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Varieties of Capitalist Development

Worker-Manager Relations in the Texas Apparel Industry, 1935–1975

Wages, benefits, and workers' rights in the American South lagged behind the national average throughout the New Deal era even after southern states industrialized after the Second World War. This article deepens arguments about a distinctive regional variety of capitalism. It emphasizes how the institutions that define rights and authority over such economic decisions as what kind of jobs to create and how industries should compete constitute the industrial order. The article focuses on the Texas apparel industry and shows that low labor standards were an outcome of choices made by business owners and managers who claimed, and were given, the authority to carry out their visions of economic development. In contrast to previous explanations that have focused on labor exploitation and resistance, I address alternative ways to organize work and market products and the influence of choices from these alternatives on the development of distinctive labor-management relations. The apparel industry developed an efficient form of production that took advantage of an oligarchic political order whose institutional features dated to an earlier era.

Wages, benefits, and workers' rights in the American South lagged behind the national average throughout the New Deal era even after southern states industrialized after the Second World War. There are several explanations for this that are debated in a large literature on southern development. A recurrent theme is that the South lagged behind the North as the twentieth century began, its economy characterized by capital shortage, labor surplus, and unproductive industrial plants. To compete, southern capitalists

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had to exploit their comparative advantage in cheap labor and closely focus state power and public resources on business needs (Bensel 1984; Cobb 1984; Shulman 1991; Bridges 1998; cf. Scranton 2001).

This article deepens the argument about a distinctive regional variety of capitalism. It emphasizes how the institutions that define rights and authority over such economic decisions as what kind of jobs to create and how industries should compete constitute the industrial order (Berk 1994; Hollingsworth and Boyer 1997; Hall and Soskice 2001; Orren and Skowronek 2004). The article focuses on the Texas apparel industry and shows that low labor standards were and still are an outcome of choices made by business owners and managers who claimed, and were given, the authority to carry out their vision of economic development. Previous explanations of southern labor conditions have taken employers for granted and have focused narrowly on labor exploitation and resistance, including the race, ethnic, and gender divisions among the working classes. They have rarely addressed alternative ways to organize work and market products and the influence of choices from these alternatives on opportunities for labor organizing. Yet these features of the industrial order are critical for explaining the development of distinctive labor-management relations. The apparel industry was not compelled by "lagged" circumstances to exploit labor and in fact developed an efficient form of production that took advantage of an oligarchic political order whose institutional features dated to an earlier era. These institutions, such as party coalitions, labor and employment law, and racial and ethnic segregation, placed employers in a commanding position, but their power was historically contingent and the subject of ideological debate and political conflict. In the end, apparel firms were able to preserve their power and implement their vision of a mass market for standardized products produced by management-dominated workplaces.[1]

Like other southern states, Texas was a member of the Confederacy, had established white supremacy by the early 1900s, and was agricultural well into the twentieth century. However, the totalizing concept of "the South" can mislead investigation if we assume that the political economies of every southern state were organized the same way and were different from non-southern states as a group. Texas was like some other places in the South and the non-South, such as eastern Pennsylvania, because it was a destination for employers who wanted to escape heavily unionized New York (Wolensky 2003). Compared to other southern states, Texas industrialized and grew more rapidly in the twentieth century. Texas had oil—as did Louisiana—and had very substantial military industrial investment in Houston, Dallas, and Austin, which helped push the state's per capita income to the national average by 1980 (Weinstein et al. 1985: table 1.7; Wright 1986; Hooks 2001). Texans supported unionism to a degree unequaled by other southern states (Marshall 1967). The state uniquely shares an international border. Also, the state contained innovative industrialists. Today we think of Texas Instruments and Dell Computer, but in the middle third of the twentieth century, innovation was associated with apparel manufacturing. Indeed, Texas apparel manufacturers pioneered a new industry that made the Dallas Apparel Mart a pivot of the national industry in the 1960s. By 1970 Texas was the center of a region that ranked fifth in the nation in apparel employment. However, wages and employee rights remained poor even though competitors in core garment centers had standards that were substantially higher.[2]

Why did the Texas industry develop this way? Most explanations revert to the southern image and fall into two categories. Neoclassical models of labor markets cite cheap labor as an incentive for interregional capital movement (Newman 1984: 111–13; Bartley 1995). Institutional theories explain development as dependent on existing local conditions, like Jim Crow or industry agglomeration (Ferguson 2001; cf. North 1990). In the former, labor is a commodity that is the same everywhere except for its price; the organization of work and the link between production and product markets are given. Rational employers seek the highest return by locating investment where the labor cost is the lowest, which in this case is in the labor-abundant American South. In institutional theories, patterns of industrial development are explained by historical legacies: southern states were burdened by their lack of capital and entrepreneurial acumen and by segregation, while the garment industry, originally concentrated in the American Northeast, gained efficiency advantages there from proximity to consumer markets, fashion designers, and skilled labor, among other factors. A problem for the neoclassical theory is that it predicts wage rate equalization. A problem for institutional theories is that innovation happens (Carlton 2003: 165–66). White supremacy in the South was abolished, and industrial modernization occurred, but labor incomes remained stagnant.

In contrast to these models, Gavin Wright (1986) presented a historically specific account that highlighted how the southern labor market was sheltered from national economic forces before the New Deal but then was forcibly incorporated in ways that had unintended consequences for working-class welfare. Wright is correct that labor market institutions are not given, whether this means they operate identically in every place or that they are different in different places, but still fixed. They are dynamic. The "Old South" was different; the New Deal changed it. And yet Wright's conclusion that the outcome was the integration of the southern labor market with the northern labor market seems implausible. There is another account that builds on Wright's insights, however.

Wright (ibid.: 175) made a crucial observation about the Birmingham steel industry in the early twentieth century that provides a clue to the significance of choices in the design of industrial order. He argued that southern steel industrialists "lacked the capacity to generate . . . advanced forms of labor-using methods." He assigned this incapacity in the first instance to underdeveloped scientific knowledge and production technology and then to northern managers who ignored the qualities of the local supply of iron. But he went on to argue that the later New Deal "forced" the South to give up the possibility of developing its "own sophisticated labor-intensive technology" in favor of the capital-intensive model characteristic of the North. This was accomplished by the nationalization of labor standards through the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) and Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). These policies integrated southern workers into a national market even though southern productivity was too low to afford the increased wage bill. To cope with this problem, he argued, southern industry increased capital investment, which raised productivity, but the pace of expansion was too slow to absorb the labor supply. The abundant supply of labor persisted, which depressed wages.

