

Masculinity and Social Visibility: Migration, State Spectacle, and the Making of the Mexican Nation

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Visibility: this term has had a formidable presence in feminist scholarship.¹ In the 1970s, feminist scholars and activists clamored both for a specifically “women’s” history and for women to be written back into the history of the nation more generally, arguing that history and nationhood are inextricably linked. Their goal was to make women’s participation in the nation and in history known and visible. While feminists subsequently realized that writing women *into* official history did not automatically make us visible or ensure our national belonging, the reverse did occur: we assumed the visibility of men. In advocating for women’s inclusion, we mistakenly assumed that all men were equally visible as citizen-subjects and that exclusion from the nation was based only on gender. This article calls that assumption into question. Using as a yardstick what I term social visibility, I will explore how the Mexican state meted out visibility and drew men formerly seen as outside its bounds into the recognized sphere of the nation. This uneven process of incorporation became a way of consolidating and legitimating both the conception of the nation put forth by the revolutionary state and also itself as the primary –if not sole – actor authorized to speak on the nation’s behalf.

Social visibility, as I define it, refers to the recognition – by herself, others and the state bureaucracy – that an individual (or collective) is a member of the nation, with the ability to impact its social/cultural boundaries and reap the rewards of its protection. It exceeds juridical citizenship² and is interwoven with, and inseparable from, the process of nation-formation. While always in tension,

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this uneven process of social visibility – and not, I argue, the widely used notion of legal citizenship – functions to determine and perpetuate national borders.

In order to examine the relationship between social visibility and nation-formation, this article examines how the Mexican State symbolically recognized and absorbed men previously excluded from its fold by class and physical location. This recognition process occurred during the selection process for the Bracero Program, a duo-national program that, from 1942 to 1964, brought nearly two million Mexican laborers to work on US farmlands. In analyzing this selection process, we will see how the Mexican government used a highly formalized spectacle to make (momentarily) visible those men normally considered outside the Mexican nation and to symbolically extend to these potential new members (the illusion of) inclusion, recognition, and privileges.

The present article is organized into three parts. The first part describes the Bracero Program and situates it in a broader historical context, especially *vis-à-vis* Mexico's relationship with the United States. Central to the program was the notion that it would modernize Mexico – a rationale promoted by the Mexican government and tacitly accepted by the US.³ The second section of the article looks beyond these program particulars to the gender ideologies formulated and adhered to in the highly ritualized process formulated by the Mexican authorities in order to determine which men would be sent to the US. This section demonstrates that the state's fundamental –and justifiable – rationale for bringing men formerly excluded from the nation into its sphere was the modernization of Mexico. In addition, this aspiration can be seen in the formalities of a selection process that established aspiring *bracero* migrants as crucial national actors in the country's movement to modernity.

As used here, modernity refers to a position of relative political and economic power achieved through industrialization, democratic institutions and the ideology of linear and observable progress. Various social actors have used this index of modernity to locate countries in time and space, and plot their march from backwardness to modernity. More than just an index of linear *economic* progress, however, the logic of modernity imposes order on entire countries and parts of countries. Most crucially, it is built on a global political discourse underpinning and underpinned by specific gender and racial hierarchies. Thus, modernity itself –which countries are or are not modern – reflects an order based on gender and race. The second section of the present article, then, shows how the state mobilized a particular version of masculine modernity/modern masculinity to christen men formerly outside the nation as its agents of modernity. In the final section, my analysis of this spectacle is employed to speculate about the role that modernity has played in Mexico. By revealing the ways in which the Mexican State interwove masculinity with the right to act as the nation's

modernizing agents, I suggest the strict limitations facing subaltern states when establishing their legitimacy and forging their nation. States such as Mexico are forced to use what they have at their disposal, namely, the carrot of extending social visibility and symbolic inclusion into the nation.

The Bracero Program: Treaty Conditions and Historical Context

When the Bracero Program was launched in 1942, the US faced a labor shortage as thousands of men went off to war and thousands more moved from stoop labor or the unemployment lines to better-paying factory jobs. With the specter of crops rotting on the vines, the US government sought to convince Mexico to establish a labor exchange program. Since Mexican men were in any case already crossing the border, the Mexican government agreed. It consented to let men—but not the women or families that the US wanted⁴—work the fields. They were persuaded to consent by promises of US officials that migrants would be guaranteed a minimum wage and other labor protections—ones, ironically, that growers were not bound to provide to US domestic farm workers.

