THE BRACERO IN ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA: A WORK FORCE FOR ECONOMIC TRANSITION

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INTRODUCTION

Between 1942 and 1964 foreign contract labor was used in the fields of Orange County, California. The workers came under a series of legal agreements between the U.S. and Mexican governments. The workers were called *braceros*, meaning hired laborers. The braceros' entrance into Orange County's agricultural labor force, and their subsequent domination of the agricultural labor market, corresponds to a significant stage in Orange County's development. The period 1942-1964 marked a transition in the County's economic base, from an economy long dependent on agriculture to one in which the manufacturing and service sectors became dominant.

The success of the transition in Orange County's economic base depended on the creation and use of a suitable labor force. The braceros satisfied this requirement in two ways. They provided an administered and abundant seasonal labor force which served as a cost cushion for the agricultural industry as it consolidated its position and as it changed its crop and production patterns to adjust to urban-industrial conditions. At the same time, they aided in the creation of a labor force for the construction, manufacturing, and service industries by displacing the former labor pool of Chicano and undocumented Mexican workers in agricultural production.

The general problem posed in this study is the realtionship between the Bracero Program and the industrialization of Orange County.[1] The introduction of a foreign labor force during this period of urban industrialization raises crucial questions concerning this relationship: Was a foreign labor force utilized by agribusiness because there was a lack of local farmworkers for agricultural production? If there was a lack of local farmworkers, where *did* the local farmworker find employment? What role had the local farmworker come to play in the post-World War II economy? If there was no lack of local farmworkers, what made the Bracero a preferred worker, over the local farmworker?

Because the Bracero Program was a national program formulated by the U.S. and Mexican governments and administered through U.S. governmental contracts and agencies, these questions are not limited to Orange County. In fact, the relationship between the general developments within agribusiness and the introduction of the Bracero work force can be simply postulated.[2] As agriculture matured into a well-developed corporate enterprise under favorable national and international market conditions and with the aid of government intervention, a work

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[1] "Bracero Program" is generally used to designate the set of agreements between the U.S. and Mexican governments which allowed for the importation of agricultural workers to the U.S. These contracts began August 4, 1942, and ended (excluding the extensions) in January of 1964.

[2] Galarza has made the major contribution to our understanding of the economic and political dimensions of the Bracero Program. See his Merchants of Labor: The Mexican Bracero Story (1964). The strength of Galarza's analysis lies in his presentation of the general structural developments in agriculture as they relate to the formation and utilization of a labor force. Galarza's work falls short of analyzing the larger economic developments of the Southwest, which would provide insight into the changing role of the domestic and immigrant work force as the economy expanded.

force, administered through government agencies favorable to agribusiness and under contracts which set wage and working conditions agreeable to agribusiness, provided corporate agriculture with the most suitable source of labor. Unable to organize themselves to bargain or strike; available "on call" at recruiting stations funded by the U.S. Government; bound to the job by governmental contract; relegated to wage standards settled between government and industry; and returned to Mexico after the harvest was finished, the Braceros provided the ample, docile and dispensable work force sought by agribusiness.[3]

The relationship between the Bracero work force and the local work force can also by posited as follows: Local workers were displaced from their jobs by Bracero labor; domestic wages were depressed and housing and working conditions deteriorated[4]; unionization was impeded by the presence of the Braceros and organizing efforts were not really effective

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[3]"Docility" here refers to the fact that the Bracero was bound by contract to work a certain length of time (usually three to six months, though there were extensions), and could not strike. However, there were cases of Braceros joining the NAWU (National Agricultural Workers Union), as discussed in Galarza's Farmworkers and Agribusiness, 1947-1960 (1977). Braceros also demonstrated solidarity with the strike activity of domestic labor. In 1961, Lawson reports that Braceros stopped their work in the Imperial Valley -- refusing to work the first day of a strike. Told by growers that they would be sent back to Mexico if they did not work, the Braceros returned to work the second day of the strike. Coverage of this can be found in Lawson, "The Bracero in Imperial Valley" (1965).

[4]The effect of Bracero labor on the wage structure and employment opportunities of domestic workers has been the sole concern of many studies of the Bracero. Two studies with this focus are Mason, "The Aftermath of the Bracero: A Study of the Impact of the Termination of P.L. 78 on the Agricultural Hired Labor Market of Michigan" (1969), and Wise, "Bracero Labor and California Farm Economy: A Micro Study" (1968). Both studies conclude that the employment of domestic workers increased with the termination of the Bracero Program; wages increased and working conditions improved for domestic workers. Mason's study shows that mechanization was introduced rapidly into the cucumber industry with the termination of the Bracero Program though migrant labor continued to be used for certain aspects of production. Mason also notes that a long-term consequence of the termination of the program was the removal of many agricultural operations to the South.

until after the termination of the program.

These general postulates about the relationship between the Bracero and agribusiness, and the Bracero and the domestic labor force, are useful indicators of the role of the Bracero Program in Orange County.[5] However, the urban-industrialization of Orange County established two trends independent of the introduction of the Bracero: it created an economic base unfavorable to agriculture, and it opened up jobs in other industries for the local farmworker.

Because the Bracero was introduced as part of an industrial work force whose entire composition was changing, the questions concerning Bracero employment in Orange County become more specific: How did the Bracero enable agribusiness to retain a place of importance in Orange County, despite unfavorable tax structures and water costs that resulted from the urban-industrialization of the County? How did the Bracero affect the economic position of the Chicano work force as they moved to employment in other sectors of the economy?

The situation of the Chicano community will be discussed in detail in the second section of this paper. The organization of the Chicano labor force against the conditions of employment in agriculture and for unionization in the 1930s, after nearly a quarter of a century of social and economic segregation in the County, was also a factor in agribusiness' attempts to procure the Bracero Program. After the strikes of the 1930s, the citrus growers formed the Agricultural Producers Labor Committee. The Committee fought locally and nationally to represent grower interests on

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[5] In fact, Galarza reports that the primary demand for the Bracero was from the large commercial growers, defined in the 1959 Census as those who sold $40,000 or more in farm products during the year. This type of farm was more prevalent in Orange County by 1969 than any other type of commercial farm (see Table 3 below).

questions of labor, and was in the forefront of the effort to secure P.L. 78.

The Chicano community was the primary source of agricultural labor when agriculture was the main industry in Orange County. The distinction between the local labor pool in the pre-World War II years and the Bracero labor pool in the post-War years is an underlying theme of this paper. Hopefully by showing the differences between these labor pools (their origin, administration and composition), the social nature of economic organization will become evident.

AGRIBUSINESS AND THE BRACERO

> Of California's agriculture in the century that ended in 1960, it could well be said that the more it changed the more it became the same thing, for change in this case was but fulfillment, ever on a larger scale, of the original endowment.[6]

From the mid-18th Century to the present, agricultural production in California has been dominated by the large landowner. Under the mission system, the Church held by 1822 the largest portion of desirable lands and almost all the livestock in the state. The secularization of this land in 1833 and the distribution of land and livestock to private landgrant holders maintained this concentration of wealth. By 1848, approximately forty individuals held virtual control over the economic and political affairs of California.[7]

The socio-economic unit formed from this concentration of land and livestock was the *rancho*. The rancho system had developed rapidly between

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[6]Galarza, Merchants of Labor, p. 107.

[7]Fernández, The United States-Mexican Border (1977), p. 27.

1833 and 1848; by the outbreak of the Mexican-American War, the area that would become Orange County was divided into 16 land grants and partial grants. In the 1950s the system came under attack. A bill was passed in the State legislature which mandated the validation of Mexican land grant titles. In order to pay for litigation, great sums were borrowed at usurous rates and land was sold at a fraction of its value. In 1864 a drought ruined many rancheros, already deeply in debt for taxes and litigation.

From 1868 onwards, the land of the Santa Ana Valley was divided into smaller, but still large units, and towns were established. By the mid-1880s, the semi-frontier conditions were giving way to a new agricultural economy. In 1889, the County of Orange was created from Los Angeles County.

The division of the ranchos made it possible to develop the industrial form of agriculture which provided the economic base of the County by the end of the nineteenth century.[8] Since then, large landowners have set the pace in farm technology and organization. The cooperative structures developed by the industry for the marketing and distribution of goods have reflected, from their inception, the needs and interests of these large units. The production of specialized crops, within a pattern of diversity, has brought millions of dollars to the Orange County economy annually since the turn of the century.

