

'Forgetting' Farmworkers: Transnational Experiences of Black Jamaicans *'Retired'*
from Canada's Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program

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Abstract

This dissertation is an inquiry into the lives of Jamaican farmworkers who have left Canada's farmwork program. The thesis explores the workers' past farmwork experiences and their present realities at home, to better inform our understanding of farmwork operations that result in oblivescence, a process of 'forgetting.' Drawing on interviews with former Jamaican farmworkers and other key stakeholders, I argue that the experience of Black Jamaican men, deemed to have now 'retired' from the program, is influenced by 'forgetting,' which emerges as a linchpin that structures the program and facilitates its reproduction. I repurpose the idea of 'forgetting' to underpin the examination of farmworkers' lives and socio-institutional structures and to inform the multipronged conceptual framework guiding this research.

The systemic oblivescence is articulated from two main dimensions: one emerged through the states' administrative maneuvers I characterize as 'forgetting states' and the other from Jamaican men, rendering them 'forgetting masculinities.' Half the empirical chapters explore the states' dimension of 'forgetting' demonstrated in practices/policies infused by racist/neoliberal ideologies that construct migrant workers' vulnerabilities and normalize their exploitation. The other half magnify 'forgetting' – as agency – that the men employed as survival mechanisms in response to the structures the states press upon them. Both dimensions of forgetting reinforce each other to create catastrophic consequences during their employment but especially when they 'retire.' I evidence the material impact of the compounded consequences of 'forgetting' relative to their health, the denial or restriction of pension benefits, and show how spatial mobility and 'forgetting' mediate masculine performance.

That migrant farmworkers vanish from the program, therefore, is not accidental but orchestrated systematically via a process of 'forgetting' that legitimizes their exploitation through policies enacted to extend the oppression into their so-called 'retirement.' Yet, as a function of work, this thesis underscores the illusion of Jamaican farmworkers 'retirement,' which remains a contradictory part of their life course.

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List of Acronyms

This dissertation uses the following acronyms:

ALCAN – Aluminum Company of Canada

AWA – Agricultural Workers Alliance

CARICOM – Caribbean Community

CBC – Canadian Broadcasting Corporation

CIC – Citizenship and Immigration Canada

CNN – Cable News Network

CPI – Consumer Price Index

CPPIB – Canada Pension Plan Investment Board

EI – Employment Insurance

EPZs – Export Processing Zones

ESDC – Employment Services and Development Canada¹

FARMS – Foreign Agricultural Resource Management Systems

FEL – Lost Future Income

FERME – Fondation des entreprises pour le recrutement de la main-d'oeuvre étrangère

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

GIS – Guaranteed Income Supplement

ICIs – Informal Commercial Importers

IDB – International Development Bank

IFIs – International Financial Institutions

ILO – International Labour Organization

IMF – International Monetary Fund

IOM – International Organization for Migration

JADEP – Jamaica Drug for the Elderly Programme

JAMALCO – Jamaica Aluminum Company

JIS – Jamaica Information Service

JLP – Jamaica Labour Party

LMIA – Labour Market Impact Assessment²

LOE – Loss of Earnings

MNCs – Multinational Corporations

MOU – Memorandum of Understanding

NAFTA – North American Free Trade Agreement³

¹ Previously known as Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC)

² Formerly known as Labour Market Opinion (LMO)

³ Now called USMCA

NDP – New Democratic Party
NHF – National Health Fund
NHT – National Housing Trust
NIEAP – Non-Immigrant Employment Authorization Program
NIF – National Insurance Fund
NIS – National Insurance Scheme
OAS – Old Age Security
OHIP – Ontario Health Insurance Plan
PNP – People’s National Party
POWs – Prisoners of War
PRB – Post-retirement Benefit
PTSD – Post-traumatic Stress Disorder
QPP – Quebec Pension Plan
RADA – Rural Agricultural Development Authority
ROE – Record of Employment
SAPs – Structural Adjustment Programs
SAWP – Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program
STATIN – Statistical Institute of Jamaica
TINA – There Is No Alternative
UFCW – United Food and Commercial Workers Union
UN – United Nations
USMCA – United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement⁴
WSIB – Workplace Safety and Insurance Board
WWI – World War I
WWII – World War II

⁴ Previously known as NAFTA

Chapter 1. Introduction

“Yu si wat bikiem af os in di faam werk, di baas dat wi did av werkin wid, dem jos let wi go laik dat. Noting a taal dem seh to wi. So, aal diiz iers werkin, yu jos werk an it gu laik dat.”

[You see what became of us in the farmwork, the boss that we worked for, he just fired us like that. Nothing at all he said to us. So, all these years of service meant nothing – they are forgotten].

– Linton, February 17, 2017

I’m not so sure what happens between them and the employer, if the employer wi seh to dem, ‘aarite yu getting up in age, you can’t manage the work anymore.’ Most times if they say they can’t [work] or for some health reasons, they decide they can’t do [work] anymore, they probably just stop going; have some agreement with the employer. Or sometimes, some of them may end up with some serious illness, lifestyle related illness that they just cannot travel anymore.

–Senior Jamaican technocrat interview, January 13, 2017

1.1 Indicting the Failure of ‘Forgetting’ States

Still clad in his stained and faded farm clothes, well-worn boots, and a hat that offered little protection from the sweltering overhead sun bearing down, I shook his hand, callused from years of hard work and introduced myself. “Patrick; delighted,” he returned the pleasantry. It was around the noon hour and with a smile, the ‘retired’ farmworker ushered me into his yard. As Patrick and I sat on a makeshift bench in his yard and chatted about his farmwork and ‘retirement’ experience, Ataliah, his wife was seated on the verandah among a group of children. But her posture was one of unease – brooding. As my conversation with Patrick wore on, Ataliah arose from her seat and wandered past us towards the gate and back to her position. I suspect it was to catch a good look at the ‘outsider’ or intruder who was engaged in conversation with her husband. But no sooner than she had settled back into her chair, about 12 feet from us, the now agitated Ataliah abruptly hurled herself into the discussion and verbally exploded, “*Jenkman! Wy yu affi a riisiirch fii uu weh iina chravl fah? Weh it stan fah? Weh it go fah?*” [Gentleman! Why are you researching people who once traveled? What’s the purpose of it?] Patrick tried to calm her, “*aarait yu wi ier wen mi dun.*” [alright, I’ll tell you when I’m through with it]. Ataliah countered, “*mi noh waahn ier nut’n fram yu, far yu no av noh sens, mi a taak to di man.*” [I don’t wish to hear anything from you because you don’t have much sense, I’m talking to the man].

Stunned by Ataliah’s reaction, I summoned my equanimity and reached for a response to satisfy her overt curiosity but no sooner than I had begun to furnish an answer, the now

hyperventilating Ataliah cuts me off, “Wat?!” I managed to squeeze in a brief explanation before she continued her tirade:

So wy a nuo uunu a kom? Luk fram wen im a chravl? Weh im a badda riisiirch im fah, [him] tap fram lang iers a bak. Tasha a ow moch ier uol nong? A fuulishnis dem deh man. Luk fram wen yu tap chravl? Fram Tasha a biebi yu tap chravl. Luk fram wen yu tap chravl, luk fram wen! Luk fram wen yu tap chravl an deh ya in a bush? Dyam iidiat dem! Mi no waahn ier nut'n fram yu enoh, far yu a di saim ting.

[So why is it that you're only coming now? Look at the years that have passed since he's not traveled? What's the sense in doing this research? He stopped a long time ago. How old is Tasha now? That's nonsense! Look at the years he's not traveled? Since Tasha was a baby you stopped. Look at the years since you've not traveled and have been forgotten in the bushes? Dam idiots! I'm not interested in hearing anything from you because you are the same thing]. (Patrick's (Ataliahs') Interview, March 3,2017).

Ataliah was infuriated because her husband was unexpectedly kicked-off the SAWP some 20 years ago, leaving him forgotten. Since then, no one had ever bothered to check into their well-being. She used the age of their now adult child, Tasha – who is 20 years old but was a baby at the time Patrick was terminated – to determine the number of years since he has been jettisoned from the program. Ataliah was understandably suspicious of the timing and reason for my visit and immediately dismissed it as nonsense. Why would anyone want to know about farmworkers after they have been forgotten for so long – two decades in the case of her husband?

While at that moment I felt attacked by Ataliah's misdirected anger, I reflected upon the content of her vitriol and quickly reconciled the legitimacy of her concerns with her wrath. It became instantly clear that Ataliah's reaction represented an indictment against both Canadian and Jamaican states that have terminated and forgotten her husband for 20 years. Now 70-years-old, Patrick does not even collect a Canada Pension Plan (CPP) pension. So, Ataliah's (re)action – a consequence of 'forgetting' – was justifiable. This encounter was one of the most poignant moments for me in the field as it underscored and justified the purpose of my research. For, indeed, 'retired' farmworkers are treated as non-entities because when they become a liability to their employers, they are disposed of by a process of 'forgetting' – also echoed in Linton's opening lament. Surprisingly, however, for a senior Jamaican official, also captured in the second opening quotation above, what happens to Jamaican farmworkers after they are terminated from the program is an open speculation.

1.2 The Issue

Securing a farmwork position represents a golden opportunity for members on the lower rungs of Jamaica's social hierarchy. Over the last five decades, more than 200,000 work permits have been granted to Jamaican farmworkers⁵ for participation in the Canadian farmwork program with some workers returning seasonally for more than 40 years (Mundle, 2015). However, what becomes of this massive group of migrant workers once they have ended their relationship with Canada's Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP)⁶, remains largely unexplored as there is very little to no documented empirical information about their post-SAWP or 'retirement' life. Indeed, since the inception of the SAWP, tens of thousands of men have been jettisoned – the general practice of Canadian employers to separate migrant workers from the program – and repatriated to Jamaica. Although some men collect a pension, many have not been superannuated or are still unaware of their eligibility and invariably, many have died without it. Most researchers investigating transnational farmworkers focus their attention around what happens in the north and to a lesser extent, life in Mexico (Preibisch & Binford, 2007; Preibisch & Santamaria, 2006; Thomas, 2010; Faraday, 2012; Satzewich, 1991). But considerably less attention has been given to what happens in Jamaica; except for works by Cecil & Ebanks (1992); Knowles (1998) and more recently by McLaughlin (2010). Further, there has been almost no attention to what happens in their 'retirement.'

This oversight in farm labour scholarship communicates that migrant farmworkers are only valued in their 'productive' years in Canada, which also contributes to the reifying of their erasure after their exit from the program. However, the less known spaces that I have found from examining farmworkers' 'retired' and previous farmwork experience, inspire a rethinking of the program's operations. So, the production of this text articulates and maps new areas that have largely been overlooked by scholars inspired by various Marxist, feminist, post-colonial and anti-racist frameworks. Therefore, the question animating this research is what are the long-term implications of transnational

⁵ Invariably, I refer to participants in the Canadian farm work program as farmworkers (a household name in Jamaica), migrant farmworkers, transnational farmworkers, transnational migrant workers, seasonal migrant workers, SAWP participants or SAWP workers, throughout the body of this text.

⁶ Hereafter referred to as the SAWP, the program, the farmwork program or the Canadian farmwork program.

migrant work specifically as it relates to the health, gender, and the socio-economic positions of Jamaican farmworkers, more so after their exit or 'retirement' from the Canadian farmwork program?

Exploring the experiences of Jamaican farmwork 'retirees,' this thesis has the following primary, interlinked objectives:

- ✚ To understand how retirees' health is affected by their work, what their general health in 'retirement' is like and the impact of health care expenses on their pension benefits;
- ✚ To investigate some of Canada's and Jamaica's retirement policies and practices and their implications for migrant farmworkers survival in 'retirement';
- ✚ To explore the lived experience of migrant farmworkers and to demonstrate the consequences of state policies on their survival post-production, or what is considered their 'retirement';
- ✚ To examine how Canadian farmwork influences and disrupts performances of gender within transnational spaces.

That 'retirement' remains largely omitted from analyses of transnational farmwork not only serves to reify the disposability of farmworkers, but it also underscores the idea that retirement for migrant farmworkers, in this case, Jamaicans, like their enslaved ancestors before them, remains a contradictory part of their life course. A western phenomenon, retirement is a mechanism that removes people from the workforce but having been institutionalized only within the last century it is not practiced in many parts of the developing world in the same way (Parker, 1982). So, what is the post-farmwork experience like for farmworkers residing in rural Jamaica, where the 'culture' of retirement has not ossified?

1.3 Hatched in a 'Hornet's Nest': The Genesis of Canada's 'Racist' Farmwork Program

Ottawa's decision to utilize Jamaican labour power was not only made belatedly but also begrudgingly. Jamaica's participation in the Canadian farmwork program has now inched beyond the half-century mark. Canada's 1966 approval of Jamaica's participation in its farmwork program represented the culmination of a protracted period of relentless negotiations and deliberations and resistance among functionaries of the Canadian federal and provincial governments, the Jamaican state and other Caribbean islands like Trinidad, along with Ontario farm owners before the Canadian state finally acquiesced to the use of Black Caribbean labour in agricultural production (Satzewich,

1991). But the green-light was not given before an international embarrassment for Ottawa as the *London Financial Times* caught wind of the racial tension that mounted on Canada's Parliament Hill and headlined an article, "*Will Jamaican Workers be Admitted?*" It continued, "a labour problem...revealed that racial discrimination does exist in Canada at the high government level and has created a hornet's nest of trouble at the cabinet table in Ottawa" (Satzewich, 1991:167).

Thus, confronted by the sullied optic of a scandal that spilled racism unto the pages of a major international newspaper, and having exhausted its options for a white agricultural labour force, culled from European states, Ottawa's approval for the first seasonal foreign workers program, utilizing Caribbean farmworkers, was granted on March 31, 1966 (Satzewich, 1991). Jamaica became the first West Indian country to ink a bilateral memorandum of understanding with Canada, cementing the participation of tens of thousands of men since its pioneer cohort of 264 men over 52 years ago (Andre, 1990). In the first 10 years after its inception, other Caribbean countries and Mexico signed separate memoranda of understanding with Canada: Trinidad, a year later in 1967, along with Barbados; Mexico secured its position in 1974, while the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)⁷ in 1976, rounded out the remaining participant countries of the program (Andre, 1990). Some 40,000 seasonal farmworkers now travel to Canada annually, including more than 8,000 from Jamaica (Canadian Labour Institute for Social and Economic Fairness, 2018; Jamaica Observer, 2016).

Contemporary farmworkers now immigrate to Canada from developing economies under the federally sponsored labour arrangement, branded the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP). The program functions within the larger structure of Canada's Temporary Foreign Worker Program (Faraday, 2012; Faraday, Fudge & Tucker, 2012; Preibisch & Binford, 2007; Thomas, 2010; Trumper & Wong, 2007; Verma, 2003). So, the trajectory of the now 52-year old 'temporary' Canadian farm work program is intricately connected to the consistent use of imported, gendered and racialized bodies to address 'labour shortages' in Canada's agricultural industry. The farmwork question, in Jamaica, therefore, is rooted in historical patterns of uneven development, starting from the colonial

⁷ Members of the OECS: Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia and St Vincent and the Grenadines.

period through to the contemporary context of neoliberal globalization, which has not made it any less difficult for most qualified workers to secure employment, let alone less educated and impecunious Black men. Although Jamaica's socio-economic situation serves as a catalyst for sending workers to Canada, the precariousness of the jobs they undertake presents other problems for them to negotiate as they are confronted with varying degrees of ill-treatment, exploitation, and discrimination. These migrant farmworkers take on some of the most dehumanizing jobs, which are often under-regulated, under-compensated and under-appreciated. Agricultural work, for example, because of its inherent dangers, is located among the most hazardous occupational groups, averaging around twenty fatalities per year in Ontario (Faraday, Fudge & Tucker, 2012).

Bracketed within the farming enclaves by processes of social exclusion, precarious migrant farmworkers remain invisible within the larger society except for rare instances when the media reveal their relative obscurity (Russo, 2012). This is usually invoked by some farm-related tragedy, sensationalized by the media to highlight their perilous working conditions, a situation which, while eliciting fleeting pity, unwittingly serves to reproduce their status as 'less than' other workers (CBC News, 2012). But after the initial public outrage, migrant farmworkers return to the banality of their hidden, laborious routine, until another tragedy pans the glare of the media in their direction. Their relative invisibility enables the role their unglamorous labour plays in the economy. Although the scale of their importance to the Canadian economy is downplayed, the numbers tell a different story as farmworkers generate around CDN\$4.5 billion in economic output each year (United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW), 2014).

These geographies of transnationalism continue to shape economic, social and race relations as the labour agreement itself remains structured by racist ideology, which results in their othering, oblivescence, and peripheralization in Canada and in Jamaica. *Significantly, this thesis utilizes the concept of 'forgetting' – which I take up in greater detail in Chapter 3 – to underpin not only the examination of the lives of seasonal agricultural workers but also to explore the operations of the state and institutional actors. Thus, both migrant farmworkers along with states and institutional actors are implicated in divergent yet complementary processes of 'forgetting' that facilitate the reproduction of*

the SAWP. For while migrant farmworkers deploy 'forgetting' as an exercise of agency, I also demonstrate how they are constrained and indeed forgotten or invisibilized by institutional and societal structures. I use 'forgetting' and the 'process of forgetting' interchangeably throughout the text.

So, this research articulates a conceptual framework, which explores evidence that demonstrates the consequences of 'forgetting,' during farmworkers' employment in the SAWP but more so when they 'retire.' These are highlighted at the intersections in this text of concerns over 'retired' farmworkers health, the bureaucratic institutions that shape the experiences of racialized migrant farmworkers, post-farmwork socio-economic realities, and gender relations and practices. Therefore, this epistemic excursion into farmworkers social reproduction is couched within a transnational context. This is in consideration of Peck & Tickell's (2002) caution against being too obsessed with developments at the local scale while being insensitive to the connections at the global scale, which silences the role of the larger neoliberal project. This research primarily but not exclusively forefronts Jamaican farmworkers' lived post-SAWP experiences, deemed to be their 'retirement' since it judiciously pulls on their work experiences/interactions with institutional actors and wades into the operations of state institutions within the transnational setting. Together, these collectively inform the operations of 'forgetting' as consequential for grappling with farmworkers' 'retirement' and their social reproduction in the Jamaican context.

1.4 Focus of the Study

Underpinned by racist and patriarchal ideologies, the history of colonialism continues to have lingering implications for how social factors like race and gender (masculinity) are used to order and segment the workforce. For more than 52 years, migrant farmworkers have been brought to Canada under the guise of labour shortage but as it turned out, they are imported primarily on the basis of their race, gender, and class as they constitute non-white, mostly male, poor workers from the developing world, eager to take on the back-breaking, brute jobs that Canadian-born workers have flat-out rejected. In Canada, white farmers extract surplus labour from them under precarious conditions that are potentially health-threatening. But we are curious to learn about the support systems in place, in

their retirement, from a health and economic perspective. With less than generous funding under a strict IMF borrowing program, Jamaica's public health care system, though free, attracts high user fees and generally leaves much to be desired, while private healthcare often leads to high medical bills in a short time (De La Haye & Alexis, 2012). These critical concerns are a matter of interest here.

Surprisingly, for the five decades that the SAWP has been investigated and from the volumes of scholarship that have been produced, we are none the wiser in terms of the long-term consequences of the program on workers' lives, as I am not aware of any scholarship that has advanced an epistemological excursion into the 'retirement' phase of migrant farmworkers' lives. It is, therefore, my position that the exploration of the dimensions of 'forgetting' – from migrant workers' experience, working in the program in Canada, and their lived 'retirement' reality in Jamaica – could offer further insight into the operations of the SAWP. Ironically, in its treatment of the SAWP, labour geography's scholarship with all its focus on workers has largely overlooked the economy from an aspect of social reproduction and certainly not retirement (Strauss, 2018).

Therefore, among the various perspectives that script farmwork scholarship, this thesis offers other vistas in thinking about farmwork and 'forgetting.' I attempt to rearticulate it throughout this discussion, in relation to the whole operations of the SAWP, illustrating how it leads to workers' marginalization while working in the program and renders them 'forgotten' in retirement. The process of forgetting, therefore, forms a crucial part of the cooptation and subjugation of racialized and poor men into a global labour regime of temporary farmworkers. Thus, the 'process of forgetting,' filtered through an anti-black racism lens, forms a pervasive theme woven throughout the body of this text binding it together. This farmwork research, aligned with feminist economic geography, is differentiated by investigating beyond production, that is, not just the worksite but the issues of social reproduction that shines a light on the 'retired' lives – the humanity – of the fathers and husbands, men who are indispensable to the operations of the program, where it evidences not only the 'process of forgetting' that structures the program's reproduction but also the material impact on farmworkers post-program existence. Since no one knows what happens in migrant workers 'retirement,' but themselves, this research begins to fill the gap in the literature in order to better appreciate the full

import of the life-cycle of transnational migrant work and dovetails with extant literature from the position of social reproduction to contribute to efforts to improve the benefits of transnational migrant farm labour.

1.5 Outline of the Dissertation

The thesis is organized into nine chapters and the following schema maps them out. The contextual background is presented in Chapter 2 to locate the research. Advancing an intersectional theoretical framework to better understand the SAWP and its 'forgotten' workers, Chapter 3 expands the conceptual idea of 'forgetting' and draws on debates on world-systems theory, neoliberal globalization, and feminist/anti-racist/critical masculinity perspectives. It explores the interconnections of transnational labour migration, core-periphery relations in a globalized world, gender, class, age and the socio-spatial character of racialized bodies. Such a multifaceted theoretical framework informs an approach to understand the whole operations of 'forgetting' while making allowances for alternative discourses, contestations, and disruptions. The methodology of the research, the interviewees I spoke with, my positionality/reflexivity and the limitations of the study are taken up in Chapter 4.

The empirical chapters are split evenly between the major dimensions of 'forgetting.' Chapters 5 and 6 explore the dimension of the 'forgetting state' and show how the government and other institutional actors play a major role, administratively from a policy and pragmatic perspective in 'forgetting' migrant workers.

Therefore, Chapter 5 brings into focus the 'forgetting state' and the key role played by state/institutional actors such as the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB), employers, and Jamaica's Liaison Service in the 'process of forgetting' farmworkers. It does this by focusing on their health outcomes working in the SAWP and after their exit. It maps a convoluted terrain that looks broadly at three main themes: the injured, diseased and the dis/stressed body. It explores how Jamaican workers are coopted, integrated and forgotten in the transnational labour regime, which results in their 'forgetting' when their usefulness has been exhausted. And documents the challenges encountered in managing their illnesses and covering their medical expenses.

Chapter 6 also examines the ‘forgetful state’ but from the position of the retirement institutional infrastructure where the process and operations of ‘forgetting’ migrant workers structure and script policies and normalize practices that ‘forget’ migrant workers economically. In other words, I disambiguate the ‘process of forgetting’ that informs the denial and neglect of retirement benefits to racialized migrant farmworkers. It also grapples with the meanings, contradictions and the illusion of ‘retirement’ for thousands of Jamaicans who have been jettisoned from the SAWP.

Chapters 7 and 8 examine ‘forgetting masculinities’ and show the ‘process of forgetting’ that is deployed by migrant workers as a mechanism of survival or exercise of agency and evidence the material impact of the consequences of ‘forgetting.’

Chapter 7 maps the geographies of farmworkers socio-economic realities in ‘retirement’ and evidences the repercussions of their oblivescence as played out in their ‘retired’ or lived experience and their agency in response to being forgotten. Though the chapter picks up on health in retirement, it does not overlap the contents of the dedicated health chapter but complements it.

Chapter 8 is a standout that locates Black Jamaican masculinities within a racialized, transnational global structure and explores the tensions and contradictions around their socialization and performances of gender within the transnational space. The chapter grapples with spatializing farmwork domesticities and their sexuality during periods of absences from their wives along with sexual reproductive practices. It also contends with transnational parenting and fatherhood and transgressions (or personal acts agency) within the program.

Chapter 9 concludes the dissertation with a summary and an assessment of the original contributions. Based on the production of knowledge distilled from the research, this chapter also advances recommendations for key stakeholders – the Governments of Canada and Jamaica – that resist the ‘process of forgetting’ to improve the lives of past and future generations of farmworkers. It also suggests areas for future research to address some of the outstanding issues that were raised throughout the text – so farmworkers, may perhaps, someday not be forgotten.

Chapter 2. Setting the Context: Geographies of Exclusion, Agency, and Exploitation

“Som taim wi deh pan di pruogram it kom iin laik wi a di lowis klaas enuh. Kaa it kom iin laik wi nuh kount enuh...fa dem jos hangl wi laik wi nuh kom fram no weh; yu nuh liv no wiir. Yu affi gud still. A jos ii monii enuh.”

[Sometimes while working in the program, we’re made to feel like we are the lowest class. Because it appears we aren’t of any value. We are not treated like humans; like we didn’t leave our families back home. You must be a someone who overlooks all the exploitation to do this job. But it’s for the money why we do it].

– Roger, January 11, 2017

2.1 Jamaica’s Geography

Jamaica, like other tropical countries, is a blend of paradoxes (Mason, 2000). Billed as a coveted tourist destination, the island is often epitomized as the ultimate tropical wonderland, complete with luxurious hotels, exotic cuisines, warm people, reggae music, and spectacular geographical landscapes and fascinations. But the contradiction lies in the fact that Jamaica is a paradise explored and enjoyed only by some Jamaicans since most do not experience its packaged and manicured wonders of nature. Millions of poor, mainly Black Jamaicans, have never set foot on a tourist compound, even to work. So, while multitudes of paradise-seeking-tourists flock to Jamaica, annually, the hardship induced by joblessness and structural poverty create the conditions that compel tens of thousands of locals to flee this island-paradise in search of a better life.

A Caribbean island, Jamaica forms part of the north-westerly archipelagian arc, stretching about 2,000 miles from the delta of the Orinoco River off the Venezuelan coast to the south, to the Floridian peninsula to the north then pushing on near to the Yucatan peninsula in the west (Lewis, 2004). Grouped among the islands of the Greater Antilles⁸ and covering an area of about 11,000 square kilometers, Jamaica (see figure 1 below) – the largest English-speaking island – lies 90 miles south of Cuba, and 119 miles west of Haiti, occupying a west-central location in the Caribbean Sea (Mason, 2000).

Jamaica’s unobtrusive discovery, around 650 AD, marked the arrival of the first wave of indigenous Tainos who called it Xaymaca – “land of wood and water” (Mason, 2000:6). Some 844

⁸ The larger Caribbean islands comprise the Greater Antilles: Dominican Republic and Haiti, Cuba, Jamaica and Puerto Rico.

years later, Columbus, on his second voyage made contact with the island naming it Santiago in admiration of its beauty but its indigenous name prevailed over the conquistadors' re-naming attempt (Mason, 2000).

Figure 1 Map of the Caribbean



Source: <https://maps-jamaica.com/jamaica-caribbean-map>

Jamaica is now divided into 14 parishes, with Kingston being the capital city. The country has a population of 2.8 million people with another three to five million living abroad as part of a global diaspora (Jamaica Gleaner, 2018). Some with Tainos heritage, once believed to have been terminated, can still be found in Jamaica, but most of the population is of African descent. About 10 percent of the population comprises diverse ethnicities: white-Europeans, Chinese, South Asians, Syrians, Portuguese and others – social groups often exercising more power in the economic landscape. While a Black educated middle-class still form the political elite, most Black Jamaicans languish at the base of the social hierarchy.

Fed by internal migration, Kingston's ghettos are home to thousands of poor Black people, but the poor are not confined to the shanty towns of Kingston, they are fanned out across all 14 parishes (shown in figure 2 below), mostly populating rural, mountainous areas. Farmworkers have historically been drawn from the poor working-class in rural areas, including the 8090 (mostly) men who

comprised the 2016 cohort of migrant farmworkers to Canada (Jamaica Observer, 2016). The parishes are historically and geographically contextualized, deliberately withholding district names to sever any association with the interviewees to protect their identity. In south-central and western Jamaica – the parishes of Clarendon, Manchester, and St. Elizabeth; in the northwestern section of the island – Trelawney and on the opposite northeastern tip of Jamaica – St. Mary (Jamaica Information Service (JIS), 2017). The next section takes a closer look at the parishes in the study. These are rural parishes with limited employment opportunities, except for farming, for farmworkers. Farmworkers are drawn from these areas – unlike the more urban parishes like Kingston – because of their farming experience.

2.1.1 Parishes in the Study

Clarendon

The English colonial history of the parish of Clarendon dates back to 1664 when it was brought into existence by re-configuring neighbouring parish boundaries and named for the Earl of Clarendon (Jamaica Gleaner, 1991). The Bull Head and Mocho Mountain ranges, rising to a pinnacle of 851 meters, elevate the north of the parish to claim the spatial significance as the island's geographical center (Jamaica Gleaner, 1991; JIS, 2017). Vere forms a sprawling plain in the south, meandered by rivers, chief of which is the Rio Minho that flows through the entire parish; May Pen, the parish capital, sits along portions of the banks of the Rio Minho (Jamaica Gleaner, 1991). The plains of Clarendon are conducive to the growth of sugarcane, which flourishes in verdant abundance to produce the most sugar of all the parishes; bauxite mining also ranks in economic significance (JIS, 2017).

The third largest parish, Clarendon blankets an area of 1,196 square kilometers and is home to a population of 246, 322 people (JIS, 2017). Claude McKay High School, located in the parish's northern mountain – in James Hill – honours the birthplace and legacy of the Harlem Renaissance writer (Jamaica Gleaner, 1991). My field work took me through the foothills of Manchester and into the mountains of Clarendon where I located 11 farmworkers residing in eight remote districts that either straddle or are situated adjacent to the border of the parishes of Clarendon, St. Ann and Manchester where they are mostly engaged in farming.

Manchester

Bounded by the parishes of Trelawney in the north, Clarendon to the east and St. Elizabeth to the west, the parish of Manchester was created by the House of Assembly in 1814 by expropriating parts of the parishes of Clarendon and St. Elizabeth, to form a new administrative center (Horst, 2008). It was named after the Duke of Manchester – William Montagu, Jamaica’s Governor at the time and the capital Mandeville was christened after Montagu’s eldest son, Lord Mandeville (Horst, 2008).

A mountainous parish, Manchester rests at an elevation 626 meters, summitting to 840 meters in the Carpenters Mountain, which towers over the parish’s other two mountain ranges, the Don Figuerero and the May Day Mountains (Jamaica Gleaner, 1991). Comprised chiefly of limestone rocks, Manchester is littered with speleological fascinations furnishing more than 100 caves, including Jamaica’s longest and deepest caves: Gourie Cave, which stretches 3505 meters and Smokey Hole Cave which plummets 194 meters, respectively (The Jamaican Caves Organization, 2017). With the vast limestone terrain, all but one of Manchester’s rivers disappear underground. Manchester covers 850 square kilometers with a population of 162,135 (Jamaica Gleaner, 1991).

Because of its hilly terrain, Manchester is the only parish without a history of sugarcane or banana plantations, better suited for the plains (Horst, 2008). The parish also has rich deposits of bauxite ore, which, over the past several decades, has attracted several multi-national mining companies to the area. Mandeville has a strong presence of returning Jamaicans who had lived abroad for decades, and whose sprawling mansions adorn the mountains to give it a ritzy character (Horst, 2008). My field trip took me beyond Mandeville’s urban sprawl and into the bowels of Manchester, a distance of between 10 to 15 kilometers from the capital where I met with 14 respondents from 10 different districts, all engaged in farming, places where the class difference is palpable.

St. Elizabeth

The parish of St. Elizabeth, named in honour of the wife of Jamaica’s first English governor, Sir. Thomas Modyford was one of the original seven Anglican parishes created from the remapping of the island by the new colonizers (Jamaica Gleaner, 1991; JIS, 2017). The Nassau, Lacovia and Santa Cruz Mountain ranges elevate the north and northeastern landform overlooking the plain of Savannah,

which is situated at the center and towards the south of the parish (JIS, 2017). The Black River, which originates in the mountains of Manchester, makes its circuitous journey in the open plains before emptying into the Caribbean Sea (JIS, 2017). Like Manchester, St. Elizabeth has an abundance of sinkholes and caves, including the famous Peru cave with its impressive stalagmites and stalactites, and also a significant underground river whose source has been mapped to the parish of Trelawney (The Jamaican Caves Organization, 2017).

St. Elizabeth covers an area of 1,185 square kilometers and is bounded to the west by Westmoreland, to the east by Manchester and to the north by Trelawney and St. James. With a population of 144,000, it is the most ethnically diverse parish including ethnic enclaves from the 17th and 19th centuries that brought waves of Europeans including Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, English, Irish, Scottish, Germans, and Africans along with Asians like the Chinese and Indian indentured servants, who all settled there (Jamaica Gleaner, 1991; JIS, 2017).

The parish has rich deposits of bauxite ore, a bauxite processing plant, and a pier – Port Kaiser – dedicated to the export of alumina. Additionally, there is a tomato cannery along with two sugar factories (JIS, 2017). Black River, the parish capital, was the first part of the island to be powered by electricity in 1893 (Jamaica Gleaner, 1991; JIS, 2017). My field trip took me to four districts in the mountains of St. Elizabeth where I met nine interviewees – all subsistence farmers.

Trelawney

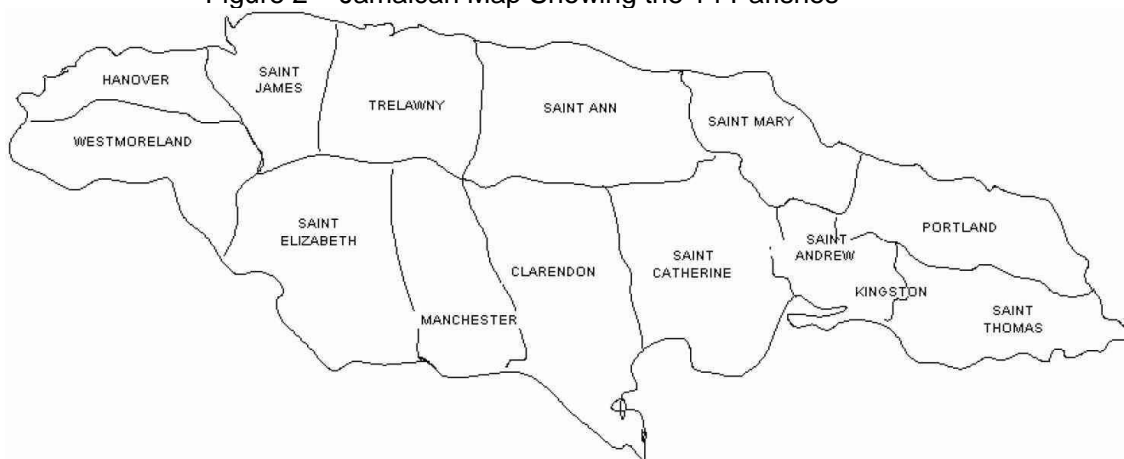
Trelawney was created in 1770 by the House of Assembly cutting off portions of the parishes of St. Ann and St. James at the request of the powerful landowners who appealed for a new administrative center in that region (Jamaica Gleaner, 1991). It bears the name of the governor of the day, Sir William Trelawney and Falmouth is the capital (JIS, 2017). The parish spreads over an area of 874 square kilometers and is populated by about 76,000 people (JIS, 2017).

The terrain is mostly flat, towering to 910 meters at its pinnacle in Mount Ayr and part of what is known as Cockpit Country, a precipitous rainforest, extends from southern Trelawney into neighbouring St. Elizabeth (JIS, 2017). The contiguous rainforest, characterized by dangerous and difficult land formation – treacherous caves, sinkholes, and jagged rocks in the limestone formation –

was appropriated by both the indigenous Tainos and later on by the Maroons as an impenetrable fortress whose rugged and dangerous terrain posed a natural bulwark that staved off the Spanish and English oppressors (JIS, 2017). The rugged rainforest breeds a rich ecosystem of both plant and animal species including dozens of birds endemic to Jamaica, as well as reptiles, and is also the habitat of the largest know butterfly in the western hemisphere – the giant swallowtail (The Jamaican Caves Organization, 2017).

Trelawney is historic on many fronts. Accompong represents the nucleus and legacy of the maroons and the parish maintains the strongest maroon presence on the island, a people whose autonomy was granted by the British in 1739 and continues to be recognized by the constitution of Jamaica (JIS, 2017). Trelawney is also home to sprint sensation Usain Bolt. Sugar and rum, along with tourism, continue to dominate Trelawney’s economy. I met one interviewee in Trelawney who is a small yam farmer.

Figure 2 – Jamaican Map Showing the 14 Parishes



Source: maps-jamaica.com, 2019

St. Mary

Located in the north-eastern section of the island and bounded by the parishes of St. Ann to the west, Portland in the east and St. Andrew and St. Catherine to the south, the old parish of Metcalfe was joined to St. Mary to form the new parish of St. Mary in 1867 (JIS, 2017; Jamaica Gleaner, 1991). Shale and limestone rocks form the hilly terrain that, without a distinct mountain range, rises up to

1,200 meters at its peak (Jamaica Gleaner, 1991). Like Manchester, the permeable limestone results in underground rivers but unlike Manchester, it has three main surface rivers (JIS, 2017).

One of the smallest parishes in Jamaica, St. Mary has an area of about 610 square kilometers and a population of about 115,000 (Jamaica Gleaner, 1991). The capital Port Maria, with inscriptions of the Taino people, is also among the first places to be inhabited by the Spanish conquistadors. Tourism and agriculture are the main industries in a parish known to be the island's poorest. Oracabessa, once an important banana port, is now the site of a marine sanctuary (Jamaica Gleaner, 1991). My field work took me up the mountains of St. Catherine and over into two remote districts in St. Mary where I interviewed two farmwork retirees engaged in farming.

2. 2 Of Gender, Race/Colour, Class, and Nation Building: The Complexity of Jamaica's Social, Cultural, and Political Identities

After having been ravaged by Spain and Britain – colonizers for close to 500 years – Jamaica gained political independence from Britain in 1962 (Manley, 1987). After the gradual departure of the Europeans, 'mulattos' – offspring of Europeans and Africans – filled their place in the racial, social, and political order. Perpetuating European values, they denigrated Africans traditions, so that well into the 1950s, Jamaica still saw itself as being fully Europeanized (Lewis & Carr, 2009). Since mulattos have an ambivalent status – not truly African and not fully European and therefore no homeland to return to – they promoted themselves as the only true Jamaicans; thus, Jamaican-ness was creole and creole was authentically Jamaican, and the mulattos embodied it (Lewis & Carr, 2009). The self-proclaimed Jamaicans played a key role in charting Jamaica's national identity to guarantee their socio-economic and political protection needed to survive post-independence (Chevannes, 1989; Lewis & Carr, 2009). In fact, the mulattos constituted the 'midwives' who crafted and delivered Jamaica's constitution at independence, largely to the exclusion of Afro-Jamaicans whose black skin pigmentation did not fit the image upon which nationality should be mapped (Chevannes, 1989; Lewis & Carr, 2009). Significant in this process was the church as the creoles embraced and projected their religious values. Yet the overlaying of Christianity with African traditions resulted in syncretized

religious variants (Lewis & Carr, 2009). So here we see deliberate efforts to exclude and render invisible and 'forget' Africans while magnifying European values.

But eminent Afro-Jamaicans like Marcus Garvey felt Blacks also had a legitimate claim on nation-building with an independent vision of their own to restore the African dignity (Lewis & Carr, 2009). Years later, other social justice agitators like Michael Manley emerged in the fight for Blacks, whose own class and colour contradicted his stance (Bogues, 2002). The class-colour attitude towards the poor was profoundly repulsive, which motivated Manley to act on their behalf as his lifelong campaign was to fully restore the humanity of Blacks (Bogues, 2002). Therefore, at his first opportunity as Prime Minister, Manley outlawed the *Master and Servant Act* that was promulgated at emancipation to govern the relationship between the White planter elite and the African, and which gave the master unfettered power to dismiss and criminalize workers (Bogues, 2002). Manley also introduced and legislated a raft of social changes that started to redress some of the injustices of the Black underclass, a move which inspired affront in the middle class, many of whom fled the country under his second administration in the mid to late 1970s (Bogues, 2002).

But the hierarchical racial and gendered order also invisibilized women who were largely silent and absent from the definition of the national self, perceived primarily as "degendered objects of property" (Lewis & Carr, 2009:8). So, the national project was structured by race, colour and patriarchy and the reluctant inclusion of Afro-Jamaicans. Thus, it becomes clear why Jamaican men are viewed as providers, informed by the "Victorian gendered ideology...that promoted the masculinization of the labour force" an ideology strengthened by other social institutions like the Church (Lewis & Carr, 2009:9). But in contemporary Jamaica where, approximately 50 percent of households are headed by women, and with many men deferring to their spouses on the domestic front, there is, arguably, a legitimacy of matrifocality that introduces a tension within the walls of patriarchy. And while class remains a stubborn structuring mechanism, notions of colour and gender continue to characterize or shape social relations in Jamaica. Taken together, this discussion is important to the thesis as Black Jamaican men who participate in the SAWP are drawn from or represent a race/colour and class of people who have, historically, been written out or erased from the nation's development and forgotten.

But through their own ingenuity and agency, they have had to carve out a space and livelihood for themselves and their families, often through migration.

2.3 Bauxite Blunder: Another Lost Opportunity to Industrialize

A decade into independence, Jamaica enjoyed steady economic growth, buoyed by bauxite mining, so that the island's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) – a reflection of its economic activities in terms of its production of goods and services – registered a rate of five percent per annum (Manley, 1987; Mason, 2000). At the time, Jamaica had 20 percent of the world's known supply of bauxite, which was strategic on several fronts as it is of fine quality, easy to extract, and within close spatial proximity to the United States (Manley, 1987). Britain, Canada, and the US all intervened in the growth and expansion of Jamaica's bauxite industry, a deal initially hatched between their Multinational Corporations (MNCs) (ALCAN –1944, Reynolds – 1944, and Kaiser –1974, were the main players backed by the Marshall Plan – a US aid initiative of US\$13 billion to rebuild Europe after WWII) and the governing colonial power with little regard for the island or in other words forgetting Jamaica's development interest (Manley, 1987). But there was an uneven distribution of this wealth that did not translate into development with few benefitting while the country's Black majority remained in poverty (Mason, 2000). With a booming bauxite industry, Jamaica was denied the processing of alumina into aluminum, missing another great opportunity to industrialize, thereby marking the continuity of colonialism and further entrenching its dependence and peripheral position in the international capitalist system (Manley, 1987; Beckford & Witter, 1982). Like previous times, the importance of Jamaica's development was forgotten as industrialization would have created linkages throughout the economy, more even development and by extension created employment opportunities to address the chronic unemployment that menaced the country and especially the Black underclass.

In fact, it was the penetration of foreign capital into Jamaica's economy that dislocated thousands of poor small farmers who fed the urban drift as some 200,000 acres of lands were packaged off to six MNCs (Beckford & Witter, 1982; Manley, 1987). Consequently, towards the end of the 1960s, Jamaica's unemployment rate stood at 24 percent and illiteracy pegged between 30-50

percent (Manley, 1987). Organized by the church since emancipation, education, was an elitist commodity as high schools and colleges were largely the preserve of White and light-pigmented people who used it to reproduce themselves (Manley, 1987, Miller, 2006). This meant that 85 percent of the population – mostly Blacks – did not receive an education beyond the elementary level and in most cases, they did not even complete elementary education (Manley, 1987). Naturally, then, in both the public and private sectors, the workforce was a colony of Whites and light-pigmented people with Blacks all but forgotten. Job advertisements overtly targeted candidates with lighter skin-pigmentation and the few menial positions that Blacks managed to secure did not require them to interface with the public (Henriques, 1951). It was in this racial, socio-economic and political context that Jamaica made its debut in the SAWP to exploit the cheap labour of ‘forgotten’ and undereducated Black men.

But close to five centuries after Europe's contact with and occupation of Jamaica and long after the European colonizers have physically left, the economy is still orchestrated externally, with Jamaica marching to the orders of the International Monetary Fund. And now with China's pervasive presence in Jamaica, steeped in multi-billion-dollar infrastructure projects, it questions whether a new colonizer has physically emerged (Jamaica Observer, 2018). Jamaica's labour force hovers around 1.1 million with more than half of Kingston's labour force working in the informal sector (Clarke & Howard, 2006). By the late 1980s, jobs had become such a scarce commodity many unemployed people had given up on finding one and therefore exited the labour force (Clarke & Howard, 2006). As of 2017, Jamaica's national and youth unemployment rates stood at 13 percent and 25 percent, respectively (Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN), 2018). And even with recent claims of 10,000 new jobs created by the 16 Chinese construction companies now operating in Jamaica, the infrastructure to sustain viable livelihoods for the island's poor, working-age population remains tenuous at best and inadequate by any measure as the list of Jamaican men waiting to take up overseas farmwork opportunities number in the thousands (Jamaica Observer, 2018).

2.4 Whither Migration? Agency Beckons Movement

Material possessions for poor Jamaican Black people are scant, elusive and deemed largely unattainable outside the apparatus of migration, with which the Caribbean islands have long been integrated.⁹ The prospects for a better life is often conceptualized and romanticized somewhere beyond the shores of Jamaica. Those wishing to migrate are habituated to believe that whatever foreign activity they became engaged in would furnish the means to elevate their standard of living and put them in a position of financial independence (Thomas-Hope, 2010). The historical practice of migration is so revered that it ascribes to the émigré an enhanced status as just the experience of having been abroad assigns this false prestige to the traveler (Thomas-Hope, 2010). Therefore, a combination of their systematic under preparation for the workforce, reflected in their limited education and training, along with the lack of jobs in Jamaica and the internalization of their patriarchal role as providers drive a compulsion to migrate to places with a demand for cheap labour. So, we observe that it is the surplus labour exacerbated through structural adjustments, linked to historical colonial processes of underdevelopment, which is targeted by capital for exploitation overseas because the system never recreates enough jobs for everyone where it has wreaked havoc (Choudry & Smith, 2016; Stasiulis & Bakan, 2005).

Indeed, the migration of peoples across state boundaries is generally consistent with the exigency of labour supply and demand. However, since labour is mapped on to raced, gendered and classed bodies, immigration becomes a very selective process, especially in the era of neoliberal globalization. And the capability to overcome this physical geography is not the same for everyone. As a gatekeeper, therefore, the state is decidedly discriminatory about who is granted entrance into its spatial boundaries or ascribed membership to its social formation (Satzewich, 1991). So, it gives rise to the question, what qualifies the disenfranchised to emigrate when the neoliberal immigration

⁹ The first wave of Caribbean migration, in the late 1800s, was intra-regional to the Hispanic Islands like Cuba, Costa Rica, and Panama before heading north to the US for agricultural work and then East to Britain during the 1940s -1960s before heading back west to Canada and the US (Horst, 2007). Step migration also brought many Caribbean migrants from Britain to Canada and the United States at the relaxation of those countries overtly racist immigration policies in the 1960s (Brown, 2006; Mensah, 2010). Also, during this time, there was a gradual shift from long-term to temporary migration.

system is such a terror to a class of poor 'forgotten' people? It is a terror because their social locations inscribe their embodied undesirability abroad, rendering them immobile. State gatekeepers are much friendlier to business elites, the professional middle class, and even students. While the 1950s domestics scheme created a path for Jamaican women to migrate to Canada, the comparable option for poor Black men did not arrive until a decade later when Canada initiated the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP). So, the farmwork program has played a very significant and instrumental role – an opportunity of ultimate resort to migrate – to a 'forgotten' underclass, otherwise doomed to a life poverty and insecurity. Therefore, the farmworker clings to this position hoping that it will facilitate the fulfilment of his dreams and hopes and aspirations of building a house, raising a family and securing a better education for his children. Thus, migration is seen here as an exercise of agency – a "spatial strategy" (Rogaly, 2009:1980) but since not all men are invited to participate, some 'unselected' men use creative means to foist their selection into the program.

But getting into the farmwork program presents other challenges for workers because the recruitment process has historically been a partisan enterprise, steeped in political patronage and clientelism, an expediency exploited by both major political parties – the People's National Party (PNP) and the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP). While patronage panders specifically to the patron looking to secure the prospective recruit's vote or other political support, Russo (2012) describes clientelism as "a reciprocal exchange of goods and/or services on a personal basis between two unequal parties (p.72). So, it is a *quid pro quo* transaction where the 'awarding' of the farmwork 'invitation card' is usually because of or for the purposes of securing political loyalty to help solidify the patron's control of the constituencies the men are drawn from – in exchange for the opportunity to migrate. Altink (2015) writes, "in 1979, rumours circulated that personnel in the Ministry of Labour and Employment discriminated in the selection of overseas farm workers so that those who were recommended by MPs or constituency caretakers were prioritized" (p. 40). My conversation with a Jamaican technocrat confirms the involvement of politicians in the recruitment and selection process.

The remainder of this chapter continues to lay out the context for the arrival of poor Jamaican migrant men in Canada.

2.5 Historicizing Ontario's Agriculture and Labour challenges

Long before the advent of Europeans into South Western Ontario, Indigenous communities had cultivated the region, one of the most fertile in Canada but the land would eventually be commandeered by white settlers for their own purposes of accumulation (Satzewich, 1991). The genesis of what is now called the SAWP has had a long history, which Andre (1990), Satzewich (1991) and more recently, Russo (2012), among many other scholars, have all laid out for us; so, its repetition here is redundant due to space limitations. And since more than 90 percent of Jamaican farmworkers are employed in Ontario, the province where all research respondents worked, I will limit the genealogical evolution of the farmwork program to Ontario and the period from around the onset of World War II (WWII). This review, therefore, touches upon aspects of the "Federal-Provincial Agricultural Manpower Program," which the 1942 *Stabilization of Employment in Agriculture Regulations Act* brought into existence (Russo, 2012:39-40). This was a labour regime set up between Ottawa and many of the provinces of Canada to shore up labour power for several industries including agriculture. It was a time when the labour force was weakened due to thousands of men being engaged in military production initiatives or to fight the war (Satzewich, 1991).

At that time, it was mostly family members who ran the daily operations of most farms; however, the period following the war witnessed an amalgamation of almost 733,000 farm holdings that existed in Canada at the turn of the 1940s (Basok, 2002; Russo 2012; Satzewich, 1991). Employment statistics support this trend as at the beginning of the 1940s, the agricultural industry employed almost 29 percent of Canada's working population compared to just fewer than eight percent by the mid-1960s and the industry's wages were also less attractive with agricultural workers earning an average of \$85.00 compared to \$172.00 per month in other industries (Russo, 2012). Farmers lamented their inability to compete with other industry sectors citing cost-price squeeze, which are escalating costs pressures when the competition makes it prohibitive to respond by raising prices in order to cover the increasing expenditure (Satzewich, 1991).

During the war, the federal state deployed what Satzewich (1991) calls the "Emergency Labour Regime" (p.70) where it suspended market mechanisms by influencing the flow of specific groups of

people into the agricultural industry, deemed an essential service. These workers were incorporated into agriculture as unfree wage labourers, which involved legal and political compulsion to restrict their circulation in the labour market and to provide labour to specified agricultural employers (Satzewich, 1991). Some 35 thousand German prisoners of war (POWs), close to 24 thousand Japanese interns along with over five thousand pacifists of the Doukhober and Mennonite persuasion were put to agricultural use by the Order in Council (Satzewich, 1991; Walia, 2010).

After the war ended, labour camps were set up by the federal and provincial governments, in concert with the growers, but later folded as the cost became too burdensome. It was during this time that the state also mobilized over five hundred aboriginals, some 4,200 children along with miscellaneous psychiatric, convict, military and day labour which all proved futile (Satzewich, 1991). The farmers have traditionally relied upon both permanent and seasonal workers, especially the latter whose labour is critical during harvest seasons (Trumper & Wong, 2007).

Recruitment efforts then turned to Eastern Europe where the colour of the labour would better match Canada's white settler society and where it was hoped that the replacement would prove to be more lasting than the groups that were recruited before them (Satzewich, 1991). The Polish War veterans along with civilians displaced by the war in Eastern Europe constituted the first wave of unfree immigrant labour. Keep in mind that people from Eastern Europe were once frowned upon by the white establishment as they were not yet considered fully white (Kibria *et al.*, 2014). Nevertheless, they were brought into Canada on a graduated basis, where they would be granted temporary status for the first three years during which time they were indentured to their employers before they could apply for citizenship after the expiration of their contracts (Satzewich, 1991). The disciplinary mechanism built into the arrangement has always been the threat of deportation if workers violated their contracts, but many would still seek out opportunities in other industry sectors and were never deported, only warned by the police to honour their contracts (Satzewich, 1991).

However, other Europeans were also incorporated as free immigrant labourers. The Dutch formed the next migrant labour group and matched more perfectly the criteria for Canada's white settler imagined community, of whom 19,300 arrived between 1947 and 1951 with their families

(Russo, 2012). Unlike previous groups, the Dutch nationals all arrived as permanent Canadian settlers, which meant they were free to circulate in the labour market as there were no legal or political compulsions to channel them into farm labour; however, as previous farmers in the Netherlands, they were encouraged to settle in areas where they could purchase farms and establish themselves (Satzewich, 1991). The proceeds from the liquidation of their Dutch assets would arrive several years later as the Dutch government had faced a shortage of Canadian dollars at the time of their emigration but by the time their assets arrived in Canada, many of them had left farming (Satzewich, 1991).

There was also the assisted passage loan scheme which brought another group of immigrants from Germany and Portugal and of the 36,000 who took advantage of the scheme, 4,700 were channeled into agriculture and the rest into other industry sectors like transportation (Satzewich, 1991). These were given two years to repay the loan and could not circulate in the labour market until they had retired the loan or spent a year in the job (Satzewich, 1991).

The decline in Portugal's agrarian industry coincided with the expansion that the Canadian economy was experiencing at that time (Russo, 2012). Portuguese started arriving around the mid-1940s, primarily from the capital city of Lisbon, then from other Portuguese cities by the early 1950s before eventually declining towards the end of that decade (Russo, 2012). Although the conditions under which they lived and worked were just as deplorable and exploitative, their labour mobility were not as restrictive as today's migrant farmworkers and as a result, escaped the harsh realities of farm labour by seeking better paying and less oppressive job opportunities in urban areas like Toronto and Windsor (Russo, 2012). Here we see that efforts to recruit Europeans to fill labour shortage is a manifestation of Canada's hierarchical position on race as the various groups and the legal status the state inscribed upon their entry into Canada, along with their mode of incorporation into the labour market are in direct proportion to their desirability being adjudged beyond their human capital potential.

But with the menacing problem of white worker retention in the agriculture industry, Canadian growers had grown preoccupied with the Caribbean for its rich source of labour, being motivated in part by the United States' use of them. The SAWP is the equivalent of the H-2A program that operates in the United States (US) which similarly targets racialized men from the Caribbean and Mexico for

employment in agriculture (Trumper & Wong, 2007). Moreover, the fact that Caribbean women were imported as part of Canada's domestic worker scheme in the mid-1950s was more reason to argue for the use of its men in agriculture (Andre, 1990). So, Ontario growers pressed the federal government to engage this source of labour, an idea which the federal government resisted for a long time as their functionaries were motivated by anti-black racism being apprehensive about having a stream of migrants who were not desirable (Andre, 1990; Satzewich, 1991).

It was not that people of colour were strictly prohibited but their entry into Canada would be limited to those with the propensity to make significant contributions both economically or culturally to the nation (Satzewich, 1991). Blacks were not suitable permanent settlers nor desirable migrant farm workers as it was thought that they would cause race relations problems generalized from the 1958 Notting Hill Riots in Britain, a place where thousands of Caribbean migrants – *the Windrush Generation* – had settled and also because of the racial tensions that simmered in the US (Horst, 2007). Satzewich (1991) contends that Canadian immigration officials further justified Black's exclusion by claiming that "they do not assimilate readily and pretty much vegetate to a low standard of living. Despite what has been said to the contrary, many cannot adapt themselves to our climatic conditions" (p.127). Such rhetoric constitutes a process of forgetting – a negative assessment of their biological characteristics: their inability to compete economically, their unfitness to adapt to Canada's adverse climatic conditions and pathological problems awaiting manifestation.

However, this reasoning is not only blatantly racist but also completely absurd as Mensah (2010) reminds us that not only does the history of Blacks in Canada dates back to 1604, with successive settlements throughout most of the country, but also refutes the notion that Blacks would settle for a low standard of living. Mensah (2010) furnishes examples of free Blacks who had migrated from California to British Columbia in the 1850s and became successful entrepreneurs, the likes of Lester & Gibson that was a strong competitor of Canada's Hudson Bay Company. Besides, Canada was not entirely foreign to Jamaicans who have been arriving there since 1776; the province of Nova Scotia witnessed the arrival of some 550 Jamaican Maroons that same year (Mensah, 2010).

With the decline of unskilled Portuguese immigrants towards the beginning of the 1960s, the government took control of the program from the private immigration brokers who had managed the importation of migrant agricultural workers hitherto, not only as a means of controlling immigration, but supposedly to address the issues of exploitation of the migrant agricultural workforce that had been raised before (Satzewich, 1991). But how did these same problems continue unabated in the SAWP with seemingly no political will to resolve them? In response to the growers push for Caribbean labour, the government tried to get growers to provide more comfortable housing, reasoning that that would remedy the turnover crisis, which they argued was only a “temporary problem” (Basok, 2002:32). This represented one of the Canadian federal government’s final efforts to avert the use of Black Caribbean labour. Eventually, the Canadian government acquiesced, seemingly, to the growers’ pressures to import Caribbean labour but not before introducing changes to the Canadian Federal-Provincial Manpower Program that had been in operation since WWII. In other words, the state consented to the growers’ demands with the intent to weaponize citizenship in their continued oppression of Black West Indians. These transformations characterize a racial ideological shift and the introduction of a refurbished racialized program that the federal government would manage, which represented a signature departure from the system that private brokers had operated. A rationale for the ‘change-of-heart’ is captured in the scripted thoughts of a federal Canadian functionary, “a sounder means of control lies in facilitating the movement of races that experience has shown are likely to remain in agriculture” (Satzewich, 1991:103), signaling the ‘forgetting’ of racialized farmworkers in agriculture.

