

Caught in the Middle: The Mexican State's Relationship with the United States and Its Own Citizen-Workers, 1942–1954

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*The problem of braceros is . . . a problem . . .
of . . . hunger.¹*

*As long as Mexican workers [can]not find
work, food, [or] guarantees [on their own
soil], they will look for a resolution to their
tragedy in a foreign land because hunger ad-
mits no hope.²*

ON 4 AUGUST 1942, the Mexican and United States governments closed a deal, laying the foundation for what would be the first in a series of contract labor agreements, lumped together in the vernacular as the Bracero Program.³ Through this program in force from 1942 to 1964, men would leave families, friends, and pueblos in Mexico and toil in United States agricultural fields. They would do the planting and harvesting previously done by poor white, black, and Latino domestic laborers now finding better paying industrial jobs in a United States economy geared up for war production. This mid-twentieth-century Mexican migration to the United States was at times sanctioned and regulated, at others impeded and challenged by the Bracero Program. Examining it reveals the Mexican state's relationship with the United States and its posture toward its own citizenry. Increasing and increasingly visible pressure and presence "from below" constrained the government's diplomatic power and options vis-à-vis the United States as well as the space of engagement available for mobilizing and demanding consensus at home.

During the Bracero Program, Mexico's Revolutionary Nationalism was still under construction.⁴ Analyzing two border incidents—one in 1948, another in 1954—juxtaposes Program rhetoric to each government's reaction to them and reveals the shifting diplomatic relationship between Mexico and the United States, and the mounting pressure that the

Mexican government would face from its economically strapped citizen-workers. Aspiring workers would go to great lengths to labor in the United States, limiting their government's diplomatic options. Ultimately the disparity between the needs of workers and the Mexican government's ability to satisfy those needs undermined the latter's claim of a nation securely on the road to industrialized progress, democracy, and modernity.

MODERNITY, STATE DISCOURSE, AND REVOLUTIONARY NATIONALISM

When the United States government approached Mexico in early 1942 complaining of a growing labor shortage, it appealed to a domestically strong and popular government, a popularity partially secured in 1938 when then-president Lázaro Cárdenas nationalized oilfields previously under foreign control. While Mexico had repeatedly attempted to settle its outstanding financial claims, the United States had rebuffed these attempts, claiming that the compensation offered for nationalized oil wells was grossly insufficient. In 1942, however, this United States intransigence faded. Very much wanting a hemispheric ally, it was now willing to settle oil company claims. In addition, the Mexican government found itself broached about the possibility of sending men to work in United States agricultural fields. Given its domestic popularity and legitimacy, it had few incentives to approve a transfer of laborers that symbolized its inability to satisfy the needs of citizenry.⁵ The government would have to legitimate its participation in the Bracero Program to a domestic audience.⁶ It mobilized consent during the war by linking its participation to membership in a world democratic community and, later, by claiming that the Program would modernize the country and transform it from a "backward" country into a modern nation-state.⁷ Recognizing the role that United States multinationals, technology, and investment would play in this modernizing metamorphosis, President Manuel Avila Camacho angled for a way to soften the government's stance towards the United States and to shift from a confrontational to a mutually-advantageous posture. The onset of World War II and United States growers' clamor for help in mitigating a domestic labor shortage gave Avila Camacho his needed opportunity.⁸

Mexican migration was not a new phenomenon; men had been emigrating ever since "the border" was created and institutionalized in the

nineteenth century, lured by plentiful jobs, higher salaries, a fear of revolutionary violence, or simply the rumblings of children's stomachs.⁹ Jobs beckoned ever-greater numbers of men northward as United States factories increased production and soldiers headed off to war. But when United States Ambassador to Mexico George Messersmith advocated a more formal approach to this migrant stream in 1942, Undersecretary of Foreign Relations Jaime Torres Bodet dismissed his offer.¹⁰ While he acknowledged Mexico's unemployment problem, Undersecretary Torres Bodet asserted that Mexico was gearing up for an unprecedented industrialization and modernization of its agricultural sector. The country, he claimed—voicing a widely-held opinion—would soon need all those working arms.¹¹ Still, men kept heading northward. Mexico was haunted by the specter of abuses that men had suffered working on United States soil during World War I and by the “repatriation” of long-time residents to Mexico in the mass deportations of the 1930s.¹² The government faced growing pressure from a press demanding that workers be protected from exploitation and discriminatory practices.¹³ It grabbed the opportunity to exert some control over this exodus.¹⁴

After Mexico announced its support for the Allied powers in early 1942, the press changed its tone and depicted unpicked crops rotting on United States vines as people flocked to better-paying jobs in urban factories. Editorials in the newspaper *Excelsior* publicized the essential role that Mexican workers could, and indeed should, play in helping the United States to fight the enemies of democracy. With titles such as “They are Requesting Mexican Workers in the US” and “Mexican Workers Urgently Needed in the US” to “Only Mexicans Can Save California Harvests,” editorials laid the foundation for what would soon be touted as a beneficial official policy.¹⁵ “These reports specifically elevated workers needed for harvesting crops to the same level as those shiny-faced American “boys” fighting in Europe.

The Mexican government also portrayed its role in the Program as part of a democratic alliance to keep the world free from authoritarianism. Discussing the threat from fascism, Foreign Relations Undersecretary Jaime Torres Bodet predicted that “a victory by the democracies would . . . bring progress, harmony, and a just peace to the world.¹⁶ The government called upon the United States to respect Mexico's democratic roots and revolutionary accomplishments. The Program was a partnership in the form of “the good contract,” proving that Mexico was respected by its northern neighbor and that it also wielded sufficient influence to protect its citizen-workers *outside* its territory.

The first contract, the result of the July 1942 negotiations, in fact was (at least on paper) a good contract and it mitigated some of the problems of previous migrants. First and foremost, it made the United States government the employer. Not only would all braceros be afforded the same protections and rights; in addition, the United States government—and not individual growers as had been the case in past informal arrangements—undertook the responsibility for upholding the contract's obligations and conditions. Secondly, the contract guaranteed (again, at least on paper) that migrants would live in sanitary housing and be paid the prevailing wage for the crop they picked—protections far stronger than those historically accorded United States domestic farmworkers.

The Mexican government made much of this good contract, trumpeting the details of its diplomatic success in the press. Throughout August and September 1942, national newspapers proclaimed that humble, hard-working men would promote greater understanding between the two countries. With protections stronger than those allotted United States citizens and guarantees against racial discrimination, Mexicans would no longer hold second-class status. The United States also attempted to placate Mexican opponents of the Program¹⁷—in particular, large landowners that relied on low-waged labor—by guaranteeing that migrants would return in time to attend to Mexican fields.¹⁸ Lending *brazos* during the war would only be the beginning of what a democratic and modernizing Mexico would offer the United States.

