"IT'S TIME TO LEAVE MACHISMO BEHIND!" Challenging Gender Inequality in an Immigrant Union

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Based on an ethnography of a Latina/Latino immigrant union, the author examines changes in gender inequality along five dimensions. Union renewal weakened the structural division of union labor, allowing women on staff to realize feminist values of leadership development in concrete goals. These changes made space for women members to engage in new leadership practices that undermined gender inequalities in interactions with men and empowered and politicized women at the individual level. Feminist values of caring for children, however, were not realized in specific goals thus limiting the leadership practices and politicization of women with children. The ethnography shows the need to move from the study of women and unions to an analysis of how gendered transformations intersect with economic restructuring and immigration within social movement organizations.

Keywords: *unions; immigration; economic restructuring; social movement organizations*

Unions are organizations with social change goals, but they have also traditionally reinforced gender, racial, and ethnic inequalities (Briskin and McDermott 1993; Cobble 1993; Cockburn 1991). In response to the decline of union density and influence wrought by economic restructuring, however, some unions view women and immigrants as key to union renewal (Bronfenbrenner 2005; Milkman 2000). These unions may become sites for immigrant women to reformulate gender inequities where they intersect with class, race, and citizenship status.

In this article, I examine whether, and if so how, Latina immigrant women are able to challenge gender inequality through their participation in a revitalizing Los Angeles union. The "women and unions" literature examines the extent to which women can transform exclusionary unions (Cobble 1993; Colgan and Ledgewith 2000; Milkman 1993). Much of this literature, however, is based on white, citizen women and men either in unions representing female-dominated occupations in the public or less

GENDER & SOCIETY, Vol. 21 No. 3, June 2007 409-438
DOI: 10.1177/0891243207301501

competitive service sector or in unions representing the male-dominated manufacturing sector. We know little about gender relations, or efforts to renegotiate them, within revitalizing unions in the low-wage, competitive service sector where immigrant women and men are the majority. Understanding the potential for change in organizations, however, may come in examining multiple axes of inequality (Acker 2006; Ward 2004). A separate literature on gender and migration finds that the process of migration brings relative gains for women and losses for men, although women's liberation is far from achieved (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994, 2003; Menjivar 1999; Pessar 1999). This literature focuses primarily on gender within the work/home nexus but says little about gendered struggles in sites constructed as public and overtly political such as unions.

I examine the potential for Latina immigrant women to challenge gender inequalities through union leadership using an ethnography of the Justice for Janitors (J4J) campaign housed in a Los Angeles local of the Service Employees International Union. The Service Employees International Union's J4J campaign is widely recognized as one of the most significant cases of union revitalization in the United States (Milkman 2000). It is thus an optimal case to analyze the impact of union renewal on gender inequality. My study contributes to the women and unions literature by considering the restructured low-wage service sector, where immigrant women and men's interests have converged but also remained gendered. My study also contributes to gender and migration scholarship by exploring the renegotiation of gender within a social movement organization. The women members of J4J forged the "unity in diversity" with men called for by Briskin (1999) and other feminist scholars of unions in ways that flowed from their location within inequalities of race, citizenship status, and class as well as gender.

Based on this ethnography, I argue that in contexts where immigration and restructuring prompt union renewal, unions may become sites where women are able to renegotiate gender inequalities in significant ways. After a critical review of the women and unions literature and a description of my data, method, and study context, I examine the degree of transformation in gender along five of Martin's (1990) dimensions of feminist organizations. I consider the structure of union leadership positions, values of leadership development and goals to achieve it advanced by women union staff, the leadership practices of women members, and the outcome of personal and political empowerment and feminist consciousness among women members. I conclude with a discussion of how this ethnography helps scholarship to move from the study of women and unions to an analysis of unions as sites where women can renegotiate gender inequalities as they intersect

with economic restructuring and immigration within social movement organizations.

FROM WOMEN AND UNIONS TO AN INTERSECTIONAL FEMINIST APPROACH

A useful point of departure for my analysis of changing gender inequalities within union organizations is Martin's (1990) discussion of the multiple dimensions along which an organization may be considered feminist. I use five of these dimensions. One key dimension is organizational structure, which includes the division of labor within organizations. A second important dimension is feminist values, namely, whether an organization emphasizes "the importance of mutual caring, support, cooperation, interpersonal relationships, personal growth, development and empowerment" (Martin 1990, 190). Feminist goals are more action oriented than feminist values in that goals relate to whether the organization has "an internal action agenda that helps members see women as an oppressed group and encourages women to change (politically and personally)" (Martin 1990, 190). Feminist practices are even more specific, consisting of the concrete activities that members or others engage in to achieve goals. Feminist values, goals, and practices may lead to feminist outcomes, defined as whether members are transformed by participating in the organization either materially in terms of earnings or status or subjectively in terms of self-esteem, empowerment, or consciousness of women's oppression.

I use these conceptual tools to analyze the extent to which women can undermine gender inequalities within an organization focused on challenging class inequalities. The number of women in unions has increased, but many unions have a gendered structure with men in the formal leadership positions where key decisions are made, while women are either excluded from leadership or confined to informal, invisible, and less influential forms of leadership (Briskin and McDermott 1993; Cobble 1993; Cunnison and Stagemen 1995; Milkman 1993). Unions often become "gendered oligarchies" as elected male leadership is reproduced through bureaucratic, hierarchical, and competitive organization (Healy and Kirton 1999, 344). The division between union labor and caregiving is also reinforced when child care is lacking (Briskin and McDermott 1993; Cobble 1993). Studies emphasize that many unions are based on masculine values that view men as natural leaders and ignore unpaid caregiving (Cockburn 1991; Healy and Kirton 1999). The lack of concrete goals to facilitate women's participation is apparent in long hours

of union work, the scheduling of meetings during family times, and insufficient resources devoted to child care during union events (Briskin and McDermott 1993). Gender inequality in practice is common in many unions, evident in sexist interaction (Fonow 1998; Healy, Bradley, and Mukherjee 2004). Unions characterized by sexist practices and that lack feminist goals and values leave little space for an outcome of women's empowerment and politicization.

The women and unions literature provides clues as to how women might transform exclusionary union structures, values, and practices, but it is limited by a privileging of the experiences of largely white, citizen women. At the level of practice, many scholars of women and unions argue that there is a different "women's way" of organizing that is more participatory and inclusive. This way of organizing is not essential to women but rather is developed in separate women-only spaces (Briskin 1999). The argument is that organizing through women's committees, courses, or more informal networks help women to build their confidence, develop leadership skills, and create coping and support mechanisms, which is a key feminist outcome at the personal and political level. Moreover, scholars view separate organizing as a way to open up organizational structures by bringing women, women's collectivist ways of organizing, and women's issues into mainstream sites of the union (Briskin 1999; Healy, Bradley, and Mukherjee 2004; Parker 2003). Also related to structural change, scholars argue that women in important paid staff positions have a positive effect on bringing women workers into formal leadership (Crain 1994; Milkman 1993). However, studies have found varying degrees of success in the separate organizing strategy, in part because the multiple interests of women workers of color are not served well by separate organizing (Munro 2001; Zavella 1988). The women and unions literature recognizes that union women have both similar and different interests from their male counterparts, but the focus is on women's similarities to one another. In contrast, an intersectional approach breaks apart the category "woman" to examine different women's experiences.

