International Journal of Sociological Research : Vol. 11, No. 2, (July-December 2018)

TOWARDS A THEORY OF CITIZENSHIP DIVIDE: THE UTILITY OF ETHNIC RESOURCES AMONG LATINA/O WORKERS

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ABSTRACT: *While the influence of ethnicity in shaping labor market outcomes has received wide attention, we know less about whether ethnic benefits, or the lack there of, is equally shared among members of a presumably homogeneous ethnic group. I coined the term, citizenship divide, to propose that ethnic boundaries are formed along citizen-immigrant distinction that limits the usage of ethnicity as a tool for immigrants. This paper uses ten in-depth semi-structured interviews to examine the relationship between Latina/o workers and their Latina/o supervisors. Results suggest that Latina/o workers feel greater levels of discrimination from co-ethnic supervisors than from those from other racial/ethnic groups. It is concluded that ethnicity and citizenship status interact with second-rate labor market structures that are confining ethnic resources.*

Insider and outsider membership is frequently constructed along ethnic lines. Solidarity, trust, capability, and chauvinism characteristics are characteristics connected with ethnicity (see Light, *et al.* 1993). While ethnicity theory is primarily concerned with issues of group identity and the tensions of assimilation and cultural pluralism (see Omi and Winant 1994), ethnicity also can influence the dissemination of resources. Discussions on how ethnicity shapes economic returns have pointed to the significance of ethnic boundaries. The influential work of Fredrik Barth who argued ethnic boundaries entail a complex set of behaviors and social relations that define an ethnic group. Particularly, when a person identifies another as a member of the same ethnic group "It thus entails the assumption that the two are fundamentally 'playing the same game', and this means that there is between them a potential for diversification and expansion of their social relationship to cover eventually all different sectors and domains of activity" (Barth 1969:15). Similar conceptualizations of ethnic boundaries have sustained in recent times. Sanders (2002:237), for example, defined ethnic boundaries as "patterns of social interactions that give rise to, and subsequently reinforce, in-group memberships' self-identification and outsiders' confirmation of group distinctions." Therefore, ethnic boundaries construct insider and outsider membership along ethnic lines.

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Sharing ethnicity (or co-ethnicity) can be used to facilitate or hamper benefits such as economic integration. Omi and Winant (1994) influential theory of racial formations describes the construction of race as a process occurring through the linkages between social structure and cultural representation. As such, ethnic and racial boundaries are interacting with structural dynamics to form ethnic boundaries which influences the distribution of resources including economic rewards. While ethnicity influences the majority of social interactions examining economic capital is important given its connection to quality of life.

Usually, majority white and minority groups of color are compared to each to evaluate ethnic and racial disparities. With the exceptions of class and gender disparities, less attention has focused on intra-ethnic inequality. This is particularly the case for studies on Latina/o economic inequality. While the frictions among Latina/os along national-origin lines (e.g. Mexicans and Salvadorans) have received some attention (see Lichter and Waldinger 2001) and gender (Gilbertson 1995), less attention has been given to frictions that occur along citizenship lines. Although valuable research has illuminated the differential economic trajectories of native-born and immigrants and the differential wage outcomes of these groups (e.g. Bean, Van Hook, and Fossett 1999; Borjas 1987; 1994; Borjas and Tienda 1987; Butcher and Piehl 1997; Catanzarite 2000; 2002; Farley 1996; Fix and Passel 1994; Sorensen and Bean 1994; Valenzuela and Gonzalez 2000), less attention have been given to whether immigrants and their native-born counterparts share ethnicity in the same manner. This issue is especially important to investigate given the literature on the citizen-immigrant distinction highlights the tensions between nativeborn and their co-ethnic immigrant counterparts (e.g. Gutiérrez 1995; Heyman 2002; Vila 2000).