World War II *also* marked a turning point in US-Mexico relations. On the one hand, the US adopted the “Good Neighbor Policy,” on the other, Mexico was forcefully challenging foreign incursions on its sovereignty. In 1938—a mere four years before the program was launched—Mexico had nationalized its oil fields, some long held by US companies. This bold assertion of sovereignty and Mexico’s refusal to back down from this position forced the hand of the US: it wanted the labor treaty. In the end, it accepted Mexico’s official framing of the program and the various treaty conditions its southern neighbor demanded. Initially both governments labeled these men’s work as Mexico’s contribution to the fight against Fascism in World War II, a message communicated to migrants during the war in their interactions with both governments. While the US continued to accept this assertion at the highest diplomatic levels, in practice it fell by the wayside, as US officials no longer greeted migrants with speeches or welcomed them in other public ways. In Mexico, however, the selection process continued to be accompanied by pomp and ceremony.

At the inception of the program, Mexico mobilized all the leverage it had to affect early *Bracero* treaties, insisting on safe working conditions for laborers and publicly portraying this project as a collaboration of hemispheric allies.⁵ While much of this leverage eroded over the course of the program, Mexico demanded that the US act as the employer and party responsible for honoring the terms of the *Bracero* agreement. In standing firm on this demand, Mexico hoped that problems faced by earlier migrants to the US would be alleviated.⁶

The government also foreclosed—at least at the outset—the possibility of *bracero* laborers going to another eight states (such as Wisconsin, Illinois, Montana) in addition to Texas, citing, in particular, Texas’ history of blatant discrimination against people of Mexican descent. Mexico demanded that the treaties incorporate constitutionally protected labor standards received officially (though not in practice) by workers in Mexico. In addition, it mandated that 10 % of workers’ wages be held in escrow, to be made available when migrants returned to Mexico. With these funds, tractors and other equipment were to be purchased by the laborers, modernizing first their own farms and villages, and then the rest of Mexican agriculture.⁷

Mexico interpreted the US’s initial acceptance of its demands for far-reaching protections for workers as a sign that its northern neighbor countenanced a more equal relationship. This attitude was also taken as acknowledging the validity of Mexico’s collectivist vision of a modernity being sought for the benefit of the Mexican nation, even as Mexico recognized the modern technologies, skills, and attitudes possessed by the US. The United States, being in need of manual laborers and a hemispheric alliance—and in the public spirit of the Good Neighbor Policy—acquiesced to this supposedly more egalitarian positioning. Although Mexico’s ability to negotiate strong agreements on behalf of its citizen-workers was later curtailed by the vast numbers of men who sought to emigrate, the government never completely relinquished the idea of itself as a contender for modern nation status. It also did not agree to the US’s completely determining the version of modernity embodied in the treaties. Rather, despite declining political leverage, Mexico continued to insist on its collectivist version of modernity throughout the program and to attempt to reap for the nation the privileges that the label of modernity brings.

From Invisibility to Visible Citizen: Selecting Proper Agents of Modernity

After having offered a general description of the Bracero Program, I will now proceed to explore how the Mexican government used social visibility—awarding the status of citizen to those formerly outside the bounds of the nation—to solidify its ties with the revolution and assume its position as the nation’s legitimate benefactor. To understand the connection between the legitimacy of the Mexican State and social visibility, I will examine one stage in the Bracero Program’s multi-stage selection process that men went through in order to be chosen as *braceros*. This selection process, I argue, functioned as a pivotal moment in which the Mexican government groomed aspiring migrants for their

role as the nation's modernizing agents. In order to arrive at the regional stage, men had already passed a village-level inspection, for which they had presented copies of their birth certificate, evidence of military service and past agricultural work and recommendations from the local elite or governmental officials as to their respectability and moral fiber.⁸ Thus, these men had already been deemed worthy by the government of such an "opportunity."

The regional competition usually took place in a stadium or large public place, in the capital or a nearby major city and often within weeks of the initial review. On the appointed day, men were transported by bus to this location. They would congregate outside the site and wait until officials called their names. Some men sat on the ground, others squatted, still others stood or leaned against the stadium wall.⁹ Some slept while others gathered with friends and sang, accompanied by a guitar that someone had brought. Women and children, too, were present and vocal, hawking food and drinks, beckoning hungry men fortunate enough to have a few pesos in their pockets. Children often performed songs or wandered about, trying to shine shoes for those who wore them, in hopes of earning a centavo or two.

