Clientelism and Democracy:
Two Faces of Migrant Hometown Ties

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The hometown networks linking migrants with their places of origin have generated considerable interest and enthusiasm among scholars hopeful that those networks will foster grassroots political participation both here and there (Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton-Blanc 1994; Smith and Guarnizo 1998; R. Smith 1998; Zabin and Escala 1998; Rivera-Salgado 1999; Itzigsohn 2000, Levitt 2001). The celebratory tone of much of the earlier transnationalism literature has since been tempered by studies of the ways that such networks actually affect migrants’ economic and political participation in sending communities. In line with that rethinking of cross-border politics and its effects, this paper focuses on a set of variable ways that hometown networks are used in receiving communities. Specifically, how are migrant hometown networks deployed to promote greater political participation and gain economic and political advantage in a labor union dominated by Mexican immigrants and U.S.-born co-ethnics? I argue that the inclusive face of hometown networks, on which the literature concentrates, necessarily implies a less-recognized exclusive face as well. Rather than thinking about hometown networks as inherently ‘good’ or ‘bad,’ analytic leverage is gained by examining the ways that hometown networks are a basis of achieving social closure for a variety of purposes.

AN AGNOSTIC VIEW OF CROSS-BORDER TIES

Influential works in the earlier transnationalism literature have tended to promote cross-border practices as acts of resistance emancipating migrants from the clutches of the nation-state and/or monopolistic global capitalism (Kearney 1991; Glick Schiller, Basch,
This set of perspectives has been criticized as failing to recognize the ways that cross-border practices can actually 1) contribute to increased inequality in sending communities as migrants take advantage of the class mobility afforded by their migration (Mahler 1998), 2) reinforce state-led nationalist projects in sending countries (Glick Schiller and Fouron 2001), and 3) create forms of political participation in which long-distance participants do not have to face the consequences of their decisions by virtue of their absence (Anderson 1998).

A normatively agnostic view of cross-border practices facilitates a broader understanding of the ways these ties work and their effects. Hometown ‘networks’ are not simply a set of relationships among people from the same place. The internal face of hometown commonality inherently implies an external face of division between those who are members of the hometown network and those who are not. Affiliation with a place-based identity becomes the marker of a dichotomization between ‘us’ and ‘them’ (Cohen 1978). A Weberian perspective would suggest that hometown ties are one means by which social closure is created and maintained (Weber 1978).

Achievement of social closure is an on-going interaction subject to negotiations about who is a legitimate insider and the variable degree to which the channeling of goods can be restricted to insiders. The literature on social capital and international migration describes how even migrants poor in financial and human capital can achieve a relative degree of economic success by mobilizing their social capital through exchanges in hometown and family networks (Massy et al. 1987, Boyd 1989). Channeling jobs through social networks means that opportunities are available to insiders and closed off
to outsiders. When the social network is based on a hometown, the place-based identity becomes a means of achieving social closure in a struggle for scarce resources.

**RESEARCH SITE AND DESIGN**

Local 123\(^1\) of a construction laborers’ union affiliated with the AFL-CIO is a strategic site to explore how hometown networks and cross-border ties are used as a means of achieving both democratic economic and political participation and social closure. The Local is active in the U.S. labor movement’s efforts to organize Latino immigrants and promote their participation in U.S. politics. At the same time, leaders of Local 123 campaign in members’ Mexican hometowns during internal union elections because Mexican hometowns are a vehicle for patron-client relations inside the union. I chose Local 123 not because its cross-border practices are ‘representative’ of unions in any statistical sense, but because the case is theoretically significant as a site to understand how hometown networks channel democratic politics, labor unionism, and the struggle for economic and political advantages among members of different networks (cf. Burawoy 1991, p. 281).

**A UNION OF IMMIGRANTS**

The California construction sector has been rapidly transformed by Mexican immigration into an ethnic occupational niche (Portes 1995; Lee 1997). In 1996, 49 per cent of California laborers were foreign-born Latinos and 9 per cent were native-born Latinos (Lopez and Feliciano 2000, p. 34). Typical of these demographic trends, the majority of Local 123’s active members were born in Mexico. The second largest group is Chicano
(U.S.-born of Mexican descent). Anglos comprise less than 5 per cent of the membership. All of the staff, officers, and politically active members at Local 123 are of Mexican origin. Most formerly undocumented members legalized their status through family sponsorships or the 1986 amnesty, in which the union provided crucial documentation of members’ U.S. work history. Local 123 leaders support the AFL-CIO’s position adopted in 2000 supporting a new amnesty, but the Local is not engaged in a concerted effort to organize undocumented immigrants like unions in other sectors. As union density in the United States has fallen by half in the last forty years (Milkman 2000), Local 123 has suffered. Active membership declined by over 3000 in the last twenty years to a total of 3500 in 2001.