The objective of this paper is to theoretically reconceptualize what it means to be a coethnic via the examination of the availability of ethnic resources (ethnicity as a beneficial tool) among Latina/o immigrant wage workers. I coined the term the citizenship divide, where ethnicity is formed along citizenship/nativity lines leading to differential utility of ethnicity between immigrants and their native-born counterparts, to examine how ethnicity can form subgroups within a larger pan-ethnic category. To begin the examination of the citizenship divide the ethnic resources available to Latina/o workers will be analyzed.

Admittedly the citizenship divide cannot simple be captured by the investigation of ethnic resources among wage earners. Indeed, the inspiration for this analysis comes from living in the U.S.-Mexico border with majority Mexican-origin populations where insider and outsider frictions appeared to be developed along citizenship lines. Therefore the intent of this study is to provide a theoretical tool to begin to evaluate disparities between immigrants and their nativeborn counterparts not based on assessing the lack of parity among the two groups, but by evaluating the rewards or limitations associated with membership in a presumably similar panethnic group. Based on this theoretical perspective, if ethnic resources are distributed in such a manner that Latina/o immigrants and native-born-Latina/os workers are reaping

differential rewards from being supervised by a co-ethnic then this is an indication that immigrants are not reaping benefits from shared pan-ethnicity. As such, this study will contribute to the literature on usages of ethnicity for economic advancement among Latina/os.

Literature Review

This following section outlines ethnic and structural factors that may influence ethnic formation among Latina/o workers. I begin by discussing the literature focusing on the influence of employment in different economic sectors with a co-ethnic numerical majority. I then lead up to discussions on how structural economic structures can form insider and outsider ethnic boundaries. The theoretical discussion presented below then provides a useful framework to begin to assess the citizenship divide among Latina/o workers.

An indispensable context for understanding Latina/o racial formations is the economies of immigrants (De Genova 2006). Most of this literature has focused on the ethnic economies and enclaves, where immigrant owners and their workforce share ethnicity (ref). These economic sectors first received attention because rather than the downward economic trajectory associated with segregation of ethnic majorities, sharing ethnicity and having a co-ethnic majority in a workplace became an asset. For instance, in ethnic economies and enclaves, ethnicity is a beneficial tool that influences economic institutions and social relationships for economic advancement among otherwise disadvantaged immigrant-minority groups (see Bonacich 1973; Bonacich and Modell 1980; Light and Bonacich 1988; Light and Gold 2000; Light and Karageorgis 1994; Portes 1981; Wilson and Portes 1980; Zhou 1992).

There is a lack of consensus about the benefits of working with co-ethnics. Others argue that relationships among members of the same race/ethnic groups in these economic sectors can lead to substandard outcomes. For example, some argue that co-ethnicity is an excuse to enforce deplorable working conditions, low-wages, and being under the paternalistic control of ethnic elites (see Sanders and Nee 1987; Chin 2005; Kwong 1997). Similarly, others question the ethnic enclave-economy hypotheses, stressing the economic benefits associated with sharing ethnicity within geographical clusters of ethnic firms and co-ethnic workers (see Portes 1981), and argue that economic advantage in these firms are restricted to the owners and not the immigrant-minority work force (see Sanders and Nee 1987; Light and Gold 2000).

It may also be possible that it is not the entire Latina/o workforce that is excluded from ethnic resources. Part of the explanation for the lack of consensus on the role of co-ethnicity in the labor market may be that ethnic boundaries form in such a manner that generate opportunities for some while excluding a segment of a given ethnic group. While this issue has received limited attention, we can get some insights from the literature on gender distinctions among coethnic work environments.