The scene outside contrasted dramatically with the formalized and carefully scripted performance occurring within the stadium. Within its walls, barricaded securely from unauthorized onlookers, local military units and the state or regional director of the program were already in position. These were joined by well-dressed members of the press, other important government officials and influential citizens, marking the importance of the event and the prestige that a *bracero* contract would bestow on the chosen ones. Young soldiers standing at attention faced each other, decked out in uniform, equipped with rifles and forming two straight lines stretching toward the center of the stadium from both sides of the entrance. Between them a path was formed leading to the table where the program director, main government officials and prominent individuals were seated. To the aspiring *braceros* entering this hallowed space, these soldiers standing silently in formation signified the prestige of the program. They vividly demonstrated the national importance that the government conferred upon the program and, by extension, the honor bestowed upon its chosen workers- ambassadors, men selected as Mexico's agents of modernity to its already modern northern neighbor. During the war, the *braceros* often referred to themselves and were referred to as being Mexico's on-the-ground "ambassadors," representatives of the nation who would help the two countries reach better mutual understanding.¹⁰

Beyond the lines of soldiers stood the press and lower-ranking officials, both looking on and participating in the selection spectacle. Lists containing the names of contract contenders were thrown into a receptacle. Then, one by one

the director pulled out each list and read the names until the regional allotment (based on both perceptions of economic need and repayment for political support) of *bracero* contracts was exhausted. One by one, each man's name was boomed out over the PA system to the thousands waiting anxiously outside. The requested individual entered the stadium and walked along the narrow pathway created by the soldiers, which guided the men to the table of waiting examiners. In the presence of this auspicious company, each man was rigorously interrogated by the director regarding his general health and strength, his agricultural knowledge and work experience. Then he or one of the other officials present examined the worker's hands. As has repeatedly been called to my attention, the officials were looking for the "hands of a worker" –rough, weathered, "used."¹¹ "Calluses," I was told, "they wanted hands with calluses."¹² "Men's hands –callused and hard, . . . hands that . . . were used," someone elaborated.¹³ "Not women's hands," another man told me, "all soft and tender."¹⁴ "Sí, men's hands," another chimed in during one of our discussions.¹⁵ Those with the requisite weathered hands and documents in order exchanged the latter for an official ID stating their name, town, and state of origin. This *mica*, as it was termed, indicated that the Mexican government had chosen them for the program and that they would continue on to the next selection site for final approval on their way to a visa and work in the US.

The selection process brought men who had formerly been part of the rural mass(es) into social visibility, into the nation. The movement and activity outside the stadium was disorganized and, in a sense, uncontrolled. The men, women, and children circulating outside were replicating everyday village life. People sat, stood and squatted; they sang and talked, ate and drank; they engaged in a multitude of personal interactions and postures. These people remained a part of the indistinguishable rural mass. They had yet to be recognized as individuals and citizen-subjects, meanwhile being lumped together as supposedly backward and uncivilized.¹⁶ Until that point, they had lived without running water or electricity in unsanitary, disease-spreading conditions; they did not go to the doctor when they were ill, but rather sought out remedies from local *curanderos* or folk healers.¹⁷ Many could not even afford shoes.¹⁸

The interactions occurring outside the stadium stood in stark contrast to the carefully scripted procedure occurring within its confines. The moment each selected man's name was announced over the PA and he entered the stadium, he issued forth from this so-called disorderly mass and proceeded toward social visibility. The area demarcated by the two lines of soldiers acted as a passageway, a liminal moment, a "limbo" between their transformation from being a member of an indistinguishable mass to a socially recognized, visible citizen-subject.¹⁹ To reach the table at which the regional program director and his prestigious

entourage were seated, men entered, passed through, and emerged from this liminal space. Guarded and delineated by the Army, an organ of the state and a representative of the nation, this space symbolized each man's (re)birth, his passage from unrecognized entity to socially visible citizen.

