

THE BRACERO PROGRAM

A Historical Perspective on the Perpetuation of Isolated Labor Markets in South Texas

This paper explores the perpetuation of isolated labor markets in Texas border towns caused by Texas' relationship to and use of the Bracero Program, a temporary guest-worker program between the United States and Mexico. This work outlines its legislative formation and evolution then discusses the various methods in which bracero workers were both bound to the land they worked and isolated from the national labor market.

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Mexican woman and children at a station in Neches, TX (1939)
Source: Library of Congress

In *Old South, New South: Revolutions in the Southern Economy Since the Civil War*, economic historian Gavin Wright explained the relative regional poverty of the South as dependent on the propagation of an “isolated low-wage southern labor market” through the economic models of slavery and share-cropping.¹ In south Texas, the Bracero Program perpetuated Wright’s definition of a “colonial economy” through a mobile, seasonal, temporary, isolated, disenfranchised, marginalized, and repressed labor force, in a society historically dependent on a plantation economy. While these programs were federally created and sanctioned, most day-to-day operations, including transportation, recruitment, processing, and border control, were controlled at least partially by local governments and agencies, which counteracts Wright’s idea of change driven by “federal pressure.”² The Bracero Program prompted an isolated labor market devoid of labor market mutual selection, bracero unionization and bargaining, equilibrium of supply and demand, and fair assessments of labor shortages and prevailing wages. The program was centered on the creation of a debt peonage system, which soon drove wage depression and regional economic stagnation in southern Texas. The evolution of the political and legislative framework that sanctioned and regulated the Bracero Program defines how this economic system evolved and adapted to remain feasible into the 1960s.

PRECURSORS TO THE BRACERO PROGRAM

A precursor to the Bracero Program began in 1917 with the United States’ entrance into World War I.³ The war not only caused domestic labor shortages in the agricultural and manufacturing sectors, but also created new markets for food and other wartime supplies.⁴ The migration and employment of Mexican nationals was locally organized, with negotiations between Mexican consuls and border town officials.⁵ During this “classic era” of immigration from 1910 to 1920, about half of this Mexican labor force immigrated to Texas, primarily because of their geographic proximity.⁶ Using Mexican labor to fill market demand during wartime was a notable, if rudimentary, step toward the Bracero Program. However, after the Great Depression in 1929, the federal government repatriated almost 500,000 Mexicans and Mexican descendants.⁷ This forced exodus illustrates the flexibility and mobility of this type of labor force in response to booms and busts in the economic cycle, albeit to the detriment and relocation of the laborers themselves, who were relatively excluded from New Deal policies.⁸

BRACERO PROGRAM: THE WWII YEARS

In 1942, Mexico and the United States created the Bracero Program through a series of bilateral political accords. The Bracero Program was a temporary guest-worker program designed to import Mexican farm laborers to fill the predicted gaps in the wartime labor markets.⁹ This was similar to the program implemented in World War I, in terms of the economies of both countries; however differences included the contract labor nature and agricultural nature of the Bracero Program causing the bondage of laborers to a specific location and job and the perpetuation of an isolated, plantation style economy.¹⁰

The program was officially created after an intergovernmental agreement by executive order on August 4, 1942, and was administered by the Department of Agriculture.¹¹ However, Texas initially refused to participate because the program required the state to offer participants a minimum wage and living conditions, stipulations not required by the guest worker program during WWI. In the spring of 1943, Public Law 45 replaced the initial executive order. This law further tightened the terms of employment and changed the depart-

ment that ran the program to the War Food Administration. To subvert the law, in May 1943, the local commissioner of immigration in El Paso hired by the state, permitted farmers to recruit Mexican workers for year-long permits. After three days and 2,040 unauthorized permits, the border was closed in reaction to outrage from the Mexican government.¹² Because Texas violated the agreements and had a history of racial discrimination and violence against Mexicans, Mexico refused to allow any braceros to be contracted to Texas.¹³ This promoted illegal immigrant movement into Texas border towns, as the demand for cheap, mobile labor in Texas increased. This incident in El Paso reflected the degree of local control on the Bracero Program, as the temporary opening of the border reflected the power of state control over national and international agreements.¹⁴ According to State Department statistics, prior to World War II, there were around 25,000 undocumented Mexican immigrants in border towns, almost all in Texas. By 1947, this number increased to almost 100,000, demonstrating Texas' growing use of and dependence on undocumented labor, which was justified by their continued exclusion from the Bracero Program.¹⁵ According to Otey Scruggs, the initial exclusion of Texas from contracting braceros was less problematic to the farmers because:

the availability of illegal entrants had made it unnecessary for the farmers of southern Texas to worry unduly about the ban on braceros. As long as they could obtain wetbacks, they could ignore braceros, whose use required the farmers' acquiescence in conditions of employment.¹⁶