Complications developed immediately. Only eight days after the Mexican government announced the first request for a mere 6,000 workers, thousands of hopeful men swarmed the offices of the Mexican Ministry of Labor, exceeding the government's wildest expectations. "Lines extended [for several blocks] and men . . . began arriving at 4:00 am," reported one newspaper.¹⁹ Those who descended on the office that morning came to escape the impoverished conditions of the countryside and earn the money this opportunity would bring, or to serve in the war against tyranny, or just maybe for an adventure.²⁰

Those lucky enough to win the coveted contract found themselves regaled by the government about how the Program would make them (and through them, the Mexican nation) modern. The government suggested that migrants working in the technologically superior United States would learn modern agricultural skills and be exposed to "modern" values and work habits.²¹ It also touted the Program's forced saving plan as promoting modernization.²² Returning migrants would buy modern farm machinery with money they had saved, ultimately enabling return-

ing braceros to not only modernize production on their own land but to promote this process gradually throughout Mexican agriculture.²³ As instructed by the Mexican government, migrants were not mere poor farmworkers—they were field soldiers who, with callused fingers and machete in hand, fulfilled the duty to save crops needed for combat soldiers.²⁴ In the process of harvesting cotton, beets or lemons, these field soldiers would be modernized by participating in a truly modern war.

Whether or not Mexican government officials whole-heartedly believed that performing stoop labor, the most un-modern of tasks, could modernize the entire nation, it offered a modernizing discourse as its *public* rationale for the Program. The government's use of a modernizing language to promote a program so intuitively *anti-modern* demonstrates the fervor to modernize that permeated *every* state program.²⁵ As a subaltern state juggling international pressures and highly-charged and competing domestic demands, the government would have preferred to employ "surplus labor" within its borders.²⁶ Symbolically and strategically, migrant laborers had provided a sign of its failure.²⁷ Yet with no way of creating enough jobs to satisfy the country's need, the Mexican government could only put a positive spin on a negative situation. It portrayed Mexico as the strategic, if not quite equally modern partner of the United States.²⁸ And with sufficient justification: the labor program was the United States government's idea; it had approached Mexico, not the other way around; it needed an alliance with its southern neighbor. Having a powerful suitor brought the Mexican government significant rewards. It could redefine a diplomatic relationship that had (en)gendered Mexico as the weaker (female) country and the United States as the stronger (male) power. As semi-partners, Mexico, both country and government, "became" democratic and modernizing. The government maneuvered to secure the good contract, emphasizing the "good treatment the Mexicans [would] receive . . . in the US."²⁹

The Mexican government anchored its public promotion of the Bracero Program in the notion of *la familia mexicana*, the Mexican family, an ideal emerging out of the Revolution and mobilized with great success in the aftermath of the oil expropriation. This image subordinated the individual or faction to the ideal of a unified pueblo and created a working notion of Mexican interests.³⁰ Most importantly, it made the Mexican state the protector of these collective interests and the true, legitimate upholder of the Revolution's ideals.³¹ It simultaneously ex-

posed inherent cracks in this artificial national unity and contradictions in the Mexican government's position as subaltern state. Revealed in the "surplus labor" that the state "chose" to "export," in an agricultural sector that could not feed the nation's hungry mouths, and in an industrial sector too weak to create sufficient jobs was an emasculated state-as-father. The state was forced to demand sacrifices from the very people it claimed to defend and protect—humble men who couldn't feed families from meager plots of land, and women and children left behind in Mexico, unprotected by either household or national patriarch, to carry out men's tasks. Unable to provide for its citizens, the state retained a tenuous grasp on its position as patriarch.

Mexico had entered into the Program with strong bargaining strength relative to that of the United States, a leverage rapidly undercut by the ever-increasing numbers of men clamoring to escape lives of "exploita[tion] and insult[s]." ³² As word of the Program spread, demand for contracts outpaced their number. Seeing family, friends, and neighbors returning with dollars in the pockets of new clothes, men unable to obtain contracts through formal mechanisms journeyed to the border. ³³ While some awaited future possibilities, others sneaked across the territorial line, forming an all-too-visible human stream neither sanctioned nor regulated by the Program. The growing presence of workers without official contracts, in turn, gave growers an unforeseen, but not unnoticed, advantage; and they immediately put to work this parallel stream of laborers not covered by official protections. Mexico appealed to the United States government to put in place sanctions similar to those enacted under the 1986 Immigration and Reform Control Act four decades later, but the United States government refused to do so, instead proposing that both nations take steps to control the rapidly-growing flow of undocumented men. ³⁴

After the war ended, the United States upped the number of contracts available, partly at the behest of growers who saw in this system a way of exerting downward pressure on wages and partly to offset non-documented migration, appeasing its southern neighbor. Yet even raising the number of men permitted to migrate did not meet the seemingly insatiable demand for labor, and the result was fierce competition for contracts, more men crossing *de mojado* (without documents) and enormous corruption among Mexican police and local officials. ³⁵ In October 1948, reports estimated that "at least 70,000 illegal Mexican[s]" were working in the United States while by 1952, reliable sources put the

figure at a million and a half.³⁶ These facts spurred an official of the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Relations to tour the United States in search of “‘first-hand information’ about the illegal traffic of Mexican braceros.”³⁷ This 1948 figure, announced the official, was merely a “conservative calculation [of mainly] semi-illegal workers . . . who had stayed in the United States after their contracts expired” and did not include those who had entered without official contracts.³⁸ He added, however, that “[t]he border patrols from both countries were [now] cooperating to impede the [flow] of illegal traffic” denounced by both Mexican government officials and many United States communities.³⁹

United States growers’ push to keep the “gates open” coincided with visible countermeasures on the southern side. Even as the Mexican government vociferously argued that continued non-contracted migration depleted a source of labor necessary for its own agricultural production, it simultaneously found its negotiating hand forced by the multitudes waiting to sneak across the border—the very labor force it was working to protect.⁴⁰ From 1947 to 1949, about twice as many men (142,000) were “legalized” once over the border than were originally contracted (about 74,000), in effect rewarding those who had migrated outside official channels.⁴¹ This constant stream of hopeful migrants undermined the government’s ability to secure worker protections. Unable to withstand pressure from its own citizens, Mexico lost diplomatic ground; the United States government refused to function any longer as the employer, awarding individual growers that “responsibility.”⁴² The result was widespread abuse of workers: the growers directly benefiting from the Program were charged with protecting the welfare of workers from whose labor they directly profited.

CROSSING THE LINE: NORTHERN OPENING, SOUTHERN CLOSURE; INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE INTERESTS

Two border incidents, one in 1948 and the other in 1954, reveal the Mexican government’s loss of negotiating clout. By examining state responses and the ways in which they were portrayed to the nation, we see the increasing constraints in the government’s maneuvering room.⁴³ The first took place on 13 October 1948, in El Paso, the second in 1954 along the entire border.

