

2011

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Recommended Citation

Melero Malpica, Daniel (2011) "Marginalized Workers: The Experience of Day Laborers in the Informal Economy," *Diálogo*: Vol. 14 : No. 1 , Article 13.

Available at: <https://via.library.depaul.edu/dialogo/vol14/iss1/13>

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Cover Page Footnote

This article is from an earlier iteration of *Diálogo* which had the subtitle "A Bilingual Journal." The publication is now titled "Diálogo: An Interdisciplinary Studies Journal."

MARGINALIZED WORKERS: THE EXPERIENCE OF DAY LABORERS IN THE INFORMAL ECONOMY¹



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The day labor market acts as an extremely effective device for bringing prospective employers and seekers of work. The day labor site is where potential workers seeking labor congregate. These informal labor pools, which have been a U.S. tradition for years, provide an important niche for migrant workers.⁵ Day labor markets provide considerable number of workers, mostly Latino undocumented migrants, the chance to gain a foothold in the urban economy. For a number of migrants this is one of their first jobs in the United States labor markets since arriving from their respective countries; for others it represents an option to earn money when temporarily laid off from their job, and for some it is a way to complement the low salary earned in another job. Today, for many migrants (especially the recently arrived) obtaining a good job, which implies a regular job, seems harder to come by these days (Franklin, 2009; Park, 2009). Consequently, many migrants are relying on casual day labor to survive (Gonzalez, 2007). The locations of these day labor sites are readily known, informally determined, and accessible to all. Day-labor sites tend to form near home improvement stores, at busy intersections, and in parks and other public places. The employer and the employee have only to meet one another, make their interests known and agree on terms. Many hiring sites are quite large, with upwards of 75 workers assembling to search for work each day, and a few sites draw more than 200 job seekers on a typical day. The number and size of hiring sites in California and nationally has increased dramatically in recent years, raising questions regarding the driving forces behind the growth of day-labor in the United States, and what these mostly informal hiring sites mean for urban labor markets and the communities in which they are located.

This essay focuses on how the day labor industry works, its social organization, and looks at workers on the job, and how they struggle to work in the low-wage economy, raise families, and move ahead. This essay also intends to explore whether day labor worker centers are a viable solution to how communities are dealing with the increase of the number of men and women frequenting corners throughout the state of California. A case study of the Graton Day Labor Center in Northern California is analyzed illustrating the inner workings of a successful day labor worker center that could serve as a model for other cities throughout the nation.

WHO ARE THE DAY LABORERS?

Most day laborers are young men (and sometimes women) from Latin American countries trying to make a living working as *esquineros*. Although there are some day laborers who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents, most entered the United States without legal documentation (Valenzuela, 2003). Most day laborers are young adults coinciding with the conventional wisdom that undocumented workers are young, mainly in their 20s and 30s.

The presence of Latino men (and sometimes women) congregating at day labor curbsites or *esquinas* has become a common scene in streets throughout the United States.² These workers referred to as day laborers and in Spanish as *esquineros* or *jornaleros* have become visible symbol in the national debate over “illegal” immigration (Malpica, 2002, Valenzuela, 2003).³ Now estimated to total well over 100,000 nationwide, these poor, predominantly men are a ubiquitous presence on urban street corners. Every morning, rain or shine, hundreds of hopeful laborers gather on the streets desperately in search of work, as they risk arrest, fines, exploitation, and even deportation. Unable to land a regular job, they seek work at these curbside hiring sites. If a car pulls over, they will rush to the vehicle, competing for the job being offered. The transaction is fast. Employers pull over to the sidewalk, and the *esquineros* do the rest, as they swarm to the vehicle, trying to win the job.

As day laborers crowd around vehicles in convenience store and home-improvement store parking lots day labor sites can become disruptive. These areas are regularly associated with increased traffic hazards caused by vehicles stopping to pick up *esquineros* at busy downtown intersections. Common complaints about informal day labor sites include littering, public drunkenness and urination, loitering, and trespassing (Zoellner, 2000). Public officials are often dumbstruck that about 100 men standing on a busy street corner can represent a complex issue for municipalities.

