



Los Mojados: The Wetback Story by Julian Samora; Jorge A. Bustamante; Gilbert Cardenas

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The education of migrant children is national in scope.

Federal funds are not equitably allocated and Congress has been late in appropriating funds for the program resulting in the fact that over \$17 million went unspent for fiscal 1967, 1968, 1969.

Leadership and planning are weak on all levels and local staffs lack orientation and are poorly motivated.

A very small number of migrant children are receiving high school education.

Migrant children go hungry while almost one million dollars budgeted for this purpose goes unspent.

Less than one-half of the migrant children receive physical or dental examinations or immunizations and less than one-fifth receive medical or dental treatment.

Coordination to meet total needs of migrant families is lacking, and home-school contracts are found to be the weakest part of the total program.

Based on the data gathered, the study group makes some far-reaching recommendations. In part, they are-

Legislation and Administration

1. The USOE must give stronger leadership to the development of national goals and strategies.
2. Congress must appropriate funds in time, and Title I migrant funds should *not* be diverted for other purposes.
3. Allocation of funds should be based on pupil needs, and the Commissioner of Education should take steps to insure that all appropriated funds are allocated.
4. Federal, state and local programs must be coordinated, and the USOE must develop consistent procedures for collecting and recording essential data.

Staffing

1. The best staff available should be employed for the teaching of migrant children.
2. Open recruitment policies should exist for staffing.
3. There should be a program on the national level for recruitment of competent teachers and administrators.

4. Inservice training programs should give priority to helping staff learn to diagnose individual interests and needs.

Educational Planning

1. The USOE must assist states to develop program objectives and components.
2. Program personnel must participate in preparing budgets.
3. Programmed teaching materials must not be substituted for a balanced curriculum and good human relationships.
4. All segregated school facilities must be eliminated.
5. The USOE must take the initiative for a nationwide effort so that more migrant children graduate from high school.

Educationally Related Services

1. All local projects should include funds for basic health needs of migrant children.
2. Every migrant child, regardless of age, should receive free breakfast and lunch the year round.
3. All programs should include appropriate care before and after school hours for all children.

Home-School-Community Relationships

1. Non-enrollment of migrant children must be the concern of local education agencies.
2. Home visits by teachers should be a regular part of the program.
3. Local projects should provide guidance to both children and parents.

This report detailed and well documented, is recommended reading for persons concerned with the problem of education for migrant children.

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Los Mojados: The Wetback Story. By Julian Samora, with the assistance of Jorge A. Bustamante and Gilbert Cardenas. Notre Dame: The University of Notre Dame Press, 1971. Pp. 205.

This work, a study of illegal immigration from Mexico to the United States, is a product

of the United States-Mexico Border Studies Project at the University of Notre Dame and funded by the Ford Foundation. It is a piece of research which makes excellent use of a relatively few primary and secondary documentary sources in order to sketch an outline of the phenomenon of illegal aliens from Mexico and their problems, its causes, as well as the general consequences for the United States and Mexico. Among these documents is the official response of the Immigration and Naturalization Service to the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare as part of that committee's hearings on "Migrant and Seasonal Farmwork Powerlessness", 1969-70, and is reproduced in full as an appendix in this work.

In addition, the study utilized two additional sources of original data, primarily for the purpose of validating the tendencies and patterns implied or stated in the documentary evidence. The first was a questionnaire based survey administered to 493 illegal aliens held in three detention camps in the Southwest. Unfortunately, very little of this data is presented in detailed and usable form; it is mostly summarized in narrative form. The second source of original data is in the form of a diary kept by Mr. Bustamante (a graduate student at Notre Dame and a Mexican Citizen), who assumed the role of wetback in order to get a firsthand view of the terror, paths and frustration suffered by these desperate but courageous people. It is an immensely provocative and insightful account and is the chapter which easily qualifies as the highlight of this book.

In this study, Dr. Samora and his colleagues focus on various aspects of the problem of illegal Mexican immigration. They devote considerable attention to the history and present day situation of U.S.-Mexican relations with particular reference to institutionalized immigration (legal and illegal) policies and actions. Also, they concern themselves with the particular patterns and methods of illegal migration across the border, selected characteristics of these illegal aliens and its consequences. In addition, this work contains a chapter on the methodological problems encountered in gathering first hand information on the wetbacks, their circumstances, histories and motivations. The final chapter is dedicated to suggestions for the development of "realistic" policies

and actions—on both sides of the border—which would bring an end to illegal immigration and the human costs it presently extracts.

There are several shortcomings or deficiencies in this work which need to be mentioned. First, the information it provides is often too sketchy or overly summarized to be fully grasped in terms of its implications for the particular sociological and economic factors or forces involved in this type of migration. Second, the order in which the information or topics are presented seems somewhat disorganized or arbitrary. For example, the principal characteristics of the illegal aliens are distributed across at least three or four chapters making it difficult to get an overall portrait of this population and, often, leading to a lot of unnecessary repetition.