In El Paso in 1948, United States border officials blatantly “desisted in their efforts to stop the illegal entry of Mexican agricultural workers

[waiting anxiously on the southern side of the border] into North American territory."⁴⁴ Towards the end of September the Mexican government had decided to allow men living in or congregated at border towns to be contracted for work "immediately," as United States growers had urged.⁴⁵ For five days in mid-October, men "waded [across] the shallow river in sight of the Border Patrol, which received them with formality, herded them into temporary enclosures and immediately paroled them to . . . cotton growers, who trucked [them] . . . at once to the fields." This action, announced *La Opinión*, the newspaper for the Mexican community in Los Angeles, was "in flagrant contradiction to . . . the agreement in force, [which states that] the corresponding authorities from both governments will [under]take all measures [needed] to avoid the illegal [sic] migration of Mexican [men]."⁴⁷

While press coverage suggested that United States officials had merely *refrained* from carrying out their duty of stopping men at the border and that "[n]o arrests were made because . . . Immigration Agents had . . . permit[ted workers] to cross," in actuality, United States border guards intentionally and unilaterally opened the border, stating that fall harvests "were in danger [of being lost]."⁴⁸ Local United States officials took it upon themselves to pull back the gates, allowing waiting men to freely cross.⁴⁹ The 7,000 to 8,000 men who made it across during the momentary border reprieve were instantly "dried out," a play on the term wetbacks, slang for non-documented migrants.⁵⁰ These men were immediately offered contracts by growers who happened to be standing by in case of such an unexpected event.⁵¹ Mexico denounced this act as a blatant treaty violation and an assault on the basic "spirit of cooperation and the Good Neighbor policy," and the United States government apologized for the incident a few days later.⁵² This unilateral action further destabilized an already unequal power relationship. It broke Mexico's grip over the procedures that delivered workers to the fields.⁵³

The human bodies rushing across the border crippled the Mexican government's ability to secure protections for its citizen-workers and hampered its diplomatic clout with the United States. It was essentially forced to acknowledge the now patently visible "never-ending poverty" facing "hundreds of thousands of field workers."⁵⁴ With so many "struggl[ing everyday] to leave Mexico . . . and work in the United States . . . through legal or surreptitious means," the government was called upon by prominent citizens at home *and* in the United States to "stop lying about . . . [the] uncontestable truth . . . [that the nation's] ag-

riculture continue[d] in crisis."⁵⁵ Squeezed by escalating vocal and visible pressure from "below," the government found its ability to broker adequate protections increasingly undercut by the very people it sought to safeguard.⁵⁶ The United States government and growers had a new and formidable bargaining edge.

The border incident at El Paso occurred because the Mexican government had been unwilling to concede to new United States demands. The two had long haggled over the location of recruitment centers and during the summer of 1948, the United States government persuaded Mexico to locate a recruitment center in Mexicali (the capital of Baja California on the international border) in exchange for allowing others to be established in the interior. For Mexico, the location of recruitment centers at the border was expensive; the United States government shouldered the cost of moving braceros from "border" recruitment centers to United States farms, while its Mexican counterpart picked up the tab to this point. Second, the Mexican government felt compelled to placate powerful large agriculturalists in Sonora, Chihuahua, and Sinaloa that paid significantly less than workers could earn north of the border and who wanted recruitment centers located in the country's interior, where they were less visible.⁵⁷ Lastly, the Mexican government believed that inland centers enabled it to better regulate the selection process.⁵⁸ The struggle over the physical location of recruitment centers was over which country wielded the power to define the border, physically, symbolically, and ideologically. In these debates, the border itself became destabilized, and disconnected from the physical line-in-the-sand or jurisdictional or territorial divide. No longer fixed, the border was wrested from a single site, and became a moveable abstraction haggled over in bi-national treaty negotiations.

In the end, the Mexican government tacitly acknowledged its need for the Program; it continued to participate despite a blatant encroachment on its negotiating power. Regardless of its bluster about a forthcoming modernization and heightened demand for domestic labor, the government knew migration functioned as a "safety valve" for rural unemployment and poverty.⁵⁹ An outpouring of anti-state violence during the recent Cristero Rebellion, with its potent images of militant peasant outrage in the North, weighed heavily on Mexican bureaucrats' minds. Driven by this specter, the government continued to claim leadership of the nation *through* the Program and heralded the treaty between "good neighbors" and diplomatic equals.⁶⁰

In 1948, in El Paso, United States officials had acted on their own to open the border; in 1954, they did so with authorization from "the highest levels of government."⁶¹ On 15 January 1954, after months of negotiation had not produced a new formal agreement, United States Departments of Labor, State, and Justice took matters into their own hands.⁶² Together they issued a press release stating that the United States would begin awarding contracts to migrants crossing the border.⁶³ Outraged by this turn of events, the Mexican government denounced the decision and implored men to stay home, and retaliated by halting all negotiations.⁶⁴ It retorted that the United States was wielding "a stick, to force . . . Mexico . . . to accept . . . [unacceptable] conditions" and to tip the scales in the diplomatic stalemate over the agreement.⁶⁵

But Mexican men kept heading north. They dismissed government pleas and its threats to increase the number of troops stationed at the border.⁶⁶ They ignored Mexico's pledge that no one would be permitted to cross and its promises of swift, stiff punishment for those who did.⁶⁷ Noting the large pool of waiting laborers, the urgent needs of United States growers, and the break-off in negotiations, Texas Representative Ken Regan publicly lamented the two countries' inability to settle their differences, doubting whether Mexico's tactic of closing the border would effectively deter persistent migrants.⁶⁸ "Mexicans," he concluded, "need North American dollars and we need their labor. [Migration] is an aid to the Mexican economy and to ours."⁶⁹ Not surprisingly, the Mexican government put sole blame for the predicament on the unilateral decision of the United States government.⁷⁰ It accused its northern neighbor of "encouraging men to [cross the border and] violate the law," putting them in physical danger.⁷¹

The throngs of men gathered in Mexicali did not care whose fault it was. After waiting there, many for as long as seven months, most men had no money. "Thousands of workers," claimed Baja California's head of Migration, "are milling around in Mexicali's streets . . . in desperate need of . . . food and a place to stay," impatient with the delays and diplomatic finger-pointing.⁷² At first the federal government tried to counter this impatience with threats, dispatching troops to Ensenada, Nuevo Laredo, Nogales and other border points.⁷³ In Mexicali, 500 men retaliated by marching on the governor's palace demanding food and work, and found their protests greeted by soldiers wielding fire hoses.⁷⁴ President Adolfo Ruíz Cortines attempted to diffuse the tense situation by instituting a plan to extend greater credit to communally-held land

communities and small landowners, plans that it hoped would relieve men's need to cross,⁷⁵ while Baja California Governor Braulio Maldonado took matters into his own hands. With over 12,000 men congregated at the border and more arriving daily, he hoped to entice them into leaving by dangling an offer of free transport home and possibilities of work.⁷⁶ Some men took up Maldonado's offer but most stayed in Mexicali. As one newspaper reporter saw it, "the hordes of braceros here . . . don't want help from the government; all they want is to be allowed to cross . . . and work."⁷⁷

