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Migrant farmworkers: Resisting and organising before, during and after COVID-19

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Abstract

Migrant farmworkers are a ubiquitous but invisibilised, expropriated and exploited component of the global agricultural economy. Their conditions took centre-stage during the COVID-19 pandemic. Fear of production disruption in the migrant labour-intensive sectors led to foreign workers being deemed 'essential' in many countries, and exceptional procedures and regulations were instituted that further increased their exploitation, illnesses and deaths. However, the pandemic has not merely exposed the long-established structures of racialised exploitation and expropriation in the domain of farm work. Although it exacerbated the precariousness of the living and working conditions defining the reality of migrant farm workers, there is evidence that the pandemic also strengthened farmworkers' individual and collective consciousness, along with forms of organisation and resistance. The symposium 'Migrant Farmworkers: Resisting and Organizing before, during and after COVID-19' explores two dimensions reflected in migrant farmworkers' realities during the pandemic. First, the contributions look at the general conditions defining power structures and material outcomes within the political economy of agriculture before and during the pandemic. Second, they explore the conditions under which resistance and

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solidarity emerged to question established structures of exploitation.

KEYWORDS

agricultural workers, COVID-19, migrant workers, resistance

1 | INTRODUCTION

Workers with temporary, precarious and unauthorised immigration status have become increasingly indispensable to the agricultural industry, especially in the Global North. For the most part, they sustain labour-intensive and export-oriented sectors like fruit, vegetables and horticulture, which are dominated by large firms operating within an industrialised agriculture economy (Martin, 2016). Such sectors have been continuously supported by agricultural policies that have boosted industrial modes of food production and the interests of trade and racialised capitalism (Clapp & Moseley, 2020; Friedmann, 1991; Smith, 2013a, 2013b). Agricultural labour in the Global North has been marked by an outflow of native-born, racially dominant workers who are less willing to engage in seasonal, precarious, neocolonial, non-Fordist and 3-D (difficult, dangerous and dirty) work. They are replaced by racialised, immigrant and foreign workers (Basok et al., 2014; Bernstein, 2016; Clapp & Moseley, 2020; International Labour Organization, 2022). Migrant/foreign farm labour has become a quintessential feature of many high-income countries such as the United States, Canada, Germany, Italy, Spain and the Netherlands (Basok & George, 2021; Della Rosa, 2021; Fratsea & Papadopoulou, 2020; Perrotta, 2015; Schneider & Götte, 2022; Siegmann et al., 2022) but also of non-high-income ones like Costa Rica (using workers from neighbouring Nicaragua), the Dominican Republic (workers from Haiti) and South Africa (workers from Zimbabwe and other southern African nations) (Christiaensen et al., 2021; Corrado & Palumbo, 2020; Martin, 2016; Venkatesh, 2019). Some countries like Thailand, the Dominican Republic, South Africa and Mexico function as both receiving and sending countries (Ferraro & Weideman, 2020; Ramón et al., 2022; Richardson & Pettigrew, 2022; Simmons, 2010).

Migrant farmworkers are a widespread but invisibilised, expropriated and exploited component of the global agricultural economy (Ferrando, 2021). Their conditions took centre-stage during the COVID-19 pandemic. The migrant labour-intensive sectors faced the risk of major production disruptions due to travel restrictions, supply chain disruptions and worker illness (Clementson, 2020; Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2020; Schmidhuber & Qiao, 2020). Foreign workers were classified as 'essential workers' in many countries so as to be able to create exceptional procedures and regulations for exempting this vulnerable population from immigration, health and labour laws during the pandemic, such as selective border rules for foreign farm workers, differentiated social distancing norms, forced confinement with infected persons, extended working hours, and curfew exceptions (Bogart, 2020; Bogoeski, 2022). Labour-intensive farms and food production plants became COVID-19 hotspots, leading to numerous migrant workers catching the virus and dying (Bogart, 2020; Stewart et al., 2020). Since the outbreak of the pandemic, the media has highlighted the massive infection outbreaks in the midst of extensive internal and foreign migration of millions of seasonal migrant workers, especially those from indigenous nations and socially marginalised groups, who contend with poor living and working conditions, racism and xenophobia (Bogoeski, 2022; de Pablo et al., 2020; Hennebry & Hari, 2020).

