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Migration and Gender among Mexican Women

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Despite their importance to women's empowerment and migrant adaptation more generally, the social and cultural processes that determine how gender relations and expectations evolve during the process of migration remain poorly understood. In this article, data from a survey conducted in Durham, North Carolina and four sending communities in Mexico are used to examine how the structures of labor, power, and emotional attachments within the family vary by migration and U.S. residency, women's human capital endowments, household characteristics, and social support. Using both quantitative and qualitative information, the main finding of the study is that the association between migration and gender relations is not uniform across different gender dimensions. The reconstruction of gender relations within the family at the place of destination is a dynamic process in which some elements brought from communities of origin are discarded, others are modified, and still others are reinforced. Results challenge the expectation that migrant women easily incorporate the behavior patterns and cultural values of the United States and illustrate the importance of selective assimilation for understanding the diversity of changes in gender relations that accompany migration.

Gender is one of the most important social forces shaping migration patterns, and migration is a powerful catalyst of social change. Yet it is only relatively recently that researchers have critically considered the nexus between gender and migration (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2003; Pessar and Mahler 2003). Seminal work on the topic viewed migration as a liberalizing experience that empowers women by providing better economic opportunities and exposure to more egalitarian gender norms. Other studies, however, have questioned the equalizing effect

of migration on gender relations and sought to situate migrants' gender inequality within the larger context of stratification by race, social class, ethnicity, and legal status. These studies emphasize that the gains of migrant women in some domains have been tempered by lack of progress or even losses in others. What remains elusive is research that systematically examines which gender domains are associated with gains and losses for migrant women, and that isolates and interrelates the factors conditioning these outcomes (Pessar 2003).

These issues are particularly relevant for Mexican migrants to the United States. The greater opportunities for female employment in the United States in tandem with starkly different gender ideologies between the two countries hold the potential for significant alteration of gender practices among Mexican families. Disentangling how Mexican migrant families reshape or reinforce gender inequities in the U.S. setting will enhance our understanding of both the theoretical link between gender and migration and the role of family and gender dynamics in migrant adaptation.

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Our analysis formulates a theoretical framework that integrates Connell's (1987) theory of gender and power with expectations derived from the selective assimilation literature to elaborate specifically on the differential effect that migration has on particular aspects of gender relations. The theory of gender and power distinguishes between three gender domains: labor, power, and cathexis (i.e., the attachment of emotional feelings and significance to an idea, object, or more commonly, a person). Together, these three domains describe the gender regime of a particular institution, in our case, the family. Our analytical strategy is to model these three gender structures separately and compare attitudes and behaviors among migrant Mexican women in stable relationships in Durham, North Carolina, and their counterparts in four sending communities in Mexico. By drawing on data collected both in Mexico and the United States, we are able to assess variation in gender dimensions without resorting to recollection or inference, as previous research on the topic commonly did. Moreover, our analysis combines quantitative and qualitative data, which allows us to examine statistically the impact of social and demographic factors on migrant adaptation and gender roles while also providing an in-depth understanding about the context of these changes. The results show that the relationship between migration and gender structures is highly variable and complex. Whereas Mexican women clearly benefit from migration in some dimensions of gender inequality, in other cases, male-dominated lines of authority actually are reinforced in the U.S. setting.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Until recently, much of the research on international migration has been all but silent on issues of gender, focusing on the male migrant and largely dismissing women as secondary reunification migrants (Kossoudji and Ranney 1984). The growth of feminist scholarship and the exponential increase in international migration during the 1980s and 1990s drew attention to the importance of gender to migration and of migration to gender (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2003). Several pioneering studies on the topic viewed migration as an emancipating experience for women (Boserup 1970; Grasmuck and Pessar 1991; Guendelman and Perez-Itriaga 1987;

Lamphere 1987). These studies generally argued that migration leads to greater personal autonomy and independence for women, primarily because of their heightened employment prospects enhancing their control over budgetary and other realms of decision making and providing greater leverage for involving men in household chores (Pessar 2003).

In addition, it is argued that the U.S. legal environment, particularly protection against domestic violence, make women more aware of their rights and reduce men's capacity to control them (Hirsch 1999; Kibria 1993). Finally, more general differences in cultural representations of gender in Western receiving societies may weaken male hegemony and move households toward a more egalitarian division of labor and authority (Foner 2002).