2.5.1 The ‘Transient’ Influence

It is also important that we take up the context of ‘transient’ farm labour in southwestern Ontario, which is hardly engaged anymore, and which Reid-Musson (2014) reminds us is significant in structuring the labour geography of Ontario’s agriculture. Tobacco, in particular, has traditionally been among Ontario’s most prized, salable crops, but as an undertaking that is exceedingly labour-intensive, it has, since the turn of the 1930s, magnetized so-called transients – a situation that intensified during the 1960s and 1970s (Reid-Musson, 2014). According to the author, some “60,000

transient workers would “swarm into tobacco-land” – Quebecers, Atlantic Canadians and Northern Ontarians, university students, older and highly skilled tobacco ‘curers’ from southern US states – all looking to pocket harvest wages over a six-week span” (Reid-Musson, 2014:164). This situation even led to the formation of the United Transient Laborers Association in the 1960s. But often destitute upon arrival, the transients were considered a menace, begging food and shelter from local charities, pilfering from the residents and otherwise bringing a life of vice to the local tobacco communities in southwestern Ontario, and often necessitating local law enforcement to summon outside help (Reid-Musson, 2014). It was a situation that often turned ugly during the harvest of the tobacco, as Reid-Musson (2014) reported that the police in Delhi, Ontario had “no days off and long hours of overtime” (p. 166). Such context provides a better understanding of the construction of the labour problem that supposedly exists in the farm industry, or as Reid-Musson (2014) put it, the labour shortage that plagued Ontario farmers was “deeply entangled and legitimized through the “transient [labour] problem” (p. 162).

So, even though claims of SAWP’s creation pivot around the purported shortage of labour in the farming sector and the complementary army of labour to be found in the source countries, the Canadian state chose to implement the SAWP as opposed to addressing the structural shortcomings that have historically plagued the industry (UFCW, 2014). Therefore, “the creation of the SAWP was consistent with the long tradition of interventionist policies from federal and provincial government...where the employers managed to establish their need for manpower as a national political issue” (UFCW, 2014:3). A tradition that continues to the present.

Consequently, in addition to the more desirable white labour that Canada could no longer source from Europe, the introduction of the SAWP, in 1966, had the simultaneous intent to dislocate and repel the use of transient labour because of the transgressions it brought to those rural areas in Southwestern Ontario. Additionally, municipal efforts in the form of local ordinances were deployed to outlaw transient labourers’ practices of camping out in parks, even going as far as discouraging local charities from rendering any form of assistance to them (Reid-Musson, 2014). Here we see the political coordination of ‘forgetting’ at the federal and municipal levels in efforts to sanitize rural Ontarian

tobacco areas of an unstable, disruptive class of workers who were clearly not desired in those spaces. Though equally undesirable, Caribbean workers would be more manageable and allow the agricultural sector to 'forget' their past 'transient' labour problems.

2.6 The Contemporary Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program

And so, in 1966, the Canadian Federal-Provincial Agricultural Manpower Program was re-branded the Season Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP) utilizing 264 black men from Jamaica – the first participant country to be engaged via a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) (Andre, 1990). The remaining participant countries followed in successive years. But why has Canada opted to sign MoUs with these countries as opposed to more internationally recognized agreements? Verma (2003) argues that MoUs do not fall under the jurisdiction of the Vienna Convention of Laws and Treaties, making them mere governing accords between Canada and each participating-sender-state. So, having circumvented the standards of the Vienna Convention – a process of forgetting – Canada frees itself from the clutches of its obligations, rendering MoUs instruments that are neither binding nor enforceable (Verma, 2003). However, they are effective enough to domesticate international migration as all decisions with respect to the SAWP are viewed through the lens of the Canadian law which helps to legitimize the arrangements (Verma, 2003). As Canada is not a signatory to the Vienna Convention, it is not beholden to it and, therefore, cannot be held accountable to it with respect to any issues arising from these loose MoU arrangements (Verma, 2003).

But 'forgetting' is also alluded to in the bilateral agreement as the SAWP invests growers with enormous latitude. Repatriation of farmworkers is completely arbitrary, lacking any appeals process. Growers are also empowered to hand-pick seasonal workers (85% of farmworkers are so chosen) whom they wish to reward 'return work opportunities' since the work permits tether imported migrant workers to their assigned grower, rendering them unfree workers. This move was engineered to prevent them from seeking alternative employment in more attractive industry sectors, forever resolving the problem that had plagued and paralyzed the old program (McQueen, 2006). Prior to 1966, growers experienced serious attrition problems, presenting a dilemma as the nature of the industry necessitates a dependable source of labour to plant/rear and reap the harvest. Canada's

Department of Labour estimates that between 1948 and 1954 around 60,000 agricultural workers migrated annually to other industries in urban areas (Russo, 2012). Thus, quoting a local newspaper source, Reid-Musson (2014) flagged the relief of an Ontario grower, "I like Caribbean labor because I hold something over him. If he chatters too much or stays out too late at night I can send him home. You have no control over Canadian labor. You can't force them to stay" (p.168). So, there is a logic of 'forgetting' that underwrites the agreement that farmers are keenly aware of, which legitimizes the vulnerability and the discriminatory treatment of offshore workers. Farmers have this latitude over the now 40,000 workers in the SAWP, which is the main stream¹⁰ of offshore farmworkers in Canada (Canadian Labour Institute for Social and Economic Fairness, 2018).

According to Andre (1990), at the SAWP's establishment, the federal government had committed financial support to the liaison service of each participant country to the tune of CDN \$250,000 annually, but in 1987 after more than 20 years, citing cost-cutting measures, the Mulroney administration, withdrew the yearly support. As Andre (1990) observes, liaison officers were to play a crucial role in the operationalization of the SAWP as "the farmer must give the officer a set of rules and regulations which the farmer expects his workers to observe" (p.265). Thus, the role of the liaison officer should serve to temper the powers of the employer relative to the migrant worker. But with the annual liaison service funding canceled, the Horticultural Industry of Ontario instituted the Foreign Agricultural Resource Management Systems (F.A.R.M.S.)¹¹ in 1987 designed to ensure the continuation of the SAWP and to mitigate any disruptions that may have arisen with the cancellation of the SAWP's federal subsidy (Andre, 1990). While theoretically, it may be a federal program under the purview of Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), the SAWP, in practicality, is now administered by the F.A.R.M.S., a not-for-profit, user-fee-funded entity, controlled by the growers themselves. Thus, Andre (1990) argues, it has given rise to an "anomalous situation" where the

¹⁰ Aside from the SAWP, there is another federal program, introduced in 2002, called the Pilot Project for Occupations Requiring Lower Levels of Formal Training that also employs people in the agriculture industry (and other industries as well) (McLaughlin, 2010; Pysklywec *et al*, 2011). These *non-seasonal* workers are imported not only from the Caribbean but other places like the Philippines, Guatemala, and Thailand to work for a more extended period – 48 months (Pysklywec *et al*, 2011). But at the end of the four years, they must wait out a four-year period before reapplying to the program. So that the total number of migrant agricultural workers to Canada, including SAWP, in 2016, was 54,000 (Keung, 2017).

¹¹ The French equivalent – the Foundation of Enterprises for the Recruitment of Foreign Labour (Fondation des entreprises pour le recrutement de la main-d'oeuvre étrangère) (FERME) – manages the program in Quebec and New Brunswick.

formation of the F.A.R.M.S. has mostly diminished the role of the liaison service who “depend largely on the persons whom they monitor for the services required to perform their duties” (p.265). In other words, the cooptation of the liaison officers has nullified their effectiveness, forming part of the larger operations of ‘forgetting.’

But with jurisdiction over the program, not only would the federal government make sure the growers’ needs were satisfied but it would also ensure that its own racist anxieties were addressed. Structurally different from the previous federal-provincial labour regimes, the permanent seasonality of the SAWP now enables growers to summon migrant labour to Canada on an as-needed basis and dispense with them whenever the harvest surrenders its bounty, an arrangement which guarantees growers an enduring supply of temporary help so long as the program exists (McQueen, 2006). This was not so under the old system, neither could the ‘transients’ be thus manipulated.

Also, determined to abrogate the opportunity afforded to white predecessors of the old program to not only settle permanently but also sponsor extended family members back home, the deputy minister of citizenship and immigration of the day declared “seasonal farmworkers would not have the privilege of sponsoring innumerable close relatives for immigration to and settlement in Canada” (Satzewich, 1991:335). This politics of ‘forgetting,’ facilitated through the manipulation of immigration policy would put to rest the government’s racial angst about the influx of low skilled Blacks that could potentially (dis)colour the Canadian landscape as the program expressly prohibits seasonal migrants from settling permanently and by extension sponsoring family members.

2.6.1 Construction of the Migrant Worker – *the Denial of Citizenship*

These changes were institutionalized in the Non-Immigrant Employment Authorization Program (NIEAP) in 1973 that legally constructed and entrenched the term ‘migrant’ and forever resolved the “problem of the permanence of non-Whites within Canadian society” (Sharma, 2006:23). So, while the NIEAP permits certain foreigners legal entrance into Canada, to work temporarily, it simultaneously bars membership to its social formation. This is because their ranked categorization by Citizenship and Immigration Canada prohibits migrant farmworkers from becoming citizens

(Faraday, 2012). The NIEAP, therefore, Walia (2010) argues, effectively underwrote the denial of citizenship rights, which is a legal discriminatory mechanism that infringes upon human rights, designates groups of people fit for exploitation and opens the door to all kinds of oppression. It is their precarious legal status that makes them highly susceptible to abuse as "any assertion of their rights leads not only to contract termination but also deportation" (Walia, 2010:72). Therefore, restrictive immigration policies serve as a state 'forgetting' mechanism to immobilize racialized groups within the border and strengthen their social disciplining resulting in the internalization of their otherness and forgetting whatever rights they might have in Canada (Walia, 2010). Thus, it reinforces their vulnerability and sets up employers to exercise discriminatory or exploitative practices against migrant or foreign workers and entrenches the stratification of the labour force (Bauder, 2006; Sharma, 2006). This, however, does not suggest that permanent residents and even citizens do not face discrimination. However, because of the tenuous legal status of seasonal migrant workers, it makes them prime targets for and exposes them to more discrimination and exploitation.

Other nations have mechanisms in place to reward migrants with permanent residency after working a certain number of years, like the Netherlands after working for five years and Switzerland after 10 years, a blatant discrimination that has not been lost on a migrant worker who theorised, "we have become the new coolies in Canada, good enough to work on the land but not good enough to remain in the country" (Satzewich, 1991:116). This arrangement, therefore, forces them into a circumscribed living arrangement as they have no choice but to adopt a transnational lifestyle stretched across two countries.

Citizenship, therefore, forms the basis upon which migrant workers become disqualified from fully participating in host societies, shunting them from a range of entitlements enjoyed by citizens and exposing their vulnerability to unfair treatment (Standing, 2011; Goldring & Landolt, 2013). One of the contradictions of citizenship is that, while it allows some people to access rights, it, in the same way, 'forgets' others. And this idea of inclusion and exclusion helps to perpetuate inequality. When an individual is included as a full member of society, s/he enjoys vested entitlements and privileges enshrined in the constitution that those excluded do not qualify to share. This is not to suggest that

citizenship is the panacea against exploitation, as not all privileges of citizenship are extended to all citizens. Nevertheless, it can be used as a political means to fight for rights, whereas those without it face an uphill battle (Dagnino, 2003). So, discrimination results in the creation of “non-citizens” who do not enjoy the same complement of rights as do members of the political community to which they migrated (Gibney, 2009:1). All the same, this political practice of treating non-citizens differently is not unique to contemporary times as erstwhile governments established clear distinctions between their citizens and foreigners they flagged as denizens¹² (Standing, 2011). Thus, modern trans-migratory workers are the equivalent of yesteryear’s denizens.

2.6.2 Operationalizing the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program

The SAWP is a masculinized labour regime composed of about 96 percent male participation (Preibisch & Grez, 2010). Surprisingly, after some 27 years of their participation, women linger at a low four percent (Trumper and Wong, 2007). This gender bias reinforces the patriarchal notion of the male as the family breadwinner. As one Ontario grower commented “Jamaicans like more physical work, in their society work is culturally either male or female” (Preibisch and Binford, 2007:18). Such narrative forgets the humanity of workers focusing instead on a false stereotype they use to rationalize migrant workers exploitation and discrimination.

The ideal Jamaican candidate is in the prime of his working years, between the ages of 18 to 45, and physically fit to withstand the rigors of brute labour. The process to recruit farmworkers is initiated in Canada with growers contacting Employment Services and Development Canada (ESDC), the federal department that grants work permits (ESDC, 2018). The ESDC and Citizenship and Immigration Canada have federal oversight for the program (ESDC, 2018). Growers must satisfy, through the completion of a Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA), at a cost of \$150 per applicant, to ESDC that the type of labour they require is not available within the Canadian labour-force and must, therefore, be imported (ESDC, 2018; Trumper & Wong, 2007). So, here we see that the recruitment of mostly migrant men is consistent with the requests of growers with source countries

¹² This concept dates to the era of the Roman Empire describing individuals who resided in Rome for employment purposes and consequently did not enjoy the full entitlements as did Roman citizens (Standing, 2011).

acting on their demands. Thus, the blatant discriminatory recruitment and selection practices (gender bias) utilized in the source countries 'forget' Canada's legislated attempt through the *Employment Equity Act* and *Human Rights Act*, to stamp out employment discrimination (Belcourt *et al.*, 2012).

It is important to note that in recent years the cost incurred in their emigration from Jamaica has been shifted to the migrant farmworkers themselves, making their SAWP participation a costly endeavor and increasingly prohibitive for some recruits to the extent some men now must borrow the money or request family help to secure their place in the program. In the field, I learned that *each seasonal trip* requires the farmworker to secure new biometric data and a Canadian visa at a cost of JA\$26,000 (CDN\$273). The farmworker must also furnish a clean police certificate at a cost of JA\$6000 (CDN\$63). Additionally, each worker must produce a clean bill of health through medical screenings – a cost of JA\$4,000 (CDN\$42). However, their airfare is paid by the employer and recovered through bi-weekly payroll deductions of CDN\$27 until it is retired. So, the initiation and immigration process has been turned into a profitable surplus extraction mechanism in the neoliberal era. Subject to the standard two-week probationary period, their seasonal contracts run anywhere from six weeks to eight months (Government of Canada, 2018). At the end of which they must return home and may or may not be recalled to the farm the following season depending on their performance, an arrangement Satzewich (1991) calls "a form of compulsory rotation and repatriation" (p. 110). The expense cycle detailed above repeats itself each season when each farmworker is re-selected for participation in the SAWP.

During their sojourn in Canada, employers of migrant farmworkers provide them housing accommodation (Walia, 2010). Reid-Musson (2014) views the provision of housing as serving a tactical purpose that "indirectly managed workers' movement such that they did not have strategic visibility in public space" (p.168). According to Walia (2010) "accommodation may be attached to greenhouses with seepage of chemicals and pesticides" (p. 74). So, not only is accommodation inadequate, inconvenient and, in some instances, health-threatening, it is more about the control of racialized bodies, to avoid 'spatial transgression' such that they remain 'forgotten' from sight by local residents. Except, of course, when they are taken to neighbouring towns to conduct their business

before being ushered away from the sight and spaces of white residents, back to the confines of their 'hidden' accommodation to maintain their delitescence.

Migrant workers are made to work sometimes for up to 16 hours per day and are not covered by the statutory employment protections available to most other Canadian workers (Walia, 2010). They are not covered under the *Employment Standards Act*, neither do they enjoy the protection and cushion of the grievance arbitration process as they are also shunted from unionization. As a result, the quality of their lives diminishes. It is this kind of bracketed arrangement that gives the SAWP the character of an apartheid system (Smith, 2013; Walia, 2010). Non-protection by statutory laws means that sometimes they earn below the minimum wage; besides, overtime pay is not a part of their contract, neither are they compensated the premium for working on statutory holidays (Walia, 2010). They are exposed to Canada's extreme temperatures in the hot and often humid summer and sometimes frigid winter, fall, and spring, weather conditions. More alarming is employers' egregious contravention of the occupational health and safety legislation as they allow their employees to perform unsafe work or work in dangerous environments without the requisite protection or training which leads to the compromise of their health (McLaughlin, 2010; Walia, 2010; Trumper & Wong, 2007). In other words, they are not given the benefit of their humanity as captured in Roger's opening quotation. So, employers largely 'forget' the humanity of migrant farmworkers, which does not bode well for them in the long term.

Some employers are also in the habit of confiscating the legal documentation of migrant workers such as their passports, work permits, health and social insurance cards (Walia, 2010). This means that migrant farmworkers' privacy is circumscribed as their requests for these documents from the employer would necessitate an explanation and so it incubates a culture that silences any attempts at complaining, which would merit their repatriation (Walia, 2010). This is another disciplinary mechanism, thus, "migrant worker programs allow for capital to access cheap labour that exists under precarious conditions, the most severe of which is the condition of being deportable" (Walia, 2010:73).

Furthermore, in organizing their workforce, employers capitalize on embodied attributes based on their assessment of migrant workers' anatomical constitution. This amounts to an anatomized

division of labour where the work is arranged on the basis of the generalized anatomy of racialized groups. Mexicans, being shorter in stature are made to crouch lower to the ground, reflective of their ubiquity in the horticulture (flowers) industry, whereas Caribbean workers, being taller than the Mexicans, with longer arms are more utilized in the orchards (Holmes, 2013).

Indeed, there is a striking parallel between the migration patterns and labour mobility during the period of colonialism and the contemporary era of neoliberal-globalization, which does not escape notice. During the colonial era, Africans were shipped across the Atlantic from the African continent to work the slave plantations under some of the most horrific conditions in the Caribbean (Lewis, 2004). In the current era of neoliberal globalization, a similarity is observed in migrant workers importation from the Caribbean and Latin American region to the 21st century 'plantations' located in the north.

2.7 Geographies of (Ephemeral) 'Importance'

Neoliberal globalization is not experienced in the same way everywhere as capital is invested in pursuing what I refer to as '*geographies of (ephemeral) importance*' as a key strategy to enhance capital accumulation. In the case of the SAWP, labour is critical to agriculture so, participants are dislocated, mobilized, exploited and obliterated. As such, peripheral 'forgotten places' and peoples become baptized into a globalized economy where rigid immigration laws suddenly wax flexible in compliance with the dictates of the owners of capital in the north.

But it is the same anti-black racial ontology that linked European colonizers to African labour and birthed the plantation society, which similarly inspired Canada to exploit labour sources from places like Jamaica. Upon selection, these men are then inscribed by the neoliberal order with an ephemeral importance that allows them to get past immigration gatekeepers. But no sooner than they get through immigration, the raced neoliberal market forgets their humanity while extracting surplus value then returns them to the forgotten places where they were originally found. This coordinated maneuvering of farmworkers' lives exemplifies how 'forgetting' is central to states and capitalism. But this arrangement does not negate the agency of the men, who struggle to avoid being erased.

Indeed, the paradox and complexity of this arrangement are striking. While the ephemeral importance inducts workers into the SAWP, it simultaneously disciplines them, becoming their *'Achilles' heel'* as they are disqualified from becoming permanent Canadian residents and excluded from other benefits. It, therefore, becomes less speculative that it is the labour of the people and not the people themselves that is central to this transaction. Hence, the reason I have ascribed them an ephemeral importance due to the desirability of their labour yet embodied undesirability in Canada, beyond the work they have been imported to undertake. Once the seasonal surplus value has been extracted, they are repatriated to Jamaica until the harvest summons their return. Thus, it is important for their legal status to be manipulated, temporarily qualifying them entrance into Canada but denying them citizenship. This seasonality underpins the process that 'forgets' their economic contribution to Canada, for upon their exit at the end of their contracts or when they 'retire,' they become occluded from benefits or suffer its reduction. Thus, it becomes clear that one of the ways that capital exploits cheap, external labour sources is by way of seasonality, enforced by the 'forgetful state.'

As a mechanism that polices and restricts people's movement and masking racism in the process, the immigration system, therefore, privileges some people to travel with ease, allows groups like the seasonal farmworkers to move only when summoned by overseas employers, while others remain sedentary – not moving at all. This is important, because due to capital's intrinsic connection to land, through the expediency of immigration laws, it marshals a steady stream of a typically immobile, racialized, gendered, non-white, precarious workers to the north to sustain programs like the SAWP via a systematic oblivescence borne at the state dimension.

2.8 Important Themes in Extant SAWP Literature

Space restrictions in this thesis make it prohibitive to distill decades and volumes of work into an extensive review. Besides, scholarship on Canadian transnational farmwork is already exhaustive, perhaps to the point of repetition. Since nothing has been documented on farmwork 'retirement,' this contextual descriptive overview is limited only to some key themes of and contributors to Canadian farmwork scholarship. Satzewich's (1991) manuscript, which I have drawn heavily on, furnishes

analyses of Canadian parliamentary archives evidencing racism by the state's manipulation of immigration policies to influence the racial composition of migrant agricultural labour supply. Satzewich's (1991) influential work outlines the incorporation of Caribbean workers (in the contemporary racialized SAWP) as unfree labourers – which restricts mobility in the labour market – and their unsuitability for membership in the Canadian state. Surprisingly, however, Justice Andre's (1990) formative account, which provides a comprehensive overview of the intricacies of the program's operation, whose many themes inform our understanding of Canadian farmwork operations, remains largely uncredited. Bosok's (2002) ethnographic manuscript documents and highlights working conditions of Mexican farmworkers employed in greenhouse production in Southern Ontario.

From a legal perspective, Verma's (2003 and 2007) contributions, through the North-South Institute, *inter alia*, elucidate the workings of the Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) framework between the Canadian federal government and the participant countries and show how the construction of the MOUs circumvents and domesticates international law to avoid legal ramifications. Smith's (2005) contribution from a legal consciousness perspective, challenges the argument by non-legal professionals who claim migrant workers' ignorance of the law and calls for more critical engagement around the law, farmworkers, and resistance. While Russo (2012), also from a legal perspective, makes the case for seasonal migrant workers union representation.

Institutions like the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW) in its status of migrant reports (2011 and 2015) position itself as the principal advocate for labour law reforms while its (2014) publication: *The Great Canadian Rip-Off!* provides an economic report of migrant workers contribution to Canadian society and their prohibition from claiming benefits.

From the perspective of occupational health and safety regimes, McLaughlin's (2009) thesis articulates three major themes: migration, human rights with emphasis on health in her comparative analysis between Jamaican and Mexican workers in Canada and their respective home countries. Hennebry's (2008) work is also sensitive to occupational health and safety issues, particularly with respect to Mexican Latino workers in the SAWP.

By herself, Kerry Preibisch (2003, 2007, 2010), as well as collaboratively, Preibisch and Santamaria (2006); Preibisch & Binford (2007) among many other publications, have contributed significantly to the SAWP literature exploring the organization of racialized labour in the SAWP, and reveals the employers' preference of one nationality over the other and picks up on stereotypes that help to inform employers' prejudices. Many other themes such as social exclusion, gender and the gendered division of labour, worker exploitation and health issues are also addressed. Cecil & Ebanks (1992) take on consumption practices financed by remittances from the SAWP in the participant Caribbean islands and the impact on development in general, while simultaneously examining the attributes of farmworkers. Knowles' (1998) work examines the divergence between the unfreedom that characterizes workers in the program and Jamaican workers' perspectives of the same who dismiss the notion of their incorporated status and assert the economic advantage the opportunity provides. Choudry & Thomas (2013) and Choudry & Smith (2016) have also made important contributions exploring the dynamics of labour organizing in light of migrant workers labour market (im)mobility in Canada. As previously intimated, many other scholars have also contributed to the field focusing on different niches/themes.

However, even with the weight of these works, what is absent in the literature is what happens to migrant farmworkers after they have returned to Jamaica and elsewhere they are imported from to live out the 'retirement' phase of their lives. That existing research only focuses on these workers while they are productive but not following up to see what happens to them in 'retirement' is problematic because such a position debases the worker as it does not see Black men or other racialized migrant farmworkers as complete persons. The farmwork 'retirees' have largely been neglected because a lot of the research is based in aspects of production and doing abstract labour to the extent that researchers become oblivious to the totality or completeness of workers as humans – as raced, gendered, sexualized, and aged bodies. So, it begs the question, is the academy helping to reproduce their oblivion? The fact that migrant farmworkers are only valued when productive and therefore only worth studying while being employed represents a significant theoretical oversight in the migration literature – a gap in the literature that this research attempts to address.

2.9 Conclusion

Racism, classism, and patriarchy complicated by neoliberal-globalization weave a tangled web between Jamaica – and its poor-Black-men-turned-migrant-farmworkers – and Canada’s farmwork program in a continued colonial relationship. The systematic ‘forgetting’ of these Black men underwrites the construction of their vulnerability both at home and abroad. The denial or severe limiting of their educational prospects at home resulted in their gross under-preparation for formal labour market attachment in Jamaica. This is a manifestation of the dimension of the forgetting Jamaican state. So, having been systematically obliterated, complicated by the havoc created by neoliberalism, the resulting army of uneducated men forms the pool from which the precarious racialized labour that sustains the SAWP is drawn. In a neoliberal-globalized world, therefore, the men are compelled by their patriarchal responsibility and impecunity to sell their cheap labour abroad in places where the power that is mapped on to their bodies make them easy targets for and quite often victims of exploitation. Though Canadian laws are in place for their protection, they are not enforced, manifesting a dimension of that state’s ‘forgetting’ migrant farmworkers. So, it is the oblivescence that binds migrant workers to their seasonal movements and articulates their differentiated exclusion in Canada where they are only tolerated for their labour commodity but when the last surplus for the harvest season is extracted, their temporary welcome to Canada also comes to an end. But the process of ‘forgetting’ culminates in severe consequences manifested throughout their participation in the SAWP and especially when migrant farmworkers ‘retire’ from the program. Surprisingly, the rich literature on the Canadian farmworker is silent on migrant workers ‘retirement,’ which helps to reproduce their oblivion. The next chapter presents some of the ways that can help us to understand ‘retirees’ in the SAWP system and demonstrate how the dimensions and processes of forgetting inform the conceptual framework.

Chapter 3. Oblivescence: Framing the Reproduction of Canada's Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program

3.1 Introduction

In this thesis, a multipronged conceptual framework is deployed to grapple with the complexities of the operational 'forgetting' of seasonal migrant farmworkers. After introducing the concept of 'forgetting' and advancing my postulations about its applicability in farmwork systems, I turn to tenets/debates of world-systems theory, neoliberal globalization, and feminist/anti-racist/critical masculinity studies. These discussions form an interlinked framework whose lens will guide this thesis and better inform our understanding of 'forgotten' migrant farmworkers. Some of the traditional theories employed to understand programs such as the SAWP in the past have been subjected to heavy critique as they have failed to recognize capitalism as inherently gendered and racialized. Yet, some of the major correctives also remain incomplete as they focus on the productive lives of racialized migrant workers. Theory often 'forgets' that these workers have complete lives beyond paid work. I contend that integrating 'retired' workers into such theoretical treatments is vital with the starting point of how these workers are 'forgotten' is an important element of the system.

3.2 Conceptualizing the Process of Forgetting

While there are numerous studies on memory, surprisingly, research on 'forgetting' is not as prevalent. Janet Carsten (1995) reminds us that anthropological scholarship on memory is not from a cognitive perspective as taken up by psychologists, it is more of a "loose idea in which people both remember things and forget them" (p.331). In the cognitive sense, however, as explored by psychologists, 'forgetting' is not understood as losing the knowledge once acquired but rather one's inability to access it (Carsten, 1995). However, critical scholars have demonstrated how marginalized people are erased by a 'process of forgetting' or have utilized 'forgetting' as a tool for configuring new identities. Carsten (1995) shares a perspective on the 'process of forgetting' writing about its importance in identity formation among migrant Malays in Langkawi. Carsten (1995) concludes that "the way in which people forget, and what they forget, are not random but systematic and patterned" (p. 331).

But 'forgetting' is also politically constructed. Leela Fernandes (2004) deploys a politics of forgetting that describes the "political-discursive process in which specific marginalized social groups are rendered invisible within the dominant national political culture" (p. 2415). Bent on dislocating and repelling India's metropolitan street-vendors, hawkers and slum-dwellers from urban spaces, this 'process of forgetting' is accomplished via the gentrification of spaces. It is a transformation of space or as Fernandes (2004) flags it, a 'process of exclusion' to accommodate the lifestyle of an emerging Indian middle-class. So, urban real estate development deliberately forced out the squatters and street vendors who traditionally occupied those areas with the state being instrumental in this spatial purging. It is a strategy not entirely new to India as Fernandes (2004) argues that earlier state efforts such as 'Operation Pushback' (p. 2420) rolled-out to purge the state of Bangladeshi immigrants represents another prime example.

Similarly, in Canada, the atrocities committed against non-whites, primarily Indigenous groups, Chinese and Blacks, led to what Lisa Lowe (1996) maps as an ontology of forgetting. This is so because Canada's current ontology "involves forgetting the history of white supremacy, racism, and Western imperial projects that proved central to the state's formation and ascendancy" (Pon, 2009: 66). So, despite the legacy of racism in institutional and systemic forms, the ontology of forgetting this history "perpetuates the view that Canada is a fair and tolerant society" (Pon, 2009:66).

The ontology of forgetting, as it relates to Blacks in general, has a long and sordid history in Canada from the 1600s to their more recent arrivals in the form of the first wave of domestic workers at the turn of the 1900s and the second wave in the 1950s to the current seasonal migrant workers, with which we are concerned, and beyond (Lowe, 1996; Mensah, 2010; Trumper & Wong, 2007). Despite the baggage and ongoing practices of anti-black racism and other forms of oppression, the state can champion the SAWP as a successful labour regime, which has expanded over the last 52 years largely because of a 'process of forgetting.' And seasonal migrant workers are made to feel – by the state, their employers and others – that their participation in Canadian farmwork is an act of Canada's benevolence towards non-whites and a great privilege, when in fact they are subjected to

exclusionary practices and only tolerated in Canada as an underclass for their abstract labour – and only for the duration of the harvest – outside of which they are forgotten.

3.2.1 The Functionality of Forgetting in the Farmwork System

There are various angles from which scholars have analyzed Canada's seasonal farmwork program that has given us significant insight. Yet, there is a systematic 'process of forgetting' which I have identified as a linchpin that structures the program and facilitates its reproduction. In rearticulating or repurposing 'forgetting,' I also allude to Jacques Derrida's (1992) notion of 'erasure' or crossing out, which reinforces this idea of forgetting in farmwork operations. In grappling with erasure, Spivak (quoted in Grau, 2002:360) observes that "this is to write a word, cross it out, and then print both word and delection." So, it is the idea of deleting a word because of its imprecision but at the same time permitting its legibility from the place where it was crossed out because it is needed (Grau, 2002).

Additionally, by 'forgetting,' I also mean the deliberate omission of Blacks. This speaks to the exclusion of the Black body, expediently left out of critical decision-making processes, benefits, and the society since they are not regarded or recognized as part of it. 'Forgetting' also encompasses modes of subjugation, neglect, and marginalization, which render the Black body invisible within the wider societal and institutional structures. 'Forgetting' deems Black bodies inferior, denies them the benefit of their humanity and subjects them to varying modes of oppression.

Indeed, 'forgetting' is built into the structure of society in so far as Black bodies are concerned. Due to how Blacks have been constructed because of embedded historical processes like colonialism and African enslavement, unemployment and uneven development, the capitalist system often operates from that blueprint to forget their existence. But 'forgetting' is also taken up in relation to institutional structures, in that institutions establish themselves based on traditions that are handed down temporally and so, being informed by societal structures, they ignore or minimize the existence of Blacks based on those norms. So, institutions are naturally going to pick up on the idea of what capitalism expects of them, bearing in mind that institutions also enact and enforce laws. For example,

while pension deductions are promptly taken from migrant farmworkers, their retirement, as part of their life course, is 'forgotten.' Thus, if they live in a society that erases them through the enactment of laws, it raises the question, what are they left to do? They have two alternatives a) they acquiesce to being 'forgotten' or b) take agency and respond. So, on a personal level, the individual 'forgetting' is a way of reasserting his existence and resisting that which would have erased him. Thus, 'forgetting' becomes a response to the societal and institutional structures that press upon them.

Therefore, building on the traditions and ideas of 'forgetting' discussed above, I construct an understanding of the 'process of forgetting' as it relates to the SAWP given its versatility and functionality. As a function of the system, the process of forgetting not only serves the interests of the Canadian and Jamaican states and institutions governing the SAWP but also the migrant farmworkers themselves, as agency. Therefore, the 'process of forgetting,' as it relates to farmwork operations, is fluid and paradoxical at its core, reflected in its inconsistent and contradictory manifestations. I have identified two major dimensions orchestrating the process of forgetting: one which emanates from the states' operations – as a top-down process – making it a 'forgetful state' or 'forgetting state' and the other from Jamaican masculinities – as an act of agency – rendering them 'forgetful masculinities' or 'forgetting masculinities' often in response to processes of exclusion by the states working as a bottom-up process as a means of survival. Both dimensions are held in tension to perpetuate the program.

3.2.2 'Forgetful States' or 'Forgetting States'

I postulate that the racist ideology, that informs the construction of the SAWP, drives the systematic 'forgetting' of migrant farmworkers. Therefore, operations that elide, oblivate, marginalize, erase, omit, exclude, disregard, invisibilize, overlook, neglect racialized migrant farmworkers point to efforts that consciously or inadvertently compromise and delegitimize the value of farmworkers, reducing them to mere labour commodity – something workers have resisted for centuries. Their reduction to an objectified labour source robs them of their humanity with implications for their rights, adequate health and safety protection at work, respect, identity, and legitimate benefits, which they are invariably denied. This systematic oblivescence infiltrates states and institutions to inform and

script policies, which normalizes practices and traditions governing the SAWP that oblivate racialized migrant workers, with severe consequences while they work and after they leave the program. Central among these are state policies that, for decades, have denied them citizenship. Policies designed to extract surpluses but frustrate their efforts and eligibility to secure social benefits, which is mirrored in the elision of their economic contributions to the tune of billions of dollars and denied social benefits.

Employers' tendency to arbitrarily repatriate migrant workers is scripted into the bilateral agreement between Jamaica and Canada (Government of Canada, 2018). This is an act of forgetting. Such practice of forgetting becomes normalized as a 'logic' that justifies this wanton and discriminatory behaviour. Normalized logic furnishes justificatory 'mental notes' like 'it only makes sense.' It only makes sense if a worker becomes 'problematic' that he (and it is usually he) be repatriated because of the potential to disrupt production. In other words, a logic of forgetting is exemplified in institutional practices of employee repatriation when their labour is constructed to be undesirable. But it is only logical because migrant farmworkers have been dehumanized. The endorsement of this practice by the Jamaican state is a 'process of forgetting' that overlooks the protection of Jamaican migrant workers in Canada. The policies and practices of the 'forgetful' Canadian state are influenced primarily by racism, capitalism and hegemonic white masculinity and enforced by the 'forgetful' Jamaican state's reliance on a Black masculine underclass that is subjugated in Canada because of their race and internalized patriarchal responsibility to sustain and help reproduce the program.

So, the process of 'forgetting' is effectuated by the state in the various policies and practices governing the SAWP. This thesis does not contemplate any new theory of the capitalist state. However, it is important to note that the state is the crucible for "a body of institutions which are centrally organized around the intentionality of control with a given apparatus of enforcement at its command and basis" (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 2005:22). Indeed, this dissertation offers 'forgetting' as an alternative calculus in thinking about how capitalist states function, which makes 'forgetting' one complementary tool within existing frameworks. In no way, therefore, does 'forgetting' represent a departure from the status quo.

3.2.3 *'Forgetful Masculinities' or 'Forgetting Masculinities'*

But while state and institutional actors mobilize bureaucratic policies and practices that exclude and/or render migrant farmworkers invisible, the farmworkers themselves deploy a 'process of forgetting' of their own, not as a cognitive flaw but as survival strategies/mechanisms – acts of personal agency – in response to the states' institutional constraints or practices of 'forgetting.' So, migrant workers' 'forgetting' is triggered in response to the states' 'forgetting' so that, implicitly, it assumes a 'call and response' character.

Therefore, the migrant men use the 'process of forgetting' to survive their social and economic conditions and through that whole logic of forgetting, it helps them to make excuses, or not to think about or 'forget' their conditions – to cope. In other words, 'forgetting' allows them to 'escape' their situation. Thus, with the internalization of that logic of forgetting, they construct courage and optimism that motivate them to maintain their attachment to the farmwork program and it is that space that has also been a site of hope – the possibility that their situation can be different. For how else would they have endured, for so long, the crucibles of oppression experienced in the program as they themselves have recounted and as have been documented by numerous scholars, activists, the media, and others? This is where Lowe's (1996) and Pon's (2009) ontology of forgetting becomes useful because 'forgetting' keeps them forging ahead, eking out their survival, thinking of possibilities, and, thereby reproducing the oppression, year after year; decade after decade.

Thus, being more than a logic they have bought into, to rationalize their participation in an exploitative program, 'forgetting' becomes an exercise of agency, which is a function of their survival. I also argue that for Jamaican farmworkers, 'forgetting,' as agency, is embedded in the legacies and represented in the peculiar tales of the slave folk hero and Ghanaian folkloric spider-trickster Anancy (Donkor, 2016; Roberts, 1990). Anancy, in Jamaica, is the quintessential embodiment of contradiction and resistance. This folkloric creature is calculating, evasive, and guileful; armed with a "counterhegemonic ethos" he is notorious for undermining constraints where "resistance tends to emerge in an unexpected and novel fashion" (Donkor, 2016:2). An enduring quality of Anancy is what Donkor calls 'doubleness or ambiguity' where, while appearing to bolster the social order, he

simultaneously subverts it (Donkor, 2016:72-73). Roberts (1989) argues that Anancy's peculiarities provide a framework for the marginalized to get by reworking themes of ingenuity.

The ontology of forgetting reveals how workers exercising agency navigates institutional structures. Heron (2008) characterizes human agency as "that inherent capacity in each person to think, make choices and act, within and based on the socio-economic, political and cultural forces around them, in order to improve themselves and their families and communities" (p. 87). The choices that people make are driven by their belief systems, chief of which is personal efficacy – a belief system that Bandura (2000) argues is the bedrock of human agency. Bandura (2000) charges that "unless people believe they can produce desired outcomes and forestall undesired ones by their actions, they have little incentive to act or to persevere in the face of difficulties" (p.3). But recently, Straus (2018) laments the attention scholars place on worker agency at production sites to the neglect of social reproduction. While Mitchell's exhortation (referenced by Straus, 2018:5) to focus "worker agency is both a political and an ontological move."

Therefore, within the limitations of their participation in the program in terms of its institutional and societal constraints, migrant men, over the years have challenged the structures pressed upon them, in various ways. But the paradox lies in the reality that notwithstanding the benefits they derive from the SAWP, they end up being 'complicit' in enabling their own oblivescence as they become co-creators of the consequences of the various 'processes of forgetting' – an organized operation that works to erase them – and, in so doing, remain active agents in charting their own destiny. So, 'forgetting' is a dynamic and contradictory process, which while helping them to cope and accrue benefits – via the exercise of agency – it simultaneously erases them.

Indeed, the Black man has had a long history of setting aside his masculinity in the presence of both White men and women when we think about social and race relations on the slave plantation. Therefore, the idea of 'forgetting' is not as novel as it might appear. I contend, therefore, that the 'process of forgetting' has a historical connection that is deeply embedded in slavery and colonialism for part of the colonial process is also a 'process of forgetting,' which is how people are subjugated. Thus, racism and the process by which people become dehumanized are deeply spatialized events,

being tethered to specific locations. The performance of masculinity informs agency and hints to us the motivation behind the farmworkers 'forgetting' themselves. They 'forget' gender roles, farmwork experience, sexual experience. So, should we be surprised that 180 years after the 'abolition' of slavery that Jamaican Black men find themselves in a particular geographic location still setting aside or 'forgetting' their masculinity as a prerequisite to eke out a living they have been denied in their home country? It is here that we also need to look briefly at established theoretical frameworks that have underpinned understandings of the SAWP program and temporary migration more generally.

3.3 World-Systems Theory

Distilled from Marxist epistemological influences, Wallerstein's (1974) world-systems framework is a deeply spatialized perspective that conceptualizes the world into a hierarchy of core, periphery, and semi-peripheral areas, to explain the emergence and dynamics of the "capitalist world economy" as a "total social system" (Martinez-Vela, 2001:1). Core economies like the US and Britain dominate the hierarchical world-systems, appropriating capitalism to elevate themselves (Schuurman, 1993; Meyers, 2002). So, there is an asymmetrical power relationship that organizes the interactions between the core countries that subordinate and take advantage of developing peripheralized ones. Beneath the core nation-states are the semi-peripheral or Newly Industrialized Countries (NICs), like India and Brazil, ever seeking to ascend to the position of the metropolitan states. While at the base of the hierarchy languishes the peripheral countries like Jamaica and others from the developing world that had been and remain underdeveloped by colonialism and more recently by neoliberal globalization (Schuurman, 1993; Sorinel, 2010).

Wallerstein's (1974) world-systems approach conceptualizes a global economy structured by market forces with countries co-dependent on each other for the resources necessary for their survival. The core countries with their powerful military, economic might, and advanced technology are deeply entrenched in capital-intensive production processes that rely on advanced skills (Martinez-Vela, 2001; Meyers, 2002; Sorinel, 2010). So, the rich countries can exploit both natural and human resources of less developed countries, an arrangement that reinforces the uneven relationship. Thus, "the systematic transfer of surplus from semi-proletarian sectors in the periphery to the high-

technology, industrialized core” is a process Wallerstein dubs, *unequal exchange* (original emphasis), which leads to *capital accumulation* (Martinez-Vela, 2001:4). The exploitation of their labour and raw materials is an impediment to the growth and development of peripheral nations like Jamaica, which are highly indebted and dependent. Hence, “peripheral countries are structurally constrained to experience a kind of development that reproduces their subordinate status” (Martinez-Vela, 2001:4).

Inspired by the world-systems perspective, scholars like Portes and Walton (1981), Sassen (1991), and Morawska (1990), among others, have theorized that the roots of global migration are connected to the underpinnings of the global market. Drawing on this tradition, Meyers (2002) argues that the “penetration of capitalist economic relations into peripheral non-capitalistic societies creates a mobile population that is prone to migrate from the periphery to the core” and this is compounded by historical processes of colonization (p.129-130). So, it is a tradition that has also been used by scholars to explain both seasonal and more long-term migration schemes like the SAWP and the live-in caregiver program.

But even though world-systems emerged as an alternative framework to the development theory, it has stirred no little debate to the extent that it has largely been discredited. Scholars (see Flint, 2010; Harvey, 2003; Meyers, 2002; Pieterse, 1988; Brubaker, 2009) have pointed out some of the shortcomings of world-systems thinking. Pieterse (1988) dubs the world-systems perspective, “a retro-active elaboration of dependency theory concerned with the historical explanation of underdevelopment” (p. 257). The causative links between the lack of socio-economic progress and dependency have been called into question (Meyers, 2002). Indeed, with its emphasis on political economy, political and social structures have been left under-theorized (Brubaker, 2009). Its theoretic inflexibility has also been challenged and so, Meyers (2002) contends that it cannot account for “Third World countries that have been relatively successful from an economic standpoint” (p. 130). Therefore, with the constantly-changing landscape of the globe, the classification of some countries will have to be reworked as they do not fit neatly into Wallerstein’s taxonomy. So, it calls the relevance of the perspective into question given it is so steeped in western Europe’s historical development. Pieterse (1988) argues that the utilization of the word ‘systems’ in its title ‘world-systems’ is conceptually

problematic, without epistemological referent and uncritical, which makes it cumbersome and restrictive in its utility. Flint (2010), meanwhile, is concerned with the minimization of states' agencies and actors.

And so, Pieterse (1988) billed the world-systems perspective “an economic geography which seeks to pass for history...a world market reductionism with an apocalypse for redemption, a crisis for a way out of a system which it has created as a closed system” (p. 264). A Marxist scrutiny of immigration argues that heterogeneous immigrants are imported primarily to divide the working class (due to the tension they create) making it difficult to achieve class unity; but in reality, immigration policies have largely been discriminatory against immigrants, irrespective of their origin (Meyers, 2002). But Wallerstein did not discuss immigrants after their return, as in the case of ‘retired’ migrant workers, and also ‘forgot’ a race analysis, which is critical to any migration discussion. And with the theory being completely structural, Wallerstein did not ascribe agency to workers or talk about what it is like to be a person in the periphery and how the individual might respond to institutional limitations.

3.4 Neoliberal Globalization

Becoming a dominant mode of discourse, neoliberalism wields tremendous power in conditioning contemporary human behaviour (Harvey, 2005; Brown, 2015). The logic of neoliberalism enthrones the market, summoning its enforcement in all dimensions of human affairs. But being contradictory at its political and economic theoretic core, it has a decidedly ambivalent relationship with the state upon which it relies for the enforcement of the rule of law and for safeguarding individual freedoms, private property rights, entrepreneurial freedoms, free markets and trade yet contemptuous of its intrusion into market operations (Brown, 2015; Harvey, 2005; Peck & Tickell, 2002; Springer, 2010; Smith, 2012; Kotz, 2015; Hall, 2011). Neoliberalism transforms the state into a manager of the nation on the model of a firm and hollows out democratic citizenship and sovereignty (Brown, 2015). Brown (2015) also argues that neoliberalism is a form of reason that reprograms all aspects of existence in economic terms, not even sparing the most democratic institutions.

However, scholars like Wikan (2015) have sought to disrupt the idea that neoliberalism is a hegemonic doctrine. Drawing on Lindbeck (1984), Wikan (2015) reasons that the prolongation of the welfare state constitutes thievery because “taxation and redistributive policies are seen as an infringement on personal freedom and government interference with private property” (p. 7). And because the full implementation of neoliberalism necessitates its end, there is no clear indication that the welfare state has been abandoned, which brings the hegemony of neoliberalism into question. Wikan (2015) further argues that because of the conflation of conceptual frames, it also has implications for the determination of the strand of liberal theory that is responsible for the current wave of globalization.

But Springer (2010) contends that the hybridized expressions of neoliberalism, consistent with its geopolitical specificities and domestication, add to the confusion around a conceptual consensus. Thus, “the practice of neoliberal statecraft is inescapably and profoundly marked by compromise, calculation and contradiction. There is no blueprint. There is not even a map” (Peck, 2010 quoted in Springer, 2010:1028-9). So, neoliberalism is not monolithic, but rather like a chameleon it assumes the colour of the place in which it settles; producing an “uneven geographical development of neoliberalism” (Harvey, 2005:13). However, given the global intensity of recent economic transformations, Kotz (2015) insists that this current epoch is best branded the “neoliberal era” (p. 23).

When the crises of the late 1960s and 1970s shook the capitalist social order, neoliberalism emerged to dislodge¹³ regulated capitalism and muzzle its attendant threats (Harvey, 2005; Kotz, 2015). Neoliberalism was heralded and promoted in place of regulated capitalism and framed in British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher’s phrase-turned-acronym ‘there is no alternative’ (TINA) (Weis, 2005:117). Whereas some states, like Canada, conformed to (and in some cases drove) neoliberal practices, developing states had it thrust upon them (Brown, 2015). Prime Minister Michael Manley’s initial vociferous opposition to neoliberal ideals positioned Jamaica on a collision course with its guardians and his eventual acquiescence to the IMF, elicited the most severe economic punishment

¹³Once a form of capitalism has outlived its expediency it implodes into a crisis and becomes disembedded by another mutation of capitalism (Harvey, 2005).

meted out to any country in the Western Hemisphere (Manley, 1987). The guardians of this economic doctrine – International Financial Institutions (IFIs) – developed at the Bretton Woods Conference in 1944 to safeguard the stability of the world’s financial systems, led by the IMF in collaboration with the World Bank, fully exploited this leverage through what was termed Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) in exchange for loans (Springer, 2010). The Washington Consensus¹⁴ or the principles that underpin the SAPs, insisted upon structural economic reforms that emphasized deregulation, privatization, and free trade. These structural reforms served as vehicles that entrapped developing countries like Jamaica with the institution of a political and economic ideology externally imposed.

The implementation of neoliberalism in Jamaica began in the throes of the world financial crisis, complicated by Manley’s open confrontation with multinational bauxite mining companies (as mentioned above). Because transnational banking rules disallowed tremendous bauxite revenues from flowing through the central bank of Jamaica, it created a foreign exchange crisis (Manley, 1987). This resulted in scores of international banks descending upon Jamaica to extract and repatriate the surplus generated from the bauxite industry (Beckford & Witter, 1982). So, this foreign exchange bind exacerbated the trade deficit and coerced Jamaica into its first IMF agreement in 1977. But the huge foreign exchange losses incurred by the steep devaluation of the Jamaican dollar positioned the economy on the edge of collapse; Jamaica’s subsequent IMF tests were fierce, rapid and severe and each time a target was missed, the IMF would intensify its conditions (Manley, 1987). The IMF demanded draconian measures¹⁵ to produce results the country had not been able to achieve since its 1962 independence. Herein is manifested the gross asymmetrical power relations with the IMF bringing to bear its politico-economic weight from the raced neoliberal project to punish a racialized state that dared to oppose MNCs.

The advent of the neoliberal project, in the form of a shock therapy, occasioned socio-economic consequences of epic proportions at the microscale. The removal of subsidies banished

¹⁴ Because the policies (to dominate and exploit developing countries) are designed by groups such as IMF and the World Bank, headquartered in Washington, they have been dubbed the Washington Consensus (Stiglitz, 2003).

¹⁵ The 1976 IMF deal demanded a 40% currency devaluation, total public-sector wage freeze, and a balanced budget; it later insisted that the Jamaican economy be placed on a path to recover what had been lost over several years and be competitive in 12 months (Manley, 1987).

millions into poverty; slashed education budgets closed schools and increased illiteracy rates. Increased healthcare cost placed peoples' lives at risk, while its gender-blind policies rendered a disproportionate effect on women (Mullings, 2009; Stiglitz, 2003). Successive generations of neoliberalism were in response to the havoc it initially created when it was birthed by fiat and force in the 1970s/80s (Brown, 2015). Hence, what is dubbed the Post-Washington Consensus that endorsed more state intervention to ameliorate some of the ills that it created or exacerbated, shifting the register from "destruction and discreditation of Keynesian-Welfarist...to purposeful construction and consolidation of neoliberalized state forms, modes of governance, and regulatory relations" (Peck & Tickell, 2002:384). And now governs as sophisticated common sense transforming everything it touches (Brown, 2015). The current mutation of neoliberalism still promotes the logic of the market, socializes "its subjects" while "disciplining non-compliant," revealed in the increased manifestation of the panoptic society, police militarization, and the proliferation of the prison industrial complex and the securitization of immigration (Peck & Tickell, 2002: 390). This "coercive turn" of the state assumes names such as "police state," the "carceral state," or quite simply, the "neoliberal state" (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2016:138).

Because it has not been fully implemented and due to how it has been adapted in different places, neoliberalism has become fraught with confusion, contradictions and controversies making it a 'rascal concept' (Springer, 2010:2019 referencing Peck *et al.*, 2009). Consequently, it has been criticized as being too promiscuous because of its multiple connections with other theories; pervasive because of its hegemonic ideology; and linked to globalization, it has been blamed for all global economic woes (Springer, 2010). But perpetuating its promiscuous utility, this thesis is keenly concerned with its connection with precarity, race, and globalization, which we consider next.

For Herod (2018) "neoliberalization" refers to how work patterns and protections that characterized much of the twentieth century in many parts of the world are being swept away and replaced by "precarious work," in which workers have few protections and are increasingly working part-time and/or short-time jobs" (p. 56). Conceptualizing precarious work, Herod (2018) sees it as "work which is undertaken involuntarily for low pay, with few if any benefits, and frequently under

dangerous circumstances wherein workers have little regulatory protection from either the state or a union contract...its single most important characteristic, though, is its very lack of certainty and security” (p. 87). The proliferation of precarious work is one process with a real impact on labour in general and racialized labour, in particular, across the globe and it is within the context of the neoliberal inspired transformation of economies that we see the emergence of and prevalence of precarious work (Herod, 2018). However, precarity is a contested concept, not unique to the contemporary neoliberal era – only being institutionalized in the 1990s – but existing long before then (Straus, 2018).

Indeed, with flexibility and insecurity being the hallmarks of the contemporary economic system, Guy Standing (2011) deploys *The Precariat* to account for this ‘class’ of work(er). Those who leave their countries to make a living with the expectation of returning home, Standing (2011) flags as circulants. The precariat is characterized by the ‘forgetting’ of employment security, career prospects, occupational identity or enterprise work benefits and little to no state benefits. Migrant workers are mapped onto the precariat because they form a functional part of production and distribution as governments and multinational capital rely heavily upon them for their disposable labour and contingent relationship with the labour market, ‘forgetting’ their humanity (Standing, 2011). So, ‘forgetting’ drives the flexibility that is used to rationalize the need for precarious work. And so, with the advent of neoliberal globalization, liberalization has tripled the world’s labour supply and all those extra workers were prepared and habituated to laboring for small wages in industrialized countries (Standing, 2011). Since technological innovations have made it easier to move people from one place to the other, globalization facilitates the recruitment and migration of workers located in disparate places on the planet to man production thousands of miles from their homes (Herod, 2018). This global labour regime is built on a logic of dislocation, ‘forgetting’ the importance of the family structure; dislocating workers from the family unit. But we recognize that the worker is also using ‘forgetting’ as agency in response to the structural constraints. While some people choose the flexibility of part-time work to fit their individual lifestyles, such as North American retirees, for the majority of people engaged in precarious work, it is the only form of work available to them (Herod, 2018).

3.4.1 *Neoliberalism and Race*

In his Toronto study, James (2015) demonstrates how neoliberalism is structured by race and complicated by other social variables, facilitating dissimilar labour market outcomes for two educated young Black men of like circumstances. Wacquant's (2012) ethnographic work in Chicago examines the neoliberal retrenchment of social welfare, which resulted in the penalization of poverty or the punishing management of racialized poverty. Similarly, Wilson (2006), in his work on cities and race in the United States, establishes a nexus between the effects of neoliberalism and race, particularly Blacks in marginalized ghettos. But responding to Wilson's (2006) work, Roberts and Mahtani (2010) argue that his treatment of neoliberalism and racism should render both concepts as being co-constitutive as opposed to the former resulting in the latter. For Roberts and Mahtani, (2010) "there is a seductive, common-sense logic to neoliberalism that reproduces racist ideologies" (p. 3). They contend that even though neoliberalism is conceptualized as a socio-economic process with racial consequences, there needs to be a broader debate as to how the economic doctrine "modifies the way race is experienced or understood in society" and propose its conceptualization from "race and neoliberalism towards analyses that race neoliberalism" (Roberts and Mahtani, 2010:3). Racializing neoliberalism, for Roberts and Mahtani (2010), reveal how "race and racism are inextricably embedded in the neoliberal project" emphasizing that it is important to think about "neoliberalism as a facet of a racist society that works to both reinforce the racial structure of society, while also modifying the process of racialization" (p. 3).

Likewise, Davis (2007:349), like Duggan (2003: xvi), views neoliberalism as being "saturated with race." She argues that "in a neoliberal society, individuals are supposedly freed from identity and operate under the limiting assumptions that hard work will be rewarded if the game is played according to rules" (Davis, 2007:350). But if neoliberalism champions meritocracy, then a person's social location should be inconsequential to his or her success because it is linked directly to productivity. Thus, the advent of neoliberalism has further blurred the identification of racism having enthroned the market and its idealism of meritocracy, deflecting social and structural challenges as the problems of the (racialized) individual. But 'forgetting' is the undercurrent that drives these processes. So, the

neoliberal logic, or more suitably – fallacy – is that the market is the great equalizer because it provides equal opportunities to everyone and if a person ends up being poor or unsuccessful, they are to blame because they did not exploit global market opportunities and the outcome is a responsibility that must be owned by the worker, minimizing the salience of race (Bonilla-Silva & Zuberi, 2008; James, 2015; Giroux, 2005). Heron (2008) contends that by so doing, it obfuscates and disconnects any association with poverty, inequality, issues of workers' rights, race, gender, nationality or age. We see here that even though neoliberalism is built around the free market, the reality is that markets are only free in the abstract – utopian. Neither can the market settle everything and is exceedingly difficult to operate independently, hence the reason for constant state intervention for its stability and to keep it sensible. Yet societal and institutional structures are historically invested in 'forgetting' Blacks. So, race remains a stubborn structuring mechanism infusing the market and constantly ordering the ontology of space in the broader context of globalization.

3.4.2 Globalization

The contemporary globalization period since 1991, is what Bowles *et al.*, (2005) flag as “transnational capitalism,” contending that “its most distinctive feature, compared to what existed before, is the integration of the U.S. economy into a world system of trade in goods, migration of people, exchange of knowledge, and footloose investors” (p. 163). Key to the functioning of the new economy is an international division of labour resulting from the geographical expansion of manufacturing, the de-industrialization of the north and by free trade (Roman & Velasco, 2007). This shift in production is manifested in the assemblage or manufacture of goods in what have become global factories - Export Processing Zones (EPZs) and Maquiladoras (Roman & Velasco, 2007).

Although its genealogy extends into the distant past, it was in 1985 that Theodore Levitt minted the term globalization to account for economic transformations on a global scale that affect multiple processes (Stromquist, 2002). Neoliberalism provides the “ideological software” that promotes “competitive globalization” (Peck & Teckell, 2002:380). The new recasting of neoliberal globalization

is manifested in the configuration of economic blocks like the rebranded (USMCA)¹⁶ and the European Union (Otero, 2011). Herod's (2018) treatment of "globalization refers to how numerous economic processes and actors now largely ignore national boundaries" (p. 56). In fact, scholars have left us with no few conceptualizations of globalization, notably Harvey's (1990) 'time-space compression',¹⁷ Giddens (1990) 'time-space distanciation'¹⁸ and Robertson, (1995)/Swyngedouw, (2004) 'glocalization.'¹⁹ Global neoliberal restructuring of economies during the 1980s/1990s has accelerated globalization as a phenomenon, resulting in stronger connections among disparate places on the planet resulting in the compression of time and space and a reordering of relationships within and between countries. Therefore, transcending national borders and interests, neoliberal globalization facilitates the ease of goods and services but generally restricts the free movement of labour through immigration laws, which, according to Overbeek (2002), highlights the fact that globalization was never about the free movement of people/labour across borders but for capital accumulation purposes.

