobs in the corridor further complicates the situation for this labor group. It is necessary to conduct further research to determine the reasons behind the decrease in acreage and number of farms in the tomato industry and what the impact is on the economies involved.

Figure 6.3 shows the location of the four main districts in which the tomato production industry is divided in Central and South Florida. These four production districts account for more than 90 percent of the state’s total tomato production.

Figure 6.4 shows planting seasons for the four districts. As the figure illustrates, District 1 started planting the third week of September 1997 and ended the first week of January 1998. There were 3,506 total acres harvested in the 1997-98 season in District 1. The discrepancy in the category of acres harvested between Table 6.3 and Figure 6.4 regarding Miami-Dade County is most likely due to abandoned acreage after reporting. District 3 started planting a month earlier than did District 1. As the figure notes, planting started during the third week of August 1997 and ended the first week of February 1998. During the mentioned crop season, District 3 harvested 14,201 acres of tomatoes. This information also revealed that there were jobs available in the corridor from the third week of August of each season when local growers started planting tomatoes.
Figure 6.3. Florida Tomato Production Area, Districts 1–4

Figure 6.4. Florida Tomato Industry: Week Planted by Districts 1–4, 1997-98 Season

The data also disclosed that both districts slightly increased their acres planted in the 1997-98 season compared to the previous season. In total, both districts harvested 17,707 acres of tomatoes in the 1997-98 crop seasons.

Regarding Districts 2 and 4, Figure 6.4 also reveals that District 2 started planting in the third week of August 1997 and ended the third week of February 1998. The total acreage harvested by District 2 was 4,613. District 4 started planting earlier than the other three districts—it began the second week of August 1997 and ended the second week of March 1998. District 4 harvested 11,536 acres of tomatoes in the 1997-98 crop season. In total, Districts 2 and 4 harvested 16,149 acres. The four districts are integrated by twenty-three counties located in Central and South Florida, and they harvested 33,856 acres of tomatoes in the 1997-98 crop season. The total acreage in Florida in 1997 was 39,000 acres.

Regarding the total value of sales in the four districts, Figure 6.5 shows the average price per twenty-five-pound carton was $9.11 cents and that prices were good from early November to May, except for the weeks in mid-January and early February when sales were down. The total value of the 47.6 million twenty-five-pound cartons sold in the 1997-98 crop season was about $433.9 million.
Figure 6.5. Florida Tomato Industry Total Sales by Week, 1997-1998

Despite the difficult situation for the tomato industry provoked by large decreases in the number of acres harvested, from 63,000 in 1992 to 39,000 in 1997, the tomato industry continued to be a major contributor to the local economy.

In addition, as can be seen in Figure 6.6, according to the Florida Tomato Committee, during 2000–2001, 43,800 acres of fresh market tomatoes were planted throughout the state. Acreage planted during that period is as follows: District 1 (Miami-Dade County) 3,658 acres; District 2 (East Coast of Florida) 4,255 acres; District 3 (Southwest Florida) 15,180 acres; and District 4 (Tampa Bay Area) 12,817 acres. This totals 35,910 acres planted in these districts, leaving 8,610 acres planted in the remainder of the state.

Figure 6.6. Acres of Tomatoes Planted in Florida, 2000–2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Acres Planted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District 1</td>
<td>3658</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District 2</td>
<td>4255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District 3</td>
<td>15180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District 4</td>
<td>12817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>35910</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Moreover, during the 2000–2001 growing season, average production of 1,456 twenty-five-pound cartons per acre, bringing $9.22 per carton, yielded a total value of $588 million for the season. As in most seasons, the value per carton varied significantly during the season, ranging from $10.86 to $8.53 in the fall and spring seasons, respectively. This represents approximately 40 percent of the total value of Florida's vegetable production for that season.


Table 6.6 shows that the total acreage of fresh tomatoes harvested in the state of Florida from 1997 to 2007 increased only 537 acres, which is approximately a 2 percent increase in this category. The same trend can be seen in the number of farms dedicated to tomato activities in the state, which increased from 192 in 1997 to 339 in 2007, resulting in a 77 percent increase.

Regarding Collier County, there was a decrease in production of 31 percent, yet a slight increase in the number of farms, from nine to eleven. In Miami-Dade, the corridor’s other county, the trend was also negative. In terms of acres dedicated to fresh tomatoes, the county decreased from 4,023 in 1997 to 3,667 in 2007, resulting in a 9 percent decrease. The number of tomato farms in Miami-Dade, however, also increased by fifteen new farms, resulting in a 54 percent increase.

Palm Beach also shows a decrease in production and an increase in farms, a 220 percent increase, in fact. Manatee has a 93 percent increase in production, yet a decrease in the number of farms. Hendry shows a decrease in both production and farms, while Hillsborough shows an increase in both.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Florida</th>
<th>Collier</th>
<th>Miami-Dade</th>
<th>Hendry</th>
<th>Hillsborough</th>
<th>Lee</th>
<th>Manatee</th>
<th>Palm Beach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fresh Tomatoes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Harvested for Sale Acres, 1997</strong></td>
<td>39,900</td>
<td>8,573</td>
<td>4,023</td>
<td>2,461</td>
<td>3,607</td>
<td>4,447</td>
<td>8,596</td>
<td>3,960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40,437</td>
<td>5,913</td>
<td>3,667</td>
<td>1,827</td>
<td>5,522</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>16,576</td>
<td>2,684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balance Acres</strong></td>
<td>537</td>
<td>-2,660</td>
<td>-356</td>
<td>-634</td>
<td>1,915</td>
<td>4,532</td>
<td>7,980</td>
<td>-1,276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percentage Acres</strong></td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>-31%</td>
<td>-9%</td>
<td>-26%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>-32%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rank, 1997</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2007</strong></td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Farms, 1997</strong></td>
<td>192</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>339</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balance Farms, 1997</strong></td>
<td>147</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-5</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percentage Farms</strong></td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>-40%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>-15%</td>
<td>220%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A monthly description is presented on Table 6.7, which illustrates the average price of a twenty-five pound carton of tomatoes within the main agricultural counties of Florida, including the corridor, during the 2002 and 2010 crop seasons. It is important to underline that in January of the 2004-2005 season, the cost hovered at around $3.85, the lowest registered prize of that season. However, two months earlier, in November, that price was as high as $33.00. In March of the 2009-2010 season, the price of a carton was selling for $27.25, the highest price of that season; in the several states to the north, two additional price increases occurred within the same season.

Table 6.7. Average Value per Carton of Tomatoes, Sales, Monthly, 2002-2010.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crop Year</th>
<th>Oct</th>
<th>Nov</th>
<th>Dec</th>
<th>Jan</th>
<th>Feb</th>
<th>Mar</th>
<th>Apr</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>Jun</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002-2003</td>
<td>8.75</td>
<td>12.08</td>
<td>13.30</td>
<td>12.73</td>
<td>7.93</td>
<td>13.90</td>
<td>7.50</td>
<td>5.93</td>
<td>11.50</td>
<td>9.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-2004</td>
<td>9.53</td>
<td>8.08</td>
<td>8.08</td>
<td>6.18</td>
<td>8.08</td>
<td>10.25</td>
<td>11.05</td>
<td>8.05</td>
<td>5.65</td>
<td>8.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-2005</td>
<td>23.40</td>
<td>33.75</td>
<td>13.03</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>10.23</td>
<td>10.18</td>
<td>16.28</td>
<td>12.35</td>
<td>11.10</td>
<td>12.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2006</td>
<td>10.48</td>
<td>8.80</td>
<td>22.85</td>
<td>20.68</td>
<td>11.63</td>
<td>6.20</td>
<td>8.60</td>
<td>5.83</td>
<td>7.25</td>
<td>10.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, 2010

Looking at the overall data, we can see that there has been a 2 percent increase in tomato production for Florida as a whole, which corresponds almost exactly with the increase in production for the seven main crops combined. However, if we take into account the data from 1992, when there were 63,423 acres of fresh tomatoes harvested for sale, and compare it with that of 2007, which had 40,437 harvested acres, we can see that overall there is still a substantial drop in production of 36 percent, which is more than 20,000 acres lost. Considering that the drop from 1992 to 1997 was 37 percent, then
the ten years since were relatively stable. What could have caused such a dramatic drop in the nineties? Separate research would be needed to further answer that question and to assess the economic and labor impact in the corridor.

6.7. Farmworkers’ Economic Impact in the Corridor

On 184th Street and 177 Krome Avenue, close to the agricultural area of Homestead, there is a Tom Thumb gas station. During the harvest season, a daily average of 200 farmworkers comes from Immokalee to pick tomatoes. While passing by the gas station, they frequently buy water, food, coffee, and gas. According to Mario Lima, the store manager, in 1999 each worker spent an average of ten dollars per day. This totals an average of $2,000 per day from Mexican clients. In addition, these workers travel in twenty trucks that use twenty dollars of gas per day. The drive from Homestead to Immokalee is two hours long. This adds up to another $400. Including Sundays, they spent an approximate total of $2,400 per day. Table 6.8 is a summary of an average day at the Tom Thumb Gas Station near Homestead, Florida. According to the store manager, this amount represents an increase of between 30 and 40 percent in the total regular yearly sales.

There are at least twenty small and medium-sized businesses that depend on local farm workers’ shopping along Krome Avenue. Such is the case of the popular Coffey’s Country Store located on 200th Street and Krome Avenue. This place has done business with farmworkers since 1975. On March 5, 1999, I interviewed Mr. Juan Alvarez, an employee of this business. Mr. Alvarez told me that farmworkers are vital for this business. According to him, in the harvest season, at least fifty farmworkers who work in the tomato fields buy hot food, ice, drinks, water, and gloves, spending at least ten dollars
each day. In addition, he explained that at least twenty-five families who work permanently in the nurseries and greenhouse centers buy a minimum of $150 (per family) in meat, bread, milk, and other groceries each weekend.

Table 6.8. Summary of an Average Day at the Tom Thumb Gas Station, Homestead, Florida

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>200 Farmworkers x $10.00 each</td>
<td>$2,000 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Trucks x $20.00 (gas) each</td>
<td>$400 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total x day</td>
<td>$2,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 days x $2,400</td>
<td>$16,800 per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$16,800 x 4 weeks</td>
<td>$67,200 per month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$16,800 x 26 weeks (one-half year)</td>
<td>$436,800 per season, 1999 to 2000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most important part of the store’s sales is the beer sales. Mr. Alvarez estimated that the store sells approximately 500 cases of beer per week at ten dollars each. Table 6.9 is a summary of an average sales season at Coffey’s Country Store near Homestead, Florida.

Approximately five miles from where these businesses are located are Homestead and Florida City. In the downtown areas of these cities are many bigger businesses that depend on farmworker sales, since the highest concentration of farmworkers lives there. Sales are many times greater than the above-mentioned examples. One of the most popular stores is The Mexico Supermarket, where one can find popular Mexican products like _galletas de animalitos_ (Mexican cookies), Jarritos soft drinks, _conchas_ (a variety of Mexican bread), _tortilleras_ (machines to make tortillas), and _truchaseca con sal_ (dried
salted trout) from Michoacán. Such items are hard for a farmworker to find in the United States. In summary, the fact that these businesses sell all kinds of Mexican products clearly shows the advantages of the globalization of the international markets (NAFTA).

Just ten years ago, it was unthinkable that such a variety of Mexican products could be found in these little-known places in the United States.

Table 6.9. Summary of an Average Season’s Sales at the Coffey’s Country Store

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Calculation</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50 workers per day x $10.00</td>
<td>$500.00</td>
<td>$500.00 daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$500.00 x 7 days</td>
<td>$3,500</td>
<td>$3,500 weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$3,500 x 4 weeks</td>
<td>$14,000</td>
<td>$14,000 monthly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$3,500 x 26 weeks (one-half year)</td>
<td>$91,000</td>
<td>$91,000 per season</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 families x $150.00 per week</td>
<td>$3,750</td>
<td>$3,750 weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$3,750 x 4 weeks</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
<td>$15,000 monthly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$3,750 x 26 weeks (one-half year)</td>
<td>$97,500</td>
<td>$97,500 per season</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500 beer cartons x $10.00 per week</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$5,000 weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$5,000 x 4 weeks</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
<td>$20,000 monthly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$5,000 x 26 weeks (one-half year)</td>
<td>$130,000</td>
<td>$130,000 per season</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotals</td>
<td>$91,000</td>
<td>workers sales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$97,500</td>
<td>family sales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$130,000</td>
<td>beer sales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$318,500</strong></td>
<td><strong>$318,500</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other popular and traditional places are the Ultra Supermarket on Washington Ave. and 4th Street, La Azteca de Oro on Krome Ave. and 4th Street, and the Minors Supermarket, just to mention a few. At these places, farmworkers buy food for the week (mandado para toda la semana), spending an average of $150 per family. There are also two dozen small hotels around Homestead and Florida City that rent rooms exclusively to farmworkers at weekly average rates of $120 per room. In most cases, workers share their rooms with friends to reduce rent expenses. The rooms are very small, and two workers usually live in each room. There are also two dozen other buildings that rent small apartments to farmworkers at an average monthly rate of $600. These rooms are bigger and are usually shared by three or more workers. In Homestead and Florida City, there is a shortage of rental houses and apartments, and it is hard and expensive for newcomers to find a safe place to live. The average rate for a three-room house in these areas is between $1,000 and $1,500 per month.

On the other hand, farmworkers with their families are used to living in the migrant labor camps where they pay an average of $400 in rent (per month) for a two-bedroom home, including utilities. For new farmworkers, it is almost impossible to find a house in the labor camps. The labor camps’ capacities are full, making the houses highly sought after because they are safer, better, and a little less expensive than the small apartments. In addition, since they are new in the area, many farmworkers do not have contacts that help to facilitate their accommodations.

In sum, local supermarkets, hotels, and other related businesses directly depend on farmworkers to keep them afloat in the competitive and difficult small and medium-
sized business field. At the same time, the farmworker group has enormous difficulties finding affordable housing accommodation in the Homestead and Florida City areas.

6.8. Research Question Three

RQ3: What are the international implications of the farmworker issue for US–Mexican relations?

- How much money do the farmworkers send to Mexico?

In the context of US–Mexican relations, the issue of the farmworkers in the corridor has several international implications. One is the issue of remittances sent to Mexico by the farmworkers. Another is the fact that most of the respondents mentioned in the interviews that the main reason they left Mexico was the difficult economic situation of the country, where it’s very hard for them to find jobs in the rural communities of Michoacán and Guerrero. The issue of tomato imports from Mexico is also another source of discontent on both sides of the border. In 1996, Florida tomato growers sued Mexico for “dumping” cheap tomatoes in the United States market. Florida growers maintain that their workers receive an average of $6.77 an hour, compared to the $0.50 an hour workers receive in Mexico. They add that one-third of the tomato production cost is for labor and that, under such conditions, they cannot compete with Mexico’s tomatoes. In October 1999, Mexico and United States reached an agreement regarding the tomato dispute. Mexican growers agreed not to sell tomatoes in the United States below $5.25 per twenty-five-pound box. Florida growers are still complaining, saying the Mexican tomatoes are being sold for less than the agreed-upon price.

This issue of the “tomato war” with Mexico, as the media used to call it, requires an extensive examination. It seems that perhaps Florida growers are exaggerating the
issue a little when they say, for example, that cheap Mexican tomatoes affect not only their local market but also the national market. While doing research for this part of the study, I found many sources with contradictory information. To better illustrate this observation, for example, according to the US Department of Agriculture, in the winter, 80 percent of fresh tomatoes that enter the US market come from the Mexican state of Sinaloa. The Mexican crop goes directly to the main markets in the western part of the country, while Florida tomatoes are shipped to the main markets of the East Coast.