However, the pandemic has not merely exposed the long-established structures of exploitation and racial expropriation in the domain of farm work. Although it exacerbated the precariousness of the living and working conditions defining the reality of migrant farm workers, the pandemic also strengthened farmworkers' individual and collective consciousness, along with forms of organisation and resistance (Anner & Liu, 2016; López-Sala, 2022; Oliveri, 2012; The Canadian Press, 2020; Wenban, 2021). In this context, the symposium 'Migrant Farmworkers: Resisting and Organizing before, during and after COVID-19' explores two dimensions reflected in migrant farmworkers' realities during the pandemic. First, the contributions look at the general conditions defining power structures and material

outcomes within the political economy of agriculture before and during the pandemic. Second, they explore the conditions under which resistance and solidarity emerged to question established structures of exploitation.

2 | THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF IMMOBILIZED MIGRANT LABOUR

Foreign workers are employed via bilateral or multilateral agreements, through employer-driven programmes or by informal means like being undocumented or having other forms of precarious status (like asylum-claimant) (Augère-Granier, 2021; Corrado & Palumbo, 2020; Richardson & Pettigrew, 2022; Venkatesh, 2019). Agricultural guest worker programmes now exist across continents in countries with vastly different political economies (Martin, 2016). The contributions within this symposium span the United States (Keegan, 2023; Madrigal, 2023) with its large undocumented and indigenous Latin American migrant farm-worker population working alongside employer-driven H-2A visa holders; Canada with its archetypical foreign worker programme for seasonal agricultural workers that combines bilateral agreements and employer-driven programmes (Ramsaroop, 2023); Australia and its scheme for Pacific Islander labour in horticulture (Stead, 2023); the less-discussed South Africa (Addison, 2023), which is a sending and receiving country for migrant farm labour; and Taiwan, with South-east Asian farm workers employed irregularly under a very new limited system (Cheng & Zani, 2023). Although not comprehensive, the geographical and socio-economic diversity of the case studies, mixed with the multi-disciplinarity of the approaches, provide the readers with tools and frameworks of analysis that could be adapted to other contexts and places, including European countries with their high dependence on both temporary working schemes and informal labour and Latin American and Central American countries as territories of agricultural production and workers' circulation.

Migrant farm workers, across all the regional contexts examined in this symposium, engage in circular, seasonal or temporally limited migration, creating a 'permanently temporary' workforce that is easy to exploit and a labour sector marked by precarity and rights abuse (Hennebry, 2012; Jinkang, 2022; Wickramasekara, 2011). As Adrian Smith points out, unfree labour is systematised in agriculture through a process of 'mobilizing to immobilize' (Choudry & Smith, 2016; Ferrando et al., 2020; Smith, 2015). Workers from poorer and racialised countries are mobilised by neoliberal agricultural policies, which have dispossessed their livelihoods in their home countries, to work in a foreign country, where their labour and physical mobility are controlled and restricted by their status of being deportable (Rogaly, 2021; Smith, 2015; Zuntz et al., 2022). Their immobility is further ensured by unscrupulous recruiters, whose hold on workers is ironically increased by restrictive, securitised border controls (Thiemann, 2016), rural isolation of farms, control by farm employers and xenophobic and racialised segregation from national and local communities (López-Sala, 2022; Melossi, 2021; Peano, 2021; Venkatesh, 2019). All the case studies in the symposium show how the dire working and living conditions function under a systemic framework of unfree labour that replicates historical colonialism and systemic racism by ensuring precarity of labour and immigration status, surveillance and policing, and systemic discrimination against historically othered populations. The articles use many different qualitative and analytical approaches to help advance more nuanced interrogations of the lived experience of migrant farm workers. As an editorial choice, the symposium includes articles by activists and academics to provide a rich treatment of the diversity in the struggles, resistance and negotiations within agricultural systems and to pierce the boundaries often drawn around academia and knowledge production.

The symposium begins with Stead's (2023) ethnographic study of seasonal farm workers from the Pacific Islands in North-Central Australia, which examines the structural vulnerabilities embedded within the political economy of farm work. By centring the experiences of a ni-Vanuatu worker, Anne, the article brings into sharp focus the experience of 'interminable temporariness' created during the COVID-19 pandemic. It starts with the acknowledgement of the formalised systems of labour mobility and then shifts to explorations of (im)mobility that emerged during the pandemic. This discussion allows the reader to appreciate the difficulties of workers, like Anne, who are caught along the continuum of (im)mobility, always tantalised with the possibilities of relocation/reallocation but ultimately confronted with an exhausted acceptance of the journey.