Scruggs' claims are upheld by State Department data: in summer 1947 alone, there were 31,331 bracero contracts issued nationwide. However, since Texas was still excluded from the formal program at this point, it employed almost 55,000 undocumented Mexican workers that oftentimes immigrated after being unable to gain a bracero contract.¹⁷ For example, in 1948, at the age of sixteen, Jesús Gómez illegally crossed into Texas after he failed to obtain a bracero contract.¹⁸ Where he crossed an already established route of immigration, and once the teenagers crossed, there were farm recruiters already there, with buses, ready to take the workers to their farms.¹⁹

While under federal control, Public Law 45 also gave states informal local control of the Bracero Program, as the federal Farm Service Agency to the locally controlled Extension Service. Juan Báez Barragán noticed that when workers filed formal complaints to the Mexican consulate, the investigative committee sent to the farm would inform the farmer of their arrival far enough in advance for the farmers to hastily fix issues that were complained about. Once the government officials left, conditions returned to normal.²⁰ While the federal government had to reject overt expressions of local autonomy, especially in Texas, the federal framework had much leeway in the terms of local control.²¹

THE BRACERO PROGRAM POST-WWII: THE EL PASO INCIDENT AND OPERATION WETBACK

Undocumented labor soared in popularity by the end of the wartime program and the following switch to more direct grower participation in 1947. According to the "President's Commission on Migratory Labor" of 1951, the renunciation of the federal government from paying for recruitment and transportation and in enforcing the braceros' contracts, led to "minimizing the already lax enforcement of contract provision" which stimulated more undocumented immigration.²² After the war, a "drying out the wetbacks" program began and legalized any employed undocumented worker. Salvador Velasco Patiño's route to becoming a bracero provides a typical example of this process. In 1947, Patiño illegally crossed into the United States to work on a cotton farm.



Mexican workers await legal employment in the US (1954)
Source: *Los Angeles Times* (UCLA Library)

After a month on that farm, his coworkers explained how undocumented workers could become legal braceros. From there, Patiño went, with permission from his boss, to the local Farmer's Association to acquire his bracero contract.²³ State Department statistics indicated that, between 1947 and 1949, 74,600 braceros were contracted and 142,200 undocumented workers were legalized into the Bracero Program after their employment.²⁴ J. Carmen Quezada Morales, who received his first bracero contract in 1949, recalls that, of the four states he was contracted to work in, including California, Colorado, Texas and Wyoming, Texas was the only state in which he came in contact with undocumented Mexican workers.²⁵ The effects of and problems with the more direct local farmer-to-bracero agenda of the revised regulations of the Bracero Program are epitomized in the "El Paso Incident" of 1948. Texas' continued exclusion from the formal Bracero Program, causing a lack of a formal recruitment system, resulted in the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) "opening up" the border for a weekend and allowing any worker who crossed to become contracted through the Texas Employment System.²⁶

The Bracero Program

In 1951, Public Law 78 reestablished the federal government's control and financial support of recruiting and contracting braceros and banned the policy of "drying out the wetbacks."²⁷ This change arose from a number of factors, including media sensationalism surrounding undocumented immigration, heightening Cold War rhetoric on the dangers of immigrants spreading communist ideas, the President's Commission on Migratory Labor, and challenges to federal control, as illustrated by the "El Paso Incident."²⁸ The 1954 Operation Wetback, a mass deportation of over a million Mexican immigrants, in an attempt to reverse the consequences of the "drying out the wetbacks" policy, exemplified the return of federal control.²⁹ This policy shift provided a more stable workforce by contractually binding a worker to work a certain farm for a certain time, unlike undocumented labor, and ensured workers were contracted through the Bracero Program. In 1947, around the age of sixteen, Clemente Velázquez Lucio attempted to become a contracted bracero after hearing about the program from his uncles.³⁰ However, Lucio was initially unable to obtain a contract to work in the United States despite receiving initial paperwork and processing at a center in central Mexico; therefore, Lucio crossed to border to illegally work in Texas since he had already gone through the initial process to work in the United States. Later, in 1956, notably after Operation Wetback, Lucio was able to get on the eligibility list to work in the United States legally.³¹