Figure 6.7. Shipping Routes of Mexican and Florida Tomatoes to the US Market


The controversy continues with Paul DiMare, vice president of the Homestead-based DiMare Co., one of Florida’s largest shippers, claiming that the US government is
not doing a good enough job cracking down on illegal, low-priced Mexican tomatoes and on shipments that are not meant for export but come to the United States anyways. There are fears that the Florida tomato industry could be at risk because of rapidly increasing volumes from Mexico.81

Now, according to data collected during the interviews, many Mexican farmworkers who are working in the corridor mentioned they arrived to South Florida after 1994. This situation confirmed my perception that the 1994 peso crisis had influenced their decision to leave Mexico. Also, upon examination of the records at the migrant program office, I was able to confirm that a higher number of new arrivals were registered after 1994. Therefore, it is valid to say that the economic situation in Mexico is closely linked to the issue studied.

Regarding remittances, fifteen (50 percent) farmworkers I interviewed between 1999 and 2000 told me that they send an average of $150 to $300 per month to Mexico.

Figure 6.8. Remittances per Month

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The next estimate helps to explain the importance of this section. If taken into consideration that there are 20,000 farmworkers working along the corridor and that half of them (10,000 workers) send $150 dollars per month. That makes $1.5 million per month (10,000 x $150 = $1.5 million). This totals $18 million per year (12 months x $1.5 million = $18 million per year). Following the logic of this estimate, if 68 percent of the farmworkers in the corridor are from Mexico, it means that 6,800 (out of 10,000 workers who send money) Mexican farmworkers send $150 dollars each month. This makes $1,020,000 per month (6,800 x $150) and a total of $12.2 million per year ($1,020,000 dollars x 12 months).

6.9. Summary of Findings

Farmworkers in South Florida, as well as in the rest of the nation, work in broad daylight and in open fields. Nevertheless, they remain “invisible” to many policymakers, politicians, and the community at large. The labor-intensive work of these men, women, and children helps harvest more than $2.5 billion worth of fruit, vegetables, and horticultural specialty crops in South Florida.

It is essential to collect comprehensive and high-quality data about migrant and seasonal agricultural workers in order to develop more effective ways of meeting the needs of this labor group. There is a range of complex social, educational, economic, housing, and health-related issues that simply cannot be addressed effectively until we begin to work with more reliable information about them. It is also necessary to extend the research on the situation of the agricultural industry of South Florida to determine the precise causes that provoked the decreases in acreage of the main fresh crops.
Collier County, in particular, displayed considerable losses in production and, in turn, farmworkers. The citrus canker and hurricanes are two known causes for this decline, but are there other reasons? The 1992–1997 data showed that the number of farms decreased slightly, yet by 2007 there were considerably more. However, this has not resulted in increased acreage harvested.

The decrease in production, yet increase in farms, could also be due to different methods of farming being adopted, such as organic or other less intensive forms; or are there just more, smaller farms? Are there, perhaps, more “hobby” farmers, people moving out of the cities looking for a change of lifestyle and taking up farming for personal rather than commercial reasons? How would this affect local economies and Mexico’s economy, as well? Do these types of farms utilize migrant farmworkers, and do they represent an improvement in working conditions? These issues are far-reaching and complex and would need further, focused study.

Labor conditions are extremely severe and farmworker pay is unjustifiably low. It is necessary to increase the payment for a thirty-two-pound tomato bucket from forty-five cents to a fairer wage. This thirty-two-pound tomato bucket for which tomato growers pay farmworkers forty-five cents sells for nine dollars in local markets and twenty-five dollars in New York, Maine, Massachusetts, and other northern states. In 2010, each tomato box produced in the corridor had an average cost of twenty-five dollars. Yet, in the winter, northern states such as New York, Maine and others have pricing in excess of fifty dollars.

The interviews in the corridor found farmworkers with low wages, sub-poverty annual earnings, and significant periods of underemployment. While production of fruits
and vegetables has increased, and global demand for American produce continues to grow, agricultural workers’ earnings and working conditions are either stagnant or in decline.

In addition, while farmworkers face workplace hazards similar to those found in other industrial settings, such as working with heavy machinery, and they undergo hard physical labor, they also confront factors more common to agricultural production, such as pesticide exposure, sun exposure, inadequate sanitary facilities, and crowded housing. Farmworkers earn poverty-level wages and remain among the most economically disadvantaged working groups in the United States, and poverty among farmworkers is more than double that of all wage and salary employees.

Also, there is no right to overtime or to organize in the corridor. As a result of intentional exclusion from key New Deal labor-reform measures, including the National Labor Relations Act and the Fair Labor Standards Act, farmworkers do not have the right to overtime pay or the right to organize and collectively bargain with their employers. Due to the seasonal and unpredictable nature of agricultural work, farmworkers face periods of long hours with no overtime pay, yet, on average, farmworkers experience rates of unemployment double those of wage and salary workers.

There have been thirty years of stagnant price rates in the tomato harvest, with tomato pickers often toiling ten to twelve hours a day under grueling conditions while earning no benefits whatsoever. Corridor tomato pickers earn an average of forty-five cents per thirty-two-pound bucket of tomatoes, a rate that has not risen significantly since 1978. As a result, workers today have to pick over twice the number of buckets per hour just to earn minimum wage, as they did in 1980. At today’s per-piece rate, they have to
pick over two tons of tomatoes just to earn the equivalent of Florida’s minimum wage for a ten-hour workday.

Modern-day slavery in the most extreme conditions was, indeed, founded in the corridor, where farmworkers are held against their will and forced to work for little or no pay, facing conditions that meet the legal standards for prosecution under modern-day slavery statutes. Since 1997, federal civil rights officials have prosecuted seven slavery operations, involving over 1,000 workers in Florida’s fields. One federal prosecutor called Florida “ground-zero” for modern-day slavery.82

Looking at a sample workday in the corridor for tomato pickers gives us a clearer idea of how physically demanding this work is. Farmworkers wake up at 4:30 a.m. and prepare lunch in their trailers or apartments, after which they have to walk to the parking lot or pick-up site to begin looking for work. At 6:30 a.m., if they are lucky, a contractor will choose them to work for him for the day. The job may be ten miles to as much as one hundred miles away from their homes. Then they board the contractor’s converted school bus to go to the fields. At around 7:30 a.m., they arrive at fields and begin weeding—or simply waiting while the dew evaporates from the tomatoes. The farmworkers usually do not get paid for these hours. At 9:00 a.m., they begin picking tomatoes, which consists of filling buckets, hoisting them on their shoulders, running them one hundred feet or more to the truck, and throwing the bucket up into the truck—all for a token payment worth forty to fifty cents paid to them by a ticketero or “ticketman,” a person who pays for each tomato bucket, who stands on top of the truck and from there throws a token into the picker’s bucket. These workers must pick 2.5 tons of tomatoes in order to earn today’s

minimum wage. Later, at 12:00 noon, they eat lunch as fast as they can, often with their hands soaked in pesticides, after which they return to work under the smoldering Florida sun. Then, at 5:00 p.m., and sometimes much later, depending on the season, they board the bus to return to Immokalee sometime between 5:30 and 8:00 p.m. As soon as they arrive in town, they walk home, only to repeat this same scenario the next day—and the day after that.

The farmworker issue requires the urgent attention of the Obama administration. A national commission composed of farmworkers, tomato growers, academics, civic leaders, community organizations, and local, state, and federal officials should immediately review the labor conditions under which farmworkers live and work to make possible their full integration into American society.

If America's extraordinarily wealthy can afford a multi-billion-dollar health plan, then they can also afford the revision of the farmworkers' situation. Nevertheless, in my view, the question is not about money but rather about how far we are willing to go, as a nation, in order to place American ideals of justice and prosperity within the reach of all those who toil in hope of a better life.

Finally, America’s social agenda is incomplete concerning the farmworker issue. The situation of farmworkers is simple to understand: despite the fact that the 2.5 million farmworker labor force is vital to keeping America as a world agricultural producer, this group still earns annual incomes below the federal poverty level. In fact, more than half of them earn wages below $10,000 per year. The farmworkers are behind the rest of America’s workers, not only in income but also in housing, education, and labor conditions. They live, work, and earn as they did forty years ago. As an example of this
grave situation, I would like to conclude with the current case of farmworkers from the corridor who, in this, the twenty-first century, are living in the very woods and forests around Immokalee. Those farmworkers, in this embarrassing and sad situation, do not make enough money in the fields to pay rent. Their voices are not heard and their faces are invisible; at the same time, they are being pursued and harassed because of unfair legislation that tries to deport them. Thus, in many ways the farmworkers have become America's “forgotten” workers.
CHAPTER 7
EPILOGUE TO CASE STUDY

7.1. Purpose

The purpose of this epilogue is to revisit the setting of this case study in order to update information regarding the situation in the corridor and that of the farmworkers whom I interviewed during the last decade, as well as to provide new data that could help address research questions formulated in this study. Essentially, that information is related to housing, education, health, labor, economic conditions, political power, and safety needs within the farmworker group studied.

A lot of changes have occurred in the intervening ten years. Politically and economically, the world is not the same: we have seen the birth of the “War on Terror” and the consequent tightening of security in the United States. Indeed, following the terrorist attacks of 9/11, this country enacted a series of laws as part of the “War on Terror” that has had an impact on America’s immigrants and immigration policies. Rather than viewing immigration as a positive force that contributes to the well-being of the nation, American society is now more anxious, and associates its perception of immigrants, particularly unauthorized immigrants, with issues of safety, security, and law enforcement.

In this context, the approach to US immigration policy has been marked by a shift away from shaping demographic and population levels to focusing on security and risk management. With the passage of the Patriot Act and the Homeland Security Act, the zero-tolerance strategies associated with the criminal justice system have been imported into the immigration system. As a result, immigration controls have tightened
considerably since 9/11, often with tremendous social costs for an increasingly vulnerable population across the United States.

These changes have altered, too, the corridor’s “face.” For example, ten years ago, when I conducted the first set of interviews, it was normal to see many farmworkers at Sixth Avenue and Mowry Street in downtown Homestead, waiting to be employed. This street was a popular place where farmworkers gathered every day, waiting for pickers’ contractors. Today, it is a lonely place where I saw only two or three poor people wandering around, drinking and asking for money from the people passing through. When I asked friends and local leaders like Ciprano Garza and his wife Maria Garza what happened and where the farmworkers were, they explained to me that in the last ten years, the number of farmworkers has decreased and that the workers were no longer coming to seek jobs as they had in past years. They explained to me that the reasons for this change were due to the economic crisis that struck the US economy, which has meant that there is no longer as much work as there was before. Other aspects that have affected the corridor, in Garza’s opinion, are the frequent immigration “raids,” low payments in the corridor, the security laws that now control the border, and the changes in US immigration policy that have resulted in many states viewing the migrant workers as suspicious people—almost like enemies of society. Mr. Garza also clarified that in South Florida, changes in the agricultural economy have had a negative impact and, because of that, many farmworkers are seeking work in other counties where nursery plants and the construction industry pays better and does not involve moving from one place to another in search of work.
7.2. Composite Picture of Second Set of Interviews at the Corridor, Ten Years After

I returned to the Homestead–Immokalee corridor for a period between October and December in 2011 to see what had changed. This return included conducting a series of informal interviews and observations, as well as gathering data to create a second inventory of the socioeconomic status of the migrant farmworkers. To conduct the new interviews, I used the same methodological approach that Chapter 4 describes. This new set of data was required to establish patterns of comparison with the first set of findings obtained in the first interviews, as well as patterns of comparison with other studies elsewhere. During these informal talks, farmworkers were asked about their current socioeconomic status, changes in their roles within the local community, their working conditions, their living conditions, their relations with those who remain in Mexico, remittances to family members in Mexico, and life in the corridor, in general.

I conducted the interviews and observations mainly outside the “La Fiesta 3,” a popular supermarket in Immokalee located at 106 South Third Street. I chose this location because hundreds of farmworkers congregate there every day before dawn, waiting for the buses that will take them to the fields, making this place an excellent “source” that provides an abundance of valuable information.

At the time of the first study, I was working as a teacher for the Migrant Education Program in Homestead. This allowed me to be involved in the migrant farmworker community and gave me an opportunity to build relationships and trust with those I was studying. Ten years later, I found several difficulties in conducting interviews and gathering data and information with the same facilities. There are a number of reasons that might explain why I had so many difficulties, for example, the aforementioned
changes in law and attitudes in the nation, which obviously affect the corridor’s farmworkers. As a result, farmworkers were mistrustful and afraid to speak openly with me about their labor conditions. The farmworkers thought that I might report them to the immigration services and they would be deported to Mexico, so they were initially unwilling to collaborate in answering specific questions regarding their employment and earnings and origins. Despite these initial problems, after four or five visits to places where farmworkers gather, I finally was able to overcome their initial mistrust, and it was possible to acquire the necessary data; however, it gave me useful insight into the heightened sense of fear and distrust that prevails here.

With regard to the situation of the farmworkers in the corridor, I would like to mention the case of a farmworker named Javier Garcia who, as many others do, comes every day to La Fiesta looking for job. He told me that the farmworkers are never sure that there will be work and stated, “Lately, I have only had three or four days of work per week, and I don’t know how I will pay my bills and needs.” This is a common story here among the farmworker community. Many workers are so poor economically that they have no money to pay rent or to eat well. I have visited the agricultural fields of Homestead and Immokalee many times over the years, specifically for the second set of interviews. During my visits in 2011, I talked with workers and agricultural leaders, and, sadly, I observed that the working conditions in the corridor are worse than they were ten years ago. To illustrate this observation, I would like to mention that, in the Immokalee area, it is common to hear the news that police or other authorities find farmworkers living in the woods in nearly wild conditions. The explanation for this is, from my point of view, simple: farmworkers are there because they have no money to pay rent. Ten
years ago, I never heard or saw anything like this; and if there was such a case, it was an isolated incident. Now it has become commonplace. This example is the best indicator I can cite of how conditions have deteriorated for the farmworkers in the corridor.

For that reason, in the corridor, not only are there eight to ten workers sharing a trailer or groups of workers crammed into tiny apartments, but there also are workers living in the forest. The case of Javier Garcia demonstrates the plight of many here: living far below the poverty line; without job security; no workers’ compensation or disability insurance; no paid time off; no access to medical care, Social Security, Medicaid, or food stamps; and no legal protection from the abusive and unsafe conditions in the fields. When I was doing this research, I knew of many cases of migrant families in the corridor who had relatives who developed cancer and passed away. Relatives of these family members feel certain that exposure to pesticides in the crop fields was the cause of their illness and death.

As mentioned in Chapter 5, the farmworker group is particularly vulnerable to natural disasters and weather extremes because of the unpredictable hours they work, with no financial security. For instance, in December 2011, freezing temperatures in Immokalee destroyed crops, resulting in considerable damages that affected farmworkers. Rain is another issue to consider: once it starts to rain, workers are packed back onto the buses and sent home, their workdays abruptly ended with no full-day payments.
7.3. Quantitative Findings

For the survey, twenty-six farmworkers were interviewed—all males. The survey questionnaire used to solicit information on worker characteristics, household features, and farm employment history can be viewed in the appendices section.

7.4. Worker Demographics

The majority (69 percent) of those questioned were married, with eight being single and eighteen married. Only one of the unmarried respondents was between seventeen and twenty-five years of age; six (23 percent) were between twenty-six and thirty-five years of age; and one was over thirty-six years of age. The age of the married respondents ranged from twenty-five to forty-five years.

Figure 7.1. Marital Status of Entire Group, 2011

This contrasts with the original findings, in which a majority were single and younger. Twenty-three of those interviewed (88 percent) were from Mexico, with the remaining 12 percent from Guatemala. Of those from Mexico, there was more variation in their states of origin than was found in the original study. Figure 7.1 shows that Michoacan still provides a large percentage of workers, with eight of the respondents originating there; however, Oaxaca also provides another eight, and there are also
workers from Puebla, Queretaro, San Luis Potosi and Mexico State. In the first study, Guerrero was the only other state of origin mentioned.