Mexican hometown networks dominate Local 123. About 500 of the Local’s 3500 active members are from Guadalupe in the state of Michoacán. The adjacent village of San Juan is the source of roughly 200 members. Smaller networks are linked to diverse communities throughout Mexico. Guadalupanos have the largest and most influential hometown network. As the political captain put it, ‘The strength of the union is in that town [Guadalupe]’. During the 1960s and 70s, five ‘pioneer’ Guadalupanos at the Local provided fellow villagers with lodging and an introduction to the Local. In 1999, the mayor of Guadalupe and his deputy were both Local 123 members who alternated migrating to South City to work in construction while the other stayed behind. Each had children and a house in South City and Guadalupe. About fifty Guadalupano families still live within walking distance of the union hall. On weekday mornings, a score of Guadalupano retirees wearing the straw hats common to rural Mexico gather at the hiring hall to play cards and dominos. Guadalupanos, like other members, rent the hall for
private parties to celebrate weddings and baptisms. ‘El hall’ is the social center of the Guadalupano community.

Roque, 54, is typical in many ways of middle-aged Guadalupano members. He first migrated north when he was 17 to work as a Bracero. His cousin brought him to the Local in 1971, where he has worked ever since. He does not know how to read or write and speaks practically no English. He earned over $50,000 in 2000 but was suddenly laid off in February 2001 and forced to wait for months on an unemployment list with over 200 members. Members with steady jobs are catapulted from rural Mexican poverty to a lifestyle that includes a late-model pickup, a house in one of California’s most expensive real-estate markets, and a second home in Mexico. Members with jobs that are terminated with every rain shower or the vagaries of a famously cyclical industry struggle financially in an area with few other decent opportunities for low-skilled workers. Historically, many members have relied on their Mexican hometown networks to become union members and have then struggled for good jobs within the union by using the same networks.

**METHODS**

I conducted fieldwork using participant-observation and informal interviews at the Local from January to June 2001. The ‘ethnographic present’ in this paper refers to that time period. I spent several hours each week at the union, mostly in the hiring hall or parking lot where 50-100 members gather on weekday mornings to wait for work assignments and play cards. It is a sociable environment conducive to snowball sampling. Once I established relationships with members in different networks, I could engage in long private conversations, participate in group discussions, and observe interactions. I also
spent time with union officers and staff as an observer during closed meetings, in numerous conversations lasting as long as an hour each, and formal, private interviews with the four highest officers.

There are over 4000 members of the Local including retirees. In selecting members for interviews and repeated conversations, I purposefully selected for variation by members’ country of birth, hometown, and affiliation with the factions in internal Local politics (cf. Charmaz 2001). I attended membership meetings, orientation and training classes, and a hometown fund-raising dance at the hall. I also attended a Guadalupano union election campaign party at a private home, two political rallies in South City, and a labor organizing action at a job site.

I spoke to informants in Spanish or English depending on their preference. Most Chicanos preferred English while most of the Mexican-born preferred Spanish. All translations are my own. Members often called me güero (fair-complexioned) or gabacho (Anglo or ‘gringo’). I sometimes deliberately called myself gabacho to signal that such talk would not offend me. I believe members were willing to discuss union politics and tensions between Chicanos and Mexicans because I was perceived as an outsider without a personal stake. Gaining access and a degree of acceptance was facilitated by my familiarity with members’ places of origin in Mexico from previous field work (Fitzgerald 2000). For all the challenges of doing multi-sited ethnography, displayed knowledge of the other sites can be a passport to acceptance by members of multi-sited networks.
TRANSBORDER MEXICAN POLITICS

Local 123’s large Mexican membership and the critical importance of Mexican hometown networks in the union’s internal political geography propel union leaders to engage the Mexican government. For example, when the business manager learned Fox planned to visit South City, she invited him to a luncheon at the union. The Mexican consul replied that Fox was unavailable, but the 10 top union officers and staff attended Fox’s public appearance in South City. The officers did not have a chance to speak with Fox as they had hoped, but before his appearance, the captain said privately his first goal was to lobby Fox for an amnesty for undocumented migrants. In other words, an American union official hoped to lobby the Mexican president to affect a change in U.S. policy. The captain’s second goal of insuring that retired members living in Mexico could collect their full U.S. social security benefits and use their U.S. medical insurance was driven by the same logic though the location of the policy goal’s implementation was in Mexico. The captain sought the extension of social rights of U.S. citizenship to members residing abroad. The dichotomy of domestic and international relations does not provide a framework to understand these interventions across state borders by the Mexican president and American union officials. They are a case of transborder ‘intermestic’ politics played on multiple levels of two states and two civil societies (see Manning 1977).