Yet certain prerequisites were demanded in order to gain access to this metamorphic process.²⁰ Men not only had to prove that their manly bodies were endowed with strength and vigor – “callused” hands, bodies not weakened by scars or disease – neither could their character and reputation challenge or belie their claim to truly Mexican masculinity. As defined in northern Mexico, this required being a husband and father. Only as head of a heterosexual household did men exercise control over the sexuality and labor of wives and children. This in turn re-anchored their place in the family and secured their authority as men, as respect within the family bestowed respect in the community. However, the power accorded by authority and respect as the head of the families could not be wielded at all costs or expressed by force or physical violence. Instead, a proper man achieved control by exhibiting his best qualities: hard work, honesty, reliability, patience instead of anger and the ability to sustain his family. These qualities would ensure him his family's respect and obedience, enabling him, in turn, to earn the respect of his community and to become a fully adult member of it. In other words, in theory, regardless of what was true in practice, men without wives or children were not considered “real men.”

The candidates' birth certificates attested to their legal membership in the nation and their bodies, if they were robust and capable of hard physical labor, allowed them to enter the gender-based realm of the socially visible. In other words, the possibility of and right to be metamorphosed into a citizen-subject were constructed in contrast to those excluded from it. These included men whose male bodies were effeminized by recently acquired scars or visible signs of physical weakness and vulnerability and a group that was not even permitted to attempt to qualify as worker-citizens – “women” of whatever strength and stamina. Thus, in this ritual, these men, previously forgotten or ignored by the state, were made individuals and citizens directly and officially affiliated with the state. By making this relationship to the state public – visible, known, formal, and ordered – in a way previously reserved only for the elite and, to a lesser extent, for urban residents, this ritual embodied a step forward in the national modernizing process.

Consolidating the Revolutionary State through Granting Social Visibility

Social visibility – and its bestowal by the Mexican State – must be understood within the context of the Mexican Revolution and its consolidation over the next sixty years. In 1910, land-hungry peasants took up arms and overthrew a dictatorship that had lasted for four decades. Before the Revolution and the resultant land redistribution, a thousand large landowners had owned and/or controlled nearly 65% of Mexico's *arable* territory.²¹ Landowners thus had the power to influence labor conditions, both on and off their lands; to limit peasants' access to water on small plots adjacent to their properties; and to strangle local and national attempts to change this situation.

With the fighting over, succeeding administrations based their authority on the claim that they were the true inheritors of the Revolution.²² Using revolutionary language, they declared that their policies would address still-extant economic disparities and enable Mexico to unite and progress as a nation. Peasants and workers initially related seriously to the government's rhetorical promises to promote their interests; yet presidents, although having absolute political power and embodying the populist patriarch, found themselves without funds to address the needs of the masses. Furthermore, they often instituted policies favoring the newly formed political and economic elite, while simultaneously managing to dole out short-term, negligible sums to less-connected constituencies. What enabled these politicians to maintain such an unsteady balance between rhetoric and policy was their insistence that they represented the Revolution, which had been carried out in the name of the people. Each president assumed his patrimony by claiming to be the direct descendant of a formidable lineage. Each attempted, both linguistically and ceremonially, to bring into being a nation where class-based and sectarian interests would be put aside for the sake of a "modern" Mexican State.

In Mexico, an ideology of modernity was conceived as an orderly process, one which presupposed and reinforced the popular image of a country divided into urban and rural spaces, the former controlled and linked to the global world, and the latter still wild and untamed, the antithesis of everything modern. The term "modernity" as it is defined here corresponds to the way it was used in Mexico throughout this period and by the *bracero* workers who were interviewed by me. While never defined *per se*, these men talked about it being made up of a material and a technological component, both infused with images of male mastery. Material modernity, they suggested, referred to roads, medical doctors, electricity, plumbing, telephones, and the fact that these functioned; technological modernity meant radios, x-ray machines, and mechanized farm implements. The possession of these material and technological expressions of modernity

imparted a masculine gender to the US, while in this dyad, Mexico was considered traditional and female. For the Mexican State of the period, modernity had long been portrayed as an elusive condition, which was the exclusive province of the modern democracies.

The selection ceremony manifested the lure of modernity and the way it was exerting its influence in Mexico. The state explicitly employed “modernity” rhetoric in conjunction with the program and its resultant benefits, and this ceremony, in turn, marked the men chosen as *braceros* as an integral part of the nation’s journey towards this goal. Each man’s linear passage into the stadium and movement through a soldier-lined space depicted an orderly progress. Walling off the ceremony from the quotidian interactions outside its bounds symbolically reproduced the acknowledged division between controlled and untamed space. The ceremonial nature of the selection process symbolically served the state as a means of separating those ready to be modernized from those still held back by tradition and inducted the latter into the realm of the modern, and thereby into the nation.