The gender and migration literature is part of a broader intersectional framework in that it views gender as a mutable and fluid set of social relations that shift with changes in class, race, and citizenship status. A central finding in the literature is that women and men's experiences have converged, although they remain unequal. Specifically, migration brings relative gains for women and losses for men. Two classic studies of gender and migration among Mexicans (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994) and Dominicans (Grasmuck and Pessar 1991) find that women gain more

control over household decision making through the process of negotiating the timing and terms of migration compared to back home. In contrast, men's control in this realm is limited in part due to their precarious position in the U.S. labor market as racialized and often undocumented workers alongside women. The early scholarship was fairly optimistic, yet recent retrospectives are more pessimistic (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2003; Menjivar 1999; Pessar 1999). Pessar (1999) argues that earlier conclusions about women's gains were in part related to the focus on work and family. Indeed, a few studies focusing on public sites suggest that immigrant men can reproduce their privilege (George 2000; Goldring 2001), but there is need for more research in this area.

My study of the Los Angeles J4J union elevates how gender is reformulated within macro-level changes of economic restructuring and immigration, which have pushed some unions to revitalize. Recent studies of union renewal suggest that most renewal efforts combine top-down changes initiated by paid union staff with bottom-up, largely volunteer organizing with union members (Milkman 2000; Voss and Sherman 2000). These dual processes of change might undermine gender inequalities as well as class inequities. If union renewal introduces staff with feminist values able to implement feminist goals, women members may be able to engage in new leadership practices that undermine gender inequality in their union. At the same time, given the convergence of women's and men's experiences with migration documented by the gender and migration literature, immigrant women's practices of union renewal likely reflect their need to build critical solidarity with immigrant men rather than organizing separately from them. Changes initiated by both women staff and women members could lead to individual-level empowerment, politicization, or feminist consciousness among women members.

Analyzing Gender in the J4J Los Angeles Union: Data and Method

I collected the data for this article as part of a larger ethnographic study of organizing among Mexican and Central American immigrant janitors in Los Angeles from the fall of 1997 to the spring of 2000. The majority of these immigrants were undocumented, thus lacking the right to live and work in the United States, while a few held temporary, and precarious, legal statuses. The research included formal and informal interviews and both participant and nonparticipant observation in the union local, at street demonstrations, in three workplaces, in homes, and at social events. In this article, I draw on data collected through in-depth, semistructured interviews

with 23 women union members/janitors who had become (volunteer) union leaders and seven women who were paid, full-time union staff. The members interviewed were born in Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua, and they entered the janitorial industry in the late 1980s and early 1990s. They ranged in age from mid-20s to mid-50s and had a range of marital statuses and responsibilities for children (see Table 1). The staffers included Latina immigrants and Chicana and white women born in the United States. Five ranged in age from mid-20s to mid-30s and were single while two others were in their mid 50s and married. None of the staffers had young children (see Table 1). Five were college educated and had experience in student organizing or community organizing, while two had previously been janitors. I also use data from observation at small (10 to 30 people) and large (50 to 100 people) union meetings, which I attended roughly three times a month for six months in 1999 and less frequently before and after. My interactions with or observations of 22 additional women members and 39 men members were significant enough for me to assign them a pseudonym in my field notes, and I also draw on some of those data here.

A strength of the ethnography was its longitudinal character, which in this case allowed for sensitivity to the process of leadership development. For those members formally interviewed, I typically made contact with a janitor at a union meeting or demonstration, and after repeated interactions, I asked for an interview. I then conducted a two- to three-hour interview, including both retrospective and present tense questions. After interviews, I maintained contact through later union events where I was able to ask about key issues mentioned in the interview.

I taped and transcribed the formal interviews, documented observations and informal conversations in field notes, and entered both into the qualitative analysis program NUD*IST. For this article, I analyzed the data along five of Martin's (1990) dimensions of feminist organizations. I used demographic data provided by women staffers coupled with interviews with them to detail the changing structure of the organization in terms of the degree of a gender division of union labor. I drew on interviews with women staffers to examine organizational values and goals. To address practices of gender within the union, I analyzed data collected through observations of interaction between women and men members in both small and large union settings. I drew on interviews with the women members to explore whether changes at the levels of the organization and practice had a subjective transformative outcome in terms of women's empowerment, politicization, and feminist consciousness.

TABLE 1: Primary Study Participants

Name	*Place of Birth*	*Year Janitor*	*Marital Status*	*Children Younger than 12 in United States*	*Children Younger than 12 in Extended Family*	*Level of Leadership or Staff*
Volunteer member leaders						
Elena	Mexico	1990	married	0	0	high
Thelma	Mexico	1988	divorced	0	0	high
Delia	Mexico	1992	married	2	4	high
Sonia	Mexico	1994	common-law	2	0	high
Silvia	El Salvador	1988	married	0	0	high
Magdalena	El Salvador	1992	single	0	0	high
Bernice	El Salvador	1993	divorced	0	0	high
Lupe	El Salvador	1989	married	0	0	high
Desiree	El Salvador	1996	married	3	0	high
Dora	Nicaragua	1995	widowed	0	0	high
Julia	Mexico	1992	married	0	4	medium
Maggie	Mexico	1990	divorced	2	0	medium
Maria	Mexico	1988	divorced	0	0	medium
Marta	Mexico	1987	married	3	0	medium
Leda	Mexico	1992	married	2	0	medium
Maru	Mexico	1993	married	1	0	medium
Concepcion	Mexico	1988	married	0	5	medium
Lupita	El Salvador	1992	common-law	1	0	medium
Beatriz	Guatemala	1990	married	0	1	medium
Nora	Guatemala	1992	single	0	0	medium
Elora	Guatemala	1992	single	0	0	medium
Amanda	Guatemala	1989	divorced	0	1	medium
Susana	Guatemala	1987	married	3	0	medium
Mercedes	El Salvador	1991	common-law	2	0	low/activist
Paid full-time staff						
Lola	Mexico	N/A	single	0	0	high
Raquel	Mexico	N/A	single	0	0	high
Tracy	U.S./white	N/A	single	0	0	high
Angela	U.S./white	N/A	single	0	0	medium
Sara	U.S./Chicana	N/A	single	0	0	medium
Juanita	Mexico	N/A	married	0	0	low
Berta	Latin America	N/A	married	0	0	low

NOTE: For members, "high" denotes executive board or committee member, "medium" denotes shop steward or active in unionization, and "low/activist" denotes one who regularly attends marches. For staff, "high" denotes ability to appoint members and design leadership development, "medium" denotes facilitating leadership training sessions, and "low" denotes representing or mobilizing membership.