Is posing a sophisticated labor-intensive factory system anything more than a counterfactual exercise? Wright (ibid.: 237) pointed to post–Second World War Japan as a real-world example. Japanese work organization was based on teamwork that engaged factory workers and their unions in production problem solving and on pay systems geared to the success of the firm and sector (Dore 1987). I argue that the unionized American garment industry presented another example of such a sophisticated labor-intensive system. Its leaders waged a determined effort to convince Texas garment firms to adopt this labor-intensive system, but the firms did not do so. Texas industrialists instead chose a business model characterized by capital-intensive and authoritarian forms of work organization. If advanced technology did contribute to lower wages, it did so not because northerners forced southern employers to accept capital-intensive manufacturing but because the Texans rejected the sophisticated labor-intensive model that would require them to bargain with their employees. The Texans' strategy exploited certain national product market opportunities and regional labor market conditions. Texas was different from the North because employers were able to use state power to block the extension of collective bargaining and slow the civil equality of the Mexican American and black communities. When the Texas industry modernized, business leaders chose to do so in ways that preserved and enhanced their authority and wealth and limited improvements in the status of labor.

The Labor-Based Model of the Apparel Industry

The sophisticated labor-intensive apparel industry model that became associated with "northern" industry was created by the actions of individuals and groups in and around the garment industry under changing conditions of politics and government in the first third of the twentieth century.[3] American apparel manufacturing was highly concentrated in New York City in 1900, but in the next several decades new centers arose in Philadelphia, Boston, Rochester, Cleveland, and Chicago. Crucial for the viability of the New York garment district was regulation of the ruinous competition among thousands of manufacturers and subcontractors. As fashions changed and new fabrics were introduced, firms threw themselves into desperate price-cutting competition and earned the industry a well-deserved reputation for sweating labor (Piore and Sabel 1984: 294; Best 1990: 156; Scranton 1997: 352; Cowie 2002). The industry depended heavily on immigrant women: three out of five workers in 1930 were foreign-born, and many of them were Russian Jews and Italians. A large percentage of the rest were the children of immigrants (Fraser 1991). Low pay, long hours, unhealthful and unsafe workplaces, homework, and abusive management attracted the attention of liberal reformers and unionists.

The National Consumers' League (NCL) linked middle-class and working-class immigrant women in a sometimes influential alliance that won local and state regulation of working conditions before the New Deal; the NCL championed national standards during the New Deal to improve conditions in the South (Boris 1994; McCartin 1997; Storrs 2000). Garment workers organized themselves into many unions, the two largest of which dominated the two biggest segments of the industry. The Amalgamated Clothing Workers (ACW) organized the men's clothing industry, and the International Ladies Garment Workers (ILG) organized the women's and children's segments. Among the most successful unionists were foreign-born workers who brought organizing experience and a left-wing vision of social modernization to the United States. By the 1930s they had made substantial progress toward the elimination of the worst abuses in the northern United States (Fraser 1991). This achievement was no less real because unions and cooperative employers had to exert constant effort to sustain it.[4]

The apparel industry became one of the most highly unionized industries in the United States as well as a pioneer of union-management cooperation. The extreme insecurity that intense competition caused in a very decentralized production system made manufacturers realize that "only by collaboration of all the groups" in the industry could the situation be stabilized. Thus "a type of co-operation began in which little account was taken of customary lines of demarcation between managerial and union functions and in some respects even between employer and employee status" (Braun 1947: 62). Manufacturers, jobbers, contractors, employers' associations, and unions formed complex networks to regulate and improve the contractor system, manage employment relations, stimulate industry modernization, and jointly promote the industry's products.

The critical element of industry self-regulation was the unions' strategy because the industry was populated by financially insecure proprietary firms that competed vigorously against one another, whereas the union spanned the industry. The ILG's Benjamin Stolberg (1944: 316–17) explained that "the majority of plants [in the women's garment industry] are small-scale enterprises managed by rule of thumb. . . . The union can take an industry-wide view and has the interests of the entire industry at heart." The ILG and the ACW performed the traditional union task of removing wage rates from the competitive calculations of individual employers by negotiating contracts that standardized wages and working conditions across firms. Beyond regulating the price of labor, the unions became deeply involved in organizing production, including the relationships among contractors, and in industry strategies to market products to consumers.

The unions favored piece-rate wages, which seemed more compatible than straight hourly wages with batch production of products whose qualities changed regularly, as long as the union codetermined the rates. This choice led the ACW to become involved in grading garments by their characteristics and the ILG in establishing lists of operations that might be combined to produce varying styles (Braun 1947: 104–9; Carpenter 1972: 804–6). The ILG established standards across employers by contracts with the larger manufacturers. These contracts required them to maintain union standards at their subcontractors' shops and establish "joint boards" in local product markets. The ACW accomplished much the same goal through industry-wide bargaining with the Clothing Manufacturers Association of the United States (Corbin 1970: 240–41).

The depression of the 1930s threw the union labor–based apparel industry into crisis, but it came out of the depression even stronger. At first, the collapse of product markets tempted individual firms to abandon union-employer cooperation and threaten the industry with a resumption of cutthroat competition and depressed prices and wages. However, cooperation was reinforced by the National Recovery Administration (NRA), which formalized standard setting among firms and between them and employee representatives. Even after the U.S. Supreme Court declared the NRA unconstitutional in 1934, garment manufacturers and unions stuck together to prevent the return of self-destructive behavior (Braun 1947: 107; Carpenter 1972: 762–87). In addition, employers and unionists agreed to encompass all of the groups in the industry, lest those outside the agreement gain temporary advantage (until they all were harmed) by undercutting industry standards.

This agreement required unions and manufacturers' associations to extend the system to garment districts outside the northeastern core. These districts were growing because of several factors: "run away" shops from the unionized core; population shifts toward the cities of the West and the Southwest, which created new markets for local manufacturers; and shifting consumer tastes for the products that western firms were already producing. In the 1930s it appeared that the ILG and the ACW and the core garment manufacturers would be able to extend the system because of their partnership with the New Deal Democratic Party, which supported nationwide unionization through the NLRA, standardizing and raising wages through the FLSA, and developing southern industry. As it turned out, extending the cooperative system from the core to the periphery became a decades-long project that was mostly unsuccessful.