The Mexican government's publicity about the termination of talks and pleas with men to stay home, declaring that no more braceros would work in the United States, did not persuade hungry, desperate men gathered at the border to return to their villages or deter more men from heading there. A reporter described a commotion, growing more dangerous by the day, as being as flammable as "a house over a barrel of dynamite."⁷⁸ On one particular morning some men in the restless crowd, impatient and weary, threw rocks at photographers perched on rooftops, while during another incident the same day, men lifted a bus, complete with passengers and driver, into the air in what was termed "a playful occurrence."⁷⁹

When the United States actually pulled back the gate and opened the border on January 22, chaos ensued. Hundreds of hopeful migrants rushed past the barrier, aided by the extended arms of United States Border Patrol agents, even as Mexican soldiers charged the men, trying to prevent them from crossing. Soldiers grabbed their countrymen, often by the shirt, and yanked them back as they were pulled towards the other side by United States border guards. Troops pelted men with fists, guns, water, and clubs in a vain attempt to contain this rush of bodies.⁸⁰ Pandemonium unfolded as waiting men struggled to cross the border, while United States officials and growers instructed those men already working in the United States but who had entered without authorization to step briefly over the invisible line, a move "legalizing" their presence. With this "step-over," workers met the official requirement of having been expelled or returned to Mexico, allowing them to "re-enter" with the INS' sanction and an official contract.⁸¹ Often these men, too, found themselves "grabbed and beaten by [Mexican police]" as they tried to plant one foot on the land of their birth and then return to United States soil.⁸²

The Mexican government, watching this chaotic situation develop,

made an astute tactical move. Recognizing that its assertive diplomatic posture was igniting a crisis at home, it reversed an earlier decision and declared that no Mexican official would impede anyone from crossing.⁸³ The United States, in turn, stated it would regulate migration by putting in place an interim program to begin the following Monday. But tensions continued. On January 27, more than 2,500 impatient men “rioted” for about an hour. Gathering at the border at six in the morning, they inched their way towards the gate, hoping to cross into “the promised land.”⁸⁴ A photo in *La Opinion* captured the agitated crowd pressed up against the steel fence dividing southern from northern neighbor.⁸⁵ With United States Immigration officials and police forming a human chain to “resist [an] attack” by waiting men, this “avalanche of braceros” was finally broken up by a torrent of water from fire hoses and by local police driving squad cars into the agitated crowd. Miraculously only one person was seriously injured and others received what one newspaper termed as only light bruises.⁸⁶

The Mexican Minister of the Interior again issued specific instructions to border officials not to detain anyone wanting to cross; guards were to ask only for a man’s name, his age, and occupation.⁸⁷ Officials also found themselves repeatedly denying charges that they had increased the border force or that they had ever issued orders to obstruct workers’ crossing.⁸⁸ Yet these measures and pronouncements still could not defuse the strained atmosphere. Men had seen their companions shoved, stepped on, and kicked in the previous day’s skirmish to cross the border.⁸⁹ And with the Monday date fast approaching, authorities on both sides feared new bracero uprisings.⁹⁰ They were right.

Migrant hopefuls started lining up on the border’s southern side in the wee hours of Monday morning. At first subdued, the crowd’s mood quickly turned when the small number of allotted contracts, only five hundred, ran out in a mere twenty minutes.⁹¹ As one newspaper described the spectacle underway, masses of men streaming toward the border encountered local Mexican police determined to prevent them from crossing. “This morning,” claimed the reporter on the scene, “between 8,000 and 10,000 farm workers threw themselves over the gate posts in Caléxico, while on the US side authorities, aided by police and fire fighters, stood [ready] to repel the avalanche of braceros that they found on top of them the moment that the gates were opened. . . . Officials used tear gas and hoses to turn the crowd around.”⁹²

A close-up photo on the front page of the same newspaper depicted

"a humble worker" caught in the melee, "exhausted from lack of air."⁹³ At one point, the men heading up the crowd could neither advance nor retreat; they faced a "human chain" of Mexican Immigration officials to their front and were blocked from behind by thousands of other disillusioned men straining to take each inch of forbidden territory.⁹⁴ With every prod, push, and shove forward by men straining toward the border, a few collapsed and were then trampled by others attempting to squeeze into their vacated spaces. Even the border guards, attempting to control the crowd, at times lost their balance from the pressure, and yielded momentary space to the advancing human force.⁹⁵ Border agents on the northern side also got into the fray, doing what they could to help men make it across. A photo captured a man being literally fought over by a United States border guard and a Mexican policeman, his arm yanked in one direction while his body was pulled in another.⁹⁶ After two hours of mass confusion, only five hundred men had entered the United States, but not without three attempts by the crowd to ram through the human blockade.⁹⁷ Over the following several days, almost ten thousand desperate men broke through lines of officials and scrambled onto United States soil. This prompted the United States government to finally halt the process under the pretense that it lacked funds and needed further authorization from Congress.⁹⁸ While President Ruíz Cortines attempted to downplay the diplomatic nightmare, publicly portraying the "incident [as one] that could be resolved within the norms of the good neighbor policy," the Mexican ambassador to the United States quietly approached President Eisenhower and requested that labor negotiations recommence, a plea that the latter accepted on February 11.⁹⁹ Declared a victory in the Mexican press, this rapprochement allowed the government to save face at home and gave it a way out of the international imbroglio.

Could the melee have been avoided? The Mexican government had long threatened to call home thousands of workers. In early June 1952, facing increasingly vocal United States grower demands for hard-line negotiating, Mexico decried the unacceptably low wages paid to bracero cotton pickers.¹⁰⁰ It denounced assaults on its ability to negotiate a fair, and higher, wage, insisted on its right to oversee the Program, and demanded a more comprehensive contract for its citizen-workers.¹⁰¹ Yet in 1953 congressional hearings on the Program, only Eugene McCarthy of Minnesota spoke out against the abuses braceros confronted in the United States. Most United States congressional members sided with Iowa Senator Bourke Hickenlooper, who demanded that the United States

abandon the entire program and called upon all Mexicans wanting to work to do so with no safeguards or subsidies. "Come on, boys," thundered Hickenlooper to the Senate, "there is work here, come in under your own power and go back under your own power."¹⁰²

In the months leading up to the 1954 border incident, as United States negotiators pressed for substantive changes to the agreement in force, Mexico had dug in its heels.¹⁰³ Although painfully "aware of the unofficial threats of unilateral actions emanating from Washington circles," the Mexican government refused to abdicate its responsibility to its citizen-workers.¹⁰⁴ Richard B. Craig, an expert on the Program and its diplomatic effects, attributed Mexico's determination to three factors. First the Mexican government reasoned that in a time of deteriorating "United States-Mexican relations . . . Washington surely would not adopt a go-it-alone attitude."¹⁰⁵ The second was Mexico's "sense of [political] timing and its [ability to use] pressure politics."¹⁰⁶ Lastly, the country's national pride was being displayed daily on the editorial pages of the Mexico City daily *Excelsior* in the week prior to the incident.¹⁰⁷ Having portrayed the Program as one between semi-equals, Mexico could not abdicate its responsibility to protect its citizen-workers.