Figure 7.2. State of Origin of Mexican Farmworkers, 2011

With regard to education, Figure 7.3 shows that eighteen had completed between sixth and ninth grades (69 percent) and four between tenth and twelfth grades. This illustrates a drop in the overall level of education, compared with the original study, in which an equal percentage had not completed up to sixth grade (16 percent); however, a larger percentage (34 percent) had completed between tenth and twelfth grades. It is necessary to clearly state that during these talks and interviews with the farmworkers, they explained to me that their knowledge of English was very limited because they had never taken formal English classes and that little by little they had been learning what they could in the streets, in the labor fields, and in their travels to northern states where
almost nobody speaks Spanish. This has, in turn, forced them to speak English as a matter of survival because they have to ask for food or buy other necessities.

Figure 7.3. Formal Education (Grade Level), 2011

English skills would seem to have gone up since the original study, from 16 percent to 42 percent. Although this is an improvement, that still leaves 58 percent of farmworkers with no basic English skills.

7.5. Worker Economics and Labor Activities

In 2001, farmworkers mentioned that by picking crops they could earn between forty and fifty dollars a day for six to nine months per year, resulting in an annual average income of $9,720. Looking at Figure 7.4, one can see that more than 60 percent of farmworkers are earning less than $9,000 a year. This means that workers are, in fact, earning less than they were ten years ago. The farmworkers in the corridor, as they were ten years ago, are employed mainly in picking tomatoes: 40 percent of those interviewed mentioned they work in tomato-related activities, 16 percent in fresh corn, 13 percent in snap beans, the rest of the group works with avocados (10 percent), mangoes (9 percent), watermelon (6 percent), and malanga and okra (3 percent each).
The majority of them (65 percent) stated that they arrived in the corridor after 2005 and that they came from Texas, North Carolina, and Alabama. The farmworkers (88 percent) have experience in agricultural activities and travel outside the corridor and Florida once the crop season comes to an end. Georgia, North Carolina, and Ohio are some of the states they move to as they continue to work primarily with tomatoes and other crops such as oranges, beans, pickles, and apples. Sixty-two percent of those interviewed mentioned that they will stay in the corridor looking for work in nurseries and in the construction business. In general terms, labor activities are more or less similar to the labor activities of those workers interviewed ten years ago. It also bears mentioning that in the last three years many of the farmworkers who decided to stay in the corridor after the crop season have faced serious difficulties in finding work in the construction business in Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach, and other counties with a strong tradition in construction and development. The reason for the lack of jobs in those counties is the financial crises that provoked a housing collapse in 2008, primarily in Florida, Nevada, California, and Arizona, causing construction in the commercial and
housing sectors to come to a standstill. On the other hand, the group that I interviewed ten years ago did not face such difficulties in that sector because that was the time when the construction boom had begun.

Figure 7.5. Main Activity in the Corridor, 2011

Figure 7.6 shows the legal status of farmworkers who were questioned. One can see that the percentage working without legal status has increased from just under half to over 60 percent; this means that the majority of farmworkers are working without legal protection and rights, a situation that makes them far more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.

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With regards to remittances, Figure 7.7 shows there are more people sending money and that they are sending larger amounts. In the original study, there were just under 50 percent who were sending no remittances. Now that figure is 19 percent. The mean of monthly remittances between 2000 and 2001 was $125. In 2011, that number had risen to $217.

With regards to data on the main reason given for leaving their country, data from the interviews reveals that it is apparent that the majority are coming because of the lack of job opportunities at home (69 percent), while earlier results were only 15.6 percent; however, the percentage coming for economic reasons has fallen from 40.6 percent to 3.8 percent. This would seem to be a contradictory finding that calls for more research to clarify their migration motives; however, in rural communities in Mexico and Guatemala,
the country of origin for the second largest group in the corridor, are such that the peasants who live in these regions find difficulty in securing jobs that pay well. Therefore, the high rate of unemployment in such places is one of the main motives in provoking thousands of young peasants to migrate to the North, not to mention, the violence that escalates on a daily basis in such communities.

7.6. Conclusion

The flow of people between Mexico and the corridor and the underlying reasons for it are complex and multifaceted issues, which, in my opinion, have become even more complex since this study was initiated. Indeed, looking at a comparison of the two surveys, the information can be summarized as follows: Today, workers are older and come from a wider range of locations in Mexico; more are married; more are working illegally; and they are sending more money as remittances, even though they are earning the same amount of money as they did ten years ago. There has been a drop in the level
of education, but more speak basic English. This could illustrate that the dynamic has changed, and the reasons may be different—for instance, my perception from talking to farmworkers is that perhaps more farmworkers are coming for shorter stays with fewer intentions of residing in the United States. Rather, they are trying to provide for their families in Mexico but aspire to return home as soon as they are able. Therefore, they could be saving more money to buy a vehicle, construct a home, or buy a ranch with cows in Mexico or in Guatemala. This would explain the change in demographic and economic information found in the second interviews, however I do not have sufficient information to reinforce this conclusion, further research would be necessary to clarify this point. It is clear that conditions for farmworkers and their socioeconomic position also have declined, as they are earning the same as they did ten years ago. If one takes into account the increase in the cost of living through inflation, then it is a negative situation for the farmworkers and their families.

Another relevant issue linked to the migration process is the “drug war” that the Mexican government faces, with the criminal cartels on the other side of the border. The resulting bloody violence has had a double effect on migration. On one side, it has caused an increasing number of poor peasants to escape the situation and to migrate to the United States; however, the border is now a much more dangerous place and crossing more hazardous than ever, because it is in the hands of criminal cartels. On the other side, the corridor has lost thousands of farmworkers in the last ten years, many of them perhaps arrested by INS officials and deported to Mexico or Guatemala. Once there, life will be difficult for them, because criminal cartels are recruiting young peasants by force. Anyone who resists is killed immediately. We just have to recall what happened two
years ago to seventy-five migrant workers who were assassinated on a ranch in the Mexican state of Tamaulipas when they tried to reach the border with Texas. Many of those killed were farmworkers from Central American countries.

The new interviews also found that many farmworkers, due to their illegal situation, are hidden in the corridor or trying to escape from frequent raids that the migra perform. In the first interviews conducted in 2001, the “migra raids” in the corridor were less frequent. Thus, in this regard, there is also a significant change. What impact does this have on the economy of the corridor? Also, as was mentioned before, during my visits to the corridor and based on the data examined, I found less labor activity in Collier and Miami-Dade counties. There are many, perhaps thousands of farmworkers that no longer work in the corridor. Where are they? We do not know. Perhaps they are working in other counties with better conditions and pay, or maybe they migrated to other states with fewer migratory restrictions. These questions remain unanswered.

Concerning migratory restrictions, it is also necessary to extend the research to ongoing new migrant labor legislation. For example, it would be interesting to know how legislation has affected farmworkers in the agricultural areas studied. Arizona, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina and other states along the Eastern migrant stream have introduced migratory laws that particularly exclude thousands of farmworkers that do not have permission to work in the United States, such as the Agricultural Job Opportunities, Benefits and Security Act. In addition, under the new H2A guest worker program, agricultural contractors and recruitment companies from those states, only accept farmworkers hired in Mexico, leaving thousands of farmworkers that traditionally travel from South Florida without a job. In addition, the new law requires businesses and
contractors to use a federal electronic system to verify the legal status of farmworkers, at the same time this new law gives local police the power to arrest farmworkers under the suspicion of being illegal immigrants. The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 makes the situation more difficult for farmworkers because the law requires them to remain outside the country for ten years if discovered staying illegally for more than 365 days. Therefore, these ongoing changes in immigration law require an extension of the research to determine the impact to the farm labor force and to local economies.

In addition, if we take into consideration that, in the last fifteen years, the state of Florida has lost more than 45,000 hired farmworkers according to payroll reports released by big farming industries, then the question again is, where are they? And what effects have these changes had in the agricultural activities in the corridor? In this sense, one must ask, what has been the negative effect of thousands of acres of land lost in the leading agricultural counties? An additional question is how much do tomato imports from Mexico affect the labor force in the corridor?

Those are only a sample of some questions that need to be researched in order to understand the full extent of the farmworker labor group studied and their effect on both the corridor and Mexican economies. In this sense, it is also important to clarify that the information resulting from the farmworker interviews on income, education, employment occupation, housing, legal status and other information regarding labor conditions about the group studied in the corridor must be taken with caution due to a number of data limitations. First, the sample of workers questioned is quite small and may underrepresent the numbers and real aspects of the angles approached in the research. Second the two
sets of interviews were conducted ten years apart, which is another methodological limitation that may be subject to error, and third, the complex dynamic of migrant is another limitation, not only for this research, but also for any dealing with this target group due to the fact that farmworkers are constantly moving in search of agricultural employment. For instance, as soon as they finish harvesting tomato, they move to another place to work on a different crop; such as the case of the group studied in this research, who begin their journey in the fields of Homestead and end close to the border with Canada. For that reasons the issue calls for new and comprehensive research that fully covers the mentioned limitations.

Finally, the information and data collected by this study, as it sought to answer the main research questions through ten years of contact with these exploited humans beings, seem to confirm that the farmworkers’ valuable economic contributions have, unfairly, not been recognized by American society—they serve in silence while hidden in the crop fields.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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APPENDIX A

Informants' Right and Consent

Interviewer: Hello, my name is José Alberto Gaytán. I'm a graduate student at the School of International Studies of the University of Miami at Coral Gables, Florida. I'm conducting a research study to fulfill the requirements for my dissertation. The purpose of this study is to gather information about the impact of the Mexican farm workers in South Florida and Mexico. Thus, I'm interviewing Mexican farm workers, leaders, and Mexican officials about their experiences with the migrant phenomenon. In particular, I’m gathering information on demographic and social characteristics, as well as on labor conditions of migrant farm workers who work in the tomato industry along the Homestead–Immokalee "South West Florida corridor."

Anything you tell me will be confidential. When I write up my study, I will refer to you by a code number. You do not have to worry about anyone else knowing what you have said. In any case, your participation is voluntary and you may refuse to participate at any time. My notes and final report will be available to for you to read at any time.

If you have any questions about the study or your rights as an informant, you can call Professor Richard Weisskoff at the University of Miami at #######, or me at #######. Thank very much for your participation.

Mi nombre es José Alberto Gaytán. Soy estudiante de la Universidad de Miami. Estoy haciendo una investigación para cumplir con los requisitos académicos de mis estudios de doctorado. El propósito del estudio en cuestión es recabar datos acerca de su experiencia como trabajador agrícola, lo cual incluye información demográfica y socioeconómica sobre los trabajadores agrícolas mexicanos que trabajan en la industria del tomate en el sur de la Florida. Para tal efecto, estoy entrevistando a los propios trabajadores, a líderes campesinos y a funcionarios de los consulados de México en los Estados Unidos.

La información proporcionada será confidencial; no mencionaré los nombres de los trabajadores entrevistados; en lugar de ello, usaré un código de identificación. En cualquier caso, su participación es voluntaria y la entrevista se puede dar por terminada en el momento en que usted lo desee. Los datos recabados y el reporte final estarán a su disposición en cuanto se concluya debidamente el estudio.

Si desea aclarar cualquier duda o hacer alguna pregunta relacionada con este asunto, usted se puede comunicar con el director de mi tesis de doctorado, el profesor Richard Weisskoff al teléfono ####### o bien comunicarse conmigo al teléfono #######. Muchas gracias por su ayuda y participación.
APPENDIX B

Interview Guide: First Set of Interviews

Interview Information:
ID: __________
DATE: ______
PLACE: __________

Demographic Information:
Sex: Female _______ Male _______
Date of Birth: _______ Place of Birth: __________ Country: ________
Marital Status: 
Single Married Separated Divorced Widow/Widower
Last Grade Completed in School: __________
Number of Children: _______ Ages: ____________________

General Questions:
1. Can you explain how and when you became a migrant worker, what migratory route did you follow to get to Florida and other main agricultural centers in the US?

2. Are you currently working in the tomato fields? Where? What is your income? What kind of labor do you perform and what is it like?

3. How many years have you worked in the tomato fields of the Homestead–Immokalee corridor?

4. What type of work are you currently engaged in?

5. In recent years, what crops have you harvested? Where? What was your income? What kind of labor did you perform and what was it like?

6. What was your family's combined income in the last year?

7. Do you think your work as a migrant farmworker has affected your health? Please explain.

8. Do you have access to any kind of medical services in Florida?

9. How far did you travel during the harvest season?

10. Why did you become a migrant worker?

11. What is the longest time you have ever lived in one place?
12. How do you feel about your life as a migrant worker? For example, what do you think about your family's future in: education, employment, housing, income, political participation?

13. Do you send money to your family in Mexico? If yes, how much? How often?

14. What is most negative aspect of your experience as a migrant farmworker?

15. Do you own a car?

16. Do you live in a migrant camp?

17. How much do you pay for rent?

18. Have you ever been interviewed before on aspects related to your migrant life? If yes, please explain.

19. Do you receive food stamps or any other kind of government assistance?

20. What would be your best recommendation for improving migrant labor conditions? What aspects, in your opinion, should be corrected?
APPENDIX C

Matrix of Results: First Set of Interviews

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**Code Values**

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| Q04  | 1. Yes  
2. No |
| Q05  | 1. South Carolina  
2. California |
| Q06  | 1. Alabama  
2. Georgia |
| Q07  | 1. No  
2. Yes |
| Q08  | 1. Yes  
2. No |
| Q09  | 1. Lease  
2. House |
| Q10  | 1. Yes  
2. No |
| Q11  | 1. Truck  
2. Car |
| Q12  | 1. Field work  
2. Farming |
| Q13  | 1. Cafe  
2. Restaurant |
| Q14  | 1. Tomato  
2. Orange  
3. Watermelon  
4. Lemon  
5. Lime  
6. Snap beans  
7. Malanga  
8. Okra  
9. Avocado  
10. Mango  
11. Fresh Corn |
| Q15  | 1. Tomato  
2. Orange |
| Q16  | 1. Alabama  
2. Georgia  
3. South Carolina  
4. Ohio  
5. Virginia  
6. Illinois  
7. Michigan  
8. North Carolina |
| Q17  | 1. Tomato  
2. Orange  
3. Pumpkin  
4. Tobacco  
5. Apple  
6. Pickle  
7. Fresh corn  
8. Nursery plant  
9. Construction business |
### APPENDIX D

**Farmworker Interview # 1**  
**Case # 1**

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<td>6 Years of formal education (grades)</td>
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<td>7 Speak English</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 Agricultural job in country of origin</td>
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<td>10 Year of arrival at corridor</td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Texas</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Main activity in the corridor</td>
<td>Picking avocados</td>
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</tr>
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<td>15 Wages in the corridor</td>
<td>$39 (per day)</td>
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<tr>
<td>16 Place of work after corridor season</td>
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<td>17 Main activity after corridor season</td>
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<td>22 Owner of house</td>
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<tr>
<td>23 Do you live in an apartment or labor camp?</td>
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<td>25 Medical insurance and labor benefits</td>
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<td>27 Do you like your agricultural job?</td>
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<tr>
<td>30 Would you like your family to be working picking crops ?</td>
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<tr>
<td>31 Do you want to return to your country</td>
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<td>32 What is your legal status in the US ?</td>
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### Farmworker Interview # 5
**Case #5**