The article adds to the scholarship on the socio-economic and political dimensions of global agricultural production, but with deeper insights into the historical and contemporary configuration of power in the White Australian settler-colonial state and the peculiarities of existing Global North–South dynamics that are at play in the seasonal guest worker scheme. The historicisation of Australian horticulture and the Pacific Islander labour migration scheme provide a critical perspective for locating the conditions through which regulation, isolation and marginalisation of workers are sustained. The connection to Berlant's (2011) theorisation of the impasse between global demands for flexible labour, the decline of social welfare and the growing precarity and immobility of workers captures the multiple levels and points of crises within this labour market system. Through the examination of the food security crisis and the ratcheting up of the racialised imaginaries used to other non-White, non-'local' workers, Stead allows the reader to discern between 'old–new' shifting relations of power and the implications for migrant farm workers. These themes are further explored and contextualised in all contributions to the issue.

Imaginaries based on the 'othering' of migrant workers and state-corporate processes that create an isolated, exploitable community are fundamental to the reproduction of the migrant labour system as invisible and undesired, including in emerging economies of the Global South. Addison's (2023) article introduces the readers to the selective and manifold invisibilities that define the life of Zimbabwean workers in the largest tomato farm of the Southern Hemisphere, located in Polokwane, South Africa. Through a combination of earlier fieldwork, recent interactions with workers and publicly available literature, Addison engages with the COVID-19 pandemic as an intensifier of previous dynamics and as a heuristic moment that sheds light on the internal contradictions and strategic silences of all actors involved: states, large-scale agricultural employers and a national South African workers' movement.

In the article, the notion of 'invisibilisation' is embedded in the broader economic, cultural and political structure of South Africa before and during the pandemic to how visibility and invisibility are dynamic processes that depend upon power relations. Invisibility is thus not only about the state's decision to close the borders and the employer's order that workers do not leave the farms but also about the rising xenophobia and unemployment—two conditions that transformed the presence of migrant workers on the farm into an economic risk for an employer committed to 'creating jobs in South Africa' and a political risk for groups and organisations advocating for labour rights and better working conditions. The marginalisation and subordination of the foreign workers went hand-in-hand with their disappearance from public speeches, statements and campaigns, demonstrating—once more—the material and immaterial obstacles that obstruct the subaltern's possibility of being heard (Spivak, 1988).

Securitisation provides another important conceptual framework to further understand the mechanisms of subordination Ramsaroop's and control of migrant farm workers. The symposium's dialogue with grassroot activists is enriched by the contribution of Chris Ramsaroop, who reflects on his own work among Caribbean farm workers with *Justicia for Migrant Workers (J4MW)* in Ontario, Canada. In his piece, informed by direct participation, interviews and a critical reflection of media stories during the pandemic, Ramsaroop provides a critical and much needed analysis of how the state of emergency declared during the COVID-19 pandemic, combined with pre-existing settler-colonial practices, racist mythologies and 'othering' techniques, further subordinated the lives of migrant agricultural workers to maintain productivity. Ramsaroop conceptualises the Canadian state as operating through three main dimensions of securitisation to maintain its global agricultural profile in the agricultural economy: border (movement), space of reproduction (housing/living) and space of work. He shows how the state and capital are in collusion with each other by pointing out the particular ways in which the three dimensions of securitisation 'intersect with one another to entrench the containment and control of [migrant] agricultural workers' (Ramsaroop, 2023). Ramsaroop's article gives an insight into the specific regulatory and private practices that redefine migrant farm workers' lives far beyond work, from travelling to the reproductive sphere. Rather than supporting workers' health and safety, digital tools and anti-migrant narratives were selectively deployed to ensure the labour needs of Canadian farms, the viability of Canada's multi-billion agricultural industry and the reproduction of agrarian capitalism by disciplining, isolating, fragmenting and depriving workers of individual and collective agency (Ramsaroop, 2023).