Notwithstanding, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2012), argues that one in seven people live outside their country and region and the catalyst for this mobility is varied but connected to globalization. Indeed, the reshaping of the world leaves some people in a better position, but far more people are left in a worse position, widening the inequality gap. The uneven development of globalization means not everyone benefits, which makes globalization a paradoxical phenomenon in that while it integrates, it simultaneously divides. As a result, poverty and inequality remain the lot of millions and their economic peripheralization is a signifier of their political peripheralization so that they mostly feel handicap to effect positive changes to better their circumstances (Heron, 2008).

Even the contemporary model for development panders to globalization, as development policies²⁰ are informed by the neoliberal ideology, which has implications for the inequalities

¹⁶ United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement, previously known as North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

¹⁷ This is temporal restructuring that conquers and diminishes the limitations of space and similarly the spatial reorganization that condenses the restraints of time (Harvey, 1990).

¹⁸ "The intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa" (Giddens, 1990:64)

¹⁹ This is how the local and global connects or the global diffusion of local ideas to the extent that the local becomes globalized, the emphasis here is the local being scaled to the global (Robertson, 1995).

²⁰ "Neoliberalism promotes a 'development strategy' that emphasizes efficiency, growth and competitiveness over social justice and redistribution" (Heron, 2008:89). Here, the metrics of neoliberal ideology are brought to bear on development.

manifested among states and people alike (Heron, 2008). I add that inequalities experienced are largely informed by 'forgetting.' "Globalization and neoliberalism, being twin processes at both ideological and empirical levels, often overlap in terms of policy prescriptions that dominate the development agenda in this twenty-first century" (Heron, 2008: 97). But even with the good intentions of the development agenda, embedded historical processes at the institutional level leave millions excluded and disenfranchised, with 'forgetting' implicated in the process. For example, the racialized migrant worker that is 'forgotten' by states in both countries of origin and destination in order to facilitate the flow of global labour.

For Bonacich *et al.*, (2008), race shapes global capitalism and as such, the authors deploy what they call the racialization of global labour to show its applicability in contemporary globalization. They contend that capitalism is organized within a global system of white supremacy where workers find themselves in groups that are racialized and gendered and not only that but the racialization of labour also disproportionately locates non-whites in exploitative and abusive conditions (Bonacich *et al.*, 2008). So, in this discussion, race must be engaged as a fundamental organizing principle of global capitalism (Bonacich *et al.*, 2008). They further argue that racialization is a mechanism that capital depends on to exploit labour, where peoples of the developing world are targeted and exploited because within the economy of globalism, they are the most politically, socially and economically disenfranchised groups. Thus, people of the developing world are often shuttled back and forth from home to where capital demands their labour power such that transnationalism emerges as part of the broader process of neoliberal globalization as the capitalist production relies upon the interdependence of people, which necessitates global connectivity.

Earlier understandings of immigration studies were much preoccupied with notions of assimilation and integration (Kelly, 2003; Man, 2007; Simmons & Plaza, 2006). But scholars have realized that often when people migrated, they did not abandon their homelands as considerable linkages are formulated and sustained between the host and home countries. Hence, research has caught up with the reality that innumerable immigrants remain socially, emotionally, economically and politically connected to home even while they live and work abroad (Kelly, 2003). This phenomenon

started to become more apparent to scholars over the past two decades and has given rise to the concept of transnationalism. Pioneer scholars, grappling with contemporary transnationalism, like Nina Glick Schiller and Linda Bash (1995) have done much to popularize the concept, arguing that immigrants were not plucked up from their homelands but were bound by an obligation to look back, forging a multiplicity of connections with their homelands wherever they settled (Simmons & Plaza, 2006). Transnationalism, therefore, “is the process by which immigrants forge and sustain simultaneous multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement” (Glick Schiller *et al.*, 1995:48). I would add that it is the limitations encountered at societal/institutional levels – that migrants respond to by ‘forgetting’ – that sustain transnational processes/activities.

Harzig & Hoerder (2007) argue that the notion and practice of what is now known as transnationalism had long existed except methods of communication a century ago were not as advanced since travelers depended on snail mail and newspapers for information. Letters communicated desires and gave instructions and warnings about socio-economic conditions that informed pending migration decisions (Harzig & Hoerder, 2007). But the characteristics of the old and new transnationalisms are similar – migrants are still associated with ethnic communities, remittances, and have always communicated with and visited their families back home (Kelly, 2003). What is new about transnationalism is with the diffusion of technologies, their consumption has expanded the options available to migrants to compress time and space, facilitating a wider breadth of virtual quotidian communication practices (Kelly, 2003). Centering race, however, broadens our perspective on migrants’ transnationalism, which we consider next.

3.5 Feminist/Anti-Racist/Critical Masculinity

From the 15th century, Europeans have been preoccupied with the notion of differentiation. Not only did they consecrate themselves as superior to all others on the basis of their race and epistemologies but also arrogated unto themselves the power and authority to reclassify humanity, which they encoded in Enlightenment thought (Dei, 1999). So, race was the foundation for the Europeans’ civilizing missions and the subjugation and enslavement of Africans and used to legislate

segregation in the US as well as Canada (Dei, 1999). Europeans classified and denigrated non-Europeans as barbarians, and only inscribed them with positive attributes like courage and strength conveniently to suit their purposes for capital accumulation (Hier, 2007). Indeed, “what divides this world is first and foremost what species, what race, one belongs to” (Fanon, 1963:5). So, if for more than 500 years, race²¹ has been used to order society and identity formation, then it will remain the main feature of social organization despite “its lack of intrinsic or scientific merit” (Omi & Winant, 1993:3). Race is a “cultural signifier that hides more than it reveals about human variation” (Hier, 2007:25). Yet being a resistant part of identity, “to be without a racial identity is to be in danger of having no identity” (Omi & Winant, 1993:4). Race, therefore, is a social myth as much as it is a social construct, which involves the idea of difference and othering as racial differences are consequential for discriminatory or unequal treatment (Dei, 1999). Thus, race is built on the logic of ‘forgetting’ some groups of humans. Even though they are inextricably linked, Dei (2007) cautions that race should not be conflated with class and should be analytically separated because “to offer a class/materialist-based analysis of race risk failing to engage with non-material dimensions of social existence” (p. 60).

Although the analytical scrutiny should be on racism as opposed to race itself, being oblivious to race risks the perpetuation of racism (Dei, 2007). Racism “presents itself as a cognitive system of binary opposites” as the qualities selected to be devalued in the other are valorized in the “subject group with a positive self-evaluation” (Chavannes, 1989:4). So, racism is a dialectical undertaking juxtaposing the self and the other. The physical differences are the bases upon which superiority/inferiority are assessed, which are used to form the determinants of intellectual worth and moral attributes, while racialization is the social process of grouping people based on race (Mensah, 2010). So, racialization defines individuals primarily on the basis of their phenotypical differences while ‘forgetting’ their historical, economic, political and social context. It is a reductionist, narrow, limited view of an individual or group.

²¹ Mensah (2010) defines race as “a human population distinguished on the basis of socially perceived physical traits such as skin pigmentation, hair texture, facial features and the like” (p.15).

The deployment of an anti-racist framework creates the space to address the prominence of race (articulated with other axes of social oppression) and brings into scrutiny some of the ways it has been muted in scholarship, which alludes to racism and not race itself (Dei, 2007). This is important as Dei (2007:62) further contends that there is a “mythology of racelessness” in Canada. This is as race issues have been swept up and subsumed by the narrative of multiculturalism, which gives an illusion that Canada is one big happy family. Critical anti-racist discourse provides a “framework that works with the salience of race offering an intellectual basis for understanding, researching and developing positive action-oriented solutions to oppression” (Dei, 2007:53).

However, in as much as anti-racist theory is an academic engagement, it is also a political project seeking to challenge/disrupt hegemonic knowledge as there are other ways of knowing (Dei, 1999). So, the feminist/anti-racist perspective endorses this macaronic thesis, which, in addition to the English language, also deploys the authentic Jamaican language, as accessed by research interviewees as opposed to ‘forgetting’ it. Anti-racist perspective also implicates “embodied knowing” in the analysis of race as a lived experience (Dei, 2007:62). So appropriating embodiment allows us to draw on our own experiences and histories via our personal social exchanges, which not only helps in the production of knowledge but also the resistance of hegemonic knowledge (Dei, 2007). It, therefore, disrupts the notion that the hegemonic group in Canada is a nameless, unspecified, anonymous racial other as everyone belongs to a racial group (Dei, 2007). Black anti-racism, in particular, put forward a compelling “way of knowing that black bodies experience race differently than other non-white bodies” and calls for the evaluation of racial power dynamics that order the world to unmask how race unravels itself from racism (Dei, 2007:56).

Race is not only mapped on to bodies but converges with other social identities such as gender, historically shaping embodied experiences within different spaces and societal institutions such as the labour market. Here we are specifically concerned with the masculine gender. Gender is a socially constructed term of what it is to be male and female in a given society. Because “gender is a way of structuring social practice, it intersects with other structures like race and class” and the interchange among these structures manifests multiple masculinities (Connell, 1995: 75-76). While

“‘male’ is a biological referent, manhood and masculinity are socially ascribed” (Mohammed, 2004:53). Thus, “manhood is affirmed through homosocial enactment and male validation” (Kimmel 1996 referenced in Nurse, 2004:8). Homosociality accounts for platonic friendships among males. The historical definition of masculinity finds its meaning in the “flight from women,” the repudiation of the feminine and the rejection of male-male intimacy” (Nurse, 2004:8). As such, homophobia is one of its key elements and ‘straight’ men are concerned with not being identified with any emasculated characteristics. For Lewis (2004), masculinity is a “socially constructed set of gendered behaviours and practices of men, which are not frozen in time or culture and which are mediated by notions of race, class, ethnicity, religion, age and sexual orientation, among others” (p.245). Butler (1990), engaged in McDowell (2009:131) renders its practices or norms as being performative. Strengthening this argument, McDowell (2009) adds that this performativity is not accomplished voluntarily but is “the ‘forced reiteration of norms’ that aims for a ‘hegemonic²² ideal of compulsory heterosexuality’” (p. 131). It is “the standard bearer of what it is to be a real man or boy and many males draw inspiration from its cultural library of resources” (McDowell, 2009:193). Patriarchy, masculinism, and sexism lend critical support to hegemonic heterosexual masculinity as it is generally linked with dominant actions as opposed to deference, so every attempt will be made to resist any semblance of an emasculated masculinity (James and Davis, 2014; McDowell, 2009).

For Connell (1995), patriarchy refers to a “system of gender domination” (p.41) or the dominance of males in society, reinforced through the social relations between both genders. Kimmel and Messner (1998) argue that the subjugation of subordinate masculinities, along with the oppression of women, reinforce and reproduce patriarchy. But Ehrenreich (1995) finds patriarchy “anachronistic” since “we are no longer bound to each other by economic necessity” (p.289). While masculinism is the philosophy of male supremacy or the doctrine behind masculine super-ordination and dominance, it “accepts heterosexuality and the existing division of labour as normal and is resistant to change and

²²Hegemony, as theorized by Antonio Gramsci, operates through discourses where, overtime, ideas are socialized to the point of normalization, regardless of whether or not those ideas are right or even reasonable (Connell, 2005; Castree *et al*, 2006; Hope, 2010). Therefore, in Gramscian parlance, hegemonic masculinity is the superior mutation of masculinity that dominates the hierarchy of masculinities, and is underpinned by heterosexuality and homophobia, which subjugate women, homosexuals and effeminate men (Hope, 2010; Cowell, 2011; McDowell, 2009).

not subject to fluctuation over time” (Brittan, 1989:195). So, while masculinism panders to the normalization of differentiation, masculinity is transformative and contingent. However, hegemonic masculinity is not monolithic but assumes the hegemonic rank in a specific set of gender relations; so, it is not a perpetual position as it is subjected to contestations (Connell, 1995). Within this hegemonic gender relations, some men, along with women, are subjugated and while not all men practice hegemonic masculinity, many men benefit from the general subjugation of women. Connell (1995) contends that “masculinities constructed in ways that realize the patriarchal dividend, without the tensions or risks of being the frontline troops of patriarchy are complicit in this sense” (p.79). When race gets introduced to the dynamic, then the relationship manifests marginalization in many ways. While “some masculinities are hegemonic and dominant, others are subordinated and marginalized, the latter being flagged as effeminate and infantile” (Nurse, 2004:7).

According to Connell (1995), masculinity is rooted in the moorings of the capitalist infrastructure and insists that its main purpose under capitalism is to induce men’s participation in the labour market. Not only does this participation secure a legitimate source of income for the man but it also establishes an occupational identity, a sense of purpose and a place in the social order. Crichlow, Deshong, and Lewis (2014) add that in the hegemonic patriarchal societies of the Caribbean, men are oriented to valorize hard work as the breadwinners of their families. Influential studies on Jamaican masculinities were led by scholars like Barry Chevannes (1999) because of the negative stigmas attached to Jamaican fathers. But it was Errol Miller’s (1986) *“Marginalization of the Black Male”* that stirred debates about boys’ lagging performance in education (Reddock, 2004: xiv). In response, Chevannes (1999) argued that boys’ underperformance is correlated to gender performances linked to the process of their socialization (the way they learn to behave) that release boys from duties of domesticity that girls are habituated to do, which allow boys unfettered freedom. But I contend that this essentialist view of males is problematic and cannot be generalized across the multiple spacialities as attention must be given to the scale of analysis.

Exploring Caribbean and ultimately Jamaican masculinities, I adopt a multi-scalar approach since our point of departure pushes us beyond the scale of the Caribbean to map the genealogy of

black masculinity where it is bounded at the international scale from largely African roots. This initiates the emasculation process where black men were deracinated and warehoused on the African continent before being serried into ships, hauled across the Atlantic and sold as slaves in the Caribbean to white men (Lewis, 2004). At the regional scale, they became more defined within the crucibles of the plantation system and indentureship, where white hegemonic masculinity subjugated black men, relegating them as sub-humans – chattel properties (Davis, 2006). As chattel properties, they underwent some of the most unspeakable atrocities that left them without the benefit of their humanity. At the scale of the body, their African-ness was delegitimized – stripped of their identities, names, culture, religion, dignity and more importantly, denied their masculine and patriarchal authority as fathers and husbands, as their children and wives were ripped from them (Davis, 2006). Even documentation of their children’s birth ‘forgot’ their names as fathers (Beckles, 2004). All these levels of dehumanization, I argue, are informed and influenced by processes of ‘forgetting’ at an ontological and pragmatic level as demonstrated in the experiences of SAWP workers.

Mapping Jamaica’s post-colonial hegemonic masculinity, situated in the trappings of the slave plantation, heterosexuality, higher education and economic comforts, Hope (2010) identifies an expression of masculinity that emanates from Jamaica’s dancehall²³ space. This mutation of masculinity is antagonistic towards the colonial underpinnings upon which the Jamaican middle class is built, which traditionally exerted power and control over all other forms of gender expressions (Hope, 2010). The dancehall culture has pervaded and perverted the traditional hegemonic middle-class, affecting language, dress-code and music, and confusing class and gender boundaries (Hope, 2010). Dancehall masculinity is expressed by “projecting fantasized construction of Jamaican lower-class black masculinities onto and against the bodies of Black, inner-city and lower-working-class men” (Hope, 2010:10). Groes-Green (2009) flags this masculine expression ‘protest masculinity’ which is “a marginalized masculinity which cannot be based on the privileges of hegemonic masculinity but needs to rework the themes of male superiority in the context of poverty” (p. 289). This embodied, hyper-

²³ Dancehall is a genre of Jamaican music as well as a popular culture that maps on to a multiplicity of spatial dimensions where the subalterns celebrate themselves, or in other words, it is a cultural space where the disenfranchised deploy their unique gender expressions (Hope, 2010).

heterosexual, gender-expression, appeals to the lower-class for reassuring and legitimizing their manhood, at times to the point of over-compensation. However, while dancehall masculinity aims to subvert the traditional hegemonic masculinity, it dialectically reinforces some of the very ideals it seeks to destabilize, remaining steeped in patriarchy, deeply male-dominated and sometimes violent (Davis, 2006; Hope, 2010). The emergence of this masculinity is the result of socio-institutional exclusions and its expression, therefore, is an act of 'forgetting' read as resistance against those forces.

But long before the rise of dancehall masculinity, Rastafarian ideology, suffused with African sensibilities, had emerged around the 1930s (Chevannes, 1989). The advent of Rastafarianism was not only to foist black nationalism into the consciousness of a Jamaican society that had largely internalized colonialism but more subtly, it also introduced an alternate expression and embodied representation of masculinity. The Rastafarians were ever cognizant that the patriarchal prestige the white man had mapped onto himself, the black man was forbidden from expressing; so, the Rastafarians deployed an expression of masculinity that communicated their 'forgetting' of the white man's subjugation and asserted a dominant exhibition of masculinity (Chevannes, 1989). So, the Rastafarian ideology has had a profound influence in ordering gender expressions, faith, and racial identities. But their codes of masculinism and sweeping ideological opposition to what they determined to be a "Babylon system" (the historical, socio-institutional processes organized under capitalism to 'forget' them) brought the Rastafarians in direct confrontation with the Jamaican state and for decades they were viewed as a threat to national security, constructed as a fringe group of the society (Chevannes, 1989). But the iconic Robert Nesta "Bob" Marley, through his art, and the agency of 'forgetting,' organically became the face of the movement, which helped to steer it from the fringes and not only integrate and normalize Rastafarianism in the Jamaican society but also to globalize it.

However, while Rastafarianism is now embraced and even commercialized in the Jamaican society and beyond, Rasta men with embodied physical markers of the ideology, notably the dreadlocks, are markedly absent from the ranks of the Jamaican 'retired' farmworkers or even active farmworkers. Neither are there any clear expressions of the dancehall variant of masculinity among retired or active farmworkers in the SAWP. We are, therefore, curious to know whether their visible

exclusion from participation in the SAWP represents an oversight, is a matter of competence or the lack thereof, or if the state recruiters harbor lingering apprehensions about their ideological positions for fear it might trouble White 'Massa.' We are curious to know this to establish the basis for their 'forgetting' and why indigenous expressions of Jamaican masculinities have been omitted.

But in addition to categories of race and gender, all individuals share a multiplicity of other identities, not the least are racialized migrant workers who are susceptible to and are the victims of multiple oppressions due to their synchronized social locations. Thus, black feminist scholarship is taken up here as the notion of "intersectionality provides a conceptual language for recognizing that everybody is simultaneously positioned within social categories, such as gender, social class, sexuality and 'race'" (Crenshaw-Williams, 1989 quoted in Phoenix, 2008: 23). But we recognize that intersectionality is also deployed to investigate and comprehend the "complexity in the world, in people, and in human experiences" (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2016:2). There are many social axes of oppression and discrimination that comprise a person's identity and these areas of distinction strengthen each other so full attention must be given to all dimensions of oppression as disregarding a stratum undermines the entire investigation (Davis, 1981; Monture-Angus, 1995). Not only do these social identities co-exist but they also facilitate the construction and perpetuation of oppression.

Thus, intersectionality emerging from feminist/anti-racist thought helps us comprehend how the different variables all fit together with the aim of arriving at a solution that will disenfranchise all that are oppressed – so intersectionality is also useful for its praxis.²⁴ Intersectionality is versatile enough to manage the raft of complexities that characterize the lives of racialized migrant workers as inequality does not impact everyone in the same way, necessarily. Some people, based on their race, gender and other social divisions are more susceptible to global economic changes than others who are better equipped to respond to them and in some instances, even gain from them. So, a feminist/anti-racist framework challenges the notion that global inequality is best explained from a position that only centers class (Caputo, 2009; Dei, 2007; Mitchell, 2013) but brings into scrutiny other areas of social

²⁴ We understand praxis to be the mutual application of both scholarship and practice to grapple with social problems and inform solutions (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2016).

differences like race and gender (Monture-Angus, 1995; Crenshaw, 1991). Ironically, even though intersectionality has been deployed by the subaltern to expose complex and connected layers of oppression that have made them invisible and as a praxis for their political enfranchisement, the notion has largely been discredited by different schools of thought.²⁵ But despite these controversies, a feminist/anti-racist/critical masculinity analytic illuminates a vision of some of the complexities of racialized migrant workers' experience and addresses the simultaneity of discrimination induced by their social locations. There are multiple axes of social divisions (class, gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, citizenship, ability, among others) that work in unison to structure and influence how a society organizes power and the resulting impact it has on people's lives (Monture-Angus, 1995; Crenshaw, 1991).

3.6 Scaffolding an Epistemic Structure of Forgetting

Notwithstanding world-systems' shortcomings, my use of it above finds leverage in its analytical capacity at the state/institutional level. As a participant country in the SAWP, Jamaica has managed to remain in the program for over 50 years and continues to be dominated by Canada and other countries, reproducing its dependency and reinforcing its position as a peripheral accessory to the global capitalist system. This global order is comprised of economies in the core motivated by capitalism that extracts surplus value from poorer peripheral countries via a process of 'forgetting.' These are drawn from uneven trade balances, critical human and natural resources and large interest payments on huge sums of money borrowed from international creditors, leaving little for infrastructure development, the combination of which emasculates Jamaica's productive capacity (Beckford & Witter, 1982). The institutional apparatuses which facilitate the transfer of these surpluses are iconic

²⁵ By mainstream thinkers (Nash, 2008; Weigman, 2012) for being too essentialist and consumed with identities; by left leaning/Marxist-feminist thinkers (Caputo, 2009; Mitchell, 2013) in favour of more structuralist/materialist analyses. Intersectionality has also been applied perversely by the likes of Jessie Daniels (1997) to validate racial injustice as opposed to being used progressively for egalitarian inclusion. From a post-modernist perspective, Brown (1995) also criticizes intersectionality, contending that the focus on identities is neither transformative nor liberating, being invested with a certain quality of disempowerment and with the ability to trigger again the past hurt of victims. But responding to intersectionality's focus on identity politics, Hill Collins & Bilge (2016) invoke Gayatri Spivak's (1996) concept of 'strategic essentialism,' which describes a "political practice whereby an individual or group foregrounds one or more aspects of identity as significant in a situation" (p.125).

capitalist entities like the IMF, the World Bank, and MNCs. Lately, Chinese (construction) investors have penetrated the Jamaican economy laden with concessionary financing for Jamaican state building projects, earning them various duty concessions, tax holidays, and prime land for development (Scott, 2017). These massive, ongoing, US-multi-billion-dollar infrastructure projects are among the newest surplus-extracting-mechanisms.

But while Canada's place in the world-system has been questioned and challenged, I conceptualize Canada's position as a core country. Not only because of its strong economic position but more so because of its ability to systematically extract and exploit human labour from peripheral countries like Jamaica, through a 'process of forgetting,' in ways that other semi-peripheral countries cannot. The world-systems perspective requires the migration of labour to sustain it and so, the core is also reproduced through the system of migration. The SAWP, itself, is further sustained through constant replenishment by the addition of new workers from developing countries via a process that systematically and simultaneously recruits and 'forgets' them.

So, we see geography at the center of how we understand world-systems, which is fortified by racial ideology manifested in Canada's dependence on racialized labour. We, therefore, observe the relationality between the core (Canada) and the periphery (Jamaica) highlighting and connecting not just the spatialized regions but race (embodied labour) and gender as the SAWP is a masculinized and racialized program. Ironically, the very embodied attributes that favour the men in the recruitment and selection process, become the same marginalized social locations that facilitate the construction of their vulnerabilities and ultimately the process that works to 'forget' them, and which migrant workers internalize to 'forget' themselves.

Employing a feminist/anti-racist framework is critical to this research because it does not engage in the consideration of farmworkers as debased or parts of anything but recovers the humanity of Jamaican Black men since it regards them as complete human beings both at the production site and in their so-called 'retirement' where the consequences of forgetting are overwhelmingly evidenced. Thus, the anti-racist perspective features saliently because, as an organizing phenomenon, race has historically structured Canadian farm labour, while racism has long informed

the construction of the SAWP itself and themed the narrative of much Canadian farmwork literature. And since it is oblivescence that makes the program work, it becomes the men, regarded only for their embodied labour who are used and simultaneously forgotten. Poor, racialized men are attractive to the SAWP because of the historical stereotype that has constructed their physical strength as cheap labour and best suited for brute agricultural work that Canadians have typically avoided. Here, I join Fanon (1963) to postulate that racism has an anaesthetizing effect on oppressors, rendering them desensitized to its deleterious influences upon its victims. And while racism anaesthetizes white oppressors, it occludes the farmworkers from meaningful benefits, thereby facilitating oblivescence.

But based on migrant workers place in the social order and the gross asymmetrical power relationships that exist between them and the powerful stakeholders of the farmwork diplomatic corps, it is easy to see migrant workers as disempowered pawns since they do not even form part of the consultation process. Their interests are automatically assumed by reason of their sheer excess, due to Jamaica's high unemployment, which arises from a multiplicity of factors. But even though poor Jamaican Black men might seem stuck in untenable situations, they also exercise some amount of control over their personal lives and the way they leverage power in the global system underwrites their exercise of agency. So, being determined to establish something for themselves and their families, they deploy various processes of forgetting, not as a cognitive flaw but acts of agency – survival mechanisms to overcome and navigate the limits and constraints that socio-institutional structures press upon them. This 'forgetting' plays out within the transnational context both in Jamaica, traveling with the worker in Canada and in 'retirement.' However, the contradiction lies in the reality that 'forgetting' is not only deployed as agency for their survival but in many ways, it also contributes to their erasure, reinforcing the states' dimension of forgetting. Notwithstanding the rewards farmworkers accrue, 'forgetting' results in serious consequences that affect them in the program and visits misery upon them in 'retirement.' But linked to the patriarchal structure, the process of forgetting is also empowering, making deliberate and thoughtful attempts at their family's economic security since it is mantled as the men's primary responsibility and used to maintain their sense of manhood. Their expressions of masculinity, particularly in the presence of white males and around authority

figures, reveal how masculine performances inform agency. So, it is the process of forgetting that is, in many ways, influencing the performance of Black Jamaican masculinities in the farmwork program. But the spatiality of these performances shows the agency of farmworkers as implicated in processes of globalization making them geographical actors (see also Straus, 2018).

We, therefore, recognize the centrality of Jamaican masculinities because of the gender, race and class bias that undergirds the androcentric SAWP. Poor, racialized men are strategic to the whole ontology and operations of 'forgetting' which facilitate the reproduction of the program. This is so because when the requisition for labour is made by an employer, it arrives, in this case, embodied in poor Jamaican Black men. Indeed, the body's physical attributes have always been tied to the work it is employed to perform and gendered assumptions are implicitly factored into job descriptions (Bauder, 2006; McDowell, 2009). One of the obvious reasons for this gender preference is because the rigors of the job appeal to physical strength, an essentialized masculine attribute mapped on to their racialized, gendered, and classed bodies (McDowell, 2009).

But it raises the question, how do they enter the program? With limited job opportunities in Jamaica, the men look abroad, as an act of agency, to sell their labour power and the penetration of neoliberal globalization – that legitimizes precarious labour – into Jamaica facilitates their entrance into the program. The relationship between world-systems, neoliberal globalization, racism, and patriarchy now becomes apparent. Masculinity is central to this transaction because the entire being of the man is caught up in his responsibility to provide for his family. The whole idea of Caribbean masculinity, informed by patriarchy, positions the man at the head of the house invested with his family's economic responsibility. And with neoliberalism consumed with individuality, it forces the men to differentiate and brand an expression of masculinity that increases their chances of being recruited into the program and be rewarded with successive return work opportunities. This is an act of agency.

Thus, men recruited into the program are those willing to transgress and perform a subjugated masculinity pretending to be unbothered by the disruption of their conjugal arrangements and the complex relationship between production and social reproduction across borders. This is crucial as a 'good' worker should not 'backchat' the employer, possess 'physical and emotional stamina', complies

with employment and housing conditions without question and be able to complete his contract (Preibisch & Binford, 2007:24). The employers, in turn, reward compliant – forgetting – farmworkers with return work opportunities, handpicking those who have differentiated their masculinity as ideal for the program by ‘forgetting’ the exploitative treatment and hazardous working conditions, and who have managed their expressions of masculinity to avoid collision with white hegemonic masculinity. All of these factors align to reproduce the farmwork seasonal cycles.

But if farmworkers’ masculine identities are challenged by the migration process, how do they, at the microscale, reconcile and fulfill their gendered roles and reclaim their identities, consistent with patriarchal traditions with which they clearly identify? Also, if the state actively promotes the derogation of a dominant masculinity, which, according to Connell (1995) is a ‘practical accomplishment,’ is it complicit in the process of ‘inferiorizing’ Jamaican men? This ‘inferiorization’ then becomes a process that forgets the importance of farmworkers’ masculine identity while simultaneously legitimizing white-supremacist patriarchy, strengthening the state’s dimension of ‘forgetting’ deployed to ‘forget’ racialized migrant workers.

However, for long-tenured farmworkers, the relationship with a meritocratic neoliberal labour market seems more contradictory. Minorities are targeted for these dirty, dangerous and back-breaking jobs with incommensurate remuneration, yet for all their output and hard work, their just rewards are either diminished or ‘forgotten’ in their ‘retirement’ from the program. It suggests, therefore, that the neoliberal globalized order is not only race-sensitive, but it also romanticizes success, which is elusive to farmworkers because they are ‘forgotten’ by the institutional structures. So, neoliberal globalization is a useful framework for this research because the SAWP is an outcome of a globalized economy, forming parts of larger trends of global economic reforms that take advantage of expanded labour pools of racialized masculinities, who are obliterated in the process of its reproduction. We also see how seasonal migrant work connects to globalization, which, contributes to the racialized and gendered international division of labour. So, the SAWP is an example of precarious neoliberal labour that creates a space for the seasonal movement of a class of racialized workers to meet Canada’s agricultural labour needs.

The anti-racist perspective further challenges the idea that capitalism operates on a plane where any group of workers can be exploited at any time. Rather, it assumes that capitalism, as structured within white-supremacy, is based on the exploitation of Black bodies, dating back many generations. So, it is imperative for us to locate within this discussion, Jamaica's history of European colonialism because its current legacy of uneven, and underdevelopment is directly linked to over five centuries of colonial exploitation, contemporarily exacerbated by neoliberalism. Indeed, there remains a continuity of the colonial state and relationship in the SAWP and it is this heritage of colonialism, linked to 'forgetting' that positions these men in a transnational existence. So, with the limited employment opportunities available in Jamaica, people look for alternative ways and means of survival and migration abroad has always represented an attractive option, demonstrating their agency. But Canada perpetuates colonialism, especially when it denies migrant workers their rightful entitlements. The colonial relationship continues after they leave the program, imprinted on their incomes, on their bodies and material life. Therefore, the anti-racist perspective is advising us to recognize how the world-systems continues to maintain the core/periphery relationship embodied in the SAWP.

Additionally, while racialized farmworkers can legally work in Canada, the historical institutionalization of anti-black racism in socio-institutional structures prohibits them from permanently immigrating there – via a forgetting mechanism called a points system – and requires them to return home at the end of their contracts. This transnational arrangement disciplines farmworkers into 'looking back,' sending home remittances, keeping in touch, and anticipating rejoining their families back home. So, they live out huge periods of their lives, traversing back and forth between home and abroad, responding to the limitations and constraints of the places they are embedded in (Horst, 2007).

Thus, we read the encoding of transnationalism into the bilateral agreements with SAWP participant countries as an institutional dimension of 'forgetting.' So, while transnationalism remains optional for immigrants and citizens, it is coerced for migrant farmworkers because the labour agreement stipulates that they must leave Canada after the completion of their seasonal contracts. I contend that this is a particularly unique situation in which racialized migrant farmworkers have been thrust since they have no alternative than to embrace a transnational lifestyle. Therefore, the strict

enforcement of their temporary immigration into and emigration out of Canada maps a situation specific to migrant farmworkers I flag as – *seasonality* – as opposed to transnationality since their contracts only require them to live seasonally in Canada while they are used as exploitative tools. So, the importance of migrant farmworkers family structure is forgotten while their seasonality in Canada is then used to exclude them from benefits like Employment Insurance and Old Age Security. But this separation also comes at an incredible social cost as considerable strain is brought to bear upon their isolated (seasonal) parental and spousal relationships, accentuating the degree to which a raced neoliberal project, ensconced within white supremacy, has reordered the black family structure, dislocating fathers and ‘forgetting’ them.

But with the program’s history of exploitation, is the Jamaican state ignorant of these challenges? Indeed, Jamaica has liaison officers – state representatives – with intimate knowledge of the conditions associated with the SAWP, embedded in the program, in Canada. Therefore, if after 52 years, the vexed problems that plague the program persist unresolved, then we are curious to know what is Jamaica’s role in helping to reproduce a labour regime that, despite its benefits, remains so problematic? And, if Jamaica encourages out-migration because of its weak economic infrastructure, then how does it ensure that farmworkers return home after they have completed their contracts, instead of trying to hang around Canada’s underground economy until they have regularized their legal status? Because if too many workers abscond from the farms in Canada, it jeopardizes Jamaica’s position in the program, a situation Jamaica does not desire and actively discourages. This raises the inevitable question, is Jamaica a complicit state? Could it be that the problems are neglected to engineer farmworkers’ disinclination to remain in Canada; to demotivate, discourage, obviate and ‘forget’ any kind of would-be affective bond to a land of plenty? If so, while a few men will inevitably abscond, seen as an act of agency and rebellion, most farmworkers would see their participation in the program only as a means to an end, ‘forgetting’ the ‘temporary’ unpleasant inconveniences, while earning a living and looking forward to returning home when their work permits expire. Then anticipate repeating the cycle again because the logic is, it is only a ‘temporary inconvenience’ for long-term gain – hopefully. Thus, farmworkers are forced into ‘forgetting’ responding to their limitations – while being

systematically forgotten by both states. Both dimensions of 'forgetting' reinforce the migratory cycles and facilitate the reproduction of the SAWP.

3.6.1 *Towards a Conceptual Framework of the 'Forgotten' in the Canadian SAWP*

Therefore, a world-systems perspective and neoliberal globalization – after undergoing major correctives from feminist/anti-racist/critical masculinity perspectives – frame a complex connectivity between Jamaica and advanced capitalist economies like Canada. These theoretical strands can be synchronized to espouse a form of 'political economy of international migration' in which the penetration of neoliberal capitalism/globalization into Jamaica has ushered tens of thousands of racialized men into the ranks of transnational farmwork who are clearly subordinated, exploited and 'forgotten' primarily on the basis of their marginalized social locations. These social categories interlock to create their vulnerability, which engenders processes by which they are exploited and forgotten. The SAWP, then, is a racially structured labour regime, sustained by the coercion, cooptation, subjugation and the systematic 'forgetting' of racialized men operating in a raced neoliberal project that 'forgets' their humanity.

Thus, I used Wallerstein's world-systems perspective along with neoliberal-globalization in constructing a theoretical framework to inform our understanding of temporary farmwork migration. As I have noted, notwithstanding its limitations, world-systems theory, offers a powerful understanding of the processes of accumulation, while the workings of neoliberal globalization facilitate the creation and legitimize the engagement of cheap, precarious, racialized labour, which is exploited to sustain labour regimes like the SAWP, through seasonal migration. We have also relied upon these traditions to inform an understanding of migration. However, these Marxian determinations, while focusing on the site of production, have been limited in analyzing race and gender – particularly in terms of the complex ways these variables intersect. So, I deployed feminist/anti-racist/critical masculinity perspectives as a complementary 'corrective' that enable us to understand the humanity of the men in their so-called 'retirement.' Moreover, the feminist frameworks provide a means by which we might examine the ways

masculinity is lived and expressed, not only during the work-life of the farmworkers, but also in retirement – a significant part of the life course for these Jamaican men.

Ultimately, an understanding of world-systems, neoliberal globalization, and feminist/anti-racist perspectives frame the epistemology of the co-dimensional oblivescence of racialized bodies in the SAWP, that despite the benefits accrued, they generate grave consequences while they work and especially when they 'retire.' So, central to the functioning of the SAWP are two main dimensions of 'forgetting' articulated by the states and the farmworkers themselves. Both dimensions are held in tension reinforcing each other. While white supremacy, hegemonic masculinity and neoliberal globalization (capital) articulate the Canadian dimension of 'forgetting;' the Jamaican state acquiesced primarily due to economics, its subordinated peripheral position, and supply of precarious labour, manifesting the geographies of forgetting in the SAWP. Jamaican masculinities are, in turn, targeted because of their race and social class, and a dysfunctional patriarchy which they have internalized. These various courses create the vulnerabilities that eventuate the process that vanishes them into oblivion, making way for their replacement by new recruits anxiously awaiting their turn. So, the spatialized articulation of both dimensions of forgetting is central to reproducing the program and further entrenches Jamaica's peripheral position in the world-systems.

Thus, global circulation of labour depends upon a process of 'forgetting' mapped on to workers marginalized social identities. And so, 'forgetting' functions as the program's operating system. Should the system become egalitarian to racialized workers and treats them fairly and respectfully, as they often do Canadian workers and retirees, not only would it present a major barrier to overcome, it would also risk becoming unsustainable. Thus, "the current moment of global capitalism, variegated, hybridized, protean, and processual as it may be under neoliberalism, remains the same heartless brute it has always been" (Springer, 2010:1035).

Chapter 4. Knowledge Construction from the Fringes: Methodologies that Resist 'Forgetting'

4.1 Research Philosophy

Embarking upon this intellectual journey to make sense of how and why migrant farmworkers become obliated was facilitated primarily by fieldwork, engaging not only with the 'retired' farmworkers themselves but also with other key stakeholders. Ultimately, in articulating a response to the research questions, this academic exercise also serves to enrich and shape the knowledge of the operations of the SAWP, generally, and farmworkers' unexplored 'retired' lives, in particular. As such, we are, interested in how 'retired' farmworkers describe, in their own words, and make sense of their experience and their lives. So, this exploratory work allows us to illuminate the 'forgotten' dimensions of the phenomenon, by repurposing the notion of 'forgetting' demonstrating how it is used to reproduce the program. Leaving workers 'retired' lives unexplored risk reproducing their 'forgetting' and reinforcing a diminished understanding of the multidimensionality of the SAWP. With this objective in mind, it becomes necessary for us to deploy a qualitative methodology that facilitates such exploration.

Importantly, the examination of this blind spot from the fringes provides us a unique vantage point in understanding processes of forgetting that radiate from the program, which has major implications for their lives in 'retirement.' And since one goal is to use this research as a force for farmworkers' emancipation and empowerment, it necessitates the active involvement and participation of people, which a qualitative methodology permits. Therefore, the next section situates the ontological and epistemological framework – the research philosophy – of this intellectual journey.

An ontological position addresses the perception of reality and the nature of what exists or a person's worldview (Sutrisna, 2009). According to Cunningham (2000), "an ontology is a feature of common sense typically presupposing a theory about human nature from which norms of proper or acceptable behavior flow" (p.465). And so, buried in my worldview is an intersection of historical materialism linked to spirituality and anti-racism. Although historical materialism and spirituality might seem to be contentious in the different ways they appear to influence our understanding of the world, "we should not be flabbergasted at the idea that points of correlation exist at very deep levels of

ontology between Christianity and capitalism” (Schneider 2007: 289). Weber (1958) makes the connection between capitalism and Christianity very clear arguing that the Calvinist persuasion of the Protestant Reformation led the influence on the development of capitalism. He observes that many Protestant Christians – Calvinists in particular – as opposed to Catholics, were also members of the bourgeoisie trading or business-class. In other words, the expansion of contemporary capitalism corresponded, to a large extent, with Calvinistic churches.

But Stark (2005) countered (like scores of other critics)²⁶ that hundreds of years before the advent of the Protestant Reformation, capitalism had long been entrenched in Italian Catholicism. Green (1959) contends that the desire for wealth is not an ambition unique to modern society but an aspiration that maps throughout time and space. The difference, however, is what Weber (1958) identifies as the spirit of modern capitalism. And Green (1959) defines it as “a sense of obligation in money-making,” arguing it is not so much saving money for its use at a later date but “making money as an end in itself, as a profession, as a “calling” (p.7-8). Thus, the creativity that underwrites and perpetuates the spirit of capitalism is not only consistent with “Christian human ontology, but it originated with Christianity in the first place” (Schneider, 2007: 291). Interestingly, the consensus in the Middle Ages between the Church and the state was that wealth accumulation was an evil to be avoided because of its potential for moral decay but has been “canonized as economic virtues” in modern civilization (Weber, 1958:2).

With their racial and epistemic superiority, Europeans positioned themselves as purveyors of civilization and progress mapping non-Europeans as uncivilized and sub-humans necessitating conquest and colonization – the “white man’s burden” or “the burden of civilization” – a mission enabled and reinforced by the church (Bowden, 2012:2). And so, history records their horrific crimes against humanity with the grim account of the trapping of Africans, as chattel, to be enslaved in the

²⁶ Rachfall’s 1909 thesis, rejected Weber’s argument as too simplistic contending that capitalism predated Calvinism, while Tawney in 1926 also challenged the rigor of Weber’s argument placing “more emphasis on the causative role of the whole Protestant movement as well as general political, social, and economic conditions during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Green, 1959: viii-ix).

Americas (Lewis, 2004). Thus, African enslavement in the Caribbean remains among the most heinous manifestations of racism that facilitated the development and enrichment of Europe and the underdevelopment and impoverishment of the colonized African and Caribbean states (Fuchs, 2017). So, we see here that racism and dehumanization are always location-sensitive, whether in the slave dungeons on the African West Coast or on the plantation system of the Americas; its material manifestation is profoundly spatialized. And so, “racism continues to play an important ideological and economic role in capitalism and sustains exclusion and exploitation” (Fuchs, 2017:689). Capitalism, therefore, has not existed without racism whether on the ‘old’ plantation or in more contemporary labour regimes like the SAWP that continue to be structured by race/racism and patriarchy, which is underpinned by cultural and religious influences and processes of forgetting that reproduce it. Therefore, racism persists in ordering and informing how non-whites are treated in varying spheres of our society not only the labour market but in many other areas.

As African descendants, migrant farmworkers’ lives continue to be inexorably shaped by a raced-neoliberal-globalized order and as it turned out, most of the research population are either practicing Christians or are influenced by its ideals. Indeed, the church has played a very complex and controversial role in the lives of Jamaicans both from a spiritual and socio-political perspective. And so, Brown-Spencer (2009) argues that the refusal of “one’s religious/spiritual ontology is to negate an intrinsic part of human identity” and to “devalue that place that spirituality has in the Black life is to negate the multiple aspects of Black identity” (p.70). Cunningham (2000) adds that:

racism as an ontology, and in particular a classificatory and discriminating social ontology, favours analyses that see racism primarily as a matter of exclusion: racial categorization serves racism by erecting boundaries between those worthy of full membership in a society of humans and those not (p.467).

So, an anti-racist ontology looks at the oppression of racialized migrant farmworkers and how it makes their lives miserable and facilitates their obsolescence. Therefore, if it is the elision of racialized farmworkers, due to racism and other forms of oppression that we are concerned with, then it necessitates a full-pronged anti-racist approach to challenge it.

Ontological positions, however, are not without epistemological considerations. Epistemology or the theory of knowledge governs what we can know about reality and the production of knowledge (Sutrisna, 2009). As a researcher, my epistemology and ontology are linked for it is by deciphering and interpreting reality or what I perceive to exist that I arrive at the knowledge advanced in this thesis (Sutrisna, 2009). Therefore, I ground this research in feminist/anti-racist epistemologies (Haraway, 1988; Lather, 1991; Essed, 1991; hooks, 1991; Spivak, 1987) and as such, assume that as an epistemic agent, my identities straddle multiple social classifications, since “knowledge claims are always socially situated” (Harding, 1993:54). So, my perspective as an epistemic agent mirrors what is known and the process by which the knowledge is acquired (Haraway, 1988). Thus, given the situatedness of knowledge, it is standpoint epistemologies that animate this kind of research (Pease, 2013).

As a ‘situated knower,’ therefore, my epistemic claims of farmworkers’ realities are largely influenced not only by my association with and proximity to the farmwork program but by my politics, beliefs and are also linked to the theoretical underpinnings of this research. Thus, in as much as I have attempted to present an objective accounting of reality, I am cognizant of the impact that my subjectivities bring to bear upon decoding reality and the knowledge that is subsequently constructed from it (Mullings, 1999). As such, I reject the disingenuousness locked up in value neutrality as I am the embodiment of a complex individual whose values and beliefs are inextricably bound up in the shaping of this research. It is with such understanding that Lawson (2003) contends that “all knowledge obtained is inevitably partial and fallible, including ontological insight (p.120). Hence, feminists have long taken issue with and have sidestepped the academy’s traditional propensity towards positivistic research that has reinforced the peripheralized position of Blacks and other non-Whites (Collins, 2000).

Deploying feminist epistemologies in researching men’s lives is understandably curious, if not contentious. But it becomes less so when we recognize the current shift in feminist studies toward “gender, allowing issues about the social construction of and geographical variations of masculinity as well as femininity to be raised” (McDowell, 1992:400). Indeed, New (2001) asserts that feminism can

be a vehicle for liberation for groups that are oppressed; advancing a structural definition for oppression as “systematic mistreatment” (p.729). She contends that men, too, are systematically mistreated and since that is the case, taking the experiences of ‘retired’ Jamaican farmworkers into account, it means that they too are oppressed. However, “systematic mistreatment” covers not only material inequalities but also the deprivation of ‘recognition’ and other forms of inclusion necessary for groups and communities to flourish (New, 2001: 732). This is considering how migrant farmworkers have had to misrepresent their masculinity in the presence of White males not to mention their other forms of differentiated treatment in the Canadian society. In extending her argument, New (2001) maintains that ‘oppression’ “is a value-laden term” which calls for the injustices experienced to be emancipated (p.732); but, because men’s needs are unevenly met or remain unmet, for some men, in the current gender order, they also have a latent ‘emancipatory interest’ in their transformation (p.729).

Indeed, Messner (1997) points out that “the costs of being a man are ‘linked to men’s institutional power’” (p.108). And New (2001) is adamant that “this situation can only be avoided through a radical transformation of the gender order in alliance with women” (744). Consistent with that line of thinking, Connell (1995) asserts that “the model of a liberation movement” cannot emanate from “the group that holds the position of power...the project of social justice in gender relations is directed against the interest they share” (p.235). Therefore, the restructuring of the gender order necessitates the support, alliances and coalitions of men and the recognition of men’s mistreatment as oppression is a legitimate starting point. This is not to suggest that ways in which men are oppressed minimize or even eclipse the brutal ways in which women have been oppressed for men profit from the gender order, but the contradiction lies in the fact that they are also mistreated within it (New, 2001). Thus, ‘retired’ farmworkers, like some women are mistreated, marginalized and forgotten as members of society, albeit in different ways. Although New (2001) maintains that it is in the “conservative interest” of males to perpetuate the gender order “that meets some of their human needs...it is also “in their emancipatory interest to create an order that meets their own needs better...without injury and also meets the needs of others” (p.744-745). And so, Fuchs (2003) argues

that “feminism is a political discourse that men can participate in despite their collective history and the automatic privileges that accrue to them on account of their social location” (p.113).

After all, the feminist movement was also about transforming gender relations that likewise liberated men in positive ways that changed the division of labour in the home. Pease (2013) argues that “a pro-feminist perspective locates men’s lives in the context of patriarchy, hegemonic masculinity and the social divisions between men” (p.39). Furthermore, “feminist critiques of masculinist research challenge male researchers to be more reflexive about themselves and the gendered assumptions of their projects” (Hearn 1997 referenced in Pease, 2013:46). Messner (1990) adds that “men studying men can potentially make an important contribution to the overall feminist project” (p.143).

Thus, as custodians and repositories of their own knowledge, feminist epistemology amplifies the voices of the otherwise silenced, ‘forgotten,’ and now ‘retired,’ migrant farmworkers who have something to say about their own lives, experiences and realities (Ackerly and True, 2010; Spivak, 1987). Therefore, the plurality of perspectives that feminist epistemologies embrace frustrate epistemic injustice by utilizing and thereby elevating the perspectives of the ‘forgotten’ farmworkers to produce a more robust system of knowledge. Thus, farmworkers’ theorization about their lives and the farmwork program provides a better understanding of their world and about their realities compared to the perspective gleaned from a privileged vantage point about their experiences. Thus, feminist/anti-racist epistemologies recognize that ‘retired’ Jamaican farmworkers are not oblivious of their own realities and knowledge and are assured and confident about their own experiences.

Having addressed my philosophical positions, the remainder of this methodological chapter lays out the rationale behind my decision to undertake this intellectual exploration and how it was accomplished. So, the harnessing of the data, which, in turn, was decoded and interpreted to construct the knowledge represented in this thesis is taken up here.

4.2 Why Focus on ‘Retired’ Jamaican Migrant Farmworkers?

The full disclosure of my racial, social, political, and of course personal geographical connections to Jamaica’s (overseas) farmwork programs, furnished in the ensuing positionality

subsection, forms the basis of my organic interest studying farmworkers. Aside from these connections, this is also very personal to me because farmwork affects members of my community. Specifically, the way in which migrant farmworkers seemed to vanish after they are jettisoned from the program (as well as from the literature on farmworkers) led to my research question. My reconnaissance visits to the Mona campus of the University of the West Indies, Jamaica, a couple of years prior to the start of the research, did not turn up any work on 'retired' farmworkers. Therefore, I concluded that this research could excavate a subjective accounting of farmworkers' experiences that could provide a rearview examination of the inner workings of the program that might shed some light on why they have been forgotten.

My concentration on male 'retired' Jamaican farmworkers is largely because of the androcentric nature of the program. Also, being a transnational Jamaican scholar with some knowledge of the country affords me an organic familiarity with Jamaica's socio-economic, cultural and political complexities. I also thought that with Jamaica being the first participant country in the SAWP, the voices of its 'retired' participants could help script the knowledge about the socio-economic realities of both their farmwork and post-program experience. Furthermore, not only was I confident that I could access the population that I wished to speak with, my shared positionality with the population and pseudo-'insider' status also positioned me at an advantage to conduct this research.

4.2.1 The Recruitment of 'Retired' Farmwork Interviewees

Several years ago, I was introduced to a current farmworker, Anthony, who spends about six months on a farm, every year, in southwestern Ontario, Canada. Anthony is a second-generation farmworker. His father, who has spent the last three and a half decades working in the SAWP and who is still an active farmworker, was instrumental in influencing Anthony's recruitment into the program about 10 years ago. When I intimated to Anthony my interest in speaking with many ex-Canadian farmworkers about my research, he assured me that I would have no problems locating such individuals.

I feel indebted to Anthony and I am fortunate to have networked with him because his knowledge of my research population was central to my success in locating the interviewees in Jamaica. This is important because, in rural St. Catherine, Jamaica, where I spent my years as a child, and where my mother was active in the recruitment of scores of participants into the farmwork program, and where I had hoped to have located potential research participants, there was none.

Therefore, most of the research interviewees were located through Anthony's instrumentality, leveraging his father's network, knowledge, and geography. In some instances, Anthony relied on connections he had established in several Jamaican parishes. For example, having reached out to one of his peers in the parish of St. Elizabeth, he was able to arrange meetings with several interviewees from that location. A few interviewees referred me to others, so some were also selected utilizing the 'snowball' sampling technique. Snowball recruitment, a colloquialism for purposive sampling, according to Bernard (2011) is for connecting to respondents who are hard to find. Utilizing this technique, however, takes the randomness out of the sampling, resulting in biased samples. It also makes it impossible to identify sampling error.

Not only was Anthony a great resource connecting me with interviewees, but I also depended on him for transportation. Anthony used his private vehicle to shuttle me to and from the nooks and crannies where the interviewees invariably reside, which, if I had depended on Jamaica's public transportation system, it would have taken me a considerably much longer time in the field to cover all the interviews. On the days of the interviews, I would travel from the parish of St. Catherine, where I resided while researching in Jamaica, to meet Anthony at a pre-arranged location in the parish of Manchester. We then traveled together in his car to the various interviewees' addresses, located in the rugged terrains of five parishes.

Securing interviews with Jamaican functionaries proved a bit trickier. As far back as July 2016, I had written to the permanent secretary in Jamaica's Labour Ministry requesting an interview with the appropriate personnel to discuss matters pertaining to SAWP 'retirees' for my graduate research. I was assured an interview would be granted when I arrived in Jamaica for my fieldwork and was requested to follow-up with the Ministry of Labour when I got there. But, after arriving in Jamaica, my

initial attempt to coordinate the interview was denied, much to my chagrin, as I was informed that the interview could no longer be accommodated. This was after waiting several weeks for an email response. Mortified by the thought that the promised interview would not be honoured and being cognizant of the power differential that exists between myself and the ministry of labour, I raised the possibility of going through the channel of the Jamaican prime minister's office to secure the interview. At the mention of involving the prime minister's office, the gatekeeper promptly arranged the interview and within five days I held an audience with the first Jamaican technocrat. When I eventually met with the government functionary, the official explained to me there was a 'mix-up' with another student who had my exact first and last names from another university in Toronto who had requested information on retired tobacco workers, a situation I thought was a peculiar coincidence.

4.2.2 'Retired' Farmworkers' Demographics at a Glance

Table 1 below lists the five parishes of the research area presented in Chapter 2; however, I have anonymized by numbering the 24 districts the interviewees were drawn from to protect their identities. The table also highlights the number of people interviewed in each of the 24 districts, their age, education level, and the number of years they have worked in the SAWP program. The names, as mentioned above are pseudonyms assigned to the interviewees to maintain their anonymity. It is also important to clarify that interviewees only gained some education of the specified 'Education Level' as, invariably, all interviewees dropped out of school before completion of diplomas associated with the specified education levels.

Table 1 – Research Population Demographics of Respondents (n=37)

Parish	District	Interviewee	Age	Education Level	Years in the Program
Clarendon	No. 1	Rupert	70	Elementary	40
	No. 1	Jerry	65	Elementary	31
	No. 1	Andrew	70	Elementary	22
	No. 2	Spencer	76	Elementary	32
	No. 3	Brutus	59	High School	10
	No. 3	Orville	57	Elementary	7
	No. 4	Wilton	61	Elementary	15
	No. 5	Obadiah	62	High School	32
	No. 6	Wayne	58	Elementary	15
	No. 7	Luke	59	Elementary	13

	No. 8	Robert	70	Elementary	36
Manchester	No. 9	Garth	59	Elementary	7
	No. 9	Morgan	66	Elementary	22
	No. 9	Tony	76	Elementary	6
	No. 10	Vincent	64	Elementary	16
	No. 10	Roger	62	Elementary	29
	No. 11	Patrick	70	None	20
	No. 11	Sample	58	High School	8
	No. 12	Monty	65	Elementary	28
	No. 13	Agabus	70	Elementary	31
	No. 14	Delroy	68	Elementary	13
	No. 15	Michael	60	High School	28
	No. 16	George	72	Elementary	40
	No. 17	Bentley	70	None	30
	No. 18	Leroy	58	Elementary	12
St. Elizabeth	No. 19	Oliver	58	Elementary	22
	No. 20	Jethro	58	High School	7
	No. 20	Adam	58	Elementary	6
	No. 20	Emmanuel	62	Elementary	12
	No. 20	Amos	60	None	14
	No. 20	Peter	63	Elementary	15
	No. 20	Moses	58	Elementary	7
	No. 21	Linton	68	Elementary	23
	No. 22	Manuel	76	Elementary	20
Trelawney	No. 23	Egbert	60	Elementary	27
St. Mary	No. 24	Mark	58	Elementary	17
	No. 24	Marcus	63	Elementary	8

4.3 Data Collection

This research project was granted approval by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines.

The Interviews

It can be debated which methods are best suited to capture 'retired' farmworkers experiences. Developing a questionnaire and distributing it to the research interviewees was certainly an option. However, such quantitative method would be ineffective for the research population given that some of them are illiterate. This process would have excluded some key interviewees and otherwise would not have captured the nuances and complexities of their experiences as I was able to do, from an anti-racist position, utilizing the semi-structured interview method. Therefore, this research relied primarily

on semi-structured interviews along with fieldnotes and photographs used to gather the data. Semi-structured interviews are less rigid than structured interviews and the flexibility of the process allowed the conversations to flow in directions that made for wider explorations and probing of many ideas and concerns that arose during the course of the interviews, some of which I had not previously thought about. Murray & Sixsmith (1998) and Bernard (2011) argue that the semi-structured interview is an effective method of data collection based on the richness of data that can be derived from that type of interviewing experience. I also avoided focus groups as coordinating them in remote rural areas would have proven to be too challenging.

I also conducted individual interviews with four professional stakeholders, comprising two Jamaican officials associated with that country's labour ministry in January and February of 2017. The first interview lasted about 50 minutes, while the second interview lasted about 30 minutes. These interviews were conducted at the offices of the Jamaican functionaries in Kingston, Jamaica. The semi-structured interviews were intended to elicit information about the 'retirement' of Jamaican farmworkers who had been employed in the SAWP. I was curious to learn about Jamaica's Labour Ministry's involvement in farmworkers transition from the program due to retirement. Unlike the rigorous screening process that initiates farmworkers into the SAWP, there is no formal process that removes or 'retires' workers from the program. Due to the complexities of forgetting that entrench the program, when farmworkers are jettisoned from the SAWP, invariably, there are no further connections or interactions between these workers and Jamaica's Labour Ministry.

One of the questions I wanted to be answered was the exact number of 'retired' Jamaicans from the SAWP that is collecting a pension. So, what I thought was a simple question proved difficult and remains unanswered as the functionary did not have that information available and promises to furnish the information were never honoured, despite my repeated reminders. This might be partially explained by the workers disposability and underscores the position of the forgetting state. My second request from the Jamaican technocrat for a list of all the men who have participated in the program was denied, citing confidentiality reasons. As a workaround, I then negotiated an anonymized version,

which was promised but never delivered and repeated reminders and follow-ups were also stonewalled as my emails were never responded to by this individual.