Union leaders engage in transborder, intermestic politics in part because displaying concern for Mexican politics might improve the Local administration’s standing among the ‘paisanos’ in the membership. In a meeting with other officers, the captain characterized the invitation to Fox as part of their effort to establish ties with
members’ families in Mexico and to fight for immigrant rights. Privately, he said, ‘We wanted [Fox] to come over to give us a little P.R’.

The union also has regular contacts with the Mexican consulate. The Local’s social services director distributes consular pamphlets, and the consul periodically attends membership meetings to advertise consular services for migrants returning to Mexico and discuss civil rights abuses of Mexican nationals. The Mexican policies that most interest members, like the regulation of importing cars, relate to crossing the U.S.-Mexican border. Migrants care about Mexican government policies not in spite of their residence across a state border, but because of it. As an institution with primarily local political interests but a large membership with ties to Mexico, Local 123 is a site for both Mexican and American governmental and civil actors to engage and promote cross-border politics.

PROMOTING U.S. POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

Historically, American unions have been a vehicle for the political assimilation of immigrants by promoting naturalization, voting, and participation in political campaigns (Lane 1987). Local 123 leaders promote the political socialization of their primarily Mexican immigrant membership. Like other unions in Los Angeles, (Zabin 2000, Delgado 2000), the leadership uses hometown and family networks to mobilize politically. At a protest outside a company that officers said blackballs union members, five of the seven rank-and-file members from the Local were family members of the Guadalupano business agent. The political captain explained how the hometown/family network strategy in electoral politics operates along similar lines.

If [the members] are married, they have an average of 3 kids. That’s 5 people that become a voting bloc. Suzy helped Refugio in the citizenship drive. One guy had
12 kids. I told him that by Election 2000, 8 of his kids would be eligible to vote. With the parents, that’s 10 voters from the same house.

Local 123 became deeply involved in citizenship issues following a 1987 incident in which Republicans hired armed guards to stand outside the polls in Latino areas of South City warning that voting as a non-citizen is a felony. Of the five Latino citizens who subsequently sued the Republican Party for intimidating Latino voters, three were members of the Local. They established the Hispanic Political Council that won a $400,000 settlement. Part of the settlement was spent on citizenship classes taught by the current business manager. More members naturalized as a reaction against the anti-immigrant policies promoted by Governor Pete Wilson’s 1994 re-election campaign and Proposition 187 (see Jones-Correa 2001). The business manager estimates 40 per cent of immigrant members naturalized in the last ten years.³

Increasing the number of U.S. citizens at the union increases its influence in local politics. Local 123 members participate in public protests for a variety of progressive causes. Officers routinely meet with city council members and state and federal legislators. During elections, the union contributes financially and operates a phone bank to support primarily Democratic candidates. Staff and members campaign door-to-door in South City and travel around Southern California in a 25-member ‘strike force’ to walk precincts in critical battlegrounds. All unions engage in politics, but unions relying on government contracts to build schools and roads have a particularly strong incentive to be politically active. Thus, the Local encourages immigrant incorporation into ethnic and class politics in the United States.
HOMETOWN LOCALISM

The primary cross-border ties at the union are not on the national level, but rather the local level of South City and members’ hometowns in Mexico. A major barrier to transborder collective action on the national level is the salience of subnational hometown identities and the material rewards offered through hometown networks.

Hometown club leaders from San Juan said they hoped to emulate the Zacatecan model of a state federation of hometown associations with institutionalized relations with the Mexican government (see Goldring 2002). Yet Juaneños have not even coordinated their activities with Guadalupanos, whose village is a mile from San Juan. Members from another ranch next to Guadalupe with a dozen union members also have an entirely separate club and events. Organizations based on such narrow interests are unlikely to achieve the sort of celebrated impact of the Zacatecan Federation. Everyone at the union I spoke to said they had a circle of friends that goes beyond hometown networks, and members from all over Mexico frequently chat with each other at the hall. Still, there is an underlying sense of competition among members based on differential access to resources allocated through hometown networks.