Day laborers perform a variety of low-skilled, manual jobs. Day laborers along with nannies, domestic workers, garment workers, gardeners, busboys, caregivers, and janitors form part of the low-skilled laborers working within America’s informal economy (Sassen, 1996; 2001). Despite being recognized as integral part of industrialized nations, the social science literature has paid little attention to low-skilled workers who do things, make things, with their hands.⁴

Many of the day laborers are unmarried; those who are married migrated to the United States alone leaving their spouses behind. In the state of California, day laborers are predominantly from Mexico and Central America. *Esquineros* from Central America are for the most part from El Salvador and Guatemala. The Mexican migrants at the day labor sites are basically from non-traditional migratory states (with the exception of Guanajuato and Michoacan) such as Mexico City Metropolitan area, Hidalgo, Oaxaca, Guerrero, and Chiapas. This distribution of migrants suggest that Mexican migration to the United States is changing from a regional phenomena to a national phenomena (Cornelius, 1992; Massey, Durand, and Malone, 2002). Thus, the majority of the day laborers are Latin American migrants.

From the 1960s and onward, Latin American migrants have increasingly sought urban destination and work in industry, construction, commerce and especially in services (Waldinger and Lichter, 2003; De Genova, 2005). The deep structural changes in the United States economy and urban population are generating a growing number of low-paying, low-skilled jobs for migrant workers (Passel, 2005). Many of these are Mexican migrants. Even in current recession, there is increasing demand for labor-intensive services, more than for labor-intensive good.

Though it has been relatively easy for Mexican migrants to obtain urban jobs in the United States, these are likely to be dead-end ones (Canales, 2007; Cantazarite, 2003). The predominate type of work is low-skilled, where even a knowledge of English is not required. Mexicans provide the “cheap”, low-skilled labor for business throughout the urban economy.

It is not difficult to understand why cities throughout the United States provide easy entry for Mexican migrants. The large metropolitan centers tend to have a polarized occupational structure: large numbers, associated with the functions of these cities as controlling centers of a world-wide economy, and large numbers of low-paid jobs providing cheap, labor-intensive services or in sweat-shops type production (Sassen, ksdksdksd). Class factors contribute to this polarization. The niches in the urban economy left by the large corporations are suited to businesses prepared to complete savagely to keep the costs of their goods and services down. Restaurants, garment workshops, or factories assembling parts for bigger companies, operating flexible shifts, and, in general, being prepared to cope with fluctuations in demand by taking on or shedding labor flexibly. This sector of the economy does not offer attractive job opportunities to Americans seeking a stable income with which to meet family obligations. This niche is suited to temporary Mexican labor: migrants stay as long as the jobs last and leave if some other work does not appear soon. Single migrants, prepared to lodge with friends or relatives or to share a small apartment, have low subsistence costs (Piore, 1979; Diez-Canedo Ruiz, 1984) which make it less strenuous to survive on these wages. Employers benefit from the lower wages, longer hours, less alternative opportunities, and overall greater degree of exploitation which can be imposed on undocumented workers. Moreover, the political vulnerability of the immigrant worker, especially the undocumented worker who faces the constant threat of deportation, means that the traditional defenses of labor provided by labor unions are often inaccessible to the immigrant worker (Castles and Kosack, 1973). In these ways, the economies of cities and suburbs in the United States are structured to promote temporary labor migration.

Nonetheless, the prospect of earning higher wages than those available in Mexico and other Latin American countries has fueled the surge in migration over the past decade. For migrants, day labor serves as an essential avenue to employment, offering a chance to earn money despite the barriers posed by their migration status and the lack of well-paying jobs in the secondary economy (Cantazarite, 2003).

Education levels of day laborers are relatively low. Day laborers average six years of school and one in five has no schooling (Malpica, 2002; Valenzuela 2006). This is above the average educational level (typically five years or less) reported for male migrants in the late 1990s (Bustamante et al., 1998). The reason is that now more migrants come from urban areas. That they come from modernized social groups, live in cities, and have above-average education (Lozano-Ascencio, Roberts, and Bean 1994:141), countering the common impression that Mexican undocumented migrants are mostly rural workers (Samora, 1971; North and Houston, 1976), but is consistent with Massey et al. 1987 and Cornelius (1992) findings. Prior to migrating, most men and women worked as manual workers in urban-based occupations and with no intention of pursuing farm work in the United States. However, most cannot speak or read English, severely restricting their access to desirable jobs.

For most *esquineros* is their first time migrating and that they had only recently arrived to the United States. Because these migrants are not tied into established networks that assist in finding jobs, counterfeit documents, housing, etc. most of them literally take to the streets. Some work as street vendors, hawking fresh produce or flowers; other, doggedly appear at the day-labor sites.

WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF DAY LABOR WORK?