The other two professional stakeholders are representatives from the Agricultural Worker's Alliance (AWA) linked to the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW). I had especially anticipated an interview with a Jamaican who was employed to the AWA, whom I met several years ago and through whom I was introduced to my current contacts in the organization. However, due to restructuring in that organization, in 2017, the individual became dislocated and regrettably grew uninterested in participating in the research. However, in previous discussions, the former AWA employee intimated that the organization had sent her to Jamaica to help track down farmworkers who had been discarded from the SAWP without being superannuated. So, her job was to seek out these individuals and sign them up for the Canada Pension Plan pension, which she claimed she had some success doing. Therefore, this research would have benefited from the depth of her insight and experience, information the current AWA employees could not expand on. Nevertheless, I was able to glean other information from the data gathered from the two AWA participants. These interviews, lasting about 45 minutes each, were conducted at the offices of the Agricultural Worker's Alliance in Virgil and Simcoe, Ontario, in May and June of 2017, respectively.

Between January and March of 2017, I conducted personal interviews with 37 'retired' farmworkers, domiciled in 24 districts spread across the five Jamaican parishes highlighted in Chapter 2 and also in table 1 above. The interviewees ranged from 58 to 76 years old, with each man spending an average of 19 years in the program, including two men who topped four decades as farmworkers. Each semi-structured interview lasted between 40 and 60 minutes. I organized the questions to capture their Canadian experience separate from their Jamaican experience and also the transnational experience with different questions for each category of experience. The questions were constructed to fall into the themes (that aligned with the research objectives), which sought their responses to their health, expenditures in 'retirement' and the sustenance of their economic mobility along with more gender-specific concerns. Most of the interviews took place at interviewees' homes or near their homes. About four interviews were conducted at district squares where they felt more

comfortable. To protect their confidentiality, all interviewees in this thesis are identified pseudonymously. Their interviews were audio-recorded. I also took hand-written notes during some of the interviews and in some cases, photographs of their properties.

Having my friend and driver, Anthony, personally introduced me to each interviewee was extremely helpful. I also appreciated that Anthony sensed that the conversations demanded privacy so after the exchange of pleasantries and the informal introductions, he left for the duration of the interviews and reappeared towards their end. This eliminated the awkwardness of me asking Anthony to excuse himself. Anthony had not returned soon enough after one interview, and the weight of the heavy cumulus clouds that threatened all that afternoon, emptied into a brief shower upon us. Orville and I hastened to a nearby shop in the district square to escape the pelting raindrops but were drenched by the time we made it there; however, four hours later when I arrived home, I was completely dry. Orville was grateful for the rain, upon which he depends to water his crops as his forgotten farming district has no irrigation infrastructure. I did not mind getting wet.

It was my profound honour to have been allowed into the interviewees' private spheres. The conversations were easy, and the men were comfortable with most of the subject matters that were discussed except when it came to the topic of sexual relations, they all waxed diffident. I sensed that being their junior, perhaps even my 'outsider' status and their religious conservatism may have been at play. Thus, "what an outsider might consider innocuous or mundane may prove extremely sensitive in a particular research context" (Barrett & Cason, 1997:97). However, I allowed them to share whatever information they were comfortable with so as not to derail the entire interview as they were also at liberty to terminate the interview at any time if they chose. Thus, it is important to recognize that the interviewees also wielded power (O'Leary, 2004).

The wives of some of the interviewees were present when we called at their homes. So, a few of the interviewees' wives inserted themselves into our conversations or were invited by their husbands to join in as some men depended on their spouses to help them make sense of their transnational experience. In all instances where the wives were present and contributed to the interviews, their input was fresh and insightful, tremendously enriching all discussions they supported. This is as there were

several instances where the women prompted the men to 'open-up' about a particular experience (some of which I had not even thought of). Thus, in those instances, I was able to elicit more information from the men than I might have been able to gather independently from them, absent their wives.

On several occasions, as discussed in the health and retirement chapters, it came to light that the interviewees had not been aware of their pension entitlements, let alone to benefit from receiving them. In those instances, I encouraged, even persuaded the interviewees to apply for their pension benefits or fielded questions, to the best of my knowledge, about the process. In those moments, I felt that my purpose in the field exceeded the mere gathering of data as my mission assumed greater significance, educating and empowering the interviewees, who have been 'forgotten' abroad by the Canadian government and also at home by the government of Jamaica. In other respects, I felt I was continuing, perhaps completing the work my mother began as she was instrumental in initiating many young, unattached men from rural Jamaica, into the program. Thus, this research, while not overlooking their work in the program, shines a light on their exit from the SAWP and advocates for the 'remembrance' of this very important yet forgotten group of people, which is personally rewarding.

Qualitative methodology demands sympathetic understanding and some emancipatory interest from the researcher; therefore, by encouraging interviewees to apply for benefits they are entitled to, I fulfilled what is expected of a qualitative researcher. In fact, "research which is not oriented towards transformation effectively reinforces inequality by default" (Lynch, 1999:57). Also, one tenet of critical social theory is for research to lead to the emancipation of the subaltern, which is what was accomplished or initiated in these instances. Thus, emancipatory research ensures that the "research process enables participants to understand and change their situation" (Lynch, 1999:57). Some of the interviews required me to follow-up with the interviewees, mostly pertaining to their pension application. They were all happy that I 'remembered' them and kept in touch. Ultimately, the methodological implications of this study call Dei's (1996) admonition to action that as a proponent of anti-racism, I felt a responsibility to "address questions of social inequality" (p.123).

Secondary data also formed a vital part of the data collection process. It comprised media reports, government sources (websites) and statistical information from agencies like the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) and the Statistical Institute of Jamaica, along with non-government sources alike.

As a token for their participation in the research, I gave each Jamaican interviewee (except the Jamaican elites who graciously refused them) a thank you card. So, at the end of each interview, I presented the interviewee a card enclosed with JA\$500 intended for the purchase of mobile telephone credit – an indispensable commodity to most Jamaicans using a mobile telephone. Similarly, the two AWA (Canadians) participants each received a thank you card enclosed with a \$5.00 Tim Hortons card.

4.4 The use of Jamaican (Patois)

Jamaica's official language is English. However, most Jamaicans speak some variant of patois or Jamaican, the local vernacular or the mother tongue. Language in Jamaica can be conceptualized along a continuum, such that the official language of communication – English –or what is considered the acrolect is along one end of the spectrum and the Jamaican vernacular or the basilect, falls towards the opposite end (Forrester, 2011). So, Jamaica manifests a diglossic situation involving the co-existence and utility of patois and English. But how a speaker pronounces his or her words and the amount or degree of Jamaican dialect employed, vary by geography. Generally, Jamaicans living in or close to urban areas, invariably speak a language closer to English, whereas those from the lower class in the rural areas, where all 'retired' farmworkers originate, are more likely to speak patois more freely. So, class and education are factors in the use of patois, as historically it has been disparaged as a language of the unlearned.

But Christie (2001) argues that since the 1950s when Louise Bennett-Coverley, the late Jamaican educator, poet, and folklorist, showed moxie by challenging the status quo in her liberal and unabashed use of Jamaican patois, attitudes towards its use, over the years, have relaxed. There is now an appetite for and acceptance of patois, which has been normalized in elements of broadcast,

the print media, advertising, and theatre. Moreover, not only is there a Jamaican language unit at the University of the West Indies (Mona) but it also now appears internationally among the languages that are offered at institutions like York University (Jamaican Language Unit, 2009).

More importantly, Jamaican is a well-developed and structured language complete with its alphabet and official writing system called the Cassidy Writing System (Cassidy & LePage, 1967). However, the writing system that Cassidy & LePage employs is one that is phonemically based, which is slightly more unwieldy although it is far more consistent when compared to an etymologically based system, like English. In this text, I followed the academic rigour of the Cassidy Writing System but immediately followed up with the English translation/interpretation to make it easy for my audience to follow along. But it should be noted that many people engaged in writing Jamaican, employ an etymological approach where words are used based on English spelling, which is easier for a general audience to understand (Christie, 2001). However, such practice makes for variations in spelling based on each writers' pronunciations of particular words. Thus, whereas Jamaican is a legitimate language, patois is broken English (Jamaican Language Unit, 2009).

Although the questions of the personal interviews with farmworkers were framed in English, from an anti-racist position, I frequently code-switched to patois to neutralize the power differential between myself and 'retired' farmworkers, and collapse the distance that using only English created, which accomplished my intent to magnify my 'insider' status. This worked well, with most respondents asking which parish I was from, as they were genuinely happy that I 'remembered' them. More importantly, the farmwork interviewees' responses were all delivered in patois, except for a couple of the interviewees' code-switching with English. Additionally, one of the Jamaican functionaries frequently code-switched with patois during the interview. As such, I have transcribed and reproduced the Jamaican language in this thesis, without its sanitization, in my attempt to capture the authenticity and originality of the interviewees' voices and to transmit them to my audience precisely as I have caught them.

The meaning and richness of the Jamaican vernacular lie in how it is accessed by users. Therefore, it has significant implications for my reflexivity, which influences how the data is interpreted

and by extension, how the knowledge is constructed and represented in this thesis. The intonation and expression of the words convey the objective of the speaker so that it is not mere words that are spoken, but the voice variation and inflection, its pitch and tone and cadence are all mobilized to communicate thought. Therefore, the retention of the Jamaican language in this thesis represents a political effort to elevate Jamaican farmworkers' indigenous and cultural knowledge systems as a legitimate mode of communication and an alternative to English, a colonial language that was forced upon colonized people, and which most are not technically conversant with, due to their inadequate institutional learning, facilitated by the process of forgetting. Recall that as a colonial outpost, English was thrust upon Jamaica as a "vital appendage of British colonial rule, one that was to be used as an instrument of oppression, alienation, and marginalization of the indigenous peoples" (Dissanayake, 1993: 337, quoted in Amin 2000:39; Dei & Johal 2005:186). The use of Jamaican, therefore, contests the supremacy of English as the principal mode of communication and its inclusion, effectively makes this document a macaronic thesis.

4.5 Data Organization, Coding, and Analysis

The interview transcriptions began in the field, albeit on a limited basis as I was often exhausted by extensive daily traveling. Nevertheless, I would replay the recordings to keep the conversations fresh and baked into my memory and also in an effort to start identifying some of the themes. But, transcription and coding continued in earnest, once I returned to Canada. Having conducted in excess of 40 interviews, their transcriptions took an exceedingly inordinate amount of time. Then began the coding process. The codes are critical because they encapsulate the crux of the interviewees' utterances, which were then utilized to catalog the data. Since coding is not relegated to researchers, being done intuitively, by everyone as we seek to make sense of our environment, "coding qualitative data is merely a formalization of this process in order to apply it to research and to provide some structure as a way of conveying our interpretations to others" (Cope, 2010:293). Though exhilarating at times, it was simultaneously depressing, unmasking how the system operates to obliterate farmworkers. It also involved some amount of tedium and proved to be a lengthy process.

The coding of each transcribed interview or data document was undertaken in Microsoft word. After all the data documents were coded, I created a 'master document' using an excel spreadsheet, where I assigned each interviewee a column, grouped into the district and parish they resided, where I transferred all corresponding codes. Topics that bore similarity were mapped to the same colour right across the range of columns, creating a dazzling kaleidoscopic document. I also appended a legend that cross-referenced the codes and colours, which served as my codebook (Cope, 2010). Constructing the themes and performing the analyses also entailed a considerable amount of work, but the excel document made it easy to map out tentative themes until more permanent ones became apparent. The analyses, therefore, are grounded in the data-set that I gathered and the themes that emerged inspired the major divisions and subdivisions of this thesis.

During the organization of the data, quotes were earmarked to support particular themes that emerged from the clusters, which made it easy to write the empirical chapters. In fact, more themes emerged than were used in this thesis; therefore, the rest have been earmarked for possible future research.

4.6 The Ties that Bind: Positionality and Reflexivity

That this dissertation explores the socio-economic realities of Jamaican men deemed to have 'retired' from the Canadian farmwork program is hardly coincidental given my mother's prior involvement, recruiting scores of Jamaican candidates into both Canadian and US farmwork programs. My mother's social activism and desire for positive change compelled her to seek alternate employment for many unattached youth and young adults in her immediate and surrounding districts who lacked the requisite qualification for local employment. Besides, not only was my paternal grandfather a US farmworker in the 1960s, I learned my father, a decade later, also dabbled in that same program. In the throes of the global economic crisis that gripped Jamaica in the 1970s, my father, like thousands of Jamaican men, before and after him, secured a farmworker opportunity. I also gathered that my mother kept their brood of boys during his absence from home.

But as it turned out, the farmwork program denied my grandfather and father alike, the chance of making a 'career' out of it, since my grandfather was discarded after working one season and my father, after only two seasonal rotations. Their rejection, as I understood it, had nothing to do with their competence or the lack thereof, but rather, their performances of masculinity collided with the program's expectations for obsequious participants. My grandfather resorted to farming thereafter. And my dad, having confronted episodes of racism and other forms of oppression, being a member of the *Windrush generation*²⁷ as a former British citizen, was not prepared to be stripped any further of his dignity or identity. He upgraded his education and later became a Jamaican civil servant.

But thousands of farmworkers remained entrapped, for decades, in the rotational cycle of the farmwork programs, with most experiencing only glimmers of success. Then they are jettisoned from the program, often without notice, and forgotten, and suitable replacements summoned in their stead. Many of my mother's 'recruits' are still employed in the farmwork program, though some have been discarded along the way, or have fled the program abroad, having used it as a legal opportunity to emigrate from Jamaica. The latter I read as an exercise of personal agency and an open act of rebellion. Yet some participants have 'retired' due to age, illnesses, and injuries. But I had not stuck around long enough to find out what happened after their exit from the program. So, from a very young age, I have had some knowledge of the farmwork initiative.

I invoked here, my progenitors' intricate farmwork connections to underscore the ties that bind me to the farmwork program, the scale of its impact and the basis of my intellectual curiosity and motivation for undertaking this research. And so, throughout the entire research process, I was always conscious of my positionality, which, according to Lather (1991) "shapes our rhetoric and practice" (p. xvii). My social and political identities drape across many intersections, being a Black, male, transnational Jamaican-Canadian, and dichotomized as both an 'insider' as well as an 'outsider,' among so many other identities (the most obvious being a junior scholar). Significantly, as a 'country

²⁷ The Windrush generation refers to Caribbean immigrants who were invited to England during the immediate Post- WW II era to help with the country's reconstruction. Named after the first ship, Empire Windrush that brought the first 492 people from Jamaica in May 1948 at the promulgation of the British Nationality Act, it includes all West Indian immigrants to Britain from 1948 to 1971 when the Immigration Act of 1971 closed the British floodgates. By then some half million West Indians had entered the country as citizens of the British Commonwealth (Horst, 2008).

boy,' I also share 'retired' farmworkers geographical roots being from the bowels of rural Jamaica where thousands of men are recruited into the overseas farmwork programs. I am also friends with many current farmworkers in the SAWP, whose farms I visit during their seasonal deployment to Canada. Thus, I am constantly apprised of the challenges as well as the opportunities the farmwork program presents.

I am as fascinated as I am humbled by my complex, inter-generational connection to Jamaica's overseas farmwork programs. What started as pedestrian economic migration opportunities exploited by my grandfather and father, along with my mother's influential involvement recruiting young men into the programs have come full circle, three generation later, with fresh impetus as my intellectual burden. That my place of privilege has positioned me to postulate a perspective into how these men have been obliterated, with the hope of influencing policy changes to make the program more egalitarian; in a sense, has made this journey transformative. But I have been equally disenchanted by the blatant and engineered injustices – acts of forgetting – appropriated to reproduce the program with dire consequences for the migrant farmworkers employment and 'retirement' experiences.

4.7 Limitations

Even though the research project was undertaken with strategic economic feasibility at the forefront of my consciousness, a comparison of 'retired' Jamaican farmworkers with at least one other nationality represented in the SAWP, be it Mexicans or migrant workers from another Caribbean island, may have produced a more robust and in-depth discussion. However, operating on a restrained student budget eliminated that possibility and simultaneously created the exclusion of other countries as a limitation of this research. Such a shortcoming also shaped a space for future research.

Consumed with the desire to move this research away from the site of production to social reproduction, I inadvertently overlooked the need to engage with employers implicated in 'forgetting' farmworkers, which has created another limitation. Therefore, future research needs to include farm owners among key stakeholders.

I also did not have participants reflect on 'forgetting' as I have utilized it as my theoretical explanation. So getting the men's reflection, to perhaps undo that process, might be an area that merits discovering in follow-up research. Indeed, having subjects reflect on a process they may not be fully conscious of would require a different methodological approach.

The research would also have benefited from a design that directly involved the women in the lives of these 'retired' farmworkers, but, as discussed above, as the research unfolded, the men's wives' input somewhat resolved this omission. Serendipitously, therefore, their wives unplanned insertion into the interviews encouraged the men to be more forthcoming about their experience.

This research would also have been strengthened by the voices of Jamaican women in the SAWP but with a small representation in the program, accessing that population may have proven difficult and made the project too broad. Besides, their involvement remained outside the scope of this research. Therefore, women in the SAWP remains a significant area for future research.

There are a couple interviewees' whose stories or elements thereof are plotted throughout the empirical chapters, which may give the illusion of an over-representation of their voices. However, their stories are compelling enough to merit such editorial decision and also to support how I have represented the knowledge advanced here. It is a move which also underscores the coherence and relatedness and ensures continuity among the chapters. However, as best as I tried, space limitation prevented the representation of every interviewee's voice.

Part I: Forgetful/Forgetting States

Chapter 5. The Injured, Diseased and (Dis)stressed: ‘Forgetting’ Farmworkers in the SAWP and their Health Outcomes Post-SAWP

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the health issues of ex-farmworkers of the Canadian SAWP. These are men whose work relationships with the program have ended, for various reasons, and are now residing in Jamaica. It explores how Black Jamaican farmworkers are co-opted and integrated into a transnational labour regime, sustained by the co-dimensional processes of forgetting, then disposed of when their usefulness has been exhausted. By analyzing primary data in conjunction with the interpretation of secondary data, via the theoretical lens presented in Chapter 3, it highlights not only how masculinity harmonizes with neoliberal capitalism but shows how it intersects and overlaps with race and is structured by it. As will become apparent, ‘forgetting masculinities’ deploy a process of forgetting – acts of agency – in response to the states’ dimensions of forgetting them, revealing both the rewards and consequences of forgetting, which includes their inability to cover their medical expenses.

In mapping the post-program health of ‘retired’ Jamaican farmworkers, I chart a course from Canada where some interviewees sustained musculoskeletal injuries and were repatriated to Jamaica. I first address the issue of occupational health/injuries in the context of their interactions with Ontario’s Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (hereafter referred to as the WSIB), with a nexus to Jamaica’s liaison service and to a lesser extent employers, showing how they ‘forget’ migrant farmworkers. This trajectory brings the focus back to the local scale in Jamaica and leads into a discussion about past chemical usage on the job and speculative health implications then it addresses the chronic illnesses that plague the men in ‘retirement,’ how they are managed, and concludes with a discussion on mental health issues.

5.2 The Injured Body

5.2.1 The Operations of the WSIB cum Jamaican Liaison Service

An autonomous trust agency of the government of Ontario, the WSIB is a no-fault insurance program that absolves employers from litigation. The WSIB underwrites and adjudicates insurance coverage and claims for occupational accidents and disease and manages compensation for a raft of benefits from loss of earnings to medical coverage through to survivor benefits for Ontario workers. This insurance works well for employers as the constant dangers of farmwork, expose and, in many cases, result in varying degrees of musculoskeletal injuries, which are among the most commonly reported and correspondingly represent the most expensive of WSIB's claims (WSIB Ontario, 2017).

Table 2 below furnishes evidence of the nature of bodily injuries and canvases and confirms the dangers with which many farmwork jobs are fraught in terms of the multiplicity of ways that SAWP and non-SAWP farmworkers can and do sustain injuries. Over the past six years, 2014 was the worst with 794 recorded injuries. With 1827 cases reported, sprains and strains are the most prevalent injuries. Fractures are also common with 799 reported cases. Other major reported injuries include 522 cases of cuts, lacerations, and punctures; 95 crushing injuries' cases; 169 concussions; 376 bruises and contusions and 191 scratches and superficial injuries.

Additional tables in Appendix A expand on this data. For instance, there were 125 reported claims for back injuries, which include the spine, spinal cord, and neck. The WSIB maps fractures, injuries to the lower back and shoulder as high impact claims and recorded some 300 of them. But falls are the most dangerous events causing injuries with 785 claims. The point here is that these staggering numbers convincingly demonstrate that agriculture is, in fact, a dangerous sector to work in and people do get injured undertaking their work responsibilities.

So, it is hardly surprising, then, that many interviewees sustained many of these injuries. What is surprising is how the WSIB would handle their cases and the manner in which they have gone about it. Although, in theory, the WSIB provides an array of benefits, the austerity measures it adopted in recent years place farmworkers in a particularly vulnerable situation because of their social location. Additionally, the controversial role played by Jamaica's liaison officers, as will soon become apparent,

converges to produce an oppressive maze for migrant workers to navigate. The power relationships, therefore, that organize the interactions among the employer, WSIB, liaison service, and injured workers, are not only unequal and complicated but becomes an overwhelmingly frustrating experience for Canadian-born workers, let alone migrant farmworkers.

Table 2 - Nature of injuries sustained by male farmworkers from 2011-2016

Nature of Injury	Industry Sector	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Abrasions, scratches & superficial injuries	Agriculture	15	36	43	34	26	37
Amputations or enucleations	Agriculture	16	9	12	9	17	26
Avulsion	Agriculture	5	3	8	2	1	2
Back pain, hurt back	Agriculture	5	4	10	16	8	21
Bruises, contusions	Agriculture	71	44	65	72	65	59
Burns (chemicals)	Agriculture	2	9	3	5	3	2
Bursitis	Agriculture	4	0	3	2	0	3
Concussion	Agriculture	10	16	27	34	41	41
Crushing injuries	Agriculture	22	16	14	11	9	23
Cuts, lacerations, punctures	Agriculture	64	80	80	96	117	85
Dislocation	Agriculture	10	3	6	9	12	10
Disorders of ear including deafness	Agriculture	0	0	1	0	0	0
Fractures	Agriculture	97	121	134	171	131	145
Soreness, pain, hurt, except the back	Agriculture	3	12	31	18	7	9
Sprains and strains	Agriculture	262	314	314	315	317	305
Total		586	667	751	794	754	768

Data Source: WSIB Report Generator; data accessed, organized by the author

A *Toronto Star* article informs that in tackling its \$14 billion unfunded liability, the WSIB, for the past seven years, has deployed severe austerity measures designed to shrink its debt, bringing workers health on a collision course with its merciless and stringent cost-cutting measures (Mojtehedzadeh, 2017). Specifically, the WSIB has indiscriminately deployed a 2-months, pre-determined treatment and recovery period for workers (Mojtehedzadeh, 2017). These neoliberal inspired austerity measures create a system of punishment and rewards even for medical practitioners. Mojtehedzadeh (2017) explains:

The WSIB’s “programs of care” for different types of common workplace injuries are supposed to “integrate recovery and return to work planning.” ...the report found that

treatment is capped by the board at eight weeks, regardless of the worker's expected recovery time or individual circumstances. In some eight-week programs, the report says, physicians get a declining rate of pay the longer the treatment. Doctors also get paid more to tell the board that a worker with a musculoskeletal injury is ready to go back to work. When filling in mandatory treatment outcome forms, doctors are paid \$600 if they deem the worker fit to return to regular duties. But they are paid up to 33 percent less ... if they advise that the worker cannot return to their pre-injury job (Mojtehedzadeh, May 24, 2017).

Thus, the WSIB's efforts to reduce its unfunded liability at the expense of workers health represents a structural dimension of forgetting that jeopardizes workers health. It further creates a system of punishments and rewards even for medical practitioners who become implicated in the process of forgetting, as doctors are incentivized to reduce prognoses for injured workers' recovery times or be economically punished if they refuse to compromise their professional conduct to align with the policy/incentives (Mojtehedzadeh, 2017). An Agricultural Workers Alliance informant concurs: "a lot of the times for the migrant farmworkers, they [the WSIB] do approve the case but we've had cases of workers that their cases get approved and then their doctors say, 'ok you are good to go, you can go back to work.'" Such practices render some doctors complicit in abetting the WSIB to 'forget' the same benefit it authorized. Thus, we see the layered, professionalizing of the state's process of forgetting.

Meet 60-year-old Michael with 28 years of farmwork service. He not only confirmed the above WSIB practice but the tenor of his verbal response communicated his annoyance with it: "*mi bad enoh baas, kaaz a 2013 a di laas chrip mi mek up deh, an mi braik mi fut up deh, an nat iivn a daim*" [I'm not good, sir, because I broke my foot in 2013, which was my last trip to Canada, and I didn't even get a dime]. When I inquired for clarification around the compensation he received, Michael explained, "*Workman Compensation pie mi 75% a mi regula wages an afta dat, noting*" [Workman Compensation paid me 75% of my regular wages and nothing after that]. (The WSIB was previously known, and is still often referred to, as the Workman Compensation Board). Michael reported that after his accident in April 2013, the attending physician authorized eight weeks off work while he remained in Canada, received physiotherapy and biweekly WSIB wage loss payments of about CDN\$200 until July 2013. At that time, instead of a graduated return to regular work duties, Michael lamented that, "*di baas fous*

mi, I ad to werk at liis 15 to 16 uors per die somtain...wen I staatid werkin bak, it didn't iivn iil bikaaz I ad to be goin to fizio, evri die, evri die" [the boss forced me back to work, where I was doing at least 15-16 hours per day, sometimes. And when I started working again the fracture wasn't even healed properly because I had to do physiotherapy every day].

Michael's experience demonstrates how the farmwork project is operationalized to forget the humanity of a migrant worker whose physical labour is extracted to the point of excruciating pain, with scant regard for his health. With little legal rights, Michael relented to the pressure of returning to regular duties. So, when the farmworkers confront the structural domain of power exemplified in the social institutions such as the labour market or government agencies like the WSIB, there is nowhere for them to turn for any kind of political expression (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2016). This is why social justice defenders like the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union and Justicia have stepped in to advocate on their behalf.

So, we see here how neoliberal globalization works to reinforce and legitimize anti-black racism, which aggravates racialized workers quality of life, as they are hijacked into responding by 'forgetting' themselves. Had Michael resisted, it is likely that he may have been repatriated. Thus, he was coerced into taking responsibility for his injury but he also deployed 'forgetting' as agency – a survival mechanism – by working in a state of compromised health. This reveals a contradiction in the SAWP arrangement that ensures workers' physical fitness, in Jamaica, before their induction into the program, which employers' and states 'forget' about soon after.

Michael's experience also simultaneously embodied conflicting performances of masculinity, which is central to the process of forgetting. On the one hand, he is compliant with and not objecting to the cruel demands of a brute boss, while on the other hand, capitulating to toughness, a tenet of hegemonic masculinity, enduring the pain of working while being injured, to maintain a masculine image. Although Michael completed the remainder of his contract and returned to Jamaica, he has not returned to the program for fear that the next accident might be fatal, scoffing, *"I werk 28 ierz, an it was di laas ier dat my fut got broke...an das why I didn't go bak, bikaaz dey giv me noting. So, I say maybi di next ier I go, my nek will break"* [I worked 28 years and it was the last year that I broke my

foot, which is why I didn't return because I was not compensated. So, I said, maybe if I returned to the program, I might have broken my neck]. Michael made a judicious decision to self-select from the program, peradventure he got killed in a future accident. However, as a consequence of forgetting, he continues to experience lingering pain in the area where his foot was fractured because the injury was never completely healed before he was forced back into full work duties.

5.2.2 'Uncle Tom?': The Controversial role of Jamaican Liaison Officers in 'Forgetting'

Charged with managing the operations of the SAWP in Canada, the Jamaican liaison service is reportedly of little help when conflicts arise on the job or whenever workers become injured. In all my discussions with research interviewees about Jamaican liaison officers, they were either ridiculed, rendered adversarial or spoken of contemptuously. For example, Tony shouted, "*dem nuh gud man! Dem nuh luk uot fi yu an a dat di govament sen dem up deh fi do.*" [they're no good. They are uninterested in helping us and that's what the government sent them there to do]. While Mark sneered, "*dem korrop! Dem ier fi di baas said a di stuori, an dem muor stik to di baas stuori*" [they're corrupt! They hear the boss' side of the story and are more inclined to believe him]. So, their animus toward liaison officers is palpable. An informant from the Agricultural Workers Alliance echoed this awareness: "a lot of workers don't trust going into the consulate or liaison office because they know that when workers get injured, oftentimes they get repatriated." Thus, the 'culture of fear' also becomes part of the logic of the state forgetting, which the workers themselves, inadvertently enable.

During his cabbage reaping routine, Vincent recalled, "*mi staat fiil mi bak a stik mi an mi seh Gad, a wanda a wha dis?*" [I started feeling a piercing pain in my back and thought, God, I wonder what this is?]. But exercising agency, Vincent, feigned a healthy work performance to avoid repatriation but confessed, "*pity dem nuh noa weh mi did a fiil wid it*" [little did they know how much pain I was feeling]. He traveled back and forth for two years working in the pain, but it eventually caught up with him after his return to Jamaica at the end of his work season in 2002 when the condition became too severe for him to continue in the program. So, the logic of forgetting, deployed as agency, has a destabilizing effect where, in situations where workers start forgetting their health to remain in the

program, it often becomes self-destructing. Vincent also shared that a few years later, he 'tried' the US farmwork program, but had to quit it, too, because of his aggravated back pain, which shows the long-term economic consequence of forgetting, despite accruing rewards from the program.

So, being cognizant of their own vulnerability, the internalization of fear conditions how farmworkers respond when they become injured on the job as many of their injuries go unreported, especially when their self-diagnosis renders the problem to be inconsequential. With this self-diagnosis, they deploy forgetting as agency and continue to work in an injured state, at their own peril, often exacerbating the injury. Some farmworkers only seek help when the health problem forces them to stop working. It is a situation an informant from the Agricultural Workers Alliance knows all too well, "a lot a times, workers working here tell me, you know, I'm injured, I got injured a month ago, I did not say anything but now I can't work anymore what do I do?" Even though injured workers usually have six months to initiate a claim, the longer they wait to report the injury, the more difficult and complicated it becomes for the WSIB to establish whether the injury was sustained on the job. Receiving any benefit at that point becomes almost impossible and if they are not productive, they are repatriated.

The adversarial role of Jamaican liaison officers is evident in almost all cases, from minor injuries to fatal accidents, to workplace conflicts; practices that underwrite Jamaica's complicity in the construction of workers' vulnerability, their dehumanization, and discriminatory treatment –processes of forgetting enabled by the Jamaican state. The practice of liaison officers then is to arrange workers' repatriation when they become sick/injured as opposed to helping them secure the best quality medical treatment in Canada, which is not readily accessible/available in Jamaica. The case of a fatally injured Jamaican worker illustrates the egregious practices of the liaison service. Cole (2016) writing in the *Toronto Star* documented:

When Sheldon McKenzie suffered an ultimately fatal head injury on an Ontario farm in January 2015, his recovery should have been the main concern. Instead, a liaison officer with the Jamaican consulate reportedly made great efforts to have McKenzie sent back to his native Jamaica as soon as possible. According to Marcia Barrett, McKenzie's cousin and a Winnipeg resident, the Jamaican consulate liaison initially told the family McKenzie had suffered a stroke, not head trauma related to a workplace injury. Barrett claims that same official told her McKenzie was available for so-called "medical repatriation," and repeatedly checked with doctors to see if the injured worker, who had portions of his brain removed

because of swelling and internal bleeding, was healthy enough to be flown to Kingston, Jamaica (Cole, May 19, 2016).

Although the farmworker succumbed to his injury, had it not been for the advocacy and vigilance of the concerned relative, the liaison service might have succeeded in its efforts to have him removed from Canada. This exemplifies the dimension of forgetting articulated by the Jamaican state via the liaison officer. But a high-ranking Jamaican government official outlined a process, which for the most part, contradicts the practice of the liaison service whenever a farmworker becomes injured on the job:

[For] anyone [who] is injured, it is reported to the Workman's Compensation Board [sic] and the liaison service and then the follow up takes place. If the person has to go to the hospital or the person has to stay home, they get compensated for the loss of earnings from the job. If it's a very serious injury and they can't [work], well usually though, they are treated where they are, based on doctors' orders. Um, they may stay in hospital for a while, if it's something that they need therapy for, they get therapy; it is paid for by the liaison service and by Workman's Compensation. If it's very serious that they have to have some kind of surgery, most times it's done in Canada. They may get some amount of aftercare until they are able to return home and that is based on doctor's orders. If [the] doctor say they can't move, they have to stay there and be taken care of. Um, whenever it's okay for them to return home, they are handed to another doctor here. And then, as I say before, that is when the ministry welfare team comes in and starts to monitor [the worker]. Sometimes they [the workers] come for treatment, they go to maybe Andrew's [hospital] or even Tony Thwaites [UHWI Hospital] or you have persons who come and get treatment at KPH [Kingston Public Hospital] as well. (Jamaican functionary Interview January 13, 2017).

The state official delineated a set of procedures for various injury scenarios from minor to more serious injuries. But for the power brokers – the WSIB, the employers and the liaison officers – the protocols are 'more honoured in the breach than the observance.' Three times the Jamaican official emphasized medical care based on doctors' orders. This claim is contradictory and complicated to interpret because from Michael's experience with his fractured foot, while he was not repatriated, it was the doctor's orders, influenced by the neoliberal inspired process of forgetting that forced him back to work prematurely. What is not clear, however, is in the case of the fatally injured Jamaican farmworker, the doctor's orders are silenced as Cole (2017) only reported the liaison's officer's preoccupation with the state's process of forgetting – repatriating the dying man.

In any event, for a migrant worker whose WSIB insurance coverage is triggered even before departing Jamaica, with OHIP coverage being activated when he begins working in Canada, that Jamaica's liaison service should seek to arrange medical repatriation after such a critical injury, or for

any injury for that matter, instead of pressing for the best medical care that can be arranged in Canada, is mystifying. Migrant workers pay tens of millions of dollars, annually, in statutory deductions (discussed in more details in Chapter 6), which help subsidize the healthcare system they are entitled to appropriate when needed, only to be repatriated by the state's process of forgetting via the liaison service.

For the liaison officers to act in total contradiction of their duties, suggests an undercurrent that influences such dereliction of responsibility. Their behaviour, then, effectively inscribes their service as institutionalized pawns who function at the behest of the WSIB and employers in 'forgetting' farmworkers. As such, the behaviours of the liaison officers then underwrite their role as the proverbial Uncle Tom – "(the spineless, sexless – or is it impotent? – sidekick of whites)" (West, 1993:83 quoted in Nurse, 2004:10). In so doing, it obfuscates the source of the discrimination, which emanates from the actors with the real power – the WSIB and the employers – who target the migrant workers for discriminatory treatment based on their race and social class. This practice is an element of the process of forgetting reinforced by both states as part of a large world system. The obfuscation of the liaison officers' role then sends a confusing message to the workers and put them in an adversarial relationship with the workers. The arrangement eerily harkens back to the divide and rule strategy that colonial masters deployed to control their enslaved ancestors, only that it is arranged a little more sophisticatedly on the 'new plantation' in contemporary times.

So, given the liaison officers' subordinated position in the system, it might be foolhardy to assume that they independently orchestrate these medical maneuvers, considering their knowledge of workers' insurance protection by both the WSIB and OHIP. So, if the assumption is that they are subordinated in a colonial-type relationship, as is demonstrated by their behaviours interfacing with the WSIB and employers, could it be that when Jamaican farmworkers become injured, even though, in theory, they have medical coverage, the liaison officers are expected to ensure that their countrymen are 'forgotten' by the process of systematic repatriation? This logic of forgetting not only absolves the provincial government of their medical liability, but it also makes way for the replacement of the injured worker. Such behaviour communicates an 'unwritten code,' or the process of forgetting, to which they

are expected to comply when handling injured workers, particularly if there is no resistance from advocacy groups/relatives. The casual optics signify that Jamaican officials, in the capacity of liaison officers, are acting with 'autonomy' but in reality, they have been co-opted into a system that coerces them into preserving and reproducing it via the process of forgetting, for surplus extraction, by white farm owners. This results in their adversarial relationship with the farmworkers. So, when farmworkers become sick or whenever a conflict arises on the job, no progressive disciplinary mechanism is in place, much less observed; instead, the states' process of forgetting enforce their repatriation.

An interaction between Michael, the injured worker mentioned above, and a Jamaican liaison officer calls attention to the relationship between the WSIB and the Jamaican liaison service. Michael complained, *"even while a was coming home, [at] the airport dat ier, di liaison [officer], ask me to sign a piece a paper. I said, 'what for?' [he said] 'to show that I'm fit.' I say, 'I'm not fit!'"* [even while I was returning to Jamaica that year, at the airport the liaison officer requested that I signed a piece of paper. I said, 'what for?' He said, 'to show that you're fit.' I said, 'I'm not fit!']. So, it raises the question, does coercing a worker to commit, in writing, an untruth about his health infer a culture of corruption and collusion among the employer, the WSIB, and the liaison service? The push appears to absolve the WSIB of its liability in denying workers' insurance claims while flushing the inefficiency (forgetting the injured worker) from the system, an impediment to production/capital accumulation.

But what is even more troubling, is the manifest underhandedness of a Jamaican official in seemingly aiding an organization in denying farmworkers' claims to whatever limited benefits they may be entitled to. Thus, the question becomes, is there a culture within the WSIB linked to Jamaica's liaison service that deliberately works to deny bona fide farmworkers' injury claims? What is also evident in Michael's interaction with the liaison officer at the airport is the fluidity of masculinity informing agency. Thus, masculinity is not only profoundly spatially contingent but more importantly, the gendered behaviour appeals to the judicious assessment of external threats which then orders an appropriate behaviour conducive to the moment. This is what Messerschmidt (2016) and De Moya (2004) refer to as situational masculinities. But more than that, I propose that such gendered responses can also be read as an exercise of agency as Michael carefully chose his battles, knowing

when and where to invoke a dominated and a recalcitrant masculine performance. It is these calculated actions that workers like Michael use to appropriate the system. But it also raises the concern as to the level of stress that is brought to bear upon the body for the constant, contingent adjustment to varying circumstances. In assessing mental health shortly, we will meet Obadiah who also shared his fate with a liaison officer.

5.2.3 WSIB, Temporal Policy Shifts and Spatial Implications

There are two contrasting WSIB injury cases that point to another dimension of complexity that helps us appreciate the dynamics of the state's operations of forgetting injured migrant workers in the era of neoliberal globalization. In the mountains of a western parish in rural Jamaica, I was introduced to two men who were injured in the SAWP. Jethro, now 58 years old, started the SAWP in 1991, picking apples in a rural town in Ontario. In 1997, he fell from a tree and sustained permanent damage to one of his shoulders. He was assessed at an Ontario hospital then repatriated to Jamaica. After introducing myself and explaining the purpose of my visit, Jethro's brows furrowed into a quizzical expression while unleashing a calm reproof: *wi get injud diir, dey didn't kaal wi bak. Nobadi kiers bout us. Nobadi falla up an fain bout wat is hap'nin to wi, ow wi ar livin ar wedda wi die ar stil aroun an wedda wi av famili fi kier fa ar nat – nobadi! I say dat to mei self meni taims.* [we get injured there, they didn't call us back. Nobody cares about us. Nobody follows up to find out what is happening to us, how we are getting along or whether we're dead or alive, or if we have a family to care for – nobody! I say that to myself many times] (Jethro's Interview, February 21, 2017).

Jethro has had some time to process his oblivion and is disconcerted by it. He lamented his injury and castigated the institutions for sidelining him from the SAWP then forgetting him. And he not only spoke for himself, he bewailed the conditions of all the interviewees. But as the conversation progressed, Jethro informed me that he has been receiving a monthly benefit cheque since 1998, for a few hundred dollars. Even though Jethro feels abandoned, he still receives some compensation. But it is a benefit that he thinks he might not have received had he not been persistent in its pursuit. Code-

switching between English and patois, Jethro contends that workers must be smart and steadfast in their dealings with the WSIB because:

Those guys don't want money to leave their country, they don't want you to have a lot a money from there. So, if you don't know what to do and you don't have no sense, yu wi out [you will lose out]. Yu have to stan up on yu feet when yu go diir, especially when you see things not happening your way or fast enough... Den yu have to [be] on their heels. Yu can't just shy away from them, yu have to call them and talk to them. Yu have to be a man on your own footing. If not, you will sit down, and all your speech just lost, so you have to be wise (Jethro interview February 21, 2017).

Fortunately for Jethro, with some secondary education, his smarts and persistence were crucial in resisting the forgetting process to secure some benefit. But as we will learn, there are other interlocking pieces of the puzzle, oblivious to Jethro, that worked to his advantage.

Also, from the same community, I met Moses, Jethro's brother-in-law. Moses' stint with the program began in 2002 and ended abruptly in 2009 after having been thrown from a farm tractor during a tobacco-reaping routine. His serious back injury prevented him from completing his season, so he was repatriated or 'forgotten.' When I asked whether he was compensated he complained, "*dem ongl pie fi di taim weh yu neva werk*" [they only paid for the time I didn't work]. Therefore, Moses only received compensation for the remaining half of the season, having been sent home halfway through his contract. A few months after his return to Jamaica in 2010, he received CDN\$1,250 from the WSIB (about JA\$118, 750). Aside from the fact that both injured men are related, they were repatriated after becoming injured in Canada, unlike Michael who was allowed to remain. I was, however, more curious to understand why, for ostensibly similar types of injuries, Jethro continues to receive benefit payments and Moses, none. I did explore the WSIB's records where I uncovered that between January 1, 1991, and January 1, 1998, workers who suffered what the WSIB determined to be a permanent injury were entitled to a type of benefit that replaces lost future income²⁸ (FEL), an amount that is indexed to inflation. This is consistent with the graduated payment increases that Jethro confirmed he has received over the years. So, having permanently ruined his nerves, in 1997, when the WSIB's FEL benefit was in effect, is what governs Jethro's continued WSIB payments.

²⁸ Under the FEL, injured workers receive 90% of the pay difference between their net pay and the projected net pay after the accident (WSIB Ontario, 2017)

It is important to note that the FEL was introduced under Bob Rae's New Democratic Party (NDP) government and dispensed with under the Mike Harris-led Progressive Conservative sweeping 'Commonsense Revolution.'²⁹ But beyond the superficial observance of the influence of neoliberal philosophy on party ideology in Ontario's provincial politics and their approach to governance, I hasten to add that, imbedded within Harris' 'Commonsense Revolution' was the deepening of the oblivescence of racialized migrant workers at the state level. It is a policy-shift with far-reaching implications for injured workers who have long left the program. So, grappling with the dynamics of neoliberalism necessitates a sensitivity to the interactions between the local and global forces as they play out in the process of globalization.

The WSIB's benefits for loss of earnings (LOE), introduced on January 1, 1998, is the prevailing policy that influenced and limited Moses' compensation. Thus, the logic of forgetting, deployed in the form of a policy shift forestalled the WSIB's responsibility to compensate Moses as it does Jethro. Which is why, even though Moses was repatriated halfway through his season, he was paid for earnings lost, *only*, (my emphasis) for the remainder of his contract. Unlike Jethro's benefits that continue indefinitely as the WSIB's then lost future income (FEL) policy dictated, which does not limit benefit payments to the end of a contract. Moses was never recalled to the SAWP because he is of no further use to his employer. The contradiction is, while states forget injured workers, bodies cannot easily forget their injuries. Moses now suffers the consequences of forgetting. The injury is restrictive, limiting the type of work he does, a condition which is further compromised by the onset of hypertension that requires monthly medication. It, therefore, raises the question whether Moses' hypertension has been induced by the stress of his injury coupled with the fact that his brother-in-law is receiving WSIB benefits for a similar injury he has been denied.

Accordingly, the temporal influence of a Canadian neoliberal institutional policy shift has an extra-provincial spatial significance in Jamaica with divergent material consequences for racialized individuals domiciled within the same geographical location, belonging to the same economic class

²⁹ The common sense revolution is a series of finance-driven reforms promoted by the Harris' Progressive Conservative government in Ontario. This finance driven reform emphasized spending cuts across the public sector and the realization of efficiency and other mechanisms such as new public management (Anderson, S. & Jaafar, 2003; Carnoy, 1999).

but producing different economic realities for individuals of like circumstances. For even though Jethro and Moses live across the street from each other, in Jamaica's tough economic climate, Jethro's regular stipend from the WSIB provides an economic cushion allowing him to cover his family's medical expenses (his wife is also chronically ill). Jethro's house is near completion and he has a concrete catchment structure that harvests rainwater in a 'forgotten' district without running water. His is among the few properties with the coveted water tank. Jethro dons a JA\$54,000 (CDN\$568) pair of designer frames and saves about JA\$15,000 from his monthly WSIB stipend. When I asked if he works, Jethro said that "due to di [the] injury, right now if you go out there and really work now and those man did fi [were to] come here right now and catch you, everything off. Dem wi [They will] send somebody to come around and look and ask question in the community; you don't know." Although Jethro does not work, personally, he employs day labourers to undertake his subsistence farming. While Jethro's stipend put him at ease, financially, he remains preoccupied, perhaps tortured by the possibility of being surveilled by the WSIB and fears being taken off the stipend if he were to be caught performing a task that could miscommunicate that he has completely recovered from his injury.

Moses' post- SAWP reality is much different. His house is half-complete and struggles harder to make a living. Although he is buffeted by inconsistent back pain, and plagued by hypertension, patriarchy and his financial lack compel him to work. And in a neglected community where farmers depend on rainfall, he earns menially from farming. He lamented, "*it haad. Somtaim mi spen bout 3 or \$4000 a wiik. Somtaim yu nat iiv'n av dat fi spen. Somtaim \$2000, somtaim \$1000 – as tu ow yu av it an kyan bai. Somtaim yu go shap an bai likkl ries an likkl flowa, yu noh av no saal ting.*" [it's hard. Sometimes I spend about JA\$3000 or \$4000 per week. Sometimes you don't even have that to spend. Sometimes JA\$2000, sometimes \$1000 – you buy according to how much you have. Sometimes you can only afford to buy some rice and flour, no meat kind] (Moses' Interview, February 24, 2017). So, his health is further compromised as oftentimes, his diet consists only of carbohydrates as he cannot afford protein to prepare balanced meals. Moses lives at the doorstep of poverty; whose dire economic reality is the consequence of forgetting. Juxtaposing Jethro's experience with Moses accentuates the implications of an Ontarian neoliberal policy shift that is weaponized to facilitate the process of

forgetting, producing deleterious consequences for injured workers like Moses as demonstrated locally in the Jamaican post-program reality.

5.3 Jamaica: Health Realities Post-SAWP

5.3.1 What cancer?

In conversations about their health, a third of the informants, some 12 men, spoke of using farm chemicals, the majority of whom raised concerns about near or unprotected contact with agrochemicals and the implications for their health. Mark, with 17 years of experience was sickened from his encounter with farm chemicals, lamenting, *“it sik mi mek mi staat pyuuk op som bitta supp’m, an it kut mi apitait, mi kudn’t iit nutt’n”* [it made me sick; caused me to start vomiting which was bitter. I lost my appetite and couldn’t eat anything]. Mark said that he was required to work in the field three hours after the chemical application without any protection. So, ‘forgetting’ exposed Mark to a hazardous chemical in an unsafe work environment.

While Leroy did not work with chemicals, he spoke about coming into close contact with where the chemicals were used and when he raised an objection, he was muzzled by the threat of repatriation. But Leroy had been around long enough to know that being too vocal about anything was anathema to his boss, and complained, *“yu go deh an taak tu moch somtaim, dem noh liak it”* [you go there and talk too much sometimes, they dislike it]. So, workers’ rights are forgotten, as according to Leroy *“if yu defen yu rait, mait bi nex ier, yu noh kom bak”* [if you defend your rights, you might not be called next year]. Therefore, *“aal wen yu rait, yu stil affi tek it seh yu rang”* [even when you are right, you still have to say you’re wrong]. So here in Leroy’s theorization, the relinquishing of his rights, which amounts to forgetting himself, was an exercise of agency that ensured he continued with the program.

A Jamaican government official, whom I spoke with, confirmed farmworkers’ anxieties:

We do get complaints from time to time from workers who say, bwoi [boy], um, based on how the working conditions are, they are exposed because they don’t get the gear, or the persons maybe they are not the ones using the chemical but maybe somebody else is using it and they are [exposed to it]. But what we do is we make complaints to the liaison service to check out what is happening on that farm because one of the main issues we are concerned about and not us alone, we are not the only ones concerned about it, ourselves and the employer association are concerned about safety. Almost every time that we sit down to negotiate with

the employers and with the Canadian government, the issue of safety is dealt with (Jamaican functionary Interview, January 13, 2017).

The Jamaican official made it clear the state is aware of workers' health and safety concerns; files complaints with the liaison service about it and is "dealt with" when key stakeholders meet. But the violation continues unabated, so what are we to make of the situation? Although the state relies on the liaison service, charged with oversight of the program's ground operations in Canada, the workers have little faith in it, to the point where Michael concluded, "I don't think they should use Jamaican as liaison officer. No. I don't see the sense...no, they not helping us." But liaison's officer's ineffectiveness to farmworkers serves a strategic purpose in the states' repertoire of 'forgetting.' As the state's ground troops, liaison officers are more solicitous to please the employers and seem only too eager to facilitate repatriation – the logic of forgetting that allows the system to function more efficiently.

The Jamaican government's concerns provide little consolation for 60-year-old Roger with 28 years' experience. While he did not personally handle the chemicals, he was also allowed back into the field, unprotected, too quickly after its application. Roger said that while it did not bother him, "*som a di man dem sik enoh, an dem a seh a di kemikal, but mi nuh noa. Kaw somtaim wi naah get di rait enoh, yu noa, wi naah get di rait. Kaw if yu sik, di emplaaya a get 20 muor.*" [some men become sick and they say it's because of the chemical, but I don't know. Because sometimes our rights are taken away, we're not getting the right. Because if I get sick, the employer has 20 more men ready to replace me]. Roger echoed the sentiments of many of the interviewees and made three important points. Firstly, although it is rumoured that some workers, are, in fact, affected by chemicals, my research did not bring me in contact with any of them. But Roger and others shared stories of friends who worked for decades in the program, whose duties involved chemical usage, who developed cancers and have died. And they all link their friends' deaths to unprotected exposure to farm chemicals. I am not able to confirm or deny such allegations. Secondly, Roger is aware that, in theory, workers have some form of protection, but they are barely recognized. Again, the trampling of workers' rights is part of the process of forgetting. Thirdly, Roger is all too aware of the objectification and disposability of workers. He knew that if he did not 'forget' himself in acquiescing to the employer's demands, he would have

been repatriated and his replacement flown in to Canada as thousands of Jamaicans, have been pre-selected, waiting *'fi get a buss,*' [to get a chance] as they vernacularize their initiation into the SAWP. Except they are oblivious they are waiting their turn to be forgotten.

However, 62-year-old and now hypertensive Emmanuel articulated an entirely different perspective from the other interviewees, *"yu noa dem affi sprai dem krap, jus laik wii yasso. So wii no riili wahn get ovaboat, yu noa wat a miin? Bikaaz mi neva sik, di uol chuut, mi neva sik ova deh fi di ierz mi did a chravl. Far mi neva go a dem dakta."* [you know they have to spray their crops, just like us here. So, we don't want to get overboard, you know what I mean? Because, I've never been sick, the whole truth, I never got sick there for the years that I traveled, and I've never been to their doctor]. I reflected on Emmanuel's caution and quiet rebuke, which called my normative judgments into question, even as I recalled my journeys through the mountains of St. Elizabeth, passing men along the way engaged in the use of farm chemicals. Faces masked, backpacks of chemicals loaded onto their backs and hoses that lead the chemical to a mechanism for its application by hand. My friend, Anthony, explained that in preparing the land for farming, some farmers use the herbicide Gramoxone to kill the weeds before applying fire to it.

So, on the one hand, Emmanuel is right in raising a caution. Except the men that I observed were in an open field and appeared to wear adequate protection, which raises the question, if the men use farm chemicals locally and abroad, which chemical usage is causing the cancers? For all the rumours of cancer, none of the interviewees is plagued by it. At least not that they were aware of. But on the other hand, if Emmanuel had unprotected exposure to farm chemicals, the fact that he has never been sickened by it means little for its long-term effect. Time is always relevant. When I broached the discussion with a Jamaican government official about the correlation between chemical use and cancers, she responded, "it would be very difficult to conclude that, definitely would need more studies to do that, definitely. Maybe it's something we should look at but, uum, it's, really hard to look at it in a spurious fashion and, you know, make conclusions, very difficult."

But owing to the years of unprotected chemical use, Marcus, who was not exposed to chemical usage and has long left the program, but whose friends are still active farmworkers, echoed a prescient

observation, *“di kemikal dem an ting puoz a elt risk to di faam werka dem an ting laik a dat. But a don’t noa if iina di fyuucha it won’t urt meni a dem...an dem seh di boss noh stai iina it enoh, im ongl kom an set im werk an ting an im gaan...im nuh stai iina it.”* [the chemicals pose a health risk to the farmworkers. But I don’t know if in the future it won’t hurt many of them...and they say the boss doesn’t stay in it, you know. He only sets it up and he’s gone...he doesn’t stay in it]. Marcus’ insight is striking. Like Roger, Marcus is concerned about the health risk of chemical usage especially the implications not only for long-term use but also the effects of its usage might not manifest itself in an illness for a long time. So, here, Marcus is not forgetting the health risk posed by chemicals. Marcus’ other observation is that the employers are not imperiled by chemical exposure since they do not stay in it long enough for it to impact their own health. So, while ‘forgetting’ the workers, the employers ensure they themselves are not forgotten when it comes to chemical exposure. This communicates to us that the black body is of little worth beyond the labour that is extracted. Therefore, whatever the health consequences, if any, that may result from unprotected chemical exposure, will be the problem for the worker to contend with upon his return home, for the employer would have long forgotten about it. The employers are all too aware that neoliberal globalization helps to facilitate their impunity. So, they not only violate health and safety regulations, they are not culpable for the excesses that are visited upon the Black body. All these obliterating practices facilitate the reproduction of the program.

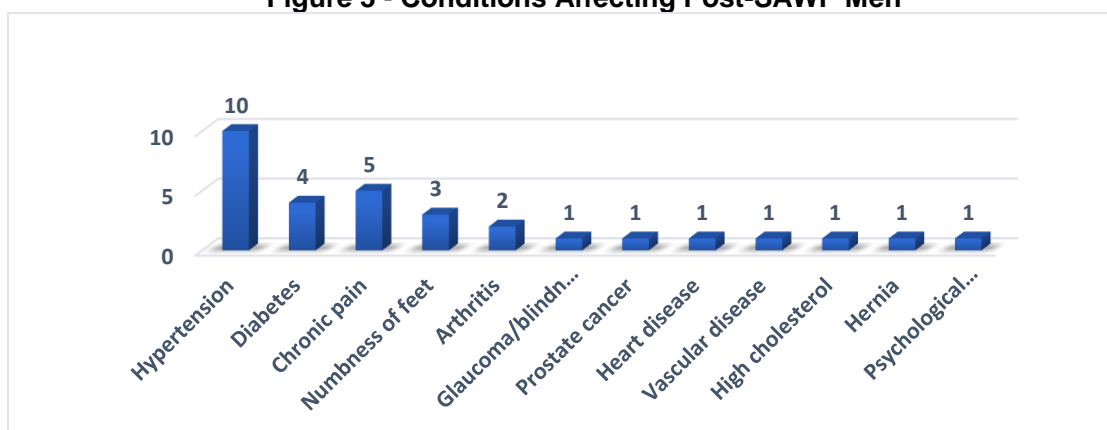
5.4 The Diseased Body

5.4.1 Chronic Medical Conditions Post-SAWP

Chronic health problems also plague ex-farmworkers challenged to access medical care and manage their illnesses with expensive prescription medications. While most of the men continued to work in Jamaica, some have stopped due to poor health. Among the multiple health conditions reported (see figure 3 below) are hypertension (the most pervasive), arthritis, chronic (back and foot) pain, vascular disease, prostate cancer, heart condition, high cholesterol, hernia, hearing loss, numbness of feet, glaucoma, and blindness.

Eight interviewees reported medical conditions that they developed while working in the SAWP or that linked them to the work that they did during their periods of employment in Canada. These include arthritis, chronic pain, broken leg, back injury, damaged nerves, hernia, numbness of feet, hearing loss, and what I loosely identify as psychological distress. The 10 men who suffer from high blood pressure invariably did not infer a connection to the program but in most of those cases, they also did not indicate a genetic history of the condition either. Two of the men quit the program because of compelling health reasons: diabetes and hypertension.

Figure 3 - Conditions Affecting Post-SAWP Men



Spencer, a 76-year-old from a remote district in the parish of Clarendon began his journey in the program in 1974 when the unexpected onset of diabetes, in 2006, brought his SAWP work to a sudden end. But it was not until he was 65 years old before a routine medical check-up turned up the bad news. Spencer informed me that his plan was to continue in the SAWP until poor health prevented him, but he did not expect it would have been at age 65, *“kaw I didn’t sii no adda betta wai uot.”* [because I didn’t see any other better way out]. Being the family provider, the SAWP is the only reliable source of income known to Spencer, which he expected to have maintained since farmers do not stop working at age 65. Spencer’s appearance of health belied his serious health conditions. He looked much younger than 76 years old to me and though plagued with peripheral vascular disease, he did not display any visible mobility challenges, even offering us a few oranges from his fruit tree, which he fetched himself. In fact, if I had not raised the health topic, I might have come away thinking that he was a healthy man. Spencer shared how he felt at the time of the interview:

Rait nuo, mai fiit, ow dem num most of di taim, an som nait a don't biliiv a gwien waak di next mawnin, to ow dey fiil. Dakta seh is puor cirkyulayshan a di blud but mi is an medikayshan...som taim mai badi jus get wiik, all mai legs dem get wiik...I ave bin takin' insulin, yu noa insulin? I takin' insulin evry day (Spencer's Interview, January 18, 2017).