The program is an indication of how Mexico’s complicated and ambivalent relationship to modernity has gone hand in hand with migration issues. At the time of the Bracero Program and its antecedents as described above, Mexico did not possess ideal conditions for modernization, regardless of the historical context or administration in power, nor was the majority of the population considered capable of achieving it. Therefore, my research on the Bracero Program can provide a rare glimpse of this process. Despite the radical changes brought about by the 1910 Revolution, Mexico’s desire for modernity was linked to migration and masculinity in a manner that transcends these supposedly big political shifts. Only in light of these processes is it possible to comprehend that Mexico’s quest for modernity was an integral part of its progress towards nationhood.

Nonetheless, the version of modernity promoted by the state had a distinctively Mexican flavor. By mobilizing revolutionary rhetoric and imagery, the state developed a concept of modernity that interwove both individualistic and collectivist threads. Men took the solitary journey into and through the stadium *as individuals*; embodying the personal relationship between each man and the state. Conversely, the government promoted the program and extolled its benefits by employing collectivist language. The state claimed that not only the individual participants but the entire nation would prosper through the men’s labor in the farmlands of the US. Moreover, the men were never really removed from their communities. While each man experienced the stadium ritual as a highly individualizing and scripted moment toward socially visible citizenship, after walking through the stadium flanked with soldiers, each was reunited with similarly chosen friends and relatives. Following their debut as citizens,

they were reinstated into the collective –but this time, on both the national and the local level. This process, then, forged a personal relationship between the individual and the state, but also the revolutionary ideal of a united Mexican nation. Furthermore, through consciously anchoring the individual in the collective, this program and other policies of the period were incorporated into the nation-building process in accordance with revolutionary doctrine.

This moment in the selection procedure illustrates the conjunction of Mexican revolutionary ideals with a specifically Mexican version of modernity, a fusion that emerges clearly in the choice of the stadium as the ceremony's setting. Hosting the event in a circular, open-air venue, the state both promoted and acknowledged its acceptance of a particular and idealized relationship between state and citizen (of the masculine gender). The circularity of the arena represents democracy and unity. Its lack of a roof conveys openness,²³ a refusal to close off those within from "the outside," despite the fact that the teeming mass beyond its walls was excluded as unacceptable. The light and open air symbolized the state's transparency of action and clarity of motive. The state, as a symbol of freedom and liberty, affirmed its support of democracy and the sovereignty of the individual.

The stadium is also a venue where competitions take place. It locates and contains the competition within a specific place, promoting a non-hierarchical rivalry in which the best team or person wins without regard to social power or favoritism. This lack of hierarchy, then, erases class distinctions, facilitating a contest between theoretical equals.²⁴ Locating the selection ceremony in a stadium caused the process to become inseparable from the ideals symbolized by the venue. Transformed from a routine procedure into a national ceremony, selection became a ritual celebrating democracy, individual competition, modernity and Mexico's steadfast progression toward these goals. More importantly, the state's link with these ideals allowed it to assume the role of legitimate arbiter in the competition, whose decisions benefited not only a particular sector, but the entire nation.

However, this competition clearly depicts a rivalry inexorably based on gender. There is a clear connection between the stadium and competitiveness, a predominantly male attribute. Also, by prominently displaying the armed forces, the ceremony stressed the role of men as defenders of the nation.²⁵ Locating the competition in the stadium, then, made it clear that it was solely for, and between, men; only men were considered to be within the reach of modernity. This linear procession, each man's movement through the double lines of young soldiers standing rigidly at attention, the ceremonial approach up to the table where each man's documents and hands were scrutinized, was symbolic of the progress of the Mexican nation.²⁶ With the progress of every individual into and

through the stadium, the Mexican nation moved closer toward modernity. The ritual, then, simultaneously conveyed a sense of both progress and continuity: of progress in the context of the Army, the quintessential symbol of a united nation and state power, and anchored by the state-as-arbiter; and of continuity in the context of the circularity of the stadium, signifying national unity, equality, and constancy, a road with no end and no beginning.²⁷ However, this national unity was also grounded in exclusion –the exclusion of women and peasant communities. Only men – the universal man as citizen – could be modernized; only men could move Mexico towards modernity.