World War II brought increased demand for Orange County's agricultural products. In character with the industry's corporate planning

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[8]See Cleland, The Irvine Ranch of Orange County, California, 1810-1950, for a general account of the development of the agricultural industry in Orange County.

structure, this demand was met by coordinated efforts designed to gain maximum profit from war production. On December 12, four days after the U.S. entered the war, the *Orange Daily News* reported a meeting between "farmers, farm leaders, and business to diagnose the ills, ailments and potential cure for the farming industry." The group drew up "recommendations on how to adjust production, costs and lives to wartime conditions" in order to "keep up prices and lower costs during the potential boom."[9]

The markets opened by the war and the coordination of war production brought "the sharpest growth in agricultural output" in the County's history.[10] In the face of general prosperity and to adjust to the impending rise in tax and water costs, brought on by defense-oriented manufacturing during and after the war, a leading journal of the citrus industry called upon growers to reevaluate their operations:

> It seems desirable, in the face of changing conditions, to study carefully all of our operations for the purpose of reducing cost to rock bottom. How much savings can be made by consolidation, cooperation and coordination?[11]

The war had set a precedent in both the coordination of production and in reducing costs to "rock bottom," through the introduction of government-contracted foreign labor and prisoners of war.[12] The contract stipula-

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[9] *Orange Daily News,* December 12, 1941, p. 5.

[10] Bank of America, Focus on Orange County, p. 9.

[11] California Citrograph, Vol 33, No. 3 (January, 1949), p. 89.

[12] For further information on the recruitment and contracting of war workers, more than 70 percent of whom were Mexican, see R. Jones, Mexican War Workers in the U.S. (1945), and Rasmussen, A History of the Emergency Farm Labor Supply Program: 1943-1947 (1951). Rasmussen provides comprehensive treatment of all farm labor programs during the war and immediately thereafter. His concern is with the legal rather than the social history of the programs.

It is important to note that Mexican workers were also contracted for agriculture during World War I. While the program terminated after the war, the 1917 Immigration Act provided for the recruitment of foreign contract labor in agriculture when no domestic labor was available. The industry did not utilize this law again until 1941. Hence, the agricultural labor pool, replenished by unrestrained Mexican immigration, was satisfactory for the needs of agribusiness until 1940, when industrial spokesmen began calling for contracting of foreign labor.

ted wage structures, working conditions, housing standards, employment regulations, and medical and sanitary services for the worker. At the same time, it provided agribusiness with a work force that would be guaranteed for the entire harvest at wages that were set by the government in agreement with the industry. While the profits from agriculture increased remarkably during the war, the wages remained at or below the 1940 level.[13]

The benefits of foreign labor in terms of its cost, administration, and efficiency in procurement were made apparent during the war years. Hence, when Orange County's main industry -- citrus -- called for a re-evaluation of its organization of production, the first place that the industry turned was to the procurement of some form of a farm labor program that included foreign workers.

In 1947, agribusinessmen from 39 states met in Washington to develop a "permanent domestic farm labor program."[14] The main points of the program were: (1) the coordination of information on the supply and need for labor: (2) the operation of a farm labor supply center; and (3) the introduction of foreign workers upon certification that "there is not an adequate supply of domestic farmworkers available."[15] The foreign workers were to be recruited,

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[13] See Holmas, Agricultural Wage Stabilization During World War II (1950).

[14] California Citrograph, February, 1948, p. 147.

[15] The process of verifying an inadequate supply of labor was carried out by the Farm Placement Service. This agency determined the need for and the availability of agricultural workers for a given harvest period. If the agency decided that there was a lack of domestic workers, they would certify the contracting of Bracero labor. The connection between agribusiness and this bureau is documented by Galarza in Farm Workers and Agribusiness in California, 1947-1960 (1977).

transported and supervised through the domestic labor program. While the industry did not receive the long-term program they desired, they did receive yearly agreements for the importation of workers from Mexico.[16]

Agribusiness leaders were dissatisfied with temporary labor agreements, however, and continued to seek a permanent labor pool. In 1948 the citrus industry petitioned the California governor, Earl Warren, for "a comparatively few Puerto Rican agricultural workers to be used as a nucleus for an industry labor pool." Warren denied their requests on the grounds that Puerto Ricans were U.S. citizens, and "there would be no legal method of getting them out of the community" during slack seasons.[17] Warren's response indicates that the government was interested only in contracting a removable labor pool.

By October, 1948, citrus industry leaders had arrived at two solutions for the development of a contract labor pool: "permanent federal legislation covering farm labor supply *or* a workable and far less costly Mexican program."[18] "It appears," they concluded, "that the Mexican is our best pool for labor."[19] This decision would orient their lobbying

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[16]Between 1947 and 1951 there were four major agreements -- March and April of 1947, February of 1948 and August of 1949. All of these agreements received legal sanction through Section 3 of the 1917 Immigration Act. The agreements differed from the wartime agreements in that the contractor was not the U.S. Government but the individual farmer or farm representative; the government was not legally responsible for a contract not fulfilled; the farmer or group was allowed to recruit upon certification of a farm labor shortage by the U.S. Department of Labor; the farmer bore the cost of transportation of the Braceros; and "wetback" (undocumented) workers were allowed to be put under contract, or "dried out," with the exception of the 1948 agreement. The undocumented worker was recruited to a greater extent than the Bracero during this period.

[17]California Citrograph, February, 1948, p. 147.

[18]Ibid., p. 147

[19]Ibid., p. 148.

efforts. The citrus industry, along with the Associated Farmers and other powerful groups, continued to demand a foreign contract labor pool until 1951, when they received Public Law 78.

The employment of domestic labor had to be seriously considered by agribusiness, since small and medium-sized growers as well as organized labor strongly opposed the employment of foreign labor.[20] The industry's main argument in support of the introduction of foreign labor was that domestic labor was not available or was unwilling to take jobs in agriculture. Industry articles which addressed the employment of domestic workers often ended in harangues against a work force spoiled by the welfare state. In contrast, articles and statements by industry spokesmen which dealt with labor costs provided far more sophisticated discussions of the relationship between labor costs and profit. A sober analysis of the competitive position of agricultural products on the world market, for example, mentions that wage rates for the production and handling of fruit in Mexico, Palestine, and South Africa do not exceed 25 percent of the comparable wage rates in the United States.[21]

The program which allowed for the recruitment and hiring of a work force at minimal costs was finally formalized in 1951. At the insistence of western growers, the U.S. Government opened negotiations with Mexico early in 1951 for the continuation of Bracero hiring. Significantly, the Bracero years corresponded to what the Bank of America viewed as "golden

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[20] See Craig, The Bracero Program (1971), for a thorough history of "interest group politics" around Bracero recruitment during the entire period of the program's existence.

[21] California Citrograph, February, 1948, p. 551.

years" in Orange County's agricultural production history; between 1951-60 there were only two years when the agricultural sector contributed less than $100 million to the County's economy.[22]

The realization of "golden years" during the peak employment of the Bracero provides support for Galarza's thesis that the Bracero created a "cost cushion" for the expansion and consolidation of agribusiness.[23] Farm wages in California during the decade 1950-60 tended to freeze; Orange County was not an exception to this pattern. Since labor costs did not rise, more capital was generated, which was utilized by the industry to make production more profitable within the context of the urbanizing economy. Despite remarkably high profits and stable wages, there was a great decrease in the number of farms and an increase in the average size of Orange County farms during the decade. The large corporate farm emerged as the dominant and nearly exclusive type of farm enterprise during the Bracero period. The small family farm, which had coexisted with the large enterprise prior to the 1950s, nearly disappeared.

Urban-industrialization partially explains the decline of the smaller farms. The manufacturing and tourist industries, together with residential expansion, created a new political economy. Urban-industrialization meant that profit would be extracted from the land in a different way than in the predominantly agricultural economy. Tax and water costs rose in relationship to the new market value of real estate. The leaders of agribusiness sought legal sanction and an economic infrastructure that would

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[22]Bank of America, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

[23]See Galarza, *Merchants of Labor*, *op. cit.*

ensure their continued co-existence alongside the urbanizing economy. The The Bracero Program, negotiated under the tutelage of these corporate growers, was one important aspect of their plan for co-existence. The program was thus a part of the new political economy of the County.

The aggregate figures on the number of farms and total acreage, shown in Table 1, are useful indexes of the transition from a local economy based on agriculture to a manufacturing economy. The consolidation of the corporate agricultural enterprise is demonstrated by the decline in the number of farms, while the total land in farms remains almost constant until 1964. The "average size" of the farms indicates the dominance of the large enterprise by 1959.