[Right now, my feet are numb most times and some nights, I didn't believe I would walk the next morning, to how they feel. The doctor said it's poor circulation of the blood but I'm on medication. Sometimes, my body just gets weak, even my legs get weak. I have been taking insulin. Do you know insulin? I'm taking insulin every day]

Spencer painted a gloomy picture of his health. In addition to diabetes, Spencer is hypertensive with poor blood circulation – conditions that have so incapacitated him, he hardly does much of anything anymore, not even subsistence farming he normally does. To compound Spencer's family situation, his wife is also hypertensive and suffers from a heart condition.

Regarding the cost of their prescription drugs, Spencer exclaimed, *"oh! it cost lots a money, far is difrent jugs, is nat wan jugs wi takin'. Mei bi it wud kost \$6000 som taim to bai som a di jugs. Mai waif is muor, far shii takin' lats muor dan mii."* [oh! it's expensive because we take different types of drugs, not just one. Maybe it costs JA\$6000 sometimes to buy my drugs. My wife's costs more as she takes lots more drugs than I do]. So, in addition to his expenses, which amounts to \$6,000, (CDN\$63) he must find another \$8,000 - \$10,000 (CDN\$84-\$105) for his wife's prescription. Spencer's monthly Canada Pension Plan (CPP) pension of CDN\$77.00 (at an exchange rate of JA\$95 to CDN\$1.00, the equivalent amount is JA\$7,315) can barely cover his medication, let alone, his wife's. After 32 years in the SAWP, Spencer's paltry CPP retirement pension is woefully inadequate. And although he qualifies for Jamaica's National Insurance Scheme (NIS), the state's Old Age Pension, he has been forgotten there, too, as he had not been aware of his entitlement until I informed him. This is the reality of his consequence of forgetting; hence, an aggravated quality of life.

Spencer also accesses Jamaica's national drug subsidy program to help defray the cost of his medication. The government of Jamaica provides subsidized medication, a crude pharma care of sorts, which chronic health patients can access in the management of their medical conditions. An overview and discussion of the plan will follow shortly. Spencer relies on his children to cover the cost difference for his medication. The consequence of forgetting crescendoed in Spencer's 'retirement.' Spencer's socio-economic 'retirement' reality illuminates a process of forgetting that is informed by

patriarchy and Jamaica's high unemployment rate that compelled his participation in the program for three decades and at the end, his inability to cover his medical and living expenses. Had he been receiving all his pension entitlements, they might have made an economic difference. Regrettably, Spencer succumbed to his illnesses five months after our meeting and his unfortunate passing is very telling of the ultimate consequence of forgetting.

Bentley, another 'retiree,' now 70 years old, is not only hypertensive but suffers a debilitating hernia he developed from excessive strain while working in the program for 30 years. Bentley's hernia is so enlarged, it bends him forward resulting in a crouching, almost shuffling gait. He complained, "*mi gat wan ernia fi cut but mi kyaahn sidong wid it. Mi affi waak up an dong*" [I have a hernia that needs surgery, which makes sitting difficult, so I have to keep moving]. Bentley, who is illiterate, also was unaware that his hernia, an occupational disease, is covered by the WSIB. So, here we see that unawareness about benefits intersects the process of forgetting producing consequences that confront him in 'retirement.' But given the history of the WSIB's discriminatory dealings with migrant workers, it is an open question whether he would have succeeded in extracting any benefit from the agency. Bentley's hypertension medication costs him about \$4000 (CDN\$42) but his hernia requires urgent attention. As if he was still trying to convince himself, he reiterated "*mi affi go kut it, mi affi go kut it enoh sah an a \$180,000 [it ago cost] but a don't si dat deh monii yet. An di medikayshan mi affi get fi si dakta, dat a bout \$7500, an di blud tes a \$6500. To si di dakta is \$7500 an di haat tes – \$6000*" [It requires surgery, I have to do the surgery you know, sir, which will cost \$180,000 but I don't know where I will get the money from yet and the medication that I have to get before I see the doctor is around \$7500. And the blood test costs \$6500. To see the doctor is \$7500 and the heart test is \$6500].

The different fees outlined above – just over JA\$200,000 (CDN\$2,222) – represent the total cost of undergoing the surgery at a private hospital in Jamaica. The operation at a public hospital would cost significantly less. However, with a history of botched surgeries and long wait times, Bentley is justifiably skittish to use public hospitals. Bentley does not receive the CPP retirement pension, which I encouraged him to request. However, he has started to pick up his benefits from Jamaica's NIS and had just received an initial cheque for JA\$269,000 (CDN\$2,988), representing retroactive

payments. But Bentley plans to use the money to extend his house (a major gender symbolism). When I asked whether he could not use the lump sum to cover the cost of the surgery instead, Bentley was dug in, “*mi affi bak bak di siknis weh mi av, mi affi bak bak it*” [I have to put the sickness I have on hold. I have to put it on hold]. While Dassa, his wife, steeped in ‘forgetting,’ piped up with a studied approval, “very important!” Bentley continued, “*mi naah tel yu no lie; mek mi tel yu di chuut. A di wan ruum, an it no komfatabl. It a badda wi bad bad, so wi affi si if wi kyan add on.*” [I’m not lying to you, I’m telling the truth. It’s one room and it’s uncomfortable. It’s a major worry to us, so we have to try and extend it].

The repetition of phrases like “*bak, bak,*” is indicative of Bentley’s entrenched position and Dassa is resolutely behind him, which means the building project assumes priority over his health; so, it left me wondering whether their improvident behaviour or the misplacement of priorities had characterized their entire lives. The consequences of all the processes of forgetting have rendered him incapacitated in ‘retirement’ because the hernia, an occupational disease he developed on the program, should have been addressed by the WSIB. But Bentley has subscribed to ‘forgetting’ for so long that it became normalized as a logic that overrides his health to the extent that not only has he neglected surgery, despite his severe health condition, he continues to work – because it is logical. So, a dysfunctional patriarchy is implicitly informing his decision to forgo urgent medical care and focus on his house and he is capitulating to toughness instead of seeking medical help. Thus, being in the program forces the men to forget themselves, while they are simultaneously forgotten.

We now explore Patrick’s (whom we met in Chapter 1) experience, now 70 years old, with a 20-year-SAWP-tenure but was kicked-off the program 20 years ago. The work he performed in Canada required him to kneel down upon the ground, which he calls “*nii werk*” [knee work] because “*a yu nii yu affi deh pan a die taim.*” [the job required me to work daily on my knees]. He assumed this position reaping radish, while harvesting celery necessitated him constantly bending his back. Having done these jobs for 20 years, Patrick bemoaned his emaciated body, “*dis ya said ya noh av nuh use to mi agen, pain in a di nii dem; wen mi seh pain; aal in a di shoulda yasso. O Gad man!*” [this (left) side has no use to me again, my knees are in pain; severe pain; not to mention my shoulder. O God

man!]. Patrick's pain started affecting him in the program, but his economic situation dictated that he kept working, but ultimately he was jettisoned from the program. Now the consequences have confronted him in 'retirement.'

Patrick explained that his boss, having observed how slowly he would raise himself up from kneeling down and bending over, had uttered a veiled warning, "*Patrick, yu suun aaf dii map.*" [Patrick, soon you'll be off the map]. Patrick's compromised gendered agility, observed by his boss, communicated his unsuitability for continuation in the program. The pain associated with his back-breaking work, enabled by the discipline of forgetting and multiplied over decades working in the SAWP, took a toll on Patrick's body. It manifested in his failure to measure up to the brute demands of the job under his boss' watchful eyes. But it was only in retrospect that Patrick realized that the boss meant that his remaining time in the program was short. And after he completed the work season in 1997, at age 50, he was never recalled to the SAWP. But Patrick reasoned that had he known he was under surveillance, he "*wud a jus skwiiz out di pain an tan up strait.*" [would have ignored the pain and stood up quickly]. In other words, he would have deployed agency and faked an embodied masculine performance to be read as a picture of health but he was caught off-guard.

The protracted timeline of Patrick's body pain gives a sense of the consequences of forgetting and the serious implications for his post-SAWP years. His debilitating arthritis, which he attributed to prolonged kneeling in the snow, sometimes challenges his ability to effectively undertake his subsistence farming. And the cool temperatures in the mountains of Manchester aggravates the condition. While his Jamaican pension helps to cover his prescription expenses, he is not aware of his CPP entitlement. Nevertheless, despite his pain, Patrick presses forward, capitulating to the dictates of patriarchy, working to provide for his family, while his quality of life diminishes.

5.4.2 Jamaica Drug for the Elderly Programme (JADEP) and the National Health Fund (NHF)

Jamaica Drug for the Elderly Programme (JADEP) was established in 1996 by former Prime Minister Patterson and is now administered by the National Health Fund (NHF), an agency of Jamaica's Health Ministry (NHF, 2017). Established in 2003, the NHF extends the subsidies to the

entire Jamaican population. JADEP subsidizes prescription drugs for 10 chronic illnesses³⁰ to make them more accessible to Jamaicans over 60 years old³¹ (NHF, 2017).

While the NHF and JADEP represent progressive initiatives by the Jamaican state to help Jamaicans access medical care to manage their chronic illnesses, there are some challenges with the system that affect ex-farmworkers access to medical care. With over half a million registered users, interviewees utilizing the service complained of long wait times. Many times, after waiting for hours, patients are told the medication is unavailable or that the ones prescribed by their health professionals do not appear on the government's designated drug list. As Spencer lamented *"iiv'n di insulin, som taim dem don't av it nyda, yu av tu bai it. Yu get a few a dem frii but nat all. Di expensiv jugs yu don't get it diir, yu av tu bai it...far yu av som weh dem don't av it so yu av to bai it."* [even the insulin, sometimes they don't have it, you have to buy it. You get a few medications free but not all. The expensive drugs you don't get it there, you have to buy it...for there's some that they don't have so you have to buy it].

In the space of 10 seconds, Spencer unwittingly echoed the phrase *"yu av to buy it"* [you have to buy it] three times, which underscores the fact that their subsidized prescription drugs are often unavailable forcing patients to buy them. Insulin is a common prescription staple among diabetics, and because some patients' lives depend on it, they have no alternative, using Spencer's words, than *"to buy it"* when unavailable through JADEP. Also, many of the designated drugs are generic brands, which some doctors avoid, depending on the patient's degree of illness or due to a previous reaction to them. These scenarios complicate ex-farmworkers access to Jamaica's limited pharmacare. So, despite social intervention, retired farmworkers' medical needs remain largely unmet as they must find other ways of accessing prescription drugs to manage their chronic health conditions. This does not include the cost of the doctor's visit, which ranges between JA\$3000 - JA\$4500 (CDN\$31-47). In

³⁰ Hypertension, high cholesterol, glaucoma, cardiac conditions, vascular disease, psychiatric conditions, arthritis, diabetes, asthma and benign prostatic hyperplasia (NHF, 2017).

³¹JADEP card holders pay JA\$40 for each prescription item, for example, a person requiring three prescription medications will pay JA\$120.00 (NHF, 2017). However, for each chronic condition, example arthritis, there is an exact number of drugs on the approved list, limited to a specific quantity, per beneficiary, per month (NHF, 2017). Should the prescribed frequency of the medication exhaust the supply before the end of the allotted period, additional medication must be sourced through other avenues.

these stories, the farmwork pensioners who suffer chronic illnesses find their CPP pension insufficient to cover their medical expenses, signaling the consequence of forgetting. If migrant farmworkers were granted Canadian citizenship, it is highly speculative that it would entitle them to significantly different benefits. In turn, it would contribute to a better quality of life.

5.5 The (Dis)Stressed Body

5.5.1 Positioned in a Perennial Psychological Predicament

Obadiah, whom I met on the outskirts of a parish capital in central Jamaica has a long history with the SAWP that began when he turned 18 years old in the mid-1970s. His dedicated service to the program ended abruptly in 2007 after 32 years. He was banished forthwith back to Jamaica, midway through an eight-month work season. Obadiah recounted the reason for his dismissal, *“di laidi weh mi werk wid, is laik, yu noh, mi an shii kudn’t get along bikaaz shi use a werd wan taim an mi use di werd ridikyulus, an shi jus sen mi uom dat Satday – zoom! Shi sen mi uom an shi sen faalz aligayshan agenz mai niem.”* [the lady I worked with, is like, we couldn’t get along because she said something, and I used the word ridiculous and she just sent me home that Saturday – zoom! She sent me home with false allegations against my name]. Because Obadiah used the word ridiculous, he was dismissed with immediate effect and repatriated? (One can guess that in the eyes of the employer, a Jamaican worker is not supposed to have a vocabulary, let alone the ability to reason). After all, Obadiah’s resistance does not represent the expression of masculinity that the SAWP attracts, or which thrives in it, so how did he last for 32 years? Obadiah vented his ordeal:

Mi use to jraiv di fawklif in a di pak’n uos. An wan mawnin, shi kiip a miit’n, bout 25 af us diir an shi kiip sayin ‘som a oonu Jamiekan onli wahn fi werk moni an sen go gi oonu ooman a Jamioka.’ Dat was di rimaaks shi paas an mi neva ansa di firs taim an shi kiip on...an shi ripiit di saim ting, an mi seh, mi noa seh a mi shi a taak. So, mi seh, ‘miss, if is mii yu a taak, di riizn mi werk 10 ours Sundehe maanin is bikaaz mi affi wait til di pak’n uos jry fi go bak in di pak’n uos. Shi seh, ‘10 uors lan? 10-uors?’ An shi tiir uot har yey at mi. So, mi tern to har an seh, ‘dis is ridikyulus den, bikaaz mi werk mi aas aaf an dis is wat mi get?’ Dis is all mi seh to har. An shi get piss’d aaf.

An bai di nex die, is di layz’n affisa mi si kom, an mi a tel im wat ap’m, an im tern to mi an seh, ‘a yu mi kom fah enoh.’ Jus laik dat. An aal di beg, mi beg im, im stil sen mi uom saim wie. An im riid a letta to mi, an seh di letta seh, ‘weneva shi want mi an di faam, shi kyaahn fain mi.’” Sii, a griin uos mi deh enoh, mi kyaa hiad in a griin uos? Shii an di layz’n affisa kuuk [it] up – Missa Griin...kuuk up an rait agenz mi, an dem sen mi dong. Dats di firs taim [with

his palms crashing against each other producing two thundering claps] *dat I've bin urt 'kaaz mi noa seh mi neva do heniting, yu andastan mi?* (Obadiah's Interview, February 28, 2017).

[I used to drive the forklift in the packing house. And one morning she kept a meeting with about 25 of us there, and she kept saying, 'some of you Jamaicans only want to work money to send back home to your women in Jamaica.' Those were the remarks she passed, and I didn't answer the first time and she kept on...and she repeated the same thing. And I thought, I know she's talking about me. So, I said, 'miss, if you're talking about me, the reason why I worked 10 hours on Sunday morning was that I had to wait until the packing house was dried before I could use it. She said, '10 hours Ian? 10-hours?' Then she opened her eyes wide at me. So, I turned to her and said, 'this is ridiculous then because I work my ass off and this is what I get?' That was what I said to her and it infuriated her.

And by the next day, the liaison officer came, and I told him what happened. And he turned to me and said, 'I came here to get you.' Just like that. Despite all my pleas, he still sent me home. And he read a letter that said, whenever time she wanted me on the farm, I was nowhere to be found. See, I worked in a greenhouse; how could I hide in a greenhouse? She colluded with the liaison officer. They fixed it and wrote me up and repatriated me. That was the first time (crashing his palms against each other producing two thundering claps) that I've ever been hurt because I know that I did nothing wrong, do you understand what I'm saying?]

Obadiah was still visibly distraught and traumatized by his contrived dismissal. From his account, the parties entangled in this workplace kerfuffle were never summoned to any meeting, to hear the different versions of their stories, as would be the norm in most other work organizations or if a white worker were involved in the conflict, especially after 32 years of service. Instead, it took one telephone call from the boss to the liaison officer, upon which the latter acted and gathered the objectionable offender and banished him from the program forever. And there ended the only livelihood that Obadiah knew for most of his life. No consideration for years of service, psychological impact, emotional effect or family implications. He was instantly forgotten! The inconsequentiality of black lives is implicitly inscribed in the contract, which empowers the employers to jettison workers from the program at will. After all, these are non-issues for Black workers whose humanity is forgotten by institutional structures.

But we need to further problematize the above exchanges. On full display are the unequal gendered power relations between a white woman and two black men. In the scenario, a white woman, who is also the boss, is not only exercising power over a migrant Black man but also a Jamaican government official – the liaison officer, arguably her equal – in a way that subjugates both black men. This subjugation by a female is a form of emasculation. But an important caveat here is necessary because there is nothing wrong with a woman exercising power, whether Black or White. In fact, it

happens all the time in various personal and professional interactions/relationships. Similarly, an emasculated male is not necessarily problematic either. Rather, what is problematic in this scenario is a white woman exercising power discriminatorily over racialized men. And in Obadiah's case, as in many other Caribbean men, part of their positionality and the black identity is about the masculine image. This is largely influenced by a patriarchal Caribbean society, which is itself a colonial inheritance. I suspect Obadiah's reaction might have been different had it been a male boss that fired him. In any event, what stung Obadiah was not only the white woman's power of control over the Black man, but she was also challenging that identity which is a tremendous structural and disciplinary force.

But the scenario gets even more complicated. On the one hand, we observe an aggrieved Black man, in the person of Obadiah, whose masculine identity has been clearly challenged by a White woman. But on the other hand, we also see another Black Jamaican, in the capacity of a liaison officer who is obsequious and compliant as he appeared to resign himself to his subjugated position and promptly observed the command of the 'boss lady' without question. In the exchange with the White woman, the liaison officer has little power to negotiate and must comply with her orders. And the worker, Obadiah, is left to bear the full brunt of the employer's arbitrary power and indiscretion through the instrumentality of 'Uncle Tom,' rather, the liaison officer. Therefore, the process of the subjugation of Obadiah, which the liaison officer helps to facilitate, works into a larger process of the states 'forgetting' farmworkers, which is one way that the system reproduces itself. Obadiah's experience helps us to further understand why the farmworkers disparage and despise the liaison service. But while liaison officers might be ineffective to the farmworkers, their effectiveness as a valve to facilitate the 'forgetting' of 'problematic' workers also become much clearer to us.

In most work organizations, it is normal for workers, especially those who have dedicated decades of service to any single employer, to be extended some form of counseling service when they are separated from their positions, not to mention severance pay. The provision of counseling service forms part of the separation package to help workers grapple with the anxieties that attend the transition from the job especially where there was an affective connection to the organization, as in

Obadiah's case - 32 years. This serves to cushion the psychological and emotional impact and lessen the pain of the separation. But for farmworkers, this practice is forgotten.

When a dedicated farmworker has given over three decades of service to the SAWP, the expectation, after so many years of service, is that he will be allowed to leave the job not only on his own volition but also with some modicum of dignity. It is not the fact that Obadiah's services were terminated since he was aware of the precarious nature of the job. It was his unceremonial dismissal; it is his dehumanization, and somewhere in the mix, his emasculation by a white woman that reinforces anti-blackness with attacks on Black male self-worth and masculinity. It is also the false assertion advanced in the termination letter as reason for his firing; it is about his deportation, compounded by the liaison officer's perceived complicity and it is the shame that he has to live with as he readjusts to his local district life, which has collectively visited such degree of torment and trauma upon him.

Therefore, Obadiah is locked in a fight to reclaim his humanity and his manliness that the system has left him bereft of. This is what his grievance is all about. Important to note, Obadiah did not mention compensation or severance pay, all he wants back is his dignity that has been forgotten. During our conversation, the tenor of his voice changed whenever he invoked his dismissal, punctuating the interview with the phrases like, *"it urt! But Gad. Biliiv mi, mi noh do nut'n dat's rang an dem kik mi out, jus laik dat"* [It hurt! But God. Believe me, I didn't do anything wrong, and they kicked me out, just like that] cycling through a range of emotions from frustration to anger, to annoyance, to being infuriated. Though angry, Obadiah did not threaten violence, he bared his soul, and simultaneously risked further emasculation of his masculinity to communicate his hurt to me, a total stranger to him. Obadiah's behaviour further throws open a window into an expression of Jamaican Black masculinity and emotional literacy and barks at the stereotypes of the Black man's (in)ability to communicate his vulnerable feelings, which, of course, appeals to how he was socialized.

When I asked Obadiah how his health was, assuming I meant his physical fitness, he described it as good. Although he did not have the medical literacy to label what he is going through and may not even recognize it as some form of mental/emotional distress, he knows that the lingering effects of the undignified job separation and the false rationale that justified his termination still festers.

Thus, Obadiah's mental and emotional states communicate to us the mental repercussions of being forgotten. When I inquired how being fired and repatriated after working for three decades affected him, he responded, "*wel a gud mi gud fi noh go kreizi, yu si, mi affi jus tun in a di bush fi it. Dat's di firs taim mi urt in laif. I av neva bin urt in mai laif bifuor dat taim.*" [well, I should've gone crazy. I take to the field as my escape. That's my first experience of hurt. I've never been hurt in my life before that time]. Obadiah inferred that it is by some miracle why he has not gone crazy. Evidently, still distressed by the ordeal, he takes to the 'bush' as his escape to deal with it. That a worker still has to resort to the crude methods of the 'old plantation' in the 21st century, to deal with his mental anguish, suggests that the plantation still lingers on in dealing with the consequences of forgetting.

More importantly, Obadiah also recognized my presence as an outlet; it was cathartic, "*mi glad seh yu kom dong bikaaz mi no ave nobadi fi taak to bout dis, yu andastan, an dis app'n fram 2007.*" [I'm happy that you're here because I have no one to talk to about this, do you understand, and this happened since 2007]. Obadiah intoned that the emotional/psychological impact was still fresh after 10 years and was also conscious of the need for some intervention/therapy to talk about his emotional/psychological state. It could also very well be a manifestation of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). So, it is reasonable to infer that he may be aware that it could take the form of professional counseling to help him sort through these raw mental/emotional issues. It is also possible that the stigma attached to mental health issues in Jamaica has paralyzed him from seeking professional help or he might be afraid that his masculine image might be further compromised if he did, or maybe his financial lack prevents him. These are all consequences of forgetting.

Whether Obadiah suffers from psychological distress, PTSD or from some other form of mental or emotional condition, I will defer to the professional judgment of mental health practitioners. The fact that he was so impassioned as he rehashed his ordeal, at the risk of subjecting his masculinity to judgment and ridicule, to me signifies a call for some sort of intervention. I utilize the term, psychological distress to highlight a mental/emotional problem that has impacted and challenged a human – a Jamaican Black man for 10 years – and is illustrative of what happens to scores of other Jamaican men who are summarily dismissed, particularly without justifiable reason. Obadiah has been

left traumatized by his ordeal and has not received the attention, whether in the form of therapy or possibly medication as his situation determines. These mental health/emotional issues – the consequences of forgetting – condition an aggrieved masculine performance complicated by his emasculation in displaying his emotions so unabashedly.

Studies of Latino farmworkers have linked psychological problems such as depression and various kinds of stress to farmwork (Ward and Tanner, 2010; Xiao *et al.*, 2014). At work, migrant farmworkers labour in extreme temperatures for very long hours, sometimes in very awkward positions – confirmed by some interviewees – and repeated over many years. For the dangerous work they do, their pay is incommensurate. Their Canadian living conditions, often deplorable. And not only are they preoccupied with the threat of being repatriated, when they return to Jamaica at the end of their seasonal contracts, they also worry about whether they are going to be recalled to the program the following season as the precarious arrangement does not guarantee their automatic return since they must be re-selected annually. So, Jamaican farmworkers are people positioned in a perennial psychological predicament. Obadiah's case is illustrative of the mental stress/distress many farmworkers battle. Farmworkers' mental health needs to be accorded serious recognition and better managed, and not be neglected upon their exit from the program. Because of being largely forgotten, their mental stress/trauma goes undiagnosed or mismanaged as in Obadiah's situation.

Because migrant labour continues to be objectified, the workers are not treated as complete human beings. There is an ambivalence when it comes to Jamaican farmworkers where the focus is always on their physical strength while their mental/psychological state remains forgotten just like their ancestors on the 'old plantation,' while their physical labour is wrung to exhaustion. All these issues induce varying degrees of stress, which not only leads to anxiety and depression but also facilitates the onset or aggravates the physical ailments which are manifested in chronic disease like hypertension, diabetes and arthritis, so pervasive among the 'retired' farmworkers as outlined earlier (Ward and Tanner, 2010; Herod, 2018). Although there is some correlation, I cannot, neither am I drawing a direct causal link between the SAWP and the diseases. But we remain conscious that all humans are psychosomatic beings, with a complex body-mind interconnection.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter serves as an exploration of some of the ways, pertinent to health, that former and now 'retired' farmworkers are systematically elided by the articulating dimensions of forgetting in the Canadian farmwork program and show its necessity in reproducing the SAWP. I located the discussion in farmworkers' interactions with different entities to demonstrate how these institutional state actors inform, script, manage and execute practices and processes that 'forget' and normalize the oblivescence of racialized migrant farmworkers. Thus, the centrality of race and gender, along with the influence of neoliberal ideology via the Ontario WSIB in shaping policy at the global scale, and the consequences for 'retired' farmworkers at the local scale became clear. The Jamaican state manifests complicity via its liaison service by facilitating the forgetting of workers. There is also a dimension of forgetting, as agency, articulated by the farmworkers themselves, in response to the constraints of the states. But we also see that in cases where the exercise of agency maintains their positions in the program, while it accrues them some benefits, it simultaneously helps to create farmworkers' vulnerabilities and ultimately the consequences they later confront in 'retirement.' Significantly, it also shows the consequences of forgetting manifested in the compromise of their health and the insufficiency of their pension benefits to cover their medical expenses. Lastly, I illustrated, through the experience of an aggrieved 'retired' farmworker, a serious pervasive medical problem – mental health/emotional conditions – that plagues farmworkers but has largely remained forgotten, undiagnosed and therefore neglected. The next chapter continues to look at how the states are implicated in the process of forgetting by exploring elements of the retirement infrastructure of both Canadian and Jamaican states.

Chapter 6. Bedeviled by Bureaucracy: Canada's and Jamaica's Retirement Infrastructure 'Forgetting' Farmworkers' Benefits

"Tek far instanz, wi a werk at a plais fi at liis seh mei bi 15 ar so iers. Som man du aal 20 add iers an dem jos let dem go laik dat an nobadi, nyda dem nar di govament uot ya no seh, 'bwoi, rait ya nou enoh, yu dizerv som kompensayshan yu noh, fi di taim an so weh oonu du enoh.' Dem supp'm deh. Yu go bak up deh, yu pei anemployment monii, dem tek weh yu anemployment monii, yu get nutt'n. Wail yu uot ier werkin, nobodi noh si yu fi gi yu bak nutt'n. So weh dat liiv yu? It liiv yu no wiir. No wiir man. Yu do ow meni iers wid dem an dem jos stap yu laik dat. Wail if yu uot ier werkin an dem ago lei yu aff, dem ago pei yu aff enoh, dem a gi yu som sevrantz pei enoh."

[Take, for instance, we worked at a place for at least, say maybe 15 or so years, some men worked in excess of 20 years and the employer just fired them like that. And nobody, neither the Canadian government nor the Jamaican government intervened to say, 'boy right now, you know, you deserve some compensation, you know, for the years that you have given to the company, you know.' An intervention of some sort to direct the employer to pay compensation. Another thing, you pay employment insurance, they take away your employment insurance, you get nothing. Meanwhile, when you are back working in Jamaica, no one advocates for you to see whether they can get you back some of the money. So where does that leave you? It leaves you nowhere! Nowhere man. You work for how many years with the employer and you are terminated suddenly from the program, while if you were working in Jamaica and the employer is going to lay you off, they are going to compensate you, you know. They give you some severance pay, you know].

—Linton, February 17, 2017

"We regret to inform you that we cannot approve your application because you do not meet all the eligibility requirements of the Old Age Security Act."

—Excerpt from Service Canada's response to George's Old Age Security application

6.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the Canadian and Jamaican governments' administrative roles – as forgetting states – in constructing the oblivescence of migrant farmworkers in the institutions of their public retirement infrastructure. I highlight the dimension of 'forgetting' articulated at the state level by describing and analyzing the process of forgetting played out in states' policies and procedural apparatuses that occlude migrant workers' retirement benefits or significantly delays and or limits them. These processes of forgetting have tremendous implications for life in 'retirement.' The meanings of retirement in Jamaica, particularly as it relates to migrant farmworkers are also examined.

As practiced in many advanced capitalist economies, retirement is a mechanism that removes people from the workforce in accordance with the needs of the labour market and the system of social supports provided. Although formal retirement has been institutionalized within the last 160 years, it is not practiced in many parts of the developing world (Morris *et al.*, 2010; Quandagno, 1982). Indeed,

even in the developed world, the practice of retirement is complex as more and more seniors are working past their retirement age. Fixed retirement is a relatively recent development in more advanced capitalist economies, an unknown concept before the early 1800s. It was the 1854 Northcote-Trevelyan report that linked the idea of inefficiency in the workplace with old age and introduced the notion of a fixed retirement age with pension support in Britain (Kinsella & Phillips, 2005; Parker 1982). While insurance companies clamoured for retirement age to be established at 60, trade union pressures were also brought to bear for pensionable benefits to be paid at age 65 (Parker 1982).

But retirement was not a major social concern before World War I (WWI) as relatively fewer people lived long after their working lives (Kinsella & Phillips, 2005; Parker 1982). Parker (1982) maps the development of retirement to three periods: (1) rare retirement, which was a time of relative economic underdevelopment; (2) discouraged retirement – a period when the economy needed aged labour as a host of men, in their prime working years, had gone off to the war, and (3) encouraged retirement – from the mid-1960s onwards, which currently accounts for an over-supply of labour than there are jobs. So, we see that retirement policies are driven more by labour supply and demand and the exigencies of economics as opposed to people's needs.

Retirement is always contested as a social, legal, economic and cultural construction. The position taken by the UN (1991), Fry (1990) and later by Woodsong (1994: 282) refrained from establishing a universal age that an individual “becomes ‘old’ or ‘aged,’” recognizing that “this status varies physiologically, cross-culturally, and, within cultural groups, among individuals.” However, the assumption of such a position does not negate the fact that age remains a stubborn social marker and that discrimination based on age is a form of oppression from which farmworkers have suffered. So, while I try to avoid blanket labels and social markers like old, I retained the use of age, consistent with its relevance to this discussion.

Since 1966, tens of thousands of racialized farmworkers have been working in Canada, making significant contributions to the Canada Pension Plan (CPP), which they become entitled to apply for at the age of 60 and above. It, therefore, becomes imperative for us to explore some of the

state's institutional policies and procedures, pertinent to retirement, to understand whether and how they are implicated in the process of 'forgetting' farmwork pensioners. After a brief assessment of the Canadian retirement infrastructure, I turn attention to the assessment of the Jamaican equivalent, the National Insurance Scheme (NIS).

6.2 Historicizing Canada's Public Retirement Pension System(s)

After WWI, Canada adopted a position to pay disability and survivor pension to veterans of the war along with their families (Canadian Museum of History, 2017). The first *Old Age Pension Act*, in Canada, was promulgated in 1927 but eligibility was restricted exclusively to British subjects who had to clear a 'means test' to qualify for it (Canadian Museum of History, 2017). In 1952, however, Old Age Security (OAS), was rolled out, as a common benefit to all Canadians, aged 70 and above, including Status Indians, as a non-means-tested benefit (Canadian Museum of History, 2017). In 1966, the same year that Jamaicans started working in the SAWP, the contributory Canada Pension Plan (CPP) and Quebec Pension Plan (QPP) came into effect and provided a better raft of benefits to workers. (Status Indians were not included in the CPP until 1988). Apart from the retirement pension, the CPP also pays disability benefits, survivor's pension – both younger and older than age 65; children of disabled and children of deceased CPP contributors, along with combined survivor's retirement and disability benefit (Service Canada, 2017). Posthumous benefits are also paid to contributors' estates, provided they are deceased after their 70th birthday and the application for the benefit is submitted within a year after the beneficiary's death, which then entitles the estate to one year of pension payments (Service Canada, 2017). CPP also pays a one-time death benefit of \$2,296.47 to a maximum of \$2,500.00, which can be claimed by the deceased contributor's partner, next-of-kin or estate, provided the contribution requirements are satisfied (Service Canada, 2017).

In 1967 came the establishment of the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS), a provisional poverty reduction allowance that became a permanent benefit in 1987 (Canadian Museum of History,

2017). Forming part of the OAS plan, the GIS is an income-tested³² supplement that offered extra funds to OAS pensioners with low income.

Thus, Canada now has a three-pronged public retirement pension infrastructure comprised of the Old Age Security (OAS), Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) and the contributory Canada Pension Plan (CPP). The Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (CPPIB) is charged with investing the \$326.5 billion value of the CPP funds, which is projected to be sustainable for the next 75 years (CPPIB, 2017).

6.2.1 Nuts and Bolts of the Canada Pension Plan

Canada Pension Plan deductions are taken from every legal worker in Canada who earns over \$3,500 per annum, provided s/he is at least 18 years old (Service Canada, 2017). Canadian pensionable earnings attract a contribution rate of 9.9 percent – half of this amount is deducted from the employee, while the employer covers the other half and submits the whole to CPP on behalf of the employee (Government of Canada, 2017). Workers below the age of 70 who receive CPP pension can continue deductions to the CPP; however, this amount is applied to what is called a post-retirement benefit (PRB), which pays an additional negligible monthly pension payment (Service Canada, 2017).

Canadian residents' pension payments are generally determined by the length of time they have paid into the CPP, the amount of their contribution, along with the age at which they initiated the receipt of the benefit (Service Canada, 2017). There is a disincentive to draw an early CPP retirement pension, which can be taken at age 60 and before 65, as for each month that contributors received CPP retirement pension before they turned 65, there is a reduction of 0.6% (Service Canada, 2017). This means that whatever amount they are entitled to receive would be reduced by 0.6% monthly or 7.2% annually (based on Service Canada's 2016 calculations). So, in the case of a farmworker who initiates his CPP benefit at age 62, for example, his pension benefit will be 21.6% (arrived at by multiplying the annual percentage of 7.2% by 3 years) less, than if he had waited until he was 65 years

³² Income-tested means the more income OAS recipients earned, the less the amount of their GIS (Canadian Museum of History, 2017).

old. Thus, it would be to a farmworker's disadvantage to take an early pension, given their already low pension payments.

Conversely, there is a reward for opting to start receiving the CPP after 65 years old, as for every month that individuals delay the receipt of their CPP pension benefit after they turned 65, there is an increase of 0.7% (Service Canada, 2017). Thus, whatever amount they are entitled to receive would be increased by 0.7% monthly or 8.4% annually (based on Service Canada's 2016 calculations). So, in the case of a farmworker who initiates his CPP benefits at age 69, for example, his pension benefit will be 33.6% (8.4% X 4 years) more because he delayed it four years after the threshold of 65 years old. Migrant farmworkers would fare better utilizing this option and due to the logic of forgetting, some inadvertently end up benefitting from this 'advantage' but because the payments are already small, the difference is menial. Postponing receipt of the CPP beyond age 70 does not merit any incentives. The Consumer Price Index³³ (CPI) is used to compute CPP annual payment increases, which are applied each January to keep pace with the cost of living.

6.2.2 Canada Pension Plan Contributory Period and "Drop out" Provision: Implications for Farmworkers

The contributory period utilized by Service Canada to compute the amount of a farmworker's CPP entitlement represents one of the pillars or dimensions of state 'forgetting.' Service Canada maps a worker's contributory period from 18 years old (or January 1, 1966, whichever is later) to the time when s/he started to collect the CPP retirement pension, reached 70 years old or become deceased, whichever occurred first (Government of Canada, 2017). However, there is a "general drop-out provision," which Service Canada uses to eliminate eight of the lowest years of contributions in order to increase the contributor's average CPP retirement pension entitlement (Government of Canada, 2017).

While many Canadian-born workers or long-tenure immigrants are more likely to hold longer-term employment, contributing more to the CPP and increasing their CPP entitlement, this is not the

³³ The "CPI is a measure of the rate of price change for goods and services bought by Canadian consumers" (Service Canada, 2017).

case for most SAWP farmworkers. Because of the precarious nature of transnational farmwork, for most migrant farmworkers, there are far more blank years (than eight) when they earned no money or very little given they would have started with the SAWP at varying age intervals between 18 and 45. Their contributions are made intermittingly, consistent with their seasonal periods of employment in Canada. Therefore, since Andrew, for example, took a pension at age 65, after having worked for 22 years in the SAWP, it meant that his contribution period would be 47 years (i.e., 65 minus 18 equals 47). However, since Service Canada's 'drop-out' provision automatically eliminated eight years from the contributory period, a 'revised contributory period' of 39 years is established. Given the seasonality of their jobs, all farmworkers leaving the program at age 65 have their contributory period pegged at 39 years over which the pension calculations are then determined. So even though Andrew only worked for 22 (seasonal periods) years in Canada, his pension entitlements are calculated over a less-intensive contributory period of 39-years.

Notwithstanding, we see here, the logic of forgetting in operation as Service Canada conveniently treats migrant farmworkers as Canadians for the purposes of their pension calculations, being well aware of the impact. As a result, migrant farmwork pensioners are left at a disadvantage with their reduced pensions. So, these factors explain the reason Andrew's pension is CDN\$84.30 per month because he only made CPP contributions for five months of each of the 22 years that he worked in the SAWP. This principle is applied to all farmworkers and translates into varying negligible monthly CPP retirement pension amounts that I have seen, ranging from George's low of CDN\$33.80 to Manuel's high of CDN\$200.00. In fact, when Manuel's consternation drove him to seek clarification why his pension was so small, he recounted Service Canada's rationale:

dem seh wen mi kom to Kyanada mi is a aaf shuor werka, so mi no entykl tu muor dan dat. If a was a Kyaneidian, mi wuda entykl to muor, wol iip muor dan dat kaaz som Kyaneidian sitiz'n a get up to \$1000 a mont. But chuu mi a aaf shuor werka. Mi ongl kom werk fi a tuu mont ar chrii mont an go bak uom, so das di riis'n wy a dat mi a get (Manuel's Interview, February 17, 2017).

[they said I came to Canada as an offshore worker, so I'm not entitled to more than that. If I were a Canadian, I would have been entitled to more, a lot more than that because some Canadian citizens get up to CDN\$1000 per month. But because I'm an offshore worker, I only came and worked for two or three months and returned home. So that's the reason why I'm getting that amount].

So, it is clear that the state's administrative process of forgetting is not an oversight but one that is contemplated, producing the small pensions 'offshore workers' receive. We see the logic of forgetting being rationalized to him. Mapping Manuel as an 'off-shore worker,' the representative, in marginalizing him, made it clear he is not deserving of a full pension and further communicates that retirement for 'off-shore' workers is to be minimized and forgotten, being secondary to Canadians. This explains why farmwork pensioners continue to work in Jamaica even while collecting a Canadian pension. As seasonal workers in Canada, the pension plan simply does not allow workers to build up employer-matched contributions to the system that other permanent migrants and Canadian born workers are able to over the same period of time. As a result, pittance pensions do not reflect in any way the economic and physical contributions Jamaican farmworkers make to Canada's economy and society.

6.2.3 The Numbers Speak their Praise and Entitlement: SAWP Workers' Statutory Deductions

Again, the low CPP retirement pension payments that Jamaican SAWP 'retirees' receive is inequitable considering their decades of service to Canadian nation-building at the enormous social cost to their own families. Not to mention the billions in surpluses that have been extracted from migrant farmworkers, in general, and paid into the CPP fund since its inception in 1966. In *The Great Canadian Rip-Off!* published by the UFCW (2014:15), "SAWP participants and their employers contributed an estimated CDN\$48,667,027.70 to the CPP in 2012." This amount represents the combined 9.9 % employer/employee contribution. So, SAWP employees, by themselves, would have paid half that amount or over CDN\$24 million into the CPP coffers in 2012 alone (UFCW, 2014). Also, consider the CDN\$20,360,853.58 in income tax deductions for 2012 and the CDN\$21,580,631.48 taken in Employment Insurance deductions (UFCW, 2014). So, in addition to the CDN\$90,608,512.76 in annual, SAWP workers' statutory deductions (see Table 3 below), they pump another CDN\$22,425,852.58 in annual consumer spending into the Canadian economy. When we consider these contributions multiplied over decades plus the investment interest, we get a real sense of migrant

farmworkers staggering economic contributions to the Canadian economy, which have been largely forgotten.

Table 3 – Total Government Deductions of SAWP Participants and Employers, 2012

Statutory Deductions	Amount
Total Income Tax Deductions – SAWP Participants	\$20,360,853.58
Total EI Premiums – SAWP Participants and Employers	\$21,580,631.48
Total CPP Contributions – SAWP Participants and Employers	\$48,667,027.70
Total Combined Government Deductions	\$90,608,512.76

Reproduced from *The Great Canadian Rip-Off!* (UFCW, 2014:16)

These estimates, therefore, communicate to us that migrant farmworkers are among the linchpins of the Canadian economy, from whom the state extract surpluses, which are then appropriated to subsidize Canadian social programs and services that least benefit migrant farmworkers. If racialized farmworkers were not a purposely forgotten group, then Service Canada might have found a better way to ensure that their CPP retirement pension – given their historical, collective, astronomical contributions to the CPP over the past 52 years – are calculated with a different formula to increase their monthly payments. One reason workers cannot practice retirement is due to their economic circumstances such as the lack of access to significant pension income that compel them to continue to work after their exit from the SAWP. But the catalyst for this situation links back to the precarious nature of their jobs. Pension calculations assume all workers are based in Canada for long periods, resulting in small pensions for all SAWP workers. Maneuvers by the Canadian state are observed in the application of clauses to deny other social benefits like EI are documented, less so for programs such as OAS and the GIS, which farmworkers should also qualify to receive.

6.3 ‘Presence’ and the Geography of Forgetting: A Duplicitous Disqualifier for OAS

While in the field, one participant, George, brought a letter to my attention that he received from Service Canada in response to an application he made for an Old Age Security (OAS) pension. With George’s permission, parts of the letter have been reproduced below in Figure 4, excluding his personal information for the protection of his identity.

Figure 4 – Sections of Service Canada’s letter denying George’s request for an OAS pension. Reproduced with his permission

Dear Sir,

We have received your application dated December 5, 2014, for Old Age Security pension, under the Agreement on Social Security between Canada and Jamaica.

We regret to inform you that we cannot approve your application because you do not meet all the eligibility requirements of the Old Age Security Act.

These legal requirements include the following:

- You must have lived in Canada for at least one year after your 18th birthday and from January 1, 1966
- You must also have lived in Canada and in Jamaica after your 18th birthday and from January 1, 1966 for a minimum of 20 years.

We cannot approve your application for the following reason:

- You have less than one complete year of residence in Canada after age 18 and from January 1, 1966.

Residence Requirements to Qualify for a Partial OAS Pension:

A partial pension is calculated at the rate of 1/40th of the full pension for each complete year of residence in Canada after age eighteen.

In determining your residence, only actual residence and **not periods of presence** in Canada are counted.

Residence: Residence means that a person makes his home here and ordinarily lives in Canada.

Presence: Presence means that a person is physically present in any part of Canada.

George is confused and infuriated by Service Canada’s ontology of forgetting with respect to the Old Age Security (OAS) benefit denied to farmworker pensioners. Thrusting the letter into my hand, George fumed, “*si di laas letta dem sen kom gimi yah, pyuur faat, pyuur faat.*” [this is the last letter they sent me, utter rubbish, utter rubbish]. Service Canada denied his application – referenced in the opening excerpt – based on his unmet ‘residency’ requirement. George thought it incredulous that he has been denied a benefit he is convinced he is entitled to receive and finds the rationale they advanced to justify the decision to be offensive. George unleashed:

Mi aplai fi oul ieg penshan dem tel mi seh mi affi liv in a Kyanada, tu rahgil, up til nuu. Ow di raas Kyanada man? Mi no liv in Kyanada! Mi werk in Kyanada, I agrii dat som man pei a biga taks dan mi, far som man pei 8 monts – nieli a ier dem go up diir, mi du shaat term (George’s interview, March 8, 2017).

[I applied for Old Age Security and they told me that I have to live in Canada up until now to qualify. How the hell Canada, man? I don’t live in Canada. I worked in Canada. I agree that some workers paid more taxes than I did because some workers paid taxes for eight months – nearly a year that they are there, I did shorter terms].

George’s reaction to Service Canada’s denial of his OAS request communicates to us that farmworkers are aware that they have been obliterated and are emotionally, perhaps psychologically, certainly economically impacted by it. George’s OAS application also challenges and registers his

overt resistance to the system of forgetting. George's application to Service Canada and its denial of the OAS benefit also evidences anti-black racism at play in the process of state forgetting.

According to Service Canada (2017), a successful OAS applicant is one who had to have lived for an entire year (365 consecutive days) in Canada, beyond the age of eighteen, after January 1, 1966. **Residence**, Service Canada pointed out, "means that a person makes his home here and ordinarily lives in Canada," contrasted with **Presence**, which "means that a person is physically present in any part of Canada." The letter continued: "In determining your residence, only actual residence and **not periods of presence** in Canada are counted." It went on to rationalize that because George did not establish a permanent home in Canada, and because his principal residence was in Jamaica, Service Canada will only consider the length of time he had been in Canada **as presence, not residence** (the words are bold in the original document). George had worked in the SAWP from the late 1960s, missing a few years (he could not recall exactly how many), until he was dropped from the program. George currently receives a monthly CPP retirement pension of CDN\$33.80 in Jamaica. The length of his work seasons in Canada varied between six weeks to three months over the 40-year period that he worked in the SAWP.

The geographical language (presence and residence) deployed by Service Canada to exclude migrant SAWP 'retirees' or disqualify them from OAS pension benefits begs closer scrutiny. First, the SAWP bilateral agreement does not contemplate the status of Jamaican migrant workers in Canada as 'presence.' Rather, it stipulates that migrant farmworkers must be legally present in Canada to execute their work duties since the spatial distance between Canada and Jamaica makes it impractical for migrant farmworkers to return home to Jamaica every day after work. This has been the arrangement since the SAWP's inception in 1966. Not only would the distance be a problem but also the time as in many instances, farmworkers work 16-hour days. Therefore, migrant farmworkers must live in Canada for the length of time they are needed by their employers, which is between six weeks and eight months of each year they are requested to work. It is also this arrangement that keeps migrant farmworkers in a transnational flux, which embeds their lives in social relations, stretched across the borders of Jamaica and Canada.

Although they might not be ideal, farmworkers are provided living accommodations by their employers, which are not referred to as their 'presence.' They are the legitimate addresses where farmworkers are domiciled – their official places of residence, however temporary or inconvenient – in Canada and which they use on official documents. Without an address, farmworkers cannot even send home remittances. So migrant farmworkers do not arrive in Canada as vagrants, they are mapped to a location – an address – where they *live* and *work* until they return to Jamaica.

Presence, therefore, as constructed by Service Canada, in relation to migrant farmworkers is a problematic and vexed term that is infused with multiple meanings. Let us, therefore, examine some of its several undertones. Presence is a codified racial terminology that underpins farmworkers otherness and communicates and reinforces the idea that they do not belong in Canada. So, presence, as opposed to being a holistic language, is a reductionist and racist language. Not only does it diminish farmworkers humanity and maps them as nonentities but further communicates the idea that they were present in Canada doing nothing and therefore unworthy of the OAS social benefit, which they help to subsidize.

Presence is also a language of erasure and peripheralization of this vital group of people in the Canadian society. It is a language that reproduces their temporariness and marginal position as a fringe group in the Canadian society. Presence is a language of erasure because it sanitizes and obviates the importance of migrant farmworkers – specifically, their overwhelming economic contribution to the Canadian economy. So, it is not difficult for us to understand that 'presence' is a language of erasure because it deletes migrant workers' contributions to the Canadian economy, to the tune of millions of dollars annually, as outlined above. Thus, presence is a language of inequality, injustice, unfairness. Presence is evidence of the geographical logic and language of the forgetting state because the word is twisted to defend and justify farmworkers' denial of a benefit they should easily qualify for.

The framing of racialized farmworkers 'presence' in Canada, for the denial of benefits, becomes even more curious when we juxtapose how the root word 'present' and the noun 'presence' are appropriated by the Canadian state for assessing eligibility for Canadian citizenship. Under the

subheading “*Time you have lived in Canada,*” Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) (2017) states:

Regardless of your age, you must have been physically *present* in Canada for at least: 1095 days during the five years right before the date you sign your application. You may be able to use some of your time spent in Canada as a temporary resident or protected person towards your physical *presence* calculation. *Each day spent physically in Canada as a temporary resident or protected person before becoming a permanent resident within the last 5 years will count as one half day, with a maximum of 365 days, towards your physical presence.* (CIC, 2017). (All emphases are mine).

So, here we see that while the same geographical language of presence is deployed by CIC to qualify and empower applicants who are ‘present’ in Canada when assessing their eligibility for Canadian citizenship, it is utilized duplicitously by Service Canada to disenfranchise racialized workers from receiving OAS and GIS pension benefits. It is the institutional and material basis of ‘forgetting’ farmworkers.

Also, and more importantly, we must never lose sight of the fact that “foreign nationals are allowed to enter and work temporarily in Canada under sections 29 and 30 of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*” (UFCW, 2014:2). And according to CIC (2017), “Temporary resident status includes lawful authorization to enter or remain in Canada as a: visitor, student, worker or, temporary resident permit holder.” Thus, we can see from CIC’s definition – Service Canada’s glaring contradiction – that because migrant farmworkers are legally authorized to enter and work in Canada, as foreign nationals, that their ‘presence’ in Canada does, in fact, constitute them, temporary residents, not as a mere ‘presence’ as purported by Service Canada.

And so, for CIC, everyday an individual is ‘present’ in Canada, for the last five years, it is counted, not discounted, towards their application for citizenship. More importantly, CIC counts the years in ‘days’ to qualify its applicants for citizenship as opposed to Service Canada that ‘forgets’ to count by ‘days,’ choosing instead to count the continuity of residence by unbroken ‘years’ to disqualify seasonal migrant farmworkers from receiving OAS benefits. This it does being fully cognizant that seasonal migrant farmworkers can never be present in Canada for an entire year as they are only needed between six weeks and eight months. This arrangement is akin to the 1908 ‘Continuous Journey Rule’ that disallowed the landing of immigrants to Canada who did not arrive from their native

countries via a 'continuous journey,' a racist rule deployed by the Canadian state to target and prohibit entry of Asians/South Asians (Mensah, 2010).

Therefore, this confusing and contradictory maneuver by the Canadian state can be likened to a case of cognitive dissonance but evidences the state's duplicity by effectively using one word, 'presence,' which maps different meanings, to different groups of people with sweeping implications, resulting in different outcomes for each. While 'presence' benefits some people – the ones that Canada desires – it disciplines and obviates racialized migrant farmworkers because of their embodied undesirability and ultimately disenfranchises them of their social benefits. Thus, discrimination is interlaced into the structure of mainstream institutions that the farmworkers interface with and normalized in their business practices becoming a logic that the state uses to forget farmworkers. The operation demonstrates how anti-black racism operates to dislocate the social entitlements that are due to racialized people and aggravates their long-term socio-economic circumstances upon their return home to Jamaica and other places they are imported from. Thus, the denial of benefits, linked to their seasonality represents part of the wider, systemic structural anti-blackness informing forgetting which also carries into Jamaican programs themselves.

6.4 Overview of Jamaica's National Insurance Scheme

With the establishment of the National Insurance Scheme (NIS) in Jamaica, in 1966, came also the introduction of the retirement concept (Morris *et al.*, 2010). But with class being an influential factor that determines whether and how retirement is actualized in the lives of Jamaicans, this social institution offered limited support in the life course of Jamaican migrant workers associated with the SAWP.

Like the CPP, the NIS is a contributory social security arrangement, which means that in order to receive its benefits, a person had to have previously contributed to it, for the most part. According to a Jamaican government official, the NIS was "established using the minimum social security standards of the International Labour Organization (ILO) as a guide, with the intent that it would not be onerous and so everyone will be able to contribute from the domestic worker up." There are,

therefore, different categories of contributors, which determine the benefits a contributor is entitled to withdraw from it. The NIS not only pays old-age pension (retirement pension) but also a range of other benefits such as invalidity pension, widow/widower's pension, health insurance (for employment injury), survivor's benefit, funeral grants, maternity allowance, and posthumous awards.

The NIS has the backing of the National Insurance Fund (NIF), which had a 2017 value of over JA\$95 billion (CDN\$1 billion) (Henry, 2017; Jamaica's Ministry of Labour, 2018). But with the NIS paying out more than it collects, it is speculated that it "will be in negative cash flow by 2025 and be flat broke by 2033" (Jamaica Gleaner, 2016). The NIF supports a liability of about 110,000 pensioners or about a third of the Jamaican population over 60 years old (Campbell, 2017; Jamaica's Ministry of Labour, 2018). The lack of contributions to the NIS from many Jamaicans, is due to their weaker attachment to formal labour markets, resulting from sporadic employment, periods of long unemployment or employment in the informal economy where contributions to the NIS are not regularised (Morris *et al.*, 2010). As a corollary, 52 years after the institutionalization of the retirement program, a retirement 'culture,' per se, compared to Canada, has still largely not crystalized within the wider population, especially among rural working-class Jamaicans.

In the context of social security matters, there is a reciprocal social security agreement that exists between Jamaica and Canada, which allows for the coordination and administration of pension benefits for persons who had previously lived and been employed in either or both states (Service Canada, 2017). Canada has this agreement with several countries and so does Jamaica. According to a senior Jamaican functionary, Jamaica has this reciprocal arrangement with Canada, Quebec, the UK and Northern Ireland along with 12 other CARICOM³⁴ states. While employed in Canada, Jamaican farmworkers have 5% of their pay deducted each pay period and remitted to the NIS in Jamaica. The amount is consistent with that which is taken from workers in Jamaica, except the farmworkers' NIS deductions are remitted to Jamaica in Canadian currency. Although farmworkers are employed in Canada between six weeks and eight months for any given year, their NIS deductions

³⁴ CARICOM (or Caribbean Community) comprises 15 Caribbean countries invested in facilitating economic partnership and trade.

are calculated to spread over 52 weeks. So, even though farmworkers work for less than a year, the calculations showed they have contributed for the entire year the deductions were taken.

Eligibility to receive NIS benefits is determined by one's contribution to the scheme. A worker is required to have contributed to the NIS for a minimum of 10 weeks during the insurable period, which is from the age of 18 to retirement or it can be up to the point of death if they are deceased before they reached retirement age. While there is no mandatory retirement age in Jamaica, except for judges, 65 is the age at which contributors become eligible to collect the NIS Old Age Pension.

According to a Jamaican official, there are three different rates of the pension attached to the average number of contributions made over an employee's working life, shown below in table 4. However, the NIS pension benefits are comprised of two calculated amounts. There is a flat rate amount, which is linked directly to contributions all workers would have made over their working lives. And there is also the wage-rated portion, specific to each worker, based on the work period they would have contributed for. So, it becomes a tricky proposition to speculate what a typical benefit amount that any worker, including farmworkers, would receive, as they have worked for varying lengths of time. The biweekly NIS pension payments that I saw in the field ranged from a low of JA\$2,800 (CDN\$30) to a high of JA\$4,200 (CDN\$44).

Table 4 – NIS Pension Rates

Rates of NIS Pension	Contributory Period	Amount
Half Rate Pension	Between 10 and 25 weeks	JA \$1400 – biweekly
Three Quarter Rate Pension	Between 26 and 38 weeks	JA \$2100 – biweekly
Full Rate Pension	Over 39 weeks	JA \$2800 – biweekly

6.4.1 Accessing Entitlements

The process for claiming NIS benefits is the same for every category of worker and can be initiated from anywhere. It may be done remotely from any international location, just as how it can be completed locally at a NIS branch in Jamaica. For overseas applicants, notarized copies of proof documents are required as opposed to original copies for in-person applicants. Required documentation includes a birth certificate, passport, marriage certificate and the application itself seeks to establish places and periods of employment. In the case of the SAWP workers, the NIS computer system is pre-populated with their overseas employment information. However, the

challenge for some farmworkers over the age of 65 lies in furnishing the required documentation to the state. For example, a passport was not initially required for traveling to Canada under the program. Nevertheless, the Jamaican state is discretionary when it comes to the supply of older documentation. One senior Jamaican government official noted, “once we can make the connection to show who you are, and it matches with the contributions we have” then the application is moved forward.

In terms of processing times, the same functionary stated that “it can be a few days to a number of years” but acknowledged “that’s something that we are working on.” However, the consequence of ‘forgetting’ was captured in Linton’s frustration:

Mi aplai ova a ier nuo fi fi wi NIS penshan an aal nuo mi kyaahn get a dalla. Mi noh ier nutn fram dem an a siem plais a Jamioka yaso mi deh an aal nuo mi kyaahn get chue wid dat. But a so laif go. Up tu tuu ar chrii wiiks a go, mi go up diir, dem a tel mi seh it stil in pruoses, it doa riich chek pint. Dem a tell mi say it deh a wan plais fram Oktoaba...nobody no kier fi nobodi yaso stil so (resignation in voice). (Linton, February 17, 2017).

[I applied over a year ago for our NIS pension and up to this point, I can’t get a dollar. I don’t hear anything from them and I’m right here in Jamaica and I can’t get through with it. But that’s how life is. The last check I made was two or three weeks ago and they told me that it is still being processed and has not reached check-point. They informed me that it’s been at a certain place since October. Nobody cares for us here, though (resignation in his voice)]

This raises the question, should farmwork pensioners be further punished for collecting their benefits? Morgan, another interviewee showed me documentation that he received from the NIS office that confirmed his application would be processed within 12-18 months. The extended delays, according to the bureaucrat, mostly have to do with verifying employment gaps and also account for time taken up in litigations as there are employers who took the NIS deductions from employees but failed to hand them over to the Jamaican government, which necessitate court actions to recover the misdirected funds. However, I read these delays as a part of the larger process of forgetting farmworkers. Should it really take such an extended time to process a small pension when the same government official informed me that farmworkers information is prepopulated in their computer system? Linton closed his complaint by concluding that no one cares; interpreted to mean that the state has forgotten him.