Creation of the Texas Apparel Industry

The Texas industry was created within specific conditions of political power and government authority and of product and labor markets. Starting well after it had in New York, industry development accelerated in Texas in the 1920s, when a dress industry was begun in Dallas by a group of former wholesale and retail buyers and merchants. In 1947 Texas broke into the top 10 states by employment in the women's garment segment. Employment in the women's outerwear industry was concentrated in Dallas, accounting for two-thirds of the firms and almost three-quarters of the workers by that date. By 1950 there were 80 garment manufacturing firms in Dallas, employing over 8,000 workers (Johnson 1954: 71, 105). Although the women's segment of the industry first put Dallas on the map as a serious competitor in national markets, the menswear segment employed twice as many workers in 1950. Women's wear employment doubled from 1951 to 1962, and in 1977 women's wear employment was equal to 86 percent of the menswear segment. Employment in the menswear segment became concentrated in three firms: Haggar in Dallas, Williamson-Dickie in Fort Worth, and Farah in El Paso. In 1975 there were 100 apparel plants in Dallas and almost 700 plants in Texas, employing 60,000 workers (DeMoss 1989).[5] The Texas industry accounted for over half of the apparel employment in the U.S. Census Bureau's "west south central" region, which included Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Louisiana. It virtually tied the "Pacific" region as the fourth largest garment center in the country, albeit far behind the New York region and the Southeast (Arpan et al. 1982).

Texas apparel firms initially supplied local retailers and military bases but eventually developed products that enabled them to ride a wave of changes in national tastes, income, and population distribution. Dallas women's clothing firms in the 1920s and 1930s primarily produced housedresses and cheap cotton one-piece street dresses. Housedresses were considered styleless—not intended for wear in public—while the ready-to-wear one-piece dresses were simple copies of styles from New York City. Menswear firms specialized in heavy-duty work clothes for the ranching and oil industries and uniforms for the military. However, product markets began to change in the 1930s, and manufacturers changed with them. The national women's market trended toward casual and simplified clothing designs, in part an expression of the increasingly public roles for women, the popularity of leisure and sports, and the widespread use of automobiles. Also in the 1930s, the combination of lower incomes and political movements that stressed Americanism in the arts and working-class solidarity contributed to the creation of a mass market (Johnson 1954: 29–33, 112–13, 164–73; Cohen 1990). In the postwar 1940s Dallas became a leading center for producing midpriced mass-market dresses and sportswear, a new product category for sports clothing as well as for casual nonwork situations. To secure domination of the market, an association of 48 firms created the Dallas Fashion and Sportswear Center in 1944 and established the Southern Methodist University School of Design to train the next generation of sportswear clothing designers (Johnson 1954; Callison 1977).

The booming popularity of casual styles and sportswear in the 1930s and 1940s was a boon to the menswear segment as well. Haggar claimed it invented "slacks," casual nonwork pants for urbanites. Williamson-Dickie and Farah capitalized on the urban popularity of rural work clothes, such as denim jeans. In the 1950s and 1960s national retail buyers flocked to the industry-built Dallas Apparel Mart. Haggar and Farah moved to market labeled clothing, while many other firms remained contractors for the mass retailers Sears and J. C. Penney and the major department stores Federated and Allied. In the mid-1970s Texas manufacturers were still contending with buyers' impressions that Dallas dresses were mass market and not ready for a sophisticated consumer (Callison 1977; DeMoss 1989). But the corollary of that impression was the success of the Texas industry in the mass retail segment of the industry and what it enabled manufacturers to do in production and labor relations.

One of the key qualities of sportswear and casual dresses is that they do not require as much tailoring or handwork as traditional fashion clothing.[6] The large-volume production of these midpriced, simply styled, and sturdy garments enabled Texas firms to adapt techniques associated with mass-production manufacturing of consumer durables. Texas firms had won their mass-manufacturing spurs during the Second World War. Virtually every garment center in the country benefited from war-induced demand for clothing. When the war was over, however, western producers were in a good position to sustain their newly realized production volumes: the federal government had subsidized new plants and equipment, and most of the larger Texas firms in both segments of the industry had converted to section-production methods (Johnson 1954: 197–99; DeMoss 1989: 113–16). Don Williamson of

Williamson-Dickie was a scientific management avatar as a fellow at the Harvard Business School and president of the Southern Garment Manufacturers Association.

Section production was like mass production: the product (garment) was standardized and simplified, and its components were sewn together one at a time. Workers might specialize in sleeves or collars, for example, in contrast to the whole garment method, in which a worker would assemble the entire garment. Section production enabled Texas firms to make a significant improvement in productivity as long as high-volume orders drove down unit costs to capture economies of scale. Without large sales, however, section production was expensive and less responsive to changes in consumer tastes than the tailor-based system of production that was reestablished in New York after the war. The greater expense was based on the increased scale of plant, longer time for work in process, and greater management overhead for increased supervision (Stolberg 1944; Belfer 1977).

The Texas manufacturing system had implications beyond the organization of work for relationships among firms and for union-management relations. Texas firms were significantly larger than the national average, and they were "inside" shops rather than manufacturers that subcontracted the work to smaller shops (Johnson 1954). Section production placed greater emphasis on managerial control of product flow and less on workers' self-management. Because of the centralization of management and concentration of production in fewer firms, there was less need to stabilize links among many firms as long as consumer (or retailer) demand was maintained, and less need for the role that the garment unions played in organizing employers to stabilize competition.

Political Conditions for Labor-Based Development

The changing structure and composition of political coalitions and product markets alike in the 1930s and 1940s created new opportunities to increase living standards and extend the labor-based model to the South. Before the New Deal, America's political economy was characterized by emerging nation-spanning product markets, but decentralized labor market regulation and political party coalitions built on state-level foundations. Some states in the North developed universal public education, workers' compensation, mothers' pensions, and work hours regulation, but few in the South did so (Tindall 1967; Mertz 1978; McDonagh 1999). The New Deal created a new context for struggles over labor standards. On the one hand, national law established rules to which advocates of national standards could appeal; on the other, freedom for capital and state autonomy persisted. When the New Deal nationalized regulatory authority in many sectors, established a federal welfare system, and gave legal authority to workers who wanted to form unions, southern employers argued against national norms. The New Deal Democratic Party was a coalition that depended on southern voters and even more on the loyalty of southern congressmen to carry its agenda through the Congress, which placed limits on how vigorously the Roosevelt administration could press for national standards. Northern labor unions, consumer and women's organizations, and party reformers promoted national legislation, but they also launched campaigns to mobilize southerners to change regional conditions.