During these crucial months, the editorial pages of newspapers in Mexico and newspapers published in the United States for Mexican communities presented an increasingly negative portrayal of the Program. They gave increasing rhetorical weight and print space to charges of braceros' exploitation and discrimination.¹⁰⁸ Gone were the headlines that only Mexicans could save crops destined for United States soldiers and quotes from proud Mexican men happy to swing machetes or endure sweat-inducing labor as crucial to the war effort as lugging rifles.¹⁰⁹ No longer did the media minimize the "hardships" of bracero life, such as time away from family, friends, and country, or adjustments to meals without salsa and tortillas.

Instead, the press focused on the Mexican government's negotiating "successes," blaming the United States for the tense and nearly uncontrollable situation. It suggested that Mexico had negotiated a good contract and secured additional "protections" for workers even when nothing was gained or advantages were surrendered.¹¹⁰ *El Nacional* and *El Universal*—and, to a lesser extent, *Excelsior*—also expounded on the large-scale modernizing projects undertaken throughout the country, the factories being built, and over-optimistic projections of how soon the country might meet its foodstuff needs without resorting to imports.¹¹¹ Even the outbreak of hoof-and-mouth disease in the North, necessitating

a complete border-closing and the slaughter of thousands of heads of cattle, and resulting in the formation of a Mexico–United States binational commission, was positively portrayed as cooperation between equals.¹¹²

Throughout this period, the government continued to frame its accomplishments—whether actual successes or failures—in terms of *la familia mexicana*. The state called upon all sectors of society, from industrialists and campesinos to factory and transportation workers, to put aside their individual needs and consider the country's future as a whole. Even as newspaper articles enumerated the reasons braceros endured the extreme conditions of United States agricultural work, the Program was portrayed in terms of its benefits for the Mexican family.¹¹³ Only through the Program could formerly humble men, now exposed to the rhythms and techniques of modern agricultural work, transplant back to their own fields what they had learned in the United States and teach those whom had not gone, a process that would “advance the nation.”¹¹⁴ Such portrayals survived media publicity of rampant corruption and document selling. Each time newspapers revealed schemes to wrest paltry sums from aspiring braceros for documents normally obtained without, they chastised low-level police or government officials for their greediness and “sins” against the national collective.¹¹⁵ And they portrayed the state as the nation's genuine protector, the trustworthy and objective arbiter of the Mexican family's needs, and thus the purveyor and true guiding Light of the Revolution. But once again, the supposed embodiment of the Revolution and defender of the masses found its diplomatic options impeded by those most needing its help and protection—the migrants.

CONCLUSION

The Mexican government had entered into the Bracero Program with a substantial diplomatic advantage vis-à-vis the United States. Gained through Mexico's 1938 oil well nationalization and United States labor shortages, this advantage declined over the life of the Bracero Program because so many Mexican workers were desperate to participate in it. In tracing out this loss of negotiating leverage, the inconsistencies inherent in the Mexican government's position became apparent. Regardless of how the government spun the Bracero experience—first as a show of patriotic zeal in a global anti-fascist fight and, later, as a self- and

nation-modernizing journey—in reality, migrants badly needed the financial rewards that United States work offered. Every time the Mexican government tried to muscle through ever stronger agreements to protect its citizen-workers, it was undermined by pressure from Mexico's destitute workers. This contradiction not only highlights a tension between national and individual interests; it also raises the fundamental question of whether and under what conditions a "subaltern state" can ever resolve them.

The Mexican government attempted to negotiate effective and enforceable protections for citizen-workers sent to the United States. To encourage and justify initial support for the Program, it constructed and projected both a set of national interests and the diplomatic strength to realize them. It sought agreements with stringent guarantees on salary, living and working conditions, and other benefits; and it fought for vigilant enforcement and constant verification of these conditions on behalf of the nation and individual migrants that it represented. In so doing, the Mexican state situated itself as both the arbiter of domestic disputes and the voice of Mexican national interests to a global audience.

Yet this same government simultaneously faced growing constraints on its ability to act on behalf of individual workers and, through them, the nation. The deep-seated economic and social needs of those it represented, made more visible by the destitute masses congregating at the border, increasingly limited the very hand the government could play. This forced Mexico to expend part of its domestic and diplomatic legitimacy on a program never designed to alleviate Mexico's poverty. The Bracero Program barely made a dent in it: not enough contracts were available since the United States retained exclusive control of the number awarded and when. Instead, the Program could only act as a limited safety valve in tandem with other labor-intensive industrialization projects that the government undertook.

At a time when the Mexican government made all programs addressing citizen needs part of the cause of national unity and sovereignty, its inability to address those needs weakened its claim as state patriarch. Even as it lost negotiating clout, the government tried to cast itself as the sole Mexican arbiter, as well as the insurer of the nation's respect and diplomatic prestige. Yet regardless of a collectivist rhetoric mobilizing Revolutionary ideology, people witnessed a government unable to meet their needs while distributing the Revolution's gains with an un-

even hand. They took it upon themselves to act on behalf of their families and themselves, and migrated outside formal Program channels, reducing further the government's bargaining leverage, from which they would have benefited. Ultimately, Mexico could not even keep the Program alive. The official economic program that replaced the Bracero Program was one of investment in *maquiladoras* or factories in the border region. It substituted neo-liberal export-oriented growth for ambitious state-led industrialization based on import substitution, a change that has benefited United States capital and consumers far more than people in Mexico. Today while consumers north of the border can buy the inexpensive electronic products and clothes produced in these maquiladoras, many sectors of the United States economy, such as restaurants, construction, janitorial services, food-producing factories, and daycare, run on cheap, "illegal" labor. This labor is fueled by continuing migration between a (globally-integrated) Mexican economy still incapable of providing living-wage jobs for its citizenry and a United States that demonizes the men and women whose sweat and stamina it exploits, but whose crossings it cannot fully control or regulate. With a growing shortage of workers in the United States and an increasing disparity in wages between the two countries luring ever more people over the border, the Mexico of the mid-twentieth century in many ways still exists. Millions of men and now women still search for a living wage in "the promised land," while the Mexican government remains caught in the middle, unable to stem this growing outflow of people by addressing their needs or protect them as they venture into *El Norte*.

NOTES

Research for this article was supported by the Wenner Gren Foundation, the Institute for the Study of Man, the Hewlett Foundation, and grants from the University of Chicago Department of History and Center for Latin American Studies. I would also like to thank Ken Clements, Robert Curley, Lessie Frazier, Donna Gabaccia, Michael Sacco, and David Williams for their provocative comments and meticulous copy-editing on the multiple incarnations of the article.

1. "Aspetos de la Política Mexicana," *La Opinión*, 2 February 1954, p. 2. Unless otherwise indicated all quotes have been translated by the author.

2. "De la Política Mexicana," *La Opinión*, 4 February 1954, p. 2.