Application for the CPP pension may be initiated by the farmwork ‘retirees,’ independently, or by an authorized third party. The UFCW through the Agricultural Worker’s Alliance (AWA) has been

instrumental in educating migrant farmworkers about this benefit and also acts as a third party on their behalf. The application may also be completed remotely from Jamaica, independently, by the SAWP 'retiree' or with the help of Jamaica's Labour Ministry. While it takes between six to eight weeks to process the CPP application, if direct deposit to a foreign bank account is requested, then it could take up to five or six months according to Service Canada. However, the interviewees who are receiving the CPP pension, whom I spoke with, all received their monthly cheques by mail.

6.4.2 Forgotten Pensions

There is a rigorous formalized process that initiates farmworkers into the SAWP. However, there is no formal process that discharges them from the program and in most cases, a Record of Employment (ROE) is not even provided to the farmworker – this also is forgotten. This arrangement communicates an 'ephemeral importance' on the frontend but a forgetting thereafter. This speaks to the ephemeral importance with which SAWP workers are invested to be initiated into the program but no sooner than they had been exploited by the program, they are returned to their rural, neglected districts and forgotten. This is so because when they become injured in Canada, as I have pointed out in Chapter 5, they are sent back home. So, after they have been beaten down by the rigors of the job, they are never recalled to the program. Some are killed on the job, some have fled the farms, rebelling against the process of forgetting, others simply quit. Because a formal exit process from the SAWP is 'forgotten' from the states' operations, it meant that thousands of eligible migrant farmworkers have left the program without being superannuated, even after having worked in the program for decades.

It is important to note that while the CPP notifies Canadian citizens/residents of their eligibility to apply for the pension benefit on their approach of age 60, this service does not extend to farmworkers who have been jettisoned from the program and now reside in their home countries – it is forgotten. This highlights the CPP's discriminatory practice of favouring Canadians with reminders, an arrangement that shines a light on the process of forgetting the notifications to racialized migrant farmworkers. So, it is not surprising that some SAWP 'retirees' were unaware that they are entitled to receive a Canadian pension and as a result, had also not submitted their claims to Service Canada. In a few cases, the SAWP 'retirees' thought the NIS pension they got from the Jamaican state was

sent there by Service Canada and then despatched to them by the Jamaican state. These episodes implicated two illiterate farmworkers from separate rural districts of a western parish. So, we see here that both the knowledge of their entitlement and the knowledge of the administration of their retirement benefits are fraught with confusion – all part of the process of forgetting. There are, however, the keen SAWP ‘retires,’ with some post-elementary education, like Jethro and Michael, who are very knowledgeable of their retirement entitlements and the process required to claim them.

Like the CPP, the NIS entitlements must also be claimed by farmworkers as the state will not automatically start making the payments to retired contributors. However, while the CPP reminds its citizens of their entitlements, the NIS infrastructure does not remind contributors of their eligibility to apply for the Old Age Pension. So, we can conclude that this failure to notify farmworkers, built into the NIS operations, constitutes a process of forgetting them, which has grave implications for their survival in Jamaica’s tough economic climate.

This evidence surfaced during my field trip where many interviewees that I spoke with were even oblivious of the NIS deductions that had been taken from their wages while they worked in Canada, let alone to anticipate its retirement dividends. As a result, those benefits, for many SAWP ‘retirees’ have gone unclaimed – forgotten! So, one would be curious to find out how many Jamaican farmworkers have deceased without receiving the benefit and also the value of those unclaimed benefits. In one fieldwork encounter, it took a great deal of convincing after the interview with a farmworker ‘retiree’ that he was, in fact, entitled to the NIS benefit. Patrick remarked, *“afta mi neva werk fi di Jamiakan govament, so ow mi fi get penshan fram dem?”* [I didn’t work for the Jamaican government, so why should I get a pension from them?]. A reasonable assumption, given nothing was ever formally explained to him or proper documentation provided (e.g., letter or guide). The NIS practice of not reminding farmworkers of their NIS pension reinforces their forgetting to apply for it.

In my conversation with a high-ranking NIS official, I asked whether the state could consider public service announcements to target these individuals, the following response was returned, “for years we really didn’t get money for public education...we got money in our budget this year (2017), we also got approval from cabinet to engage a communication consultant to do a campaign for us.”

This money, the official noted, originated from the International Development Bank (IDB), which has encouraged the Jamaican government to pay closer attention to social protection. But it raises the question, will farmworkers be addressed specifically, or will they just be general advertisements that tell people to pay more attention to NIS?

There are 14 interviewees referenced in table 5 below, who are at or above the age of 65 and, therefore, eligible to start receiving their retirement benefits. Of these 14 SAWP ‘retirees,’ only eight collect a CPP retirement pension. Six interviewees are eligible for CPP benefits but were unaware of their entitlement. Also, only five ‘retirees’ are receiving their NIS benefits, two of whom confused it for the CPP pension, as stated above. This means that there are nine SAWP ‘retirees,’ who are eligible to receive their NIS benefits but because these pensions have been forgotten, both by the states and also by the workers themselves, they are languishing in need without it. And, of the 14 respondents, only two ‘retirees’ collect dual benefits from both the NIS and CPP, with another two ‘retirees’ – completely forgotten – receiving neither.

Table 5 – SAWP Retirees Interviewed Receiving/not Receiving a Pension

Number of SAWP ‘retirees’ eligible to receive a pension (n= 14)	Above the Age of 65
Receiving CPP	8
Receiving NIS	5
Receiving both CPP & NIS	2
Not receiving CPP or NIS	2
Eligible for but not receiving CPP	6
Eligible for but not receiving NIS	9
Confused NIS for CPP	2

Given the prevailing level of obliviousness and misperception clouding pension eligibility, one can speculate that there may exist thousands of other SAWP ‘retirees’ who qualify but are omitted from benefits. Undoubtedly, many have also died, having not received or benefited from social programs they contributed to. This conjecture is not unfounded. Spencer, the 76-year-old introduced in Chapter 5, received a CPP pension but had been unaware of his NIS entitlement until I alerted him to it after the interview. Regrettably, Spencer passed-away shortly after our interview. But having communicated to him his eligibility for the NIS benefit and impressed upon him the need to urgently

apply, it is my hope that his family will follow up with the NIS for a posthumous award. As Spencer's situation demonstrates, these are some of the harsh consequences of forgetting.

Important to note, there is an eerie secrecy among the SAWP pensioners about the amount of pension they are receiving, in that no one knows what the other receives. Some are surprised, ashamed and disappointed by their small pensions, and they complained privately to me but muted by their embarrassment, no one spoke publicly about it. So, with the humiliation comes a stigma that further isolates them from bringing transparency to pension entitlements. Hence, their collective shame, unbeknownst to them, facilitates a 'forgetting' of any kind of collective mobilization around pressing the government to investigate their plight. This dimension of forgetting perpetuates their denial of benefits and ultimately, the reproduction of the status quo. Therefore, SAWP 'retirees' lack of awareness surrounding their pension entitlements is a situation that facilitates and helps to underwrite their oblivescence. The status quo reinforces their invisibility and side-lines them even in Jamaica, as the emphasis of that state appears to be on the remittances the program channels into Jamaica. And it is an awareness that has not been lost on farmworkers as Linton complained:

"mi nuh av nobadii fi tern tu afta riityament bikaaz nobadii noh iivn luuk at yu ar nobadii – uor govament, ar nobadii. Yu neva ier it an di ier tu iivn seh dem iivn seh tanks tu di paas faamwerka dem ar di present wan dem ar watsoeva. Bikaaz dem ongl taak ow meni millian dalla dem mek affa faam werka fi di siis'n. So, weh dat liiv wi?

[I don't have anyone to turn to after retirement because no one even looks at you or anyone else, our government or nobody. You never hear it on the air to even say thanks to the past farmworkers or even the present ones or whatever. Because they only talk about how many millions of dollars they have made off farmworker for the season. So where does that leave us?] (Linton's Interview, February 17, 2017).

As Linton complained, the Jamaican government does not even offer a verbal public appreciation for their hard work in the farmwork program. Instead, the state is fixated on the millions of dollars that the program rakes in. Linton is upset by this because farmworkers non-recognition signals to him that they have been forgotten. In my discussion with a senior Jamaican official, I was informed that the program, in 2015, brought in \$21 million Canadian dollars through its compulsory saving³⁵ scheme. This does

³⁵ 25% of farmworkers wages used to be withheld and sent to the Jamaican government until they returned home. This program was ended in 2016.

not include the Western Union remittances that the more than 8090 Jamaican farmworkers sent home bi-weekly. Farmworkers informed me that they each remitted around CDN\$200.00 (JA\$19000) every two weeks to Jamaica. When that amount is multiplied over eight months, for some farmworkers, it hints at the economic value of farmworkers' remittances flowing into the Jamaican economy, not to mention the amount they personally bring home to Jamaica with them. All these channels of remittances give us a sense of the tremendous financial impact of the program. This context is necessary to show the significant economic contribution of the SAWP farmworkers to Jamaica, contrasted with how they are simultaneously forgotten.

The Jamaican state, like its Canadian counterpart, has been so fixated on production – recruiting and initiating workers into the SAWP – that it, in large part, has forgotten to pay attention to when 'retirees' exit the program, which is just as important as their entrance thereinto. When I broached the topic of retirement with a senior Jamaican government official, though some information was provided, I was surprised that the high-ranking functionary was blindsided by many of what I thought were basic inquiries. For instance, I did not get an answer as to the specific number of SAWP retirees in Jamaica, neither could the exact number of people who have worked in the program, since its inception, be established. And although verbal promises were made during the interviews to furnish such information, repeated requests and reminders have all been stonewalled. One could estimate from Canadian data, but it would be challenging with the number of new entrants and people leaving never to return varying each year. States have an accurate count of how many people come each year as temporary migrants under the program. There is far less concern with tracking people who leave.

The inefficiency in Jamaica's data repository can be read as an indictment against a state with limited resources or the limited value that is placed upon the lives of farmworkers after they leave the program. It supports the claim that a raced neoliberal project invests farmworkers with an ephemeral importance for the purposes of surplus extraction before returning them to the forgotten places from whence they were taken. Thus, the government and state of forgotten places are implicated in the process of forgetting. It is bad enough that farmworkers are forgotten abroad but when they are also

forgotten at home, it takes on a whole new meaning. It communicates the idea that the labour agreement is about the exigency of economics; that farmworkers' lives are of little worth; it underwrites their disposability; it undermines development, and ultimately reproduces Jamaica's inferior position in the world-system. In Canada, migrant workers are documented and forgotten; in Jamaica, we are not sure of the documentation system. Nevertheless, one recognizes the vulnerability of data to manipulation. It can be weaponized to criminalize individuals or racialized groups, as in the controversial 'carding' practice by the Toronto Police Service but we also appreciate that its lack, in the cases of 'retired' farmworkers, renders them invisible and reifies their oblivion.

The Jamaican functionary confirmed that there is no formal retirement process when a farmworker decides to call it quits. The only times the Jamaican state gets involved when a SAWP employee leaves the program are in the events of critical injuries, illness or deaths that would necessitate their repatriation to Jamaica. There is no pre-determined age at which they are required to stop working – that is a decision that is left to the employer and the SAWP employee. However, the official noted that “we are looking at possibly limiting it. A decision has not been made. We are looking at that – coming up with a retirement age so to speak.”

But the official was also half-informed about SAWP retirees' CPP entitlements. On the one hand, the official stated that SAWP retirees complained that their CPP pension was not enough (I could not confirm how much not enough was) but on the other hand emphatically conjectured that a farmworker with 40 years of service, having worked for relatively extended seasons “would be fine.” However, when I referenced evidence from the field that such a SAWP pensioner was only receiving CDN\$157.00 for his CPP pension, the official back-pedaled, “No man, that wouldn't be enough. The expenses are much more than the conversion. When you reach that stage, you would have medication to buy, more than likely, at that time. I'm gonna check to get an idea.” Whether that check has been made has yet to be determined as all my follow-up efforts have been an exercise in futility. So here again we see the logic of forgetting that devalues farmworkers. But as mentioned, all SAWP pensioners CPP pensions are relatively small amounts, informed by Service Canada's skewed calculation formula, part of the state's forgetting mechanism to limit their CPP pensions.

6.5 Retirement for Whom?

Morris *et al.*, (2010) contend that there must be a paradigm shift in order to inscribe retirement into the psyche and culture of Jamaicans from an early age so that proper planning for it can be done. However, one is curious to understand how this can be actualized for poor working-class Jamaicans who languish in poverty and whose socio-economic circumstances dictate that they live from day to day, let alone to consider long-term planning/saving? But if this ideal does not appeal to everyone, retirement in Jamaica will simply remain a middle-class notion at best. Morris *et al.*, (2010) further argue that in Jamaica, people are generally better prepared for the world of work with the constant promotion of education and training, yet the same effort is not placed on their preparation for exiting the workforce. One possible explanation is because it takes money to retire. While many more people get an education, finding employment remains difficult and drives migration. But a great number of people who remain have weak labour market attachments and struggle to get by, let alone save for retirement.

By the time most working-class people begin to respond to the few progressive organizations in Jamaica that promote retirement, it is at such a late stage in their working lives that it becomes of little value; more of an awareness for most of them and more so, an appeal to a targeted group of people. “*Get aggressive about saving for retirement! – Pension adviser urges...*” is an article that appeared in *The Jamaica Gleaner*, a popular Jamaican daily, on April 18, 2017. It is a story about a retired Jamaican private sector worker who, at age 61, used his pension savings, drawn from a Jamaican investment company, to venture into pig farming, which has been successful so far.

In promoting the retirement investment vehicle, the company representative, while stressing the importance of time, urged Jamaicans to start saving for their retirement. While this is a positive news article and promotes awareness of and saving towards retirement, my first reaction was, who is this story’s targeted audience? It was not difficult to realize that it is marketed to a middle-class Jamaican audience as the socio-economic circumstances of many ‘retired’ farmworkers bring them close to poverty. I also thought it was ironic that this ‘featured retiree’ ran a successful pig farm. In my conversation with Emmanuel, a ‘retired’ farmworker who has also invested in pigs – rearing some 15

pigs to earn a living – he has been ‘forgotten’ as he has not been able to secure a market for his animals. Meanwhile, they are getting older and more expensive to maintain because of the costs involved.

So here we have a tale of two Jamaicans from different socio-economic classes running similar businesses with entirely different outcomes. The ‘featured retiree’ from the middle class, being more socially connected is better positioned to secure a ready market for his products. Whereas, the SAWP ‘retiree,’ Emmanuel, by reason of his lower-class status faces a barrier in finding any market at all as he has been forgotten. Meanwhile, the more mature the pigs become, the less desirable they are to butchers, while the pigs literally eat away at this poor ‘retired’ farmworker’s profit margin.

6.5.1 Unpacking ‘Retirement’ with Jamaican SAWP ‘Retirees’

Of the 37 participants interviewed, only two men quit the SAWP program on their own volition for reasons that can be somewhat ascribed to a western understanding of retirement. Most of the remaining 35 men were jettisoned from the program, without notice, or were repatriated when they became injured as the state’s logic of forgetting dictated. Two workers quit the program because their poor or failing health prevented them from continuing to work. But even if ‘retirement’ can be used to describe farmworkers post-SAWP experience, it only represents a cessation of work from the SAWP, as opposed to a complete withdrawal from undertaking work altogether or from the workforce in general as most men continued to work in Jamaica after their so-called ‘retirement.’ As Michael maintained *“as lang as mi av elt, mi tink mi ago kantinyu werk”* [as long as I’ve got health, I think I’ll continue to work]. Another SAWP retiree, Andrew completely rubbished the idea of retirement, *“no sah; no, wen yu riitaya a wen yu kyaahn elp yuself.”* [no sir; no, you only retire when you can’t help yourself]. Discussing retirement, Egbert also frowned upon the idea of retirement, not only for him but his entire district, he reasoned, *“No, mi no riili si dat fimi enoh, fi go sidong and naah du nutn...anles a sik mi sik. Mi werk haad man...mi no si nobadi riili riitiya ya nuo anles a sik dem sik. But wanc dem no sik maasah, evribadi weh kyan du dem likl faamin a dwiit, yu noh, an dem ting deh, nobadi naah riitiya.”* [No, I don’t really see that for me, you know. To sit down and not be doing anything...unless

I'm sick. I work hard man...I don't really see anyone retiring now unless they're sick. But once they aren't sick, everyone who can do their farming is engaged in it, you know, those things; no one retires].

As a corollary, 'retirement' for farmworkers becomes a problematic concept or one that needs to be contextualized since it varies across space. This is important because if most respondents worked for varying lengths of time, some for up to 40 years, before being dropped from the program, without notice or explanation or were never recalled, then it becomes a practice that communicates larger ideas about the SAWP's 'forgetting' operations and tells how the labour that sustains the program is viewed or constructed. It bears noting, by contrast, that in a typical Canadian work organization, employees who have devoted as many years of service – 20, 30 or 40 years – are often accorded due recognition. If they are being terminated, without cause, adequate notice is usually given, and a rationale advanced for their termination. And if they are retiring, there is usually some formal or informal 'send-off.' Retirees are even celebrated in some workplaces (e.g., Emeritus Professors). But this has not been the experience of racialized farmworkers, save one who worked for 40 years and was given a small 'send-off' by his employer—they have all been forgotten in some way. Because farmworkers are summoned to Canada on an as needed basis and repatriated to Jamaica when the need ceases to exist, there is a certain element of disposability that is associated with their embodied labour and therefore 'retirement' is not a practice that is readily ascribed to their life course. So, as an objectified labour source to be exploited, the logic of forgetting then normalizes them as people without post-farmwork lives.

In Canada, there is a history/practice of retirement, but it is reserved for citizens, and even then, not all citizens equally. While SAWP employers reserve retirement for themselves, they forget it as part of the life course of off-shore workers. But if we can demonstrate that considering farmworkers as people, indeed their basic humanity is a failure of states, then it becomes difficult to reconcile governing stipulations that mandate CPP contributions. For if they are just a disposable labour source, imported to subsidize the agricultural industry, then should not they be exempted (some may say excluded) from CPP deductions? And, if employers' goal is to reduce costs and not have any

obligation to migrant workers after years of employment, then why do they continue to contribute to the CPP?

Given the complexities of where these migrant 'retirees' are socially and geographically located, then, we need a more fluid conceptualization of their 'retirement.' This is not to suggest that 'retirement' as an important part of farmworkers' life course be unrecognized but asserts that as a western imposition, facilitated by a raced-capitalist social order, retirement, for farmworkers, does not unfold in a linear way. Indeed, 'retirement' as a concept in advanced capitalist labour markets is increasingly fluid with growing grey labour as many retired people head back to the workforce. Irrespective of the age migrant workers exit the SAWP, they almost all continue to work in Jamaica, constrained by economic necessity. And yet, the uniqueness of their individual socio-economic circumstances makes farmworkers in 'retirement' a heterogeneous group. They all manifest being 'forgotten' differently.

So, Jamaican SAWP 'retirees' continue to work beyond the established state pension age, and well into their 70s and 80s. Hence, the applicability of the concept 'productive ageing' (Caro, Bass & Chen, 1993; Parker, 1982; Morris *et al.*, 2010), which places their work practice into perspective, as it accounts for people older than the state pension age, engaging in the production of goods and services. Only in two cases where 'retirees' were incapacitated by poor health that they deemed themselves to have 'retired' or ceased paid-work. Here, retirement is better conceptualized as the withdrawal from the SAWP, but not from other forms of formal or informal paid work even while receiving a state pension. Any traditional use of the concept – complete removal from the workforce – is only due to a combination of age and poor health – the inability to work rather than a choice or ability to cease work.

Therefore, the necessity for SAWP 'retirees' to work as they age, can be explained by the process of forgetting, manifested in levels of inequality, discriminatory treatment and their precarious attachment to the labour market that precluded many of them from achieving economic security even after decades of labouring. Thus, Vincent reasons, *"mait bi if mi did a get sup'm sensibl fram up deh an ting, mait bi mi wuda iiz aaf a di faamin' likl fi mai iej nuo. So, mi wudn't main if dem kyan gimmi sup'm*

substanshal das mi kyaa du a ting.” [Maybe if I were getting something sensible from Canada and so on, might be I would quit farming, given my age now. So, I wouldn’t mind if they can give me something substantial so that I will be able to do something with it]. Vincent reasoned that if the system had not forgotten farmworkers, their CPP pensions would be ‘sensible’ or sufficient to cover their expenses in ‘retirement,’ which would give him the option to quit farming. He further reasoned that if he got a worthwhile pension amount, he would be able to invest it wisely. But the process of forgetting disallows substantial retirement pensions to migrant farmworkers, which forces them to continue working. I would hasten to add that Linton, in the opening quote, made the case for what Vincent describes as ‘sensible’ and ‘substantial’ payment. If the humanity of migrant farmworkers were considered, their employers might have considered severance pay for the decades many Jamaican men have served the SAWP. However, we see that the ‘process of forgetting’ deletes any mention of severance neither is their neglect taken up by the forgetful Jamaican state.

Therefore, any formal ‘retirement’ for most ex-SAWP workers remains a pipe dream – out of reach. By comparison, after spending decades in the workforce, many White, middle class, Canadian born workers find themselves in a position to retire more comfortably – although this too is being challenged. So, while a certain class of people can afford not to work as much or not even work at all in their 60s and beyond, it is not the reality for many rural folks and most SAWP ‘retirees, for Luke tells us, *“som man werk til dem riich aal 80, dem stil kyan do likl sup’m saim wei.”* [Some men work until the age of 80, for often they can still do a little work just the same]. So, their economic circumstances, because of being forgotten, compel them to work well into their advanced years, which Morris *et al.*, (2010) map as a “work until death” way of life (p.136). At the same time, as we note the lingering effects of the uneven patterns of development, SAWP ‘retirees’ have largely internalized their ascribed roles as providers. So, norms of masculine identity and patriarchal authority work to reinforce the global order of some who ‘work until death.’

In fact, all interviewees expressed that retirement is not a practice of rural, lower-working-class Jamaicans. Class is invoked here because rural Jamaican geography is not an exclusive domain of one class of Jamaicans. This caveat is important because upper and middle-class Jamaicans, people

who can practice retirement, are also domiciled in rural spaces, many of whom are retired Jamaican public servants or private sector workers or wealthier migrants who have returned to retire in Jamaica. Many of these migrant returnees emigrated from Jamaica as farmworkers, having used the program as a springboard to North American citizenship and have returned to build their homes and 'retire' in various rural Jamaican places. The latter gives us a glimpse into the agency of migrant farmworkers, highlighting one of the ways that farmworkers have challenged a system designed to 'forget' them, by fleeing from it abroad (or forgetting it) to regularize their citizenship, usually through marriage.

So western practices of retirement, while far from universal in Jamaica, are neither absent. Retirement in Jamaica is largely elusive for the rural, lower income people. In Vincent's words, there is *"no riityament kaa nut'n nuh deh fi dem liv affa. Uu nat werkin jos naah werk an uu a werk affi jos kiip goin. So, a jos faamin' area dis enuh. No indoschrial nutt'n nuh deh yah in a dem plais ya."* [No retirement, because there isn't much around for people to earn a living from. Who's without a job, just do not have one and who must work just keep going. So, this is just a farming area you know, no industrial operations are to be found in these places]. Vincent is resigned to the fact that retirement cannot be a reality for the poor and forgotten in 'forgotten' rural areas like his. But his explanation indicts the larger capitalist structure for the uneven development because he says farming is the only livelihood available for people to earn a living in districts like his, there are no other industries there.

Thus, for most SAWP 'retirees,' their precarious seasonal SAWP attachment, extended over decades, for some workers, to a globalized labour market, does not represent automatic class-mobility in Jamaica. Indeed, most understood retirement to be a terminal period in life when they become immobilized by sickness and are physically unable to work and closer, therefore, to death. So, even though they have spent most of their prime employment years working in the program, most SAWP 'retirees' do not regard retirement as a function of work but anathema to it. Hence, some of the complexities, tensions, and contradictions in understanding 'retirement' for Jamaican SAWP 'retirees.'

6.6 Conclusion

This chapter explored the dimension of the forgetting state since it was invested in engaging both countries' retirement infrastructure. It was critical to disambiguate how the institutions are implicated in the systemic oblivescence of Jamaican farmwork retirees/pensioners. These are the institutions that script policies and shape practices with significant material impact on the post-program experience of Jamaicans and other migrant farmworkers. Since the inception of the SAWP, five decades ago, both Canadian and Jamaican states have collectively extracted billions of dollars from migrant workers in the form of statutory deductions. However, their exclusionary practices or processes of forgetting are demonstrated to be deliberate in denying farmworkers their rightful benefits, as revealed in the Old Age Security/Guaranteed Supplements or in limiting retirement benefits as in the case of the Canada Pension Plan, due to how the benefits are calculated, or delaying their benefits in the case of the NIS' Kafkaesque administration. Conveniently, while Service Canada treats migrant farmworkers as Canadians to calculate their CPP pensions, a process of forgetting that reduces their benefit, it views them as offshore workers to disqualify them from OAS/GIS. For both states, there is no formal process that separates workers from the program. Invariably, farmworkers are jettisoned from the program and there is very little to no contact between either side thereafter.

While the Canadian state reminds/informs its impending pensioners of their pension entitlement, this courtesy is not extended to migrant farmworkers when they leave. The Jamaican state does not indulge in this practice for its local or overseas workers. Consequently, many farmworkers exit the program, without being superannuated and now languish, in 'retirement,' without a pension. Due to the precarious nature of transnational farmwork and their sporadic attachment to the labour market, farmworkers do not amass enough to facilitate a retirement experience as it is practiced in many parts of the developed world. Indeed, the practice of retirement is limited to members of Jamaica's middleclass. Consequently, migrant farmworkers are compelled to continue working after their so-called 'retirement' and even while collecting their pension benefits, making 'retirement' for migrant farmworkers a pipe-dream.

Having explored 'forgetting states' and some of the institutional policies and practices that underwrite their processes of forgetting and having contextualized and problematized SAWP 'retirement' in the Jamaican context, the next chapter will examine the socio-economic realities post-SAWP or the so-called 'retirement' phase that demonstrate the consequences of forgetting. While states 'forget', it is only part of a broader system of 'forgetting' which involves workers themselves internalizing 'forgetting' as the system reproduces itself.

Part II: Forgetful/Forgetting Masculinities

Chapter 7. Coping with the Consequences of ‘Forgetting’: The Socio-Economic Realities of Jamaican SAWP Farmworkers in ‘Retirement’

“Mi a tel yu seh mi staat mi uos, it noh finish yet. A chue finanshal enoh...”

[I’m telling you that I started [building] my house, it’s not finished yet. I can’t finance its completion]

–Garth, January 18, 2017

7.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the consequences that emerged in migrant workers’ so-called ‘retirement’ resulting from the various processes of ‘forgetting’ that help underpin the farmwork program. This chapter is set against the backdrop of the preceding chapters that emphasized the dimensions of forgetting states inscribed in retirement policies and administrative practices that impinge upon or deny migrant farmworkers health and pension benefits. Processes of ‘forgetting’ at the state level are reinforced by ‘forgetting masculinities’ since the men also practice ‘forgetting’ as an act of agency in response to the states’ constraints and limitations pressed against them. The discussions and analyses of farmworkers ‘retirement’ from the SAWP uncover the material impact resulting from being forgotten and the misery it visits upon them even as they struggle not to be erased – demonstrated through their personal exercise of agency. Although it examines a range of activities that comprise social reproduction, this discussion is framed with a sensitivity to a prime patriarchal responsibility – to earn money (for home construction) – that farmworkers envisioned entering the program, which is also a cultural expectation, as will become apparent soon. The intersections of gender, patriarchy, class, age, health, geography, money, as well as the dis/advantage they initiated the program with, combined to show that farmworkers are forgotten and themselves forget in different ways.

7.2 Gender Surveillance, Patriarchy, the Man and his Pursuit of the ‘Elusive’ House

A gendered expectation traditional Jamaican society attaches to men and ascribes to masculinity is home ownership (Morris *et al.*, 2010). It is, therefore, not surprising that most interviewees identified the house as their main goal – that main thing they wanted to achieve by working in the program. But the premium that is attached to the house as a material investment is not

so much for the personal equity it is able to generate, though it becomes the prime vehicle to do so. Rather, it also signifies that the man has somewhere, in Jamaican parlance, 'to put his family.' The house represents a sanctuary, a place of security for the family. It is also about respectability for the man and shows his hard work, so, it feeds into the patriarchal notion of the male as the provider. Thus, when the villagers see a man's house, they see the man and his worth (Morris *et al.*, 2010). Therefore, a well-appointed home forms a quantifiable extension of masculine identity, a patriarchal status symbol that not only affirms manhood but one that solicits ongoing local endorsement of masculinity.

The expectation is even more acute for SAWP 'retirees' who, in many instances, have worked in the program for a long time, so by the time they quit the program, they are expected, at the minimum, to have something – a house – to show for it. This masculine surveillance is more intense in rural spaces, where the district residents are more closely connected. Those who failed to meet this expectation are disparaged as, "*wutlis*" [worthless] or the community watchers theorize that the farmworkers, "*gyal uot dem moni.*" [waste their money on girls]. This narrative is even common among farmworkers themselves, as Michael speculated, "*evribadi go deh waahn wait uman an den di wait uman tek weh di moni fram dem, an as di moni dun, dem tun dem uot.*" [everyone who goes there wants a white woman and after the white woman takes and uses their money, she ends the relationship]. As this chapter addresses their economic survival, a broader discussion about farmworkers' gender dynamics is taken up in Chapter 8.

I met Linton in a sluggish town square in one of the western parishes. He was seated under a mango tree, alongside a busy thoroughfare, across from a public school, anticipating our arrival. He and his wife, Rose, operate a snack joint selling cultural cuisine to local students, which nets them about JA\$500 (CDN\$5.25) per day. Linton reasons, "*fram mi liiv di faamwerk, mi noh av no werk a do, an uot yasso slo...so yu chrai dis likkl self-impliment ting but it naah riili werk out. Bikaaz a lat a wi; a lat a piipl iina di area weh a do di saim ting weh a sel likl tings.*" [Since I left the farmwork program, I don't really have a job. Business is slow here. I'm trying this little self-employment thing but it's not working out. Because several people in the area are doing the same thing]. The money Linton and Rose make per day is not even enough to buy a daily lunch for one person, a clear indication of the

consequence of forgetting. They usually have the leftovers from the day's sale for dinner. Linton bemoaned his CPP pension of CDN\$190 (JA\$18000), which he says, "*kyaahn kova*" [can't cover] his expenses, "*biikaaz mi kyan tel yu di anes chuut, rait nou mai waata bil deh pan di verj af kutin' aaf, far dem aal diskaneek mi lait areddi*" [because I can tell you the honest truth, right now my water bill is on the verge of being disconnected; they have even disconnected my electricity already]. Here, the consequence of 'forgetting' becomes much clearer. Linton does not collect the Jamaican NIS, the previous chapter tells us that he is still waiting for its approval. His water account is in arrears JA\$60000 (CDN\$632) and he owes JA\$9000 (CDN\$95) on his electricity account. Linton's economic situation in 'retirement' is distressing, reflecting the stark consequences of 'forgetting' because after 23 years in the program, and even with his CPP pension, he still finds himself in poverty. Linton's small pension and meager income from their struggling business are just not enough to meet their modest basic needs but he resigns himself to the hardship.

When I inquired about his house, Linton seemed uncomfortable, perhaps embarrassed, as he halfheartedly pointed to an unfinished structure with no windows, doors or roof on one half of it; but on the other half, a rusted zinc roof hung over the un-rendered, unpainted concrete walls – the picture of oblivion. The house fell into the distance behind where we stood, partially hidden by shrubs. At 68 years old, with an unfinished house to 'show' for the 23 years he was employed in the SAWP, perhaps he felt unaccomplished, perhaps his home was an indictment. Linton proceeded to obligate himself to an unsolicited justification, "*yu si rait nou, piipl wuda seh mi chravl an nat iivn a ruuf ova mi ed...but mi noh av no moni. But stil yet mi giv Gad tanks, far wen di rain a faal mi noh get wet.*" [you see right now, people would say that I traveled abroad, and I don't even have a roof over my head, but I don't have any money. But still, I thank God because when it rains, I don't get wet]. I understood Linton's uneasiness. But, unlike the village watchers, I was not there to judge him. I told him about the concerns of other 'retirees' with incomplete houses, hoping that it would set him at ease. I made myself comfortable on a stool he provided me, and our discussion continued. Here, we also see that shame and feelings of inadequacy and helplessness represent other dimensions of the consequences of 'forgetting,' which are challenging Linton's masculine identity and self-worth.

However, the process of home ownership, for the farmworker, is much more complex than the village watchers' reductionisms. As Linton noted, *“yu si fi bil a uos an fi seh yu a bil a uos, a tuu difran stouri dat enoh maasah. It tek moni fi bil uos enoh. An wen yu luk pan faam werka dalla, faam werka dalla noh strang enoh. An wen yu a bil uos, a faam werk dalla yu si.”* [you see, the dream of building a house and the reality of building a house, are two very different issues. It takes money to build a house. And when you look at the money farmworkers earn, farmwork money is not strong. And when you build a house, you see the value of farmwork earnings]. Linton's statement underscores the process of forgetting that is built into the system and its consequence in the post-SAWP life. He spoke of the enormous cost involved in undertaking home construction, which he juxtaposed with the minimum wage that he earned as a farmworker and even with the conversion from the exchange rate, it still leaves farmworkers in a desperate situation. Keep in mind, farmworkers do not get paid overtime nor statutory holiday pay either – those have also been forgotten, too. But the crux of what he said is that the home structures that farmworkers are able to erect reflect the value of their earnings, which is a profound statement. So, the house – the unfinished structure – is a material reflection of the pittance earned in the program, which is a consequence of 'forgetting.'

Besides, the path to homeownership, for the farmworker, is a protracted and onerous process, which entails land acquisition, the hiring of a contractor (sometimes) and workmen and the purchase of basic building materials. But not in all cases. As Linton enlightened:

som piipl faachunet enoh. Far som piipl noh affi kom bai lan ar eni ting. Som piipl jos kom op an fram dem si a lan, di moni weh im ago tek bai di lan, im jos staat wid a uos...Mi affi bai lan far mi noh av it. Mi noh gruo up kom si no pierens. A difran piipl faada an madda mi. An di likkl lan dem ded lef, di olda hed dem tek it weh fram yu (Linton's Interview, February 17, 2017).

[some people are fortunate, you know. Because some people don't have to buy land or anything. Some people just come up and the moment they see a piece of land, the money they would have used to buy the land, they just start building the house. I had to buy land because I don't have inherited land. I didn't know my parents. Different people filled their roles in my life. And my inheritance was taken away by my older siblings].

Some interviewees had the good fortune of bypassing land purchase since they initiated construction on family³⁶ or inherited land. This advantage eliminated not only the time it would have taken to save for its purchase, which would have further delayed the process but also the money they would have paid for the land. Linton was orphaned by the age of eight and whatever land his parents had left was taken over by his older siblings. Nine respondents did not benefit from family legacies so they had to acquire the land for their home project. For those engaged in home building, in all cases, the construction process is undertaken incrementally, which meant that for most farmworkers, it becomes a lifetime project, one which extends into their 'retirement.' For others, it is a project that may be eternally forgotten, having outlasted their lifetime. Linton continued:

di salarii wasn't dat big yu noh, but a yu affi iikanamaiz wid ii. So wi chrai sen our chiljren a skuul outa it an ting, yu noa. An chrai bai wan 50 ar wan onjred blak. Wi kantinyu bai it gwaan, gwaan til wi set up a ruum ar soh fi wi self. Yu si, a noh seh di money was dat grait. Bikaaz if it wasn't fi di xcheinj bak uom, wi wudn't get noting (Linton's Interview, February 17, 2017).

[The salary wasn't that big, you know, but we had to economize with it. So, we try to send our children to school out of it and so on. And try to buy 50 or 100 building blocks. We continue buying small quantities of building material until we set up a room or so for ourselves. You see, it's not that the money was that great because if it wasn't for the exchange rate back home, we wouldn't get anything].

Here Linton tells us that it is the exchange rate on the dollar that makes farmwork and its small earnings attractive. However, the money must be managed wisely so that it covers all the competing areas of social reproduction, including the purchase of building supplies. We see here the resourcefulness of these men, putting every cent of their SAWP earnings to use; to create a better life than what they started with. Linton also informs us about the farmworkers' incremental home building process. While we read such practice as a consequence of 'forgetting,' it also communicates the simultaneity of their incredible personal agency because, in practice, farmworkers have been 'forgotten' to figure out, on their own, a major life goal so central to their masculine and patriarchal identity. Since there are no building codes to adhere to in these rural districts, the project is initiated with one or two rooms, then intermittent work, funded mostly by earnings from the SAWP, gradually improves upon it as indicated

³⁶ The downside to this arrangement is that people engaged in this practice usually do not have a title deed, as obtaining one necessitates the severing of the land, which is an additional cost. Thus, the property tax must be paid jointly by the family.

by Garth at the beginning of the chapter. But the project is seldom ever completed as reflected in unfinished house samples in figure 5 below.

Additionally, we see that the SAWP, intending to facilitate, also interrupts social reproduction in a significant way beyond the obvious of taking the men away from their families. By sending home remittances, they attempted to reproduce the home and raise their children. Ironically, however, it is a process that disrupts social reproduction in the sense that they are not able to complete their homes like some other Jamaican men because of the sweat equity that goes into their home building. Thus, the unfinished home serves as a constant reminder of them having been in the program yet their obsession with finishing the home will allow them to forget, which is a contradiction – so finishing the home is a part of the process of forgetting.

Figure 5 – Various Sections of Four ‘Retirees’ Homes ‘Stranded’ Under Construction



But even with the advantage of an inherited parcel of land on which to erect a home, advancing the project represents a major challenge for some interviewees. With a square of land his father left for him, Leroy explained his house building dilemma:

Mi did lain up a uos pan it, seh mi did ago blak up a likl uos pan it. Mi bai som blak an stiil an evri ting laik dat fi diil wid it but moni go wiik. Dem way deh. Kaaz matiirial fi uos is veri expensiv. So yu kyaahn av wan likkl JA\$100,000 seh yu ago werk pan uos, yu affi av muor moni dan dat. If yu a get som badi fi werk an bai matiirial, in a no taim di moni spen, kaaz wan bag a siment is laik JA\$1000 enoh! So yu noa seh yu affi av moni fi mek uos a dis ya plais ya. Mi noh noa weh kyan ap'm, if mi kyaahn go, mait bi a aal mi kids dem kom finish ii. An mi deh ya an mi no av no job direk (Leroy's Interview, March 2, 2017).

[I framed a house foundation on it, intending to build a little house on it. I bought some building materials, but the money got weak. That's how it is. Because building materials are very expensive. You can't have a small amount like JA\$100,000 to advance the construction of a house, you have to have a lot more money. To hire workmen and buy material, in no time the money is spent because a bag of cement costs JA\$1000, you know. So, you know that you have to have money to build a house here. And I'm here and don't have a real job. I don't know what can happen. Maybe my children will be the ones to complete it].

Leroy's, like many other 'retired' farmworkers' home building projects, have waned along the way, placed on hold or have been forgotten altogether – a reflection of the consequences of 'forgetting.' The 12 years Leroy spent in the program barely got him a house foundation and some unused building materials because of the prohibitive costs involved, as he outlined above. Since his house is nowhere near completion, Leroy has 'forgotten' it as he currently pays a monthly lease of JA\$1600 (CDN\$17). Leroy is a goat farmer, but those animals are prime targets for predial larceny (farm thievery) and will not earn him enough money to move the project ahead, hence, the reason he said he does not have a direct job. So, the same farmwork program that had brought him hope of building/owning a home has morphed into despair because the logic of forgetting jettisoned him from the program and as a result, the expected earnings from the program he was depending on to move the project along has stopped. Thus, Leroy's focus has shifted to survival, reckoning with the consequence of forgetting – that it might be impossible to complete the building project – and speculates that his children may have to pick-up where he has 'forgotten' the building.

When I asked whether he could not secure a mortgage to complete his house, Leroy snapped, *"no sah! Mi affi go werk an siev dat likkl likkl so til it kom to sirt'n amount mi kyan tek taim mek a likkl staat. Yu werk aghen an yu siev aghen an yu mek a nex likkl, a so yu affi dwiit. Yu av a ting kaal paadna..."* [no sir! I have to work and save that in small increments until I amass a certain amount, then I can use it to make a little start. You work again, and you save again and you make the next

move, that's how you have to do it. Partners³⁷ help you to save]. Because farmworkers have largely been forgotten by the Jamaican state, too, they must, through their own agency, engineer a creative way to home ownership, unlike most other working people in a better position to secure a mortgage loan. There are no formalized avenues for farmworkers to obtain a home mortgage.

The uncertainty that is buried in their precarious jobs makes them unlikely mortgage candidates seeing they can be dropped from the program at any time as is the experience of most farmworkers. So, with their jobs being so tenuous and farmwork earnings so menial, it creates the conditions for the lenders to avoid doing business with them and as such delegitimize their shelter/housing needs. We see here a ripple effect. Thus, a consequence of 'forgetting' is that it legitimizes and normalizes their discrimination at home in a very significant way, challenging their patriarchal expectation/goal of home ownership – one of the main reasons of taking up the farmwork opportunity in the first place – an accomplishment that is so central to their masculine identity. Incremental savings are also made through informal saving schemes such as a partner as disclosed by Leroy. The poorer class of people have always resorted to this means of savings demonstrating resourcefulness, often initiating home construction without formal lending channels.

Their hope of obtaining a mortgage loan via a formalized avenue would be through Jamaica's National Housing Trust (NHT) – a state loan facility established to promote the democratization of homeownership across Jamaica, especially for low-income earners. However, it has not been optimized for farmworkers, even after its 40-year existence. Farmworkers who are so important to Jamaica's economy become an invisible group, forgotten by the very institution that was set up to help poorer classes. Thus, farmworkers always find themselves on the verge of heading somewhere but never quite making it there because of socio-institutional structures designed to forget them.

³⁷ Partner is a disciplined form of group saving practiced by poorer people. Savings are collected at a pre-determined interval – weekly, bi-weekly or monthly – for a specified period of time (e.g. three months) by a trusted person referred to as the 'banker.' The banker determines the payment intervals, the amount of each contribution and the schedule of repayment called the 'draw,' to each partner. Repayments are made at each contribution interval. A draw is comprised of the total of all participants' contributions for each interval, less a minimal amount the banker withholds as an 'administrative' fee. So, the total money collected at any given payment interval, less the withholding fee, is then turned over to a 'partner' in the group, at the said interval, as the banker's schedule dictates, and done successively through each interval until every partner is repaid. Partner is an old savings system that migrated from the plantation and is widely practiced.

Farmworkers always seem to be on the verge of something great, but they are never quite accepted, appreciated, recognized or legitimized as a people who have genuine needs that ought to be accommodated. They are left marginalized and forgotten in the liminal spaces that they seem to occupy.

But does the house really makes the man? If we begin to stack farmwork 'retirees' up against each other, who were inducted into the program from very different circumstances, only to use one benchmark to judge their success, does it not become too limiting? I ask these questions with Michael in mind. At 60-years-old, Michael spent 28 years in the SAWP and does not own a home. Even my driver, Anthony, scoffed at Michael's un-propertied position, "*dem man deh deh pan di program so lang an nat evn av a ruuf fi imself*" [he's been on the program for such a long time and doesn't even own a house for himself]. Anthony's statement underscores the patriarchal link between the man, the program, and the house, the surveillance farmworkers are subjected to, even among themselves, and the value that is placed on meeting that gendered expectation; more importantly, it shows the consequence of 'forgetting.'

However, Michael informed me that he invested a considerable amount of money in his girlfriend's and his mother's houses, the latter of which was twice damaged by hurricanes that frequent the Caribbean region. He lamented, "*I help my girlfren bil har uos here. My madda uos, I spen a lat on it too. Because [hurricane] Gilbert did damij dat an [hurricane] Ivan damij it 2004. So, moas a mai monii in a dat uos an mi sista sel it behien mi bak to JAMALCO.*" [I helped my girlfriend to build her house here. My mother's house, I spent a lot of money on it, too, when both hurricanes Gilbert in 1998 and Ivan in 2004 damaged it. So, most of my money is tied up in that house and my sister sold it behind my back to the bauxite company]. On both occasions, he had to finance the repairs by himself, which cost him a lot of money. But in so doing, Michael had hoped to have benefitted from his mother's JA\$44 million (CDN\$463,158) real estate inheritance after she passed away but was reportedly cheated out of it by one of his siblings who dispensed with the property and fled with Michael's inheritance. Realizing that he has been forgotten by the system, Michael was hoping to have benefitted from the windfall resulting from his mother's legacy, which would have allowed him to build his own

home over a few months, in hopes of avoiding the intermittent method and protracted building period that characterize the building practices of most other farmworkers. But as it turned out, it was a gamble that Michael lost.

When predial thieves made off with 19 of his 20 goats, Michael turned to cattle ranching in 2008 and by 2016 had grown the herd to 20. But advancing in age and with no additional help, Michael sold nine heads of cattle that netted him over \$800,000 (CDN\$8421), which he used to support his children (as will be elaborated upon in the next chapter), and to save for rainy day. The value of his remaining 11 heads of cattle is estimated at around JA\$1 million (CDN\$10,526). Michael's expenses hover around JA\$63,166 (CDN665) per month, including his utilities JA\$3325 (CDN34), food JA\$40000 (CDN\$421), and his son's high school expenses of JA\$20000 (CDN\$210). Michael assured me that the responsibility does not overwhelm him since he has forgotten his dream of home ownership. He now works from about 6:00 am to about 10:00 am and then spends the rest of the day with his two grandchildren. Like most others, forgotten by the system, Michael has no plans to retire and will continue to work as long as he has the strength and health to do so. Thus, 'forgetting' has left Michael in an uncertain position, as at age 60, who knows what the future holds for him.

However, while Michael may not hold the title to any real property, which invites ridicule and attacks upon his worth 'as a man,' by the village watchers, he had invested heavily in his partner's and mother's homes. But without a private vehicle and its associated expenses, his monthly expenditures are the most among all interviewees. Big domestic spending is an ostentation that also helps to validate and affirm his masculine persona, which came under attack in the SAWP and left him threatened in Jamaica without a home. But we observe that the process of forgetting has also shaped Michael's behavior influencing his spending habits to overcompensate for the area he lacks – his house. Hence, he has been able to reclaim and relegitimize his dominant stereotypical, patriarchal provider role that has been challenged by his un-propertied position. Thus, the complex simultaneous, forgetting, blurring and reordering of boundaries, end up reinforcing stereotypical gender roles around the home and social reproduction.

Ultimately, the consequence of 'forgetting' intersecting with each man's unique circumstances determines whether the house project is initiated, completed or complicates the pace at which construction progresses. The size of the family also determines how the money is spread around; the larger the family, the more protracted the project can become. The pace of the completion is also influenced by the farmworkers skillset as some men worked in construction before employment in the SAWP or during their off-seasons and therefore applied sweat equity to hasten the completion of their project. The inability to make a mark on the built landscape with a home is a major challenge that reinforces their invisibility. For most SAWP retirees, the completion of the house – a farmworker's prime achievement – remains elusive, since, for many of them, the process of forgetting by employers and the state has resulted in the slowing or abandoning the pursuit of completing their home. Many respondents informed me that it was their unfinished project along with their children's education that motivated and committed them to the exploitative SAWP employment relationship for the extended time they worked in the program. So, 'forgetting' deployed as agency, a mechanism of hope that kept them in the program, helped to create the consequences they now confront in 'retirement.' Thus, the consequence of 'forgetting' largely scripts the chapter of their so-called 'retirement.'

7.2.1 Does the Completion of the Building Project Make a Difference?

Of the 37 interviewees, many of whom worked for decades in the SAWP, only four owned a completed home: three above the age of 70; the other under age 60. Due to space limitations, and since he has not yet reached the state retirement age, I will not focus on Wayne who is under 60 years old. Andrew, Agabus, and George are the men in their 70s who also own their completed home. They worked in the program for 22, 31 and 40 years, respectively. All farmworkers with 'completed' homes hail from separate districts in two parishes. Andrew, a builder by trade, finished his house while he was still employed to the SAWP, attributing its completion to divine help from God. Agabus was relocated from his original bauxite-rich property by one of the extraction companies and compensated with a new home in a housing complex. While George had built his home from the income he earned as a welder before he joined the SAWP, improving upon it, over time, with farmwork earnings.

The remaining interviewees' homes are at various stages of completion. Therefore, any association with successful home completion should not be correlated to their SAWP participation. The fact that farmworkers can hardly build a completed home after working for decades in the program is evidence of how they have been significantly left out of the built landscape. It further underscores the illusion of success and indeed development that the neoliberal era facilitates, and that the Jamaican government promotes. So, the cultural surveillance and expectations for the farmworkers to erect these homes, which they must engineer through their own labour, and savings, are perhaps unreasonable. Yet the pressure on the men themselves and internalization of the home as masculinity remains intact.

But even with completed homes, the socio-economic reality for few men, as shown in Table 6 below, demonstrates the consequence of forgetting and that their day to day situation, absent the worry of building costs, is not much different from those with incomplete homes. Andrew and George are the only interviewees who collect both the CPP and NIS monthly pensions, yet their expenses are still more than their income – clear consequences of 'forgetting.' Andrew collects a monthly CPP of CDN\$84.30 (JA\$8009) plus the NIS of JA\$8500 (CDN\$89), with his monthly expenses totaling JA\$24,408 or about CDN\$257. While Andrew does subsistence farming, he does not sell the surplus, which he distributes to those less fortunate than himself driven by his religious convictions being a pastor. His adult children, four of whom still live with him at home, cover his deficit of JA\$7899 (CDN\$83). So here, in Andrew's 'retirement,' we see the impact of the consequence of forgetting even without the additional expenses of building. His basic necessities remain outside his economic reach. Discussing his pension, the mild-mannered pastor, clearly dissatisfied with the amount, chuckled slightly, but remained gracious and positive, *"Well, it's nat much but I'm grateful for it, but as I said earlier, I invested in di chiljren an dey mek mi feel good. It help me to sen di chiljren to skool and di chiljren kom nuo an elp mi."* But if Andrew's Canadian pension were even doubled the amount he currently receives, he would at least break even and not have to rely on his children to subsidize him. However, this is not to suggest that he does not welcome their assistance. The last clause of his

statement informs us of his expectation of their help having made the sacrifice to invest in their education. Some parents see their children as their pension, others not.

Table 6 – Crude Monthly Income Statements for SAWP ‘Retirees’ with ‘Completed’ Homes

Interviewees	Andrew	Agabus	George
Total annual income	JA\$198,108 (CDN\$2085)	JA\$572,800 (CDN\$6029)	JA \$111,504 (CDN\$1174)
Monthly CPP	CDN\$84.30 (JA\$8009)	CDN\$0	CDN\$33.80 (JA\$3211)
Monthly NIS	JA\$8500 (CDN\$89)	JA\$6066 (CDN\$64)	JA\$6066 (CDN\$64)
Total monthly income	JA\$16509 (CDN\$174)	JA\$47733 (CDN\$502)	JA\$9292 (CDN\$98)
Monthly Expenses			
Food	JA\$16000	JA\$20000	JA\$12000
Cooking gas	JA\$1000	JA\$2500	JA\$1000
Electricity	JA\$3500	JA\$6000	\$0
Property tax	JA\$208	JA\$417	\$0
Medication	JA\$2500	JA\$5000	0
Doctor’s visit	JA\$1200	JA\$1200	0
Car insurance	0	JA\$2500	0
License	0	JA\$875	0
Tractor rental	0	JA\$5000	0
Total monthly expenses	JA\$24408 (CDN\$257)	JA\$43492 (CDN\$3624)	JA\$13000 (CDN\$137)
Net/deficit income	JA -\$7899 (CAN -\$83)	\$4241 (CDN\$45)	JA -\$3708 (CDN -\$39)

When I asked George whether his CPP pension covered his expenses, already irritated by Service Canada’s denial of his OAS benefit, he responded in parable, “*maasah mi kyaanh tel yu. Mi spel ii but mi kyaanh pruonuons ii.*” [sir, I can’t tell you. I can spell it, but I can’t pronounce it]. Thus, he is not able to reconcile or make sense of the small pension (CDN\$33.70) that he receives for the four decades he has worked in the program. He continued, “*Rait nou mai chek cheinj bai dis man ya kaal Missa Gaad’n. No bank naah get it, a noh bank mi a go. Som taim wen mi cheinj it, mi get som taim JA\$2000 plus, som taim it kom to \$3000, but nut’n furda*” [Right now, my cheque is encashed by a businessman – Mr. Gordon. The bank isn’t getting it. I don’t take it to any of the banks. Sometimes when I cash it, I get sometimes JA\$2000 plus; sometimes it’s \$3000 but no more]. George encashes

his cheques at a local proprietor (shop-keeper) where he also credits his groceries until the monthly pension cheques arrive. This arrangement obligates George to patronize Mr. Gordon's business. Ordinarily, people in a better economic position usually travel to the nearest town to do their shopping. So, we see here, other consequences of forgetting; a small pension limits consumer spending and choices and restricts the SAWP pensioner's activity space.

George's monthly NIS pension is JA\$6066 (CDN\$64). His modest monthly expenses amount to JA\$13000 (CDN\$137) but the combined pensions only equal two-thirds of that amount – the consequence of 'forgetting.' This reality forces George to continue working. Therefore, at age 72, he is steeped in cassava cultivation, encouraged by the Jamaican government, as its juice is utilized in beer production at the local distillery. But fetching a paltry JA\$12.75/lb., he complained, "*dem is a set a kruuk! Yu av di haygent uu bai di kasaava fram yu an go sel it fi big moni. Yu noh mek nutt'n.*" [They're a set of crooks! You have the agent who buys the cassava from you and resells it at a higher price. You don't make a profit]. The Rural Agricultural Development Authority (RADA) marketing is the state's middle player that he alleges buys his product cheaply, meanwhile, the notorious higglers³⁸ make a better offer between JA\$17.00 - JA\$20.00/lb. George did not specify the menial returns from his cassava cultivation; hence, it is not reflected in table 6 above. To compound his situation, his electricity (hydro) has been disconnected (like Linton's above) because his account is JA\$70,000 (CDN\$737) in arrears, plus he also owes the state another JA\$7,000 (CDN \$74) in property tax (also not represented in the statement) – a rare instance when the state does not forget. His children, like Andrew's, also pick up the difference.

Therefore, having laboured on the program for 22 and 40 years, respectively, Andrew and George's pensions should have easily been able to comfortably cover their modest household expenses, which does not even include discretionary spending. The extent of their social activity is largely church-related. So, absent an elaborate lifestyle, they still cannot afford to get by on their so-called 'retirement' income from two sources. Thus, their small/reduced CPP pension and non-

³⁸ Higglers are traditionally rural women engaged in micro-enterprises trading and vending farm produce.

OAS/GIS payments reflect the consequence of forgetting buried in states' policies, which then commits them to a life of hardship and poverty. As a result, they are compelled to continue working to support their families. But even so, they remained wedged in a deficit.

However, earning around JA\$572,800 (CDN\$6029) annually, from his mixed farming and NIS pension, Agabus was in a stronger financial position, and making it clear that, "*mi kyan finans mi an mi family. Mi kyan fain fuud an klous, an pie wi likkl bills.*" [I can finance myself and my family. I can find food and clothes and pay our little bills]. He recently applied for his CPP. At 70-years-old, Agabus has no plans to slow his pace, maintaining, "*mi affi werk, so no riitayament.*" [I have to work so no retirement]. Not only does he owns a vehicle, but he can also afford to mechanize his agricultural production, which may hint at his economic mobility. But even if Agabus might have achieved socio-economic mobility – given his perceived elevated social status – he still has not bought into the practice of retirement, which injects contradiction into the phenomenon being a middle-class notion.

But, in Agabus' case, he is compelled to forget about 'retirement' and continue working at the same pace, to sustain his perceived social mobility. This raises the question, at 70 years old, with prostate cancer, for how much longer will Agabus be able to work? And what happens when he is no longer able to maintain his lifestyle? Further, when Agabus is unable to work, which now nets him the bulk of his earnings – being his active income source – how will he survive? Since Agabus is 70 years old, his CPP pension payments will come in a little 'larger' but given Service Canada's skewed calculations, one can assume it will still be a relatively 'small' pension. So, it becomes easier to appreciate that Agabus' apparent 'stronger' financial position has all the makings of an illusion. The consequence of 'forgetting' sets up a false sense of security, which, ironically through his personal agency, he is responding to, that compels him to work and which he must continue to do for the foreseeable future. So, even though his financial position might seem better than the others, the process of forgetting has menacing consequences ahead of him. The point is, even those workers with completed homes still manage to be forgotten in 'retirement.'

7.3 An Enigmatic Tale of the Consequences of ‘Forgetting’

For others, like Bentley, their enigmatic situation warrants closer scrutiny. Bentley introduced in Chapter 5 is also engaged in the current ‘retirement’ discussion. Now in his 70s, Bentley was employed in the SAWP for some 30 years. His situation is unique in that, while employed in the program, he worked two separate seasons per year – one lasted for eight months and the other for six weeks – so Bentley worked for a total of nine and a half months, making two round trips per year, for three decades. Bentley’s original home, made from wattle and daub³⁹ (see Figure 6 below – left picture), was gutted by hurricane Gilbert in 1988. He lost everything, “*when Gilbert bloa, mi ongl kom si di foundieshan, di tap gaan. Aal mi tings, mi bed, mi furnicha, evry singl ting mi did bai. Aal mi rabbit, fowl; tink a likkl bit mi av ya an di wol a dem bloa aaf gaan.*” [When Gilbert blew, it only left the foundation, the housetop was gone. All my belongings – my bed, furniture; every single thing I had bought. Even my rabbits, chickens. I had lots of things and they were all blown away].

Since that time, Bentley has embarked upon the construction of a new concrete structure (see figure 6 – right picture). He explains:

Gues wat nou, if I tel yu wat apm enoh, di pension monii a fi fix di uos. Mi no av no weh fi liv, mi noh ave no weh fi liv. Di uos bad and dem sup’m, mi affi jus a tek taim an werk up sup’m kaaz wi get likl moni fi go do dis nuu. Si mi bai wan load a maal deh. A wan ruum mi eena an di uos is verii smaal. Mi no av no baatruum nor nutt’n and mi affi a deck it, far wen rain faal, it run rait chue (Bentley’s Interview, March 2, 2017).