When national politics changed in the 1930s and labor-management relations became the object of federal regulation, Texas employers had to be brought into some workable relationship with the new federal authorities to implement the New Deal project for raising labor standards. The Texas apparel industry had been created in a context in which the state's employers had conducted a successful campaign to block a surge of unionism in such industries as oil and urban transportation and establish the idea that labor relations were legally and politically a matter of private concern and not public policy. Closely linked to that campaign were state policies to segregate the races and limit the economic opportunities of blacks and Mexicans (Kiser 1972; Zamora 1993; Amberg 2004). Texas employers asserted their newly won authority against the New Deal regime. Apparel employers resolutely opposed the labor-based policy of the national Democratic Party, including the Fair Labor Standards Act, garment unions, and racial equality. The Texas industry preferred to establish a distinctive model based on a mass-market product strategy and authoritarian production organization, two qualities that created extra difficulties for the ILG and the ACW in the state.

A corollary of the Texas model was a labor market populated by weak social and political institutions that left employees in low-income jobs and denied them a share of prosperity. The model led to an impressive rate of industry growth and expanded job opportunities, with the shift of the Texas industry to section-production methods eliminating much if not all of the productivity difference between it and the core garment centers. Although the Texas industry was a success on its own terms, its success did not lead to higher labor standards. The industry paid very low wages for decades, but not because low productivity undermined employers' ability to raise them. Unlike the New Dealers' image of high-wage efficiency, southern employers pocketed efficiency gains without distributing a significant share to employees.

Union-Management Relations in the Texas Apparel Industry

The sophisticated model common in the unionized North required labor-management cooperation, which the garment unions were eager to provide Texas employers, but almost all Texas firms adhered to the local model of labor control, abetted by the leaders of the Democratic Party and the state government. Texas was part of the ILG's Midwest administrative region headquartered in St. Louis. Meyer Perlstein, who was named director of the St. Louis office in 1934, had a 20-year record as a leading advocate for union-management cooperation based on intimate collaboration in scientific management (Slichter 1941: 394–436).[7] Perlstein initiated an innovative strategy that shaped the St. Louis industry for decades and that stood as the example of what the ILG offered the Texas industry (Stolberg 1944). The St. Louis women's industry was like other "out of town" centers that depended on New York fashion leadership; firms pirated designs and competed against one another based on price. Perlstein convinced manufacturers to collaborate on a professional study of new products and production methods. The outcome was the creation of a new segment of the women's industry—"junior" size clothes for teenage girls—whose designs could be specially made in St. Louis with no competition from New York. It was a great success right away. Still 20 years later, the St. Louis women's industry was twice as likely to brand its products as Dallas (Johnson 1954: 261). At the ILG's initiative, the industry established labor-management committees in the shop, began production-engineering classes for workers and foremen, and sent members to a summer union institute in Wisconsin.

In 1935 ILG organizers arrived in Dallas to help garment workers organize unions at firms of the Dallas Dress Manufacturers Association (Green 1971; Hill 1994). The major history of the Texas apparel industry asserts that "a compatible, peaceful, and mutually beneficial relationship developed between employees and managers" and that "a tradition of close personal relationships in Texas factories between managers and workers led to gradual improvements in the working environment," but other evidence suggests that workers' reception involved stiff resistance by organized employers rather than peace and mutuality (DeMoss 1989: 143, 165).[8] The Dallas Open Shop Association rallied dressmakers to resist the ILG to forestall a union foothold in the city. The Dress Manufacturers Association "steadfastly refused to recognize collective bargaining rights" of employees who had joined the ILG (ibid.: 151). It rejected arbitration recommended by the state industrial commission and instead crushed a union-recognition strike with court orders, strikebreakers, jail for pickets, and off-duty police. When in 1937 the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed that the NLRA was the law of the land, the ILG's federal allies halted some antiunion tactics, and the union established two locals. The ILG also was invited to organize a new firm, Nardis, started by migrant businessmen from New York City. Nardis became one of the most successful firms in Dallas even though ILG wages and conditions raised its labor bill and prices (ibid.: 97).[9]

The ILG also organized locals in Houston, San Antonio, and Laredo. However, employer acceptance of the union rarely rose above the minimum definition of recognition, dues checkoff, and industrial peace; the ILG did not establish its production-engineering program and use it to raise pay. Contracts were made on a company-by-company basis rather than on a product-market basis (Harwood 1957).[10] As already suggested, in the 1940s the women's industry in Dallas developed characteristics that were distinct from those of other garment centers—inside contracting, section production of mass-market goods—that reduced the value of unionism for manufacturers that the ILG brought to the table. Employers did not need the ILG to tame destructive competition and improve productivity; unionism promised only higher wages and threatened management authority in the workplace. In the end, the union's regional Texas strategy failed because it could not engage employers in the kind of social-democratic modernization it favored, which involved joint union-management decision making about the labor process.[11]

Texas employers worked hard to disrupt worker solidarity and prevent unionization. Between 1941 and 1954 the Texas legislature passed 11 labor laws to blunt the New Deal's protection of workers' freedom of association (Dempsey 1961; Green 1982). In the 1950s ILG-organized garment manufacturers took advantage of these laws to get rid of the union. The ILG appealed for help from Texas governor Allan Shivers, but he was preoccupied with leading the state Democrats into massive resistance to school integration (Bartley 1969). By the early 1960s the ILG was defeated.[12] The ACW also faced setbacks. The union organized several locals but faced mounting resistance from employers. The ACW struck one company in El Paso in 1947 but only signed a contract in 1950. When the contract was about to expire in 1951, the company challenged the union's majority. The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) scheduled a vote eight months later, which the ACW won, but subsequent negotiations proved fruitless, and the union gave up (Harwood 1957: 25). In Fort Worth the ACW lost an election in 1952 at Williamson-Dickie, but the NLRB ordered a new election after it decided the company had engaged in illegal antiunion campaigning. Williamson-Dickie went to federal court and won a reversal of the decision, and no election was held. The ACW represented employees at four Haggar plants, but the ACW and Haggar, which had "a vehement, anti-union attitude," got into a multiyear fight, and in 1956 workers voted the union out (DeMoss 1989: 159–62). In addition, employers implemented a decentralization strategy in the mid-1950s and the 1960s in which they shifted the industry from the Dallas–Fort Worth area to small towns and the southern part of the state with its largely Mexican labor supply. Apparel employment had been overwhelmingly concentrated in 6 Texas counties in 1951, but by 1962 there were 36 counties with at least one factory with over 100 employees, and in 1977 there were 70 such counties (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1951, 1962, 1968, 1977).[13] The ACW reacted by mounting a new campaign in the mid-1960s in alliance with the Mexican American civil rights movement (discussed below).