Between 1945 and 1969 there was a 79 percent decrease in the number of farms, and a 46.5 percent decrease in the number of acres in farmland in Orange County. The average size of the farm, however, had almost tripled (using the lowest 1969 figures -- "All Farms"). The process of consolidation is even apparent between 1945 and 1950, when the number of farms increased slightly. The greatest decrease in the number of farms and acreage in farmland took place between 1959 and 1964. Significantly, this is the period when the most rapid process of consolidation took place.

The 1950-64 period saw the greatest increase in the size of the average farm. This increase was not accompanied by an increase in the number of farms of 500 acres and over. Farms in the two largest categories followed the pattern of decline in all farms. The increase in acreage per farm and the addition of the category, "Farms of 2000 acres or more," however, suggests that the remaining large farms consolidated their holdings during this period.

TABLE 1

NUMBER OF FARMS, LAND IN FARMS, AND AVERAGE SIZE OF FARMS, BY YEAR: ORANGE COUNTY, 1945 - 1969

Year	No. of farms	% Land in farms	Total land in farms	Average size of farms	Acres		
					500-999	over 1000	over 2000
1945	5,621	n.a.	346,621	61.7	35	29	
1950	5,713	76.6	383,493	67.1	44	29	
1954	4,593	n.a.	344,149	74.9	31	29	
1959	3,352	69.1	345,689	193.1	38	27	
1964	1,542	48.5	242,839	157.5	24	3	6
1969	1,174	37.0	183,920	156.6	9	9	12
1969[a]	652	30.5	168,281	258.0	9	9	

n.a. = data not available.

[a]farms with $2,500 or more in sales (see Table 3)

SOURCES: U.S. Census of Agriculture 1950, 1959, 1964, 1969; Tables 1 and 2. In 1964, the Census adds farms of 2000 or more/farms by acreage (see Table 3). In 1969, the Census divides farms by economic class, farms by acreage in back.

Consolidation of the farm enterprise enabled agriculture to retain its importance in Orange County despite industrial, residential and commercial growth. The highly capital-intensive and coordinated production that the larger unit engaged in enabled it to make the switch to crops that provided a higher rate of return.

The introduction of and increased reliance on the production of "luxury crops" such as strawberries, asparagus, mushrooms, and ornamental plants, required large amounts of capital available only to the large consolidated enterprise. In turn, there is an important relationship between

the change in crops produced and the use of Bracero labor. The State agricultural census notes the centrality of labor to the changes in production: "Obviously what the state's agriculture grows has a direct relationship to the amount and kind of farm labor needed."[24] The Bracero was available at any time during the year, at a stipulated, essentially frozen wage. First concentrated in the citrus industry, the Braceros' months of peak employment began to change after 1956; June remained the peak month after 1959. This attests to the increased importance of specialized luxury crops to the County, and to the importance of the Bracero as the major workforce for these crops.

The process of land consolidation itself was favorably influenced by the procurement of Bracero labor. In fact, there is a very close correlation between the stages in use of immigrant labor and the consolidation of the large agricultural unit (see Table 2).

The expansion of the labor pool through increased immigration of undocumented and contract labor enabled the industry to meet increased demands for production during the Second World War, and therefore, had a significant influence on the general prosperity of the agriculture enterprise during and immediately after the War. This prosperity is reflected in the slight increase in the number of farms in the post-War period.

Between 1945 and 1954, undocumented farmworkers continued to replenish the domestic labor pool, thus ensuring a surplus of labor at low

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[24] Compiled Statistics on California Agriculture, State of California, Department of Agriculture, 1950, p. 10.

TABLE 2

IMMIGRANT LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION IN RELATIONSHIP TO THE NUMBER OF FARMS AND ACREAGE UNDER PRODUCTION: ORANGE COUNTY, 1947 - 1969

Year	Use of immigrant labor force	Number of farms and acreage under production
1947-1951	Wartime practice of hiring Braceros continues under a series of yearly agreements. The individual farmer or grower organization recruits the workers and sets the terms of the contracts. With the exception of 1948, undocumented workers could be "dried out" and hired as braceros.	*Increase* # farms acreage size of farms
1951-1954	Braceros and undocumented workers work side by side: The benefit of the Bracero to the small grower is questionable; the initial cost of hiring, the contract stipulations about guaranteed hours and work or pay, and the preference given to the large grower during harvest are unfavorable to the small grower.	*Increase* size of farms *Decrease* # farms acreage
1954	"Operation Wetback" removes the undocumented worker from the fields -- the use of the Bracero increases.	*Greater increase* size of farms
1959	The use of the Bracero peaks in 1957-60. A government consultant reports that conditions on the contracts are not being met. This results in tightening of controls over wages, housing, and working conditions of Bracero workers.	*Decrease* # farms acreage
1961	Pressure to end the Bracero program mounts, but Braceros continue to dominate agricultural production in in Orange County	*Greatest increase* size of farms *Greatest decrease* # farms acreage
1964	Bracero program ends.	*Decrease* # farms acreage size of farms

cost for agricultural production.[25] The benefits of this labor pool were, however, far greater for the smaller enterprise. Because its operations were not as voluminous nor its production as constant, it benefited from the availability of an ample and an informal labor pool. The smaller grower was able to draw sporadically from this ample labor pool, since the long-established management of the pool through the labor contractor and the grower association did not require capital outlay nor a guarantee of a job to the worker.

The passage of P.L. 78 marked the formation of a labor pool far less favorable to the small grower. By setting poor conditions of pay and work for the local labor force, it reduced their participation in agriculture, when not reducing the number of jobs altogether. And it effectively reduced the number of new immigrants: Accompanying the formal documentation of workers under P.L. 78, was an increased repression against undocumented

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[25] In his thesis, "The Short-Run Socio-Economic Effects of the Termination of Public Law 78 on the California Farm Labor Market for 1965-67" (1969), Victor Salandini states that "prior to 1954, the illegal migration of Mexicans outnumbered the Mexican nationals contracted to work in agriculture. They would save costs, avoid the red tape of the Bracero program, and circumvent the minimum employment period and the wage and other safeguards built into the Bracero program" (p. 105). The rise in the number of undocumented workers after 1944 is quite substantial. The steady increase in undocumented immigrants, and the reliance on them by certain sectors of agribusiness, is demonstrated in Hearings, U.S. Senate, Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, HR 5046, 84th Congress, First Session, Washington, D.C., 1955. According to testimony presented at these hearings, at the height of agricultural prosperity in 1953 the industry offered 25,000-30,000 jobs through 400 contractors to a population of 50,000 illegals. How many undocumented workers were counted among the domestic labor force in Orange County before 1954? How many moved to industry afterwards? These questions cannot be answered with the data now available. The census does not provide statistics on the "Spanish-surname population" in Orange County for the years 1940 and 1950. Furthermore, the 1960 count was considered totally inadequate in its representation of the Spanish-surname population, leading to a revision of census forms as they concern this population in the 1970 census.

workers. One year after the formalization of P.L. 78, allocation of money and resources to the Border Patrol doubled.

Increased surveillance changed the meaning of being "undocumented." "Illicit workers" were made from a group who, with the exception of the Depression years, came back and forth with relatively little or no paper work at the San Diego-Tijuana border. The increased means to control and deport, and national agitation against the new immigrant from Mexico, culminated in outright attacks on the communities of immigrants in which the undocumented lived. In 1954-55, "Operation Wetback" was carried out in the urban and rural communities of the Southwest. This involved the massive deportation of thousands of Mexican nationals. Persons were picked up in their own communities and workplaces during raids, and forcibly sent back to Mexico.

"Operation Wetback" marked a turning point in labor relations, instituting an administered labor force. The standardized pattern of labor procurement, the ability to plan production by hiring the labor force in advance for the duration of the season, the guarantee against strikes, the regulation of wage structures, and the formalization of the contract through government agencies favorable to the large grower -- all this made the Bracero an ideal labor force for the coordinated and labor-intensive production of agribusiness.

The small grower was the last to be allocated Bracero labor. Moreover, he could not guarantee the same quantity of work for those contracted. The passage of P.L. 78, and the subsequent restriction of the non-Bracero, effectively changed the available labor force in Orange County. The decline of the small farm subsequent to 1955 was influenced by this change in the

labor market. The even larger decrease in the number of farms and land in farms between 1959 and 1964 suggests that any advantage the smaller and medium-size farmer could get from the Bracero Program was overwhelmed by the economic strain imposed by urban-industrialization and the threat of the end of the program itself.