Day labor markets in California offers Latin American undocumented migrants a chance to gain a foothold in the urban economy (Malpica, 1992). For some, day labor is their first job in the United States; for others, it offers an opportunity to earn more money while temporarily laid off from a regular job. For still others, it is a way to complement a low salary earned in another job. Day labor sites (often at street corners) are easy to locate, and they are accessible to all who are willing and able to fill the jobs being offered. Latin American migrant's inability to find employment in the formal economy due to their lack of legal documentation, inability to speak English, and few networks – among other factors - has pushed them into the informal economy.

Day labor work is a strategy for making a living that lacks any degree of security relative to either income or employment. Day labor work is sporadic and transient; the pay for hours actually worked falls at or near the minimum wage; few benefits are granted to workers; labor unions are lacking; laborers frequently work under unhealthy and dangerous or unpleasant working conditions; and total income is diminished by frequent, extended periods of employment.

Most day laborers yearned for a full-time position with a regular schedule and benefits; a smaller number preferred the flexible employment arrangements associated with day labor. It was common for *esquineros* to characterize their employment goals as such. One of my close respondents, Julio from the state of Hidalgo (Mexico) best articulated this idea. He noted: “It's better to look

for a stable job. Somebody does not come from Mexico to work for one or two days a week. They come to work for more than that. And this is really unstable as you can work for one day and not work for four and work for two and not work for more.” Working steadily for a company, he says, is better. Day laborers worked in this labor market for the time being but were actively seeking regular, permanent employment. Fluctuations in the availability of work are endemic to day labor work. Workers are hired only when employers need them and the duration of the employment “contract” (which consists of nothing more than a verbal agreement) is unsecured and open-ended. In other words, day laborers are entirely at-will employees and employers do not honor promises of continuing employment, whether from one day to the next or from one hour to the next. In short, workers are at the mercy of individual employers. Such workers are an easily exploited group, since they are afraid of being reported to authorities and thus, are often willing to accept unhealthy working conditions, abuse at the work site, and willing to accept longer hours of work.

When they are hired, day laborers put in extremely long hours, working long days, up to seven days a week, including holidays and weekends. Coming mostly from poor working class communities in Mexico and Central America, many of these *esquineros* are accustomed to long, arduous hours to little pay. According to many of the day laborers I have spoken to informally and interviewed throughout the years, they are willing to work long hours and on weekends, without complaining, so that their children in the United States have a better future. Also, many of them put in long hours in order to send money to relatives in Mexico.

In the state of California day laborers earned from minimum wage (\$8.35 in 2009) up to roughly fifteen dollars an hour depending on experience, skill, training, region, employer generosity, and luck. Most are able to work between three to four days a week. This is dependant on bad weather, season, bad luck, and economic recession. Hired and fired with relative ease in manual trades and industries and by individual homeowners/renters that relied on flexible employment, these “disposable” workers often completed their work assignment under hazardous conditions. Day laborers routinely experience unsafe working conditions, especially in hazard-prone construction industry. The National Day Labor Survey led by Abel Valenzuela and his team of researchers found that in California, one in five day laborers has suffered an injury while on the job (Valenzuela et al., 2006). Day laborers stated to me that the most common hazards were laboring at unsafe heights without proper equipment and breathing high levels of dust at jobsites. Most *esquineros* are aware that the work is dangerous, but the pressing need for employment find them returning to this market to search for work.

Day laborers face a host of other related hazards and problems not experienced by most American workers. Commonly reported problems include: not receiving payment for work performed, being harrassed by business owners and passersby, being assaulted and robbed by thieves on the job, and being harrassed by police and by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (commonly known as ICE or in Spanish *la migra*). The high visibility of day labor sites make these *esquinas* the preferred site of immigration raids. Day laborers in Los Angeles constantly alerted me to the prevalent fear of deportation that they experience – the contingency that shaped the conditions of possibility of recently arrived undocumented migrants. Many of the men spoke of

immigrant raids, of the pervasiveness of ICE raids at day labor sites throughout the city of Los Angeles. This specter of deportability – imbued with fear and anxiety – loomed high in the minds of many day laborers.

Esquineros are largely manual laborers. There are some day laborers that are skilled. Armando is a qualified carpenter, and Tepito and Lupe excellent tile installers. Lupe also has experience working with marble. However, the majority of the *esquineros* do work that is dangerous and physically-demanding. Day laborers are largely employed in construction, painting, dry-walling, hauling, gardening, farming, cleaning (of offices, houses, yards, pools, factories, and construction sites), and other manual labor. In these industries day laborers performed some of the most unpleasant and labor-intensive work: they operated machines, demolished buildings, dug ditches, tended lawns, pruned trees, set up and took down special event seating, loaded and unloaded trucks, worked on assembly lines, and helped build homes, apartments and offices. The employer of day laborers are homeowners/renters and contractors. Homeowners/renters use day laborers to perform tasks that they themselves were unable to do because of physical limitations or time constraints. Contractors and subcontractors frequently employ day laborers to hold down employment costs to enhance profits.