The status of women in co-ethnic worksites, where some see co-ethnicity as protection from discrimination, can be substandard. Ethnic economies tend to rely on

low-wage female workers as an economic survival strategy. Indeed, minority business concentrations are characterized by low-wage, low capitalization, and by high proportions of female employees (Logan, Alba, and McNulty 1994). Having female laborers rather than males, can be economically beneficial because of perceptions that women can be paid less. Phizacklea (1988) argues that successful ethnic economies thrive on the exploitation of female labor in which social structures facilitate female labor subordination to patriarchal control. However, Min Zhou and her associates (Zhou and Logan 1989; Zhou and Nordquist 1994) argue that although the enclave labor market with geographical clusters of co-ethnics, appears to exploit women, we must remember that some cultures, in this case Chinese, give priority to the family over individual achievement. Therefore, despite their low wages, Chinese women do not feel exploited or hopeless, suggesting that women's positions are embedded in ethnic social networks, which are part of the structure of social relations and cultural values.

We do need to take caution in generalizing findings of women's lack of perception of exploitation in co-ethnic work environments to women from other racial and ethnic groups. Yamanaka and McClelland (1994), for example, find that enclaves provide a hospitable environment, but not for all the Asian subgroups in their study. Additionally, while Chinese, Filipino, and Korean immigrant women experienced modest income gains in enclave employment, Indians and Vietnamese did not. Research on gender dynamics in co-ethnic workplaces is limited with respect to Latinas. An exception is Gilbertson (1995) who finds that enclave employment provides Dominican and Colombian women with low wages, minimal benefits, and few opportunities for advancement.

From the research on gender dynamics in co-ethnic work environments we learn that ethnicity does not provide a protective shield from discrimination for all of its members. Ethnic solidarity orientations can privilege certain family members (e.g., men) at the expense of others (e.g., women) (see Patterson 1977; Wilson 1999). Therefore, embedded in the ethnic solidarity that characterizes ethnic concentrated workplaces are notions of women sacrificing their upward mobility for the economic survival of the ethnic group.

Internal ethnicity is a useful term to explain some of the social divisions within ethnic groups with large immigrant segments. Specifically, Light and his associates' (1993:581) concept of internal ethnicity describes "ethnic subgroups within an immigrant group" illustrating how ethnic boundaries can splinter subgroups from a larger ethnic group. Internal ethnicity then represents a stronger bond than ethnicity because immigrants prefer to deal with those who share internal ethnicity than merely co-ethnics.

I argue it is also possible for internal ethnic boundaries to be formed along a citizenship divide where immigrants do not experience ethnicity in the same manner as their native-born counterparts. Most contemporary research addressing ethnic boundaries involves groups that have a large number of foreign-born individuals since

ethnicity partly relates to issues of foreignorigin (Sanders 2002). This is not surprising given intra-ethnic diversity has increased among the post-1965 immigrants and ethnic groups (Gold 1992). In testing the boundaries of ethnicity, even native-born individuals can hold negative perceptions of their co-ethnic immigrant counterparts that can influence ethnic formations. For example, Heyman (2002) finds that immigration officers with Mexican ancestry do not identify with Mexican and other Latin American immigrants. In Gutiérrez's (1995) historical account, he finds Mexican Americans are divided into two opposing poles on their relationship to Mexican immigrants—those that perceive immigrants as a threat and those that sympathize with them. Similarly, Vila (2000) describes how society's characterization of Mexico and recent Mexican immigrants as impoverished, fuels social distance between Mexican Americans and Mexican immigrants.

Economic competition can be an explanation for the citizenship divide. For instance, Borjas (1987) found no evidence that Latino immigrants are a substitute workforce for nativeborn Whites, Blacks, or Asian male workers, but he does found greater competition between Latino immigrants and their native-born Latino male workers. In regards to wages, Catanzarite (2000, 2002) similarly finds that brown-collar occupations (occupations where Latino newcomers are vastly over-represented) negatively impact the labor market success of their native-born counterparts. In contrast, others argued the effects of immigration on native workers are minimal (Bean, Van Hook, and Fossett 1999; Borjas 1994; Borjas and Tienda 1987; Farley 1996; Fix and Passel 1994; Sorensen and Bean 1994), even when native workers (i.e. high school dropouts) compete directly with immigrants (Butcher and Piehl 1997).