The construction of migrant farm workers as 'sacrificial labour' in the interests of the racial capitalist system is further explored by Keegan (2023), whose article traces the legacies of the plantation political economies in the United States that pervade the policies affecting racialised foreign farm labour before and during the pandemic. Using the broader lens

of racial capitalism, the article brings greater visibility to the legacies of plantation political economy in the contemporary racialised system of production. It adds to the important scholarship on the historical roots of unfree labour and agricultural racial capitalism in slavery, indentureship and plantation labour (King et al., 2021; Mangapara, 2018; Rogaly, 2021). The paper speaks to the ways in which the remnants of the plantation economy have been enabled and sustained through a regime of 'agricultural exceptionalism', which allows for the rights and freedoms of migrant workers to be sacrificed in the interest of the agricultural sector through regulatory exceptions. The experiences of H2-A temporary visa-holding agricultural workers in Georgia during the pandemic centre on the reconfiguration of relations of production, the intensification of precarity and the contradictions that are embedded within the discourses of essentiality, temporality and disposability. The emphasis on the sacrificial nature of their labour pushes for a re-framing of the relations and conditions of agricultural production systems, with a call for increased worker security and state accountability.

Indigenous scholar and farm worker activist Tomas Madrigal enriches our symposium by offering a new lens to analyse agricultural farm work in the United States with his article on organising strategies of indigenous Mexican-origin agricultural workers before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. In his account, which mobilises the lens of 'capitalist crisis', the COVID-19 pandemic functioned as a 'threat multiplier,' increasing the severity of existing disparities and 'group-differentiated vulnerability to pre-mature death' (Madrigal, 2023). He contends that the COVID-19 pandemic also created a breaking point in the collective moral economy among Meso-American indigenous agricultural workers with different immigration and citizenship statuses. As he points out, the proclamation of the state of emergency on 29 February 2020 and the concomitant declaration of agricultural workers as part of the 'Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers' were not merely isolated acts of institutionalised violence against the agricultural working class but also the opening moment of a new phase of struggle within a longer cycle of class formation. As such, his article offers a critical intervention to understand ways of escaping the state-led capitalist constructions of immobilities and unfreedoms in agriculture and ways of reclaiming power.

Lastly, Cheng and Zani (2023) bring attention to the challenges faced by irregular farm foreign workers in Taiwan, who do not have the legal documentation to work on a specific farm, and the dynamics behind a nascent foreign worker programme for its South-east Asian workers. The paper focuses on the everyday lives of four Indonesian runaways on a fruit farm in Taichung, whose experiences are explored and expanded through interviews with other over-staying workers and runaways, subsistence farmers and even police officers. The qualitative richness within the paper is premised on the use of different methods of data collection and analysis to underscore the complexities within the experiences of diverse guest workers. Their paper describes the now-familiar structural vulnerabilities that are facets of even the Taiwanese system, including the regimes of criminalisation, regulation and isolation of workers. The analysis is also extended to show the intricacies of cross-border mobility, othering processes between the different regional communities and the lack of social protection that sustain the illegality and inherent vulnerabilities of workers. The paper invites us to locate how these complexities are generated through multiple points of precarity, transactional relationships and sociality. These points of analyses are deliberately framed as 'volatile dynamics' among farmers, workers, brokers and law enforcement agents within the informal economy to capture the complex intersections.

3 | SPACES OF RESISTANCE

Although the pandemic certainly accelerated the entrenchment of the neoliberal economy, securitisation, xenophobia, gendered racism, marginalisation and false solutions (like mandating curfews but not decent salaries or citizenship), it has also opened political and material spaces for resistance. The case studies of resistance in the face of heightened structural immobilisation produced by the pandemic add to the discussion of the challenges to the insidious nexus of internalised borders and globalised agricultural production.

The globalised yet local 'apartheid' experienced by migrant farm workers in these agrarian regions is well documented within this symposium and in other scholarship (Choudry & Smith, 2016; Matsis, 1991; Morice, 2003; Paz Ramirez, 2013; Smith, 2013a, 2013b; Stobart, 2009). Racial hierarchisation and anti-migrant racism form the bulwark

on which exploitation and legal exceptionalism in corporatised agricultural economies are sustained (Preibisch & Binford, 2007; Rogaly, 2021; Scott & Rye, 2021). With industrial, globalised agriculture dependent on migrant farm labour, modern agrarianism can no longer match the imaginaries and long-standing myths of 'yeoman farmers'. Labour migration scholars have long shown the use of 'illegalisation' of workers and of various statuses and binaries of illegal/legal, migrant/refugee and worker/escapee as forms of suppression (Anderson, 2021; Balibar, 2007; Gutiérrez Rodríguez, 2018; Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013).