Most day labor sites operate year round, even in the East and Midwest where winter months are extremely cold. During the spring and summer months, the size and number of markets swells as certain industries activity increases and with it, the demand for informally employed laborers. In addition, to the daily fluctuations that are typical of day labor, some workers cycle through this labor market as they use the contacts developed with employers to secure long-term work or to identify employment opportunities in the formal economy. When these jobs are concluded or if an unemployment spell occurs, workers return to the informal hiring sites to again search for employment.

Even at small cities, some number of job seekers remain behind, waiting for work. Such loitering, in addition to the crowds of men negotiating with passing motorists earlier in the day, creates the commotion that offends and even threatens neighbors and residents.

WHAT ARE THE DAY LABOR WORKER CENTERS?

Rather than attempting to close down or remove the day labor market, some communities in California and the rest of nation have tried to manage it. Day labor worker centers are one way to achieve this goal. The Day Labor Worker Center is a labor market intermediary that is positioned between workers on the one hand, and employers on the other. In some instances, local governments provide the funds to run the worker centers, but in many cases they are run by local nonprofit organizations. These nonprofit obtain funds from foundations, donors, and grassroots funding activities.

The Day Labor Worker Centers provides workers and employers indoor shelter and services - including legal services (especially about immigration problems), English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, consciousness-raising efforts such as people’s theatre and political schools, workforce training opportunities, and help recovering unpaid wages. In return, worker centers require registered participants to abide by specified rules and procedures. These generally include minimum wage rates, performance

criteria for both employees and employers, and some kind of hiring queue that distributes employment opportunities equitably. In her recent publication on Day Labor Worker Centers throughout the United States, economist Janice Fine has identified about 122 worker centers nationally (Fine, 2006). Fine argues in her book that these worker centers are a viable solution to the “day labor problem”. The Day Labor Worker Centers work for several reasons. First, all other solutions that seek not to mitigate the source of the problem will ultimately fail. City ordinances and legislation directed at day laborers do not work because enforcement is costly, socially and economically. The Day Labor Worker Centers focuses on the source of the problem, an imbalanced day labor market. The Day Labor Worker Center increased the bargaining power of day laborers, thereby increasing their wages and reducing labor exploitation. Secondly, the worker centers fosters close collaboration between day laborers and other stakeholders, including employers, the police department, city officials, local leaders, and business owners. Instead of distancing the stakeholders, the Day Labor Worker Center brings the different stakeholders together and forces them to resolve the problem together. Furthermore, Day Labor Worker Center benefit the employers, businesses, and residents.

IMMIGRATION BATTLE IN A QUIET TOWN IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA: THE CASE OF THE GRATON DAY LABOR CENTER

The Graton Day Labor Center (also known in Spanish as *Centro Labor de Graton*) has a refined, organized, and sophisticated worker center and a system in place that supports both workers and employers that hire them. A case study of the Graton Day Labor Center in Northern California is analyzed illustrating the inner workings of a successful day labor worker center that could serve as a model for other cities throughout the nation.

The city of Graton is located in Sonoma County, 2 1/2 hours Northwest of the city of San Francisco. According to local residents, an informal day labor site has existed in downtown Graton for over seventy years. The Graton Day Labor Center is a fine-tuned nonprofit organization that has brought more order, dignity, and safety to the hiring process. With the establishment of the Graton Day Labor Center the benefits have been broad based, supporting workers, employers, and the community of Graton as a whole.