The bilocality of members’ lives motivates union leaders to adopt a bilocal strategy for controlling the union and directing its relationships with other institutions. Union officers draw on members’ hometown and family networks in union organizing, citizenship drives, and election campaigns. The current business manager, Refugio, adopted a multi-faceted strategy for winning her election and solidifying her base that illustrates multiple forms of hometown network politics.
In the 2000 election for business manager, winning candidate Refugio estimated she won 90 per cent of her votes from Guadalupanos. A field split by three candidates and a high rate of abstention among non-Guadalupanos allowed a concentration of Guadalupano support to win the election. Although Refugio is from the state of Jalisco, her son married a Guadalupana he met in South City. Refugio has visited Guadalupe four times. During one visit several months before her election she campaigned among members’ families. She is building a house in Guadalupe and said she enjoys vacationing among friends in the peaceful countryside.

Refugio’s campaign manager offered a more instrumental explanation of her interest in Guadalupe. Refugio was dispatcher for four years. ‘When you’re in dispatch, you get to know everyone’, he said. The post is ‘a magnet for votes’. He said Refugio harbored political aspirations, so she visited Guadalupe five or six years ago to make personal contacts and develop the residents’ trust. After the election, a family emergency prevented her from traveling to Guadalupe for the annual fiesta, when the population multiplies overnight as Guadalupano migrants return. The campaign manager explained in an interview why Refugio sent him and another staff member to represent her at the fiesta.

Most members have family who reside in Guadalupe. They depend on their income from the members – to fix their houses or to buy food. [Guadalupanos] have to be choosy about who becomes business manager... If Refugio calls grandfathers or wives in Guadalupe and asks them to please call their provider here and ask him to vote for her, they will do it… When I went, we made a big hit over there…. Now I can make a call over there and say, ‘I want you to push your brother or cousin to get 10 guys to vote for us’.

Demonstrations of personal ties with the distant locality and its residents are a valuable political resource. Outsiders can also tap into receiving locality nodes of
hometown networks without ever crossing the border. Union officers solicit donations from members to pay for the costs of shipping deceased members to Mexico for burial. The Guadalupe club, like half-a-dozen hometown clubs at the union, holds two or three dances a year to raise money for village projects like church and infrastructure improvement. The union donates the use of the hall, which would cost $2000 to rent. Officers give advice to club leaders about how to register their clubs as non-profit corporations. As the political captain explained, ‘People love Refugio. They call her “the Queen of Guadalupe”. She donates to the church in Guadalupe and sets up fund-raisers. It’s all politics’. Previous business managers have gained support from Guadalupanos using the same strategy of supporting hometown fundraisers. Similarly, the U.S.-born secretary-treasurer is a member of the Zacatecan Federation of hometown associations who uses the union as a venue for holding hometown fund-raisers, recruiting Zacatecan members to the federation, and even campaigning for the successful Zacatecan gubernatorial candidate in 1998 who sought support from U.S.-based Zacatecans (see Goldring 2002).

Hometown and kinship networks figure prominently in the selection of union electoral candidates. The selection of delegates for the 2001 convention of the union’s International illustrates the machinery of internal union politics. Three of the 17 candidates on Refugio’s slate were Guadalupanos and a fourth was married to a Guadalupana. During a campaign party at a member’s home before the election, she introduced her delegates to the crowd, describing one of them as a representative of laborers at a South City company and of ‘Guadalupe and the surrounding area’. Eighty per cent of the approximately 180 members at the party were Guadalupanos.
Union leaders allocate staff jobs based on a member’s ability to attract votes for the slate or as a reward for past support. In half-a-dozen conversations with staff in which I asked why they were selected, they never mentioned personal qualifications. The eight business agents, dispatcher, and janitors are all political appointees. One janitor is Guadalupano and the other is from the second largest sending community of San Juan. Tomás, the janitor from Guadalupe, is a power broker in the union known as one of the four ‘generals’ along with the business manager, dispatcher, and political captain. In return for delivering 150 Guadalupano votes, a third of the winner’s total, the business manager gave him a job. Janitorial positions are desirable because the work does not require heavy labor and janitors have a great deal of discretion in controlling members’ access to top union officers. They are literally gatekeepers who can unlock the right doors in the building. Even janitorial jobs are valuable resources exchanged in the ‘marketplace’ of the union in return for their hometown network votes.