I can also draw insights from the segmented economy literature to explain why Latina/o immigrant wage laborers may not be reaping the benefits of ethnic solidarity. According to the segmented labor market perspective, advanced capitalist societies are segmented into at least two labor markets (Gordon 1972; Edwards 1975). Primary labor markets are characterized by stable working conditions, high wages, scarce skill specifications, high returns to human capital investments, and routes for upward mobility (see Sanders and Nee 1987). On the other hand, secondary labor markets are characterized as having high turnover rates, low returns to human capital investments, and jobs that lack upward mobility (see Sanders and Nee 1987). Illustrating the costs of this segmentation, DeAnda (2000) finds that employment in periphery service sectors, among other factors, contributes to significant employment instability among women of Mexican-origin.

The location of immigrants in secondary markets, in addition to having economic implications can also shape ethnic politics of inclusion and exclusion. Heyman's (2002) study of Mexican American border patrol officers illustrated that a citizen-immigrant distinction emerged from a process of mobility into primary labor markets. Specifically, immigration officers employed in primary labor sectors reserved for citizens are a sharp contrast to the secondary markets that Mexican and Central American immigrants encounter. Hence, Mexican Americans' identity of citizens as oppose to transnational

ethnics, arise from their mobility from laboring civil service jobs located in primary markets.

The literature on ethnic concentrations in jobs also leads us to consider the constraint on ethnic resources for the facilitation of upward mobility among Latina/os immigrants. Smith's and Elliott's (2002) study on ethnic concentrations and its influence on access to authority (ranging from no authority to having the power to hire and fire) find that Latino men working under Latina/o supervisors are less likely to be in positions of authority. These findings indicate that sharing ethnicity is a hindrance for the establishment of employment authority for Latinos. Although these dynamics are not replicated for Latina women, the literature mentioned above generally questions that co-ethnicity protects women (see Gilbertson 1995).

In sum, ethnicity and labor market structures are intertwined in complex ways. Specifically, the literatures on internal ethnicity (see Light *et al.* 1993), concerns over the negative impact of immigrant workers on their native-born counterparts (Borjas 1987; Catanzarite 2002), the position of immigrants on the secondary sector (see Sanders and Nee 1987; Hum 2000) and how labor segmentation can infuse exclusionary practices along nativity lines (Heyman 2002), the negative economic returns in occupations and firms saturated with Latina/os (Catanzarite and Aguilera 2002; Hum 2000), and the restriction on authority attainment when supervised by a co-ethnic (see Smith and Elliot 2002), all lead us to the probability that Latina/o immigrant workers are not reaping the benefits of co-ethnicity. Thus, questioning whether Latina/o immigrants are employed in what Light's and Gold's (2000:23) term an ethniccontrolled economy in which "co-ethnic employees (not owners) exert significant and enduring market power in the general economy, usually because of the numbers, clustering, and organization, but also, when applicable, because of external political or economic power."

Data and Methods

The study is guided by grounded theory methods which note that the procedures for verifying theory differ from procedures in the development of theory (Glasser and Strauss 1967). The data for this study grew out of a larger project on Latina/o immigrant niches. Following the grounded theory tradition issues on the meaning of co-ethnicity were not part of a hypothesis testing design but arose through the interviews. As such, this procedure stresses discovery and theory development as oppose to hypothesis testing (Charmaz 1983).

The data for this exploratory qualitative analysis is based on ten in-depth interviews selected from snowball sampling conducted in Los Angeles and Boston with workers/ labor organizers and labor/immigration activists (who at some time had been low-skilled laborers themselves). All respondents attest to how ethnicity is utilized in low-skilled occupations.[1] Thus, I follow the work of Gutiérrez (1995) who used activists as his informants and argued that they play a crucial role in formulating, articulating, and acting on pressing issues affecting their communities and are at the forefront of

establishing equity in these workplaces. The expertise of these respondents can give us some insights on the meanings of co-ethnicity in the workplaces. These data provide the building blocks to begin to assess ethnic formations and ethnic resources among Latina/o workers, although sample sizes are small.