In sum, Texas employers largely succeeded in keeping unions out and wages low for decades. Just 24 of 315 apparel plants in the state were unionized in 1957 (Harwood 1957: 87). Johnson's study found that in 1952 workers in the Dallas women's sector earned on average $1.06 per hour, the second lowest wage offered in the nine biggest garment cities nationwide (Johnson 1954: 192). In the men's industry, sewing machine operators in Texas had the lowest pay in the South and Southwest regions in 1964, and the Southwest had the lowest pay of all regions (Rungeling 1969). Apparel wages in the "west south central" states were the lowest in six of eight occupations in 1977 and the second lowest in the other two of all American regions (Arpan et al. 1982: 19).

Administered Labor Standards and the Changing Composition of the Labor Force

These labor-management outcomes were not only the consequence of failures of unionization during the early decades of the New Deal. At this time reformers also sought to improve labor conditions through public administration of labor standards and civil rights enforcement. However, apparel employers in Texas resisted these strategies as they had union organization. Yet the condition of the working class was not a simple function of management resistance to the federal government and a united labor force. The New Deal coalition was itself divided on civil rights, and the composition of the labor force was changing.

Direct administration of labor standards was proposed in the NRA in 1933. The Dallas dressmakers' spokesperson noted the logic of the New Dealers' labor-based model of economic development: higher wages "forced them [Texas firms] to produce more efficiently or get out of the business" (DeMoss 1989: 69). But the question was which model should be deployed, the sophisticated labor-based model or the managerial labor-control model? The Southern States Industrial Council opposed the NRA. Dallas dressmakers argued that theirs was a "fledgling industry" that "should not be equated with the more productive New York City or West Coast apparel centers" (Mertz 1978: 223; see also Connery 1938; Shulman 1991: 25). Texas firms demanded and got a lower Texas wage from the National Dress Board's Cotton Garment Code. The principal manufacturer in San Antonio won a special subminimum wage with the claim that its Mexicana workforce was untrained in machine production and less efficient (DeMoss 1989: 22, 68, 147).

New Dealers next proposed the FLSA in 1937. Southern employers fought it, but the virtually unanimous opposition of national employers' associations to the act belied their charge that the FLSA was a plot by their northern competitors (Shulman 1991: 54). Instead, the FLSA was a project of the "Keynesian left" of the New Deal coalition, which included the garment unions, women's rights advocates, southern reformers, and organizations such as the National Consumers League (Boris 1994: 274; Storrs 2000). One of the primary objectives of the FLSA was to help the unions organize southern industry by stipulating minimum standards to prevent destructive competition based on labor exploitation. The Roosevelt administration, in its

1938 *Report on the Economic Conditions in the South*, identified low wages in the region as the country's number one problem. Southern employers, however, convinced Congress to establish "industry committees" authorized to recommend lower wages for specific sectors (Brandeis 1972; Oswald 1976).

Another way that southern employers slowed the impact of the FLSA was to refuse to pay black and white workers the same minimum wage by dismissing black employees or reclassifying jobs and raising white workers' pay. Nationwide in the apparel industry, the proportion of black employees declined from 6.0 percent in 1930 to 2.5 percent in 1940. In 6 of 10 southern states, black employment in apparel declined from 1940 to 1960. In Texas black employment rose from 3.3 percent of the labor force in 1940 to 5.1 percent in 1950 but stagnated at 5.0 percent in 1960. In Dallas black employment rose from 8.4 percent in 1950 to 9.1 percent in 1960 to 13.0 percent in 1970. In 1960 almost half of all blacks in the national industry were employed in nonproduction jobs as laborers and service workers, a pattern of occupational segregation that existed in Texas (Wrong 1974: tables 9, 12, 13, 15, 26, 34). Dorothy DeMoss (1989: 168) reports that Dallas dressmakers employed only "white" female production workers and that the Dallas Independent School District maintained whites-only vocational training in the needle trades until 1962. Nardis, the union-friendly company, did not discriminate by occupation, but it did segregate blacks in the plant.[14] When they could no longer legally discriminate against blacks, firms decentralized their operations toward the Mexican border, seeking to frustrate unions, avoid black workers, and employ low-wage Anglo and Mexican women.

Decentralization in the 1960s opened new possibilities for industrial change, however, because Mexican workers had their own ideas about what they wanted from work and increasingly demanded respect and equality. Texas employers turned to Mexican American workers in the belief that they were an excellent match for the semiskilled low-wage jobs they were creating. By 1970 "Spanish-language" workers were 35.5 percent of all Texas apparel workers; in San Antonio and El Paso, Mexican workers were 89.8 percent of employees (Wrong 1974: table 34). Elaine Wrong (ibid.: 102) comments that "the majority of these employers [who employ Mexican workers] operate nonunion and they believe that the Mexican Americans are less susceptible to being unionized" because their "docility," partly rooted in their ambiguous immigration status, leads them to accept poor working conditions and a faster work pace with fewer complaints than blacks. Yet the "docility" of Mexicans was a perception that predated the Chicano and Chicana militancy of the late 1960s and 1970s, when El Paso, San Antonio, and many other places exploded politically.[15]

Public administration of labor-management relations depended not only on the political conflict between garment manufacturers and New Deal officials and their interest group supporters but also on the goals that workers organized to win. Mexican workers were socially marginalized and legally segregated in the labor market in the twentieth century. Their goals were produced in the history of group and class relationships within the Mexican community and between that community and Anglos. Thus the immediate significance of the decentralization of the apparel industry to South Texas is not only that employers sought to avoid unions but that the industry created new job opportunities for Mexicans. Even low-paid employment in garment manufacturing was a precious security for families. The prospect of raising pay through FLSA enforcement, including the regulation of homework, and unionization had to be weighed against job loss when alternative employment in migrant farmwork, unskilled labor, and domestic service was significantly worse (ibid.: 99–103; Montejano 1987).