However, in this articulation, the agency and resistance of migrant workers are often overlooked, even though they are a critical source of 'new forms of labour organising and a potential force to rethink and reshape' traditional ideas of resistance (Choudry & Hlatshwayo, 2016, p. 10). The pandemic forced the world to confront the much-publicised struggles of thousands of migrant workers in the food system who were deeply impacted globally (Mešić & Wikström, 2021; Minnings, 2021). Their pivotal stories of organised and everyday resistance were no longer on the margins but were briefly centre-stage as the news cycles covered the impact of the pandemic on labour, food security and borders. The contributions in this symposium show that workers' everyday realities cannot be merely abstracted into faceless non-agentic 'labour' as a production function in the neoliberal equation. From strikes to indigenous community organising, from absconding to everyday creative survival, the examples of resistance of workers subvert subordinating expectations of state and capitalist power in numerous ways.

The symposium underscores that the structural power of the capitalist system is continuously challenged by workers. Cheng and Zani (2023) focus on the stories of absconding Indonesian workers in Taiwan who function at the intersection of immobility (socio-geographic and vocational), illegality (overstaying legal visas or working for employers different from those on their permit) and informality (the relationship between the farmers and their workers). The article illustrates how workers navigate 'within a volatile socioeconomic space fluctuating between freedom and un-freedom' (Cheng & Zani, 2023). They point out that although the absconding workers, working for small farmers outside the temporary foreign worker programme, are particularly vulnerable to physical hardships, constant insecurity, exploitation by brokers and law enforcement and dependence on third parties in the informal and 'illegalised' economy, they remain strategic in their negotiation of their engagement. The workers are positioned as conscious and active agents of their labour, who knowingly and willingly 'pay the price' to be free from 'legal servitude'. Their paper adds to the rich historical scholarship articulating fugitivity and absconding as forms of resistance that, in their own way, complicate and undermine power (Hartman & Best, 2005; Martins Junior & O'Connell-Davidson, 2022; Venkatesh, 2023).

As mentioned above, Stead (2023) centres the story of Anne, a ni-Vanuatu worker, in her article. Through Anne's eyes, we witness the everyday strength that workers need to invoke as they deal with the conflict of continuing to work in a racialised, oppressive and unfree system for the 'irrevocably deferred' promise of transformed lives. Her visibility and the storying of her life during the pandemic therefore play a key role in decentring dominant and stereotypical narratives that erase their consciousness and actions within the tensions and challenges of the (im)mobility of migrant farmworkers. The article also covers numerous instances of new forms of solidarity and organising between different precarious workers during the pandemic. Everyday stories of workers like Anne and other Malaysian and ni-Vanuatu workers formed the backdrop for sharing testimonies in larger organising efforts.

Ramsarop (2023) and Madrigal (2023) offer instances of organising that challenge the traditional union, native-protectionist and nation-state-focussed forms of organising that reify the citizen-foreigner binary, standardised employment relationships and problematic food security discourses. Ramsarop's (2023) direct engagement with the reality on the ground informs us that securitisation, subordination and marginalisation were not the only processes that took place during the long months of isolation. It was also a moment when grassroot organisations like J4MW were at the forefront of multiple forms of resistance against technological disciplining and the loss of power, including by using the same digital platforms and social media that were central to the process of racialisation and exploitation. Despite the multiple constraints and the constant fear of retaliation and expulsion, migrant farmworkers and solidarity actors organised in support of workers' basic needs and against the dominant narrative and the violence of state and corporate practices. With his article, Ramsarop takes the reader through months of manifold and multi-layered acts of resistance. These forms of resistance also included direct engagement with the media to raise

concerns about the conditions faced by migrants during the initial stage of the pandemic, secret pickups of culturally appropriated food, 'digital days of action' to increase awareness and active participation of workers in the defence of their rights. The work also centres on a multi-pronged approach of legal and non-legal strategies to counter the technologies of oppression. We learn, therefore, that the COVID-19 'state of exception' has been used by the state and corporations to increase control, thicken material and immaterial borders that define the lives of migrant workers and widen the separation between the 'Canadian community' and the 'essential other'. On the other hand, we also learn that the height of the pandemic coincided with the height of action to facilitate the emergence of more cohesive migrant worker solidarity throughout the province of Ontario. In that sense, Ontario and the struggles of J4MW act as a microcosm of the clash between top-down securitisation and bottom-up organisation during COVID-19, offering a space to look for lessons.

