



Pineros: Latino Labour and the Changing Face of Forestry in the Pacific Northwest

Brinda Sarathy

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The exploitation of Latino workers in many industries, from agriculture and meat packing to textile manufacturing and janitorial services, is well known. By contrast, pineros - itinerant workers who form the backbone of the forest management labour force on federal land-toil in obscurity.

Drawing on government papers, media accounts, and interviews with federal employees and Latino forest workers in Oregon's Rogue Valley, Brinda Sarathy investigates how the federal government came to be one of the single largest employers of Latino labour in the Pacific Northwest. She documents pinero wages, working conditions, and benefits in comparison to those of white loggers and tree planters, exposing exploitation that, she argues, is the product of an ongoing history of institutionalized racism, fragmented policy, and intra-ethnic exploitation in the West. To overcome this legacy, Sarathy offers a number of proposals to improve the visibility and working conditions of pineros and to provide them with a stronger voice in immigration and forestry policy-making.

This vividly drawn account fills many gaps in our understanding of forest management in the Pacific Northwest, making clear that true environmental justice must take into account not only stewardship of forests, but also the treatment of the people who work in them.

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