The inspiration to establish a worker center came from the Graton community who saw a need to support the day laborers who waited in downtown for temporary jobs. In 2000 the Graton Day Labor Project was formed in an effort to work with day laborers in establishing an organized hiring process. That year the Graton Day Labor Project began a series of conversations on the day labor issues and initiated organizing day laborers on the street. Two years later, a yearlong community consensus process brought together day laborers, business owners, local residents, local leaders, and Sonoma county officials to dialogue around the day labor issues. The result of this process was a set of community agreements to guide the location of the center and its scope. Building the actual worker center did not come without opposition, from residents, proprietors, and day laborers. Local residents in Graton resisted a worker center for fear of attracting day laborers to the area. After much effort however, namely trust building and changing the perception of stakeholders on day labor issues, the center opened a fully functioning day labor worker

center in 2007. The community has posted bright yellow signs to direct employers to the location of the new center at 2999 Bowen Street just 1 1/2 blocks south of Graton Road, in downtown Graton. Today, the Graton Day Labor Center is a community-based, worker-led project that organizes day laborers for employment and justice. The Graton Day Labor Center does not employ day laborers, it is an organization that acts as an intermediary between day laborers and employers. Staff and volunteers negotiate jobs and wages, distribute work fairly, and discuss the day laborers responsibilities as well as the employers' responsibilities. Workers are assigned jobs each day according to a lottery, and are not allowed to crowd around vehicles when potential employers arrived. A minimum wage rate of 12.00 dollars is paid for general work and higher wages recommended (between \$15-\$18.00) for skilled or extra difficult job. These recommendations have been decided by assemblies of the day laborers.

The Graton Day Labor Center is a nonprofit organization. It is privately owned in the sense that no government funding is used in the worker center. The Graton Day Labor Center funds are from private foundations, fund-raising events, donations, and the workers themselves. Board members and a number of volunteers do a phenomenal job at creating appropriate funds for the worker center to operate. In 2009-2010, the budget for the Graton Day Labor Center was \$264,000.

Ideally, the way the Graton Day Labor Center operates is the following way: workers come to sign-up in the morning, wait for employers to drop by, negotiate the contract with the employer, go out for work and get paid. The merit of the Graton Day Labor Center is three-fold: first, the Graton Day Labor Center increased the bargaining power of day laborers, thereby increasing their wages and reducing labor exploitation. Secondly, the worker centers foster close collaboration between day laborers and other stakeholders. Furthermore, the worker center benefits the employers, businesses and residents.

The physical existence of worker centers creates incentives for market efficiency that would otherwise not exist. In informal labor sites, for example, day laborers fend for themselves, often fighting one another for a particular job and working for a wage stipulated exclusively by the employer, many times below the federal minimum wage. The transaction between the worker and the employers changes dramatically, however, in an environment where day laborers employ a system that dictates the order in which they go out to work and where a minimum wage is set and observed.

The worker center organizes the workers that produces a collective effort that generates benefits for all the workers. For day laborers, the increase in their bargaining power can result in higher wages and better treatment at the hands of the employer. As part of the day labor center, day laborers are organized, they make and follow their own rules, agree to work for no less than an agreed upon minimum wage, and lottery systems replace swarming and underselling. The end result is that worker centers foster incentives to organize and, therefore, increase the bargaining power of day laborers such that they no longer play the subservient role of wage takers. In Graton, for example, the minimum wage for unskilled work set by the worker center is \$12.00 per hour, for no less than 5 hours per day. Prior to the opening of the worker center, the same day laborers were often seen hired for \$6.00 an hour or less. In addition to the higher wages, the power derived from organizing into worker centers also leads to better treatment at the

hands of employers. As formalized organization, worker centers reserve the rights to refuse to supply labor to any employer. If any day laborer reports abuse or mistreatment at the hands of a particular employer, all participants are immediately informed and warned. In cases of extreme abuse, the police department is also informed, as well as other nonprofit advocacy groups.

The issue of better treatment, and how it is more predominantly observed in day labor centers, is best evidenced by interviews, in-depth discussions with day laborers. The following quotes summarize the difference in treatment before and after the day laborers began participating in the Graton Day Labor Center. Pedro Uriel, best illustrated the difference in working at these two types of sites:

When I first started working in the streets [informal day labor site], I regretted coming to this county . . . Many employers never paid me and I experienced abuse I never experienced as a low-skilled worker in Mexico. When I came to the center [Graton Day Labor Center], I noticed right away how employers treated me differently.

Similarly, Gerardo Perez from the state of Veracruz noted the following: "I once worked for an employer who forced me to work for 13 hours straight. This hasn't happened once since I've been at the Graton Day Labor Center. Juan Gonzalez, a young man with a thick moustache said, "Some employers that come to the center [Graton Day Labor Center] buy me lunch, give me all the appropriate breaks, and pay me extra once I have completed the work . . . It makes me want to work harder."

There are numerous studies that show that employers are most productive when they are working in an environment that is comfortable to them. The same holds true for day laborers, who say they work harder for employers that treat them adequately.