[Guess what now, if I tell you what happen, the pension money is for fixing the house. I don’t have anywhere to live. The house is bad, I just have to take time and work something out because we got some money which allows us to do this now. Look, I’ve bought a load of marl. I live in one room and the house is very small. I don’t have a bathroom or anything and I have to build a concrete roof because when it rains we get wet].

But 28 years later, he has only erected a single (completed) room, which is now being extended with money from the pension windfall. This is an epic picture of the consequences of ‘forgetting,’ which is very telling because at 70 years old when they should be slowing down, they are actively caught up in extending their house. Since they only have one room, only sleeping takes place inside, all other domestic activities such as cooking, and laundry are conducted outdoors. The nearby shrubs just

³⁹ Flexible wood, like bamboo strips are woven horizontally between the vertical poles that form the wooden frame structure and then daubed with clay mixed with other materials to form the walls.

about cordon off their outhouse from full view. Burning candles for nightlight, they have never used electricity even though it is an accessible commodity in their area. They have never been able to afford the bill. Bentley's sister pays the property tax for the family land. This is the grim reality of the consequences of Bentley's forgetting.

Figure 6 – (L) Bentley's Old Wattle and Daub Home. (R) Concrete Home Under Construction



Bentley does not receive a CPP pension but draws a monthly NIS pension of JA\$7583 (CDN\$80). He was under the impression that his NIS pension was sent to Jamaica by the Canadian government to be directed to him. I resolved his misunderstanding upon seeing the NIS voucher and encouraged him to apply for the CPP pension. While Bentley might be above the official poverty line, the reality of his existence tells a much different story. Spending JA\$3,000 (CDN\$32) per week, their small food bill alone exceeds his monthly NIS pension. He manages his hypertension via a state-subsidized program, discussed in Chapter 5, but his hernia remains untreated and needs urgent attention. Bentley's health conditions prevent him from doing much. But he walks to his 'bush,' as the farm located away from the home is called, at 6:00 am every morning and returns around the noon hour. When we talked about 'retirement,' Bentley reasoned:

mi noh noa if mi kyan riityah nuo sah, mi a werk fi miself enoh. A miself mi a werk fah...mi noh werk fi enibadi enoh. Yu haadlii kyan dwiit but yu affi dwiit. Yu noa wen yu noa seh yu kyaanh dwiit? But mi av tu dwiit, far ow wi iit? Wen mi sidong nuo an noh werk, ow mi get moni? Mi affi werk! (Bentley's Interview, March 2, 2017)

[I don't know if I can retire now, sir, I work for myself. I work for myself, I don't work for anybody, you know. I hardly can do it, but I have to do it. Do you know when you know that you can't do something? But I must do it, otherwise, how do we eat? When I sit down and don't work, how do I get money? I have to work!]

Despite his age and struggles with a debilitating disease, Bentley continues to work. Although he would like to reduce his pace due to his age and especially because of his medical condition, his economic insecurity compels him to forge ahead. He confessed that he can hardly do the work but also reasoned that if he does not work, who will care for his family? Bentley's reality is a grim consequence of 'forgetting.' At 70 years old he is not receiving his CPP pension and is disqualified from getting the OAS, which, if he were collecting both, they might, at least, have given him the option to not work as hard as he currently does, or given his health condition, not at all. And seeing that he worked for nine months per year, over the 30 years that he was employed in the SAWP, one is curious to learn what his CPP pension will be like, given the formula utilized to calculate it. So, we see how anti-black racism facilitates the process of forgetting, which aggravates Bentley's quality of life in 'retirement.' Not only has Bentley been forgotten, but it is also the repercussions it has on his age and health. Forgetting as a survival mechanism, as practiced by Bentley, has produced detrimental effects. Alas, consumed with his survival, Bentley has also forgotten himself, exacerbating his health condition and contributing to his own self-destruction. So, masculinity also helps to inform us how the men forget themselves. Not only does 'forgetting' facilitate exploitative treatment in Canada, but it also deals a punishing effect in the post-program period.

Now let us consider Bentley's situation in the context of others who also suffered property destruction due to the notorious 1988 Hurricane Gilbert. Three other interviewees – Patrick, Vincent, and Roger also suffered losses during the devastating hurricane of 1988. Patrick's rented house was completely destroyed; he lost all his personal property. The hurricane tossed Vincent's roof into nearby bushes and ripped off one side of Roger's house. All three men have rebounded, erecting yet 'unfinished' multi-room houses that they now inhabit. Yet Bentley has worked more years in the program and for longer seasons than these three men. So, logic dictates that Bentley should not be as destitute as his current economic situation finds him. Bentley lamented that back in those days, he did not earn a lot. But the same can be said of Patrick, Vincent, and Roger, his contemporaries who all worked during the same period. While I have no reason to doubt Bentley's story, it is surprising that his participation in the farmwork program did not seem to make much of a difference in his current

economic situation. If anything, it seems worse. Yet, ironically, the house monumentalizes the consequences of 'forgetting.'

But as I reflected upon Bentley's state of poverty and neglect, I recalled a statement from George. Having worked in the program for 40 years, George positioned himself as an authority on matters concerning the men in the program. George asserted,

absoluuti lats a gies mek noting, mek it but mek noting. Far dem go up diir, evry nait (voice inflection) daanz. If yu si Jamiakan man jrink biir, yu fret. Yu wanda to raah, if man a kom bak a Jamiaka. A nuh fiirii tail mi a tel yu man, mi a tel yu lajik" (George's Interview, March 8, 2017).

[Absolutely, a lot of guys make nothing, they earned the money but didn't put it to good use. For they go up there (Canada), every night – dance (party). You'd be surprised at the amount of beer Jamaican men drink. It makes you wonder if they have responsibility back in Jamaica. I'm not telling you a fairy tale, I'm giving you the facts].

Here, George is saying that some men do earn money in the program but ended up wasting it—spending recreationally, recklessly, and socializing in pubs and forgetting their responsibility back in Jamaica. So, this lifestyle, according to George, is detrimental to their social reproduction, undermining the cause they support.

However, the evidence did not lead me to determine that Bentley's situation reflected George's generalized assessment of the men's situation. Bentley can now hardly afford food, let alone beer. Bentley informed me that while he was in the program, he did not earn a lot of money and that he sent money home regularly. He and his wife, Dassa, raised nine children and Dassa confirmed that she received and requested remittances quite frequently. It, therefore, raises the question, was Dassa irresponsible with the money? Not according to her for she assured me that "we never waste none, never waste any money." So, to what extent Bentley might have enabled his own forgetting, at this point, is secondary to the fact that it is very clear, that his 'retirement' experience is further evidence of the consequences of forgetting. Different processes of forgetting have collectively compounded to his current state of poverty.

But to George's assertion above, it raises the question, what is the motivation behind the men's exaggerated appetites for excessive socialization and indulgence in copious amounts of adult beverages? Is it simply because they are irresponsible men or uncontrollable alcoholics, or could it

be that they indulged in this beer-imbibing behavior as a coping strategy to deal with the consequences of 'forgetting' that they end up 'forgetting' themselves and their responsibility back home? It also reads as capital extracting surplus through circuits of consumption, which keeps the money in the local economy. Whatever the reason, what is clear is that 'forgetting' is consequential.

A life-period that affords some people the benefit of a slower pace in their experience of 'retirement' rings hollow, not only for Bentley but most other SAWP 'retirees,' as life as they have always known it, characterized by hardship, because of neglect, grinds along at the same pace. Age does not change anything for them, if anything, it exacerbates their situation. This is what gives meaning to the 'work until death' way of life, as noted by Morris *et al.*, (2010). So, while their economic insecurity, linked to their class, race, and age forces most SAWP 'retirees' to work, the economic security of the middle class allows few to enjoy retirement. This is not a north-south inequality, but also a difference that plays out locally.

7.4 Livelihood in 'Retirement' – Interlocking Complexities: 'Illusions' of Success?

In all the 24 rural districts that I visited, the SAWP 'retirees' are mostly engaged in farming – rearing cash crops and to some lesser extent farm animals. But the absence of proper irrigation infrastructure in these places forces farmers to depend on the heavens, literally, for rain. So, they cultivate to the timing of the rainy season, as Wayne explains, "*yu affi set di krop, laik yu noa rain taim a kom dong anytaim afta Maach.*" [you have to set the crops at the approach of the rainy season, which is any time after March]. Notwithstanding, the hilly interiors of some parishes are prone to more frequent convectional rainfall⁴⁰ than others. So, farmers cultivate at the mercy of the elements but in many cases, at the peril of – disasters – drought and floods, both of which can be detrimental as their extremes jeopardize the livelihood of these older farmers. These dynamics underscore the fact that farmworkers are domiciled in 'forgotten' places. Although rural folks are expected to eke out a living via farming, successive governments have 'forgotten' to invest in adequate irrigation infrastructure to

⁴⁰ Convectional rainfall – afternoon showers resulting from the rapid rise of daytime heat that cools, condenses and precipitates as rain.

empower them to efficiently undertake their farming endeavors. Outside the limited job opportunities that are available in the bauxite industry sector, which are taken by skilled workers, there are few employment alternatives outside of agriculture. But not only is small farming plagued by the lack of water, it is still a very labour intensive activity, beset by predial thieves, which breed uncertain returns. Hence, some of the reasons why most young people frown upon domestic agriculture as a viable form of employment yet will hasten to take up the SAWP employment reproducing consequences of forgetting, cycles of underdevelopment and dependence.

However, it is important to understand that SAWP retirees are not a homogenous group. Their socio-economic circumstances are linked to a complex number of variables that produce the heterogeneity among them. Some of the complexities are linked to their employment tenure with the SAWP; however, as Bentley's situation illustrates, longevity with the program does not automatically assume or translate into economic success nor is it indicative of how life will unfold in later years. How they fare economically are also affected by the nature and frequency of many of life's eventualities. More importantly, the economic activities they engaged in during their off-seasons and upon their permanent exit from the program, help to shape the events of their 'retirement' years. But these activities are also structured by geography. Since most SAWP 'retirees' are engaged in farming, in addition to rainfall, the soil-type of their local districts can also dictate the type of farming activity they engage in and is largely indicative of how favourable their output will be. So, how SAWP workers fare is contingent upon their diverse geographies.

The mountainous (hilly) areas – sections of northern Clarendon, Manchester, and Trelawney have loamy soil-types and ideal climatic conditions conducive to the cultivation of yams, which are yielded in abundance; similar to how the Blue Mountains in eastern Jamaica produce some of the world's finest coffee beans. Because the yams produced in those areas are of export quality, they attract entrepreneurs to the international yam trade. So, for farmers in those areas, marketing is not a problem neither is transportation as the produce is bought and collected by mobile investors who roam their local area. Hence, the five SAWP retirees who originate from these areas, eke out a livelihood from yam cultivation, which positions them with an advantage most other interviewees do

not enjoy or must work harder to create. However, as Agabus' dynamic illustrates, successful farming is not limited to these areas.

To demonstrate this point, we explore the livelihood of two interviewees from different parishes. Egbert hails from Trelawney where all farmers engage in yam cultivation while Wilton is from Clarendon and is also involved in yam production from a non-traditional yam area. According to Egbert, who spent 27 years in the SAWP, "*di amount a faam wi av, wi av to pie sombadi to elp dwiit – wi aluon kyaanh dwiit.*" [the amount of land that we have to farm, we have to pay someone to help farm it, we can't do it by ourselves]. As tenant farmers, Egbert and his wife Stella are steeped in yam cultivation to the extent that they must hire day or seasonal labour. They cultivate yam on two and a half acres of leased property that they pay JA\$8750 (CDN\$92) annually for. Egbert was also involved in yam cultivation during his SAWP off-seasons before he was dropped from the program. They hire five labourers paying each of them JA\$1500 (CDN\$15.75) per day.

But even though farming bodes well for them, Egbert and Stella are still bedeviled by uncertainties as, "*som af di taim wi luuz di krop.*" [sometimes the crop is lost]. Crop loss is attributed to plant disease, drought, flooding and other disasters. But a favourable outcome is never a guarantee either as the harvest is also imperiled by price fluctuations due to supply and demand. As Egbert explained, "*somtaim it low. Mek mi tel yu nuo. Wi plaan yam di 12 mont a di yier. But wi av sert'n taip a yam weh wi plaan sert'n taim a di yier. Wier in dat yam a di mien suors. Wen dat yam riipin...it sel fi gud moni.*" [sometimes it's low. Here's the deal. We plant yam 12 months throughout the year. But we have a certain variety of yam that we plant at a certain time of the year. That yam is our main source of income. It fetches a good price when it's harvested]. So, they strategically cultivate the preferred species of yams so that they mature around the time that they expect them to fetch the best price. Egbert continued, "*weneva taim it sellin gud, somtaim wi mek \$500,000.*" [whenever it fetches a good price, sometimes it earns us JA\$500,000 (CDN\$5263)]. They also cultivate other cash crops including various kinds of vegetables that bring in another JA\$50,000 (CDN\$526) for the year. The money they earn in a good year is more than their expenditure but when the crop is lost they suffer.

But even with Egbert's advantages of relatively good yam yields, a sure market and transportation, he still rents his farm space and occupies an unfinished home as at the time of my visit, he was just completing the addition of an internal bathroom and a carport for his private vehicle. Egbert and Stella are hard workers but with all the leverage they seem to have, almost 30 years on, they are still struggling to not be erased, demonstrating their resilience and agency. But, 27 years of being in the SAWP, complemented by diligent yam farming have only netted sluggish progress. Besides, Egbert suffers from arthritis in his feet, which he attributes to work associated with the SAWP. At age 60, Egbert is motivated to continue at the same pace, for the foreseeable future, to finish his home building project and maintain his farming properties. But how will work/age impact his health and, in particular, how will arthritis affect his ability to continue farming – the source of his active income? And will his pension(s) be enough to cover his expenses if/when he cannot work anymore? Egbert's situation appears promising but like Agabus' it reads like a mirage.

Now consider Wilton who recently turned 61 years old and was employed in the SAWP for 15 years before the logic of forgetting dropped from the program. Inaccessible by vehicle, a series of concrete steps winds to a hilltop where his home sits unfinished. His yard space is littered with several mounds of building blocks, sand, and gravel – construction materials forming exhibits of the consequence of 'forgetting.' Although he hopes to continue his home project, he has no money to move it along. Like Egbert, Wilton ekes out a livelihood also by cultivating different varieties of yams, and other crops, in addition to rearing cattle. Like some interviewees, he did not provide specifics as to the quantity under cultivation nor the value it would fetch when harvested. But while he would not hazard an estimate of his earnings, he conceded that it was just "*fuud monii*" [food money], insufficient to move his building project forward, but enough for his survival.

But even though Wilton farms good quality yams, geography presents him challenges with the marketing and sale of his produce. Unlike Egbert's area, upon which investors descend with transportation to purchase farmers' produce, the service is not available in the mountains where Wilton's farm is located. Wilton explains his plight:

A jus di iggla dem weh go Mei Pen or Ole Haaba an dem plais, ar som wi bai it an gu Viir gu jraiv roun an wen dem kom bak dem seh maakit bad (kissing his teeth). Kyaahn badda wid dem ting deh... Wen yu get a chuk kom bai it, yu mait betta raaf but yu no av eni badi fi kaal an dem kom yasso fi it. Di iggla dem a bai it fi likkl a nutt'n. Som a di iggla dem noh bai kyash enoh. So, wen dem kom bak dem a seh maakit bad an ray an yu en up nat iivn get di res bak... So, a jus luus'n a taim, so som taim yu nat iivn badda kier (Wilton's Interview, February 28, 2017).

[It's just the higglers who travel to May Pen or Old Harbour and those places or some will buy it and go to Vere and drive around and when they come back they say, "market bad" (kissed his teeth). I can't be bothered with those arrangements. When you get a truck to come by, you might be better off but I don't have any connections for anyone to come here. The higglers buy it for little or nothing. Some higglers don't even buy cash. So, when they return, they say, "market bad" and so on and they don't even return what wasn't sold to you. So, it's a waste of time. So sometimes you don't even care what happens].

So, proper marketing/transportation has not been optimized for this forgotten area. Lacking this advantage coerces him into business with higglers, many of whom are infamous for their dishonest dealings as previously stated. So, whenever the yams mature, he would consign a certain quantity to higglers who take it to the local produce market and speculate on a price. In many cases, the higglers marked up the produce and returned a lower value to him, often lamenting "*maakit bad*" [the market is bad]. This codified, dreaded exchange term communicates that the higglers were not able to fetch a good price, or the product was not sold, had to be given away or 'abandoned' at the market. So, Wilton is trapped in this endless cycle that frustrates more than it rewards him for his hard work; his annoyance was palpable as he shared his plight. And advancing in age, with limited education, it severely limits his labour market options. Thus, he has been immobilized by the consequences of forgetting. Wilton gets no assistance from the state and feels forgotten and used by the government as he said politicians are only seen on the hustings during election seasons. Wilton has no health issues and has no plans to retire as he still hopes to complete his house, but at age 61, when will it happen?

These are some of the complexities we must grapple with when assessing farmworkers socio-economic realities after they exit the program, which brings out the heterogeneity of experience among them and evidences different manifestations of the consequences of forgetting. The epistemic scale of analysis is therefore crucial. Evidently, the only consistent commonality among all SAWP 'retirees' is that they have been forgotten in some way and the consequences intensify with age and poor health.

Nevertheless, wearing their patriarchal mantle, through their agency and creativity, they eke out an existence despite their unfavorable circumstances. But none of the retired farmworkers in this project demonstrated any evidence of significant social mobility.

7.5 Physical and Economic Incapacitation in ‘Retirement’: Patriarchy Under Threat?

A snapshot of Spencer and Manuel’s economic reality in ‘retirement’ highlighted in table 7 below is the ultimate depiction of the consequence of ‘forgetting.’ As previously noted, only these two SAWP pensioners claim a retirement space as part of their life course and only because they have been incapacitated by poor health, discussed separately in Chapter 5. As such, they are forced to quit working altogether, unlike other SAWP ‘retirees’ who are compelled to continue working after their exit from the program. But as Table 7 shows, neither of the men is aware of the Jamaican NIS pension and their pensions from the CPP are inadequate to cover their monthly expenses – clear cases of the process/consequence of forgetting. Spencer was cynical about his CPP pension, *“is jus a likkl dot to mai bills dem (laughs). Som taim it kyaahn iivn kova mai lait bil.”* [It’s an insignificant amount compared to my bills (laughs). Sometimes it can’t even cover my electricity bill]. And so, the consequences of ‘forgetting’ elicits ridicule from Spencer. Manuel who is blind in both eyes recalled his reaction to the knowledge of his small pension, *“ma waif kalek it at di poas affis an tel mi ow moch, mi seh, ‘uol on, a jos dat?’* [My wife collected it at the post office and told me how much it was, I said, ‘hold on, that’s it?’].

Thus, the ultimate consequence of forgetting is, not only do farmwork pensioners have to deal with their health challenges in ‘retirement,’ but the money they receive as a pension is woefully inadequate to cover the cost of their basic necessities, which they derided and are alarmed about. But, not only are they forgotten by the Canadian state, they are also forgotten at home by the Jamaican state as at age 76 years old, both men are not even aware of their Jamaican NIS entitlement as no efforts are made to inform pensioners of their legal retirement entitlements.

Table 7 – Crude Income Statements for SAWP ‘Retirees’ Incapacitated by Poor Health

	Spencer		Manuel	
Annual Income	CPP – CDN\$77 X 12 = (CDN\$924) JA\$87,780		CPP – CA\$200.00 X 12 =(CDN\$2400) JA\$228,000	
Monthly income	JA\$7,315 (CDN\$77) No NIS pension		JA\$19,000 (CDN\$200) No NIS pension	
Expenses	Annual (in JA\$)	Monthly (in JA\$)	Annual (in JA\$)	Monthly (in JA\$)
Food	\$336,000	\$28,000	\$240,000	\$20,000
Electricity	\$72,000	\$6,000	\$36,000	\$3,000
Water	\$18,000	\$1,500	\$48,000	\$4,000
Property Tax	\$19,500	\$1,625	\$3,200	\$266.66
Medications	\$72,000	\$6,000	\$216,000	\$18,000
His wife’s	\$96,000	\$8,000	\$0	\$0
Total Expenses	JA\$613,500	JA\$51,125	JA\$543,200	JA\$45,266.66
Net income/deficit	-\$525,720	-\$43,810	-\$315,200	-\$26,266.66

Because of the process of forgetting, it denies or lessens SAWP pensioners’ social entitlements, which exacerbates their economic positions resulting in huge deficits that their children cover. Thus, we see some interviewees’ children playing significant economic roles in offsetting their parents’ shortfalls, even though most SAWP ‘retirees’ have largely distanced themselves from the idea that their children are their pension support. In most cases, however, that reality is not consistent with farmworkers’ claims. We see, therefore, the interviewees’ implicit consciousness of their challenged masculine identity. We also observe the irony, in that because the process of forgetting is caught up and sustained by masculinity, we see masculinity in ‘retirement’ has come under threat. This is manifested in their economic struggles, which challenge the man’s role as the family provider, a dynamic which gives him, power, authority, and control and as Morris, James & Eldemire-Shearer (2010) argue, relinquishing those tenets of patriarchy can be detrimental to the man’s psyche and self-awareness.

But even though their patriarchal expectations, as economic providers, have been clearly threatened, the fact that they contribute to their household spending through their passive pension earnings help to rescue and reinforce their patriarchal role. So, the formal disconnection from work has little bearing on their patriarchal roles as the head of the family. When I asked Spencer about the status of his position, in retirement, at home, he emphatically asserted, *“I plies mai self stil as di ed,*

far I ham di man (laughing). An I kyaahn produus as biifuor, but I stil riimien as di ed. I av di main, I wud want to do sert'n tings laik wat I yuus to du but diir is no wai uot." [I place myself still as the head, for I'm the man (laughing). And I can't produce as before, but I still remain as the head. I have the mind, I would want to do certain things like I used to do but there is no way out]. So here we see that Spencer continues to assert a form of masculinist patriarchy. Even though he is not as economically successful compared to when he worked in the program, it has not diminished his role as head of the home. We see how the consequence of forgetting that compromised Spencer's retirement benefits has also challenged his patriarchal identity in 'retirement.' If he were 'eligible' to receive Canada's Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement and if he had been aware of the NIS, there might not have been a need for him to assert and defend his 'position' in the home. When I inquired how his wife felt about this claim, he continued assuredly, "*yea, shi noa mi is nat a persn fi sidong an mi nat werkin, so shi stil biir aan an satisfai.*" [yea, she knows I'm not one to sit idly by when there is work to be done, so she understands and is also content]. So, while he has asserted his patriarchal position; having internalized it, his wife also reinforced it. Although Spencer's patriarchal status has been perceptibly destabilized, his wife still symbolically recognized it even with his diminished finances in retirement. It is also important to understand that this does not all have to do with economics, but it also intersects with their Christian faith and cultural and gender roles in helping to reinforce patriarchy.

7.6 Conclusion

Patriarchal expectations have, to a great extent, set the tone and agenda governing the lives of SAWP 'retirees.' The whole operations of forgetting is largely sustained by masculinity, which challenges farmworker's identity and humanity. So, here we see the dimension of 'forgetting masculinities' in action, responding to the consequences of the limitations of 'forgetting states.' Thus, political economy and patriarchal expectations not only drive the SAWP but also farmworkers existence in their so-called 'retirement.' As the system attempts erasure of the SAWP 'retirees' and pensioners, their struggles not to be forgotten persist. Retired farmworkers have defined themselves and are largely defined by home ownership, ironically, without the means to accomplish this goal. The

precariousness of their jobs legitimizes their discrimination while delegitimizing their need for a completed home. Grappling with the excesses of being 'forgotten,' retired farmworkers have had to work with improvised tools, limited and crude resources to 'succeed.' And so, their home building undertaking becomes a protracted, gendered, burden-accessory that follows them into 'retirement' where they continue to struggle to 'catch up.'

However, against the backdrop of the processes that render them invisible, we see the agency of these men shining through the spaces in which they have been driven as they eke out a livelihood from farming without proper irrigation and struggle to complete the building of their homes. But for farmworkers to engineer their way to home ownership, however incomplete, and do so without a personal mortgage, is an incredible feat and demonstration of resilient agency. Since slavery, Blacks have always been led into confined spaces but have always demonstrated resilience by thriving in the interstices that they have been foisted into. It accentuates not only their agency but also debunks the stereotypes that Blacks and Jamaicans, in particular, are defined by laziness.

Absent the added expenses of home building, surprisingly, the economic circumstances of a few men who owned completed homes are just as miserable as those with incomplete ones. And irrespective of the livelihood that they engaged in, everyone manifests a unique expression of the consequence of 'forgetting.' Therefore, the consequences of forgetting intersected with patriarchal expectations create an overwhelming burden that is brought to bear upon poor, 'forgotten' migrant farmworkers.

Chapter 8. Spatializing and Complicating Jamaican Farmwork Masculinities

“Mai waif nuo wud a seh, ‘membra a yu affi kom siis’n up di pot enoh.’ kut up mi onian, mi skelian, chikin nuugl an miks it up an stir it up laik weh yu si pan di kukin shuo an emti it iina di pat an siis’n; a siis’n mi a siis’n nuo. Mi av tuu dumplin, piis a yam, tuu koako an dat priti shiad weh di chikin nuugl gi yu wid yu adda ingriidens an yu butta – a weh yu a seh man. Aal wen yu dun wid dat man, aal streinja a kom tel yu seh yu noa seh mi wuda iit likl muor (laughing).”

[My wife would nudge me to season the pot. Using onion, scallion, chicken noodle to mix it up and stir it up just like how it’s done on cooking shows, then empty it into the pot to season it. I’m seasoning it now. Then I add two dumplings, a piece of yam, two cocoas and that pretty colour that comes from the chicken noodle, plus other ingredients and butter. When I’m through with it, even strangers ask for seconds (laughing)].

— Emmanuel, February 24, 2017

8.1 Introduction

Traditional masculinity as practiced by many Jamaican farmworkers is transformed by the migration process. It forces a disruption of static masculinity and patriarchy as the men negotiate new social contexts (Chevannes, 1999; Hope, 2010). In this chapter, I explore how the process of ‘forgetting’ migrant workers influences and informs the performances and representations of gender across transnational space. It builds on the previous chapter about the home and examines how Jamaican farmworker masculinities transform and express themselves and exercise agency in various spheres within the transnational spaces. As the chapter unfolds, the interaction between Jamaican farmworker masculinity and white hegemonic masculinity is observed with attention to Jamaican Black men’s attitudes toward notions and practices of masculine domesticity in this context. Given their spousal isolation, I also examine how they managed sexual desire in Canada and the regulation of sexual practice as a response to the process of forgetting that caused their absence from Jamaica. I then explored the dynamics of some dilemmas of dislocated husbands/fathers and end by examining behaviors I read as acts of agency or ‘resisting forgetting.’

8.2 Race and Masculinity in the SAWP

As discussed in chapter 3, the dominant narratives of masculinity in terms of men being the main economic provider for their family, the gateway to institutional access, economic mobility, among others, have had a firm foothold in Jamaica for a long time (Chevannes, 1999; 2001; Crichlow, Deshong, and Lewis 2014; Hope, 2010). Thus, Jamaican men have long internalized patriarchal

tenets, which serve as reference points in their negotiation of and performances of masculinity (Hope, 2010).

Thus, when Jamaican migrant farmworkers arrive for work in Canada, they show up with the understanding that their main goal, above all else, is to earn a living, or as Luke, one of the interviewees put it, “*to hunt.*” The hunter, therefore, is consumed with fulfilling his patriarchal responsibility as family provider. Nurse (2004) maintains that “men’s masculinity and perception of self-worth are most often defined in terms of their ability to be providers for their family” (p.15). But his gender expression is fraught with tensions and contradictions for while the hunter-farmworker ascribed to himself a dominant expression of masculinity, being the family’s economic provider, interactions with the boss requires him to ‘forget’ – as an exercise of personal agency – dominant masculine performances.

The resulting infantilization was expressed in many of my conversations with farmwork ‘retirees.’ This is how Jethro, for example, recalled his relationship with his boss:

If I av tu go eni wier – I kaal im dad – I wud go tu im an seh, ‘dad, pliiz ham axin yu if yu kyan let mi go dong a [place name withheld] Frideh ar Satdeh afta nuun?’ Im toal wi seh wi kud get a wiiken aaf but nat veri aaft’n. An I wud go tu im, ax im, an let im noa far a veri lang taim an den hii wud seh, ‘yes Jethro, suor.’ So, mi an im get alang gud, gud (Jethro’s Interview, February 21, 2017).

[if I had to go anywhere – I called him dad – I would go to him and say, ‘dad, please I’m asking you if you could allow me to go to (place name withheld) Friday or Saturday afternoon?’ He’d told us we could get a weekend off but not very often and I would request my weekend long in advance and then he would say, ‘yes Jethro, sure.’ So, we got along well].

Jethro has clearly assumed and internalized his diminished masculine position and has coerced himself into an ascribed subjugated sonship, deferring the hegemonic patriarchal father-role to his white boss – an arrangement which engenders a good relationship. So, migrant farmworkers are ever mindful that the hegemonic tenets of masculinity must be ‘forgotten’ when they interface with white bosses. It is this kind of identity-forgetting that facilitates the paternalization played out between Jethro and his boss. Which raises the question, what are the long-term effects of this kind of situational transformation or what kind of masculinities are being fashioned under those circumstances? Undoubtedly, then, we get a glimpse of the kind of racialized masculine performances it takes to

reproduce the SAWP. Thus, “representations that socialize black males to see themselves as always lacking, as always subordinated to more powerful white males whose approval they need to survive, matter in white patriarchy” (hooks, 1995:98). Certainly, this process of forgetting their identity matters in the SAWP, which is structured by white patriarchal relations. But the stark contradiction lies in the reality that while Jethro performed a subjugated masculinity around his white boss in Canada, he reverts to his dominant patriarchal role in Jamaica.

Therefore, ensconced in white patriarchy, the SAWP is structured by race with distinct performances of gender and has different expectations of racialized masculine expressions. While the White male bosses perform hegemonic masculinity, migrant farmworkers must, as an act of agency, ‘forget’ a hegemonic masculine performance to avert any collision with their employer’s expression of masculinity. This is important because to remain in the program, migrant farmworkers must create different forms of representation and gender performances that do not communicate messages that may be interpreted as a menace to white hegemonic masculinities. Racialized masculinities working in the SAWP must, therefore, be deferential – an act of agency or a survival mechanism – to whiteness. Thus, they must always demonstrate submission, which entails (self)regulation of their masculine identities. Migrant farmworkers have never been expected to express, assert, or pull on the tenets of hegemonic masculinity, which forms part of their patriarchal identity. In fact, since slavery, Blacks have been relegated to or are expected to conform to dispositions of subservience designed to bind them in subjugation. Implicitly, this expectation and practice continue under the SAWP – forming part of the contradiction of forgetting since it is also appropriated as an act of agency to remain in and thereby help reproduce the program.

Thus, masculinity is not monolithic: it is fluid; it is adaptive; it is transformative; it is contingent, and it can be ‘forgotten.’ But, depending on how it is expressed, performances of masculinity can also be oppressive. This research, therefore, disturbs many of the stereotypes that characterize Jamaican Black masculinities as the SAWP becomes an orbit that is pervaded by tensions, disruptions, contradictions, complexities facilitated by the process of forgetting. For while farmworkers capitulate to a dominant expression of masculinity back in Jamaica, they must half-suspend their patriarchal

identities and forget or deny tenets of dominant masculine performances during their interactions with white bosses in Canada. This act of agency is critical to their survival in the program.

It is for this reason, their seasons in Canada become important gendered spaces and sites of (re)socialization for Jamaicans and other racialized migrant farmworkers. Here, masculinities are (re)negotiated, (re)contested and (re)shaped as farmworkers are always confronted with a desire for power, prestige, recognition, and authority. It, therefore, produces a situational gender map that responds to the dislocations and processes of forgetting caused by capitalism. Consequently, the SAWP creates a space where racialized expressions of dominant masculinities are discouraged and suppressed by a process of forgetting, at least while they live and work in Canada, a situation that maintains their place in the program and facilitates the reproduction of the SAWP.

8.3 Tensions and Contradictions: Domesticizing Masculinities or Masculine Farmwork Domesticities?

The migrant farmworker is separated from his wife and children, who are left behind in Jamaica, where most of the social reproduction takes place. But he is cognizant that being alone in Canada, he will also have to reproduce himself. As Agabus mused, *“yu av tu do tings fa yusef, far dem dun ax yu wen yu go tu di tes if wi wash an kuk fi wiself.”* [you have to do things for yourself, because they asked us during the test if we are able to wash and cook for ourselves]. So, in addition to the skills required for transnational farm working, the ability to undertake domestic duties also forms part of the repertoire of implicit competencies required for employment in the SAWP. In other words, in addition to physical labour, the ability to do domestic reproductive work is also pre-established during the recruitment and selection process and hints at the ‘forgetting’ required to participate in the program. As such, it is reasonable to assume that if the job requires a certain expression of masculinity, then only masculinities that fit a certain profile will be selected. This position also accepts that recruiters do not necessarily seek out male recruits to be domesticated or for their domestication but instead targets masculinities that have already been domesticated or have domestic or ‘feminine’ sensibilities.

Thus, most of the men recruited into the SAWP have been socialized into domesticity – knowing how to cook and hand-wash their clothes and keep a house, long before they were inducted

into the program. As Jethro said, “*mi use to does tings fram ier enoh*” [I’m used to domestic chores from Jamaica, you know]. Roger echoed a similar refrain, “*mi a di firs wan fi mi madda, so yu si liak kukin an washin an ting, mi affi kuk kaaz som taim mi madda gaw choch pan Sundeh*” [I’m my mother’s first child, so duties like cooking and washing I had to do, I had to cook when my mother was out at church on Sundays]. Therefore, this reality challenges the pervasive stereotype that dominant expressions of Jamaican Black masculinity have escaped domestic socialization and therefore do not engage in domestic duties at home and barks at the institution of patriarchy that informs their masculinity.

Chevannes (2001) and others mount the argument around gender socialization in the Caribbean, including Jamaica, which largely releases boys from domestic chores that girls are habituated to do. These are practices that confine girls to the home space while privileging boys “to roam the streets at will” (Figueroa, 2004:148). But such an argument is problematic as their conclusions do not map neatly across the teeming complex geographies from which farmworkers originate. To suggest that boys are allowed to roam freely is not only an essentialist view of boys, but it also invokes the idea of irresponsible parenting. This is inconsistent with the reality of the male socialization that plays out in many rural Jamaican districts. Besides, discipline is a key, gender-neutral attribute that characterizes rural folks, particularly the generation of 60-70something farmworkers now ‘retired’ from the program and who comprise the population of this research.

Therefore, for the Jamaican farmworkers operating in the transnational space, the boundaries of patriarchy had long been transgressed and reordered by the blurring of traditional gender roles. Most interviewees saw household duties as gender neutral or as Spenser insists, “*it is a jab fa eni badi.*” [it is a job for anybody]. So, there is an unresolved tension or contradiction in the hunter-farmworker that panders to a dominant masculinity but simultaneously forgets or resigns himself to the performance of a subordinated masculinity, assuming responsibility for his social reproduction. Yet most men waxed confident and assured of their dominant masculinity.

With most interviewees embracing a gender-progressive position on domesticity, my conversations around domestic duties were uninhibited, frank and forthcoming. Laundry was

considered the least burdensome of domestic chores performed in Canada. Most migrant farmworkers had access to washing machine(s) at boarding locations where they took turns to wash their clothes. Where machines were not available on-site, they took advantage of commercial units in nearby towns, paying a small fee for their use. But not in every case. Mark complained, “*di baas dem nuh gi wi nuh washin’ mashiin.*” [the boss didn’t provide a washing machine]. Not only did the boss ‘forget’ to provide access to washing machines on site, but also refused to drive them into the local town to get their laundry done, ‘forgetting’ that farmworkers’ primary means of transportation – a bicycle – would be too cumbersome to lug the laundry load into the town. The only alternative was for them to hand-wash their clothes.

This Mark did daily for six months (the length of his seasonal contract) every year, over the 17 years he worked in the SAWP. Mark explained that because tobacco cultivation is a messy job, “*yu kyaahn wiir dem deh klouz deh noh muor dan wan taim enoh...pure san...yu affi wash it in a bukit. Yu affi wash evrii iivlin wen yu in a di san liif, kaa is a ting weh deh evrii weh, aal yu face av iin dirt enoh.*” [you can’t wear the clothes more than once because of the sand. I had to wash it in a bucket. Working in the sand leaf, I had to wash every evening because it’s everywhere, the dirt is even in your face]. Moses who was also assigned tobacco duties concurred, “*but a wi ‘an wi yuuz an wash. An den nuo, wen yu werk in di tubakko tu, it blak up yu klouz. Yu klouz blak, blak, blak, blak.*” [but it’s our hands we used to wash. When you work in the tobacco, it blackens your clothes. Your clothes get very black]. More than the other interviewees, working in the SAWP for these two men necessitated a forgetting of any kind of gendered inhibition they may embrace as they had to hand-wash their own clothes. To subject Jamaican black men, in the 21st century, to hand-wash their laundry, in an advanced county, where washing machines are the norm, communicates that they have been forgotten and harkens back to practices of their enslaved ancestors on the ‘old plantation.’ The practice not only shifts gender labour but denies them the ability to perform it. But Mark furnished an explanation why the access to a washing machine to reproduce himself was ‘forgotten.’ He reasoned, “*weh mi yuuz tu go, nuh blak piipl neva liv iina da area deh, jos wait piipl an som a dem nuh laik blak piipl.*” [where I went in Canada, there were no Blacks living in that area, just White people and some of them don’t like Black people].

So, Mark invokes racism as structuring the logic that forgets the provision of or access to a technology (that ironically aids capitalism) as the cause for his discriminatory treatment.

Regarding the preparation of meals, the interviewees all indulged in cooking to reproduce themselves. While many interviewees cooked out of necessity, for others, it was their delight, with some men teaching other farmworkers the finer details of the culinary art. But Mohamed (2004) contends that men's indulgence in women's domain, like the kitchen, is influenced by "age, experience and confidence in maleness, which a man possesses, so that his "feminine" activities will not be misinterpreted by his peers" (p. 57). Since all interviewees have been 'feminized' into these domestic activities, and are older, it avoids, rather, 'forgets' any misinterpretation by their peers since they were all in the same situation.

The fact that Jamaican farmworkers would go through the inconvenience of preparing their own gastronomical delights after a hard day's work, as opposed to indulging in fast-food, delicatessen or other forms of ready-to-eat-food, lends validity to the argument that the SAWP did not necessarily domesticate or 'feminize' migrant farmworkers but rather seeks out already domesticated masculinities. Thus, the SAWP reinforces the transgression or 'forgetting' of traditional gender roles while promoting white patriarchy. In patriarchal cultures, globalization has also brought a conflation of the public and the private in the transnational space as migrant farmworkers arrive in Canada in the public (global system) performing private domestic roles. In other words, they work on the farm, which is in the public sphere, but their private residence is simultaneously located in the 'public' as it involves multiple farmworkers under the surveillance of the farmer.

8.3.1 Post-SAWP Domesticity

But what is the position of farmworkers on domesticity upon their permanent exit from the program? There is an uneven engagement with domestic chores among the interviewees as the degree to which they participated in domestic duties differed from one farmworker to the next, even within the same spatial location. Therefore, the complexity lies in the fact that "different masculinities are produced in the same cultural and institutional setting" (Connell, 1995:36). So, the production of

farmwork masculinities is conditioned by a multiplicity of factors, including family dynamics. Therefore, an analysis of Jamaican masculinities must be scale-sensitive as being conscious of what transpires at the level of the household avoids misinterpretation or over-generalization. So, masculinities within the same spatial location cannot be universally homogenized. Take, for instance, Roger who does not mind cooking during his wife's absence from the home "*mi wi kuk stil enuh, mi wi kuk an ting*" [I'll cook, you know, I'll cook] but he dislikes laundry duties, which must be done by hand. While Roger cooks in his wife's absence, Emmanuel's wife actively solicits his help in the kitchen – traditionally a woman's space – in her presence as set out in this chapter's opening quotation. While Vincent from the same district has no problem with the twin duties of domesticity – cooking and laundry – reasoning "*I do dat fimi self, aal nung*" [I do that for myself, even now]. The men – fulltime yam farmers – reflected different degrees of involvement with domesticity.

But farmworkers indulgence in domestic affairs is also influenced by their spouse's intervention. When I asked Rupert if he saw a problem with men helping around the home, both he and his wife chorused a resounding, "*no man,*" as in, not at all. Rupert continued, "*not fa mi, a shii a di prablem fa mi.*" [not for me, she's the problem for me]. In other words, Rupert's wife would rather he 'forgets' domestic chores. In Rupert's world, he says "*waif dwiit ier, yu don't af tu dwiit. Waif do evri ting.*" [Wife does it here, I don't have to do it. Wife does everything]. Myrtle, Rupert's wife, who had inserted herself into the conversation, reiterated with a sharp rebuke, "*no man!*" Myrtle's intonation suggested I was crazy for entertaining the errant thought that her husband does housework.

As it turns out, Rupert is not averse to domestic activities and insisted "*shi don't want mi tu do eni ting...shi want mi tu lay dong an shii bring iin di fuud an shii chew it an mii swallo. Das ow shii want it.*" "*Nat evn di rag weh mi beid wid shi nuh want mi wash.*" [she doesn't want me to do anything...she wants me to lie down and she brings in the food and chews it and I swallow. That's how she wants it. Not even my wash-towel she wants me to wash]. Smiling, Myrtle agreed, "*mi breik im bad*" [I spoil him] or in other words, she delights in serving him and enables his forgetting any encroachment into what she owns as her matriarchal sphere of influence. But more than that, Myrtle's behaviour perhaps suggests she wants Rupert to 'forget' the 'transgression' of gender roles that occurred in the SAWP,

in Canada. Myrtle deems the private space to be her exclusive domain where she is fully in command, for even though Rupert is inclined to participate in domestic chores, Myrtle disallows it. So here we observe not only the matrifocal reign of Myrtle but also her internalization of patriarchy, which contributes to its reinforcement and Rupert's 'forgetting.'

But for Andrew, who lives in the same neighbourhood as Rupert, his household dynamics are more complicated. He explains:

Ok wan ting bout it, in Jamieka ier, wi don't av a duutii fi seh man do ar uman do. Wi werk tугyedda, an wen wi werk tугyedda, tings werk uot moch easier. So, if shii is washin, I'm rins'n. An shii bi ang'n uot di klouz an I bii giv'n ar di klouz pinz. Shii finish moch kwika, den di tuu a us kyan riilaks. An if wi ar goin tu di fiil, I wil seh, 'ok, ham goin tu di fiil. Ham goin tu du a likkl werk.' An shii wil be luuk'n an ar taim an luuk'n at di sun an seh, 'ok, kom uot a di sun, its lonch taim nuo.' So wi get along (Andrew's Interview, January 10, 2017).

[Ok. One thing about it, in Jamaica here, we don't have gendered duties. We work together and when that happens, things work out much easier. So, if she is washing, I'm rinsing. And if she's hanging out the clothes, I'm handing her the clothespins. She finishes quicker, then we can both relax. And if we are going to the field, I will say, 'ok, I'm going to the field. I'm going to do some work.' And she will be watching the clock and looking at the shadow of the sun and say, 'ok, come out of the sun, it's lunchtime now.' So, we get along]

In Andrew's home, the gendered division of household work is less pronounced. He reasoned that if he assisted his wife, it would not only lessen the workload but hasten its completion, which would, in turn, increase their recreational/bonding time together. But while household work may not be split along gender lines, his work in the public is gender specific for Andrew goes to the field by himself while Olga, his wife, monitors him to ensure his prompt return for meals. So, whereas on the one hand, there is a blurring or a 'forgetting' of traditional gender roles by Andrew's participation in domestic chores, on the other hand, the patriarchal line is simultaneously reordered and strengthened by Olga's behaviour towards his public work. In fact, they both 'forgot' that they had 'forgotten.' Therefore, the return to traditional roles forms part of the whole process of 'forgetting' the SAWP experience. And so, there is a constant forgetting and reinforcement of stereotypical gender roles so that the more things changed, the more they remained the same.

8.4 'Retired' Farmworkers, Fidelity and Sexuality

Writing about Mexican farmworkers in the United States (US), Cohen (2006) argues that the transnational experience poses a challenge to their masculinity and heterosexuality as the physical

separation from their wives/partners breeds a sex deficit that also confronts their patriarchal status. I wanted to learn about the experience of Jamaican farmworkers in the Canadian context especially because they are the subjects of intense regulation of their personal freedoms such as sexual activities based on negative perceptions of their race.

Responding to the sex-deficit question, 70-year-old Rupert with 40 years of service to the SAWP initially waxed cryptic with a convoluted explanation. But Myrtle, who had inserted herself into the discussion grew even more impatient with her husband's puzzling response and implored him to, "*tel di man seh mi aal tiich yu fuon sex*" [tell the man that I even taught you 'phone sex'] to which all three of us erupted in laughter. So, in his effort to 'forget' the experience, Myrtle jogged his memory. Myrtle who is 14 years his junior, helped to facilitate their sex-void in the transnational space, by initiating the 'phone sex conversations. Myrtle's bold interjection seemed to have disarmed him for Rupert was emboldened, thereafter, to be more forthcoming, "*bwoi yu affi fait it, yu affi fait it, somtaim yu plie wid yusef bikaaz naycha is naycha.*" [boy, I had to fight it...had to fight it, sometimes I played with myself because nature is nature]. Rupert struggled to forget but when the sexual desire overwhelmed him – he 'naturally' ended up masturbating. A confession that did not surprise Myrtle, who intoned, "*aarite! A dat mi a chrai tel yu,*" [alright, that's what I've been trying to tell you all along] inferring that her husband should have been more responsible with the truth or 'forget' about the 'forgetting.' Had Myrtle not been there as a mediating influence, I suspect I might not have elicited Rupert's confession on my own – he might have succeeded in 'forgetting' it. Thus, Myrtle's presence assisted Rupert in making sense of his sexual experience in the program and also helped to regulate his sexual desires. So, from Rupert's account, masturbation and 'phone sex featured as coping mechanisms in periods of sexual distress, but we also see that 'forgetting' was convenient to erase its memory. Rupert's apprehension is also explained by his conservative culture and space (rural Jamaica) where the idea and practice of masturbation are not openly discussed. Also, given that masturbation might have been triggered by their 'phone sex,' it may be premature to generalize the behaviour to other farmworkers. Nevertheless, these provisional sexual practices are insightful.

Sixty-two-year-old Emmanuel was more philosophical when addressing how he controlled his lack of physical intimacy, he reasoned:

Wha yu niid yu affi put yu mine to, bikaaz a uol iipa man deh a prasn rait now weh no riilii av no uman an im no av no komfert. Mi neva riilii mel wid a wait gurl enoh, bikaaz dem tel wi a tuon, but man dwiit. Dem tel wi a tuon ow fi riiak genz yu baas waif an kids an wateva. Dem seh yu mus kip weh fram yu boss waif an yu mus noa ow fi diil wid sirt'n mattaz ...laik weh yu doan andastan, yu noa wat to ask, ow tu bihayv an ting. Neva put familiia kwestian to baas waif ar im chail. Dem tel wi dat man. Evrii ier dem tel yu dat (Emmanuel's Interview, February 24, 2017).

[The things you need, you have to put your mind to achieve it because lots of men are incarcerated and their women are not with them in prison, so they don't have any comfort. I've never had a sexual encounter with a white girl because they told us in Kingston, but men did it anyway. They told us how to react to the boss' wife and daughters. They said we should keep away from the boss' wife and we should know how to handle certain matters – like what we don't understand, know what to ask and how to behave. Never fraternize with the boss' wife or daughter. They told us that. Every year they reminded us].

Emmanuel likened the separation from his wife to prisoners who are forgotten in incarceration and suffer the same sex-starvation because they are separated from their partners. But Emmanuel reasoned from a heteronormative (sexual) position as it is an open secret that some prison inmates initiate sexual contact among themselves. Which is also an implicit juxtaposition of the dominant and subordinated masculinity.

But Emmanuel's further insight may shed some light on why interviewees claimed to avoid '*farrin uman*,' which the other interviewees invoked but offered little clarification for. So, like the rest of interviewees, Emmanuel did not engage in any sexual contact with Canadian White women because the Jamaican functionaries in the SAWP communicated the expectation for their men to oblivate a hegemonic masculine performance by discouraging or 'forgetting' sexual rendezvous with white women. But Emmanuel hastened to insert a footnote – "*but man dwiit*" [but men did it] – that testified against other men who, even though they are encouraged to forget their biological impulses, defied the order anyway. But, Jamaica's Labour Ministry's admonition can also be read as paternalistic and the infantilization of adult men. With most of the workers being married men, does Jamaica's Labour Ministry really need to remind them of their conjugal responsibility or sexual behaviour? And why is it that some men acquiesce to this order while others resist by 'forgetting' it? It further questions, what

is the age-group and marital status of the men who defy this order if the entire research population of more mature men is compliant?

Thus, the Jamaican state is also complicit in reproducing subordinated Jamaican masculinities by inculcating in farmworkers how to behave when they go abroad to work. In Emmanuel's words, "*dem giwi di learnin a minischrii bifuor wi go weh an ting. So wi werk wid it, enoh.*" [They gave us the instructions at the ministry of labour before we left for Canada. So, we complied]. Specifically, the men are educated and coached by Jamaica's Labour Ministry officials on how to interact with the boss' wife and daughter(s). One interpretation of this kind of arrangement is that the Jamaican black man is viewed as a threat to the white man's household – a threat that must be 'forgotten.' So, the stereotypical hypersexuality that informed the construction of black masculinity since the days of the 'old plantation' is reproduced. And, "since competition between males is sanctioned within male-dominated society, from the standpoint of white patriarchy, black masculinity must be kept "in check" (hooks, 1995:98). These cautionary notes further communicate the regulation or 'forgetting' of Jamaican Black masculinity in the SAWP. So, forgetting about their sexual desires helps to condition the expression of a subordinated masculinity, aligning them with the Jamaican state's expectation of forgetting, which facilitates the reproduction of the program.

Since slavery, Black men have been essentialized by the twin attributes of physical strength and sexual threat, which have linked them to various forms of exploitations. But in my conversations with interviewees, sexual promiscuity was not a defining characteristic among 'retired' farmworkers, it was obliterated. The narrative that mapped them as unfaithful partners engaged in adulterous relationships with white women was not confirmed, it was 'forgotten' among them. Neither was there any mention of same-sex relationships. It is reasonable to assume that Christian norms and principles overwhelmingly helped to shape the narratives of sexuality. This is not to say that queerness among farmworkers is absent, but it is silenced, or perhaps forgotten.

Indeed, my research had neither an overt nor systematic homosexual intent and the evidence gathered from the field did not lead in that direction. When discussing sexual relations with all 37 male interviewees, none of them alluded to the topic of homosexuality, even in jest. My reading of their

avoidance of the subject of queerness is the risk of discrediting the masculinity they performed and to further erect a social boundary or distance from it. In all 24 districts that I visited, the expression of male straight identity was the norm and I intuit that it was also the expectation of the wider districts as well. All of the districts that I visited, the interviewees projected a strong Christian faith, and by extension, Christian identity with a heterosexual underpinning as in those spaces, becoming a man involves a sexual relationship with a woman. According to Chevannes (2001:217), “a man is not a real man unless he is sexually active. But his activism must be hetero-not homosexual.” While most of the interviewees were in a marital relationship, few of the men had a “visiting” or “extra-residential” relationship (Chevannes, 2001:216).

Rather, what was consistent among the interviewees was they all appeared to have summoned a framework of moral or religious sensibilities or appealed to one, which served as some sort of mooring for their sexual conduct during the periods of their deployment in Canada. So that for the men I interviewed, a generation of close-to-pension-age and pension-agers; family men, working in the SAWP under constrained conditions, it did not appear to result in them losing their way or forgetting their moral or religious principles. For them, abstinence or forgetting facilitates their adaptation to protracted absences and does not represent a denial of their sexuality nor the overthrow of their natural, biological impulses. If anything, the rigor of the Christian teachings and cultural norms in Jamaican society, for this generation, helps facilitate forgetting sexual interactions abroad, consistent with the wishes of their Jamaican bosses. So, forgetting helps them to perhaps exercise sexual restraint. And being guided by a higher moral code to conquer their basic desires was a sacrifice they believe was worth making for their families.

Ultimately, the sexual behaviour of these ‘retired’ farmworkers, disrupts and challenges the stereotype and essentialism that Jamaican Black men are highly sexualized and are compelled by their basic sexual impulses. However, the interviewees invoked a caveat that while they themselves did not indulge in inappropriate sexual activities, or forgot about romantic possibilities, that other men sometimes did. Therefore, it also raises the question, are the farmworkers ‘forgetting’ some of their own ‘encounters’ as their way of readjusting to life post-SAWP?

8.4.1 Farmwork, Absences, and Reproductive Practices: Blocking (Forgetting) Joe Grine

When I spoke with Bentley about how he dealt with the separation from his wife over the 30, nine-month periods that he participated in the program, he contended, “*Mi tan wid out man (laughs), stay wid out uman so til mii kom uom bak, hmm hm. Mi naah go noh weh enoh. Mi a man weh gaw werk, a werk mi go, mi noh go luk fi noh badii.*” [I abstained (laughs), I abstained until my return to Jamaica. I went to Canada to work, not to seek out another partner]. Like the previous interviewees, Bentley also forgot his sexual desires to cope with being away from his wife as his purpose for going to Canada was not to seek out another partner but rather to work.

But his wife, Dassa, made a startling revelation, rather, confirmation about their conjugal relationship. After inserting herself into the conversation, Dassa proceeded to inform me of their fruitful union of nine children – spaced two years apart – and that on many occasions, she only found out she was pregnant after his seasonal departures for Canadian farmwork duties. By the time Bentley returned from Canada, he would meet, for the first time, the newest addition to his family. So, this reproductive practice was repeated several times over a period of 18 years. When I inquired whether these pregnancies were coincidental or planned, Bentley and Dassa erupted in sustained laughter.

Bentley suggested it was mere happenstance, while Dassa only ventured to add, “*mi noh noa, a so ii go,*” [I don’t know, that’s how it is] but the cadence and pitch of her vocal response along with her body language implied that her husband may have deliberately timed the pregnancies to his seasonal departures. But as I was to confirm, it was a process of forgetting that necessitates further comment. Whether the pregnancies were planned, I am not able to categorically determine. No further explanations were provided, and the topic was soon ‘forgotten’ as the awkwardness that fell upon the matter was my cue to move the discussion along. I suspect that had Dassa not been present with Bentley during the interview, I might not have gathered this nuanced information about them. It might have been ‘forgotten.’ But I was not surprised by Bentley’s practice. Rather, it confirms that this behaviour is rife among many Jamaican migrant farmwork men who leave their spouses pregnant before their seasonal departures, a practice that happens among both Canadian and US farmworkers.

Bentley's behaviour is complex to unravel but finds its interpretation among the intersections of gendered sexual practices, competing masculine identities and cultural influences. In Jamaica, there exists virile, dominant personae, who, after they have inserted themselves into established relationships, assume the colloquial moniker: *Joe Grine*. The word '*Grine*' (Grind) picks up the sexual innuendo in the label. *Joe Grine* is 'the other man,' who is notorious for wreaking havoc in relationships by the 'stud service' he renders to the woman, unbeknownst to the main man in the relationship. So, there is an unspoken, dread among men, of these personae. *Joe Grine's* female equivalent is the '*Matie*.' *Matie* is the woman who inserts herself into an existing relationship for sexual pleasure and material benefits and has no interest in assuming conjugal relationship responsibilities.

Joe Grine's insertion into existing relationships is for the sole purpose of sexual conquest, thereby legitimizing and validating his virility, while simultaneously delegitimizing his competitor's masculinity. It is a predatory showcase of his sexual bravado that obviates the main man's sexual identity. Because of his ability and reputation for subverting relationships, this transgressive gendered identity is valorized by some and vituperated by others. *Joe Grine* is celebrated because it is a showcase of his predatory hypersexual masculinity but villainized because he is a persona non-grata whose rude intrusion must be forgotten – never be associated with the main man – because recovering his emasculated masculinity from such transgression is often quite difficult if not impossible. It is the behaviour of *Joe Grine* that gives oxygen to the stereotype that labels some Jamaican men as cheaters, unfaithful and promiscuous. Since the structure of the SAWP dislocates spouses, farmworkers impregnating their wives before their emigration is read as a strategy to preempt and therefore 'forget' about the potential havoc that *Joe Grine* might cause.

This practice of farmworkers is also borne out of a place of distrust of their spouses for fear that their prolonged, unfulfilled sexual desires might fall prey to *Joe Grine*. In other words, he fears that the spouse might 'forget' him. So, by leaving the wife impregnated, it helps him to 'forget' about *Joe Grine*. But the greater worry is the potential disgrace he wants to avoid, should the sexual escapades by the unfaithful spouse bear him a '*jacket*.' '*Jacket*' is a cultural Jamaican term that refers to the child fathered by *Joe Grine*.

In Jamaica, particularly in rural areas where residents are more close-knit and familiar with each other, whenever children are born, the villagers, and especially the paternal grandmothers, play a key role in 'authenticating' the paternity of the child by judging the resemblance of the child to the father (or the main man). It is the cultural 'DNA' test. The absence of facial and family features invokes suspicions and stirs scandalous whispers of a *'jacket'*⁴¹ in the district.