3. The official title of the Program is The Mexican-United States Program of the Loan of Laborers. The term *bracero*, meaning manual laborer, comes from the Spanish word *brazo*, which translates as arm.

4. For a thorough review of the Bracero Program itself, see Manuel García y Griego, "The Importation of Mexican Contract Laborers to the United States, 1942-1964: Antecedents, Operation, and Legacy," in Peter G. Brown and Henry Shue,

eds., *The Border that Joins, Mexican Migrants and U.S. Responsibility* (Totowa, 1983), pp. 49–98.

5. García y Griego's concludes that migration functioned as a sign of the Mexican government's historical inability to address the nation's basic needs. García y Griego, "Mexican Contract Laborers."

6. For a more detailed version of these connections, see my "Masculine Sweat, Stoop-labor Modernity: Gender, Race, and Nation in Mid-Twentieth Century Mexico and the United States (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2001).

7. As an example of the images and rhetoric in play during the initial period, see the caption for an untitled photo, Blanca Torres, *Hacia la utopía industrial, Historia de la Revolución Mexicana* (Mexico City, 1984), vol. 21, p. 42. For a more extensive discussion of the way in which modernity anchors the framing of the Bracero Program, see Cohen, "Masculine Sweat," chapter 2.

8. Scholars contend that this shortage was invented and sustained by growers who refused to institute increased agricultural wages to draw sufficient workers and instead badgered the government for assistance, leading it to approach Mexico. See Kitty Calavita, *Inside the State: The Bracero Program, Immigration, and the I.N.S.* (New York, 1992). The Program functioned not just to supply labor but to control it. See Lawrence A. Cardoso, *Mexican Emigration to the United States, 1897–1931: Socio-economic Patterns* (Tucson, Ariz., 1980); David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the making of Texas, 1836–1986* (Austin, Tex., 1987); David Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors, Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of Ethnicity* (Berkeley, Calif., 1995); and Mae Ngai, "Illegal Aliens and Alien Citizens: United States Immigration Policy and Racial formation, 1924–1943," Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1998).

9. Sister Mary Colette Standart, "The Sonoran Migration to California, 1848–1856: A Study in Prejudice," in David G. Gutiérrez, ed., *Between Two Worlds, Mexican Immigrants in the United States* (Wilmington, Del., 1996), pp. 3–22.

10. Manuel García y Griego, "Mexican Contract Laborers."

11. See, for example, editorials from the 11 June 1942 edition of *Excelsiór* and from *El Nacional*, 15 June 1942.

12. For information about the "first" Bracero Program, see Fernando Saúl Alanís Enciso, *El Primer Programa Bracero y el gobierno de México 1917–1918*. (San Luis Potosí, 1999).

13. Blanca Torres, *México en la segunda guerra mundial*, p. 249; Manuel García y Griego, "Mexican Contract Laborers," p. 51; and Centro de Estudios Históricos, *Historia general de México* (Mexico, 1976), vol. 4, pp. 197–198 and 164–165.

14. According to García y Griego, the Mexican government had been trying to protect Mexican migrants to the U.S. since the 1917 Constitutional Convention, when Article 123, laying out protections for emigrant workers, was adopted. From that moment on, border guards were instructed to discourage workers from leaving and consulates in the U.S. were directed to step up the help they offered to migrants and assist them in adjudicating their complaints against employers. The government would come to see these unilateral efforts as ineffective as thousands of Mexicans returned to Mexico during the Depression, a return, it realized, as brought about not by Mexican policies but the loss of jobs in the U.S. See his "Mexican Contract Laborers."

15. *Excelsiór*, 14, 30 May and 12 June 1942.

16. Jaime Torres Bodet, *La victoria sin alas: Memorias* (Mexico City, 1970).

17. González Navarro, *Población y sociedad en México*, pp. 163, 215; Boletín del Archivo General de la Nación, pp. 22–23; and García y Griego, "Mexican

Contract Labor." To some extent, this opposition continued, "Los Industriales No Desean Salgan Ya Braceros Mexicanos Para Los EEUU," *El Nacional*, 13 February, 1946, p. 6. Also see, Editorial, *El Popular*, 9 December 1941, p. 5 and Blanca Torres: *México en la segunda guerra mundial*, pp. 248–250. Trade unions and organized commercial interests argued that the exportation of men would undermine the country's efforts toward economic development and modernization. See, for example, Editorial, *El Popular*, 9 December 1941, p. 5 and Blanca Torres: *México en la segunda guerra mundial*, pp. 248–250.

18. Editorial, *Excelsior*, 14 August 1942, p. 5; Blanca Torres, *México en la segunda guerra mundial*, p. 253.

19. Editorial "La emigración mexicana," quoted in Blanca Torres, *México en la segunda guerra mundial*, p. 251.

20. Editorial "La emigración mexicana," quoted in Blanca Torres, *México en la segunda guerra mundial*, p. 251; Josefina Zoraida Vázquez and Lorenzo Meyer, *The United States and Mexico*. (Chicago, 1985), p. 160. Men were repeatedly charged with wanting only an adventure. See, for example, *Tiempo*, 2 January 1948, p. 4. quoted in Blanca Torres, *México en la segunda guerra mundial*, p. 255.

21. For early thoughts on the benefits of migrations see "Trabajadores mexicano," *La Opinión*, 24 April 1929, p. 3 and "La Tragedia de los Preatriados," *La Opinión*, 19 November 1931, p. 3; "Es necesario abandonar el complejo de inferioridad comercial en México," *El Nacional*, 16 June 1948, p. 1.

22. For a discussion of the importance of this aspect of the Program, see Cohen, "Masculine Sweat," chapter 2 and Blanca Torres, *México en la segunda guerra mundial*, pp. 255–56.

23. Editorials, *El Nacional*, 7, 8 August 1942, p. 5.

24. Editorial, *Excelsior*, 12 May 1942.

25. Ken Clements, personal conversation, University of South Carolina; April 2000. Also see Anne Rubenstein, *Bad Language, Naked Ladies, & Other Threats to the Nation, A Political History of Comic Books in Mexico* (Durham, N.C., 1998).

26. Moises González Navarro, *Población y sociedad en México, 1900–1970* (Mexico City, 1974), vol. 2, pp. 163, 215; Boletín del Archivo General de la Nación, Tercera Serie 4, number 4 (October–December 1980), pp. 22–23; and García y Griego, "Mexican Contract Labor." To understand how this functioned for Venezuela, see Fernando Coronil's "Listening to the Subaltern: The Poetics of the Neocolonial State," *Poetics Today*, 15 (Winter 1994): 631–41 and Coronil, *The Magical State: Nature, Money, and Modernity in Venezuela* (Chicago, 1997); Blanca Torres, *México en la segunda guerra mundial*, p. 249.

