

Colonias, Water, and Extractable Bodies: COVID19's impact on the Rio Grande Valley

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This paper develops the concept of “extractable bodies” and extends it to apply to Latinxs' experience in the Rio Grande Valley (RGV) subject to structural problems and predatory market practices before and during the pandemic. The RGV has had more COVID cases than counties of equal population size. Through a mixed-methods approach, this paper describes, in detail, how racist state practices, structural inadequacies, poor administration, and predatory capitalism effectively explain why the RGV was the epicenter of COVID-19 in the State of Texas in 2020. We introduce a concept, *extractable bodies*, to show how Mexican Americans provide limitless opportunities for exploitation while, at the same time, lacking basic public services and shouldering the blame for such circumstances. We focus our analysis on Latinx “essential workers” in an area challenged by health issues, high obesity rates, inadequate infrastructure, the situation in *las colonias*, and how these factors contributed to the COVID crisis. [Article copies available for a fee from The Transformative Studies Institute. E-mail address: journal@transformativestudies.org Website: <http://www.transformativestudies.org> ©2023 by The Transformative Studies Institute. All rights reserved.]

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Francis Parkman's (1950) historical portrayal of Mexicans as dirty backstabbers continues to serve as a way for white non-Hispanics to

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