Therefore, Dassa's pregnancies, synchronized to Bentley's departures, read simultaneously as a process of forgetting – as an act of agency – as well as a consequence of forgetting. Pregnancies are deployed to hold the family unit intact and as a precautionary deterrence to *Joe Grine*. It accomplishes a couple of things. While Bentley's masculinity was being transgressed and delegitimized abroad; ironically, his reputation in absentia was simultaneously being legitimized and reinforced locally. So, Dassa's pregnancies read as a symbol of Bentley's manhood, brands and sets him apart as a dominant male, which garners him further respect among villagers. Thus, the longer he remained in the SAWP, the more children Bentley tended to father and the more children he sired, the greater the evidence of his manhood. But the practice of impregnating the woman also reads as the objectification of the female body because it suggests he unilaterally determined reproduction and 'forgot' the input of the woman. Pregnancy, therefore, is often thrust upon the wife largely because of the man's insecurities and borne as a consequence of 'forgetting.' These competing masculine identities are in constant conversation, with the main man's masculinity capitulating to *Joe Grine's*. Bentley's reproductive practices align with McDowell's (2009) view that masculinity is uncertain, insecure and unstable.

However, Sample's experience with *Joe Grine* was devastating. Sample recounted his ordeal, "*wel mi kom iin fram werk an sii ar wid man in a di uos, in a mi bed niekid.*" [well, I came in from work and saw her with a man, in the house, in my bed, naked]. After fetching his machete to discipline the intruder, the naked *Joe Grine* fled the house and disappeared into the darkness. After the incident, the neighbours informed him that *Joe Grine* had been a 'regular visitor,' especially during his absence for

⁴¹ Although none of the interviewees admitted to being given a 'jacket' the researcher is aware of ex-farmworkers in the US program, whose scientific paternity tests have turned up mismatches for some of their 'children' born to them while working in the farmwork program.

farmwork. Sample sighed, “*shii was neva a gud an faithful uman.*” [she was never a good and faithful woman]. For while he worked in Canada, Sample remained loyal to her even avoiding “whorehouses” but complained that “*shii did deh ya a gwaan wid tings an shi stil no waahn mi run aff nyda, so mi noh noa a weh shi up tu.*” [she was here being adulterous and didn’t want me to abscond from the farm abroad either. So, I don’t know what she is up to]. What was more scandalous was that Sample and Goody, his wife, were both practicing Christians, belonging to a sect of Protestant organization and held key positions in the Church. In the end, *Joe Grine* had cost Sample his marriage and his house, which had to be sold, because of the dissolution of the marriage, and the proceeds divided between the now estranged couple. The point here is that a consequence of forgetting is not only the threat to the family unit/structure but its real disruption and lingering emotional wounds in its wake.

8.5 Consequences of Transnational Fathering

One of the overriding reasons why interviewees participated in the SAWP and remained in it for decades was to secure a brighter future for their children. They want their children to obtain a solid education that will catapult them into a better economic class and thus escape for themselves and successive generations, the drudgery, poverty, and hardship that characterized their earlier lives and those of previous generations. So, the internalization of patriarchy motivated them to pursue the “hard work and personal sacrifice they are making to be breadwinners for their families” (Pleck, 1995:11).

But for many interviewees, the discharge of their obligation of parenthood within the transnational space only mapped to a financial relationship with their children. In these interviewees’ minds, the weekly or by-weekly remittances represented the fulfillment of their roles as providers - economic providers – seemingly forgetting their emotional support. George waxed poetic about his patriarchal provider role in the transnational space: *Far is jus laik a bird. Wen yu si di bird nuo, wen di madda jraa straa an bil dem nes, antil sirt’n taim wen di madda av biebi, di faada av fi uot dier a luk fuud an kyarri kom fiid di madda, an di madda fiid di likkl bird dem, so yu affi jus ben tu it.* [It’s just like a bird. When you see the mother bird gets straws and builds a nest, after she hatches the eggs, the father has to find food and brings it to the mother and the mother feeds the chicks. So, you have to

adjust your mind to it]. In George's mind, there is a gendered division of responsibilities, he provides economic and 'forgets' emotional support while his wife handles the caring and nurturing. Some interviewees even expressed that their wives played both roles being mother and father – forgetting the father – to their children during periods of arranged absenteeism.

So, many of the interviewees demonstrated a socialization that did not habituate them to communicate their feelings as the emphasis was on being 'tough.' And in many corners of Jamaica, being tough is synonymous with being a man (Chevannes, 1999). This mentality shapes the expression of a masculinity that conditions and influences how their role of fatherhood is played out. The paradox is that in many of these relationships, although the fathers made the sacrifice to secure a better life for the children, the separation/absence resulted in a strained father-child(ren) relationship, which is a major consequence of forgetting. But that consequence breeds other unintended consequences that have a material impact because when the child(ren) become adults and their fathers advance in age, the child(ren) sometimes forget them.

To help put this in context, a farmworker whose seasonal assignment removed him from his family for eight months of each year over a tenure of 30 years, meant that absenteeism would have collectively robbed 20 of those 30 years of the child-father relationship. That gap in the relationship is a significant consequence of forgetting. Now, the fact that he returned home to his family every year after his seasonal contract ended, assumed that he would have been just as committed had he remained and eked out a living in Jamaica. So, it is also reasonable to argue that fathers would have been more involved in their children's lives, and vice versa. Working together and undertaking various activities together would more endear them to each other and ultimately facilitate a stronger relationship bond even if the father is distant from his emotions.

But neoliberal globalization is antagonistic to the Black fathers in many ways and is indifferent to their family structure and relations. Further, neoliberal globalization as expressed through the SAWP insists upon 'forgetting,' dislocating fathers based on their race and social class. For farmworkers must deploy a process of forgetting – as a survival mechanism – to be recruited into the program and as an act of agency, pretend the absenteeism that the program creates does not threaten, weaken

and disrupt values they hold dear. But over time, such practice becomes a societal norm and contributes to the destabilization and gradual breakdown of the Black, lower-class family structure. In some instances, the children even developed behavioural problems. A cost cannot be attached to these consequences of forgetting even with the benefits accrued from working in the program.

Thus, farmwork seasonality is taken up at an enormous cost by migrant workers, certainly the Black working-class family from the poor regions of rural Jamaica. It demonstrates the process of forgetting filliped by anti-black racism that structures the operations of the SAWP and exposes the subtle racial inequality that is still malignant in Canada. A holistic approach that gives serious consideration to the black family structure is forgotten when this race and class of men are considered for participation in labour regimes such as the SAWP. Therefore, capital relentlessly seeks after the abstract labour of racialized men, an arrangement that does not give them the benefit of their humanity and therefore forgets the importance of the cohesive structure of the black family. Such arrangement invokes a parallel with slavery and a continuity of colonialism. The expansion of capitalism was a system that, for generations, thrived off the disruption, 'forgetting' and dislocation of Black families during slavery and the plantation system. Thus, SAWP, like slavery, is a system that continues to be bound together and reproduced by the interruption and displacement – driven by the process of forgetting – of the Black family structure. So, the flight of the centuries has changed little since enslaved descendants – Jamaican SAWP workers – continue to be impacted by the process of forgetting.

The lamentations of Obadiah, father of 10, is illustrative of the father-children strain, spawned by the dislocation facilitated by the process of forgetting in the SAWP:

Dem gruo op an get big, an som a dem, yu affi seh nat iiv'n memba mi. Wan a tiicha, wan a nuors, wan a suolja an dem deh pan dem uon. Bikaaz iiv'n adda die, mi kaal wan an tel im seh mi wud a laik a monii fram im. An im a tel mi seh bwoi, shi noh get pie yet, an aal nuo shi no get bak to mi an shi mus get di monii areddi. So dat miin seh shi no kier. Mi affi chrai fi av mai uon bikaaz mi kyaahn dipen pan fi im. Far im naah gimi no monii – non a dem! (Obadiah's Interview, February 28, 2017).

[They grow up and become adults, some of them don't remember me. One's a teacher, one's a nurse and one's a soldier and they've moved out on their own. Even recently, I called one and told her I'm in need of some money. She told me she hadn't got paid yet but up to this point she hasn't got back to me and I assume she's been paid by now. That means she doesn't care. I have to try and have my own because I can't depend on theirs. Because they're not helping me. None of them!]

The full weight of Obadiah's strained relationship – the consequence of forgetting – with his children washed out in the tenor of his voice, which was one of regret and disappointment. After sacrificing 30 years of his life for his 10 children – three of whom he mapped to their occupational identities: teacher, nurse, soldier – they have reportedly forgotten their close-to-pension-age father. His request for a little monetary help was met with an unfulfilled promise. Obadiah might not have needed to reach out to his children to suffer the humiliation of rejection. But he found himself in a financial bind because of his abrupt dismissal from the SAWP, the only livelihood he had known his entire working life, due to the state's process of forgetting.

Hence, we see here that because of the compounded consequences of forgetting in the SAWP that Obadiah has suffered a succession of dislocations: from his place in the family and his relationship with his children and from the program itself. But all these dislocations are necessary for the reproduction of the program. On top of that, Obadiah complains his wife, Ruby, also ridiculed him because he lost the job, *"wen kwaril taim kom, shi choa it at mi, si wat a miin. Bikaaz it urt ar tu enoh, but shi choa it at mi"* [whenever we quarrel, she throws it at me, do you understand. Because it hurts her too, you know, but she throws it at me]. So Ruby also forgot the three decades that he supported the family. We also observed his weakened patriarchal position and his destabilized masculinity. Reconciled to the reality that he cannot depend on his children, unlike Andrew and George, he has resigned himself to securing his own independence. The unfolding of Obadiah's family dynamics is consistent with several other interviewees whose relationships with their children have been destabilized and soured because of the consequences of forgetting caused by the absenteeism created by the process of forgetting.

But not all relationships suffer the same fate as Obadiah's. In addition to being economic providers, some interviewees demonstrated emotional sensibilities/attachments or deployed an affective masculine performance. But even though they were passionate and more deeply involved, the process of forgetting eclipsed them from major milestone events such as children's births, birthdays and graduation ceremonies, among other significant events. Rupert and others missed all their children's birthdays; many interviewees suffered the same fate with their children. Some

interviewees even spoke of not being able to eat for days after they had arrived in Canada because of the disruption of the nuclear family bond.

Michael, a father of four, having been unsuccessful at homeownership has forgotten that dream rationalizing that the 28 years spent working in the program was all for the benefit and success of his children. He spoke of the excellent bond that he cultivated and maintains with his children, stressing that he spoke with them frequently when he worked in Canada and glowed with the pride and joy their successes have brought him, *“Well one of them used to play football for an NFL Football Team, mi big son. And di daughter jus gone. She just left Decemba, gone to university – a college up there [in the US].* The other daughter works in the service industry in the capital city of Kingston, Jamaica, while his last son is currently a pupil of one of Jamaica’s top high schools.

Michael often spoke in perfect English but code-switched at times. An example is the first statement that begins in English and trailed off in patois. But that switch was deliberate and uttered to make a statement. Not only is Michael emphasizing the accomplishment of his eldest child, but he is also implicitly highlighting the fact that his first child is a son, which culturally underscores his virility and validates his masculine pedigree and paternity, as not all men, let alone Jamaicans, produce sons who play for a prestigious international football team. Since the consequences of forgetting left him without a home, he basks in the successes of his children to forget the absences facilitated by the program.

8.6 Transgressions as Acts of Agency

There were the SAWP ‘retirees’ who, in some ways, have wittingly or unwittingly flouted the law or who know of relatives or friends who have done so. These violations ranged from having gained employment in the program under assumed or false identities, through to producing false biological samples to pass the requisite medical screening. There are also transgressions that were not perpetrated by the interviewees (but reported as occurring elsewhere) including their sons they referred to the SAWP absconding from the program in Canada, to anecdotes of rackets at Jamaica’s Labour Ministry. I argue that these maneuvers can, in fact, be considered acts of personal agency.

In one of my first encounters in the field, I was introduced to an interviewee in his early 60s, whom we will call, Marcus. I introduced myself to him, gave my name and requested his. Marcus initiated his response with a caveat, “*mi chravl in di neim af Marcus Emmins*” [I traveled in the name Marcus Emmins], then came the inevitable but, followed by the full disclosure of his legal name. As Marcus explained, Emmins was a regular US farmworker who also got selected into the Canadian SAWP. However, a local political activist, who had responsibility for distributing the ‘farmwork invitation cards,’ inquired of Marcus if he, “*wuda waahn go chrai a selekshan iina Maas D neim.*” [would want to attempt the selection in Emmins’ name] Marcus offered some context:

Di saim taim wen im fi go du di Kyanada selekshan, im [Emmins] gat a riikwes fram Amerika kom dong. So im redda fi go on di Amerikan [program] so im gi di telegram to Missa Bruon uu did giv im di tikit an Missa Bruon kaal mi an ax mi if mi waahn go chrai it. An mi tel im yes...wen mi go tu di selekshan, mi paas di selekshan iina is neim...

[The time when he was supposed to do the selection test for the SAWP, Emmins was also called for the US program. So, he gave the telegram to Mr. Brown who had given him the invitation card and Mr. Brown called and asked me if I wanted to try it. And I told him yes...when I went to the selection test, I passed the selection in Emmins’ name] (Marcus’ Interview, January 10, 2017).

Marcus explained that in the early 1970s, farmworkers did not travel on passports. Instead, it was a crude identification assembled together with the traveler’s photograph attached to a manila card bearing a handwritten name and an identification number (see Figure 7 below for an example). And, in those days, circumventing the SAWP selection process was not difficult as according to Marcus, “*is jos a neim yu ansa tu*” [you just answered to a name]. Marcus’ cavalier attitude towards this serious legal violation hinted not only at his ignorance but also at what might be the normalization of this practice. This also communicates that a class of people, condemned to a life of poverty and distress, whom the selection process has overlooked, sometimes ‘forget’ the established selection process and use their agency to foist their way into a program, that ironically will forget them.

Figure 7 - Prototype of Crude Jamaican Immigration ID Used by Farmworkers in the 1960s/1970s



I also met Delroy in west-central Jamaica who found himself in the same predicament. Delroy's friend was recruited into the program, but Delroy did not get a personal 'invitation card.' According to Delroy, when it was time for his friend to do his medical screening, he found out he had to undergo a surgery, so, *"im giv mi di kyaad an seh mi fi chrai a ting. An mi jos go iina im neim an mi chravl fi buot nain yiers. An mi did kina kowad to"* [he gave me the card and said I should give it a try. So, I went in his name and traveled for about nine years. But I was afraid]. Although the recruitment process 'forgot' Delroy, like Marcus, exercising agency, he circumvented the legal process to assert his 'selection' into the program, 'forgetting' his legal identity for nine years while assuming his friend's. But working incognito was an experience that terrorized his conscience as it conflicted with his religious convictions. Delroy explained how the quandary was resolved:

So, wan a di iers, dem gies seh, 'yu kyan go tu di lays'n affisa an taak to im.' An wen mi riich a Toronto ierpuort, iina di ierpuort...mi go deh an mi tel im seh mi av a prablem enoh. An [him] ax mi wat it is, an mi tell im seh mi did a chravl an a neva mai neim. An im jos ax mi seh wat is mi rait neim. An im tek uot wan paypa uot a im pakit, an mi giv im mai rait neim. An di nex yier mi get kaal iina mai rait neim now" (Delroy's Interview, February 22, 2017).

[So, one of the years, the guys said, 'why don't you talk to the liaison officer about it.' So, when I arrived at Pearson, at the airport, I told the liaison officer that I had a problem. And he asked what it was, and I told him that I was traveling illegally. And he asked what my correct name was. And he noted my legal name on a paper that he had. And the following year, I was requested to return to the program in my correct name].

Delroy had already confessed his false identity to his farmwork colleagues, a situation they advised him to take up with a liaison officer who, surprisingly, made the switch back to his legal name, with impunity. Not only was the switch made to Delroy's real name; thereafter, he received repeated return work requests in his legal name, until a few years later, the logic of forgetting dropped him from the program. So, we see here the liaison officer is also implicated in the process of forgetting the transgression – which perhaps might have cast a shadow on Jamaica's selection process – and regularized Delroy's participation in the program.

When I thought Marcus' case was an anomaly, there came along Delroy from a different parish, and then appeared a story in the *Jamaica Observer*, one of Jamaica's dailies that reported a similar account of a Jamaican farmworker – one Errol Brown. The excerpt below explains:

...Brown's brother, who is in the United States, applied for and was given a passport in 1983. Brown then assumed his brother's identity and used the passport to travel. [He] renewed the passport in 1999 and in 2009. However, in 2015, Brown's brother applied to renew his passport via the Consulate General of Jamaica. It was then discovered that someone else had been using the passport, hence a stop order was placed on the document. In November 2016, Brown arrived in Jamaica from Canada and was arrested and charged. [Brown confessed to] the police... [saying] A just time catch up on mi; mi know wat mi did was wrong. [At the sentencing] Brown...begged for leniency... [and maintains that his decision to impersonate his brother] was [influenced] by [his] parents.... something [he] regret[s] and [so he is] asking the court to have mercy on [him] (Mundle, 2017).

Brown averted a six-month prison sentence by paying a fine of JA\$340,000 (CDN\$3579) – a penalty or consequence of forgetting used as a mechanism of survival. While we may never know the answers to questions around the family dynamics, what is clear is that Brown, like the other implicated interviewees, exercised forgetting as agency that resisted/contravened the established selection constraints. Challenging the system in this manner necessitated Brown (officially) 'forgetting' his personal identity for some three decades. But he has also had to forget other makers of identity in order to remain in the program. Ironically, while he had 'forgotten' his personal identity, the process of forgetting that structures the program simultaneously worked against him but the ultimate consequence of forgetting his personal identity will be tested when he applies for his pensions.

These transgressions map to three different spatial, research locations. There is also a manifestation of different attitudes or responses to these illegalities, which accentuate different

expressions of masculinity. Marcus' cavalier attitude towards this legal violation suggests that in his mind, he had done nothing wrong but taking a chance or exercising agency. For Delroy, one of the consequences of his act of agency was spiritual turmoil – a compromise of his Christian convictions; while for Brown, the proverbial 'chickens came home to roost' as he was caught and fined. But these are some of the risks desperate men will take to live up to their family responsibilities. But does the action of the liaison officer in Delroy's case hints at a larger 'culture of forgetting' that facilitates these kinds of circumvention of the system and the normalization of illegalities?

Therefore, the motivation behind these violations is hardly a mystery. Absent a legal background, the fact that in all three cases, the men infiltrated and remained in the program instead of using it as a springboard to get into Canada then abandon the program in hopes of regularizing their legal status, hints at their intent not to contravene the law. Although they ended up doing so anyway, their actions can be read as personal acts of agency in a global system. Under the weight of a neoliberal order that does not create enough jobs in Jamaica, and an immigration system that is antagonistic to their race and class, and further pressured by the internalization of patriarchal norms that dictate their roles as economic providers, they seize every opportunity to carve out a space for themselves and their families. Pushing back at an oppressive system, pressing down upon them, even in circumstances that bring them in breach of the law, it necessitated migrant men 'forgetting' themselves, in the courageous exercise of agency, as a survival strategy, only to be 'forgotten' in return by the system.

Although the farmwork program does not represent a panacea for their socio-economic ills, it appeals to a certain demographic, an economic class and race of people who have been shut out of educational opportunities, which would normally have been the vehicle for their upward social mobility (Manley, 1987). So, the SAWP in many respects represents an opportunity of last resort and if men do not make the selection because they are on the wrong side of the political divide, or because of their conflicting expressions of masculinity, they may deploy transgressions to subvert the system to leverage the benefits that those who have been selected, receive. While Marcus lasted less than ten years, Delroy worked nine years under an assumed identity and another five or six years in his legal

name. Meanwhile, in the last scenario, Brown worked for 30 years in his brother's name. The ultimate consequence of these acts of agency or illegalities might be the forfeiture of their pension benefits for having 'forgotten' their real identities.

Further acts of agency include the use of other men's biological samples when interviewees' samples had been compromised. Amos, from the mountains of St. Elizabeth, had been a repeat farmworker for several years until one year, his urine sample failed the medical screening. Amos was quite disturbed and depressed by the development as he had not had any problems with his previous urine samples before. Besides, his family doctor had given him a clean bill of health at his yearly medical check-up. Jamaica's Labour Ministry told him that he would not be able to return to active farmwork duties until he got it all cleared up.

In the meantime, a battle raged between Amos' doctor and that of the Jamaican Labour Ministry. During the period of frustration in limbo, Amos confessed, "*a guy ova deh kaal mi an seh why yu noh use a nex man urin? Dat taim dem neva so strik – use a nex man urin an kom noh, Amos?*" [a guy called me and said why not use someone else's urine? At that time, they weren't as strict – why don't you use another man's urine?]. While waiting for the Canadian process to be sorted out, Amos was recruited into the US farmwork program by furnishing "*a nex man urin*" [another man's urine sample] when summoned to do his medical screening. He worked in the US program for a couple of years and was eventually recalled to the Canadian program but due to a conflict with both programs requiring him to emigrate around the same time, he had to decline the request. So, having been forgotten by the process that the local labour ministry relies on to medically screen the farmwork candidates, Amos countered with his own process of forgetting at the suggestion of his friend, that circumvented the urine test. Amos' action, though illegal/unethical, read as an exercise of agency.

In all these cases of violations, the interviewees deployed bold and daring acts of personal agency – survival strategies – that circumvented established processes. These practices harken back to the plantation and the inspiration slaves derived from Anancy – the legendary, Ghanaian spider-trickster-persona who often employed some means of stratagem not only to survive and get ahead but in the process, claim a space for himself to push back against the system (Shepherd, 2012).

There are also the intergenerational connections – interviewees who were influential in getting their sons into the program. In these cases, the sons had not even had any prior farming experience but were requested on the merit of their fathers' excellent work ethic and performances of a subjugated masculinity. But no sooner than they arrived in Canada, the sons absconded from the farms or 'forgot' the SAWP. Four interviewees, Rupert, Roger, Vincent, and Egbert voluntarily shared information about their sons using the program as a stepping stone to get abroad, then 'run-off' to regularize their legal status, through marriage. Two of these men, Roger and Vincent are from the same community but their sons were sent to different places in Canada. Absconding the program abroad can be read as an act of rebellion intended to break the cycle of oppression. These are acts of agency; albeit to endure other forms of racism and oppression in Canada.

Writing about masculinities, De Moya (2004:75) argues that men "might have multiple, situational and fluid masculine "identities" ("multiple selves," unstable and vaguely integrated identities, in Laclau's 1993 terms), which are discriminately displayed or attributed according to perceived characteristics of the actors and the requirements of the environment, as an endless power game." I agree. In the case of Jamaican farmworkers, it shows how the performance of masculinity informs agency in the different ways they deploy 'forgetting' as a survival mechanism. As demonstrated from the various examples of hierarchical and horizontal gender and race relations above, Jamaican Black masculinities cannot be essentialized but ebbed and flowed, becoming subordinated or dominant, as appropriate, to leverage advantages in order to eke out a living in the SAWP. Masculinity, therefore, is a relationship of super-ordination and subordination (Messerschmidt, 2016) and in its various expressions, patriarchy has been transgressed, breached, disrupted but simultaneously reordered and reinforced as the men 'forget' themselves and are 'forgotten' by the system.

8.7 Conclusion

This chapter grapples with the geographies of Jamaican Black farmwork masculinities and pulled out some of the complexities around their socialization and performances of gender. The dimension of 'forgetting masculinities,' manifested in different forms, emerged as a central element in

enabling the reproduction of the farmwork program along with the attendant consequences of forgetting. The fluidity of masculinity is seen throughout the chapter as the men deployed acts of personal agency to adapt to the multiple demands of the farmwork program – ‘forgetting’ gender roles, farmwork experience, sexual experience. Also, reworking their masculinities through deference to White hegemonic masculinities resulted in the transgression of their masculine identities while working abroad. However, they resort to a dominant masculine performance upon their return home. As the evidence demonstrates, the program does not recruit men to be domesticated, but as it turned out, it employs men who have been socialized into domesticity. And we also gained insight into how they managed their sexuality and biological and social reproductive practices in various contradictions of ‘forgetting.’ The dynamics of transnational parenting, the dislocation of fathers and the disruption of the family structure are also brought out as consequences of ‘forgetting.’

As an option of last resort for poor Jamaican men to actualize their dreams of a better life through migration, only a relatively small percentage of men are selected into the program. We see, however, how some men foist their way into the program in breach of the law, but I read these illegalities as the courageous exercise of personal agency pushing back against an oppressive system pushing down upon them. These acts of agency allowed the men to carve out a space for themselves, in a globalized neoliberal world, to meet their patriarchal responsibilities. But with these risks come rewards of earning a bread but also severe consequences. Since their dominant gender expressions are not tolerated in the SAWP, the processes of forgetting articulated by Jamaican farmwork masculinities along with forgetting states, reinforce each other to normalize and legitimize the performance of subordinated racialized masculinities. These processes effectively facilitate and sustain the reproduction of the program.

Chapter 9. Invoking Remembrance: Resisting Processes of ‘Forgetting’ in Canada’s Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program

Until the philosophy, which holds one race superior, and another, inferior, is finally, and permanently, discredited, and abandoned, everywhere is war, we say war

That until there no longer, first class and second-class citizens of any nation. Until the colour of a man's skin is of no more significance than the colour of his eyes, we say war

That until the basic human rights are equally guaranteed to all, without regard to race, is a war.

–“War” (Marley, 1976).

9.1 Introduction

Herod (2018) references the New Economy, which was billed to be a marked departure from the Old Economy being “expected to be less tiresome and more rewarding than Old Economy work, as the menial jobs of the industrial age were replaced by technology” (p. 139). But despite the narrative of this emancipatory-oriented new economy, there is a preponderance of evidence to the contrary as that argument remains a fantasy for millions of workers who remain entrapped in the drudgery of exploitative, labour-intensive work in the so-called New Economy (Herod, 2018). Indeed, the conditions under which racialized migrant farmworkers labour on Canadian farms, in the 21st century, are inconsistent with the reality of any emancipated work, remaining racialized and masculinized, under-compensated and under-appreciated in the so-called New Economy. That the SAWP is a labour-intensive program, which has thrived for more than half century is well documented in its exhaustive literature (Andre, 1990; Preibisch, 2003; Satzewich, 1991). But what is less well known are accounts of ‘retired’ farmworkers’ lived experiences that could be useful to provide an explanation as to why such a program, steeped in oppression, has survived for more than 50 years and remains attractive to racialized migrant workers and that could inform us about the long-term implications of transnational farmwork. I believe that ‘forgetting,’ as I have articulated, in the two major dimensions, offers one explanation.

Accordingly, a summary of key arguments and findings and an assessment of the original contributions are presented in this final chapter. It also grapples with some of the opportunities to resist ‘forgetting’ before advancing recommendations for key stakeholders – the Governments of Canada and Jamaica to improve the lives of past, current and future generations of migrant farmworkers. I

then offer a reflection on possibilities for constructing alternative Jamaican masculinities and suggest areas for future research to address some of the outstanding issues raised throughout the text.

9.2 Summation of Key Arguments and Findings

I embarked upon this project to examine the SAWP economy from one aspect of social reproduction – the context of migrant farmworkers so-called ‘retirement’ – as opposed to only the worksite. I was led in this direction because most researchers investigating transnational farmworkers focus their attention on the site of production, which occurs in the north with less interest in social reproduction, the bulk of which takes place across multiple places in the south where migrant recruits are imported from (Preibisch & Binford, 2007; Preibisch & Santamaria, 2006). This concentration on knowledge production from the worksite has created a gap in the farmwork literature, for what becomes of the massive group of workers once they ended their relationship with the SAWP had largely remained a mystery. I was, therefore, interested in learning from Jamaican migrant farmworkers, jettisoned from the program, what their experiences both in the program and in ‘retirement’ were like and what we could learn from those experiences to better inform our understanding of the operations of the SAWP that result in the obsolescence of migrant farmworkers.

Building on the traditions of ‘forgetting’ deployed by Carsten (1995), Lowe (1996), Fernandes (2004) and Pon (2009), I repurposed the notion of ‘forgetting’ to offer an alternative imagination in exploring and understanding the operations of the SAWP. ‘Forgetting,’ is inherent in the social, economic and political structure of society with institutions that operate to subjugate, marginalize and exclude racialized people – in this case, Black people – making them invisible within society. ‘Forgetting,’ is also informed by historical processes like colonialism that dehumanizes, subjugates and erases Black bodies based on embedded societal norms. At the individual level, migrant farmworkers employ ‘forgetting’ in their exercise of agency, intentionally doing so in reasserting their existence and resisting that which would have erased them. ‘Forgetting,’ therefore, serves as a means of hope and possibilities that the future can be brighter. In the case of migrant farmworkers, states (forgetting states) and their institutional actors maintain processes of ‘forgetting’ that facilitate the

reproduction of the SAWP and contribute to 'forgetting masculinities' among the men. So, 'forgetting states' and 'forgetting masculinities' are the two major dimensions that form the central pillars of this text. For while migrant farmworkers deploy 'forgetting' as an exercise of agency, which accrues them benefits, I have also demonstrated how they are constrained and indeed 'forgotten' by institutional and societal structures. The combination of these dimensions of 'forgetting' in their various manifestations work as a 'call and response' system to create deleterious consequences that oppress farmworkers during their time of SAWP employment and shortchange and continue to erase them even when they 'retire.'

To deal with the complexities of forgetting, I employed a multipronged conceptual framework that engaged debates on select tenets of world-systems perspective, neoliberal globalization, and feminist/anti-racist/critical masculinity perspectives. World-systems is underpinned by racial ideology reflected in Canada's reliance on racialized labour from the south. Indeed, world-systems theory is a hierarchical behemoth and being completely structural, it enables us to understand the limitations and constraints it presses upon people, which in very real ways dictate their fate in life. But notwithstanding these structures, there is some flexibility as people – migrant farmworkers in this case – demonstrate resilience in how they resist and adapt themselves to accomplish things. Thus, I have examined these processes to restore the humanity, power, and agency of the subjects the Marxian theories talk about. 'Forgetting,' therefore, is just one aspect of many structures that helps us understand global systems.

The SAWP is fed and maintained by the recycling of racialized workers from the Caribbean and Mexico. The difficulty of finding employment to fulfill their patriarchal role as the family breadwinner drives thousands of Jamaican men to migrate – something which is an act of agency (Rogaly, 2009). The penetration of neoliberal globalization into Jamaica facilitates these men's entrance into the program and helps them overcome the geographical barriers which make their seasonal, precarious, Canadian work rotation(s) possible (Herod, 2018). Indeed, impecunious Jamaican Black men are drawn to the SAWP because, for many, it is their only hope to legally emigrate to eke out a living since they have largely been written out of Jamaica's development. Thus, disadvantaged, racialized men are central to the process of forgetting, which is necessary for the reproduction of the SAWP. But the

men who become attached to the program for an extended time are those who have resigned themselves to being compliant, which I read as an act of agency that invokes the described process of forgetting.

The use of offshore workers provides Canadian farmers tremendous flexibility in managing farm labour as they can summon Jamaican workers when needed and dispense with them when the planting and harvest are over. But this arrangement 'forgets' the cohesion of the Black family structure that is intermittingly disrupted/dislocated resulting in strained/estranged relationships, which is a consequence of forgetting. While migrant farmworkers worked and helped to build the Canadian economy, the process of forgetting, buried in Canada's immigration policy and institutionalized in anti-black racism, prohibits them from permanently immigrating with their families (Satzewich, 1991). The prohibition of permanent residency traps them in a recurring seasonality where the men live out huge periods of their lives across borders (Horst, 2007). Their seasonality is mediated by technology that compresses time and space to keep them in virtual contact with their family but does not compensate for an intimate relationship nor for the time spent apart from their family (Harvey, 1990; Kelly, 2003).

So, while the lenses of world-systems and neoliberal-globalization have traditionally been used to explain labour regimes like the SAWP in terms of processes of accumulation and migration, for example, these theories have been limited in analyzing race and gender – particularly in terms of the complex ways these variables intersect. Therefore, I deployed feminist/anti-racist/critical masculinity perspective as a complementary 'corrective' that enables us to understand the humanity of the men in their so-called 'retirement.' Moreover, the feminist frameworks provides a means by which we might examine the ways masculinity is lived and expressed, not only during the work-life of the farmworkers but also in retirement – a significant part of the life course for these Jamaican men.

The geographies of forgetting scripted in the multiple case studies presented in this text illustrate the processes and demonstrate the ultimate consequences of 'forgetting.' These are observed through the mobility of rural Black Jamaican men through space and its relationship with place and identity and how it mediates the performance of gender across space. It emerged in the complex social relations that embed them transnationally; their patriarchal affinity for home ownership

and challenges of the constructed environment which help to bring their dreams to fruition. It manifested in their health and economic challenges exacerbated by their small pensions in their so-called 'retirement,' among others. Thus, it is my hope, that the revelation of these geographies of forgetting at both dimensions, even in some small way might invigorate a broader discussion for their emancipation – their remembrance.

The four empirical chapters are organized around the two overarching dimensions of forgetting. a) The notion of *forgetting states*, which I explored in Chapters 5 and 6. b) The idea of *forgetting masculinities*, taken up in Chapters 7 and 8. At the state level, 'forgetting' underpins policies/practices of institutions such as the WSIB that negate the humanity of farmworkers. And, the neoliberal ideal of efficiency is a process of forgetting with serious consequences especially for migrant workers (Mojtehedzadeh, 2017). As a corollary, workers are faced with two unpleasant alternatives: they either acquiesce to employers' demands and complete their contracts while injured or resist and be repatriated.

This is crucial because when workers become sick, production is impacted and a racialized neoliberal program nor the harvest cannot wait until workers have fully recovered because production and output – which are more important than workers health – become compromised. Because a racialized neoliberal project does not make adequate provisions for the health of the Black man nor does it honour the arrangements that have been put in place; when he becomes injured, the system flushes out the inefficiency and summons a waiting replacement to continue the program. Nothing must be allowed to impede surplus accumulation.

I also explored and disambiguated the adversarial and confusing behaviour of Jamaica's liaison officers who are implicated in the institutional processes of forgetting, and I have argued that they have been coopted and utilized as institutional pawns in practices of repatriation, which is a 'forgetting' process. Liaison officers act as 'ambassadors' protecting Jamaica's participation in the SAWP since (through remittances) it nets significant foreign exchange for Jamaica, with temporary migration acting as a valve to 'address' the unemployment of under-educated men in rural Jamaica. So, after 52 years of participation, Jamaica is still guarding its participation in the program by

maintaining a decidedly deferential posture. Being more solicitous to please Canada, Jamaica is constrained to act out its subordination that the global system forces upon it with grave consequences for its subject participants. So, the idea of 'forgetting' and recycling migrants maintains the global hierarchy and forces and reproduces Jamaica's under-development. Thus, part of the role of the state is to reproduce a racialized capitalism in the global system, which is consistent with the theoretical chapter.

But in response to institutional constraints, Jamaican masculinities trigger 'forgetting' as a survival mechanism, often working while injured reinforcing the states' processes of forgetting, which result in serious consequences after they exited the program, and ultimately manifested in the death of one of the 'retirees.' For those who sustained injuries or became chronically ill after their departure from the program, I demonstrated the consequence of 'forgetting' both in their suffering and financial inability to cover their medical expenses in their so-called 'retirement,' which impacts their quality of life. States also 'forget' the importance of migrant workers mental health reflected in the trauma that is visited upon them as a consequence of their arbitrary and often unfair dismissal.

Oblivescence is also embedded in the state's retirement infrastructure, exemplified in Service Canada's method of determining pension benefits with consequences for racialized migrant farmworkers, which is disclosed in their low pension benefits, even with Service Canada's mitigating 'drop out' provision. I argued that the small pensions the farm workers receive are inadequate given the billions in surplus value extracted over the past five decades from migrant workers and paid into the CPP fund. I also ferreted out Service Canada's mechanism that 'forgets' Old Age Security (OAS)/Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS), normalized as an institutionalized logic that disqualifies these benefits to offshore workers. 'Forgetting' also showed up in both states' practices of not alerting workers to their pension entitlement. In the case of Jamaica, this lack of awareness reinforces their invisibility and sidelines them even at home.

As a result of these processes of forgetting, Jamaican migrant farmworkers permanent post-program experience represents only a cessation of work from the SAWP and not a complete detachment from the labour force. Thus, ensnared by the consequence of 'forgetting,' it forces them

to continue working, demonstrating that their basic humanity is a consequence of the failure of states to treat them as complete workers. Such a situation put into perspective Morris, James & Eldemire-Shearer's (2010:136) "work until death" mentality, which means that poor rural Jamaican men literally continue to work after the state retirement age of 65 until their death. But Morris *et al.*, (2010) contend that Jamaican men who work into their later years beyond the established state pension age, do so because they are intrinsically motivated. I would argue, however, that the reason they do is more complex than an orientation towards or a propensity for work. This is in light of Budd's (2011) conceptualizations of work, one of which, of course, is disutility – work done simply for material needs. But more than that, it is the neoliberal-globalized order that actuates and facilitates the process and logic of 'forgetting' by constructing the precarious conditions necessary for farmworkers to work beyond any 'normal' retirement age. In other words, it is capitalism that creates the unequal patterns of development both globally and locally. And the current phase of capitalism manifested as raced neoliberalism with its appeal to precarity exacerbates their economic position by remunerating them at sub-optimal levels and denying their social entitlements. If migrant farmworkers were permanent Canadian residents, having worked as hard and for as long as they do in the SAWP, they would qualify for all their social entitlements and so their 'retirement' compensation would perhaps increase their economic options for 'retirement.' Thus, they may not have to work as hard as they now do in Jamaica after their ejection from the SAWP.

Forgetting masculinities are then taken up in Chapters 7 – 8 where the full brunt of the material impact of the consequences of 'forgetting' is revealed. Since most interviewees entered the program with an internalized patriarchal vision of home ownership, the evidence shows most interviewees ensnared in an intermittent project of home-building but unable to complete the construction – even in their so-called retirement – despite having worked in the program for decades. But the resilience and agency of these men shone through, remaining committed as providers even while the system attempts erasure.

Farmworkers' 'retirement' lives are largely characterized by grinding hardship and a stubborn struggle to survive, as evidenced by their impecuniousness – the consequence of 'forgetting.' For even

in cases that profiled an appearance of success, the evidence led us to conclude that it was only a mirage given their age and health as mitigating factors. At the risk of sounding dystopian, 'retired' farmworkers' socio-economic circumstances furnish grim testimonies of a category of people who have been challenged and elided by processes/consequences of 'forgetting.' So that, ironically, the vehicle they rode to accomplish their patriarchal goals has challenged, in very significant ways, their masculine identity and the achievement of their goals, creating consequences they are often ill-equipped to handle. But if after working decades in the SAWP that these men remain desperately impecunious, then it is very telling that in its current operations, the SAWP has not proven and has, therefore, failed to be a viable economic solution they had hoped it to be or that their migration opportunity would have brought them. But even so, we see a remarkable demonstration of their agency in the creative ways they have appropriated the system in their determination to make a living.

In the previous chapter, I explored relationships between gender and geography. It emphasized spatialized expressions of masculinity as the men adapted to the demands of the program, thereby demonstrating how masculine performances may inform agency. In Canada, migrant farmworkers must be compliant and stage a gendered performance that communicates that they are unbothered by the exploitative nature and conditions associated with the SAWP and must appear to be obsequious in their dealings with White men and women. Thus, their masculine expressions are often mediated by geography and white patriarchy. Exploring the role of masculinity in social reproduction, the evidence led to the conclusion that the program does not domesticate the men it recruited but selects domesticated men, which reinforced a degree of domesticity while they worked in Canada. However, upon their return to Jamaica, their degree of involvement with domesticity is largely determined by the extent to which their wives, having internalized patriarchy themselves, will allow it. 'Forgetting' also manifested in reproductive practices that resulted in higher rates of fertility.

Transgressions also featured as acts of personal agency with the men working incognito or using false biological samples to pass medical screenings to (re)assert their inclusion in the program.

9.3 Resisting Forgetting

Notwithstanding farmworker's exercise of personal agency, it is clear that the processes of forgetting have incapacitated them in some way. But it is not an accident that migrant workers find themselves in dire straits since states are organized to 'forget' them. And given that states/institutions establish limitations that largely exclude migrant farmworkers from social benefits, it would be simplistic to expect states to automatically 'remember' them as they do other workers who can successfully claim benefits like OAS/GIS.

Therefore, what are some changes that can be introduced to the SAWP to make it more palatable for the migrant farmworkers? More aptly, how can we positively 'remember' them? Farmworkers have been rendered invisible by 'forgetting' but they have also been silenced since speaking up jeopardizes their positions. A solution might be the engagement of an institutional voice that offers the veil of anonymity. So, what type of conversation needs to happen amongst 'retirees' to unite them as a force to start advocating for their benefits or how can a space be created for them to make this possible? A practical start would be a campaign that challenges forgetting states/employers and secures 'retired' farmworkers their rightful benefits and better working conditions for current farmworkers.

But the advent and hallmark of neoliberal globalization are precisely to facilitate precarious work arrangements like the SAWP – a hotbed for the incubation and practices of 'forgetting' – and to weaken the power of unions that have traditionally been able to advocate for the resistance of 'forgetting' (Herod, 2018; Standing, 2011). Ironically, however, while unions fight social inequality, Blacks have historically experienced lower rates of unionization, so it can be argued that, in general, the labour movement is also compromised by 'forgetting' (Das Gupta, 2006). One notable exception, however, is the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW), a staunch advocate for migrant farmworkers, that currently helps some men secure Canada Pension Plan (CPP) pension benefits.

Jamaican unions could also coordinate with Canadian unions, like the UFCW, in a multiscalar approach to challenge the globalized system (Herod, 2018). They could also strategize with non-labour interest groups like the Church or other civic organizations towards a more community-focused effort

(Tufts, 1998). One of the earlier policy positions of the UFCW had been to secure migrant farmworkers exclusion from having to pay CPP and Employment Insurance (EI) deductions because of the challenges they encounter in collecting these entitlements (UFCW, 2014). Whereas *Justicia for Migrant Workers* (J4MW) (2014), an activist political organization that champions the cause of social justice, took the opposite position arguing that migrant farmworkers should pay these deductions but should also be able to collect them.

So, unions such as the UFCW remain one pragmatic option in advocating for their benefits but is not the only institution available to workers. Indeed, what is urgently needed is a counter retirement infrastructure, an institutional platform that unites jettisoned SAWP workers. This necessitates a shift from individual to collective agency and ties them to an association as such a fight cannot be undertaken individually. It, therefore, requires the men to start dialoguing with each other and emerge from isolation and invisibleness as a political force to collectively pushback against the 'forgetting' institutions and contend for their rights/benefits. So, in contrast to and contradiction of the individual agency of 'forgetting' that migrant workers deploy to survive the system, this is a collective call to remembrance. But it is a tricky proposition as some men might not wish to remember.

9.4 Halting 'Forgetting': Pragmatic Policy Reforms/Recommendations

The history of SAWP's racism and other forms of prejudice and exploitation have animated vigorous discussions about its future, which largely settle into an abolition versus reform debate. I am not convinced, however, that abolishing the program would best serve the interests/needs of migrant farmworkers or even participating countries like Jamaica. In fact, it would be untrue to the research participants if I framed it as such since none of them called for the program to be eliminated. As other scholars and activists have recommended (McLaughlin, 2009; Walia, 2010), I agree that SAWP workers need to be placed on a path to citizenship and be allowed to claim more benefits from social programs like Employment Insurance. However, additional state reforms could include the below recommendations.

Given there is a 'culture' of retirement in Canada and its long-running reciprocal agreement with Jamaica on pension matters and, with both states taking statutory retirement deductions (CPP and NIS), surprisingly there is neither retirement planning for farmworkers, nor their formal transition from the SAWP. And even though migrant farmworkers have paid into both states' public pension plans, many have not been superannuated. Therefore, the humanity of migrant farmworkers must be reinstated – be viewed as people – and their retirement life course must, therefore, be legitimized by the state.

Given that CPP retirement pensions can become a consistent stream of remittance to Jamaica, it remains contradictory that the Jamaican state has not been proactive in establishing a department dedicated to ensuring that every, eligible, farmwork 'retiree' is notified of their entitlement. The labour ministry would do well to coordinate the completion of farmworkers' applications to ensure they or their next of kin receive the pension they are entitled to. And not only retirement pension but also death benefits, in the event of their passing, to help defray the cost of funeral expenses. Since Jamaica and Canada are already coordinated in the area of social (retirement) benefits, this recommendation can be implemented almost immediately.

As previously noted, a Jamaican government official stated that 'retirees' are not notified of their eligibility for NIS benefit. There is no system in place where they would benefit from a reminder, whether by direct mailing or public announcement via radio or television advertisement, as they approached the state pension age of 65, which signals that they have been forgotten by that state. This reminder is crucial for the farmworkers for several reasons. Many of them are not fully aware of their entitlements, others have been jettisoned from the program so long ago that they have forgotten about it given Jamaica does not have a 'culture,' per se, of retirement among the rural working-class. Some are simply illiterate and could use whatever assistance that can be rendered. Thus, the Jamaican state should invest in remembering and ensuring that eligible NIS recipients are both notified and set-up with their benefits to begin addressing the problem of farmworkers neglect.

Based on my discussions with a senior Jamaican official about farmworkers' records, the ministry of labour should be more sensitive to record-keeping with respect to when workers have been

separated from the program. In other words, implement a system that documents their exit from the program to align with the importance that is placed upon their initiation therein. An efficient record-keeping system complements the previous point above. In simplest terms, there is a need to know how many retirees from the SWAP there are and where they live before a full assessment of their lives can be taken.

The role of the liaison officers has been compromised by the process of forgetting as they have drifted from their original mandate as evidenced by their cooptation in aiding the reproduction of the program. They play an instrumental role in purging-repatriating 'unwanted' and or 'problematic' workers from the program. This links back to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which invests employers with the latitude to remove workers without any established recourse (like a hearing), upon whose orders liaison officers act. So, 'forgetting' is buried in the MoU. Therefore, empowering liaison officers to act in the interest of workers, also necessitates an amendment of the MoU. Or maybe a rethinking of their role altogether. As one interviewee, Michael, charged, maybe avoiding the use of Jamaicans might be a solution? The Jamaican state is also encouraged to be more sensitive to workers mental/emotional health as the manner in which some men are separated from the program inflicts a great deal of trauma that workers bear as a form of tormenting accessory.

Since the precarious nature of the SAWP significantly challenges farmworkers in securing personal mortgage loans from most formalized lending institutions, the Jamaican government is encouraged to update legislation to allow the National Housing Trust, its low-income mortgage solution entity to be optimized to help farmworkers realize their dreams to not only initiate building but more importantly to *complete* the construction of their homes. Also, given that Jamaica no longer withholds 25 percent of their earnings, the labor ministry could partner with an investment company to encourage regular recurring savings towards home construction or 'retirement' investments, or other projects, which might facilitate better preparation for when they are ejected from the program.

Turning our attention to the Canadian state, it is evident that over the past 52 years, migrant farmworkers have paid billions of dollars into Canada's coffers by way of statutory deductions, from which they have scarcely benefited. As I have disambiguated above, the process of forgetting has

limited their CPP pensions and denied farmwork pensioners the benefit of the Old Age Security (OAS), on tenuous grounds, which they clearly qualify for and are in desperate need of. As I have argued, the Canadian state demonstrates a rather fluid, inconsistent, and disingenuous position on the legal status of migrant farmworkers, which evidences a process of forgetting. Service Canada conveniently calculates their pensions using the same formula for Canadians, resulting in smaller pensions for farmworkers but invokes their offshore status to disqualify their OAS/GIS benefits – claiming they were only a ‘presence’ in Canada. This duplicity evidences racial discrimination.

So, Canada needs to pay migrant farmworkers the social entitlements they have themselves contributed. This is not a charitable appeal for welfare but for the workers to be rewarded at least some of the surplus value that the Canadian state has extracted by way of statutory deductions over decades. Therefore, a minor policy reform in this area adjusting their CPP contribution period making it shorter would result in ‘larger’ pension payments for migrant farmworkers. Canada should also pay them the Old Age Security pension. This would earn them even a few extra hundred dollars per month, and would, therefore, make a huge material impact on their socio-economic circumstances, and make their so-called ‘retirement’ less miserable. At a minimum, it would provide them with more options in retirement and I believe it would also go a long way to improve job morale.

If farmworkers have demonstrated such resourcefulness – such courageous acts of agency – with so little, what if they had not been denied the social benefits, such as OAS and GIS, not to mention the decades of contribution to the EI fund they are largely barred from claiming? What if farmworkers as a group, were not forgotten? Perhaps they would have the benefit of living in finished houses. Certainly, they may have avoided all the indignities that characterize being forgotten. Indeed, they would have the benefit of their humanity.

The process of forgetting by employers has also resulted in employers avoiding paying a severance package (not as a retirement benefit but as a separation benefit) due to their crude practice of separating migrant farmworkers from the program even after devoting decades – 20, 30, 40 years – to the program. Therefore, the Canadian state should strongly encourage employers to pay migrant farmworkers severance after working a pre-determined number of years (decades), by scripting it into

the MoU. This would go a far way in 'remembering' workers and hopefully make their lives more comfortable when they 'retire.'

Employers along with the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) should collaborate and halt the status quo, the process of forgetting that currently discourages workers from reporting workplace injuries/illnesses. The WSIB is also encouraged to amend its policy to allow workers more time to completely heal from their injuries instead of requiring them to return to work prematurely. The benefit is obvious – a healthy worker is more productive. As well, since they are already covered by provincial health insurance, injured/sick workers should be given the appropriate medical attention and care in Canada as their situation determines, instead of liaison officers hastening their repatriation. In other words, I am advocating that racialized migrant workers be remembered as humans.

9.5 Reflections: Constructing Alternative Jamaican Masculinities?

I would be remiss if I did not add a reflection about 'forgetting masculinities,' without whom, the program, under the current set of circumstances, could not be reproduced. I have identified some processes of forgetting and recommended policy reforms that appealed to a sensitivity to their humanity by advocating for improved treatment and better working conditions. This allows their masculinity to be human because there is a pain associated with having their sense of masculinity disrupted by the SAWP. So respectful treatment that allows them to maintain a sense of self but retain their desire to be the family provider they have so internalized.

However, the performances in masculinities that emerged in the research strove to construct, I believe, a different performance and by extension, representation of Jamaican Black masculinity that did not surrender completely to hegemonic notions of masculinity. The creation of alternative expressions of masculinity in the program that demands obsequiousness and deference of men while still maintaining the patriarchal role as economic provider was evident. But the process of reproducing masculine authority and identity became complicated and contradictory. Black Jamaican men have always felt compelled, to a very great extent, to negotiate their performances of gender against the canvas of hegemonic ideals (Hope, 2010). In other words, Jamaican farmwork masculinities are

always in conversation with dominant forms and are always trying to locate where they have situated in relation to white hegemonic masculinity. Consequently, they end up performing only a situational masculinity (Messerschmidt, 2016) while interacting with white patriarchy abroad – a process of forgetting or an act of agency – but largely surrender those subordinated masculine ideals in the absence of white masculine interaction and certainly upon their return home to Jamaica.

The fact is, if these men were not forgotten by the states – if they had better pensions, were not denied OAS/GIS, could claim EI benefits – certainly, they would have had more material support. It is, therefore, possible that they would not be so motivated to (re)assert hegemonic patriarchal masculinity because they would have been in a much better economic position, eliminating the need to emphasize that identity. Otherwise, alternative expressions or mutations of masculinities might have emerged along the way, moving towards less ‘toxic’ expressions of Jamaican masculinities. A caveat is important here, though, because what is flagged as toxic Jamaican masculinities, I also see as a mechanism of survival or a type of “protest masculinity” (Groes-Green, 2009:289 - referencing Connell 1995), otherwise, we fall into the trap of essentializing Jamaican Black men. So, we see here that it is their economic situation, connected to geography that is driving the need for them to assert a hegemonic patriarchal masculinity. So, while being deeply economic, SAWP is also deeply spatialized, racialized and gendered. These are some of the elements driving the process.

9.6 Contributions and Future Research

Work is one of the most fundamental parts of our lives – we spend most of our days at work. Naturally, retirement is defined as an aspect of what one did before s/he retired, so retirement is, in fact, a function of work. After all, workers who no longer work are deemed to still be part of the working-class. So, deploying a feminist/anti-racist lens eased us into exploring social reproduction and allowed us to reclaim and focus the humanity of Black Jamaican migrant farmworkers, which includes what they do after formal work and thereby got us away from dealing with abstract labour.

But for a program that has been thoroughly researched, I am unaware of any scholarship that has previously applied the process of forgetting, which I have repurposed and deployed in two major

dimensions, to disambiguate the intricate operations of the SAWP and broaden our knowledge and insight into how the program reproduces itself. Indeed, I believe ‘forgetting’ in all its complexities inaugurates a different ontological imagination into the workings of the SAWP in terms of how we might come to understand the experiences and lives of seasonal farmworkers. Significantly, since migrant farmworkers are erased by societal traditions and institutional processes, bent on not being overdetermined by their circumstances, they use ‘forgetting’ as agency and a site of hope to forge new possibilities. More importantly, the research took us into the lives of Jamaican migrant men, in their so-called ‘retirement’ and acquainted us with the consequences of ‘forgetting.’ We, therefore, have another way of understanding the program’s stubborn persistence – despite its ruthless flaws – over the past 52 years. Thus, my empirical contribution furnishes a better understanding of the social reproduction of a valuable group that remains understudied. We also learned how states, reinforcing racist practices, are organized to forget workers. Indeed, our knowledge of the SAWP, as part of the world system, is better informed by understanding how it is organized by states to forget.

Yet, my research represents, a stepping stone, upon which I hope future scholarship will be built, exploring SAWP ‘retirement’ in different geographies and ferreting out other dimensions of life post-SAWP. And importantly, looking at whether and how women in the SAWP conceptualize ‘retirement’ and how they are preparing for it compared with the men.

To recapitulate, the SAWP is a project that has been reproduced over the past five decades by operations of ‘forgetting’ at the state level, which underpins policies and practices governing the program that become conventionalized overtime while extracting surplus value. These societal/institutional policies and practices inform the construction of migrant farmworkers’ vulnerabilities and therefore dehumanize them. The program targets, coopts and coerces racialized migrant workers who, in turn, respond to the states’ operations of forgetting by triggering their own process of forgetting (paradoxically) as a mechanism of survival or exercise of personal agency, which while accruing benefits to them, ultimately creates grave consequences while they work and especially when they ‘retire.’ Both articulations of forgetting end up reinforcing each other to facilitate the reproduction of the farmwork program over time.

9.7 Marley's Closing Thoughts: "Finally and Permanently, Discredited and Abandoned"

As I reflected on conversations I had with some 'retired' Jamaican farmworkers, the lyrics of Robert Nesta 'Bob' Marley's "War" – excerpts of which formed the epitaph above – blared from the public passenger bus I was aboard in May Pen, Clarendon. It was March 8, 2017. I was traveling back from Manchester, en route to Spanish Town, St. Catherine, where I met my brother daily in order to carpool home to my father's place. On a point of technicality, the opening epigram from Bob Marley's "War" song and indeed most of its lyrics were borrowed from Ethiopia's Emperor Haile Selassie's speech to the UN in October 1963 (Selassie, 1963). Nevertheless, Marley's message is consistent with the argument that processes of 'forgetting' which encompass but are not limited to modes of exclusion and subjugation, permeate and structure the systems that organize this world, resulting in systemic oppression across different social divisions. Marley's profound "War" lyrics could not have been more apposite as he rehearsed the theme of racism, which underwrites the philosophy that informs the oblivescence of the racialized men in Canada's Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program.

Therefore, by disambiguating some of the processes that facilitate the way migrant farmworkers have been abandoned, I have interrogated and challenged those dynamics so that the institutional policies and practices that influence and inform the 'forgetting' of farmworkers might, in the echo of Marley's "War," be "finally and permanently, discredited and abandoned." This is a prerequisite for not forgetting racialized migrant farmworkers and restoring their humanity as – fathers, husbands, brothers – men deserving better treatment. Thus, while I am not advocating for an ideal world, which exists only in heaven, by uncovering the logic that scripts migrant farmworkers elision, I am provoking and promoting a reconsideration of their wanton 'forgetting.' Indeed, for migrant farmworkers to be remembered!

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Appendix A

Table 1 - Sources of injuries sustained by farmworkers from 2011-2016

Industry Sector	Injury Source	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Agriculture	Animals and animal products	40	35	40	28	40	30
Agriculture	Containers, boxes, barrels, packages	49	72	66	88	83	88
Agriculture	Machinery	77	63	88	94	94	113
Agriculture	Other tools, instruments, equipment	66	68	74	107	106	87
Agriculture	Parts and materials	83	94	101	99	104	112
Agriculture	Persons (bodily motion or condition)	99	119	156	122	127	130
Agriculture	Plants, trees, vegetation	40	49	57	59	50	51
Agriculture	Structures: walkways, floors & buildings	136	154	161	174	166	150
Agriculture	Vehicles	68	76	72	106	82	83
Total		658	730	815	877	852	844

Data Source: WSIB Report Generator; data accessed, organized by the author

Table 2 - Parts of the farmworkers' bodies that suffered injuries from 2011-2016

Industry Sector	Part of Body	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Agriculture	Back (spine, spinal cord, neck)	18	19	18	30	21	19
Agriculture	Head	0	0	0	0	2	0
Agriculture	Lower extremities	14	19	25	23	20	19
Agriculture	Multiple body parts	1	1	6	1	2	4
Agriculture	Trunk (excluding back)	17	22	19	22	26	19
Agriculture	Upper extremities	19	17	18	26	13	18
Total		69	78	86	102	84	79

Data Source: WSIB Report Generator; data accessed, organized by the author

Table 3 - Events causing the injuries farmworkers sustained from 2011-2016

Industry Sector	Injury Event	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Agriculture	Exposure to harmful substances or environments	2	10	5	4	4	2
Agriculture	Falls	104	131	146	145	144	115
Agriculture	Transportation accidents	31	37	31	54	36	43
Total		137	178	182	203	184	160

Data Source: WSIB Report Generator; data accessed, organized by the author

Table 4 - Types of high impact claims by farmworkers from 2011-2016

Industry Sector	High Impact Claim Type	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Agriculture	Fracture	40	47	58	62	46	47
Agriculture	Lower Back	18	16	17	26	20	18
Agriculture	Shoulder	11	15	11	14	18	14
Total		69	78	86	102	84	79

Data Source: WSIB Report Generator; data accessed, organized by the author