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<td>7  Speak English</td>
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<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8  Agricultural job in country of origin</td>
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<tr>
<td>9  Years of experience as a farmworker</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 Year of arrival at corridor</td>
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<td>(1996)</td>
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<td>11 Travel expenses to get to South Florida</td>
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<tr>
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<td>14 Main activity in the corridor</td>
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<td>Stay in corridor area</td>
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<td>17 Main activity after corridor season</td>
<td>Nursery plants</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 Combined income</td>
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<tr>
<td>19 Send remittances to Mexico</td>
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<td>22 Owner of house</td>
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<td>23 Do you live in an apartment or labor camp?</td>
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<tr>
<td>25 Medical insurance and labor benefits</td>
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<td>26 Previously interviewed by any government agency</td>
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<td>27 Do you like your agricultural job?</td>
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<td>28 Do you own a car or truck?</td>
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<td>29 Do you have bank savings?</td>
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<td>(0)</td>
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<tr>
<td>30 Would you like your family to be working picking crops?</td>
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<td>(0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 Do you want to return to your country?</td>
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<td>32 What is your legal status in the US?</td>
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<td>13 Place of previous work in the US</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 Main activity in the corridor</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 Wages in the corridor</td>
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<td>16 Place of work after corridor season</td>
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<td>17 Main activity after corridor season</td>
<td>Tomatoes and fresh corn</td>
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<td>(300)</td>
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<td>21 Registered to vote in the US</td>
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<tr>
<td>22 Owner of house</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>(0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 Do you live in an apartment or labor camp?</td>
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<td>24 How much do you pay for rent?</td>
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<tr>
<td>28 Do you own a car or truck?</td>
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<td>29 Do you have bank savings?</td>
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<tr>
<td>30 Would you like your family to be working picking crops?</td>
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<tr>
<td>31 Do you want to return to your country</td>
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<td>32 What is your legal status in the US?</td>
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**Farmworker Interview # 7**  
**Case # 7**

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<td>7 Speak English</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 Agricultural job in country of origin</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>15 Wages in the corridor</td>
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<td>16 Place of work after corridor season</td>
<td>Stay in corridor area</td>
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<tr>
<td>17 Main activity after corridor season</td>
<td>Nursery plants</td>
<td>(8)</td>
</tr>
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<td>18 Combined income</td>
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<td>(9,000)</td>
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<td>19 Send remittances to Mexico</td>
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<td>20 Monthly remittances</td>
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<tr>
<td>22 Owner of house</td>
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<tr>
<td>23 Do you live in an apartment or labor camp?</td>
<td>Apartment</td>
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<tr>
<td>24 How much do you pay for rent?</td>
<td>$300 x month</td>
<td>(300)</td>
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<td>25 Medical insurance and labor benefits</td>
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<tr>
<td>26 Previously interviewed by any government agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>27 Do you like your agricultural job?</td>
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<tr>
<td>28 Do you own a car or truck?</td>
<td>Truck</td>
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<tr>
<td>29 Do you have bank savings?</td>
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<tr>
<td>30 Would you like your family to be working picking crops?</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>31 Do you want to return to your country</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>32 What is your legal status in the US?</td>
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### Farmworker Interview # 8  
**Case # 8**

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<td>8  Agricultural job in country of origin</td>
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<td>9  Years of experience as a farmworker</td>
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<td>15 Wages in the corridor</td>
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<td>Tobacco and tomatoes (1,4)</td>
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<td>18 Combined income</td>
<td>$ 10,500</td>
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<tr>
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<td>22 Owner of house</td>
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<td>(0)</td>
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<tr>
<td>23 Do you live in an apartment or labor camp ?</td>
<td>Apartment</td>
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<td>24 How much do you pay for rent?</td>
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<tr>
<td>25 Medical insurance and labor benefits</td>
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<tr>
<td>26 Previously interviewed by any government agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>27 Do you like your agricultural job?</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>28 Do you own a car or truck?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 Do you have bank savings?</td>
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<td>(0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 Would you like your family to be working picking crops ?</td>
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<tr>
<td>31 Do you want to return to your country</td>
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<td>13 Place of previous work in the US</td>
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<td>14 Main activity in the corridor</td>
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<td>15 Wages in the corridor</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Nursery plant</td>
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<td>(9,500)</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>(0)</td>
</tr>
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<td>20 Monthly remittances</td>
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<td>(0)</td>
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<tr>
<td>21 Registered to vote in the US</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>(0)</td>
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<td>7  Speak English</td>
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<td>8  Agricultural job in country of origin</td>
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<td>13 Place of previous work in the US</td>
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<td>15 Wages in the corridor</td>
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<td>18 Combined income</td>
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<td>(8,350)</td>
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<td>22 Owner of house</td>
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<td>27 Do you like your agricultural job?</td>
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<td>28 Do you own a car or truck?</td>
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<td>29 Do you have bank savings?</td>
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<tr>
<td>30 Would you like your family to be working picking crops ?</td>
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<td>31 Do you want to return to your country</td>
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# Farmworker Interview

**Case # 16**

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<td>(11,000)</td>
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<td>30 Would you like your family to be working picking crops?</td>
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<td>31 Do you want to return to your country</td>
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<td>Nursery plants</td>
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<td>16 Place of work after corridor season</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Tomatoes and fresh corn</td>
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<td>(9,500)</td>
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<tr>
<td>22 Owner of house</td>
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<td>23 Do you live in an apartment or labor camp ?</td>
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<td>24 How much do you pay for rent?</td>
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<td>32 What is your legal status in the US ?</td>
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### Farmworker Interview  
#### Case # 19

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<tr>
<td>22 Owner of house</td>
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<tr>
<td>23 Do you live in an apartment or labor camp?</td>
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<td>Truck</td>
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<td>(11,000)</td>
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<td>19 Send remittances to Mexico</td>
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<td>(1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>20 Monthly remittances</td>
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<tr>
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<td>(1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>22 Owner of house</td>
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<td>(1)</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>29 Do you have bank savings?</td>
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<tr>
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<td>31 Do you want to return to your country</td>
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### Farmworker Interview # 21  
Case # 21

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<td>29 Do you have bank savings?</td>
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<td>30 Would you like your family to be working picking crops ?</td>
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### Farmworker Interview # 22
#### Case # 22

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<td>30 Would you like your family to be working picking crops?</td>
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<td>23 Do you live in an apartment or labor camp?</td>
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<td>28 Do you own a car or truck?</td>
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<td>29 Do you have bank savings?</td>
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<td>30 Would you like your family to be working picking crops?</td>
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<td>31 Do you want to return to your country</td>
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<td>Combined income</td>
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</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Owner of house</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you live in an apartment or labor camp?</td>
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<td>(300)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical insurance and labor benefits</td>
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<td>Previously interviewed by any government agency</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Do you have bank savings?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Would you like your family to be working picking crops?</td>
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## Farmworker Interview # 30
### Case # 30

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<td>7  Speak English</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Fresh corn and tomatoes</td>
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<td>(9,000)</td>
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<td>19 Send remittances to Mexico</td>
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<tr>
<td>20 Monthly remittances</td>
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<td>21 Registered to vote in the US</td>
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<tr>
<td>22 Owner of house</td>
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<td>(0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 Do you live in an apartment or labor camp?</td>
<td>Labor camp</td>
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<td>24 How much do you pay for rent?</td>
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<td>(300)</td>
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<tr>
<td>25 Medical insurance and labor benefits</td>
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<td>26 Previously interviewed by any government agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>28 Do you own a car or truck?</td>
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<td>29 Do you have bank savings?</td>
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<tr>
<td>30 Would you like your family to be working picking crops?</td>
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<tr>
<td>31 Do you want to return to your country</td>
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## Farmworker Interview # 31
### Case # 31

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<td>7 Speak English</td>
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<td>12 Main reason to leave your country</td>
<td>Legal problems</td>
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<td>15 Wages in the corridor</td>
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<td>16 Place of work after corridor season</td>
<td>Stay in corridor area</td>
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<td>17 Main activity after corridor season</td>
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<tr>
<td>23 Do you live in an apartment or labor camp ?</td>
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<tr>
<td>24 How much do you pay for rent?</td>
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<td>17 Main activity after corridor season</td>
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## APPENDIX E

**Interview Guide: Second Set of Interviews**

**Name of Interviewer:** ________________________________________________

**Date:** ___________________ **Location of Interview:** ________________

### Worker Profile

1. **Country:**
   - [ ] México
   - [ ] Guatemala
   - [ ] Other

2. **State:** ________________________________

3. **Age:** ________________________________

4. **Marital status:**
   - [ ] Single
   - [ ] Married

5. **Family Size:**
   - ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________
   (children ages)

6. **Years of formal education (grades):**
   - [ ] None
   - [ ] 6th – 9th
   - [ ] 10th - 12th

7. **Speak English:**
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No

8. **Agricultural job in country of origin:**
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No

9. **Years of experience as a farmworker:** _______________
   - [ ] Less than 10 years
   - [ ] More than 10 years

10. **Year of arrival at Corridor:** ____________________________ (year)
    - [ ] Before 2005
    - [ ] After 2005

11. **Travel expenses to get to South Florida:**
    - ________________________ ($)

12. **Main reason for leaving your country:**
    - [ ] In search of a job
    - [ ] Looking for a better life
    - [ ] Legal problems
    - [ ] Economic opportunities

13. **Place of previous work in the US:**
    - [ ] Texas
    - [ ] North Carolina
    - [ ] California
    - [ ] Alabama
    - [ ] None
    - [ ] Other ____________
14. Main agricultural activity in the Corridor:
   - Tomato
   - Orange
   - Watermelon
   - Lemon
   - Lime
   - Snap Beans
   - Malanga
   - Okra
   - Avocado
   - Mango
   - Fresh corn

15. Wages in the Corridor: $45.00 $55.00 $60.00

16. Place of work after Corridor season:
   - Georgia
   - North Carolina
   - Ohio
   - Florida
   - Stay in corridor
   - Other________

17. Main activity after Corridor:
   - Tomato
   - Beans
   - Orange
   - Blueberry
   - Nursery plant
   - Squash
   - Pickle
   - Construction business
   - Cucumber

18. Combined income:
   - $8,350.00
   - $9,000.00
   - $9,500
   - $10,000.00
   - Other________

19. Send remittances to Mexico: Yes No

20. Monthly remittances:
   - $200.00
   - $250.00
   - $300.00
   - $350.00
   - $400.00
   - $0.00

21. Registered to vote in the US:
   - Yes
   - No

22. Home owner:
   - Yes
   - No

23. Do you live in an apartment or labor camp?
   - Labor camp
   - Apartment
24. How much do you pay for rent?

________________________________________________________

25. Medical insurance and labor benefits?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

26. Previously interviewed by any government agency about labor conditions?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

27. Do you like your agricultural work?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

28. Do you own a car or truck?

☐ No  ☐ Car  ☐ Truck

29. Do you have a bank account?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

30. Would you recommend work picking crops to your family?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

31. Do you want to return to your country?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

32. What is your legal status in the US?

☐ US Citizen  ☐ Permanent resident  ☐ Illegal alien
APPENDIX F

Matrix of Results: Second Set of Interviews

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APPENDIX G

Second Set of Interviews

Name of Interviewer ______________________________________________
Date: ___________________ Location of Interview: _________________________

Worker Profile

1. Country:  ○ México  ● Guatemala  ○ Other

2. State:
   Huehuetenango (Guatemala)

3. Age: _35 years________________________________________

4. Marital status:  ○ Single  ● Married

5. Family size:  9____ 1___  ______  ______  ______  ______
   (children age)

6. Years of formal education (grades)  ○ None  ● 6th – 9th  ○ 10th - 12th

7. Speak English:  ○ Yes  ● No

8. Agricultural job in country of origin:  ○ Yes  ● No

9. Years of experience a farmworker: _11 years____________________
   ○ Less than 10 years  ● More than 10 years

10. Year of arrival at Corridor: _2003_________________________________(year)
    ● Before 2005  ○ After 2005

11. Travel expenses to get South Florida: _$2,000____________________

12. Main reason for leaving your country:
    ○ In search of a job  ● Looking for a better life
    ○ Legal problems  ○ Economic opportunities

13. Place of previous work in the US:
    ○ Texas  ○ North Carolina  ○ California
    ○ Alabama  ● None  Other__________
14. Main agricultural activity in the Corridor
- Tomato
- Orange
- Watermelon
- Lemon
- Lime
- Snap Beans
- Malanga
- Okra
- Avocado
- Mango
- Fresh corn

15. Wages in the Corridor:  
- $45.00
- $55.00
- $60.00

16. Place of work after Corridor season:
- Georgia
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- Florida
- Stay in corridor
- Other

17. Main activity after Corridor
- Tomato
- Beans
- Orange
- Blueberry
- Nursery plant
- Squash
- Pickle
- Construction business
- Cucumber

18. Combined income
- $8,350.00
- $9,000.00
- $9,500
- $10,000.00
- Other

19. Send remittances to Mexico:  
- Yes
- No

20. Monthly remittances:
- $200.00
- $250.00
- $300.00
- $350.00
- $400.00
- $0.00

21. Registered to vote in the U.S?
- Yes
- No

22. Home owner?
- Yes
- No
23. Do you live in apartment or labor camp?
   - Labor camp
   - Apartment

24. How much do you pay for rent?
   - $300

25. Medical insurance and labor benefits?
   - Yes
   - No

26. Previously interviewed by any government agency about labor conditions?
   - Yes
   - No

27. Do you like your agricultural work?
   - Yes
   - No

28. Do you own a car or truck?
   - No
   - Car
   - Truck

29. Do you have bank account?
   - Yes
   - No

30. Would you recommend work picking crops to your family?
   - Yes
   - No

31. Do you want to return to your country?
   - Yes
   - No

32. What is your legal status in the US?
   - US Citizen
   - Permanent resident
   - Illegal alien
Name of Interviewer______________________________________________a02
Date: _______________ Location of Interview: ________________________

Worker Profile
1. Country:  ● México ○ Guatemala ○ Other
2. State:   ________________________________ San Luis Potosi
3. Age:   ____________________________ 30years
4. Marital status: ○ Single ● Married
5. Family size:  6     8     ______     ______     ______
   (children age)
6. Years of formal education (grades) ○ None ○ 6th – 9th ● 10th - 12th
7. Speak English: ● Yes ○ No
8. Agricultural job in country of origin: ● Yes ○ No
9. Years of experience a farmworker: 7years
   ● Less than 10 years ○ More than 10 years
10. Year of arrival at Corridor: 2006 _____________________________(year)
    ○ Before 2005 ● After 2005
11. Travel expenses to get South Florida: $3,000 ______________________ ($)
12. Main reason for leaving your country:
    ● In search of a job ○ Looking for a better life
    ○ Legal problems ○ Economic opportunities
13. Place of previous work in the US:
    ○ Texas ○ North Carolina ○ California
    ○ Alabama ● None Other___________
14. Main agricultural activity in the Corridor

- Tomato
- Orange
- Watermelon
- Lemon
- Lime
- Snap Beans
- Malanga
- Okra
- Avocado
- Mango
- Fresh corn

15. Wages in the Corridor:  
- $45.00  
- $55.00  
- $60.00

16. Place of work after Corridor season:

- Georgia
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- Florida
- Stay in corridor
- Other_________

17. Main activity after Corridor

- Tomato
- Beans
- Orange
- Blueberry
- Nursery plant
- Squash
- Pickle
- Construction business
- Cucumber

18. Combined income

- $8,350.00
- $9,000.00
- $9,500
- $10,000.00
- Other___________

19. Send remittances to Mexico:  
- Yes
- No

20. Monthly remittances:

- $200.00
- $250.00
- $300.00
- $350.00
- $400.00
- $0.00

21. Registered to vote in the U.S?

- Yes
- No

22. Home owner?

- Yes
- No
23. Do you live in apartment or labor camp?
   ○ Labor camp      ● Apartment

24. How much do you pay for rent?

$300

25. Medical insurance and labor benefits?
   ● Yes          ○ No

26. Previously interviewed by any government agency about labor conditions?
   ○ Yes          ● No

27. Do you like your agricultural work?
   ○ Yes          ● No

28. Do you own a car or truck?
   ● No          ○ Car          ○ Truck

29. Do you have bank account?
   ○ Yes          ● No

30. Would you recommend work picking crops to your family?
   ○ Yes          ● No

31. Do you want to return to your country?
   ○ Yes          ● No

32. What is your legal status in the US?
   ● US Citizen   ○ Permanent resident   ○ Illegal alien
Worker Profile

1. Country:  ● México ○ Guatemala ○ Other

2. State:
  ___Puebla___________________________________________

3. Age: __29 years_____________________________________

4. Marital status: ○ Single ● Married

5. Family size: ___6___       ___8___   _______   _______   _______
                (children age)

6. Years of formal education (grades) ○ None ○ 6th – 9th ● 10th - 12th

7. Speak English: ● Yes ○ No

8. Agricultural job in country of origin: ● Yes ○ No

9. Years of experience a farmworker: _5 years__________
                ● Less than 10 years ○ More than 10 years

10. Year of arrival at Corridor: __2005_____________________
                ○ Before 2005 ● After 2005

11. Travel expenses to get South Florida: $2,000_______________ ($)

12. Main reason for leaving your country:
                ● In search of a job ○ Looking for a better life
                ○ Legal problems ● Economic opportunities