All of the business agents, who earn $50,000 to $75,000 a year, are former laborers who are selected based on their ability to deliver votes. When I asked a 28-year old agent why he was hired, he gave a typical answer: ‘Because I have about 60 family members at the union. Uncles, cousins, relatives. I can bring in 60 votes, and if each one of them has 1 or 2 friends, that’s over 100 votes’. His family members are from two towns in Michoacán and his wife is Guadalupana. He did not frame his selection in terms of hometown networks, but his appointment clearly derives from his position in both family and hometown networks.

Samuel, born in the Mexican state of Guerrero to Guadalupano parents, said he twice received jobs from a dispatcher because he is Guadalupano. According to the
formal work dispatch system, members are assigned jobs based on the amount of time they have been unemployed and their skill level, or their ability to independently find an employer willing to hire them on a union contract. In practice, the dispatch process is not transparent and the dispatcher has some discretion in allocating job referrals.\footnote{The current administration claims to adhere to the formal rules, while administration opponents openly charge it with showing favoritism to its allies. The Local has been under a series of investigations into racketeering, election fraud, and misappropriation of funds over the last twenty years.} Even though Samuel claimed the current business manager favored members from Guadalupe, he said he wanted to elect a new manager who is actually a Guadalupano.

‘If we were united, we could do whatever we wanted. We would have someone to help us’. I asked how someone ‘on the inside’ could help them. He looked at me as if I had asked a stupid question. ‘All this’ he said, sweeping his arm around the hiring hall packed with unemployed members. ‘If you’re from the rancho, I’m going to give you a job. Yes or no?’ he asked. ‘I don’t know’, I said. ‘Yes! If you’re living with your cousins, you’re going to give them a job’.

Union officials promote hometown ties and the collective practices that reinforce them because hometown networks are an efficient way to channel votes in exchange for jobs. What are the effects of such localistic practices on national identification and organizing? On the one hand, hometown ties \textit{may} reinforce cross-border nationalism when members from different Mexican communities share similar concerns. On the other hand, members from all over Mexico do not have equal access to the resources afforded by hometown ties, so hometown localism inhibits collective organization \textit{qua} Mexicans.

**CHICANOS AND MEXICANOS**

Hometown networks are also deeply implicated in union struggles between Chicanos and Mexicans over political power and material resources. I have argued that union leaders
work through hometown networks to transform members arriving in California with a
diverse set of experiences and identities into a more politically powerful aggregate that
frames politics in ethnic and class terms. Through a process of assimilation to a
predominantly Latino union, rank-and-file members develop a situational sense of
common ethnicity that unites Chicanos and Mexicans as ‘la raza’ in the face of shared
job discrimination from Anglos. Yet there is a tension between the construction of la raza
on the one hand and the exclusive nature of competing networks based on Mexican
hometown and U.S. nativity on the other. Depending on the composition of the union
leadership at a given moment, being a ‘Chicano’ or a member of a specific hometown
network offers advantage in the struggle with other union members for scarce resources.
In 2001, the union’s patronage system prompted members to appeal to identities based on
a foreign hometown as a way to achieve economic and political advantage in the United
States by excluding outsiders.

Non-Guadalupanos at Local 123, particularly if they are Chicanos, say they are
excluded from equal access to good jobs. Several of the members who actively oppose
the administration are self-defined Chicanos who express this complaint most forcefully.
Robert, a 26-year union veteran, said it is hard to get work because Guadalupanos only
give work to other people from Guadalupe.

‘They’ve got uncles, cousins, brothers, fathers - YOU’RE not gonna get a
job’. He said that on several occasions, he was the first worker dismissed from
a job site where the foreman and other workers were Guadalupanos. The
people from Guadalupe ‘have a real animosity towards us Chicanos’. Robert
later said the current business manager got most of her votes from Guadalupe.
‘You don’t vote for her; you don’t have a job’, he said. ‘We [Chicanos] don’t
have any representation’. 
The Chicano dissidents’ resentment of Guadalupano political power is often accompanied by resentment towards the Mexican-born membership in general. Three Chicano members approached me separately to discuss a struggle between Chicanos and Mexicans for jobs and ‘representation’. Like other Chicano opponents of the administration, Eddie acknowledged a common ancestral origin in Mexico but distinguished himself in cultural terms.