Grower representatives from Orange County fought for the Bracero Program until its termination. But national pressure to end the program, focused upon the documented abuse of the contract provisions, emanating from farm labor representatives, liberal and church groups, organized small farmers and small businessmen from border towns, led to its demise. At the local level, the termination of the program represented a relative loss of power by agribusiness in Orange County. The decrease in the size of the farm, the number of farms, and overall acreage under production after 1964 demonstrates the impact of the termination. Nonetheless, large-scale agribusiness continued to play a major role in the County's economy in 1969, as can be seen from Table 3.

The termination of the Bracero Program accelerated the change in crop and production patterns in Orange County. Importantly, the thrust of these changes was towards mechanization. In 1964, the citrus industry called an "emergency session" to discuss the end of the program. The "termination of the Bracero program," stated the citrus-growers journal, "makes it imperative to accelerate mechanization ... There has been no strong momentum until now."[26] An Orange County grower provided an ex-

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[26] California Citrograph, January 1964, p. 30.

TABLE 3

FARMS BY ECONOMIC CLASS: ORANGE COUNTY, 1969

Class 1	*Class 2*	*Class 3*	*Class 4*	*Class 5*	*Class 6*
198	66	109	101	178	87

Class by sales:

Class 1:	a)	$100,000 and over
	b)	$ 40,000 - $99,000
Class 2:		$ 20,000 - $39,999
Class 3:		$ 10,000 - $19,999
Class 4:		$ 5,000 - $ 9,999
Class 5:		$ 1,500 - $ 4,999
Class 6:		Under $1,500

SOURCE: *Agricultural Census*, Table 4, 1969, p. 318.

planation for this lack of momentum:

> It was not profitable for the farmer to mechanize picking until the Bracero was removed ... Then, to survive they had to start planting crops and developing machines that could pick the crops. I mean those that could pick the crops and replace the Bracero. Nobody is going to buy an expensive machine and change his farming methods and put himself through the discomfort and the expense of this -- the indebtedness of it, and the risk -- if he doesn't have to.[27]

Two growers suggest that this relationship between crop and labor hinged on the price of labor itself. A farmer, one observed, "never changes as long as *[he]* can get cheap enough labor."[28] The comments of a second grower reaffirm the centrality of labor to the changes in the organization

[27]Beverly Gallagher, Oral History 1060: Dr. Robert Dukes (1971).

[28]Donna Barash, Oral History 1128: George Graham (1972).

of agricultural production:

> Like so many other industries, we've had to develop machinery to do a lot of this work that has to be done by hand because it became more and more difficult to get satisfactory help ... And, of course, there again is the union pressure for increased wages and particularly in agriculture ... But they have to find ways of doing things mechanically so that they can keep costs down.[29]

The Bracero Program had created a completely controlled work force, an unfree worker -- a development paralled by increased surveillance against another group of unfree workers, the "undocumented" immigrants. The number of undocumented workers increased after the program's demise; many of them simply continued to follow the migration pattern established while the Bracero Program existed. After it ended, the undocumented became the work force used by agribusiness for its continued co-existence alongside an urban-industrial economy. They were also an important force for the expansion of the service and manufacturing sectors in the 1960s and 1970s.

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[29] Beverly Gallagher, Oral History 655: William Croddy (1971).

THE CHICANO AND THE BRACERO

> In the very early years we were able to get most of that local help. The usual process was to hire one or more foremen that were capable of hiring a crew himself. He knew where the men lived and he'd line up a crew. Of course, in later years, we planned to get the labor imported from Mexico.[30]

By the turn of the century Orange County had established the structure of agricultural production that would eventually lead it through the transition to an urban-industrial society. It also had, by the end of the second decade of this century, the community of Mexican workers that would become an important source of labor for this transformation. The local elite that largely controlled the formation of the agricultural industry through the ownership and monopolization of a great percentage of the County's land continued, in subsequent years, to exert great influence over the County's development. Similarly, Mexican immigrants, who enabled the County to become a prominent agricultural producing area, continued to provide the necessary labor force for economic expansion.

The introduction of large-scale farming at the end of the 19th Century, initiated the formation of an agriculturally-based economy and society that remained largely unaltered until the 1950s. The developments in transportation and irrigation, crop and production innovations, together with immigration into the county, set the conditions for the change from the pastoral to the farming economy. The establishment of the California Fruit Exchange in 1893 marked the beginning of a marketing and distribution system that quickly led the County to national prominence as a citrus-producing area.

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[30]Gould, Oral History 23a: Brad Hellis (1968).

The agricultural economy created the demand for a large seasonal labor force for harvesting.[31] This labor force was composed of Japanese, Chicano and itinerant white workers until 1914, when the Chicano became the dominant group. Between 1914 and 1919, the Chicano labor force expanded from 2,317 to 7,004. By 1930 there were 10,000 Chicanos in Orange County. The group composed an estimated 60 to 90 percent of the agricultural work force through 1940.[32]

The high perishability of the agricultural product and the fluctuations in labor requirements resulting from market prices and the quality of the harvest, created the need for and ample and flexible labor force. Noting the effect of the Chicanos position as a surplus labor force on their employment conditions, one Chicano recalled "there were too many people for the amount of work."[33] The ensuing unemployment and low wage structure kept at least some of the larger families on the move as "fruit tramps," following the harvest and returning to the County when the harvest was over.[34]

While some sought employment through migration, others were able to find employment throughout the year by moving between industries. A Chicano

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[31]Most studies on the Bracero and farm labor begin with statistics on the seasonal fluctuations of the farm labor market. These fluctuations are very important because they illuminate the economic motivation behind the creation of a farm labor pool.

[32]McWilliams, Southern California County: An Island on the Land (1946), p. 218. McWilliams states that two-thirds or more of the agricultural labor force was composed of Chicanos. Vásquez, Oral History 609, states that 90% of the Chicano community was engaged in agricultural production.

[33]Banderas, Oral History 609: Chaoi Vásquez.

[34]Banderas, *Ibid.*

from Placentia recalled that "before the Depression there was so much work for the Mexican."[35] The oil companies provided work in ditch digging while the agricultural industries provided work in irrigation, cultivation, and the preparation of the land for the harvest. This work was always "menial," he states, as "the Mexicans were brought in for the hardest work."[36]

The relegation of the Chicano population to agricultural work and "menial jobs" reflects the racial division of the society; a division that was slowly formalized as the non-Mexican became the dominant group in the County in the last two decades of the 19th Century. Many of the Mexicans who resided in the County as landowners, skilled workers, or tenant farmers before the large-scale breakdown of the rancho system left the County subsequent to its reorganization by the new American landowners. At the same time, the European immigrants and Anglo-Americans who began to constitute the majority of the new society established structures which relegated the Mexican and Asian to segregated positions. By this time Mexican immigration was numerically significant again, in the first two decades of this century, the immigrant confronted a society that was systematically segregated.

The class structure of the society reflects this racial division. Land ownership provided a few with control over the social and political process, and relegated the majority to small farming, tenant farming and different service and manufacturing jobs necessary to the agricultural economy. In an overly-simplified analysis, important for its dramatization of the segregated position of the Mexican, Carey McWilliams cites a three-

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[35]Banderas, Oral History 474: Waldo Ortega (1970).

[36]Banderas, *Ibid.*

tiered class structure: the "Mexican working class," the "grower-manager elite," and the "in-between element of townspeople."[37] The racism of the two non-Mexican "classes" resulted in a polarization of the society. The "in-between element" -- the middle and non-Mexican working class -- "invariably adopted the grower-exchange point of view on all controversial issues and, during periods of social tension, was quickly neutralized or went over, *en mass*, to the growers."[38] The Mexican was excluded from the communities, schools and jobs in which the Anglo population was concentrated.

The relegation of the Chicano community to agricultural production and seasonal, outdoor work through the mechanism of racism is reflected in many local Chicanos' recollections of the pre-War years. A former Chicano farm worker from Anaheim provides a vivid description of the division of labor according to race:

> Our part was all agricultural workers ... Anaheim being what it was, a German town, we were expected to pick the crops -- tomatoes, oranges, beans -- there wasn't anything open for us. If we went up to town looking for a job, they'd tell us to get out in the fields.[39]

Another Chicano resident of Orange County who spent his summer in the fields, like the majority of Chicano male youths,[40] related his family's attitudes toward employment:

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[37] McWilliams, *op. cit.*, p. 219.