27. Manuel García y Griego, "Mexican Contract Laborers," p. 53.

28. Blanca Torres, *México en la segunda guerra mundial*, p. 249.

29. Blanca Torres, *México en la segunda guerra mundial*, p. 257.

30. For an example of its usage, see "México Antes de Todo," *La Opinión*, 25 April 1938, p. 3.

31. "Los Sacrificios y Beneficios Deben Ser Distribuidos en Forma Equitativa," *El Nacional*, 28 May 1946, p. 4.

32. Que Tratan Bien a Los Braceros Mexicanos en EU," *La Opinión*, 12 January 1954, p. 7.

33. The Los Angeles daily *La Opinión* claimed that the per capita earnings in the U.S. were approximately *eleven* times greater than those in Mexico and that salaries had continued going up while in Mexico, they had fallen steadily, "Braceros, Miseria," 3 March 1954, p. 5.

34. García y Griego, "Mexican Contract Laborers," p. 54.

35. Mojado translates as wet, engendering the term wetbacks to refer to non-documented migrants. On corruption see "Repercusiones en Relación con el Fraude a Braceros," *El Nacional*, 11 July 1946: section 2, 3 and "Contrabandistas de Braceros Capturados," *La Opinión*, 10 February 1954, p. 3.

36. "Serio Problema de dos Braceros," *El Nacional*: 3 October 1948, p. 1; "Braceros, Miseria," *La Opinion*, 3 March 1954, p. 5.

37. "Serio Problema de dos Braceros," *El Nacional*: 3 October 1948, p. 1.

38. "Serio Problema de dos Braceros."

39. "Serio Problema de dos Braceros." Also see Ernesto Galarza, *Merchants of Labor: The Mexican Bracero Story*. (Charlotte, 1964), p. 63.

40. Ernesto Galarza, *Merchants of Labor: The Mexican Bracero Story*, p. 63.

41. Richard B. Craig, *The Bracero Program, Interest Groups and Foreign Policy* (Austin, Tex., 1971), p. 67.

42. García y Griego, "Mexican Contract Laborers," p. 63.

43. Una Protesta por la Importación de Braceros," *La Opinión*, 12 September 1948, section 2, 4.

44. "Amplia Documentación Relativa a la Ilícita Entrada de Braceros a EEUU," *El Nacional*, 18 October 1948, p. 1.

45. Contratación de Braceros in Mexicali, Baja California," *La Opinión*, 28 September 1948, p. 1; "Monterrey Invasido por Los Que Pretenden Trabajar en los EEUU," *La Opinión*, 3 October 1948, p. 2; and "Huelga de Hambre de Los Braceros," *La Opinión*, 9 October 1948, p. 2.

46. Ernesto Galarza, *Merchants of Labor, The Mexican Bracero Story*, p. 49. Also see Peter N. Kirstein, *Anglo over Bracero: A History of the Mexican Worker in the United States from Roosevelt to Nixon* (San Francisco, 1977). For a different perspective see "Illegalmente Hay en México 15,000 Guatemaltecos," *La Opinion*, 26 October 1948, p. 2.

47. Amplia Documentación Relativa a la Ilícita Entrada de la Braceros a EEUU," *El Nacional*, 18 October 1948, p. 1. For another reading see "Más Elogios Recibe México Aun Por Su Patriótica Actitude Ante EU de A," *La Opinion*, 26 October 1948, p. 3.

48. Pasaron 6,000 Braceros a EU en Un Sólo Día," *La Opinión*, 17 October 1948, p. 1; "Quedó Derogado el Acuerdo Entre Ambos Países, Para la Contratación de Braceros," *El Nacional*, 19 October 1948, p. 1.

49. See Kirstein, *Anglo over Bracero*.

50. For another reading, see "La Cuestión de los 'Braceros,'" *La Opinión*, 25 October 1948, p. 3.

51. Across the country states were battling each other for braceros. See "Dos Estados en Pugna; Ambos Quieren Braceros," *La Opinión*, 22 September 1948, p. 2 and "Otro Conflicto Por Los Braceros," *La Opinión*, 29 September 1948, p. 1.

52. Denuncian Graves Violaciones," *La Opinión*, 18 October 1948, p. 1; and "Que Castigue a Los Culpables de La Entrada Ilegal de 1-7 Braceros," *La Opinión* 27 October 1948, p. 1; "Ecos Mexicanos de la Actitude Estadunidense sobre Los Braceros," *La Opinión*, 23 October 1948, p. 8 and "Llamado a Braceros," *La Opinión*, 20 October 1948, p. 1. "EU Regresará a México Todos Los Braceros Ilegales," *La Opinión*, 26 October 1948, p. 1. For further information, see Kirstein, *Anglo over Bracero*; Craig, *The Bracero Program*; Galarza, *Merchants of Labor*; García y Griego, "Mexican Contract Laborers"; and Robert D. Tomasek, "The Political and Economic Implications of Mexican Labor in the United States under the Non-Quota System, Contract Labor Program, and Wetback Movement," (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1957), pp. 232-35.

53. Empleados Mexicanos Acusados," *La Opinión*, 22 September 1948, p. 1 and "Protesta de 7000 Braceros Ante Ruíz Cortines," *La Opinión*, 17 September 1948, p. 1.

54. "Hermano Bracero," *La Opinión*, 30 October 1948, p. 5; "La Demanda de Garantías," *La Opinión*, 28 October 1948, p. 5.

55. "La Demanda de Garantías."

56. "Protesta de 7000 Braceros Ante Ruíz Cortines," *La Opinión*, 17 September 1948, p. 1; "Huelga de Hambre de Los Braceros," *La Opinión*, 9 October 1948, p. 2; "La Demanda de Garantías," *La Opinión*, 28 October 1948, p. 5; "Más de 1000 Son Las Solicitudes de Los Obreros," *La Opinión*, 26 October 1948, p. 2; "Ecos de la Actitud Mexicana Por Los Braceros," *La Opinión*, 22 October 1948, p. 4; "Colonización de Mexicanos Antes Que 10 Extranjeros," *La Opinión*, 15 October 1948, p. 3; "Monterrey Invasado Por Los Que Pretenden Trabajar en Los EEUU," *La Opinión*, 3 October 1948, p. 2; "Otro Conflicto Por Los Braceros," *La Opinión*, 28 September 1948, p. 1; and "Contratación de Braceros en Mexicali, Baja California," *La Opinión*, 28 September 1948, p. 1.

57. During the initial phase of the Program, the main recruitment centers were located in Mexico City, Guadalajara, and Irapuato, Guanajuato. They quickly shifted northward, to Monterrey, Chihuahua City, Zacatecas, Hermosillo, and Mexicali; by 1955, some bracero workers were processed at the actual Mexico-U.S. border.

58. García y Griego, "Mexican Contract Laborers," p. 67; Galarza, *Merchants of Labor*, p. 77; González Navarro, *Población y sociedad*, p. 248; García, *Operation Wetback*, p. 39.

59. Nuestra Industrialización está en marcha," *El Nacional*, 4 March 1948, p. 1; "Disminuye la importación de artículos de consumo," *El Nacional*, 30 April 1948, p. 1; "México necesita miles de técnicos en agrícola," *El Nacional*, 7 June 1948, p. 1; Editorial, *El Nacional*, 24 July 1948, p. 5; and Editorial, *El Nacional*, 26 August 1948, p. 5.