While the benefits to day laborers are obvious, the day labor centers also provide important benefits to employers in spite of the relative fall in their bargaining power. For example, the regulation of the day labor centers reduces the fear of being arrested by the police or ICE for soliciting day laborers. Many communities have strict ordinances banning the solicitation of day laborers. Fear of police intervention is virtually non-existent at the Graton Day Labor Center.

The Graton Day Labor Center also provides employers with an intermediary, someone to report to in case of an emergency or in case involving work-related problems. The Graton Day Labor Center is held accountable for the actions the day laborers. In Graton, for example, once in a while an employer expresses their displeasure in the work done by the center's day laborers. While this is rare, it is important that employers have this opportunity to voice their concern. Each day labor center has one director in charge of overseeing operations and communicating with the public, including the employers. In fact, the center at Graton, distributes feedback cards to employers that ask them to rate their satisfaction with the work done by the day laborers and the center in general. This service, of course, is not available at informal labor sites.

In addition, employers that seek workers at day labor centers like Graton are guaranteed the freedom to choose from 100% day laborers that are skilled in specialized trades or have demonstrated competent knowledge in a particular skill. The application process administered at the day labor centers ensures that all admitted

members are actual day laborers. The director and all day laborers know the skills of each worker. The application process reduces the risk of hiring a non-day laborer or hiring someone who says they know a trade (but mislead the employer) just to be hired.

Moreover, day labor centers strongly disallow swarming of any type. Usually, as in the Graton Day Labor Center it uses the raffle system and/or let the employer choose the day laborer. This prevents day laborers from swarming employers and oncoming traffic, which is often seen in informal day labor sites.

Finally, for the community, day labor centers help resolve neighborhood conflicts around day labor, providing regulations of seemingly disorderly hiring sites and assistance with local policing matters.

Other benefits that day laborers receive by going to the Graton Day Labor Center include the following: on-site English classes six days a week, weekly Occupational Health and Safety Training sessions, weekly Health Education presentations, monthly visits of the dental van from St. Joseph's Health. Medical professionals from Occidental Health Center provide help twice a week, Political, Social and Cultural dialogue occurs weekly, and finally, Leadership, Job Outreach and Development sessions are regularly presented. The workers themselves train each other in services such as landscaping. There is also the Women's Collective, a separate process which works to get house cleaning and childcare jobs for the women, as well as addressing women's issues.

CONCLUSION

The day labor issue is not going away. Sociologists and economists project that the demand for day labor will continue to increase in the coming years, and cities will continue to face tensions around the issue. Employers in a variety of industries have turned to recent migrants, many of whom are not authorized to work in the United States, as a stable labor supply for low-wage jobs. As a result, many migrant workers enter urban economies through precarious jobs in low-wage industries and the informal economy where they often endure routine violations of labor laws. This article explores the day labor phenomenon. It has focused on who are the day laborers, what are the characteristics of day labor work, and what are the day labor worker centers. In addition, the article analyzes the activities of worker centers in improving wages and working conditions. Through a case study of the Graton Day Labor Center located in Northern California, I examine the low wage labor market and the problems that have arisen for workers who hold jobs that effectively exist beyond the reach of the government regulation. I argue that the new organizational form of the worker center is the most promising attempt at crafting a strategic response to the tensions, pressures, and conflicts generated within unregulated workplaces.

NOTES

¹ I will like to thank Edith Chen, Leslie Howard, Elizabeth C. Martinez, Gilda Ochoa, Edward Telles, Tryon Woods for their insightful comments and suggestions on earlier drafts of this article. I also offer my sincere thanks to my respondents, who took the time to explain to me what it means to be a day laborer. Direct all correspondence regarding this article to Daniel Melero Malpica, Department of Chicano and Latino Studies, Sonoma State University, 1801 East Cotati Avenue Rohnert Park CA 94928-3609 USA.

² The hiring corners have a simple nomenclature – la esquina (“the corner”). This is how I will refer to curbside hiring sites, in the same manner that the population that I am researching makes reference to it. This article is based on ethnographic fieldwork in Los Angeles and Graton California.

³ I will use “illegal immigration” or “illegal alien” under quotes because I find the terms offensive and derogatory. I use instead, in this piece the term undocumented or unauthorized immigrants to refer to this population.

⁴ There are a number of exceptions. Recent excellent studies that concentrate on low-skilled workers include: Waldinger and Lichter, 2003; De Genova, 2005; Milkman, 2006, Zolniski, 2006.

⁵ For a general history of day labor markets in California and the United States see the work of Malpica, 2002.

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