His second time in the United States, Lucio was bound to his particular farm, unlike undocumented laborers. For example, the President's Commission on Migratory Labor estimated the "skip rate" of undocumented workers was up to 50% in most areas of Texas, mostly caused by intolerable living and labor conditions.³² José Ponce López, for example, deserted his initial contract in Texas to attempt to find work in California, where other braceros, who had previously worked there, told him about the state's improved wages and working conditions.³³ In total, the Commission documented the role of "increased wetback traffic" in causing depressed farm wages, increased competition and displacement and deplorable living and health conditions.³⁴

FEDERAL CONTROL OF THE LABOR FORCE: THE REDUCTION OF UNDOCUMENTED LABOR

The reduction of undocumented immigration, however, benefitted the Texas farmers for two primary reasons. First, with the passage of Public Law 78 and the reestablishment of federal control, came the renewed importance of bracero contracts negotiated by the federal government. These contracts also came with an obligation of \$25 for every bracero not returned to Mexico by the expiration of his contract to the farmer.³⁵ According to Calavita, this restriction of labor and bondage to a small area helped reduce the problems of "long hours, sporadic employment, and arduous working conditions... [that] made the retention of workers problematic."³⁶ The formalization of federal control and the enforcement of policies against undocumented workers reduced the

influence of the illegal immigrant labor force. Enforcing the prohibition and deportation of undocumented workers benefited Texas farmers by creating a more docile, controllable, and, most importantly, predictable workforce.³⁷ Eleanor Martin, a payroll clerk for a farm just outside of Pecos, Texas, in the early to mid 1950s, mentioned that the braceros were not allowed to leave the farm premises without being accompanied by an American employee of the farm.³⁸ Furthermore, according to a quote from the Chief of the Farm Placement Service of the Department of Labor in 1957, "These workers [braceros] are not free agents in the labor market. They do not have freedom to move about as they please and shop for the best job that the labor market could afford."³⁹ Most importantly, the passage of Public Law 78 created a federal role in recruiting, transporting and protecting the bracero workforce. This policy shift, coupled with the Mexican government's belief that formalizing Texas into the program would cut down on the worst abuses suffered by undocumented Mexicans, guided Mexico to accept Texas into the Bracero Program in 1951.⁴⁰

However, the effects of this policy change were not immediately felt since the federal government's enforcement had been lax. When policies were enforced, they were done so more in line with the interests of the farmers. Farmers were unwilling to switch to documented, bracero labor until they were given proof of the government's commitment to enforcing stricter regulation on both Bracero contracts and restriction of undocumented labor. For example, in the Texas Valley in 1953, only 700 braceros were contracted for the entire season.⁴¹ However, just a year later, the Reception Center in Hidalgo had contracted 50,326 braceros to farmers in the Texas Valley.⁴² This jump in braceros in 1954 made Texas the largest importer of bracero labor, with 50% of braceros contracted placed in Texas that year.⁴³ This is a testament to the success of Operation Wetback in remedying the Bracero Program and in demonstrating to Texan farmers once reliant on undocumented workers, that enforcement would make the Bracero Program a more profitable system. In 1954, a Southern cotton farmer deemed the labor market necessary for the profitability of cotton when he said, "Cotton is a slave crop, nobody is going to pick it that doesn't have to."⁴⁴ This farmer's sentiments effectively sum up the importance of the contract labor force of braceros as more profitable than an undocumented workforce, as the braceros were legally bound to the land.

Another facet of the idea of braceros being bound to the land was the manner in which they were transported to the United States. These established, direct routes of migration between bracero processing centers in Mexico and processing centers in the United States served as another means of preventing bracero interaction with the larger United States' labor market. These networks, both formal and informal, created routes that placed braceros directly in contact with local farm labor recruiters in Texas, essentially eliminating

the process of mutual selection between employer and employee.⁴⁵ For the formal process, Jesús Aranda Morales, an ex-bracero who first came to Dell City, Texas, in 1957 at the age of 20, describes his journey to becoming a contracted bracero.⁴⁶ Morales first traveled from his village of Gran Morelos to the initial processing center in Chihuahua, Mexico. He was then sent to Rio Vista, a processing center in Socorro,

was chosen based on the way he walked and the callous on his hands, both indicative of years of hard labor.⁵¹ Potential braceros were also subject to medical examinations to determine if their physical state was compatible with the intensity of farm labor.⁵² Elías García Venzor noted that those deemed physically unable to work were immediately sent back to Mexico.⁵³ This gave bracero employers more control.

“Enforcing the prohibition and deportation of undocumented workers benefited Texas farmers by creating a more docile, controllable, and most importantly, predictable workforce.”

