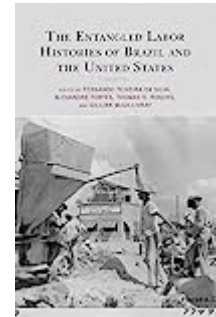


Fernando Teixeira da Silva, Alexandre Fortes, Thomas D. Rogers, Gillian McGillivray, eds. *The Entangled Labor Histories of Brazil and the United States*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2023. vi + 253 pp. \$110.00, cloth, ISBN 978-1-66691-750-5.



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Based on a project first published in Brazil, *The Entangled Labor Histories of Brazil and the United States* is a collection of essays that views labor history through comparative and transnational histories between and across Brazil and the United States and focuses on overcoming the contrasting characteristics developed in both countries. Interweaving a broad scope of themes such as immigration, feminism, the New Deal, World War II, the Cold War, race, and rural workers, historians from the United States and Brazil present a unique comparative approach that attempts to uncover similarities and nuances in an intellectual field full of differences. The book deserves praise for tackling uncommon comparisons—most literature portrays both countries as lacking relatable features regarding labor history.

Influenced by authors such as Micol Seigel, who argued for a critical vision on comparative history, the authors bring to life comparisons that unfold beyond dichotomies and emphasize global and transnational connections that prove that both countries histories are more entangled than

the mainstream literature often portrays. Interconnected through the major umbrella theme of labor, each chapter crafts a story that starts by highlighting the contrasting differences that make that specific case an uncommon topic and relevant to the scholarship examining the Americas. If the comparative literature between the US and Brazil often focuses on studies of slavery and of racial thought, this book demonstrates the necessity of expanding the scholarship to unveil a diverse amalgam of relations between both countries' labor histories.

In the first part, contributors Michael Hall and Glaucia Fraccaro address such topics as immigration, labor, and feminism. In the book's first chapter, Hall uses Jurgen Kocka's "asymmetrical comparisons" to "understand the relationship between ethnic consciousness and class consciousness among Italian immigrants in São Paulo and in the United States" in broad terms (p. 11). Hall's chapter tells two immigration stories emphasizing the differences and similarities in the ways these new workers settled between 1880 and 1920. Dis-

secting the political history of the Brazilian politician, zoologist, and feminist Bertha Lutz, Fraccaro unveils the similarities and differences between international feminist networks and labor rights for women between 1917 and 1937. This chapter analyzes the clashes between networks that were formed at the International Labor Organization (ILO) conventions and meetings by tracing Bertha Lutz's relationships with women's rights, equal treatment of women and men, and the maternity leave debates. It also examines the interaction between Brazil and the ILO regarding the formulation of international labor standards for women and analyzes the debates between Brazilian and American leaders and organizations.

In the second part of *The Entangled Labor Histories of Brazil and the United States*, the chapters demonstrate that both countries' labor histories endured processes that influenced and were influenced by the New Deal, Brazil's New State, and World War II. Factors such as these informed the creation of complex working classes. Addressing differences and similarities between the formation of labor legislation in the United States during the New Deal and Getúlio Vargas's administration in Brazil in the 1930s and the 1940s, Fernando Teixeira da Silva argues in his chapter that comparing both labor histories can be productive. Although Da Silva concludes that it might be more fruitful to discuss contrasts and similarities in the general legislated nature of the political models, analyzing corporatist traces in both cases helps to bring similarities that were not evident before, such as the parallel formation of corporatist institutions fostered by federal governments. In chapter 4, Alexandre Fortes explores US representatives' views on Brazil during World War II. Establishing a counterpoint to how the public and the private spheres in the United States perceived Brazilian labor, Fortes discusses how US intelligence and diplomats viewed race, class, and the working class in the country. Examining labor exploitation by the US company Panair do Brasil during World War II in northern Brazil, Rebecca

Herman paints an institutional picture of the labor justice system by revealing how unionization did not reach the entire country and how workers negotiated with foreign companies and used Brazil's labor courts.

In the third and last part, discussing unionism in the Cold War, segregation, and revolutionary movements, contributors Larissa Corrêa, Jerry Dávila, Gillian McGillivray, and Thomas D. Rogers reflect on different facets of the Brazilian labor movement in the postwar period. Corrêa's contribution examines the US scholar and labor and political activist Robert Alexander's view of the Brazilian labor movement. She argues that exploring Alexander's ideas helps to comprehend the US labor union approach to Brazil and Latin America during the Cold War, and suggests that "his analysis of the Latin American union movement influenced the formulation of policies by the largest labor union center for that region." But she adds that "a firmer conclusion must await a deeper analysis of Alexander's archives" (p. 158). In his chapter, Dávila explores the role of doormen "in the system of racial stratification and segregation of mid-twentieth-century Brazil" (p. 179). Dávila's inspiring writing dissects the position of Brazilian doormen as both victims and enforcers of segregation. More than that, analyzing the case of doormen, he contrasts Brazil's legislative system with the one in the United States by demonstrating how Brazil has historically focused on individual cases of discrimination, whereas the United States has been focusing on structural racism. In the last chapter, McGillivray and Rogers examine US dedication to interpreting Northeast Brazil during the Cold War. The authors eloquently raise evidence that supports the argument that US intelligence's fear of a revolutionary explosion in the sugarcane region was real. More than that, they demonstrate how the military regime's repression between 1964 and 1985, along with the labor reforms promoted by Brazil's federal government and often supported by US forces, helped tame any revolu-

tionary spirit and turn rebels' actions into labor rights struggles in local courts.

Although one might see the amalgam of diverse themes as a downside to a book without an apparent common denominator, the publication of books that escape the structural norm and explore connections that are more subtle or fragile, but that evoke curiosity and new avenues of investigation is healthy for the development of our scholarship. One of the merits of this volume is the authors' acknowledgement of the limits of their work by addressing how their themes differ in the two countries or explaining how unique but relevant the subject can be. As their narratives unfold, they are able to highlight and examine similarities that serve as a fertile ground for future research. This book is not for those searching for direct answers or an introduction to one of the discussed subjects. *The Entangled Labor Histories of Brazil and the United States* provides new ideas about ongoing debates. As Barbara Weinstein well says in her postscript, this book demonstrates that “a transnational approach is capable of enhancing any area of historical interpretation” (p. 242). Whether you study the worlds of work in a particular country, region, or continent, labor history emerges as a special research field for a transnational perspective, and this book is the proof of it.

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