Job opportunities were opened, but exploitation and discrimination at work persisted with the management-based model (cf. Siegel 1997; Sunstein 1997). Mexican American civil rights activists had won significant legal victories before the 1960s, in employment opportunities and education, for example, but federal civil rights enforcement in Texas remained bitterly contentious, and the goals still were largely unachieved (O'Connor 1950: 93; Landolt 1976; Daniel 1991; Samora and Simon 1993: 107–32; Lichtenstein 2002: 85–86). Therefore the mobilization of the Mexican workforce by apparel employers was an opportunity for the ILG and the ACW if they could comprehend its meaning for union strategy. The ILG and the ACW wanted to extend standards from the industry core. Both unions stressed education of the membership about modern factory management and union leadership of the industry. Both taught members to commit to careers at work. Both were run by immigrants and children of immigrants whose socialism favored cultural assimilation. They depended, even more than those in the core, on the solidarity of workers themselves to carry the day because of the significantly greater power of Texas employers and the lesser value of union organization for an industry that used a more centralized management model.

Like most unions in the South before the 1960s, the ILG stepped gingerly around white supremacy: it fairly represented black workers where they worked but did not challenge segregation. Its failure to confront Jim Crow placed it in the sights of critics who argued that American union leaders were racist and sold out their members (Davidson 1990; Balea 1992; Gutiérrez 1995: 183–99; Stein 1998; Rosales 2000). However, the meaning of *sell out* depends on claims about workers' interests and strategies, which cannot be taken for granted.[16] For example, Isaias James McCaffery, in an otherwise valuable study of garment unionism among Mexican American workers in San Antonio before the civil rights revolution, oversimplified the dynamic quality of identity when he argued that the ILG was deluded about the universal quality of its social-democratic goals. The union was in some sense Jewish, and its commitment to assimilation was alien to Mexicans (McCaffery 1999: 22–24, 173–74, 186–87, 204). The premise of his analysis—that a group has some essential interest—is flawed, because the ILG (and the ACW), including their Jewish members and leaders, adapted their goals and organization as new conditions emerged (Fraser 1991). The same observation may be made of the Mexican community: it was diverse and evolving. Thus there *were* organizations that preserved the traditions of the community, such as the Catholic Church, but the church also supported unionism, as it did in the North. The most important organization at that time in the Mexican American community, the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), was assimilationist. It was critical of unions in the 1930s and then became pro-union. On the other hand, the prominent *mexicanista* Spanish-language paper in San Antonio, *La Prensa*, scorned female garment strikers (Garcia 1991: 254–55).

Consider the Mexicana apparel workers. They faced discrimination against people of Mexican heritage, but they also were enveloped in historical constructions of the proper role of women. Thus, when the ILG negotiated a regional contract for homeworkers in the mid-1930s that compelled employers to pay factory-equivalent wages and that was a step toward ending homework, many Mexicanas were ambivalent about leaving the home-centered life (Blackwelder 1984: 61–62; McCaffery 1999: 157–59). It is not a stretch to note similarities with Charles Sabel's (1982) "peasant workers." That is, the women wanted a job, not a career; they were rooted in traditional communities in which women were expected to stay home and identify themselves as mothers and spouses. The meaning of the abolition of homework was even debatable among New Dealers and women's rights advocates. Some saw it as support for minimum wages as well as protection for the traditional conception of the home, namely, the home should not be a factory (Boris 1994: 298–99). Yet not everyone was a "traditionalist"; peasant workers do not necessarily stay peasants in outlook and interests (Fraser 1991: 105–6; Honey 1993: 80; cf. Vila 2000). For example, a leading labor organizer in San Antonio in the 1930s was Emma Tenayuca, a communist. At the same time, her Communist Party connection rather than her ethnicity caused the Dubinsky-led ILG to keep her out of the organization.[17] In short, Mexican Americans' debates about what to do were bound to evolving identities and interests. The broader point is that the status of Mexicans was changing because opportunities and authority were changing, and the pace of change increased in the postwar decades, when activists broke up the barrio and challenged the state's political leadership.

In contrast to the ILG, the ACW became involved in Mexican Americans' civil rights struggles in the 1960s and built on the new alliances to help the union cause, most directly by supporting César Chávez's new United Farm Workers Union and by helping to persuade the U.S. Congress to end the bracero program with Mexico in 1964. The ACW simultaneously launched an organizing campaign in Texas that added thousands of new members, largely gained by a victory at Farah in 1974. By the mid-1970s, however, the collaborative relationship between the union and Mexican American activists had weakened because of disagreements about reform strategies based on still-changing political conditions and identities.

It is important to bear in mind that the union's basic goal is to remove the price of labor from the competitive calculations of employers and that, to do this, the union must organize the labor force for collective action. Thus, when the New Deal coalition ended the bracero program with Mexico in 1964, ACW strategists, like "employers, politicians and academicians," predicted that a consequence would be a "serious labor shortage problem" (Rungeling 1969: 20; Briggs et al. 1977). The core idea was that the agricultural labor market depressed wages for manufacturing labor. Cutting off the bracero supply would improve the union's ability to organize workers and raise pay. But, Brian Rungeling (1969: 20) observes, the labor shortage "never happened." Mexican labor also came to the United States under the alien commuter rule. The rule was an Immigration and Naturalization Service exception to the 1924 Immigration and Nationality Act that enabled Mexicans to obtain work permits ("green cards") if they intended to take up permanent residency and become citizens. There was no enforcement of the residency requirement (Kiser and Kiser 1979: 216; Lopez 1996). Union organizers soon realized that "green card" workers could have the same effect as braceros. "Firms employing commuters paid the lowest wages" in every sector, according to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (Kiser and Kiser 1979: 230). The ACW gained strong support from the Farm Workers Union and the Texas AFL-CIO as well as LULAC and the new La Raza Unida Party to prevent Mexican workers from undermining the union effort.[18] Yet within a few years sentiment in the Mexican American community shifted to ethnic solidarity among people on both sides of the border against the company and the union.