The Nexus of Economic Restructuring, Immigration, Union Renewal, and Gender

The context of migration, restructuring, and union renewal is important to an understanding of how women negotiated gender inequalities within the union. Among my primary study participants (see Table 1), important changes in gender inequalities were already bubbling up from below. At home, women and men negotiated the division of unpaid labor. Within couple families, men did more housework and child care than they did in their home countries, although women still did more of this work than men. Other families did not include men at all, and struggles over unpaid work took place between women within extended families. In both couple and extended families, therefore, a sharp boundary between women's and men's work was weakened as found in other studies (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; Menjivar 1999). Economic restructuring, in turn, undermined the gender division of paid work. In the 1980s, nonunion cleaning companies won the majority of cleaning contracts from building owners. They did so by hiring undocumented Latina/Latino immigrants to whom the contractors denied basic labor rights and living wages enjoyed by the previously unionized African American workers. Nonunion contractors also disrupted the historical division of such work into male janitor/female maid positions. In an effort to cut positions and speed up the work, contractors instead assigned both Latinas and Latino men to do all aspects of janitorial work, namely, dusting, vacuuming, and emptying trash. These changes at the workplace and at home created the context for challenges to gender inequalities within the union.

There were also important top-down changes occurring in the union local. To understand the significance of these changes, a brief history of the campaign is warranted. The international union initiated the Los Angeles J4J campaign in 1987, sending paid staff to direct it within Service Employees International Union Local 399—a local of both janitors and health care workers. From the late 1980s to the mid-1990s, the campaign focused on organizing. In this period, janitors won union recognition and a contract that brought wage increases and better working conditions. Both women and men janitors were centrally involved in the grassroots work of organizing the unorganized. The ability of women to challenge gender inequality within the union, however, was limited in this period because the janitors who entered formal leadership were primarily men (Cranford forthcoming). In the mid 1990s, a racialized and gendered struggle for union power ensued. A group of members called the *reformistas* (reformers) argued that more time should be spent improving contracts and servicing the existing membership and were critical

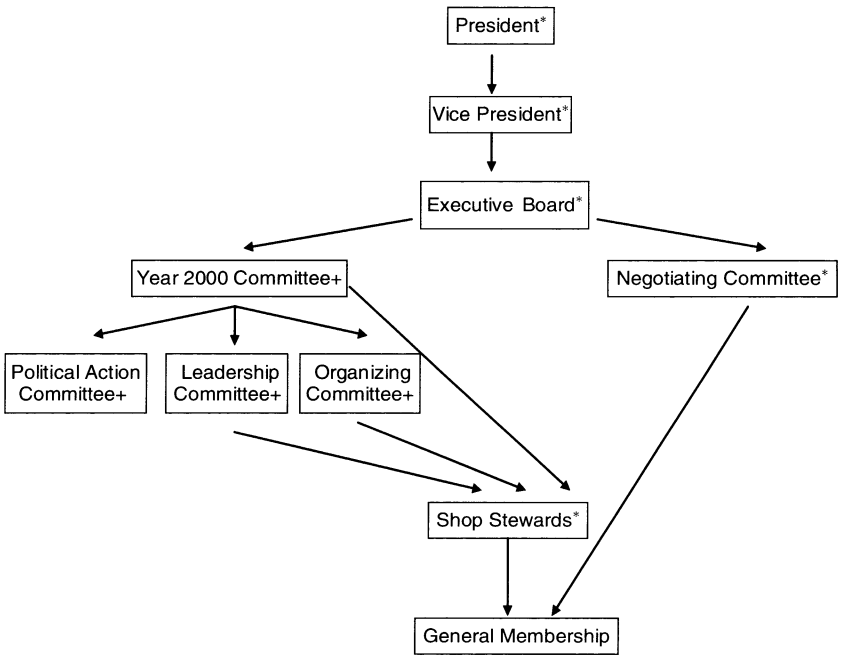

Figure 1: Nonstaff Leadership Positions in Service Employees International Union Local 1877, Los Angeles, 1999

NOTE: * = elected. + = appointed by paid staff.

of the paid union staff largely because of the time it took to resolve grievances. In 1995, a multiracial alliance of reformista janitors and health care workers won all the positions on the executive board but not the top positions of president and vice president. The president and vice president of local 399 were white men. Several women who had not been janitors, Chicana, Mexicana, and white, were in union staff positions. In contrast, the reformistas were all janitors and almost all men. When the two sides could not collaborate, the international put the local (399) into trusteeship, replacing the president, vice president, and executive board with Mike García as trustee and Rocio Saenz as deputy trustee. García is a Chicano who moved from janitor to president of the janitors' local in the San Francisco Bay Area (1877), and Saenz is a Mexican immigrant who was one of the early paid staff.

In the late 1990s, during my fieldwork period, the union began to focus on leadership development among members to improve contracts and servicing

of members while continuing to organize the unorganized. In 1997, the trusteeship ended, and the janitors voted to break with Service Employees International Union 399 and merge with Local 1877. Organizational renewal accelerated during the Year 2000 Campaign, which began in 1998 with select organizing drives and culminated in a three-week, countywide strike over contract negotiations in the spring of 2000. The internal renewal efforts of women staffers coupled with changes already taking place among the women and men janitors had significant implications for gender inequality in the union local.

GENDERED TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE UNION

Feminist Structural Changes

Feminist structural changes were evident in a weakening of the gender division of union labor, although equal representation of women and men in leadership positions was not achieved. A new leadership structure coupled with the authority of women staffers to appoint and recruit members allowed more women members to enter formal leadership positions.

The union division of labor that prevailed in the early years of J4J eroded in the late 1990s. The top leadership positions of president and vice president (see Figure 1) were still held by men. However, more women moved into the high-level positions on the executive board. In 1999, 45 percent of members elected to the executive board were women (see Table 2). Women were still underrepresented since they made up approximately 50 percent of all union members, but this was a significant improvement. In the early 1990s, all but one of the members on the board of the J4J campaign and later on the building services division of the local's executive board were men. The elected negotiating committee was widely seen as one of the most important committees. Negotiating committee members helped draft language for the collective agreement, surveyed the membership about priority issues, and were present at negotiations. In 1999, women made up 42 percent of this significant committee compared to 20 percent of the previous negotiating committee (see Table 2).