13. Place of previous work in the US:
                ○ Texas ○ North Carolina ○ California
                ○ Alabama ● None ○ Other__________
14. Main agricultural activity in the Corridor

- Tomato
- Orange
- Watermelon
- Lemon
- Lime
- Snap Beans
- Malanga
- Okra
- Avocado
- Mango
- Fresh corn

15. Wages in the Corridor:

- $45.00
- $55.00
- $60.00

16. Place of work after Corridor season:

- Georgia
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- Florida
- Stay in corridor
- Other

17. Main activity after Corridor

- Tomato
- Beans
- Orange
- Blueberry
- Nursery plant
- Squash
- Pickle
- Construction business
- Cucumber

18. Combined income

- $8,350.00
- $9,000.00
- $9,500
- $10,000.00
- Other

19. Send remittances to Mexico:

- Yes
- No

20. Monthly remittances:

- $200.00
- $250.00
- $300.00
- $350.00
- $400.00
- $0.00

21. Registered to vote in the U.S?

- Yes
- No

22. Home owner?

- Yes
- No
23. Do you live in apartment or labor camp?
   ○ Labor camp   ● Apartment

24. How much do you pay for rent?
   $300

25. Medical insurance and labor benefits?
   ○ Yes   ● No

26. Previously interviewed by any government agency about labor conditions?
   ● Yes   ○ No

27. Do you like your agricultural work?
   ● Yes   ○ No

28. Do you own a car or truck?
   ○ No   ○ Car   ● Truck

29. Do you have bank account?
   ● Yes   ○ No

30. Would you recommend work picking crops to your family?
   ○ Yes   ● No

31. Do you want to return to your country?
   ● Yes   ○ No

32. What is your legal status in the US?
   ○ US Citizen   ● Permanent resident   ○ Illegal alien
Worker Profile

1. Country:  ● México  ○ Guatemala  ○ Other
2. State:  __Michoacan__________________________
3. Age:  ___23years_____________________________________
4. Marital status:  ● Single  ○ Married
5. Family size:  ________  ________  ________  ________  ________
   (children age)
6. Years of formal education (grades):  ○ None  ○ 6th – 9th  ● 10th - 12th
7. Speak English:  ● Yes  ○ No
8. Agricultural job in country of origin:  ○ Yes  ● No
9. Years of experience a farmworker:  ___4years_________
   ● Less than 10 years  ○ More than 10 years
10. Year of arrival at Corridor:  ___2008_____________________________(year)
    ○ Before 2005  ● After 2005
11. Travel expenses to get South Florida:  _$2,500____________________
12. Main reason for leaving your country:
   ○ In search of a job  ○ Looking for a better life
   ○ Legal problems  ● Economic opportunities
13. Place of previous work in the US:
    ○ Texas  ○ North Carolina  ○ California
    ○ Alabama  ● None  Other__________
14. Main agricultural activity in the Corridor

- Tomato
- Orange
- Watermelon
- Lemon
- Lime
- Snap Beans
- Malanga
- Okra
- Avocado
- Mango
- Fresh corn

15. Wages in the Corridor: $45.00 $55.00 $60.00

16. Place of work after Corridor season:

- Georgia
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- Florida
- Stay in corridor
- Other

17. Main activity after Corridor

- Tomato
- Beans
- Orange
- Blueberry
- Nursery plant
- Squash
- Pickle
- Construction business
- Cucumber

18. Combined income

- $8,350.00
- $9,000.00
- $9,500
- $10,000.00
- Other

19. Send remittances to Mexico:

- Yes
- No

20. Monthly remittances:

- $200.00
- $250.00
- $300.00
- $350.00
- $400.00
- $0.00

21. Registered to vote in the U.S?

- Yes
- No

22. Home owner?

- Yes
- No
23. Do you live in apartment or labor camp?
   - Labor camp
   - Apartment

24. How much do you pay for rent?
   - $300

25. Medical insurance and labor benefits?
   - Yes
   - No

26. Previously interviewed by any government agency about labor conditions?
   - Yes
   - No

27. Do you like your agricultural work?
   - Yes
   - No

28. Do you own a car or truck?
   - No
   - Car
   - Truck

29. Do you have bank account?
   - Yes
   - No

30. Would you recommend work picking crops to your family?
   - Yes
   - No

31. Do you want to return to your country?
   - Yes
   - No

32. What is your legal status in the US?
   - US Citizen
   - Permanent resident
   - Illegal alien
Name of Interviewer: ____________________________________________

Date: __________________ Location of Interview: ____________________

Worker Profile

1. Country: ● México ○ Guatemala ○ Other
2. State: ____________________________ Michoacan
3. Age: __________________________ 37 years
4. Marital status: ○ Single ● Married
5. Family size: __5_____ __7_____ _______ _______ _______
   (children age)
6. Years of formal education (grades) ○ None ● 6th – 9th ○ 10th - 12th
7. Speak English: ○ Yes ● No
8. Agricultural job in country of origin: ○ Yes ● No
9. Years of experience a farmworker: ___8 years ______________
   ● Less than 10 years ○ More than 10 years
10. Year of arrival at Corridor: __2007____________________________
    ○ Before 2005 ● After 2005
11. Travel expenses to get South Florida: __3,000_______________ ($)
12. Main reason for leaving your country:
   ○ In search of a job ● Looking for a better life
   ○ Legal problems ○ Economic opportunities
13. Place of previous work in the US:
   ○ Texas ○ North Carolina ○ California
   ○ Alabama ● None Other___________
14. Main agricultural activity in the Corridor

- Tomato
- Orange
- Watermelon
- Lemon
- Lime
- Snap Beans
- Malanga
- Okra
- Avocado
- Mango
- Fresh corn

15. Wages in the Corridor:
- $45.00
- $55.00
- $60.00

16. Place of work after Corridor season:
- Georgia
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- Florida
- Stay in corridor
- Other

17. Main activity after Corridor

- Tomato
- Beans
- Orange
- Blueberry
- Nursery plant
- Squash
- Pickle
- Construction business
- Cucumber

18. Combined income

- $8,350.00
- $9,000.00
- $9,500
- $10,000.00
- Other

19. Send remittances to Mexico:
- Yes
- No

20. Monthly remittances:

- $200.00
- $250.00
- $300.00
- $350.00
- $400.00
- $0.00

21. Registered to vote in the U.S?

- Yes
- No

22. Home owner?

- Yes
- No
23. Do you live in apartment or labor camp?
   ○ Labor camp  ● Apartment

24. How much do you pay for rent?
   $300

25. Medical insurance and labor benefits?
   ○ Yes  ● No

26. Previously interviewed by any government agency about labor conditions?
   ● Yes  ○ No

27. Do you like your agricultural work?
   ○ Yes  ● No

28. Do you own a car or truck?
   ● No  ○ Car  ○ Truck

29. Do you have bank account?
   ○ Yes  ● No

30. Would you recommend work picking crops to your family?
   ○ Yes  ● No

31. Do you want to return to your country?
   ○ Yes  ● No

32. What is your legal status in the US?
   ○  ○  ●
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<th>Permanent resident</th>
<th>Illegal alien</th>
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</thead>
</table>

Name of Interviewer: ________________________________

Date: __________________ Location of Interview: ____________________

Worker Profile

1. Country:  ● México  ○ Guatemala  ○ Other

2. State:  ____________________________

3. Age:  ___________  47 years

4. Marital status:  ○ Single  ● Married

5. Family size:  1  16  ______  ______  ______  ______

   (children age)

6. Years of formal education (grades)  ○ None  ● 6th – 9th  ○ 10th - 12th

7. Speak English:  ● Yes  ○ No

8. Agricultural job in country of origin:  ● Yes  ○ No

9. Years of experience a farmworker:  ___________  15 years

   ○ Less than 10 years  ● More than 10 years

10. Year of arrival at Corridor:  ___________  1999 (year)

   ○ Before 2005  ○ After 2005

11. Travel expenses to get South Florida:  ___________  $1,500 ($)

12. Main reason for leaving your country:

   ● In search of a job  ○ Looking for a better life

   ○ Legal problems  ○ Economic opportunities

13. Place of previous work in the US:

   ● Texas  ○ North Carolina  ○ California

   ○ Alabama  ○ None  ○ Other ___________
14. Main agricultural activity in the Corridor

- Tomato
- Orange
- Watermelon
- Lemon
- Lime
- Snap Beans
- Malanga
- Okra
- Avocado
- Mango
- Fresh corn

15. Wages in the Corridor:  
- $45.00
- $55.00
- $60.00

16. Place of work after Corridor season:  
- Georgia
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- Florida
- Stay in corridor
- Other_________

17. Main activity after Corridor

- Tomato
- Beans
- Orange
- Blueberry
- Nursery plant
- Squash
- Pickle
- Construction business
- Cucumber

18. Combined income

- $8,350.00
- $9,000.00
- $9,500
- $10,000.00
- Other_________

19. Send remittances to Mexico:  
- Yes
- No

20. Monthly remittances:  
- $200.00
- $250.00
- $300.00
- $350.00
- $400.00
- Other_________

21. Registered to vote in the US?

- Yes
- No

22. Home owner?

- Yes
- No
23. Do you live in apartment or labor camp?
   ○ Labor camp       ● Apartment

24. How much do you pay for rent?
   $300

25. Medical insurance and labor benefits?
   ○ Yes       ● No

26. Previously interviewed by any government agency about labor conditions?
   ○ Yes       ● No

27. Do you like your agricultural work?
   ● Yes       ○ No

28. Do you own a car or truck?
   ● No       ○ Car       ○ Truck

29. Do you have bank account?
   ○ Yes       ● No

30. Would you recommend work picking crops to your family?
   ○ Yes       ● No

31. Do you want to return to your country?
   ● Yes       ○ No

32. What is your legal status in the US?
   ● US Citizen       ○ Permanent resident       ○ Illegal alien
Worker Profile

1. Country:  ● México  ○ Guatemala  ○ Other

2. State:  ___Puebla__

3. Age:  ___36years__

4. Marital status:  ○ Single  ● Married

5. Family size:  7  1  _____  _____  _____  _____

6. Years of formal education (grades)  ○ None  ● 6th – 9th  ○ 10th - 12th

7. Speak English:  ○ Yes  ● No

8. Agricultural job in country of origin:  ● Yes  ○ No

9. Years of experience a farmworker:  ___4years___

   ● Less than 10 years  ○ More than 10 years

10. Year of arrival at Corridor:  2007 (year)

   ○ Before 2005  ● After 2005

11. Travel expenses to get South Florida:  ___$1,500___ ($)

12. Main reason for leaving your country:

   ● In search of a job  ○ Looking for a better life

   ○ Legal problems  ○ Economic opportunities

13. Place of previous work in the US:

   ○ Texas  ● North Carolina  ○ California

   ○ Alabama  ○ None  ● Other_________
14. Main agricultural activity in the Corridor
- Tomato  ○ Orange  ○ Watermelon
- Lemon  ○ Lime  ○ Snap Beans
- Malanga  ○ Okra  ○ Avocado
- Mango  ○ Fresh corn

15. Wages in the Corridor:  ○ $45.00  ● $55.00  ○ $60.00

16. Place of work after Corridor season:
- Georgia  ○ North Carolina  ○ Ohio
- Florida  ● Stay in corridor  ○ Other________

17. Main activity after Corridor
- Tomato  ○ Beans  ● Orange
- Blueberry  ● Nursery plant  ○ Squash
- Pickle  ○ Construction business  ○ Cucumber

18. Combined income
- $8,350.00  ○ $9,000.00  ● $9,500
- $10,000.00  ○ Other________

19. Send remittances to Mexico:  ● Yes  ○ No

20. Monthly remittances:
- $200.00  ○ $250.00  ● $300.00
- $350.00  ○ $400.00  ○ $0.00

21. Registered to vote in the U.S?
- Yes  ● No

22. Home owner?
- Yes  ● No
23. Do you live in apartment or labor camp?
   ● Labor camp   ○ Apartment

24. How much do you pay for rent?
   $300

25. Medical insurance and labor benefits?
   ○ Yes   ● No

26. Previously interviewed by any government agency about labor conditions?
   ○ Yes   ● No

27. Do you like your agricultural work?
   ● Yes   ○ No

28. Do you own a car or truck?
   ● No   ○ Car   ○ Truck

29. Do you have bank account?
   ● Yes   ○ No

30. Would you recommend work picking crops to your family?
   ○ Yes   ● No

31. Do you want to return to your country?
   ● Yes   No ○

32. What is your legal status in the US?
   ○ US Citizen   ○ Permanent resident   ● Illegal alien
Name of Interviewer______________________________________________a08
Date: __________________ Location of Interview:_______________________

Worker Profile

1. Country:  ● México  ○ Guatemala  ○ Other

2. State:  Michoacan

3. Age:  39years

4. Marital status:  ○ Single  ● Married

5. Family size:  ___8_____    ________   ________   ________   _________
   (children age)

6. Years of formal education (grades)  ○ None  ● 6th – 9th  ○ 10th - 12th

7. Speak English:  ● Yes  ○ No

8. Agricultural job in country of origin:  ● Yes  ○ No

9. Years of experience a farmworker:  10years
   ○ Less than 10 years  ● More than 10 years

10. Year of arrival at Corridor:  2003(year)
    ○ Before 2005  ○ After 2005

11. Travel expenses to get South Florida:  $1,500 ($)

12. Main reason for leaving your country:
    ● In search of a job  ○ Looking for a better life
    ○ Legal problems  ○ Economic opportunities

13. Place of previous work in the US:
    ● Texas  ○ North Carolina  ○ California
    ○ Alabama  ○ None  Other________
14. Main agricultural activity in the Corridor

- Tomato
- Orange
- Watermelon
- Lemon
- Lime
- Snap Beans
- Malanga
- Okra
- Avocado
- Mango
- Fresh corn

15. Wages in the Corridor:  ○ $45.00  ● $55.00  ○ $60.00

16. Place of work after Corridor season:

- Georgia
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- Florida
- Stay in corridor
- Other_________

17. Main activity after Corridor

- Tomato
- Beans
- Orange
- Blueberry
- Nursery plant
- Squash
- Pickle
- Construction business
- Cucumber

18. Combined income

- $8,350.00
- $9,000.00
- $9,500
- $10,000.00
- Other_________

19. Send remittances to Mexico:  ● Yes  ○ No

20. Monthly remittances:

- $200.00
- $250.00
- $300.00
- $350.00
- $400.00
- $0.00

21. Registered to vote in the U.S?

- Yes  ● No

22. Home owner?

- Yes  ● No
23. Do you live in apartment or labor camp?
   ○ Labor camp   ● Apartment

24. How much do you pay for rent?
   $300

25. Medical insurance and labor benefits?
   ○ Yes   ● No

26. Previously interviewed by any government agency about labor conditions?
   ○ Yes   ● No

27. Do you like your agricultural work?
   ● Yes   ○ No

28. Do you own a car or truck?
   ○ No   ○ Car   ● Truck

29. Do you have bank account?
   ● Yes   ○ No

30. Would you recommend work picking crops to your family?
   ○ Yes   ● No

31. Do you want to return to your country?
   ● Yes   ○ No

32. What is your legal status in the US?
   ● US Citizen   ○ Permanent resident   ○ Illegal alien
Worker Profile

1. Country:  
   - México ✓
   - Guatemala ○
   - Other ○

2. State:  
   - Michoacan

3. Age:  
   - 28 years

4. Marital status:  
   - Single ✓
   - Married ○

5. Family size:  
   - 0

6. Years of formal education (grades):  
   - None ○
   - 6th – 9th ●
   - 10th - 12th ○

7. Speak English:  
   - Yes ●
   - No ○

8. Agricultural job in country of origin:  
   - Yes ●
   - No ○

9. Years of experience a farmworker:  
   - 10 years ○
   - Less than 10 years ○
   - More than 10 years ●

10. Year of arrival at Corridor:  
    - 2006 (year)
    - Before 2005 ○
    - After 2005 ●

11. Travel expenses to get South Florida:  
    - $1,500 ($)

12. Main reason for leaving your country:  
    - In search of a job ●
    - Looking for a better life ○
    - Legal problems ○
    - Economic opportunities ○

