**THE BRACERO LEGACY ON MIGRANT AGRICULTURAL LABOR**

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Civic engagement involves an individual or group seeking to address community concerns. Throughout American history, examples of individuals committing themselves to fostering change are ample. When it comes to Latinos, some of the most prominent movements emerged during the mid-20th century. One can argue that Bracero Program farm workers emerged as some of the most dominant voices for agricultural migrant workers in the US. This program was enacted in 1942 in response to labor shortages stemming from World War II. During its 22 years, more than 4 million Mexicans crossed into the U.S. to work under temporary contracts in industries that included agriculture and railroads (Smith, 2022). Unfortunately, many Braceros would not only face physical and mental abuse, but also financial exploitation.

Using historic interviews, documentaries, and academic texts, this study examines how the Bracero Program not only fueled political engagement and mobilization of migrant workers during the 1940s, but also how it institutionalized the importance of civic and political participation for migrants through the creation of the United Farmer Workers Association (UFWA). Findings underscore that fostering change was not easy. Some of the earlier strategies employed to foster better working conditions included recognition of inequality and abuse, education of members, identification of demands, calls to action, identification of leadership, coalition building, organization building, civic engagement tactics, and political lobbying; efforts that were eventually institutionalized through the UFWA. Decades later, the UFWA has continued to use and build upon these strategies to advocate for the rights of migrant workers.

Despite claims that Latinos rarely take part in civic engagement activities, this is not the case. Latinos do indeed have a rich history of participation often neglected by researchers (Garcia & Sanchez, 2008). This is why this type of historic overview is necessary. Though attention has been placed on understanding the role and impact of the Bracero Program, not enough time is spent exploring the legacy of this movement on future generations of migrants.