The entrance of women into formal leadership increased further with a new committee structure set up to lead the Year 2000 Campaign (see Figure 1). The Year 2000 Committee directed the more specialized work of the leadership, political, and organizing committees during the campaign. At 48 percent, women were well represented on the Year 2000 Committee (see Table 2). The organizing committee mobilized union

TABLE 2: Union Leadership Positions by Sex, 1999

Position	*Women*	*Men*	*% Women*
Executive board[a]	5	6	45
Committees			
Negotiating[a]	10	14	42
Year 2000	10	11	48
Organizing	14	17	45
Leadership	4	7	36
Political action committee	3	7	30
Total[b] shop stewards[a]	124	168	42
Area 1	37	67	36
Downtown	20	46	30
Century City	17	21	45
Area 2[c]	22	17	56
Wilshire Corridor	2	5	29
Beverly Hills	4	4	50
Westwood	16	8	67
Area 2a	11	9	55
Culver City	2	4	33
Santa Monica	9	5	64
Area 3	13	28	32
Pasadena	1	6	14
Hollywood	1	4	20
Glendale/Burbank	5	12	29
South Bay	6	6	50
Area 4 (San Fernando Valley[d])	7	11	39
Total union members[e]	4,250	4,250	50

SOURCE: High-level staffer, Service Employees International Union, Local 1877.
a. Elected positions.
b. Total shop stewards is made up of those areas listed in the table and small pockets of janitors in greater Los Angeles County, Antelope Valley, Riverside, San Bernardino, Ventura, Kern, San Luis Obispo, and Santa Barbara counties.
c. Area 2 also includes the Los Angeles Airport.
d. Area 4 includes Studio City, Sherman Oaks, Woodland Hills, and West San Fernando Valley.
e. The figures are estimates since the union did not collect the data. The total number of janitors was 8,500, and women were half of all members. A high-level staffer went through the names of people in the various leadership positions and counted the number of women and men.

members to help bring nonunion janitors into the union. Reflecting their long-standing grassroots leadership, women were 45 percent of the organizing committee. In contrast, women were only 36 percent of the leadership committee and 30 percent of the political action committee (COPA is the Spanish acronym). The leadership committee planned how to develop leadership among a broader group of members. The political action committee

mobilized politicians to support the campaign. I identify the people in my sample on these committees or the executive board as high-level leaders (see Table 1).

The committee members helped to develop additional tiers of worker leadership, especially among shop stewards who are the elected union representatives at the workplace (see Figure 1). For example, the leadership committee trained the shop stewards to resolve grievances through collective action at the workplace when necessary. The Year 2000 Committee shared campaign information during shop stewards councils. Shop stewards were responsible for mobilizing the general membership to attend demonstrations and to help organize the unorganized. Activists, defined as those who did not hold a formal position but who were active in the grassroots work of demonstrating, could get involved in union governance by attending the leadership convention and voting on resolutions drafted by the committees.

There was also progress in the representation of women in medium-level leadership positions. I identify those in my sample who were shop stewards but not committee members or members of the executive board as medium-level leaders (see Table 1). In 1999, women were 42 percent of shop stewards, up from 30 percent in 1998. Furthermore, women were at least 50 percent of shop stewards in areas organized in the mid-1990s: Beverly Hills, Westwood, Santa Monica, and South Bay. In contrast, women remained underrepresented in areas organized in the early period, such as downtown, and in several large film studios within Hollywood and Glendale/Burbank that maintained union members throughout the 1980s. The San Fernando Valley still required much organizing, and women shop stewards were underrepresented there (see Table 2).

The paid union staff represented a parallel structure that supported the elected and appointed union leadership. By the late 1990s, there were women in important staff positions. Staffers in high-level positions appointed committee members and designed leadership development programs. Those in medium-level positions helped those in high-level positions facilitate the training sessions. Staffers in low-level positions serviced the general membership and mobilized them to organize the unorganized (see Table 1). During my period of fieldwork, women staffers were actively recruiting more women onto the committees and encouraging them to run for the elected positions.

These leadership positions made up a new structure in the union, but women's representation in leadership was not guaranteed by the structure. All the committees, except the Year 2000 Committee, were written into the union's bylaws, as were the higher-level positions. The number of

shop stewards per building was also safeguarded in the union's structure. There were no separate women's committees within the local. The members of these committees were appointed by paid staff, and they were sex integrated. Women's representation in these positions, however, was not written into the bylaws or constitution. And no resolutions had been passed to secure women's representation in these structures. Instead, women's representation in formal leadership depended on the efforts of women staffers and members to push for them and were thus highly influenced by the values of the paid union staffers.

Feminist Values

Women staffers displayed feminist values that emphasized empowering women members to become union leaders alongside men. The union valued leadership development in general due to the growing realization that to organize the unorganized and protect contract gains, the membership needed to become the union rather than relying on staff. The need for labor movement renewal, not the empowerment of women per se, was therefore the impetus for leadership development among members. The women staffers, however, stressed the need for specific leadership development among women.

High-level staffers began to ask tough questions of themselves and the medium- and lower-level staff (often called "organizers") they supervised, questions that reflect the emphasis on developing women's leadership. Lola said, "The organizers identified the leaders. Some women were included, but the tendency was to always pick the men. And in sort of leading that work, we always had to call them out: 'Well what about this other person? . . .' And we tried to struggle with that and what that meant. Were we not thinking that women could be in that place? Or was it that women didn't want to take that responsibility? But we needed to constantly remind ourselves. And that's the kind of vision that a union that's going to do anything needs to have, right?" Answering such questions is difficult. The multiple reasons for women's underrepresentation in union leadership positions include socialization that results in men nominating themselves for leadership positions and women not thinking of themselves as leaders, resistance from male partners, and women's lesser leisure time due do greater child care and housework (Briskin and McDermott 1993; Cobble 1993; Creese 1999). The women staffers focused on the factors that they could most easily control, namely, leadership development among women.

Women staffers challenged traditional ideas of "leaders" as those who possessed charisma, who were able to talk in front of a group, and who

were respected by others. They valued the ability to engage in one-on-one conversations, to listen, and to be patient, skills they felt women were more likely to have. In these ways, the women staffers gendered leadership development. As Sara said, "In order to move someone, to motivate them, you have to understand them. And the only way you're going to understand them is if you let them talk. And men, most of the time, have a hard time letting other people talk. They want to come and bestow knowledge on you. . . . I think that in general, women are better listeners and maybe are a little more patient with people when they don't get it right away. . . . And that's an important skill." Similarly, Tracy said, "Women are better organizers because they know how to listen, period," whereas "men are much more able to talk." In addition to valuing women's ways of organizing, such as listening, women staff also identified people who had the potential to develop more traditional skills, such as talking. As Tracy summed up, "There's a saying in Spanish, *'Hay madera?'* [or] Is there wood to work with, to be able to carve something out?" Lola said that the focus on potential allowed them to "scoop in a lot more women." The women staffers emphasized that much of the work of turning potential into leadership happened one on one, "someone having a plan for someone else," in Angela's words. Women staffers cultivated close relationships with women members to encourage members to see themselves as leaders.