Conclusion

At the beginning of this article, I indicated that a feminist initiative to include women in the nation has inadvertently strengthened the reverse assumption: that all men are visible within the nation, regardless of class, race, sexuality, or location. I have argued that this is *untrue* – not all men are, nor have they always been, visible. I also explored how the process of becoming –or making someone – visible is integral to and inseparable from the gender-based process of nation formation. By analyzing a particular moment in the Bracero Program's selection procedure, we have seen how the act of extending social visibility to a segment of the Mexican population that had previously been invisible served to consolidate the state's attempts to institutionalize its version of, and claims to, the Revolution.

By means of this ceremony, men formerly excluded from the nation and exempt from its social prizes were inducted into it, thus becoming socially visible – part of a modernizing nation. The ceremony interwove, and was interwoven with, notions of masculinity, modernity, and nation-formation. Only men whose callused hands attested to hard work and whose masculine bodies bore not a trace of effeminizing disease and vulnerability earned the right to be modernized and to act as worker-ambassadors.

Yet the ceremony also illustrates the constraints that still plagued the Mexican State. The revolutionary government created public festivals which they linked to the Revolution, but this did not preclude the need to distribute material rewards in the name of the Revolution. Lacking unlimited economic resources and the time required to consolidate its power, it found a symbolic way of portraying its alliance with the poor by extending social visibility to those formerly outside the nation's boundaries. Through the spectacle of the Bracero Program, the state selectively anointed particular inhabitants of the nation with social visibility.

Moreover, it chose to bestow the *Bracero* prize in accordance with a specific class-, race- and gender-based system.

Notwithstanding, as indicated by my research, which has been shaped by the ways migrants portrayed and understood the program, these workers did not fully accept the state's visionary project.²⁸ On the one hand, they were proud of having worked in the US and refused to see themselves as victims or martyrs; in their eyes, their participation helped modernize Mexico. On the other hand, from the workers' perspective, social visibility was not granted by the state, but rather, fought for from below, using whatever means people – in this case migrant laborers – could mobilize, in an ongoing revolution carried out by the workers themselves.

NOTES

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1. See for example *Becoming Visible: Women in European History*, a 1977 collection by editors Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. The collection is now in its third edition.
2. I define citizenship as more than nationality (the gender-based rights conferred to someone born within the nation's territorial bounds), and less than social visibility. It is an intermediate position, often synonymous with voting rights, the right to buy and own property, appear in court, and act as an agent conducting legal affairs in one's behalf.
3. Mexico's quest for modernity was not a new one. Rather, since the latter half of the nineteenth century, it had been trying to "modernize." For further elucidation of the historical significance of modernity for Mexico, see my *Bordering Modernities: Race, Masculinity, and the Cultural Politics of Mexico-US Migration*, Introduction and Chapter 1, in progress; and "Masculine Sweat, Stoop-labor Modernity: Gender, Race, and Nation in Mid-Twentieth Century Mexico and the US," (Ph.D. dissertation: University of Chicago, 2001), Chapter 1.
4. Mexico objected to sending families, anticipating that they would be more likely to settle in the US. Instead, it would only consent to male laborers. The US, however, considered families to be a more stable workforce. Not only would they be less mobile than individual male workers, but families would need little encouragement to put all their members to work. Families were given preference despite the fact that the US government saw *braceros* as temporary workers and not potential citizens. For further discussion of Mexicans as always deemed ineligible for citizenship, see Mae Ngai,

- Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).
5. See my “Caught in the Middle: The Mexican State’s Relationship with the US and Its Own Citizen-Workers, 1942-1958,” *Journal of American Ethnic History*: 20: 3 (Spring 2001) 110-32; *Bordering Modernities*, Chapter 2, in progress; and “Masculine Sweat, Stoop-Labor Modernity,” Chapter 2.
 6. For more information on the “first” Bracero Program—during World War I—see Fernando Saúl Alanis Enciso, *El Primer Programa Bracero y el gobierno de México, 1917-1918* (San Luis Potosí, Mexico: El Colegio de San Luis Potosí, 1999).
 7. As we now know, however, most men never received—or even knew about—these withheld wages. Instead, they were forced to take the Mexican and US governments as well as the banks involved to court some fifty years later—to this day, these men have yet to collect a dime of the billions in lost income and interest.
 8. For a detailed description of the early parts of the selection process, how men proved themselves respectable and ideas of “social indebtedness,” see Chapter 1 of *Bordering Modernities*, in progress.
 9. Licenciado Antonio Paredes, director of the program for Durango, 1963-1967; conversation with author; Durango, Durango; October 1995.
 10. “Alemán es gran hombre,” *El Nacional*, December 1, 1946: 13.
 11. Paco Zermeño and Anibal Bañales, conversation with author; Santa Angélica, Durango; February 1996.
 12. Alvaro García, conversation with author; Santa Angélica Durango, Mexico; September 1995.
 13. Anibal Bañales: May 1996.
 14. Félix Amado, conversation with author; Santa Angélica, Durango, Mexico: May 1996.
 15. Alvaro García: May 1996.
 16. Interestingly enough, this gulf between city and countryside is still reproduced today. In vernacular and scholarly works, the city and its inhabitants are designated as of male gender and depicted as modern against an indistinguishable, traditional, and feminized countryside. As an example of this tendency, see Matthew Gutmann, *The Meaning of Macho, Being a Man in Mexico City* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1996). For a much needed corrective, see Julie Skurski, “The Ambiguities of Authenticity in Latin America: *Doña Bárbara* and the Construction of National Identity,” in Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny, *Becoming National* (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 1996), 371-402.
 17. For further discussion of doctors as modern, see Chapter 1 of my aforementioned manuscript.
 18. Many of the men I talked with cited such signs as the wearing or not wearing of shoes as the divider between civilized and uncivilized, and modern and pre-modern. At the beginning of the 20th century, Mexico City officials generally labeled those not wearing shoes and or modern dress as Indians and refused to allow them to enter the city limits.
 19. For further discussion of liminality, see Victor Turner’s *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1969).
 20. To reach this second phase of the selection process, men had to have passed an initial

- screening. Required at this screening were various documents, including a recommendation attesting to a man's good character. See Chapter 1 of *Bordering Modernities* for a fuller analysis of the impact of these recommendations.
21. Jean Meyer, *La Revolución Mexicana 1910-1940*. Translated by Héctor Pérez Rincón. (Mexico City: Editorial Jus, 1991), 22. Other figures suggest that the concentration of land was higher, with nearly 1% controlling over 95% of the land. See, for example, James Cockroft's "Intellectual precursors of the Mexican Revolution, 1900-1913"; Frank Tannenbaum, *The Mexican agrarian revolution*; or Eyler Simpson, *The ejido; Mexico's way out*.
 22. While this was in actuality a revolution in that governmental power changed hands and basis, a majority were still left with little access to government. For more regarding the initial consolidation process, see Ana María Alonso, *Thread of Blood, Colonialism, Revolution, and Gender on Mexico's Northern Frontier* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1995); Alan Knight, *The Mexican Revolution, Volume 2: Counterrevolution and Reconstruction* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1990); Enrique Krause, *La Presidencia Imperial, 1940-1996* (Tusquets: 1997), Daniel Nugent, *Spent Cartridges of Revolution, An Anthropological History of Namiquipa, Chihuahua* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), Claudio Lomnitz-Adler, *Exits from the Labyrinth, Culture, and Ideology in the Mexican National Space* (Berkeley and London: University of California, 1992); Nora Hamilton, *The Limits of State Autonomy: Post-Revolutionary Mexico* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982); Adolfo Gilly, *La revolución interrumpida* (Mexico City, 1994); and Ilene O'Malley, *The Myth of the Revolution* (Greenwood, 1986).
 23. Much of this section is based on Mona Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution*, translated by Alan Sheridan. (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1988), 128, particularly, Chapters 6 and 7.
 24. Ozouf, *Festivals*: 128-130.
 25. While women have, in fact, always been essential to military service and armed struggles, by defining the battlefield as a male space, women's participation has been occluded, reinforcing the notion of the citizen as male and the superficiality of women's involvement. See for example, Elizabeth Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican Military: myth and history* (Austin: University of Texas, 1990).
 26. Ozouf, *Festivals*: Chapter 6.
 27. Ozouf, *Festivals*: 130.
 28. *Bordering Modernities*.