Texas, to obtain government documents such as his bracero identification card, sign a predetermined contract and undergo medical examinations and “sanitation.”⁴⁷ Finally, Morales was sent by truck to a “Bracero Association” in Dell City, Texas, where ranchers gathered to select the braceros they deemed best suited to work. Through this system of contracting and transporting the braceros, the farmers prevented direct contact with a competitive labor market, reinforcing the isolated labor market founded in contractual labor bound to its specified plot of land. In essence, the braceros were placed in the subsectors of the agricultural labor market in which they were deemed necessary. As laborers, they did not have the option to turn down a contract offer in an attempt to search for a better offer, removing the competitive and relational aspects out of the labor market supply and demand.

In spite of the crackdown on undocumented immigration, with Operation Wetback, Mexican migrants continued to cross illegally, especially into Texas, because of its proximity and history of established routes of immigration stemming from its exclusion from the Bracero Program.⁴⁸ An Immigration and Naturalization Service report in Livermore, Texas showed that immigrants preferred illegal entry over bracero labor because they had the ability to “select the better paying jobs and locations.”⁴⁹ This shows the extent to which the contracted bracero was isolated from the free labor market, as being a disenfranchised and marginalized undocumented worker was perceived as possessing more opportunities and considered preferable to being a contracted bracero.

BINDING BRACEROS TO THE LAND: LABOR QUALIFICATIONS, DEBT PEONAGE AND DEMAND

Beyond contracting and transporting the braceros within this system, braceros also had to “qualify” for the job. Recruiters often picked braceros who were docile, uneducated and poor to create an “obedient” workforce.⁵⁰ Following this, the recruiters would then select on physical evidence of past manual labor. One ex-bracero, Aurelio Delgado Moreno,

Another way to bind the braceros to a specific plot of land was through debt peonage. Public Law 45, which created the Bracero Program was popularly known as the “Peonage Law.”⁵⁴ In many cases, braceros were forced to buy necessities like food and clothing from employer-owned stores. Eleanor Martin noted that the store clerk would mark down the braceros’ *ficha* number so their purchases could be deducted from their paychecks. Martin also recalls that, on farms not large enough to sustain their own commissary store, farmers would load their braceros onto trucks to go to the local town store, where they paid from their weekly paychecks.⁵⁵ Without much competition for these company stores because of restricted access, farmers maintained monopoly pricing control. The justification was to provide “the protection of workers from such undesirable persons as pimps and prostitutes, dope and liquor peddlers, gamblers... and unscrupulous salesmen.”⁵⁶ This not only showed paternalism and belittlement, but also isolated the braceros from the larger labor market and society.

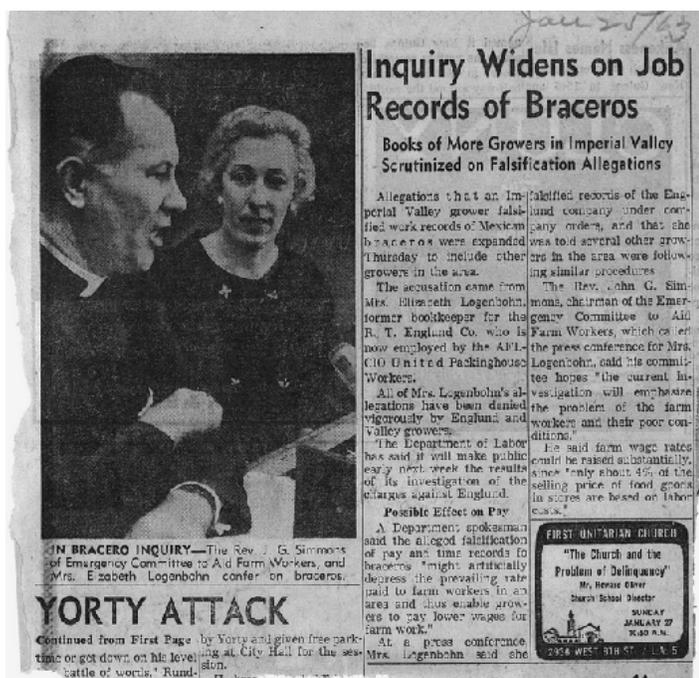
However, if braceros still owed any debt to the farmer, the farmer could extend the contract until the debt had been paid.⁵⁷ Farmers used this provision, to leverage the bracero’s debt and thus retain the bracero on his farm. Braceros had no other choice: Efrén Pacheco concluded, “even in times when we didn’t make that much money, we had to complete the contract anyway.”⁵⁸ Ex-bracero Ignacio Najera had to pay up to \$10 a week for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.⁵⁹ Natibidad Mancinas, an ex-bracero, was paid a meager 75 cents per day to pick cotton.⁶⁰ Both contractual obligation and debt peonage tied braceros to a specific area for a specific time, isolating them from a larger labor market.