Feminist Goals

Women staffers implemented concrete goals to achieve leadership development among women alongside men, thus mirroring their values of women's specific empowerment. Women staffers designed training sessions to link workers' experiences to broader social relations of power, with the aim of empowering all members, but also paid specific attention to gender inequality. Tracy described the traditional approach to education as the "you are the vessel I will pour into you" approach and contrasted it with J4J's "how do I create a training module that is going to allow you to take ownership and assume power" approach. Within a sex-integrated committee structure, however, the women staffers created modules that were explicitly attuned to gendered power relations as well as inequalities between janitors and employers.

After noting the similarity of many training sessions to experiential and interactive popular education (Freire [1970] 1996), I asked the women staffers if they thought these styles influenced the gender dynamics in the group. Angela contrasted the training sessions with hierarchical structures

by noting the number of women on staff and arguing that organizations "run by women" are less hierarchical and more attentive to participatory democracy. The others agreed with this general sentiment, but they emphasized that participatory learning was not sufficient to create a level playing field between women and men. Tracy said, "From my perspective, the concept of doing collective decision making and opening up space and ensuring that people all have an opportunity to participate is definitely based on feminist principles. . . . And that ultimately leads to more equitable participation. And I think that that's been conscious. But I think it's a combination of active facilitation and then the politics of the types of trainings that you do, how you structure the trainings." Structuring the trainings included a more deliberately feminist intervention than that found in Freire's writings, as emphasized by Sara: "You can say that you're using Freire to implement your popular education program, but if you're doing it from a sexist point of view and you're not really dedicated, and even recognizing your own sexism, it's still not gonna happen, no matter what model you're using. . . . I have to check myself still, all the time. . . . You have to be concerted, deliberate, and thoughtful and plan." These women staffers were trained in Freirian style, popular education, and community organizing that was interactive and, theoretically, allowed everyone to participate. These styles, however, lacked explicit attention to gender inequalities embedded in interaction, such as the tendency for men to dominate conversations and for women to listen or wait to be called on. The popular education style reflected the official goal of the union to develop leadership among both women and men janitors. The development of women leaders, however, required attention to gendered dynamics of interaction.

Staffers consciously intervened to obstruct gendered patterns of speech and interaction through one-on-one relationships with both women and men members behind the scenes. Angela spoke of the need to push women members to engage in new practices, or to "kick them in the butt." Sara described her relationship with a woman member as follows: "It's almost as if, it's like a politician has a staff that is kinda identifying issues out there and kinda puts that person in a place that they need to be as far as the public view, or as far as other people who they need to gain respect from." Women staffers also worked behind the scenes to convince talkative, experienced men to "take a back seat" on certain issues. As Sara continued, "And also, like not just with the women, but like having the guys take a back seat. Like saying to [male member], 'You're a good leader, it's great that you're being respectful, but take a back seat on this one. Let it play itself out; see what everybody says. You don't always have to have all

the answers. . . . Give other people a chance to go through what you've gone through in the last year.'" The women staffers found interactive role-plays, exercises, and discussions insufficient to ensure that women and men contributed equally to the conversation and activities. Instead, they supplemented popular education with specific goals to encourage women to speak and engage more and to discourage men from dominating the conversation. In these ways, the women staff implemented specific goals to empower women. Popular education infused with explicitly feminist goals reflected the specific value of empowering women and made space for women to engage in leadership practices alongside men.

Feminist Practices

Within the committees, where the goal of women's leadership development alongside men's was implemented, the new women leaders practiced leadership in a way that undermined gender inequality in the union at the level of interaction. The lack of consistent, formal child care, however, limited the leadership practices of a broader group of women.

An example involving the organizing and the political committees illustrates how participatory and interactive training sessions made space for women to assert their leadership vis-à-vis men. The example also demonstrates how gendered interaction is shaped by a racialized politics of citizenship in the California context. These two committees worked together closely to develop a set of Principles for a Responsible Commercial Real Estate Industry that they then asked both politicians and building owners to sign. At a joint meeting of the committees, a disagreement arose over the language in the principles. Member Arturo took issue with one of the statements that "78 percent of Latino workers depend on the county for health care." Reflecting a political and economic context where Latino immigrants and African Americans were pitted against one another, Arturo felt the need to distinguish between the two groups, arguing, "I think it is higher for Blacks, because we Latinos work." Omitting the negative stereotype of African Americans, Delia argued that the use of the statistic was confusing and agreed that they should not emphasize Latinos' use of public health care. Hidalgo and José both pointed out that the statistic did recognize that Latinos were working because it referred to 78 percent of all workers. José, a university-educated Salvadoreño did not criticize Arturo but condescendingly said to Delia, a working-class *Mexicana* with little formal education, "If you read it well, you will understand." Delia's point, unlike Arturo's, was not due to a misreading of the statistic; rather, it was a point about the racialized political context. She

responded that "it would be better to write that some Latinos have to work two jobs and still cannot afford health insurance. That's my opinion." José dismissed Delia's point, but member Carlos recognized it and told the staffer to write it on the board. The group eventually agreed that they should change the wording of the principles to reflect the politics of citizenship Delia and Arturo had identified. This interaction also informed the wording of a resolution: A Call to the Building Owners to Take Responsibility.

Delia's stance in this meeting challenged not only unequal relations of class and racialized citizenship in the California context but also gender inequalities within the union at the level of interaction. The goal of encouraging everyone, but especially women, to speak their minds resulted in recognition of Delia's and other women's contribution to union strategy. Delia felt that it allowed different ideas to be included. After the meeting, as we were walking through the union parking lot, I saw José getting into his car and remarked to Delia, "He didn't agree with you, did he?" Shaking her head no, she said, "Neither did Hidalgo." Delia went on to say that she and Hidalgo, who were on several committees together, often had different points of view. This prompted me to ask, "But do you work together OK, or no?" "Yes, we work together well, but we have different ideas." Delia went on to assert the value of women's ideas tied to motherhood. "The women always have better ideas; they understand more. Even though this is the most liberal country, even though here we do the same work and supposedly we are equal, the woman still has the responsibility for the children and among the whites also." Similarly, Elena said, "More than anything, Cynthia, the participation of the women is very important. We have to go forward. And we have a lot of ideas. As mothers, as women, we feel the necessity of the children." Through critical engagement with men, women were able to voice their ideas. The inclusion of women's voices was important because their ideas were often different from men's due to the women's experiences as mothers. At the same time, this difference did not prompt women to call for separate organizing from men but rather to declare their ideas within the sex-integrated committees. In these ways, the sex-integrated committees infused with the feminist goals of developing women's leadership allowed women to practice leadership alongside men.