The long struggle with Farah was a turning point in this shift, a key element of which was the redefinition of the commuter problem. Farah, the largest garment firm in Texas, employed half of El Paso's 12,000 apparel workers in 1967. Almost 90 percent of the employees in El Paso's garment factories were Mexicans and Mexican Americans (Rungeling 1969: 56–58, 77). About 80 percent were women, most had not completed high school, pay was the minimum wage, and turnover was high. Farah proudly announced that it did not employ commuters from Ciudad Juárez just across the Rio Grande, but about 40 percent of the workforce at other companies lived in Mexico (Antone 1969; Rungeling 1969: 57–58, 90–98). But when Farah's U.S. employees joined the ACW and struck the company in 1972, Farah changed its policy and hired commuters to break the strike (Coyle et al. 1979: 31).[19] In fact, the company operated all of its plants throughout the strike despite impressive mass demonstrations and arrests. The keys to the ACW victory in 1974 were expensive litigation with the company and a nationwide consumer boycott, which gained widespread support from the broader civil rights movement and from the Catholic Church.[20]

Competing explanations for the strike's weaknesses and outcomes, however, expressed an emerging split between the membership and the union's leaders. Strikers criticized the ACW for emphasizing the boycott rather than the strike, but the New York leadership noticed that the plants stayed open; local workers did not show solidarity against the company. Normally in a strike, unions castigate strikebreakers who cross picket lines, but in this case many workers suspected the union's motives: "Some Chicano strikers blamed Mexican workers for being hired by Farah, rather than blaming Farah and other employers along the border for using job competition to divide workers" (ibid.). The union's strategy provoked militant workers into forming their own strike committee and creating a strikers' "distress fund" independent of the ACW. After the strike was over, the outcomes were interpreted through the different experiences of the workers and union leaders. One was that the strikebreakers were now (legally) part of the workforce and entitled to participate in contract negotiations, but the strikers wanted nothing to do with them and believed that they themselves should have the glory for doing all the work of the strike. The contract that was negotiated was weak because the company had been hurt by the boycott and by other management miscalculations, but the militants suspected the union had compromised too much with Farah (ibid.: 51–52).[21]

Another problem was the union's industrial relations model, which frankly required limits on plant-level syndicalism in the service of a broader effort to comanage firms and the industry (cf. Fraser 1991), but which also created problems of trust and representation throughout the union bureaucracy. When the strikers went back to work after two years, they found that jobs had been reorganized—new materials, patterns, work processes—and many could not make their production quotas; some were fired. Many grievances were filed, but few workers volunteered to serve as shop stewards; the local union staff was "overwhelmed" (Coyle et al. 1979: 55–60). The ACW's time-tested response to production standards disputes was to send its own production engineer to check the job. But the process was slow, and when he sided with the company and the union refused to pursue members' claims, the workers were furious. This was adding insult to injury: Doing the work of the strike had given the strikers a new appreciation for their own abilities, which were greater than they had thought. But rather than be rewarded as "would-be craftsmen," they were resubordinated at work and even dismissed for failure to perform well. The activists regrouped as Unidad Para Siempre, while dues payments lagged far behind the cost of the local union (ibid.: 35; Sabel 1982).

Conclusion: The Texas Variety of Capitalism

The American South improved its economic position in the U.S. economy from 1935 to 1975, but the region continued to have the highest proportion of workers laboring for poverty-level wages and the lowest "worker climate" rankings of the 50 states (Newman 1984; Shulman 1991: 112–13, 173;

Cobb 1993: 264, 272). The Texas apparel case demonstrates how it is possible to develop economically without raising labor standards. The argument is that there are varieties of industry organization because of different institutional conditions for economic development. To support this proposition, this article has analyzed the goals and interactions of individuals and groups in the specific contexts of history and politics. Any new project, such as creating an apparel industry or establishing national standards for wages and working conditions, takes place in institutional contexts. This study has highlighted oligarchy based on white supremacy; the conditions of the labor market, including segmentation of labor by ascriptive characteristics established by citizenship rules and the authority of union organizations; the structure of product markets, including product market segments and retailer-producer relationships; and industry structure, such as the extent of concentration, competition, and collaboration among firms that shape opportunities for types of actions. The shaping typically occurs in a disjointed way because the institutions often do not operate in synchrony (Orren and Skowronek 2004).

Texas apparel manufacturers envisioned opportunities for mass-market clothing that could be produced by methods adapted from mass manufacturing. However, they rejected the existing sophisticated labor-intensive model that was based on deep cooperation between the garment unions and factory management. Instead, with the help of wartime federal procurement decisions and state laws that hobbled union organization and sustained white supremacy, Texas firms were given the authority to organize work according to a labor-control model. Their model was organized by individual firms and trade associations and was abetted by their state political allies in the changing conditions associated with the New Deal and the civil rights revolution. This industrial relations model enabled the garment industry rapidly to expand and flourish but also contributed to unequally shared benefits from development.

The garment unions' alternative model of how to organize the industry depended in part on capitalizing on those same changing political conditions in Texas. The success of unionism depended on factors related to the ongoing reconstitution of workers' status by developments within the community and between the Mexican community and the broader society, including the new job opportunities created by garment companies and the choices of the unions, and by the regulation of labor by the state. New Dealers planned to realign the electoral coalitions of the Democratic and Republican parties to unite liberals in both parties from all regions against reaction and for union-management cooperation, but this strategy was largely defeated (Amberg 1994). Both the composition of the national Democratic coalition, with its large southern contingent, and federal division of authority attenuated labor standards enforcement through legal mandates and unionization. The unions became involved in campaigns to bring the New Deal and civil rights to Texas, but the Democratic oligarchy was able to keep control of the party and state government for most of the years from 1935 to 1975 (Green 1979; Davidson 1990).

The success of the unions' vision also depended on its resonance with the lives of Texas workers. The ILG and the ACW brought their sophisticated model to Texas, but they were not able to establish a strong connection. The ACW tried to link with the changing political conditions created by the Mexican American civil rights movement. But the class divisions between garment workers and managers did not develop into a social-democratic union vision of how workers themselves would help manage the industry. This was in part due to improving employment opportunities for Mexicans and weak union contracts and in part due to the cultural divisions constituted by "ethnicity" and "race," which were organized in a way that made cooperative industrial relations suspect for compromising the dignity of the group. Consider the missing Mexican American apparel entrepreneurs. With few exceptions, Anglos dominated the 700 garment shops that existed in 1975, but Roger Waldinger (1986) has documented the significance of intraethnic labor-management relations in the industry core. Shared ethnic background could be a means to establish union-management collaboration, share information and skills, and halt vicious competition, but Texas's authoritarian model reinforced inequality as it blocked development of skills and cooperative work relationships. Not only were Mexican workers sweated, but Mexican Americans were denied opportunities to learn the business. The class divide of the employment relationship coincided with an ethnic divide, which reinforced the separateness of identity and interest. Texas workers accommodated the management-based model with all the authority behind it state law and political power could provide.

The Texas apparel case is probably not unique, since industry is always embedded in institutions that vary significantly from region to region in the United States and the world. Do laggard regions have no choice but to exploit local labor if they hope to catch up with the advanced economies?