Another important factor in creating an isolated labor market of braceros was the manner of assessing the labor shortage in areas petitioning for them. Before the implementation of Public Law 78, “prevailing wages” were determined by the growers to then be approved by the Bureau of Employment Security (BES).⁶¹ This reactive, rather than proactive, role of

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the BES allowed farmers to define what a “fair” and prevailing wage was, stratifying labor shortages by grower wage.⁶² This active and relatively unregulated role of growers in determining “prevailing wage” persisted from the initiation of the Bracero Program until a later 1955 amendment to Public Law 78.⁶³ This also underscored the degree of local control granted to states through the Bracero Program within a larger and very lax federal framework.

By Public Law 78, Sec 503, there were three basic requirements for the Department of Labor when assessing the labor shortage in particular areas.⁶⁴ First, there had to be a lack of domestic labor “able, willing, and qualified... at the time and place needed.” Second, the bracero employment could not “adversely affect the wages and working conditions of domestic agricultural workers.” And third, farmers had to attract domestic laborers “for such employment at wages and standard hours of work comparable to those offered to [braceros].”⁶⁵



“Inquiry Widens on Job Records of Braceros” from *Los Angeles Times* (1963)

Source: *National Archives and Records Administration*

These provisions became problematic primarily because the definition of ability, willingness, and qualifications of the domestic workers were contingent on the committees, which sought profitability.⁶⁶ The Department of Agriculture’s report on nationwide farm wages from 1953 to 1959 demonstrate a 14% increase in wages in states without bracero workers, while wages remained constant in states that employed braceros.⁶⁷ Additionally, the President’s Commission on Migratory Labor investigated cotton-picking wages in the lower Rio Grande Valley in 1950 and found that the average wage was \$1.75 per hundredweight, while the statewide average was \$2.45 per hundredweight.⁶⁸ Ex-bracero Ismael Rodri-

quez Rico received a 1952 paycheck of only \$35 after working 70 to 80 hours that week.⁶⁹ Thus, the presence of both undocumented and, later, bracero workers had a depressive effect on farm wages.⁷⁰

Bracero experiences in different parts of the country also illustrate agricultural wage disparities. Ex-bracero Ignacio Nájera was first contracted to work in Montana, where he received a wage of \$14.50 per acre picked.⁷¹ After three years in Montana, Najera was sent to Pecos, Texas, where he received a meager 75 cents per day for picking cotton. Another example of wage disparities comes from former bracero Elías García Venzor, who describes his best experience as a bracero working in Colorado where he earned just over \$500 for forty-five days of contracted work.⁷² He goes on to describe his worst experience as a contracted bracero worker as his time in Pecos, Texas, where he earned “very little money for very difficult work” which was only compounded by the unfavorable working and living conditions.⁷³ These regional disparities highlight segmentation and isolation of the Texas bracero labor market from agricultural labor markets in other parts of the United States.

PHYSICAL ISOLATION, SOCIAL MARGINALIZATION AND REDUCTION OF POLITICAL AGENCY

Braceros were also denied the right to unionize or to strike, preventing their assimilation into larger labor markets. In the initial accords between Mexico and the United States, braceros were denied access to broader representation.⁷⁴ However, in a 1951 provision to Public Law 78, braceros were given the right to select representatives to “communicate” their interests and concerns to their employers.⁷⁵ These gains, however, did not include the right to collectively bargain or to negotiate changes to established contracts.⁷⁶ When braceros protested and petitioned for their rights, their petitions were often ignored. From 1954 to 1956, the Bureau of Employment Services reported over 11,000 formal complaints from braceros. Of those, only 1,631 cases were determined to have violated the contracts, and only 50 employers who had committed violations were removed from the Bracero Program.⁷⁷ Thus, federal agencies showed contempt towards braceros similar to that of farmers.