The feminist goal of leadership development made space for women's leadership practices, but it did not prevent men from trying to assert themselves as experts, or from sometimes making sexist remarks. It did mean, however, that staff, women members, and other men members felt freer to

reject such assertions and remarks. For instance, at one meeting that involved an organizing role-play member, Mario played the role of the worker being organized while Emmanuel played the role of the worker-organizer. Emanuel tried to use familism to motivate Mario to become involved in the campaign by first asking him if he had children. Mario responded, "No, but my wife does." Then Mario said that he had three wives and many children. No one laughed, and staffer Sara quickly cut off Mario and ended the exercise. A more common interaction occurred later in this same meeting. Member Juan expressed his frustration with trying to organize his women coworkers to come to marches. "One señora says to me, 'My husband won't let me'; another says, 'My boyfriend won't let me'; another said, 'I can't because of my children'; and another said that she is not interested!" Member Mona told Juan that when women use the children as a "pretext," she tells them, "Bring them along; I bring my children." Another woman said she tells other women, "I'll help you with the children." Women were more likely to facilitate other women's participation by not only drawing on familism but also by offering to help with the children. While some men drew on a patriarchal notion of family, the meetings allowed women to present their own ideas about how to organize other women.

Women's leadership practices alongside men also had an impact on union structure. The process of including more women on the contract-negotiating committee is a good example. At a committee meeting when staffer Tracy detected that the workers saw the upcoming contract negotiations as a "big, scary, mysterious thing," she decided to change the agenda and do a role-play of contract negotiations. Tracy played the cleaning company's negotiator. She asked member Francisco to represent Downtown and Century City (area 1) janitors and member Delia to represent janitors from the outer urban areas (areas 2 and 2a) since they worked in those areas (see Table 2). When the workers asked for 10 sick days for all areas, the "company negotiator" replied that they would take two-and-a-half sick days from area 1 janitors who had five and give them to the janitors in the other areas who had none. This prompted an unscripted dispute between Delia and Francisco over sick days. Following the role-play, another member, Carlos, said that they should have the same negotiating committee that they had for the last contract because they would better be able to handle employers' attempts to pit janitors against one another. But when Tracy said that the negotiating committee last time was 80 percent men, members Georgina, Delia, and Desiree protested Carlos's suggestion. Desiree, who had three children, told Carlos that equal representation of women was important because women would be more concerned with

getting a good family medical plan, while men would just focus on higher wages. Delia, who had recently helped to analyze membership surveys about negotiating priorities, agreed and said that if forced to choose between wage increases and family health insurance, women would pick the latter.

The example also demonstrates how gender intersected with structural changes linked to economic restructuring and immigrant labor. When the outer urban areas (areas 2 and 2a) and the adjacent cities within areas 3 and 4 were organized, the union was unable to secure the same level of wages and benefits as those won by the area 1 janitors in the urban core who were organized earlier (see Table 2). And the sex composition of the last committee reflected the lack of women in formal leadership in previous periods. By the end of the meeting "everyone was in agreement," said Desiree, that half of the members on the committee would be women and that there would be representation from the different geographic areas. In the process, women asserted their and other women's right to participate in one of the most important committees in the union.

The gains made by women in the committees allowed them to challenge gender inequalities in larger union settings. For example, at a shop stewards council, member Desiree used the skills developed in the smaller committee meetings to contest the idea that a good negotiating committee meant the (male-dominated) committee that was previously elected. Pointing to a diagram displayed on a large easel, without a scripted speech, Desiree assertively presented the new committee structure to the shop stewards (see Figure 1). Desiree thought she had finished her presentation and began to walk away from the easel but was called back by male member René. René said that he had heard a lot about committees, but not much about the negotiating committee for the new contract. "Unless we have a good, experienced negotiating committee, we will win nothing," René asserted, echoing Carlos's initial comment in the smaller committee. Without hesitating, Desiree replied that they were about to elect a negotiating committee but that they were in the process of discussing how to ensure an equal number of women and men. Desiree emphasized a broader participatory democracy that would allow people with different interests to be involved in contract negotiations. René, who was generally outspoken at these meetings, did not reply, suggesting his acceptance of Desiree's claim. This vignette demonstrates how practices that upset gender inequality at the level of interaction, fostered in the smaller committee meetings, were extended to larger union settings. As a result, women's leadership was displayed alongside men's to a broader group of members.

More women practiced leadership alongside men, but women with children could not participate fully due to the lack of consistent child care at union meetings. Women staffers recognized the importance of child care to developing women's leadership, yet they were unable to translate these feminist values into concrete goals. Angela said, "I actually think it is really important to provide child care." Similarly, Sara said, "If they're single and they have kids, you know, it's five times as hard, right, you have to find someone to take care of the kid and you probably have to pay them." Raquel recounted that in the early years, they had child care at union meetings, but during the two-and-a-half years of my fieldwork, there was no formal child care. As Tracy said, "I think we should have it. I think someone should spend the time to figure out how to make it happen. It's unfortunately been deprioritized." Women staffers sometimes took care of the children themselves, but since child care was added to their already enormous workload, it was intermittent. As expressed by Tracy, "I used to do it, for the stewards councils and stuff like that, I'd take on that responsibility. Then it became an issue of time. I just didn't have the time to deal with it. And so it fell off the plate." Similarly, I watched staffers Jackie and Berta sit with children outside of union meetings or hold them inside the meetings many times. Alternatively, staffers would "organize some of the workers to do it," explained Tracy, but there were problems with this tactic as well since it was the most active women who would volunteer and therefore could not be in the meetings. When a new campaign to organize nonunion workers resulted in "50 to 60 children running around during meetings," staffer Angela took it upon herself to pay the older children of the janitors to take care of the younger ones. Angela did not have a budget for child care, however, and this was a temporary organizing campaign. Since no resources were allocated to it, child care was sporadic and dependent on individual staffers.

Child care at the meetings was addressed informally as it was for all J4J activities. J4J unionism was practiced as a "family affair," to quote staffer Lola—that is, people brought their children to union events. Women who held medium-level leadership positions brought children to shop steward councils, and couples of members with children were not uncommon at these large meetings. Women generally helped other women care for children, making negotiating carework and union work less arduous. For example, at one shop steward council, a very social and talkative member Maria came in, went directly to her friend Carolina, and took her baby. She then walked about the room chatting with other women who held the baby. Later, when we broke into smaller groups, Maria and Carolina sat

together with the baby. These were typical practices noted in my field notes. Including children in union activities supported a broader community unionism that included organizing for immigrant rights. For instance, the older children who took care of younger ones during a new organizing campaign also taught them union and immigrant rights songs and to paint murals about the J4J movement. However, there were also drawbacks to the family affair practice in the union.