Each interview lasted approximately an hour and a half to two hours. The respondents came from a variety of settings. I transcribed the interviews verbatim, with transcriptions averaging about eight single-spaced pages. In LA I conducted interviews at workplaces, public spaces (e.g., restaurants), and sites of labor organizing. Nearly all of the interviews were conducted in English, although two interviews were conducted in Spanish and a few of them were conducted in English and Spanish. With the exception of two women, I spoke with each respondent separately.[2]

Although several questions were asked regarding the experiences Latina/os encounter in the job market and co-ethnic work environments, for proposes of this paper I will solely focus on the question of the role of the ethnicity of the supervisor. The question was simply stated as "Does the race/ethnicity of the supervisor make a difference?" This paper is a presentation of the analysis of the benefits or hinderance of sharing ethnicity with the supervisor among Latina/os low-skilled laborers.

Citizenship Divide: An Alternative Framework for Understanding Ethnic Boundaries

In LA, respondents did mention tensions between Korean owners and supervisors and Latina/o laborers. For instance, a respondent mentioned that while having a co-ethnic supervisor did not protect Korean workers from exploitation, it does play a role. For instance, there is some degree of favoritism towards co-ethnic Korean as oppose to Latina/o workers. However, the severity of this potentially exploitive relationship is more pronounced among Latina/o supervisors towards their co-ethnic workers.

There are some indications of ethnic competition between supervisors and workers that can fuel ethnic tensions among Latina/os. For example, an undocumented Latina worker discussed the better relationship that Latina/os have with their White employers compared to their Latina/o supervisors:

> In this factory there are Latino supervisors, the supervisors, but the owners of the factory are Anglos. Do you know what I mean?
>
> The treatment from Anglos towards Latinos is very beautiful, but the Latino-to-Latino treatment is something totally different because we just happened to work right now on that, and it is such a different that you tell yourself, wow.
>
> I even congratulated the owner of the factory because he doesn't pressure you. He knows what he is doing and if you are working better than everyone else he congratulates you, something a Latino does not do. He [Latino supervisor] doesn't come to praise you. What he wants is to see how he could look good.

When asked why she thought that is the case, she said the managers want to impress the owners and they are thinking about themselves and not the workers. This indicates that ethnic resources are scarce given constrains on economic opportunities or competition. From the perspective of an undocumented worker, in this situation the presence of a co-ethnic supervisor does not provide an economic advantage. Indeed, not only is there no co-ethnic favoritism, there seems to be co-ethnic competition between Latina/o workers and their co-ethnic supervisor.

Moreover, the race and ethnic background of the supervisor matters and is distinct from the influences of the ethnoracial background of the owner. In terms of workplace ethnic tensions, the Latina/o worker is not a threat to the White owner, but may directly be competing with the Latina/o supervisor. Although, the Latina/o laborers did not feel maltreated by the White owner; he/she does have the authority to decide who is in a supervising position as well as the authority to disapprove of management styles. In these situations it is the owners who ultimately benefit from these ethnic tensions. Therefore, matching the supervisors' ethnoracial background to the majority of the workforce is a strategy that can limit ethnic resources. This is a concern given that Elliot and Smith (2001) find that employers' match the race/ethnicity of the supervisors to that of their subordinates.

Another indication of the reason for co-ethnic tensions came from a second-generation Latina activist. She also stated that Latina/o supervisors maltreated their co-ethnic workers. Her perception is that Latina/o supervisors, as members of the same ethnic group, are likely to know which workers are undocumented and tend to be harsher on those workers. This indicates that there appears to be a continuum of insider ethnic membership where Latina/o supervisors have enough of insider status to know whose undocumented and who is not, but not enough of an insider status to consider him/herself a member of that ethnic group. In this case, ethnic membership continuum has boundaries around nativity lines that are forming along a citizenship divide.