[38] McWilliams, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

[39] Banderas, Oral History 476: George and Conny McLain (1976).

[40] It is difficult to assess the number of women and girls who worked in the fields of Orange County. The oral histories indicate that, for the most part, women and girls were confined to work in the home. See Rosalinda Gonzáles' bibliography, The Chicana in Soutwest Labor History, 1900-1975 (unpublished) for further information on the employment of Chicanas in the Southwest.

> Their goals were to make a living in the agricultural field or something related to labor because ... I don't think they thought that the opportunity was there for them to do anything else.[41]

The school system, he added, "kept people socialized to a particular place."[42]

A Chicano resident of Fullerton repeatedly stressed that many Chicanos had "trades" and "education," but that approximately 90 percent of the community worked in agriculture "because there wasn't anything else."[43] According to him, the only work available to the Chicano community was in the lemon and orange industries.

The exclusion of the Chicano from any form of production which could have provided for possible social advancement is further reflected in the actions of the Irvine Ranch Manager. He would go to Ventura and solicit farmers to come as tenants to the Irvine property on a sharecrop basis. He did not draw on the local Chicano community to fill these positions. While he recalls a few Chicano tenants, he acknowledges that the majority of the Chicanos on the Ranch composed the 250-300 person seasonal work force. These Mexicans, he states, "were good assets ... hard workers."[44]

The 1930s witnessed an increase in the unemployment and underemployment of the Chicano farmworker.[45] Oklahoma migrants arrived in the County

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[41]Banderas, Oral History 474: Waldo Ortega (1970).

[42]Banderas, *Ibid.*

[43]Banderas, Oral History 609: Chaoi Vásquez (1970).

[44]Gould, *op. cit.*

[45]The 1930s also witnessed the first mass deportations of Mexicans. See Hoffman, Unwanted Mexican Americans in the Great Depression (1974). Some of the repatriates left by choice. The majority, however, were coerced into leaving by government propaganda against them or by direct deportation. The 1930s marked, as well, the first massive move against "illegal aliens." The second occurred during "Operation Wetback" in 1954-55. Many "sweeps" have occurred since then, and were common occurrences in the 1970s.

but soon departed "because of the labor surplus locally."[46] A 1940 study of economic conditions in Orange County made note of the large numbers of persons dependent on agriculture and the poor wages and underemployment which they faced:

> One explanation for personal income being lower in the County than in other areas was the basically agrarian nature of the community at that time. The population was composed of a larger number of farmers and farm laborers who were paid low wages and employed on an irregular basis.[47]

While the annual income of the farmworker had never been substantial, it had become totally inadequate by 1935.[48]

The first major response in Orange County to the conditions of underemployment, low wages, and poor working conditions came in 1935. Forming a part of the strike actions which took place in the fields throughout the Southwest in 1935-37, 2,000 Orange County farmworkers in the celery, pea, squash and lettuce fields walked out on strike in 1935.[49] The workers demanded wage increases, break periods and bathrooms in the fields.

The vegetable strike marked the first phase of the organizing and strike activity that went on in Orange County's Chicano community between 1935 and 1936. While immediate wage and working conditions formed the basis

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[46]Reccow, "The Orange County Citrus Strikes of 1935-36: 'The Forgotten People' in Revolt" (1971), p. 17.

[47]Lund, Orange County: Its Economic Growth (1959).

[48]Reccow states that the longer-established families had been able to save enough money to buy a house in the *colonia* or a car, but that wage and working conditions had become so poor that in the early 1930s it was difficult to maintain a family above bare subsistence. California Citrograph, on the other hand, reported record profits in 1935 and 1937 for California citrus products (California Citrograph, November, 1946, p. 8).

[49]The strike was directed against a group of Japanese farmworkers who rented their land from large landowners. "Ironically," Reccow reports, "the strike was directed against a group of growers who, in response to exploitation by commercial and other interests," offered some of the lowest wages and working conditions. (Reccow, *op. cit.*, p. iii.)

of the workers demands in the vegetable strike, subsequent protests involved larger issues. A former farmworker articulated the discontent of the citrus workers as follows:

> We organized because we were charged for all picking equipment and the ride to and from the barrio. We were only paid 3 to 4 cents a box, and were not making a thing. They were able to hire and fire us whenever they wanted or if we complained.[50]

The demands for higher wages and better working conditions merged quickly with demands for a bargaining agent which would give workers some influence over legitimate disciplinary actions and hiring practices. This demand for a bargaining agent was the most significant threat to the industry.

In May, 1936, a citrus strike halted picking throughout the industry. Foremost in this strike was the demand for recognition of a bargaining agent, the Confederacíon de Uniones de Campesinos y Obreros Mexicanas (C.U.C.O.M.).[51] The adamant refusal of the citrus industry to grant labor's demands is evident in the response of the growers to the strike. The clash of farmworker and grower in the citrus field produced "the largest and most violent citrus strike of the Depression decade."[52]

The class antagonisms evidenced in the strike and its repression cannot be considered separately from the initiation of the Bracero Program and its continuation in the post-War years. The unity of the workers evidenced during the strike and the popular recognition which the workers

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[50] Banderas, Oral History 612: Alfred Esqueda (1971).

[51] C.U.C.O.M. was an ethnic-based union for Mexican agricultural labor, which had a relatively short history during the 1930s. It was one of the last exclusively ethnic unions among agricultural labor. The tradition of the single ethnic union began with Japanese unions and ended with the successful repression of ethnic-based organizations in the 1930s.

[52] Reccow, *op, cit.*, p. 80.

received nationally posed a situation the growers had not contended with before. The immediate response of the growers was to establish the infrastructure by which they would begin to turn away from their long reliance on the local Chicano work force and, at the same time, begin to institute new forms of labor management.

In 1937, one year after the June strike of 1936, the citrus growers formed the Agricultural Producers Labor Committee. The explicit purpose of the Committee was "to enable agricultural producers to have adequate representation in national and local labor questions."[53] The formation of the Committee and its subsequent role in the procurement and management of the Bracero Program strongly suggest a link between the articulation of discontent by the domestic work force and the introduction of the Bracero. The Committee had "fought for the program from the very start."[54]

World War II prvided the context for the implementation of a new industrial order in agriculture. Most young Chicanos left the fields for military service.

> At the time of Pearl Harbor, approximately 250,000 Americans of Mexican descent lived in and around the Los Angeles area... Other large Mexican population areas in California were Orange and San Bernardino Counties....Along with other Americans, we all answered the call to arms.[55]

At the same time that Chicano youth went to war, some of the older men and women found employment in war-related industry.

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[53] California Citrograph, June, 1948, p. 338.

[54] California Citrograph, *Ibid.*, p. 335.

[55] Morín, Among the Valiant: Mexican-Americans in World War II and Korea (1966), pp. 15-16. See Morín for a military history of the Chicano in these wars.

It is difficult to determine the number of persons who remained in agricultural production during the war years. It is also difficult to determine the jobs acquired by those who moved to other industries during the war.[56] The oral histories indicate that some Chicano farmworkers became foremen over Braceros during the War. There are no sources of data except oral histories to substantiate the occupational mobility of the Chicano work force during this period. It is certain, however, that many farmworkers remained in agricultural production throughout the war years.[57]

The expansion of agricultural production during World War II created the need for an enlarged work force. At the same time, war-related production provided the basis for the expansion of all sectors of the economy.[58] As the local economy expanded, the employment patterns of the Chicano community began to change. The largely homogeneous community

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[56]This information would provide a basis for determining the precedent set for Chicano employment by the government in this "time of emergency." Two other related questions are: Did the Chicano persist in these same jobs after the war? Did those persons who remained in agricultural employment rise in occupational position or to full employment during and after the war? The relative paucity of data on Chicano employment patterns prior to 1965 makes it nearly impossible to answer these questions.

[57]There were no labor bulletin reports available for farm employment by county during the war years. The *State Farm Labor Report,* however, shows that local farmworkers composed well over half of the farm labor force during the war.