The informal family affair practice worked against the total exclusion of women with children, but it was difficult for these women to participate in the meetings fully. When young children were fussy or older children noisy, they disturbed their mothers and other members. This was particularly the case in larger shop stewards councils, where much of the meeting was devoted to reports and/or presentations. For example, at one meeting, several women had children with them. Three children were coloring at a table in the back of the room next to me. One mother was standing close by, and another was sitting in a row of chairs in front of them. As the meeting progressed, the five-year-old began to climb on the table and talk to two other children who were sitting there coloring. The children were loud, making it difficult to hear the speaker at times. One mother would periodically turn around to tell her two children to be quiet. A staffer also asked the children to be quiet at one point. Delia said that Lupe told her not to bring her nephews to the union meetings since they were "tremendously rambunctious"; thus, Delia convinced her sister Julia to care for their brother's children. In short, bringing children to meetings limited the participation of their caregivers as well as other members.

The lack of formal child care also limited more women's entrance into high-level leadership positions. Most of the women with high levels of leadership had few responsibilities for young children (see Table 1). Desiree was the only member who consistently brought her children to the longer committee meetings. I watched Desiree multitask in several of these meetings. During one meeting, for example, while holding her baby, she criticized the way that a man had done the role-play. Despite that fact that women did it, and some did it well, multitasking at union meetings was a difficult third shift. When I asked Mercedes, an activist who regularly attended marches with her small son, if she would consider becoming a shop steward, she said her child care responsibilities would hinder her ability to go to meetings. "For example, one time I went to the union for a meeting with [staffer]. And we went into the conference where she was. And my son started to cry, and I had to leave. . . . And I couldn't hear anyway. So I prefer not to commit myself." I observed several women

members, and a few men, leave meetings when their children started to cry. Although the family affair practice worked well at the marches, where children were valued actors and child care was mixed with play (Cranford forthcoming), this informal practice at union meetings hindered many women's full participation.

The prevalent informal child care reflected the intersection of gender with economic restructuring and immigration. The importance of child care was recognized as more women moved into leadership, but formal child care did not materialize. In late 1999, Desiree began to strategize with women staffers over child care. They drafted a resolution to form a child care committee, which passed at the leadership convention. The proposed plan was to set up a volunteer group of members to provide child care on a rotating basis. The resolution framed child care as a family issue rather than a women's issue. The framing both reflected the family affair practice among the immigrant janitors and was meant to gain the support of the men members. The resolution professed the "importance that the members have an equal opportunity to participate in the Union at all levels." It also stated that the majority of members had families to care for and that child care would "greatly benefit" the ability of "many of the member leaders" to participate, without mentioning women specifically. The child care resolution was an important step toward realizing the value of child care in the union's formal organizational structure, but the issue was put on the back burner when the organizing for the Year 2000 Campaign accelerated. As a result, formal child care would continue to hinge on the ability or willingness of women staffers to pay for child care out of their own pockets and thus be jeopardized if feminist staffers left the union. More commonly, child care would continue to be addressed through the informal family affair practice that limited the participation of women shop stewards with children and put higher levels of leadership out of their reach. These effects of informal child care are significant because the women who engaged in high levels of leadership alongside men were transformed by it.

Feminist Personal and Political Outcomes

The women leaders were transformed personally and politically by new practices of leadership. They contrasted their interaction with the men in the committees with *machismo.* Machismo has been used, problematically, to denote immutable and backward gender relations inherent to Latino and especially Mexican culture. It has also signified honor and respect for Latino men. More recently, scholars use *machismo* to denote

specific gender inequalities between women and men. The women in my study talked about machismo as a set of ideas and power relations based in separate, and unequal, activities of women and men. They said it was common in their countries of origin but not among all men. Some women described machismo as the idea that women should be subservient to men in the home. Sylvia's said,

> Machismo is, for example, this exists in my country [El Salvador], Mexico also, that the man thinks that the woman will never be equal to him. They think that the woman was made to be in the house, to cook, to clean, that she would not even be able to work outside of the house. And these men that think they are the ones that have the final say in the house; they are the head of the family. They think that the woman is good for nothing but this. So these people have the woman at a lower level.

Similarly, Delia said there was an "enormous machismo" among the reformistas, recalling that one told her she should not be working since she had a husband to support her. Other women emphasized machismo as not only keeping women in the home but also keeping them out of politics and other activities in the public sphere. Dora said, "The man always has this myth of machismo. . . . Do you know what machismo is? Like, since the man is so jealous and *machista* he doesn't want the woman to participate in his activities. . . . They don't want to mix with women in the field of action: in organizing, in the military, or in unions." Dora described machismo as the idea that politics were men's activities and therefore not suitable for women. This idea was challenged by the women committee members.

The women's new practices alongside men empowered them to assert themselves as union leaders. Dora spoke of a mismatch between men's ideas and efforts to (re)produce male privilege on one hand and interaction within the committees on the other. When I asked how women and men got along in the committees, Dora replied, "Even though we are members of the same union, the man always wants to be higher than the woman. But what I have seen here [in the committees] is that we are relating to one another on an equal level. We give one another compliments and exchange ideas. Whether the men like it or not, they have to accept it. It's time to leave machismo behind." Similarly to Dora, Elena pointed to the amount that both women and men contributed to the conversation, presentation, and general agenda as indicators of equality within the committees. Referring to one committee on which she sat, Elena said,

> I think that it was a very delicate and wise decision on the part of the president, the staff, and more than anything the membership that supported this [sex] mix of committee members. . . . We have talked in groups. And I have personally seen the opinions of different *compañeros.* And they have motivated me a lot because they are people with very positive ideas. And not because they are men; they also listen to the women. . . . And we are able to give them the message that we have as women in order to see how we can do things better.

Elena argued that the committees were a place where equal interaction resulted in valuing a broader message that women bring due to enduring gender differences. Interaction with men in the integrated committees was a key site for women to challenge men through critical engagement with them.

Women also gained the confidence to challenge a broader group of men and the general idea that the union was men's domain. Silvia contrasted the changing men in the committees with enduring machismo in a powerful site within the union, but like Dora and others, she felt women's leadership practices upset machismo.

> Those of us on the committees now, we are working together well. And the men give the women the opportunity, as we women give the men. I think that we are winning this. In the committees, we are very much at the same level. . . . In the executive board, I have felt machismo sometimes, from those that do not participate with us. But I feel that once they come around and begin to see how we are working and all the areas in which we are involved, I think we will win them over. . . . The truth is they have to accept the changes with all the things they are seeing we women do.