Besides bureaucratic unfairness, obstacles like relocation, isolation from outside society, and lack of outside labor allies prevented organization. The situation was best summed up by former bracero Ramón Avitia:

Growers didn’t always respect the contract or pay us what it said. But it was hard to advocate for ourselves and our rights. We were far from home, didn’t speak the language, and often had no one to go to for help. Mostly we braceros struggled alone... we had no names.⁷⁸

In essence, a sense of alienation, isolation and established power structures prevented braceros from organizing and protesting successfully. First, there was the physical isola-

tion, as many farms were far from towns or cities. Ismael Rodriguez Rico described his time as a bracero as “lonely,” partially because his camp was located so far from a city center that no artificial lighting could be seen, making nights pitch black.⁷⁹ In addition, the braceros were deliberately socially segregated, not only from domestic farm laborers, but also from society, to perpetuate the feelings of isolation and vulnerability. Feliciano H. Ordonez, an American citizen whose father served as a plantation foreman, spoke of the intentional segregation of braceros in separate fields from locals, so that braceros would not find out that their wages were significantly lower than those of the domestic workforce. Ordonez comments that, overall, the braceros had very little interaction with the outside community.⁸⁰

In the rare cases of strikes of organized strikes, braceros had little bargaining power while their bosses had the ability to deport or repatriate them. Efren Pacheco, a former bracero, describes an attempted strike organized by the braceros on his farm over low wages, about \$35 a week. However, the strike was quickly disbanded when the leader of the strike’s contract was terminated, and he was sent back to Mexico.⁸¹ The unequal power distribution and threats from their bosses often forced the braceros to stay docile. In 1955, Pedro de Alba Gonzalez refused to join a strike that led to the desertion of almost half the bracero work force of that farm because he “needed the work” regardless of wages or conditions.⁸²

Another manner of weakening the bargaining power of the braceros was their lack of reinforcement from or alliance with domestic agricultural laborers. This division was caused by the braceros’ role in depressing wages, which prevented their alliance with domestic farmworkers in the United States.⁸³ In fact, domestic worker strikes, on the whole, were directly responsible for the removal of bracero workers instead of engaging in a collaborative unionization effort across all sectors of agricultural labor, most evidenced in the instances of the 1947 DiGiorgio Fruit Corporation strike and the 1961 lettuce worker strike.⁸⁴ A popular strike song composed in 1952 even warned against “taking the striker from the rival of the contracted bracero.”⁸⁵ Rather than perceiving the braceros as allies in the struggle for the improvement of agricultural labor demands, domestic agricultural workers perceived the braceros as their reason for striking.



The first Braceros arriving in Los Angeles by train (1942)
Source: Oakland Museum of California

CONCLUSION

According to Nagi, “The creation of the Mexican migrant farm workforce might be understood as a modern solution to an old colonial problem.”⁸⁶ In conclusion, the bracero program served to isolate the labor markets in the border towns in Texas first, during Texas’ ban from the formal bracero program, though the employment of undocumented workers then later through the formal bracero program. These slightly differing systems, however, both created an isolated economic sector in the regional south until 1964, which extended the pockets of Wright’s so-called “colonial economy” in south Texas.⁸⁷ These methods of political, economic, and social isolation and control included a system of debt peonage, an inability on the part of the braceros to collectively organize, a placement of workers directly from Mexico to the United States, which subverted the competitive system of the mutual selection between employer and employee, an unfair assessment of labor shortages and prevailing wages in favor of the growers, a marked difference between labor supply and labor demand and the contractual bondage of a bracero to a certain location for a certain amount of time. ▮