Through Madrigal's (2023) account, we are invited to appreciate the importance of kinship, community, mutual aid and decades of self-organisation as the background that allowed indigenous agricultural workers in Washington State to take power into their own hands, support each other and better resist the physical and mental brutality of COVID-19. The work draws on the long experience with culturally specific practices and responses of indigenous peoples. We learn therefore of unique forms of mutualism and direct action, including community *asambleas* and miles-long caravans, that created the conditions to transform the lockdown measures into an opportunity for further organising and the construction of collective consciousness. Madrigal describes in detail the establishment of the new agricultural worker union *Trabajadores Unidos por la Justicia* (Workers United for Justice) and its actions in defence of workers' health, rights and dignity. The example offers an insightful opportunity to reflect on the importance of establishing and maintaining ties and relationships beyond the working place and on the effect that the atomisation and temporalisation of the agricultural workforce have on the capacity to fight back. By bringing his experience as well as the power and wisdom of indigenous-origin agricultural workers as a class to this symposium, Madrigal (2023) exposes a gap in mainstream accounts of the agrarian conflict and calls for more truthful histories of indigenous-origin people's 'shared struggles' to be told, more voices to be heard and more knowledge to be made visible (Esnard, 2019).

4 | CONCLUSION

This symposium adds to the scholarship on what King et al. (2021) have called the 'agriculture-migration nexus', which draws out the connections between the industrialisation of agriculture and the construction of a largely invisible foreign labour force subject to conditions of unfreedom in agrarian economies (King et al., 2021).¹ The case studies show the 'permanently temporary' nature of migrant farm labour, where foreign workers function as a permanent resource of expendable, fungible, othered and deportable 'reserve army of labour' used to respond to the vicissitudes of climate, pandemic and other crises (King et al., 2021; Rogaly, 2021). The symposium also contributes to the recent literature on the intensification of labour exploitation, new forms of resistance and the use of the 'essential worker' discourse during the pandemic (De Genova, 2020; Prasad-Aleyamma, 2021; Schling & Rogaly, 2022; Stevano et al., 2021). Liebman et al. (2020) characterise the 'essential worker' discourse as a form of 'racialised essentialism that deems some bodies naturally disposed to risk and premature death'. The papers in this symposium provide paradigmatic case studies on migrant farm workers being simultaneously lauded as essential for food security while being disposed of due to disease, death and concrete and adaptive forms of exploitation that are essential to profit. In the space of a few months, migrant workers in the South and the North have been exposed to intensified forms of oppression and value extraction. At the same time, the racialised and gendered exploitation that they experience was brought to the public's attention like never before.

The pre-existing conditions characterising the political economy of agriculture shaped forms of control and exploitation during the pandemic, such as the mechanisms and intensity of the violence experienced in the countries of departure and arrival (Addison, 2023; Corrado & Palumbo, 2022; Keegan, 2023; Ramsaroop, 2023; Stead, 2023),

¹See the articles in the Special Issue on Agricultural Regimes and Migrant Labour edited by Russell King, Aija Lulle, Emilia Melossi, Ben Rogaly in the *Journal of Rural Studies*, vol. 88 (2021).

the racialised and gendered exploitation experienced along the journey and in the farms and fields (Duenas et al., 2019; Madrigal, 2023; Ramsaroop, 2023; Stead, 2023), the opening or foreclosing of spaces and forms of organisation and resistance (Cohen & Hjalmarson, 2020; Madrigal, 2023; Ramsaroop, 2023) and the role of the capitalist state in reproducing subordination and conditions of visibility/invisibility (Addison, 2023; Cheng & Zani, 2023; Duenas et al., 2019; Ramsaroop, 2023; Rotz, 2017).

Until the pandemic, the study of migrant farm workers in the agricultural economy was often relegated to the realm of academia and policy as they were invisibilised in public media. As the pandemic enters its fourth year and foreign worker programmes in agriculture continue to be expanded without any changes to the structural conditions (Borges, 2020; CBC Radio, 2022; Crampton, 2020; Molnar, 2022; Stevenson, 2022; United States Department of Agriculture, 2022), the following question arises: are they going to be re-forgotten and re-invisibilised, or are they are finally going to be addressed as critical actors in the current agrarian political economy that constitute the human costs of food production? The contributions in the symposium serve to complexify the solution in the face of compounded violence and multiple crises faced by migrant workers and provide scholars and policymakers with some key elements to address questions on agrarian capitalism.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available from Authors. Restrictions apply to the availability of these data, which were used under license for this study. Data are available from the author(s) with the permission of Authors.

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