A similar pattern of workplace co-ethnic tensions are found in Boston. However, the respondents attribute this divide to the lingering effects of being a colonized group. It is well established that at the center of the colonization literature is the domination of African and Indigenous people by Europeans and the U.S. that created racial hierarchies (see Hunter 2002). Some of the members of the conquered group can internalize the racial ideology of White superiority and Latina/o inferiority leading to internalized oppression (see Tatum 2004). Drawing on this insight, a Latino community organizer describes how Latina/o supervisors are less likely to look out for their co-ethnic immigrant workers:

> What I find interesting in the Brazilian, in the Central American communities, that if somebody gets promoted to become a supervisor…they're the person that is less less apt to look out for the interest of the co-workers and more apt to huh kiss [up] to the boss.

> And once they become supervisors, they become really abusive. It seems that this little taste of status, all of the internalized racism, internalized neocolonialism, comes out and they take it out on the workers.

Ethnic tensions can then resemble the strategies used to colonize and attempts to disempower people of color. Part of the strategies of colonization and neocolonization involved divide and conquer strategies where groups are broken up to prevent them from gaining power. Drawing on these insights, another respondent working at an NGO that services Latina/o immigrants further explains when asked if the race and ethnicity of the supervisor makes a difference:

> …enough experience here [with this organization] and the work here, we've discovered that the supervisors that both…discriminate and abuse the workers are themselves people of color [laugh].
>
> But you know for me I understand it. You know it is kind of that dynamic of the middle person, you know like what happened in our countries when we were colonized, right? That that as certain class emerges…that it's either mestizo or or whatever, and they're kind of like like the *colchon* [cushion] that they're the…layer between the power that be and the people they suppress.
>
> Do you see what I am trying to say? So there is this this middle layer…that kind of forgets where they come from because they have been giving a chance here and there, and so because they have internalize a lot of the rhetoric, a lot of the images that get communicated about us, you know they become the people who most abuse…
>
> When employers would tend to be more careful because they know they are discrimination laws, right? But it would be harder for a worker to claim discrimination when it is another of their kind.

Both respondents coupled the Latina/os' history of colonization with contemporary experiences of Latina/o immigrant wage workers with a co-ethnic supervisor. Similar to the "middleman minority" there is a co-ethnic in an intermediary status position that negotiates between the owners or upper management and the lower-status co-ethnic workforce (see Bonacich 1973). An important question, however, is who benefits from these negotiations? Having a co-ethnic supervisor not only creates potentially more exploitative working relationships for immigrant Latina/os, but it also makes it harder for workers to make discrimination claims (also see Elliot and Smith 2001).

In sum, ethnicity has been explained as a phenomenon that is equally shared by members of a presumably homogeneous group, such as Latina/os. I propose the concept of citizenship divide as a starting point to explain how ethnicity among groups with large immigrant segments is can be formed along citizenship/nativity lines. This framework has three components. First, this term highlights how immigrants and their native-born counterparts may be forming separate ethnic subgroups with distinct insider and outsider boundaries. Although the disparities between immigrants and their native-born ethnic counterparts have been documented (see Valenzuela and

Gonzalez 2000), this study points to how these groups may be operating as distinct ethnic subgroups. For instance, the characteristics of solidarity and trust associated with ethnicity are not apparent between Latina/o supervisors and their co-ethnic immigrant workforce. Second, sharing ethnicity is attached to resources. Immigrants are not reaping the benefits of sharing ethnicity with the supervisors which limited their upward mobility. On the contrary, the immigrant workforce perceives more discriminatory treatment from co-ethnic supervisors. Third, structural influences that confer differential rewards to immigrants also influence ethnic formation. While respondents attributed the maltreatment of Latina/o supervisors towards their co-ethnic workers to various causes: changes in class status associated with upward mobility, competition, having an insider status to allows him/her to know who is undocumented, and internalized racism and colonization, it is also reported that having a co-ethnic supervisor makes it more difficult for workers to make discrimination claims and increases productivity via competition among co-ethnics.