Endnotes

- [1] Wright explains the erosion of this system by federal legislation removed the economic benefits the South enjoyed by separating the labor and capital markets, which gradually opened the South to external labor and capital and ended the Southern market's regional isolation by the 1950s.; Gavin Wright, *Old South, New South: Revolutions in the Southern Economy Since the Civil War* (New York: Basic Books, 1986), 58-64.
- [2] Kitty Calavita, *Inside the State: The Bracero Program, Immigration and the INS* [After the law [^]A139077] (Routledge, Chapman and Hall, 1992);
- [3] This temporary work program was a provision of the Immigration Act of 1917 creating the first publically sanctioned foreign-worker program.
- [4] Gregory Crider, "El primer programa bracero y el gobierno de Mexico, 1917-1918," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 81, no.2 (2001): 396-397.
- [5] Ibid.
- [6] Jorge Durand, Douglas S. Massey, and Fernando Charvet, "The Changing Geography of Mexican Immigration to the United States: 1910-1996," *Social Science Quarterly* 81, no.1 (2000): 1.
- [7] However, not all were Mexican citizens. Thousands were children born in the United States who were denied the ability to claim U.S. citizenship.; Roger Daniels and Abraham Hoffman, "Unwanted Mexican Americans in the Great Depression: Repatriation Pressures, 1929-1939," *The American Historical Review* 80, no.2 (1975): 524.
- [8] For further reading: Mae Ngai and the American Council of Learned Societies, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America, Politics and Society in Twentieth-Century America* [[^]A1051401] (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004): 136-7.
- [9] The origins of the word "bracero" come from the Spanish word brazo, which translates to "arm," in reference to the manual labor typically done by the bracero workers.; Calavita, *Inside the State*.
- [10] Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*.
- [11] Otey M. Scruggs, "Texas and the Bracero Program, 1942-1947," *Pacific Historical Review* 32 no.3 (1963): 251-264.
- [12] Ibid.
- [13] For further reading: William D. Carrigan and Clive Webb, *Forgotten Dead: Mob Violence against Mexicans in the United States, 1848-1928* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).; William D. Carrigan and Clive Webb, "When Americans Lynched Mexicans," *New York Times*, February 20, 2015.
- [14] Calavita, *Inside the State*.
- [15] "American Embassy to department of State, June 6, 1944", S.D.; *U.S. Stat.*, 80 Cong., 1 sess. (1947), Vol. LXI, Part 4, 4098.
- [16] Scruggs, "Texas and the Bracero Program," 263.
- [17] Calavita, *Inside the State*.
- [18] Mireya Loza, "Jesús Gómez," in *Bracero History Archive*, Item #403, <http://braceroarchive.org/items/show/403> (accessed April 21, 2015).
- [19] Ibid.
- [20] Mireya Loza, "Juan Báez Barragán," in *Bracero History Archive*, Item #477, <http://braceroarchive.org/items/show/477> (accessed April 21, 2015).
- [21] Gail M. Hollander, *Raising Cane in the 'Glades: The Global Sugar Trade and the Transformation of Florida* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).
- [22] The President's Commission on Migratory Labor was created by executive order to study both the conditions of and effects of migratory labor in the United States. This report is a summary of the Commission's findings.; "United States President's Commission on Migratory Labor," *Migratory Labor in American Agriculture: Report* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Govt., 1951).
- [23] Veronica Cortez, "Salvador Velasco Patiño," in *Bracero History Archive*, Item #326, <http://braceroarchive.org/items/show/326> (accessed April 21, 2015).
- [24] Calavita, *Inside the State*.
- [25] Mireya Loza, "J. Carmen Quezada Morales," in *Bracero History Archive*, Item #689, <http://braceroarchive.org/items/show/689> (accessed April 21, 2015).
- [26] Calavita, *Inside the State*.
- [27] Ibid.
- [28] Calavita, *Inside the State*.; For examples of media sensationalization and exposé work: *New York Times*, March 25-29, 1951; *Life*, May 21, 1951, 30-37; *Time*, April 9, 1951, 24.
- [29] Jorge Durand et al., "The Changing Geography of Mexican Immigration to the United States."
- [30] Monica Pelayo, "Clemente Velázquez Lucio," in *Bracero History Archive*, Item #392, <http://braceroarchive.org/items/show/392> (accessed April 21, 2015).
- [31] Ibid.
- [32] "Skip rate" refers to laborers quitting before the season had ended as noted in the Truman Commission on Migratory Labor.; "United States President's Commission on Migratory Labor."
- [33] Anais Acosta, "José Ponce López," in *Bracero History Archive*, Item #388, <http://braceroarchive.org/items/show/388> (accessed April 21, 2015).
- [34] "United States President's Commission on Migratory Labor."
- [35] "Changes in Mexican Labor Agreement Will Be Required," *Sweetwater Reporter*, September 14, 1949. <http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph283770/m1/1/?q=bracero>
- [36] Calavita, *Inside the State*.
- [37] Ibid.
- [38] Richard Baquera "Eleanor Martin," in *Bracero History Archive*, Item #46, <http://braceroarchive.org/items/show/46> (accessed April 14, 2015).
- [39] Calavita, *Inside the State*.
- [40] Ibid.
- [41] "Report to the American Section of Joint Commission on Mexican Migrant Labor," *U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service* (1954), 34.
- [42] Ibid.
- [43] Eleanor M. Hadley, "A Critical Analysis of the Wetback Problem," *Law and Contemporary Problems* 21 (Spring 1956): 334-357.
- [44] "United States President's Commission on Migratory Labor," *Migratory Labor in American Agriculture: Report*.
- [45] *Harvest of Loneliness*, Motion Picture on DVD, directed by Gilbert Gonzalez, Vivian Price, and Adrian Salinas (2011).
- [46] Myrna Parra-Mantilla, "Jesús Aranda Morales," in *Bracero History Archive*, Item #3, <http://braceroarchive.org/items/show/3> (accessed April 14, 2015).
- [47] This sanitation process consisted of stripping the braceros naked and