[58]The businessmen of Orange County planned to "bring new work or business to the County" during the war years. In their effort to expand the economy, the County's industries banded together to secure prime contracts or subcontracts from the government at the outset of the war (*Orange Daily News,* December 12, 1941). The Employment Development Department report, *Estimated Number of Wage and Salary Workers in Nonagricultural Establishments, By Industry, 1949-1971,* does not show a sharp growth in defense-related industries until 1955. The growth of defense-related manufacturing employment continued until 1969. In general, the growth of the manufacturing sector was not dramatic until the mid-50s, but all types of employment had expanded during the war and continued to grow in the post-war period.

of farmworkers and laborers became a more stratified middle and working class.[59]

The rate at which the Chicano work force moved from employment in agriculture to other industries is difficult to determine. George McLain noted a 300 percent movement upwards "since 1940."[60] Waldo Ortega marked the change as having begun

> ...as we came out of the Second World War. There was demand for production and services. This, in turn, meant that jobs were open. It could have been that there were not enough Anglos to fill the positions and they had to hire minorities and teach them labor and skills to do the job.[61]

Lennel Magaña, from Placentia, discussed a noticeable change in the Chicano's position beginning with the expansion of Placentia's economy in the mid-1950s. He noted "so many opportunities for the kids. There's so much more work -- factory work, construction. Before, there was very little going on in Placentia but picking."[62] While the expansion of the economy by city took place at different rates, the post-war years marked the move towards urban-industrialization, which saw the incorporation of thousands of workers into new industries each year.

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[59]Unfortunately, there are no local-level statistical data for this period indicating the changes in Chicano employment. As can be seen from the statistics relied on in this paper, the census figures for 1960 are the first body of quantitative data that provide information on the Chicano community in Orange County. However, the oral histories and farm labor reports provide evidence that the Chicano's position reflected the employment patterns shown in the 1960 census (see below).

[60]Banderas, Oral History 476: George McLain (1976). Stein's book, California and the Dust Bowl Migration (1973), provides information on the assimilation of the "Oakies" into urban areas, "where they took jobs in shipyards and the munitions plants and began their slow process of assimilation into the state" (p. 279). His book provides material for a comparative analysis of the Chicano's assimilation into other industries during the war and in the post-war years.

[61]Banderas, Oral History 474: Waldo Ortega (1970).

[62]Tatom, Oral History 661: Lennel Magaña (1971).

The first statistics which indicate the Chicano's position in this urban industrial order are provided in the 1960 census (see Table 4). Unfortunately, these figures are for the Los Angeles/Long Beach/Orange County metropolitan districts combined. The high concentration of workers by industry, however, illustrates employment trends among Chicanos in the Orange County area.

The highest concentration of U.S-born Chicano workers was in the durable goods manufacturing industry. The second highest concentration was in the nondurable good industry, with the wholesale and retail trades providing nearly as many jobs. Mexican-born persons were also concentrated in nondurable and durable good industries. The only significant difference between the employment pattern of the Mexican-born workers and the native-born workers was the relatively greater concentration of the Mexicans in personal services and agriculture.

The concentration of Mexican-born workers in agriculture and personal services indicates that, by 1960, most of the American-born Chicanos had moved into manufacturing, trades, and construction. Urban-industrialization of the County and civil rights activities of the Chicano community caused a breakdown in the strict, pre-war racial stratification of the working class.[63] However, employment in new sectors did not change the general conditions of unemployment, underemployment and low family incomes that characterized the Chicanos' position in the agricultural industry.

While the employment of Chicanos by industry had changed, their role in the economy had not. A majority of the Chicano population continued to

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[63]After a lengthy struggle by members of the Los Angeles and Orange County Chicano communities, school segregation of the Chicano was banned in Orange County in 1946. The court battle is known as the Westminster case.

TABLE 4

CHICANO AND IMMIGRANT EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY, LOS ANGELES/LONG BEACH/ORANGE COUNTY: 1960

Industry	Native of Mexican or mixed parentage	Born in Mexico
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries	1,668	4,672
Mining	93	50
Construction	6,597	3,864
Durable goods manufacturing	21,921	10,774
Nondurable goods manufacturing	11,874	10,829
Transportation, communications, public utilities	5,012	2,550
Wholesale and retail trade	11,222	8,614
Finance, insurance, real estate	1,860	750
Business and repair services	2,157	1,371
Personal services	2,918	3,480
Entertainment and recreational services	700	664
Professional and related services	3,150	1,765
Public administration	2,019	329
Industry not reported	1,258	1,288
TOTAL EMPLOYED	72,449	51,000

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population, 1960, p. 161 (native, p. 163 (born in Mexico).

provide a surplus labor force for the industries that had a high degree of seasonal employment followed by periods of contraction. They also continued to provide the main labor force for industries that were in the process of expansion or of establishing themselves. Finally, they provided a community base for the new immigrants from Mexico whose presence would become increasingly important to the economy in the late 1950s and especially in the 1960s.

The introduction of the Bracero into Orange County had an impact on the position of the Chicano within the emerging industrial order. Bracero wages were supposed to be determined by the "prevailing wage" paid to local workers. Instead, discussed below, the Bracero set the wage and working conditions for the local labor force, which worsened the employment situation of those local workers who continued to seek seasonal employment in agriculture. Ultimately, the presence of the Bracero increased the underemployment and unemployment of a significant sector of the Chicano community in the County.

The introduction of the Bracero effectively blocked the possibility of securing change from within the agricultural industry through the unionization of the local labor force. Hence, two groups of workers were affected: those Chicanos who engaged in a "back-and-forth" movement between agriculture and other occupations, and those who remained in agricultural employment year-round.

The local worker could not survive except at poverty level on the wage standard that was set for the combined bracero/domestic work force. An Orange County grower acknowledged:

> You can't take a person and give him what the Bracero earned and expect him to live within our society and prosper.[64]

Very few local farmworkers cared to do piece work. According to another grower, the local worker would not increase his production for a higher piece-rate income. In contrast, the Bracero would work seven days a week and, if possible, "night and day."[65]

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[64]Gallagher, Oral History 647: Ed Rosenbaum (1971).

[65]Gallagher, Oral History 655: William Croddy (1971), and Banderas, Oral History 609: Chaoi Vásquez (1970).

> In the beginning of the season we paid 7 cents a box .... Later, when the crop was really ripe, the pay was increased to 14 cents -- the local would work less while the [Mexican] nationals would double their work.[66]

The greater output of the Bracero can be explained by the fact that he could earn in the United States more money than he could possibly earn in Mexico. The difference in wages meant that the Bracero was able to return to Mexico with significant savings.[67]

Employer preference for the Bracero also hinged on the fact that the contract gave the grower the power to set the pace of production. Local help had a "choice": "While the locals seek a coffee break, the Braceros did the hardest work for the money -- they took no break and only a 15 minute lunch."[68] One farmer interpreted the demands of local help as "obstinance." He preferred the Bracero because "the farmer could insist on how picking should be done (the pace, the manner), so as not to damage the fruit."[69]

The Bracero provided, moreover, a work force ideal for industrial efficiency because he was available upon request of the farmer. The farmer could "pick up the telephone and order [the worker] for day after tomorrow."[70] The efficiency of this system of labor procurement for the large grower is in striking contrast to the system of hiring from a pool of domestic workers.

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[66] Gallagher, *Ibid.*

[67] See Campbell, "Bracero Migration and the Mexican Economy, 1951-1964" (1972). Campbell's work provides information on the "push" factors which sent the Bracero to the U.S., especially on the economic structures of the areas from which the majority of the Braceros came.

[68] Banderas, Oral History 609: Chaoi Vásquez (1970).

[69] Gallagher, Oral History 647: Ed Rosenbaum (1971).

[70] California Citrograph, April, 1947, p. 8.

In sum, the Bracero was clearly the worker preferred by Orange County growers. This preference was based on four main factors: the wage standard the growers were able to set and enforce through government contract, the high output of the Bracero worker, the control the grower was able to exert over the Bracero work force, and the planned and orderly procurement of the labor force. For those smaller growers who would still use the domestic work force in agriculture, the Bracero set unfavorable competitive conditions in the market. For the local worker, the Bracero set adverse wage and working conditions.

The local labor force in agriculture decreased with the introduction of the Bracero. However, two groups remained marginally dependent on agricultural employment during the transition to the urban-industrial economy. It is these groups that experienced the lowered wage scale and adverse working conditions set by the Bracero program.

Many Chicanos were employed in industries with a high degree of seasonal fluctuation. These industries reveal a fluctuation of employment by the thousands in a given year, a pattern which became more pronounced as the work force became larger (see Table 5). Many of the Chicanos employed in these industries engaged in a "back-and-forth" movement between food processing and construction and agricultural employment. Those who relied on work in both agriculturally-related manufacturing and construction and seasonal work in agriculture for year-round employment now had a reduced income or lost year-round employment altogether.