Being that the respondents' experiences in this sample are focused on low-skilled employment, it signals that ethnicity interacts with second-rate labor market structures that are confining ethnic resources. For example, secondary markets that disproportionately hire Latina/o immigrants are workplaces characterized by low wages and ethnic competition and supervisors may lack the power to favor co-ethnic workers. Labor market structures may impede Latina/o immigrants from reaping benefits associated with sharing ethnicity with their supervisors thus forming a citizenship divide.

Conclusion

This study examines the ethnic boundaries and resources in the labor market for Latina/o immigrants in Los Angeles and Boston. Although numerous studies have examined ethnic resources in ethnic economies and enclaves (e.g., Bonacich 1973; Bonacich and Modell 1980; Light and Bonacich 1988; Light and Gold 2000; Light and Karageorgis 1994; Portes 1981; Wilson and Portes 1980; Zhou 1992), less attention has focused on not all members of a presumably homogeneous ethnic group reaping the same ethnic benefits. I coined the term *citizenship divide* to begin to explore the differential outcomes in the utility of ethnic resources among pan-ethnic groups with large immigrant segments.

This study illustrates how ethnic boundaries are more complicated than previously conceptualized, especially with Latina/o immigrants being at the periphery of Latina/o ethnic boundaries. The results reveal that part of the explanation is that Latina/o supervisors, as part of the Latina/o community, have a greater perception of the citizenship divide as oppose to those outside of the ethnic group who may not be able to distinguish native-born from immigrant workers. Moreover, this divide is maybe an example of internalized racism. Latina/os' history of colonization and oppression lay the foundation for internalized oppression and racism in which over time members of exploited groups internalize and act upon those negative perceptions about themselves and other members of their own racial/ethnic group (Padilla 2004). In this

case, it emerges through a citizenship divide where Latina/os reported co-ethnic supervisors over exert their control over the co-ethnic mostly immigrant workforce.

It is also important to acknowledge who benefits from such ethnic tensions in the workplace. It is important to remember that these supervisors are not the owners of the firms. Insights from this analysis illuminate the benefits of having a Latina/o supervising a co-ethnic workforce for firm owners. For example, the owner can strategically place a co-ethnic supervisor to oversee a co-ethnic workforce to minimize discrimination claims. Moreover, it is possible that the work environments of low-skilled occupations infuse ethnic competition (which is good for productivity) by having a Latina/o supervisor oversee and control a Latina/o workforce. Thus, the confinement of ethnic resources for this group is shaped by labor structural conditions characterized by a co-ethnic majority working in menial jobs with limited upward mobility.

It remains to be investigated whether the nativity status of the supervisor influences the promotion of co-ethnics (native- and foreign-born). This will allow for a more accurate assessment of the citizen-immigrant distinction and how it functions in the labor market. Yet, this study demonstrates that the nativity status of workers matters for upward mobility and influences labor market outcomes even in environments with co-ethnics in authority positions.

In sum, it is important to pay attention to aspects of inclusion and exclusion and how ethnic boundaries influence upward mobility. In this case, ethnic boundaries can form along citizenship lines in a matter that immigrants are reaping differential rewards from sharing ethnicity. Evidence indicates that for Latina/o wage workers, having a Latina/o supervisor can dampen work environments. Indeed, having a co-ethnic supervisor serves as a mechanism to control the workforce and can limit upward mobility of the group and thus illustrates the covert manner in which inequality operates.

Notes

1. This study is part of a larger study on the access and wage outcomes for Latina/os employed in niches. The regions chosen for this analysis coincide with the regions in a separate study with quantitative data.
2. The establishment of rapport that granted me the interviews varied, but I participated in several protests and demonstrations to show my support for the issues at stake and to show my gratitude for them granting me the interview. Although the responses are shaped by my status as a researcher and a Latina, along with their particular situations shaping respondents lives at the time, I tried to avoid taking people's responses out of context and to sketch the proper setting for understanding the interviewees' perspectives.

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