13. Place of previous work in the US:  
    - Texas ○
    - North Carolina ○
    - California ○
    - Alabama ●
    - None ○
    - Other ○
14. Main agricultural activity in the Corridor
- Tomato
- Orange
- Watermelon
- Lemon
- Lime
- Snap Beans
- Malanga
- Okra
- Avocado
- Mango
- Fresh corn

15. Wages in the Corridor:  
- $45.00
- $55.00
- $60.00

16. Place of work after Corridor season:
- Georgia
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- Florida
- Stay in corridor
- Other________

17. Main activity after Corridor
- Tomato
- Beans
- Orange
- Blueberry
- Nursery plant
- Squash
- Pickle
- Construction business
- Cucumber

18. Combined income
- $8,350.00
- $9,000.00
- $9,500
- $10,000.00
- Other________

19. Send remittances to Mexico:  
- Yes
- No

20. Monthly remittances:
- $200.00
- $250.00
- $300.00
- $350.00
- $400.00
- $0.00

21. Registered to vote in the U.S?
- Yes
- No

22. Home owner?
- Yes
- No
23. Do you live in apartment or labor camp?
   - Labor camp
   - Apartment

24. How much do you pay for rent?
   - $300

25. Medical insurance and labor benefits?
   - Yes
   - No

26. Previously interviewed by any government agency about labor conditions?
   - Yes
   - No

27. Do you like your agricultural work?
   - Yes
   - No

28. Do you own a car or truck?
   - No
   - Car
   - Truck

29. Do you have bank account?
   - Yes
   - No

30. Would you recommend work picking crops to your family?
   - Yes
   - No

31. Do you want to return to your country?
   - Yes
   - No

32. What is your legal status in the US?
   - US Citizen
   - Permanent resident
   - Illegal alien
Worker Profile

1. Country:  ● México  ○ Guatemala  ○ Other
2. State:  __Queretaro______________________________
3. Age:  __29years______________________________
4. Marital status:  ● Single  ○ Married
5. Family size:  ___0_____     ________   ________   ________   _________
               (children age)
6. Years of formal education (grades)  ○ None  ● 6th – 9th  ○ 10th - 12th
7. Speak English:  ● Yes  ○ No
8. Agricultural job in country of origin:  ● Yes  ○ No
9. Years of experience a farmworker:  ___4years___________
               ● Less than 10 years  ○ More than 10 years
10. Year of arrival at Corridor:  __2008______________________________ (year)
                ○ Before 2005  ●  After 2005
11. Travel expenses to get South Florida:  __$1,800___________________ ($)
12. Main reason for leaving your country:
               ● In search of a job  ○ Looking for a better life
               ○ Legal problems  ○ Economic opportunities
13. Place of previous work in the US:
              ○ Texas  ○ North Carolina  ● California
              ○ Alabama  ○ None  ○ Other___________
14. Main agricultural activity in the Corridor
   ○ Tomato  ○ Orange  ○ Watermelon
   ○ Lemon  ○ Lime  ○ Snap Beans
   ● Malanga  ○ Okra  ○ Avocado
   ○ Mango  ○ Fresh corn

15. Wages in the Corridor:  ● $45.00  ○ $55.00  ○ $60.00

16. Place of work after Corridor season:
   ○ Georgia  ○ North Carolina  ○ Ohio
   ○ Florida  ● Stay in corridor  Other_________

17. Main activity after Corridor
   ○ Tomato  ○ Beans  ● Orange
   ○ Blueberry  ○ Nursery plant  ○ Squash
   ○ Pickle  ○ Construction business  ○ Cucumber

18. Combined income
   ● $8,350.00  ○ $9,000.00  ○ $9,500
   ○ $10,000.00  ○ Other_________

19. Send remittances to Mexico:  ● Yes  ○ No

20. Monthly remittances:
   ○ $200.00  ○ $250.00  ○ $300.00
   ● $350.00  ○ $400.00  ○ $0.00

21. Registered to vote in the U.S?
   ○ Yes  ● No

22. Home owner?
   ○ Yes  ● No
23. Do you live in apartment or labor camp?
   ○ Labor camp  ● Apartment

24. How much do you pay for rent?
   $300

25. Medical insurance and labor benefits?
   ○ Yes  ● No

26. Previously interviewed by any government agency about labor conditions?
   ○ Yes  ● No

27. Do you like your agricultural work?
   ● Yes  ○ No

28. Do you own a car or truck?
   ○ No  ● Car  ○ Truck

29. Do you have bank account?
   ● Yes  ○ No

30. Would you recommend work picking crops to your family?
   ○ Yes  ● No

31. Do you want to return to your country?
   ● Yes  ○ No

32. What is your legal status in the US?
   ○  ○  ●
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>US Citizen</th>
<th>Permanent resident</th>
<th>Illegal alien</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Name of Interviewer: ________________________________
Date: __________________ Location of Interview: __________________

Worker Profile

1. Country:  
- México
- Guatemala
- Other

2. State: _______________________

3. Age:  
- 31 years

4. Marital status:  
- Single
- Married

5. Family size:  
- 0

6. Years of formal education (grades):  
- None
- 6th – 9th
- 10th – 12th

7. Speak English:  
- Yes
- No

8. Agricultural job in country of origin:  
- Yes
- No

9. Years of experience a farmworker:  
- 5 years

10. Year of arrival at Corridor:  
- 2006

11. Travel expenses to get South Florida:  
- $1,800

12. Main reason for leaving your country:  
- In search of a job
- Looking for a better life
- Legal problems
- Economic opportunities

13. Place of previous work in the US:  
- Texas
- North Carolina
- California
- Alabama
- None
- Other
14. Main agricultural activity in the Corridor
- Tomato
- Orange
- Watermelon
- Lemon
- Lime
- Snap Beans
- Malanga
- Okra
- Avocado
- Mango
- Fresh corn

15. Wages in the Corridor:  ○ $45.00  ● $55.00  ○ $60.00

16. Place of work after Corridor season:
- ○ Georgia
- ○ North Carolina
- ○ Ohio
- ○ Florida
- ● Stay in corridor
- Other_________

17. Main activity after Corridor
- Tomato
- Beans
- Orange
- Blueberry
- Nursery plant
- Squash
- Pickle
- Construction business
- Cucumber

18. Combined income
- ○ $8,350.00
- ● $9,000.00
- ○ $9,500
- ○ $10,000.00
- ○ Other_________

19. Send remittances to Mexico:  ● Yes  ○ No

20. Monthly remittances:
- ○ $200.00
- ● $250.00
- ○ $300.00
- ○ $350.00
- ○ $400.00
- ○ $0.00

21. Registered to vote in the U.S?
- ○ Yes  ● No

22. Home owner?
- ○ Yes  ● No
23. Do you live in apartment or labor camp?
   ○ Labor camp   ● Apartment

24. How much do you pay for rent?
   $300

25. Medical insurance and labor benefits?
   ○ Yes   ● No

26. Previously interviewed by any government agency about labor conditions?
   ○ Yes   ● No

27. Do you like your agricultural work?
   ● Yes   ○ No

28. Do you own a car or truck?
   ○ No   ● Car   ○ Truck

29. Do you have bank account?
   ○ Yes   ● No

30. Would you recommend work picking crops to your family?
   ○ Yes   ● No

31. Do you want to return to your country?
   ● Yes   ○ No

32. What is your legal status in the US?
   ○ US Citizen   ○ Permanent resident   ● Illegal alien
Worker Profile

1. Country:  ● México  ○ Guatemala  ○ Other

2. State:  ___Oaxaca______________________________________________

3. Age:  ___36years_____________________________________________

4. Marital status:  ○ Single  ● Married

5. Family size:  2  1  _____  _____  _____  _____  _____  
   (children age)

6. Years of formal education (grades)  ● None  ○ 6th – 9th  ○ 10th - 12th

7. Speak English:  ● Yes  ○ No

8. Agricultural job in country of origin:  ● Yes  ○ No

9. Years of experience a farmworker:  ___11years__________
   ○ Less than 10 years  ● More than 10 years

10. Year of arrival at Corridor:  ___2000____________________________(year)
    ● Before 2005  ○ After 2005

11. Travel expenses to get South Florida:  ___$1,800____________________($)

12. Main reason for leaving your country:
    ● In search of a job  ○ Looking for a better life
    ○ Legal problems  ○ Economic opportunities

13. Place of previous work in the US:
    ● Texas  ○ North Carolina  ○ California
    ○ Alabama  ○ None  Other___________
14. Main agricultural activity in the Corridor

- Tomato
- Orange
- Watermelon
- Lemon
- Lime
- Snap Beans
- Malanga
- Okra
- Avocado
- Mango
- Fresh corn

15. Wages in the Corridor: $45.00 $55.00 $60.00

16. Place of work after Corridor season:

- Georgia
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- Florida
- Stay in corridor
- Other________

17. Main activity after Corridor

- Tomato
- Beans
- Orange
- Blueberry
- Nursery plant
- Squash
- Pickle
- Construction business
- Cucumber

18. Combined income

- $8,350.00 $9,000.00 $9,500
- $10,000.00 Other________

19. Send remittances to Mexico: Yes No

20. Monthly remittances:

- $200.00 $250.00 $300.00
- $350.00 $400.00 $0.00

21. Registered to vote in the U.S?

- Yes No

22. Home owner?

- Yes No
23. Do you live in apartment or labor camp?
   - Labor camp
   - Apartment

24. How much do you pay for rent?
   - $300

25. Medical insurance and labor benefits?
   - Yes
   - No

26. Previously interviewed by any government agency about labor conditions?
   - Yes
   - No

27. Do you like your agricultural work?
   - Yes
   - No

28. Do you own a car or truck?
   - No
   - Car
   - Truck

29. Do you have bank account?
   - Yes
   - No

30. Would you recommend work picking crops to your family?
   - Yes
   - No

31. Do you want to return to your country?
   - Yes
   - No

32. What is your legal status in the US?
   -
US Citizen                          Permanent resident                Illegal alien

Name of Interviewer______________________________________________a13
Date: ___________________Location of Interview:_______________________

Worker Profile

1. Country:  ● México          ○ Guatemala          ○ Other

2. State:
    ___Michoacán____________________________________________

3. Age:
    28 years

4. Marital status:  ○ Single          ● Married

5. Family size:  ___4____     _____   _____   _____   _______
     (children age)

6. Years of formal education (grades)  ○ None          ● 6th – 9th          ○ 10th - 12th

7. Speak English:  ● Yes          ○ No

8. Agricultural job in country of origin:  ● Yes          ○ No

9. Years of experience a farmworker:  4 years
    ● Less than 10 years          ○ More than 10 years

10. Year of arrival at Corridor:  2007(year)
    ○ Before 2005          ● After 2005

11. Travel expenses to get South Florida:  $1,500($)

12. Main reason for leaving your country:
    ● In search of a job          ○ Looking for a better life
    ○ Legal problems          ○ Economic opportunities

13. Place of previous work in the US:
    ● Texas          ○ North Carolina          ○ California
    ○ Alabama          ○ None          Other___________
14. Main agricultural activity in the Corridor

- Tomato
- Orange
- Watermelon
- Lemon
- Lime
- Snap Beans
- Malanga
- Okra
- Avocado
- Mango
- Fresh corn

15. Wages in the Corridor: $45.00, $55.00, $60.00

16. Place of work after Corridor season:

- Georgia
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- Florida
- Stay in corridor
- Other: 

17. Main activity after Corridor

- Tomato
- Beans
- Orange
- Blueberry
- Nursery plant
- Squash
- Pickle
- Construction business
- Cucumber

18. Combined income

- $8,350.00
- $9,000.00
- $9,500
- $10,000.00
- Other: 

19. Send remittances to Mexico: Yes, No

20. Monthly remittances:

- $200.00
- $250.00
- $300.00
- $350.00
- $400.00
- $0.00

21. Registered to vote in the U.S?

- Yes
- No

22. Home owner?

- Yes
- No
23. Do you live in apartment or labor camp?
   ○ Labor camp  ● Apartment

24. How much do you pay for rent?
   $300

25. Medical insurance and labor benefits?
   ○ Yes  ● No

26. Previously interviewed by any government agency about labor conditions?
   ○ Yes  ● No

27. Do you like your agricultural work?
   ● Yes  ○ No

28. Do you own a car or truck?
   ○ No  ○ Car  ● Truck

29. Do you have bank account?
   ○ Yes  ● No

30. Would you recommend work picking crops to your family?
   ○ Yes  ● No

31. Do you want to return to your country?
   ● Yes  ○ No

32. What is your legal status in the US?
   ○ US Citizen  ○ Permanent resident  ● Illegal alien
Name of Interviewer: _____________________________________________
Date: ___________________ Location of Interview: _____________________

Worker Profile

1. Country:  ● México ○ Guatemala ○ Other

2. State: _______________ Oaxaca

3. Age:  __36 years__

4. Marital status:  ● Single ○ Married

5. Family size:  ___0______  _______  _______  _______  _______
   (children age)

6. Years of formal education (grades)  ● None ○ 6th – 9th ○ 10th - 12th

7. Speak English:  ● Yes ○ No

8. Agricultural job in country of origin:  ● Yes ○ No

9. Years of experience a farmworker:  ___10 years_____
   ○ Less than 10 years  ● More than 10 years

10. Year of arrival at Corridor:  ___2006___________________________ (year)
    ○ Before 2005  ● After 2005

11. Travel expenses to get South Florida:  __$2,500_________________

12. Main reason for leaving your country:
    ○ In search of a job  ● Looking for a better life
    ○ Legal problems  ● Economic opportunities

13. Place of previous work in the US:
    ○ Texas ○ North Carolina ○ California
    ○ Alabama  ● None  Other___________
14. Main agricultural activity in the Corridor
- Tomato
- Orange
- Watermelon
- Lemon
- Lime
- Snap Beans
- Malanga
- Okra
- Avocado
- Mango
- Fresh corn

15. Wages in the Corridor:  ● $45.00  ○ $55.00  ○ $60.00

16. Place of work after Corridor season:
- Georgia
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- Florida
- Stay in corridor
- Other________

17. Main activity after Corridor
- Tomato
- Beans
- Orange
- Blueberry
- Nursery plant
- Squash
- Pickle
- Construction business
- Cucumber

18. Combined income
- $8,350.00
- $9,000.00
- $9,500
- $10,000.00
- Other____________

19. Send remittances to Mexico:  ● Yes  ○ No

20. Monthly remittances:
- $200.00
- $250.00
- $300.00
- $350.00
- $400.00
- $0.00

21. Registered to vote in the US?
- Yes
- No

22. Home owner?
- Yes
- No
23. Do you live in apartment or labor camp?
   - Labor camp
   - Apartment

24. How much do you pay for rent?
   - $300

25. Medical insurance and labor benefits?
   - Yes
   - No

26. Previously interviewed by any government agency about labor conditions?
   - Yes
   - No

27. Do you like your agricultural work?
   - Yes
   - No

28. Do you own a car or truck?
   - No
   - Car
   - Truck

29. Do you have bank account?
   - Yes
   - No

30. Would you recommend work picking crops to your family?
   - Yes
   - No

31. Do you want to return to your country?
   - Yes
   - No

32. What is your legal status in the US?
   - US Citizen
   - Permanent resident
   - Illegal alien
Name of Interviewer______________________________________________a15
Date: ___________________Location of Interview:_______________________