Wright argued that the New Deal nationalized the U.S. labor market and integrated the South with the industrial North. I have argued, in contrast, that racially coded labor market institutions related to the status of both African Americans and Mexican Americans that existed before the New Deal in Texas were reconfigured as newly authoritarian industrial relations institutions that emerged after the New Deal. Distinct conditions persisted because employers had a vision of what they wanted to implement, and they organized politically to achieve it.

Some observe contemporary labor conditions in the United States and conclude that the New Deal was the aberration and that the South reflects the American norm of laissez-faire and libertarianism (Lipset and Meltz 2004). But that misses the more important point that labor markets are always governed and that they always reflect the power struggles of the groups that contend on the industrial relations field, as campaigns for and ultimate denial of workers' freedom of association in Texas amply testifies. It also underestimates the malleability of interests that enable more or less just forms of political economy.

Notes

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1 In political science and historical sociology, scholars have drawn attention to the importance of management strategy and choice in industry organization and personnel policy (Jacoby 1991; Herrigel 1996; Sabel and Zeitlin 1997; Patton 2001), including the possibility that managers and workers have some interests in common that can be institutionalized, rather than conceive industrial relations as a structurally determined zero-sum conflict between interest groups (Thelen 2002; cf. Green 2003).

2 This study focuses on the period 1935 to 1975. In the 1970s a major transformation of the industry began that divides the earlier history from contemporary problems (Abernathy et al. 1999).

3 Like the term *southern*, *northern* is simply shorthand for a range of conditions. McDonagh (1999) and Robertson (2000) demonstrate that labor market and social welfare reforms before the New Deal were shaped by the diverse conditions of state and local politics.

4 There were always firms that "ran away" from the highly organized garment centers, chronic problems with the enforcement of federal labor standards to prohibit homework, and sexism among the unions' leaders. Female workers campaigned to

convince the ACW's male leadership that the union's slogan "equal citizens in industrial democracy" included women (Argersinger 1999).

5 In 1951 menswear employment was 13,151, and women's and children's wear employment was 7,294; in 1977 the figures were 32,610 and 27,986, respectively (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1951, 1962, 1968, 1977).

6 In contrast to the claim about what distinguished Texas industry, but consistent with the rule that links products and the labor process, infants' dresses were often hand-embroidered by individual homeworkers. Homeworkers in San Antonio are discussed below.

7 Meyer Perlstein, letter of resignation, June 25, 1957, file 7A, box 367, International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) Papers, UNITE Collection.

8 Contrary to DeMoss's (1989: 144) claim that there was "only one union victory" from 1930 to 1980, the ILG had 9 contracts in the 1950s in Texas; the ACW alone had signed 15 contracts by 1974 (National Labor Relations Board [NLRB] Elections 1953–76 and Collective Bargaining Agreements, 1955–76, box 440, Research Department, Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America [ACWA] Papers, UNITE Collection).

9 *Time Magazine*, June 12, 1950, clipping in folder 8b, box 367, ILGWU Papers, UNITE Collection.

10 The union tried, however (ILGWU Institute Program, February 26, 1949, file 8b, box 367, ILGWU Papers, UNITE Collection).

11 Social-democratic modernization meant equal citizenship in industry decision making as well as in society (Fraser 1991).

12 Sol Chaikin to David Dubinsky, September 15, 1958, file 5, box 17, ILGWU Papers, UNITE Collection. The mobilization of white resistance to school integration—mostly in East Texas, including Houston and Dallas—cut against broader unionizing efforts and helped stop the growth of union membership (Marshall 1967: table 5; Amberg 2004).

13 Texas has 250 counties.

14 File 7d, box 367, ILGWU Papers, UNITE Collection.

15 Many of the interviews on which Wrong's study relies were conducted in 1968, but her observations were out-of-date by 1974, when they were published.

16 The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the ILG engaged in a famously bitter dispute in 1962 about the racial practices of the union's New York organization, which resonates with the South Texas experience (Marshall 1965: 75–79). The changing racial and ethnic compositions of the union's membership and the leaders' desire to hold on to power created racist outcomes (cf. Wrong 1974: 52–55). My account adds that the organization of new members involves the formation of a union identity rather than merely the activation of a ready-made interest.

17 McCaffery (1999: 221–22) cites Melissa Hield (1979) to say the ILG refused to hire Mexicanas on staff, but that was not as true in the 1950s as it was in the 1930s. In 1956, 9 of 11 regional staff were women, and 2 of the 6 assigned to Texas were Chi-

canas. The ILG's regional manager in San Antonio was an Anglo woman, whom the ILG fired in part because she was insensitive to the Mexican American women; after she was fired, she went to work for a leading employer (reports from Sol Chaikin to Louis Stulberg, January 17, 1956, and January 4, 1957, file 3, box 17, ILGWU Papers, UNITE Collection). LULAC also did not support Tenayuca because of the communist connection. For discussion of the changing terminology of identity see Rocco 1970 and Amberg 2004: 178–79.

18 The ACW, the AFL-CIO, LULAC, and the Farm Workers Union all lobbied to block new green cards and then to require the U.S. Labor Department to certify that green card workers would not act as strikebreakers. The ACW's position was not opposed to commuters *as long as* workers' rights to form unions were fully protected (box 437, ACWA Papers, UNITE Collection). Some commuter workers joined the ACW. The U.S. Labor Department supported the union's position, but President Lyndon Johnson did little to help the union cause in Texas (Amberg 2004).

19 Rungeling (1969: 22–23) reports that about 5,000 U.S. citizens commuted to work in Ciudad Juárez from El Paso and over 12,000 commuted the other direction. That was about 15 percent of the El Paso labor force. The ACW estimated that about 40 percent of the workers went out on strike and about 25 percent of the strikebreakers were commuters, suggesting that about 75 percent of the workers who crossed the picket line were from El Paso (Castro 1972).

20 The General Executive Board minutes (January 28, 1974, and September 16, 1974) note the weak financial position of the union because of the expensive litigation strategy of Farah (ACWA Papers, UNITE Collection).

21 The AFL-CIO published a pamphlet about the Farah struggle, which was simultaneously receptive of the Chicano and Chicana identity of the strikers and patronizing (Hardesty 1973). Union members protested when the ACW's El Paso Joint Board removed the popular manager, a Chicano, while the strike was ongoing. In July 1974 the ACW had nine organizers in El Paso, of whom three were women and seven Chicanos or Chicanas (Office of the President Files, Joint Board of El Paso file, box 122, ACWA Papers, UNITE Collection).

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