The most serious deficiency rests with the particular perspective which pervades the analysis of the data. It is a static approach. The principal thesis underlying this work is perhaps most cogently presented in Chapter II—"The Illegal Mexican Alien". Here it is stated that the presence, origin and cyclical influx of illegal Mexican aliens is directly related to the interests of employers, especially the Southwestern "agribusiness" Establishment. And, further that "U.S. Immigration policies through their selective application and periodic relaxation along the Mexican border merely regulated if they did not insure the realization of the interests of agribusiness". (p.33) While the overall thesis is correct, the details seem to be dated. The source of this "error" is the failure of the authors to take into account the changes which have taken place in the Southwestern agricultural economy, as well as the more or less evolutionary development in the nature and method of this illegal immigration. In short, the industrialization of farming in that part of the United States has made and is making the illegal Mexican alien obsolete as a source of cheap agricultural labor and as a weapon against the organization of local Mexican-American labor. In other words, the interests served by the selective application of U.S. Immigration policies have changed.

This interpretation can to some extent be supported by a careful examination of the data provided in this work. For example, the techniques for crossing of the wetback have apparently become more sophisticated, costly, and involve the

increased use of professional smugglers (both international and, especially, intra-state), falsified documents and skillful manipulation of legal loopholes, as in the case of "green carders". It does not stand to reason that such investment is made in order to secure low-paying, seasonal employment in agriculture. Indeed, the authors themselves indicate that the desired destination of these aliens has become increasingly oriented towards the industrialized areas of the Midwest. Furthermore, in 1968 only 50% or so of those aliens apprehended while employed were involved in agricultural labor. Finally, it is noted that of 151,000 aliens apprehended in 1968, 144,000 were picked up in the Southwest. While the authors interpret this situation as reflecting the fact that these are the areas of greatest attraction (presumably because of agricultural labor opportunities), it could perhaps be interpreted as reflecting the selective application of immigration policies, i.e. more strict enforcement. The authors themselves raise the point (on p.88) that if more patrolmen were available in the north, more illegal aliens would be apprehended there. The question is, why aren't more patrolmen utilized there? Why the concentration and more strict application in the Southwest?

There can be no doubt that the peak periods of illegal alien agricultural employment in the Southwest, which the authors point out coincided with the Bracero program, was not only an economic adaptation, but also a political one. It bought time against the stirrings for the unionization of agricultural labor, primarily among local Mexican-American populations. It was a race which was won by the growers through the overwhelming mechanizations of the agricultural enterprise. It was not meant to be a permanent adaption as the analysis in this work implies.

Despite these shortcomings, with the publication of *Los Mojados*, Dr. Samora and his colleagues have boldly opened up for social scientific consideration an area of inquiry of widespread, urgent and disturbing implications. Although sober and to the point, it is not a "dispassionate" work, but rather one written with an alarmed concern for the welfare and future of its subjects—the wetbacks. It is a work which

deserves the attention of scholars and policy makers alike.

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The Chicanos: Mexican American Voices. Ed Ludwig and James Santibanez, ed. Baltimore: Penguin Books, Inc., 1971. Pp. 286.

The myth of Mexican American invisibility and passivity is being rapidly laid to rest through the dedicated efforts of Chicano scholars and activists. While cultural stereotypes, racist rhetoric, and hoary prejudices persist among a small segment of the American populace, the "new" social science—of and by Chicanos—has conquered academia, influenced antediluvian governmental policies, and established a firm grip upon publishers' purse strings. As a result, we witness a veritable flood of textbooks, essay collections, novels and poetry aimed at Chicano Studies courses and an increasingly sympathetic public audience.

In this context, *The Chicanos: Mexican American Voices* is a candidate for high honors. This splendid anthology, blessed with superb social commentary, distinctive fiction, and vivid poetry, spans the gamut of Chicano experiences in contemporary America: *The Fields of the Past*; *La Raza in the Fields Today*; *The Barrios*, *A Growing Awareness*; *Education, A Way In or Out*; *Facing Anglo Society*; and, *Between Two Worlds*. In addition, Ludwig briefly, but competently, reviews the ancestry of modern-day Chicanos and summarizes the current socio-political controversies (with emphasis on Delano, Denver, and New Mexico) in which the thirty contributions are set. A useful list of additional readings completes the volume.

The point of view tends to be personal and polemic, rather than statistical and analytic. What took Grebler and his associates at UCLA five years, several hundred thousand dollars, and nearly eight hundred pages to demonstrate, Cesar Chavez ("The Organizer's Tale"), Daniel Garza ("Saturday Belongs to the *Palomia*"), Luis Valdez ("El Teatro Campesino"), Reies López Tijerina ("From