Worker Profile

1. Country:  ● México ○ Guatemala ○ Other

2. State: ○ Oaxaca

3. Age: 38 years

4. Marital status: ○ Single ● Married

5. Family size: 12 (children age)

6. Years of formal education (grades) ○ None ● 6th – 9th ○ 10th - 12th

7. Speak English: ○ Yes ● No

8. Agricultural job in country of origin: ● Yes ○ No

9. Years of experience a farmworker: 15 years

10. Year of arrival at Corridor: 2000 (year)

11. Travel expenses to get South Florida: $3,000 ($) (year)

12. Main reason for leaving your country:

- ○ In search of a job ● Looking for a better life
- ○ Legal problems ○ Economic opportunities

13. Place of previous work in the US:

- ○ Texas ○ North Carolina ○ California
- ○ Alabama ● None ○ Other___________
14. Main agricultural activity in the Corridor

- [ ] Tomato
- [ ] Orange
- [ ] Watermelon
- [ ] Lemon
- [ ] Lime
- [ ] Snap Beans
- [ ] Malanga
- [ ] Okra
- [ ] Avocado
- [ ] Mango
- [ ] Fresh corn

15. Wages in the Corridor:  
- [ ] $45.00  
- [ ] $55.00  
- [ ] $60.00

16. Place of work after Corridor season:

- [ ] Georgia
- [ ] North Carolina
- [ ] Ohio
- [ ] Florida
- [ ] Stay in corridor
- [ ] Other_________

17. Main activity after Corridor

- [ ] Tomato
- [ ] Beans
- [ ] Orange
- [ ] Blueberry
- [ ] Nursery plant
- [ ] Squash
- [ ] Pickle
- [ ] Construction business
- [ ] Cucumber

18. Combined income

- [ ] $8,350.00
- [ ] $9,000.00
- [ ] $9,500
- [ ] $10,000.00
- [ ] Other_________

19. Send remittances to Mexico:  
- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

20. Monthly remittances:

- [ ] $200.00
- [ ] $250.00
- [ ] $300.00
- [ ] $350.00
- [ ] $400.00
- [ ] $0.00

21. Registered to vote in the U.S?  
- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

22. Home owner?  
- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
23. Do you live in apartment or labor camp?
   - Labor camp
   - Apartment

24. How much do you pay for rent?
   - $300

25. Medical insurance and labor benefits?
   - Yes
   - No

26. Previously interviewed by any government agency about labor conditions?
   - Yes
   - No

27. Do you like your agricultural work?
   - Yes
   - No

28. Do you own a car or truck?
   - No
   - Car
   - Truck

29. Do you have bank account?
   - Yes
   - No

30. Would you recommend work picking crops to your family?
   - Yes
   - No

31. Do you want to return to your country?
   - Yes
   - No

32. What is your legal status in the US?
   - US Citizen
   - Permanent resident
   - Illegal alien
Name of Interviewer: ____________________________________________
Date: __________________ Location of Interview: _______________________

Worker Profile

1. Country:  ● México  ○ Guatemala  ○ Other

2. State:  ________________________________________________________

3. Age:  ______________________________

4. Marital status:  ○ Single  ● Married

5. Family Size:  ___11_____  ___16____  ________  ________  _________ (children ages)

6. Years of formal education (grades)  ○ None  ● 6th – 9th  ○ 10th - 12th

7. Speak English:  ○ Yes  ● No

8. Agricultural job in country of origin:  ● Yes  ○ No

9. Years of experience as a farmworker:  ___10years____________
   ○ Less than 10 years  ● More than 10 years

10. Year of arrival at Corridor:  _______2002___________________________(year)
    ○ Before 2005  ○ After 2005

11. Travel expenses to get to South Florida:  _______$2000______________ ($)

12. Main reason for leaving your country:
    ● In search of a job  ○ Looking for a better life
    ○ Legal problems  ○ Economic opportunities

13. Place of previous work in the US:
    ○ Texas  ○ North Carolina  ○ California
    ○ Alabama  ● None  ○ Other___________
14. Main agricultural activity in the Corridor:

- Tomato
- Orange
- Watermelon
- Lemon
- Lime
- Snap Beans
- Malanga
- Okra
- Avocado
- Mango
- Fresh corn

15. Wages in the Corridor:  
- $45.00
- $55.00
- $60.00

16. Place of work after Corridor season:

- Georgia
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- Florida
- Stay in corridor
- Other________

17. Main activity after Corridor:

- Tomato
- Beans
- Orange
- Blueberry
- Nursery plant
- Squash
- Pickle
- Construction business
- Cucumber

18. Combined income:

- $8,350.00
- $9,000.00
- $9,500
- $10,000.00
- Other________

19. Send remittances to Mexico:  
- Yes
- No

20. Monthly remittances:

- $200.00
- $250.00
- $300.00
- $350.00
- $400.00
- $0.00

21. Registered to vote in the US:

- Yes
- No

22. Home owner:

- Yes
- No
23. Do you live in an apartment or labor camp?
   ○ Labor camp   ● Apartment

24. How much do you pay for rent?
   $300

25. Medical insurance and labor benefits?
   ○ Yes   ● No

26. Previously interviewed by any government agency about labor conditions?
   ○ Yes   ● No

27. Do you like your agricultural work?
   ● Yes   ○ No

28. Do you own a car or truck?
   ● No   ○ Car   ○ Truck

29. Do you have a bank account?
   ○ Yes   ● No

30. Would you recommend work picking crops to your family?
   ○ Yes   ● No

31. Do you want to return to your country?
   ○ Yes   ● No

32. What is your legal status in the US?
   ○ US Citizen   ○ Permanent resident   ● Illegal alien
Name of Interviewer: _____________________________________________ a17
Date: ___________________ Location of Interview: ____________________________

Worker Profile

1. Country:  ● México  ○ Guatemala  ○ Other

2. State:  ______________________________________________________
          Oaxaca

3. Age:  38 years

4. Marital status:  ○ Single  ● Married

5. Family Size:  __7____  __8____  __15____  ________  _________
                  (children ages)

6. Years of formal education (grades)  ○ None  ● 6th – 9th  ○ 10th - 12th

7. Speak English:  ○ Yes  ● No

8. Agricultural job in country of origin:  ● Yes  ○ No

9. Years of experience as a farmworker:  11 years
     ○ Less than 10 years  ● More than 10 years

10. Year of arrival at Corridor:  2004 (year)
     ● Before 2005  ○ After 2005

11. Travel expenses to get to South Florida:  $3000 ($)

12. Main reason for leaving your country:
     ● In search of a job  ○ Looking for a better life
     ○ Legal problems  ○ Economic opportunities

13. Place of previous work in the US:
     ○ Texas  ○ North Carolina  ○ California
     ○ Alabama  ● None
     ○ Other _____________
14. Main agricultural activity in the Corridor:

- Tomato
- Orange
- Watermelon
- Lemon
- Lime
- Snap Beans
- Malanga
- Okra
- Avocado
- Mango
- Fresh corn

15. Wages in the Corridor: ☐ $45.00 ☐ $55.00 ☐ $60.00

16. Place of work after Corridor season:

- ☐ Georgia
- ○ North Carolina
- ○ Ohio
- ○ Florida
- ☐ Stay in corridor
- Other

17. Main activity after Corridor:

- Tomato
- Beans
- Orange
- Blueberry
- Nursery plant
- Squash
- Pickle
- Construction business
- Cucumber

18. Combined income:

- ☐ $8,350.00
- ○ $9,000.00
- ○ $9,500
- ○ $10,000.00
- ○ Other

19. Send remittances to Mexico: ☐ Yes ○ No

20. Monthly remittances:

- ☐ $200.00
- ○ $250.00
- ○ $300.00
- ○ $350.00
- ○ $400.00
- ○ $0.00

21. Registered to vote in the US:

- ○ Yes
- ☐ No

22. Home owner:

- ○ Yes
- ☐ No
23. Do you live in an apartment or labor camp?
   ○ Labor camp       ● Apartment

24. How much do you pay for rent?
    ________________ $300 ________________________________

25. Medical insurance and labor benefits?
   ○ Yes       ● No

26. Previously interviewed by any government agency about labor conditions?
   ● Yes       ○ No

27. Do you like your agricultural work?
   ● Yes       ○ No

28. Do you own a car or truck?
   ● No       ○ Car       ○ Truck

29. Do you have a bank account?
   ○ Yes       ● No

30. Would you recommend work picking crops to your family?
   ● Yes       ○ No

31. Do you want to return to your country?
   ○ Yes       ● No

32. What is your legal status in the US?
   ○ US Citizen       ○ Permanent resident       ● Illegal alien
Name of Interviewer: _________________________________
Date: ___________________ Location of Interview: _________________________

Worker Profile

1. Country:
   - México
   - Guatemala
   - Other

2. State:
   - Oaxaca

3. Age:
   - 37 years

4. Marital status:
   - Single
   - Married

5. Family Size:
   - 5
   - 9
   - 15
   - ________
   - (children ages)

6. Years of formal education (grades):
   - None
   - 6th – 9th
   - 10th - 12th

7. Speak English:
   - Yes
   - No

8. Agricultural job in country of origin:
   - Yes
   - No

9. Years of experience as a farmworker:
   - 11 years

10. Year of arrival at Corridor:
    - 2006

11. Travel expenses to get to South Florida:
    - $2000

12. Main reason for leaving your country:
   - In search of a job
   - Looking for a better life
   - Legal problems
   - Economic opportunities

13. Place of previous work in the US:
    - Texas
    - North Carolina
    - California
    - Alabama
    - None
    - Other
14. Main agricultural activity in the Corridor:
- Tomato
- Lemon
- Malanga
- Mango
- Orange
- Lime
- Okra
- Watermelon
- Snap Beans
- Avocado
- Fresh corn

15. Wages in the Corridor:
- $45.00
- $55.00
- $60.00

16. Place of work after Corridor season:
- Georgia
- Florida
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- Stay in corridor
- Other_______

17. Main activity after Corridor:
- Tomato
- Blueberry
- Pickle
- Beans
- Nursery plant
- Construction business
- Orange
- Squash
- Cucumber

18. Combined income:
- $8,350.00
- $9,000.00
- $9,500
- $10,000.00
- Other__________

19. Send remittances to Mexico:
- Yes
- No

20. Monthly remittances:
- $200.00
- $250.00
- $300.00
- $350.00
- $400.00
- $0.00

21. Registered to vote in the US:
- Yes
- No

22. Home owner:
- Yes
- No
23. Do you live in an apartment or labor camp?
   - Labor camp
   - Apartment

24. How much do you pay for rent?
   $300

25. Medical insurance and labor benefits?
   - Yes
   - No

26. Previously interviewed by any government agency about labor conditions?
   - Yes
   - No

27. Do you like your agricultural work?
   - Yes
   - No

28. Do you own a car or truck?
   - No
   - Car
   - Truck

29. Do you have a bank account?
   - Yes
   - No

30. Would you recommend work picking crops to your family?
   - Yes
   - No

31. Do you want to return to your country?
   - Yes
   - No

32. What is your legal status in the US?
   - US Citizen
   - Permanent resident
   - Illegal alien
Worker Profile

1. Country:  
   - México
   - Guatemala
   - Other

2. State:  
   - Oaxaca

3. Age:  
   - 43 years

4. Marital status:  
   - Single
   - Married

5. Family Size:  
   - $16+

6. Years of formal education (grades):  
   - None
   - 6th – 9th
   - 10th - 12th

7. Speak English:  
   - Yes
   - No

8. Agricultural job in country of origin:  
   - Yes
   - No

9. Years of experience as a farmworker:  
   - 15 years
   - Less than 10 years
   - More than 10 years

10. Year of arrival at Corridor:  
    - 1995

11. Travel expenses to get to South Florida:  
    - $4000

12. Main reason for leaving your country:  
    - In search of a job
    - Looking for a better life
    - Legal problems
    - Economic opportunities

13. Place of previous work in the US:  
    - Texas
    - North Carolina
    - California
    - Alabama
    - None
    - Other
14. Main agricultural activity in the Corridor:
- Tomato
- Orange
- Watermelon
- Lemon
- Lime
- Snap Beans
- Malanga
- Okra
- Avocado
- Mango
- Fresh corn

15. Wages in the Corridor: $45.00, $55.00, $60.00

16. Place of work after Corridor season:
- Georgia
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- Florida
- Stay in corridor
- Other

17. Main activity after Corridor:
- Tomato
- Beans
- Orange
- Blueberry
- Nursery plant
- Squash
- Pickle
- Construction business
- Cucumber

18. Combined income:
- $8,350.00
- $9,000.00
- $9,500
- $10,000.00
- Other

19. Send remittances to Mexico: Yes, No

20. Monthly remittances:
- $200.00
- $250.00
- $300.00
- $350.00
- $400.00
- $0.00

21. Registered to vote in the US: Yes, No

22. Home owner: Yes, No
23. Do you live in an apartment or labor camp?
   ○ Labor camp  ● Apartment

24. How much do you pay for rent?
   ____________________________
   $300

25. Medical insurance and labor benefits?
   ○ Yes  ● No

26. Previously interviewed by any government agency about labor conditions?
   ● Yes  ○ No

27. Do you like your agricultural work?
   ● Yes  ○ No

28. Do you own a car or truck?
   ● No  ○ Car  ○ Truck

29. Do you have a bank account?
   ○ Yes  ● No

30. Would you recommend work picking crops to your family?
   ● Yes  ○ No

31. Do you want to return to your country?
   ○ Yes  ● No

32. What is your legal status in the US?
   ○ US Citizen  ○ Permanent resident  ● Illegal alien
Name of Interviewer:_____________________________________________ a20
Date: ___________________Location of Interview:_______________________

Worker Profile
1. Country:  ● México ○ Guatemala ○ Other
2. State:  _____________________________
          Michoacan
3. Age:  _____________________________
          35years
4. Marital status:  ○ Single  ● Married
5. Family Size:  _____________________________
                   8   11   15   ________   _________
                   (children ages)
6. Years of formal education (grades)  ○ None  ● 6th – 9th  ○ 10th - 12th
7. Speak English:  ○ Yes  ● No
8. Agricultural job in country of origin:  ● Yes  ○ No
9. Years of experience as a farmworker:  __10years__________
          ○ Less than 10 years  ● More than 10 years
10. Year of arrival at Corridor:  __2003___________________________(year)
          ● Before 2005  ○ After 2005
11. Travel expenses to get to South Florida:  _____$1800_________________
12. Main reason for leaving your country:
          ○ In search of a job  ● Looking for a better life
          ○ Legal problems  ○ Economic opportunities
13. Place of previous work in the US:
          ○ Texas  ○ North Carolina  ○ California
          ○ Alabama  ● None  ○ Other___________
14. Main agricultural activity in the Corridor:
- Tomato
- Orange
- Watermelon
- Lemon
- Lime
- Snap Beans
- Malanga
- Okra
- Avocado
- Mango
- Fresh corn

15. Wages in the Corridor: $45.00
- $55.00
- $60.00

16. Place of work after Corridor season:
- Georgia
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- Florida
- Stay in corridor
- Other

17. Main activity after Corridor:
- Tomato
- Beans
- Orange
- Blueberry
- Nursery plant
- Squash
- Pickle
- Construction business
- Cucumber

18. Combined income:
- $8,350.00
- $9,000.00
- $9,500
- $10,000.00
- Other

19. Send remittances to Mexico: Yes
- No

20. Monthly remittances:
- $200.00
- $250.00
- $300.00
- $350.00
- $400.00
- $0.00

21. Registered to vote in the US:
- Yes
- No

22. Home owner:
- Yes
- No
23. Do you live in an apartment or labor camp?
   ○ Labor camp        ● Apartment

24. How much do you pay for rent?
   ____________ $300 ______________________

25. Medical insurance and labor benefits?
   ○ Yes               ● No

26. Previously interviewed by any government agency about labor conditions?
   ○ Yes               ● No

27. Do you like your agricultural work?
   ● Yes               ○ No

28. Do you own a car or truck?
   ● No            ○ Car            ○ Truck

29. Do you have a bank account?
   ○ Yes               ● No

30. Would you recommend work picking crops to your family?
   ○ Yes               ● No

31. Do you want to return to your country?
   ○ Yes               ● No

32. What is your legal status in the US?
   ○ US Citizen        ○ Permanent resident        ● Illegal alien
Worker Profile