I’m not against no immigrants coming over, but there has to be a quota. They’re overwhelming us… I don’t have anything against the Mexican-born, but they have different customs… There’s a lot of corruption in Mexico. They’re bringing that with them. My grandfather was from Mexico, but I was born here, and my father was born here… I was brought up to play by the rules, but all of these new people don’t know the rules.

Three Chicano members of the opposition told me separately they believe that immigrants degrade the quality of existing jobs. According to this argument, the Mexican-born are not fully committed to the union’s struggles because of their unassimilated Mexican frame of reference that includes corruption and low expectations of labor rights. The on-going connectivity of Mexicans in the United States with Mexico also threatens the dissidents’ economic nationalist sensibilities. For instance, Robert and Eddie lamented that Mexicans send $8 billion a year to Mexico, thus weakening the U.S. economy and the union. Most importantly, the Chicano dissidents believe their material interests are threatened by exclusion from Mexican hometown and family networks.

The Chicano opposition faction’s emphasis on the distinction between Americans and Mexicans draws derogatory counter-claims that members of that faction have assimilated to the Anglo-American majority (though ‘Chicano’ itself suggests ethnic American pluralism). Two self-described Chicano officers accused the administration’s other Chicano opponents of ‘hating Mexicans’ and giving Chicanos preferential access to
jobs when the opposition Chicanos held power. The officers made these charges in separate, private interviews and to a visiting Chicano attorney. Tony accused three Chicano opponents of being racist:

‘One has lighter skin than most Mexicans and thinks he is superior. When they were in charge, the first 400 people on the dispatch list were from Guadalupe, but they were only being sent out for two or three-day jobs. They were giving all the good long-term contracts to their pocho [gringoized Mexican] friends’. He said the second agent was a ‘Tío Taco’. I asked what a Tío Taco was, and he said a Tío Taco was someone whose parents came from Mexico, but doesn’t want to speak Spanish or won’t speak slang Spanish. ‘They don’t care about Cinco de Mayo or the Virgin of Guadalupe’s birthday. They try to assimilate to this country, and the ultimate sign of that is to become a Republican’.

It would be a mistake to describe the internal divisions of the union as a simple fissure between Chicanos and Mexicans. Both Mexican and U.S.-born members are on the same slates and serve in the same administrations. The cleavage between those claiming to be Chicanos with a sense of Mexicanness and their putatively Anglo-conformist pocho enemies falls closely along the division between 1) Chicanos closely allied with the Guadalupano network and 2) Chicanos excluded from that network. Many of the members who say they are ‘from Guadalupe’ are U.S.-born. Guadalupano affiliation (by birth, descent, or as a channel of patronage with outsiders) cross-cuts the division of natives and foreigners.

CONCLUSIONS

The bilocality of immigrant union members’ lives motivates outsiders like union leaders to adopt an instrumental bilocal strategy for controlling the union and directing its relationships with other institutions. Union officers draw on members’ hometown and
family networks to organize workers, promote U.S. naturalization, and promote participation in both U.S. and Mexican politics. In this sense, hometown networks are the democratizing vehicle for increased political participation of a population that has largely been excluded from an effective voice on both sides of the border. Union officers also campaign in Mexican sending communities, promote hometown association projects, and access hometown networks to dispense favors in return for votes in internal union elections. Migrants use their hometown networks to seek economic and political advantage within the union in competition with native born co-ethnics. In this sense, hometown networks are a vehicle for patron-client relations. While the patrons are not always affective members of the hometown network, they are able to access that network by using it as the basis for exchanging votes, jobs, and other resources. In short, hometown networks are a means to incorporate migrants into organized labor and democratic participation outside the union even as they facilitate patron-client relationships and inequality within the union. The inclusiveness and exclusiveness of hometown localism are two sides of the same coin that merit sustained scholarly attention.

NOTES

1 Names of the union local, places, and persons have been fictionalized. When capitalized, ‘Local’ refers to Local 123, while ‘local’ retains its common sense meaning.

2 During the early twentieth century, Mexican consulates were deeply involved in organizing Mexican labor unions in the United States because Mexicans were often excluded from American unions (González 1999).
3 Holding U.S. citizenship allows members to participate fully in union politics, because only citizens are eligible for officer positions. In March 2001, the International began to allow non-citizens to serve as delegates to the International’s convention.

4 These three opponents were not the same Chicanos who approached me to discuss Mexican-Chicano tensions.

REFERENCES