60. "Un Alto Espíritu de Amistad y Cooperación Anima a los Legisladores Norteamericanos," *El Nacional*, 25 August 1948, p. 1.

61. García y Griego, "Mexican Contract Laborers," p. 65.

62. "Continuarán Trayendo Braceros Mexicanos a EU," *La Opinión*, 2 January 1954, p. 1.

63. "Estados Unidos Quiere Braceros 'A Como de Lugar,'" *La Opinión*, 13 January 1954, p. 1; "Otro Programa. Para Traer Braceros," *La Opinión*, 16 January 1954, p. 1; "Fondos Para Los Braceros en el Presupuesto," *La Opinión*, 23 January 1954, p. 1; "Mexico Suspende el Envío de Braceros," *La Opinión*, 17 January 1954, p. 1; and "Los Partidos Aprobaron el Acuerdo del Gobierno Sobre Braceros," *La Opinión*, 19 January 1954, p. 2.

64. "Medidas para Evitar que Vengan Braceros," *La Opinión*, 20 January 1954, p. 1; Craig, *The Bracero Program*; and García y Griego, "Mexican Contract Laborers," p. 65.

65. Se Cumplió El Plazo a Los Braceros," *La Opinión*, 27 February 1954, p. 1 and "EU and Mexico en Un Acuerdo Sobre Braceros," *La Opinión*, 28 February 1954, p. 1. Also see Craig, *The Bracero Program*, pp. 105-6.

66. "Medidas Para Evitar Que Vengan Braceros," *La Opinión*, 20 January 1954, p. 1; "Tropas Mexicanas Evitan la Salida de Braceros," *La Opinión*, 24 January 1954, p. 1.

67. "Los Estados Unidos Piden Tropas Mexicanas Para Vigilar La Frontera," *La Opinión*, 2 January 1954, p. 3.

68. "Estados Unidos Quiere Braceros 'A Como de Lugar,'" *La Opinión*, 13 January 1954, p. 1.

69. Editorial, *Excelsior*, 17 January 1954, p. 5.
70. "México Sólo Negociará se se Suspende la Libre Contratación de los Braceros," *La Opinión*, 23 January 1954, p. 3 and "Dos Aspectos de Un Problema," Editorial, *La Opinión*, 26 January 1954, p. 5.
71. "2,211 Braceros Cruzaron La Frontera," *La Opinión*, 27 January 1954, p.1.
72. Ibid.
73. Editorials in *Excelsior*, 21 January 1954, 5 and 23 January 1954, p. 5.
74. García y Griego, "Mexican Contract Laborers," p. 66.
75. "Evitarán la Emigración de Braceros a EU con Amplios Créditos y Trabajo," *La Opinión*, 25 January 1954, p. 2.
76. "Se Arremolinan en la Frontera los Braceros," *La Opinión*, 29 January 1954; "Se Agrava El Problema de Los Braceros," *La Opinión*, 26 January 1954, p. 1; and Editorial, *New York Times*, 16 January 1954.
77. "Se Agrava El Problema de Los Braceros," *La Opinión*, 26 January 1954, p. 1.
78. "Se Arremolinan en la Frontera los Braceros," *La Opinión*, 29 January 1954, p. 1.
79. Ibid.
80. See editorial pages of *Excelsior*, 24, 27, 28, 29 January and 2 February 1954, along with the *El Paso Times* for complete description of events.
81. García y Griego, "Mexican Contract Laborers."
82. Craig, *The Bracero Program*, p. 113.
83. "2,211 Braceros Cruzaron La Frontera" and "A pesar de la excitativa oficial, empezó la fuga de braceros," *Excelsior*, 23 January 1954, p. 3.
84. Una Gran Multitud de Braceros se Lanza Sobre La Línea," *La Opinión*, 28 January 1954, p. 1.
85. "Los Braceros Se Desesperan," *La Opinión*, 29 January 1954, p. 1.
86. "Una Gran Multitud de Braceros se Lanza Sobre La Línea," *La Opinión*, 28 January 1954, p. 1.
87. "Podrán ya Salir los Braceros," *La Opinión*, 30 January 1954, p. 1.
88. "Podrán ya Salir los Braceros."
89. Ibid.
90. "Teme Un Nuevo Motín de Braceros," *La Opinión*, 31 January 1954, p. 1.
91. "Otro Túngulo de Braceros en Mexicali," *La Opinión*, 2 February 1954, p. 1.
92. Ibid.
93. "La Avalancha Braceril," *La Opinión*, 2 February 1954, p. 1.
94. "Otro Túngulo de Braceros en Mexicali."
95. Ibid.
96. *Hispanic American Report*, January 1954, p. 1 and Craig, *The Bracero Program*, pp. 112–13.
97. "Otro Túngulo de Braceros en Mexicali."
98. "9000 Asaltaron La Frontera con EEUU," *La Opinión*, 3 February 1954, p. 1 and "EU Detiene La Contratación," *La Opinión*, 5 February 1954, p. 1.
99. Ruíz Cortines, quoted in Tomasek, "Political and Economic Implications," pp. 260–261; Craig, *The Bracero Program*, p. 117; and García y Griego, "Mexican Contract Laborers," p. 66.
100. Los Partidos Aprobaron el Acuerdo del Gobierno Sobre Braceros," *La Opinión*, 19 January 1954, p. 2; Craig, *The Bracero Program*, p. 103.
101. "Medidas Para Evitar Que Vengan Braceros," *La Opinión*, 20 January 1954, p. 1.
102. U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, *Extension of the Mexican Farm Labor Program. Hearing on S. 1207*, 83rd Congress, 1st Session, March 24, 25, and 26, 1953, pp. 24, 26.

103. Medidas Para Evitar Que Vengan Braceros," *La Opinion*, 20 January 1954, p. 1.
104. Craig, *The Bracero Program*, p. 107.
105. Ibid.
106. Ibid.
107. See *Excelsior's* editorial pages during the week 15–24 January 1954.
108. "Que Excluyen a Los Mexicanos de Los Jurados en Jackson, Texas," *La Opinion*, 14 January 1954, p. 6.
109. See editorials in *Excelsior*, 12, 14, 30 May 1942.
110. "Mexico Explica el Nuevo Acuerdo Sobre Braceros," *La Opinion*, 14 March 1954, p. 1.
111. Blanca Torres, *Hacia la utopia industrial*, part 2.
112. Ibid.
113. See, for example, editorial from *Excelsior*, 22 January 1954; "Los braceros y la verdad mexicana," *Excelsior*, 1 February 1954; "La cuestión de los braceros," *Excelsior*, 5 February 1954.
114. Cohen, "Advancing the Nation on Bended Knees: Democracy, Modernity, and the Bracero Program, 1942–1953," paper presented at Latin American Studies Conference, 24 September 1998.
115. Ibid.