1. Country:  ● México  ○ Guatemala  ○ Other

2. State:  Oaxaca

3. Age:  37 years

4. Marital status:  ○ Single  ● Married

5. Family Size:  3  9  _______  _______  _______  _______(children ages)

6. Years of formal education (grades)  ○ None  ● 6th – 9th  ○ 10th - 12th

7. Speak English:  ○ Yes  ● No

8. Agricultural job in country of origin:  ● Yes  ○ No

9. Years of experience as a farmworker:  11 years

   ○ Less than 10 years  ● More than 10 years

10. Year of arrival at Corridor:  2008 (year)

   ○ Before 2005  ● After 2005

11. Travel expenses to get to South Florida:  $1500 ($)

12. Main reason for leaving your country:

   ● In search of a job  ○ Looking for a better life

   ○ Legal problems  ○ Economic opportunities

13. Place of previous work in the US:

   ○ Texas  ○ North Carolina  ○ California

   ○ Alabama  ● None  Other_________
14. Main agricultural activity in the Corridor:

- Tomato
- Orange
- Watermelon
- Lemon
- Lime
- Snap Beans
- Malanga
- Okra
- Avocado
- Mango
- Fresh corn

15. Wages in the Corridor:  
- $45.00
- $55.00
- $60.00

16. Place of work after Corridor season:

- Georgia
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- Florida
- Stay in corridor
- Other________

17. Main activity after Corridor:

- Tomato
- Beans
- Orange
- Blueberry
- Nursery plant
- Squash
- Pickle
- Construction business
- Cucumber

18. Combined income:

- $8,350.00
- $9,000.00
- $9,500
- $10,000.00
- Other________

19. Send remittances to Mexico:  
- Yes
- No

20. Monthly remittances:

- $200.00
- $250.00
- $300.00
- $350.00
- $400.00
- $0.00

21. Registered to vote in the US:

- Yes
- No

22. Home owner:

- Yes
- No
23. Do you live in an apartment or labor camp?
   ● Labor camp   ○ Apartment

24. How much do you pay for rent?
   $300

25. Medical insurance and labor benefits?
   ○ Yes   ● No

26. Previously interviewed by any government agency about labor conditions?
   ○ Yes   ● No

27. Do you like your agricultural work?
   ● Yes   ○ No

28. Do you own a car or truck?
   ● No   ○ Car   ○ Truck

29. Do you have a bank account?
   ○ Yes   ● No

30. Would you recommend work picking crops to your family?
   ○ Yes   ● No

31. Do you want to return to your country?
   ○ Yes   ● No

32. What is your legal status in the US?
   ○ US Citizen   ○ Permanent resident   ● Illegal alien
Name of Interviewer: ___________________________________________ a22
Date: ___________________ Location of Interview: ___________________

Worker Profile

1. Country:  ● México  ○ Guatemala  ○ Other
2. State:  ________________________________________________ Michoacan
3. Age:  28 years
4. Marital status:  ○ Single  ● Married
5. Family Size:  _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ (children ages)
6. Years of formal education (grades)  ○ None  ● 6th – 9th  ○ 10th - 12th
7. Speak English:  ● Yes  ○ No
8. Agricultural job in country of origin:  ● Yes  ○ No
9. Years of experience as a farmworker:  2 years
   ● Less than 10 years  ○ More than 10 years
10. Year of arrival at Corridor:  2007 (year)
    ○ Before 2005  ● After 2005
11. Travel expenses to get to South Florida:  $1800 ($)
12. Main reason for leaving your country:
   ● In search of a job  ○ Looking for a better life
   ○ Legal problems  ○ Economic opportunities
13. Place of previous work in the US:
   ● Texas  ○ North Carolina  ○ California
   ○ Alabama  ○ None  ○ Other
14. Main agricultural activity in the Corridor:

- Tomato
- Orange
- Watermelon
- Lemon
- Lime
- Snap Beans
- Malanga
- Okra
- Avocado
- Mango
- Fresh corn

15. Wages in the Corridor:  
- $45.00
- $55.00
- $60.00

16. Place of work after Corridor season:

- Georgia
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- Florida
- Stay in corridor
- Other_________

17. Main activity after Corridor:

- Tomato
- Beans
- Orange
- Blueberry
- Nursery plant
- Squash
- Pickle
- Construction business
- Cucumber

18. Combined income:

- $8,350.00
- $9,000.00
- $9,500
- $10,000.00
- Other_________

19. Send remittances to Mexico:  
- Yes
- No

20. Monthly remittances:

- $200.00
- $250.00
- $300.00
- $350.00
- $400.00
- $0.00

21. Registered to vote in the US:

- Yes
- No

22. Home owner:

- Yes
- No
23. Do you live in an apartment or labor camp?
   - Labor camp
   - Apartment

24. How much do you pay for rent?
   - $300

25. Medical insurance and labor benefits?
   - Yes
   - No

26. Previously interviewed by any government agency about labor conditions?
   - Yes
   - No

27. Do you like your agricultural work?
   - Yes
   - No

28. Do you own a car or truck?
   - No
   - Car
   - Truck

29. Do you have a bank account?
   - Yes
   - No

30. Would you recommend work picking crops to your family?
   - Yes
   - No

31. Do you want to return to your country?
   - Yes
   - No

32. What is your legal status in the US?
   - US Citizen
   - Permanent resident
   - Illegal alien
Worker Profile

1. Country: ● México ○ Guatemala ○ Other
2. State: Edo.de Mexico
3. Age: 36 years
4. Marital status: ○ Single ● Married
5. Family Size: 3 5 □ □ □ □ □ (children ages)
6. Years of formal education (grades) ○ None ○ 6th – 9th ● 10th - 12th
7. Speak English: ● Yes ○ No
8. Agricultural job in country of origin: ● Yes ○ No
9. Years of experience as a farmworker: 11 years
   ○ Less than 10 years ● More than 10 years
10. Year of arrival at Corridor: 2007 (year)
    ○ Before 2005 ● After 2005
11. Travel expenses to get to South Florida: $1500 ($)
12. Main reason for leaving your country:
   ● In search of a job ○ Looking for a better life
   ○ Legal problems ● Economic opportunities
13. Place of previous work in the US:
   ○ Texas ○ North Carolina ○ California
   ○ Alabama ● None ○ Other
14. Main agricultural activity in the Corridor:

- Tomato
- Orange
- Watermelon
- Lemon
- Lime
- Snap Beans
- Malanga
- Okra
- Avocado
- Mango
- Fresh corn

15. Wages in the Corridor: $45.00 $55.00 $60.00

16. Place of work after Corridor season:

- Georgia
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- Florida
- Stay in corridor
- Other

17. Main activity after Corridor:

- Tomato
- Beans
- Orange
- Blueberry
- Nursery plant
- Squash
- Pickle
- Construction business
- Cucumber

18. Combined income:

- $8,350.00
- $9,000.00
- $9,500
- $10,000.00
- Other

19. Send remittances to Mexico: Yes No

20. Monthly remittances:

- $200.00
- $250.00
- $300.00
- $350.00
- $400.00
- $0.00

21. Registered to vote in the US:

- Yes
- No

22. Home owner:

- Yes
- No
23. Do you live in an apartment or labor camp?
   ○ Labor camp  ● Apartment

24. How much do you pay for rent?
   __________________________________________________________

25. Medical insurance and labor benefits?
   ○ Yes  ● No

26. Previously interviewed by any government agency about labor conditions?
   ○ Yes  ● No

27. Do you like your agricultural work?
   ● Yes  ○ No

28. Do you own a car or truck?
   ● No  ○ Car  ○ Truck

29. Do you have a bank account?
   ○ Yes  ● No

30. Would you recommend work picking crops to your family?
   ○ Yes  ● No

31. Do you want to return to your country?
   ● Yes  ○ No

32. What is your legal status in the US?
   ○ US Citizen  ○ Permanent resident  ● Illegal alien
Worker Profile

1. Country:  ● México  ○ Guatemala  ○ Other

2. State:  ____________Puebla________________________

3. Age:  _____33years__________________________

4. Marital status:  ● Single  ○ Married

5. Family Size:  __0_________  _______  _______  _______  _______
(children ages)

6. Years of formal education (grades)  ○ None  ● 6th – 9th  ○ 10th - 12th

7. Speak English:  ● Yes  ○ No

8. Agricultural job in country of origin:  ● Yes  ○ No

9. Years of experience as a farmworker:  ___10years___________
   ○ Less than 10 years  ● More than 10 years

10. Year of arrival at Corridor:  ______2006________________________(year)
   ○ Before 2005  ● After 2005

11. Travel expenses to get to South Florida:  _____$1500__________________ ($)

12. Main reason for leaving your country:
   ● In search of a job  ○ Looking for a better life
   ○ Legal problems  ○ Economic opportunities

13. Place of previous work in the US:
   ○ Texas  ○ North Carolina  ○ California
   ○ Alabama  ● None  ○ Other___________
14. Main agricultural activity in the Corridor:

- Tomato
- Orange
- Watermelon
- Lemon
- Lime
- Snap Beans
- Malanga
- Okra
- Avocado
- Mango
- Fresh corn

15. Wages in the Corridor:
- $45.00
- $55.00
- $60.00

16. Place of work after Corridor season:
- Georgia
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- Florida
- Stay in corridor
- Other

17. Main activity after Corridor:
- Tomato
- Beans
- Orange
- Blueberry
- Nursery plant
- Squash
- Pickle
- Construction business
- Cucumber

18. Combined income:
- $8,350.00
- $9,000.00
- $9,500
- $10,000.00
- Other

19. Send remittances to Mexico:
- Yes
- No

20. Monthly remittances:
- $200.00
- $250.00
- $300.00
- $350.00
- $400.00
- $0.00

21. Registered to vote in the US:
- Yes
- No

22. Home owner:
- Yes
- No
23. Do you live in an apartment or labor camp?
   ○ Labor camp   ● Apartment

24. How much do you pay for rent?
   $300

25. Medical insurance and labor benefits?
   ○ Yes   ● No

26. Previously interviewed by any government agency about labor conditions?
   ● Yes   ○ No

27. Do you like your agricultural work?
   ● Yes   ○ No

28. Do you own a car or truck?
   ○ No   ○ Car   ● Truck

29. Do you have a bank account?
   ○ Yes   ● No

30. Would you recommend work picking crops to your family?
   ● Yes   ○ No

31. Do you want to return to your country?
   ● Yes   ○ No

32. What is your legal status in the US?
   ○ US Citizen   ● Permanent resident   ○ Illegal alien
Worker Profile

1. Country:  
   - México
   - Guatemala
   - Other

2. State:  
   - Huehuetenango (Guatemala)

3. Age:  
   - 45 years

4. Marital status:  
   - Single
   - Married

5. Family Size:  
   - 16+

   (children ages)

6. Years of formal education (grades):  
   - None
   - 6th – 9th
   - 10th - 12th

7. Speak English:  
   - Yes
   - No

8. Agricultural job in country of origin:  
   - Yes
   - No

9. Years of experience as a farmworker:  
   - 25 years

   - Less than 10 years
   - More than 10 years

10. Year of arrival at Corridor:  
    - 1995

    (year)

   - Before 2005
   - After 2005

11. Travel expenses to get to South Florida:  
    - $2000

    ($)

12. Main reason for leaving your country:

   - In search of a job
   - Looking for a better life
   - Legal problems
   - Economic opportunities

13. Place of previous work in the US:

   - Texas
   - North Carolina
   - California

   - Alabama
   - None

   - Other
14. Main agricultural activity in the Corridor:
- Tomato
- Orange
- Watermelon
- Lemon
- Lime
- Snap Beans
- Malanga
- Okra
- Avocado
- Mango
- Fresh corn

15. Wages in the Corridor: $45.00 $55.00 $60.00

16. Place of work after Corridor season:
- Georgia
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- Florida
- Stay in corridor
- Other

17. Main activity after Corridor:
- Tomato
- Beans
- Orange
- Blueberry
- Nursery plant
- Squash
- Pickle
- Construction business
- Cucumber

18. Combined income:
- $8,350.00
- $9,000.00
- $9,500
- $10,000.00
- Other

19. Send remittances to Mexico: Yes No

20. Monthly remittances:
- $200.00
- $250.00
- $300.00
- $350.00
- $400.00
- $0.00

21. Registered to vote in the US: Yes No

22. Home owner: Yes No
23. Do you live in an apartment or labor camp?
   - Labor camp
   - Apartment

24. How much do you pay for rent?
   - $300

25. Medical insurance and labor benefits?
   - Yes
   - No

26. Previously interviewed by any government agency about labor conditions?
   - Yes
   - No

27. Do you like your agricultural work?
   - Yes
   - No

28. Do you own a car or truck?
   - No
   - Car
   - Truck

29. Do you have a bank account?
   - Yes
   - No

30. Would you recommend work picking crops to your family?
   - Yes
   - No

31. Do you want to return to your country?
   - Yes
   - No

32. What is your legal status in the US?
   - US Citizen
   - Permanent resident
   - Illegal alien
Worker Profile

1. Country:  ○ México  ● Guatemala  ○ Other

2. State:  ____________________________________________
           Huehuetenango(Guatemala)

3. Age:  34 years

4. Marital status:  ● Single  ○ Married

5. Family Size:  0  ________  ________  ________  ________
                 (children ages)

6. Years of formal education (grades)  ○ None  ● 6th – 9th  ○ 10th - 12th

7. Speak English:  ○ Yes  ● No

8. Agricultural job in country of origin:  ○ Yes  ● No

9. Years of experience as a farmworker:  8 years
   ● Less than 10 years  ○ More than 10 years

10. Year of arrival at Corridor:  2006 (year)
    ○ Before 2005  ● After 2005

11. Travel expenses to get to South Florida:  $2000 ($)

12. Main reason for leaving your country:
   ○ In search of a job  ○ Looking for a better life
   ● Legal problems  ○ Economic opportunities

13. Place of previous work in the US:
    ○ Texas  ○ North Carolina  ○ California
    ○ Alabama  ● None  Other__________
14. Main agricultural activity in the Corridor:

- Tomato
- Orange
- Watermelon
- Lemon
- Lime
- Snap Beans
- Malanga
- Okra
- Avocado
- Mango
- Fresh corn

15. Wages in the Corridor:  
- $45.00
- $55.00
- $60.00

16. Place of work after Corridor season:  
- Georgia
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- Florida
- Stay in corridor
- Other_________

17. Main activity after Corridor:  
- Tomato
- Beans
- Orange
- Blueberry
- Nursery plant
- Squash
- Pickle
- Construction business
- Cucumber

18. Combined income:  
- $8,350.00
- $9,000.00
- $9,500
- $10,000.00
- Other_________

19. Send remittances to Mexico:  
- Yes
- No

20. Monthly remittances:  
- $200.00
- $250.00
- $300.00
- $350.00
- $400.00
- $0.00

21. Registered to vote in the US:  
- Yes
- No

22. Home owner:  
- Yes
- No
23. Do you live in an apartment or labor camp?
   - Labor camp
   - Apartment

24. How much do you pay for rent?
   - $300

25. Medical insurance and labor benefits?
   - Yes
   - No

26. Previously interviewed by any government agency about labor conditions?
   - Yes
   - No

27. Do you like your agricultural work?
   - Yes
   - No

28. Do you own a car or truck?
   - No
   - Car
   - Truck

29. Do you have a bank account?
   - Yes
   - No

30. Would you recommend work picking crops to your family?
   - Yes
   - No

31. Do you want to return to your country?
   - Yes
   - No

32. What is your legal status in the US?
   - US Citizen
   - Permanent resident
   - Illegal alien