While Silvia focused on the impetus for change based in women's visible leadership practices, Delia focused more on the importance of the union as a site of education. Pointing to the closet in her house, Delia said, "The union draws the women out of the closet because, look, sincerely, you come home from work and you don't know anything but your children and your house. . . . I say the union takes you out of the closet because it's like being locked up (*encerrada*). You don't know anything. When one arrives in another country, she doesn't know anything. And in our countries, politics is almost always left to the men. Few women participate. So you ignore these things; politics doesn't interest you. To organize? Forget it! But here, suddenly, I have done a million things." Delia contrasted her union activism with both a lack of such an experience in Mexico and experiences of feeling "locked up" at home due to a lack of knowledge as a recent immigrant. While *encerrada* is a term traditionally used to

describe women who do not work outside the home or who work in paid domestic service, here it is not being used to denote a literal entrapment in the home. These women went out to work each night, generally using public transportation. Significantly, Delia emphasized how both the paid and unpaid work of women created a "closeting feeling" in the home. Several days after our interview, I told Delia that I wanted write about her metaphor, and she expanded her idea to include men. "When I say the union draws women out of the closet, what I want to say is that the men can't think that women are good for nothing in terms of politics. So the man can't put you in the closet, understand?" Delia's metaphor of being drawn out of the closet symbolized illumination and politicization.

For Delia, as for Dora and Sylvia, the union was not only a site of education but also a place where women could challenge men who thought women could not or should not be union leaders. Others also indicated a consciousness of themselves as leaders that came out of their leadership practices. As part of a discussion about women's leadership in the union, Desiree tentatively generalized from her own participation in various committees to argue that both women and men are capable of becoming union leaders. "For me, this is something new but for women I don't know. I think that we all have the ability. Well, initially [those in leadership] were almost always men, but now things have changed!" Lupe more forcefully articulated a link between women's political practices and their consciousness when she said, "We have more voice now. We have more consciousness that we can do it. [Author: Why the change?] Because we are demonstrating so!" By engaging in new practices of leadership alongside men, these women proved to themselves that they could do it and argued that if men were going to engage with this union, they would also have to change.

CONCLUSION

My ethnography of an immigrant union in a context of labor movement renewal addresses questions key to gender scholarship in an age of economic restructuring and migration. How do immigrant women negotiate gender within social movement organizations? This question is missing from the gender and migration scholarship. How do immigrant women transform union structures, values, and practices that exclude them? This question is absent from the women and unions literature. My ethnography fills these gaps by analyzing immigrant women's efforts to challenge gender inequality within their revitalizing union.

The women and unions literature is valuable for its emphasis on women's efforts to transform exclusionary unions but limited by its focus on white, citizen women. The literature suggests that women gain the ability to move into formal leadership and challenge exclusionary union traditions and agendas through participatory leadership practices in women-only spaces. This theory conflates participatory forms of organizing with women-only spaces. The women in my study practiced leadership in interactive and participatory ways, but they did so with men. Migration and economic restructuring had eroded much of the structural basis for gender inequality between these women and men. These macro-level changes did not make women and men automatically compañeros or comrades but did mean that it made sense for these women to engage directly and continuously with the men in their union.

The immigrant women in my study challenged gender inequality along several of Martin's (1990) dimensions of feminist organizations. Feminist outcomes for women and for the organization were spurred by a combination of top-down changes initiated by women staffers and bottom-up changes initiated by women members. Women's representation in formal leadership increased in both long-standing and newly created positions as the union began to emphasize leadership development. Women staffers were able to realize feminist values of empowering women in specific goals to develop leadership among women members in sex-integrated committees. Within these committees, women members asserted their opinions vis-à-vis men and other women, thus renegotiating gender relations at the level of interaction. The women felt their practices of leadership in front of men challenged ideas that women and men should engage in separate and unequal activities—ideas that they described as machismo—and argued that men would have to "leave machismo behind" if they wanted to participate in this revitalized union. Practices of leadership alongside men within spaces explicitly designed to elicit equitable participation in turn affected the structure of the union. In the integrated committees, the most active men were convinced to support an equal number of women on the negotiating committee, and by engaging with these men, women developed the skills to mobilize a larger group of men to support women in leadership. In these ways, an informal sisterhood among women staff and women members, combined with women members' critical engagement with men members, brought about change. At the same time, women's equal representation in union positions was not enshrined in the union's constitution and thus hinged on the ongoing efforts of women staff and members, thus limiting more structural change.

Notwithstanding significant personal transformations and some structural changes, the union's lack of resources devoted to child care limited leadership among women with children. These findings suggest that top-down, staff-led change may run up against limits of budgets that reflect the strategic aims of the organization as a whole. In this case, the goal of continuing to organize nonunion workers and improve contract gains within a context of economic restructuring took resources and attention away from formal child care. New women leaders, working with women staffers, have put forth more concrete child care goals. The question that remains is whether they will be able to secure resources for reliable child care. A commitment to formal child care may require broader bottom-up support from the membership. What is clear is that women's fight for resources will likely occur with men, rather than separate from them.

These findings suggest that the pessimistic turn in gender and migration scholarship was made too soon. Yes, women's gains were uneven, but significant challenges to gender inequalities tied to politics were also evident. More broadly, my study suggests that changes in gender inequalities do not occur only, or primarily, through the process of migration itself where women experience relative losses and men relative gains. Change depends also on the specific organizational context that immigrant women and men face on arrival. It is important to note that a similar politicization could have occurred back home if these women had come into contact with one of the many neighborhood-level antipoverty movements in their countries. Moreover, their engagement with immigrant class politics might not have occurred in the United States had there not been a revival of the labor movement in the city where they moved and in the industry in which they found jobs. The women members contrasted their union leadership not only with experiences in their countries but also with feelings of being "locked up" as newly arrived immigrants and with their lack of leadership in the earlier period of the union. These women's renegotiation of gender relations, with the support of women staffers, does not mark assimilation to Western gender norms. Instead, it shows how unions' responses to economic restructuring and immigration make space for women to challenge gender inequalities.

My findings provide insight into gendered changes in other organizations. My study underscores the significance of women's leadership practices alongside men for both personal and structural changes in organizations. This potential would likely not be extended to women's committees in corporations given their profit-maximizing values and goals. Feminist values and goals are explicit in same-sex schools and

women's studies programs, and my study suggests that the integration of boys and men into these feminist sites could prompt changes in gender at the level of interaction. The most relevant extension of my findings, however, is to organizations that include a mix of women and men located in similar class, race, or citizenship locations. Men's resistance to affirmative action measures within unions is widespread (Creese 1999; Luxton and Corman 2001). The combination of staff-led and member-driven changes in gaining support from men could hold lessons for such unions. In contrast to the significant change in leadership documented here, George (2000) finds that immigrant men were able to reinforce their privilege through their leadership within churches. Changes in gender inequalities, therefore, may be most likely within organizations with transformative aims. The context of immigration incorporation, however, also matters. Goldring's (2001) findings that immigrant men reproduce privileges tied to leadership in transnational political organizations contrast with the practices among my study participants whose politics focused on improving their lives in Los Angeles. Changes pushed from outside the immigrant group, therefore, might be important levers to elevate changes already underway among immigrant women and men. One limitation of this study is the lack of men's voices in these accounts. Interviews with men would be necessary to examine whether they are also changing and, if so, how changing men is linked to changing women and transforming organizations. The process and degree of changes in gender inequality documented here raise important questions for labor, social movements, and migration scholars.

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