While the Bracero decreased the possibility for full employment of the seasonal work force in agriculture, it greatly increased underemployment and unemployment among those who relied almost solely on agricultural pro-

TABLE 5

NUMBER OF WORKERS ACCORDING TO HIGH AND LOW MARKS OF EMPLOYMENT, BY INDUSTRY AND BY YEAR: ORANGE COUNTY, 1950-1960

Industry	Year and numbers employed (thousands)							
	1950		1955		1958		1960	
	low	*high*	*low*	*high*	*low*	*high*	*low*	*high*
Manufacturing	6.2	9.6	15.6	19.7	31.5	36.0	45.2	50.5
Durable goods	n.a.		n.a.		21.8	25.1	33.0	36.4
Nondurable goods	n.a.		n.a.		31.5	36.0	12.0	15.1
Trades	11.8	15.9	18.1	23.7	26.0	31.7	34.9	40.5
Services	5.5	5.9	9.3	12.6	17.2	19.9	22.3	26.1
Contract construction	3.5	5.2	7.2	11.8	12.1	14.8	15.2	18.1

SOURCE: State of California, Employment Development Department, *Estimated Number of Wage and Salary Workers in Non-Agricultural Establishments by Industry, 1949-1971* (1972).

duction. This group was clustered in the non-urban areas, or the "remainder of the county":

> In the remainder of the county, job opportunities are clustered in wholesale and retail trade, service industries, and the agricultural industries. Because of the large number of persons employed in agriculture, seasonal fluctuations in employment in this district are more pronounced.[71]

The accelerated use of the Bracero after Public Law 78 came into effect in 1951 brought a sharp decline in the number of local workers employed in agricultural production (see Table 6).

[71] Lund, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

TABLE 6

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE BRACERO WORK FORCE AND THE DOMESTIC WORK FORCE IN THE MONTH OF PEAK EMPLOYMENT IN EACH YEAR: ORANGE COUNTY, 1950-1964

Year	Month	(1) Numerical comparison of Bracero WF to domestic WF	(2) Bracero as % of the seasonal domestic WF	(3) Bracero as % of average annual labor
1950	Sept.	2.2 :: 10	18.0	--
1951	Oct.	8.2 :: 10	45.3	--
1952	Aug.	6.9 :: 10	40.8	--
1953	Sept.	6.2 :: 10	38.5	--
1954	Oct.	7.4 :: 10	42.5	--
1955	Sept.	9.5 :: 10	48.7	33.8
1956	July	11.8 :: 10	54.0	43.8
1957	Sept.	15.4 :: 10	60.0	49.2
1958	July	13.1 :: 10	56.0	46.5
1959	June	12.9 :: 10	55.6	49.0
1960	June	11.5 :: 10	53.5	46.2
1961	June	9.9 :: 10	49.7	41.6
1962	June	11.4 :: 10	52.3	44.2
1963	June	11.2 :: 10	52.6	39.8
1964[a]	June	35.7 :: 10 (seasonal only)	70.7 (seasonal only)	73.2 (seasonal only)

[a]From 1964 on, the Labor Report added the category "seasonal" to divide the seasonal domestic work force into "regular" and "seasonal" worker. Between 1950-1963, "seasonal work force" combined both regular annual and seasonal workers in one category.

SOURCE: Tabulated from State of California, Department of Employment, Report 881M, No. 2 (January, 1963) and, Report 881M, No. 4 (January, 1965).

Farm labor statistics do not clearly indicate the dominant position of the Bracero in seasonal production after 1951. The statistics combine seasonal and regular agricultural workers to arrive at the number of domestic workers employed in seasonal work. Seasonal workers compose well over half of the total work force used by the agricultural industries.[72] Hence the inclusion of the year-round or regular work force under the rubric of "seasonal domestic work force" gives the impression that a larger, strictly seasonal domestic work force was employed in agricultural production.

One can arrive at a more accurate approximation of the relationship between the Bracero work force and the strictly seasonal domestic work force by setting the Braceros in relationship to one-half of the ratio of seasonal domestic workers in Column 1 of Table 6. Accordingly, there were a minimum of 8.2 Braceros for every 5.0 strictly seasonal workers in 1951. In 1953 there were at least 6.2 Braceros for every 5.0 strictly seasonal workers, and in 1959 there were at least 12.87 Braceros for every 5.0 strictly seasonal workers.

The 1964 statistics provide the most accurate representation of the relationship between the Bracero and the domestic work force. In that year the seasonal work force was divided into "seasonal" and "regular" workers. Even though the ratio of Braceros to domestic workers had fallen since its 1957 peak, there were still 35.7 Braceros to every 10.0 strictly seasonal workers.

The number of local workers in agriculture, the number of farms,

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[72] Most historians of agricultural labor say the seasonal work force comprises two-thirds of the agricultural work force; only one-third of the work force in agriculture is "regular" or year-round.

and total acreage in farmland all declined during the 1950s. Thousands of employees were added to every category of non-agricultural industry each year after 1949; tens of thousands were added yearly after 1955.[73] A free-market theory of labor would suggest that the Chicanos dependent on agriculture would simply move to better, urban-industrial employment as a result of the unfavorable wage and working conditions set by the Bracero. In practice, however, "market forces" did not work to the Chicano's advantage.

With the introduction of Bracero labor, local workers had to seek employment in manufacturing and other urban industries. This movement to urban-industrial employment meant that the Chicano was in an unfavorable bargaining position in relation to those who had already been in the urban labor market. The ex-farmworker was the "last hired and first fired." One former farmworker stated that "when things go slow, out you go."[74]

Even though manufacturing and other industries continued to expand rapidly in Orange County, the work force grew just as rapidly through migration into the County. Between 1940 and 1959, the population increased from 130,000 to nearly 634,000. In 1958, there were 153,000 persons gainfully employed in Orange County, as compared with 319,000 in 1964. One private-sector analysis of the Orange County economy found that "Employment growth has so exceeded that of the labor force and of the population, that the rate of unemployment has dropped sharply."[75]

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[73] State of California, Employment Development Department, Estimated Number of Wage and Salary Workers in Nonagricultural Establishments, By Industry, 1949-71 (1972).

[74] Banderas, Oral History 612: Alfred Esqueda (1971).

[75] Bank of America, Focus on Orange County (1965).

Chicano unemployment and underemployment did not drop "sharply," however. Chicanos continued to provide a labor pool for the expansion of Orange County industry; the importance of their presence is suggested in an economic report of 1958. Referring to the cities of Santa Ana, Orange and Tustin, the report concluded "the current labor supply is ample in all categories and the area has a large labor force on which to draw as industrialization continues."[76] Santa Ana was the Orange County city which had the largest Chicano population: 15,372 persons with "Spanish surnames" resided in the city in 1960, with a total of 12,800 native born and 2,439 born in Mexico.[77] A comparison of the unemployment figures for Chicano workers and the overall unemployment rate in Santa Ana indicates that the Chicano worker composed a substantial part of the unemployed work force (see Table 7). The unemployment figures of the City of Orange reveal an even more striking disparity between Chicano and overall unemployment rates.

The relatively high unemployment rate of Chicanos in Anaheim and Fullerton, and the disparity between Chicano and average unemployment in the La Habra and Buena Park areas, can be at least partially explained by the industries that dominated these areas. Food processing, packing, and construction were significant industries in 1958. The concentration of Chicanos in these firms meant that they provided a labor pool for the expansion and contraction of these industries. As we have seen, workers in industries with a high seasonal fluctuation, especially agriculturally-

[76] Lund, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

[77] U.S. Bureau of the Census, Report 1-B: Persons of Spanish Surnames in the Southwest (1964).

TABLE 7

COMPARISON OF CHICANO UNEMPLOYMENT TO OVERALL UNEMPLOYMENT BY CITY: ORANGE COUNTY, 1960

	City and percent unemployed								
	Anaheim*	Buena Park	Costa Mesa	Fullerton	Garden Grove	La Habra	Orange	Santa Ana*	Westminster
Chicano unemployed:	8.6	4.1	6.1	5.4	4.4	4.8	9.9	6.5	4.2
Overall unemployed:	4.6	5.3	5.0	3.6	5.4	3.9	5.9	5.7	5.5

SOURCE: California Census, 1960, 1-B Table PS, p. 607 (for Spanish surname); California Census, 1960, Table 33, p. 6-244 (for average unemployment by city).