- spraying them with DDT to “clean” them.; *Harvest of Loneliness*, Motion Picture on DVD.
- [48] Calavita, *Inside the State*.
- [49] “Border Patrol: Intelligence Report.” *U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service* (Livermore, Texas.: U.S. Gov’t, October 1957).
- [50] *Harvest of Loneliness*, Motion Picture on DVD.
- [51] Myrna Parra-Mantilla “Aurelio Delgado Moreno,” in *Bracero History Archive*, Item #5, <http://braceroarchive.org/items/show/5> (accessed April 14, 2015).
- [52] *Harvest of Loneliness*, Motion Picture on DVD.
- [53] Myrna Parra-Mantilla, “Eliás García Venzor,” in *Bracero History Archive*, Item #8, <http://braceroarchive.org/items/show/8> (accessed April 14, 2015).
- [54] Hollander, *Raising Cane in the ‘Glades*.
- [55] *Ficha* (translation “token” or “marker”) represents the bracero’s identification number for credit and payment at the farm stores; *Ibid*; Richard Baquera, “Eleanor Martin,” in *Bracero History Archive*, Item #46, <http://braceroarchive.org/items/show/46> (accessed April 14, 2015).
- [56] “A Report on ‘Strangers in Our Fields’ by Region X, Regional Office, Bureau of Employment Security,” with attached memorandum from H.R. Zamora to A. J. Norton regarding televised news report on *Mexican National Labor Program* (1956). Retrieved from The National Archives.
- [57] “Changes in Mexican Labor Agreement Will Be Required,” *Sweetwater Reporter*.
- [58] Itzel Kuchle, “Efren Pacheco A.,” in *Bracero History Archive*, Item #745, <http://braceroarchive.org/items/show/745> (accessed April 21, 2015).
- [59] Myrna Parra-Mantilla, “Ignacio Nájera,” in *Bracero History Archive*, Item #17, <http://braceroarchive.org/items/show/17> (accessed April 13, 2015).
- [60] Myrna Parra-Mantilla, “Natibidad Mancinas,” in *Bracero History Archive*, Item #23, <http://braceroarchive.org/items/show/23> (accessed April 13, 2015).
- [61] Calavita, *Inside the State*.
- [62] *Ibid*.
- [63] Hadley, “A Critical Analysis of the Wetback Problem,” 334-357.
- [64] Extension of Bracero Program, Pub. L. No. 78 § 65 Stat. 119 (1951).
- [65] *Ibid*.
- [66] Calavita, *Inside the State*.
- [67] *Ibid*.
- [68] A hundredweight is equal to one twentieth of a ton, also know as a centum weight or quintal.
- [69] Mario Sifuentes, “Ismael Rodríguez Rico,” in *Bracero History Archive*, Item #409, <http://braceroarchive.org/items/show/409> (accessed April 21, 2015).
- [70] “United States President’s Commission on Migratory Labor,” *Migratory Labor in American Agriculture: Report*.
- [71] Myrna Parra-Mantilla, “Ignacio Nájera.”
- [72] Myrna Parra-Mantilla, “Eliás García Venzor,” in *Bracero History Archive*, Item #8, <http://braceroarchive.org/items/show/8> (accessed April 14, 2015).
- [73] *Ibid*.
- [74] Hollander, *Raising Cane in the ‘Glades*.
- [75] Extension of Bracero Program, Pub. L. No. 78 § 65 Stat. 119 (1951).
- [76] Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*.
- [77] *Ibid*.
- [78] Deborah Cohen, *Braceros: Migrant Citizens and Transnational Subjects in the Postwar United States and Mexico* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 145.
- [79] Mario Sifuentes, “Ismael Rodríguez Rico.”
- [80] Mireya Loza, “Feliciano H. Ordoñez,” in *Bracero History Archive*, Item #739, <http://braceroarchive.org/items/show/739> (accessed April 21, 2015).
- [81] Itzel Kuchle, “Efren Pacheco A.”
- [82] Annette Shreibati, “Pedro De Alba González,” in *Bracero History Archive*, Item #402, <http://braceroarchive.org/items/show/402> (accessed April 21, 2015).
- [83] Cohen, *Braceros*.
- [84] *Ibid.*, 145-160.
- [85] *Ibid.*, 163.
- [86] Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*.
- [87] Wright, *Old South, New South*.