*Degree of fluctuation in unemployment by census tract suggests pockets of even higher unemployment in the Chicano community:

Anaheim: 12.3%, 9.0%; Santa Ana: 6.3%, 4.6%, 10.4%, 6.9%, 3.2%, 5.6%.

related manufacturing, were affected by the introduction of Bracero labor. In 1951, many Chicanos still engaged in a "back-and-forth" movement between food processing and construction and agriculture.[78] What percentage of this group remained seasonally unemployed by 1958, as a result of Bracero domination of agricultural production?

The relatively high unemployment of the Chicano work force, and their low family income in relation to the rest of the population, suggest that the Chicano community continued to occupy a subordinate position in the new industrial order. Even in the cities where the Chicano unemployment rate was

[78] Senate Fact Finding Committee, The Recruitment and Placement of Farm Laborers in California, 1950 (1951).

lower than the overall unemployment rate (Westminster, Garden Grove, and Buena Park) the median income for the Chicano family was lower than the overall median family income (see Table 8).

The Bracero's replacement of the domestic worker in the fields was accompanied by a temporary replacement of the undocumented worker in agricultural production. The undocumented worker "did not go to the farms, because the Bracero program, displacing even the native farmworkers in the U.S., left no employment open to them."[79] The successful use of the Bracero in Orange County agriculture meant that the undocumented worker moved increasingly into urban-industrial employment. The urban *barrios* of Orange County, which provided the community base for the new immigrant, served the same integrative function that the *colonia* did for the immigrant population before World War II.

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[79]Nelson Copp, "Wetbacks and Braceros: Mexican Migrant Laborers and American Immigration Policy, 1930-1960" (1963), p. 100.

TABLE 8

COMPARISON OF CHICANO FAMILY INCOME TO OVERALL FAMILY INCOME, BY CITY: ORANGE COUNTY, 1960

	City and median income (dollars)								
	Anaheim	Buena Park	Costa Mesa	Fuller-ton	Garden Grove	La Habra	Orange	Santa Ana	Westmin-ster
Chicanos:	6,327	6,727	5,927	6,113	6,756	6,693	5,297	5,471	6,013
General population:	7,625	7,510	6,781	7,993	7,450	7,923	6,737	6,304	6,587

SOURCE: California Census, 1960, 18, Table P5 (for Spanish surname); California Census, 1960, Table 33, p. 6-222 (for overall median family income).

CONCLUSION

The central question posed in this study is the relationship between the Bracero Program and the industrialization of Orange County. It has been argued that there are two central aspects to this relationship: First, Public Law 78 aided agribusiness in making adjustments that enabled it to co-exist profitably alongside the urban-industrial economy, by providing a work force that could not organize or bargain, and whose wages remained essentially frozen for a decade. Second, the Bracero Program served to generate a new work force for urban-industrialization. The Bracero displaced the local worker and the new undocumented immigrant from agriculture to urban-industrial employment. The contracting of the Bracero led to increased governmental vigilance against the non-contracted, undocumented immigrant, making a highly exploitable work force from a large sector of the new immigrants due to their illicit status.

Following the strikes of the 1930s and after the agricultural industry gained record profits through the expanded market and a cheap, government-administered work force during World War II, agribusiness organizations sought to maintain the government contracting of workers. Agribusiness acquired such an administered work force through Public Law 78 in 1951. The Bracero Program provided agribusiness with the structural conditions for capital gain, which, in turn, enabled the industry to make changes in crop and production patterns necessary for its survival in the face of the rising tax and water costs which accompanied urban industrialization.

The initial impetus for the expansion of the manufacturing sector in Orange County came from the defense-oriented aerospace industry, which

created thousands of jobs and resulted in the expansion of the service and construction sectors in the County. The opening of jobs in services and construction, and the eventual expansion of jobs in diverse manufacturing industries, provided the Chicano labor force with non-agricultural employment. However, the Chicanos' employment in these sectors did not change the general conditions of unemployment, underemployment, and low family incomes that characterized their position in the agricultural industry. Their role in the local economy continued to be that of a "reserve army of labor." In the much-expanded economy of the 1950s, the Chicano remained concentrated in low-pay and low-status employment.

Before P.L. 78, many Chicanos continued to work in agriculture as a supplement to seasonal work in other industries, such as canning and construction. The accelerated use of the Bracero after P.L. 78 came into effect put more Chicanos into the surplus labor force of the urban-industrial economy. The local farmworker who remained employed in agriculture was used only as a supplement to the Bracero work force. His income was reduced by the low wage structure which was maintained by the presence of the Bracero. Movement between agriculture and other industries was made difficult because the Bracero dominated the seasonal labor market. The majority of the local seasonal workers were directly replaced by Braceros. As a result, many Chicanos were pushed into the developing industrial labor market -- a market amply supplied by migration from other areas of the United States.

This displacement of the Chicano work force was accompanied by the displacement of the undocumented worker in the fields. The former rural *barrio* became an ethnic enclave in the urbanizing area. The *barrio* continued to integrate the new immigrant workers into the economy, where they

experienced conditions similar to those confronting the Chicano worker. However, the new immigrants were more concentrated in the lowest-paying service and manufacturing sectors, and had a greater degree of employment in the agricultural industry.

The differences between an informal, mixed, domestic-and-immigrant agricultural labor force and the Bracero work force reveal the essentially social character of economic organization. The local labor force would not submit to the same wage and working conditions that the Bracero would accept. Moreover, local labor had set a precedent for organizing itself -- a threat to an increasingly coordinated and consolidated agricultural industry. The informal administration of this mixed work force was replaced by a formal, government administration of agricultural labor on terms favorable to the agriculture industry. The former, native-born agricultural workers moved on to employment in non-agricultural sectors, while new immigrant workers arrived to replenish the surplus labor force in the first decades of Orange County's urban-industrialization.

A NOTE ON SOURCES

It has been very difficult to verify the movement of the Chicano population into non-agricultural employment during and after World War II. The approximate dates of the movement, the number of workers employed by industrial sectors, the movement of families from rural to urban residential areas, the numbers of legal and illegal immigrants in the County and their employment patterns -- all are very difficult to document because of the contemporary nature of the study and the subject matter itself. To write a history of these changes, it was necessary to draw from sources that indicated overall trends and that suggested periods of change.

It was nearly impossible to indicate the movement of the Chicano work force by industry in Orange County during World War II. The farm labor reports only provide information on domestic and foreign workers by state, and by county. Oral histories and the agricultural journals provided the only indication of the conditions of employment of the Chicano community in the County during the Second World War. After the war, oral histories continue to provide the main source of documentation for the movement of Chicanos into other industrial sectors. The census data for 1950 did not separate the "Spanish-surname population" from the Anglo population. The 1960 Census did, however, provide information on the employment of Chicanos by industry as well as by area in Orange County. It also provided data on the family income and rate of unemployment of the Chicano community in Orange County.

Economic reports for the County served to show the employment conditions in the areas in which the Chicanos lived, and U.S. Department of Labor

statistics documented the employment conditions in the industries in which the Chicano labor force was concentrated.

It was not so difficult to determine the rate at which the domestic worker was displaced from agricultural production. This can be seen in the statistical reports of the Farm Labor Bureau (which provide number and type of agricultural worker by month and by year). The actual ratio of the Bracero work force to the domestic work force was more difficult to determine because the labor reports did not separate the number of seasonal workers from the number of year-round workers until 1964, the year the Bracero Program was terminated. The ratio discussed in the test (not in Table 6) had to be deduced from the ratio of seasonal to year-round workers. There were no statistics which could indicate the mobility of the work force by residential area and the rate of that mobility. This mobility had to be deduced from the growth of the urban barrio, evidenced in economic reports and the 1960 Census. Oral histories also referred to this movement.

The displacement of the undocumented workers by Braceros was, of course, most difficult to establish, since there are no available records on raids by immigration officers in Orange County fields in the first half of the 1950s. However, the labor reports did show an increased reliance on Bracero labor after 1955. This strongly suggested a change in employment patterns among undocumented workers.

There is no way, at present, to determine whether the "seasonal domestic labor" that continued to be used throughout the late 1950s and '60s was undocumented or documented immigrant labor. But, given the general statistics on "Spanish-surname employment, Los Angeles/Long Beach/

Orange Coutny, 1960," it is plausible that new immigrants, and not pre-war Chicano farmworkers, were being employed at this point in time. The movement of new immigrants into the County cannot be accurately judged until the 1970 Census reports are carefully reviewed in subsequent work.

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