As applied to Mexico, these differences in cultural representations imply that the ethos of egalitarianism, whether real or ideological, permeating U.S. notions of gender and the sexual division of labor (Brooks and Bolzendahl 2004; Domino and Acosta 1987; Felmler 1994) would clash with the Mexican emphasis on family life and male authority (Baca Zinn 1994; González de la Rocha 1986; Gutmann 1996; LeVine 1993).¹ These divergent gender ideologies ensure that Mexican migrants to the United States face a continuously changing milieu in which their more "traditional" social and cultural attitudes are confronted by relatively unfamiliar and "liberal" values (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2003).

An alternative body of literature, however, has questioned the direct association between migration and female independence, and has identified considerable variation in patterns of migrant

¹ The Mexican husband is often portrayed as "an authoritarian, patriarchal figure who is head and master of the household, and who enjoys the highest status in the family" (Lewis 1949:602). The wife, in turn, is depicted as submissive and faithful, shunning the public sphere to fulfill her domestic responsibilities. Numerous studies have questioned this characterization, however, especially in light of rising employment among married women (Gonzalez and Tuñon, 1997; Selby, Murphy, and Lorenzen 1990; Ybarra 1995). Mexico also exhibits considerable diversity in family arrangements across generations, regions, and socio-ethnic groups (Blanco 1995; Figueroa Perea 1995; Gutmann 1996; Hirsch 2003).

adaptation (Espiritu 1997; Foner 1986; Glenn 1983; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; Kibria 1993). The scholars behind this literature point out that the lives of migrants are structured by class, race, ethnicity, and foreign status, which may supercede gender in determining their well-being. Depending on the larger context of reception, including local labor market opportunities, the degree to which migrants are isolated in the receiving society, and the available social networks, migration may mitigate or reinforce gender inequality.

For instance, in their classical study investigating the relocation of working-class families in London, Young and Willmott (1957) found that the disruption of family connections and lack of familiarity with the new environment forced migrant families to keep more to themselves. As a result, families tended to reinvent gender relations and patterns of interaction in a way that increased the dependence of husbands and wives on each other, which exacerbated gender inequality in many respects.

Similar findings have been noted among Asian immigrants to the United States. For instance, Zhou's (1992) study of Chinese women in New York showed that gender inequities were maintained or even reinforced after migration despite the fact that female employment and earnings were essential for family subsistence. The women studied seemed to accept their subordinate position as a necessary sacrifice to guarantee the status attainment of their families. Glenn (1983) also noted that the tendency of migrant Japanese women to work in service and domestic jobs provided a degree of role continuity that minimized the challenge posed by female employment to traditional gender ideology. Likewise, Kibria (1993) argued that Vietnamese migrant women in Philadelphia did not use their increased resources relative to men to restructure family life along more egalitarian lines. Rather, women were deeply ambivalent about any change that would undermine the traditional Vietnamese family system, which conferred economic benefits through the extended kin structure and obligations of husbands and children to the family unit.

Comparable results have been reported for Latin American women. Ferree (1979) argued that for Cuban migrants, the employment of women was not necessarily incompatible with traditional standards of female behavior, par-

ticularly if viewed as needed to fulfill the needs of the family rather than as an expression of independence or loosened constraints. Menjivar (1999) argued that for Central American migrants in California, the structure of employment opportunities sometimes made it easier for migrant women to find work than for their husbands. In this case, women entering paid employment did not guarantee more egalitarian gender relations. On the contrary, in situations that left migrant men feeling threatened, particularly when they were unable to fulfill their expected roles as breadwinners, they tended to withdraw support, exacerbating gender inequality by making women responsible for both economic and domestic maintenance of the household.

Castro (1986) found that among Colombians in New York, women of middle-class origins were highly ambivalent about their position as low-skilled workers, which, coupled with their preoccupation with their children, tended to reinforce an unequal division of power within the family. Overall, studies suggest that female employment often is viewed by Hispanic migrants as a temporary adjustment to low male incomes, a necessary evil for attaining the symbols of a middle-class lifestyle rather than a permanent realignment of family values after migration (Fernandez-Kelly and Garcia 1990; Grasmuck and Pessar 1991; Menjivar 1999).

Moreover, the adaptation of migrant women is highly conditioned by their capacity to reassemble social networks in receiving communities (Rogler 1994). Rather than a steady, constant source of assistance, immigrants' networks are inherently complex and fluctuating. The system of reciprocity and exchange central to social networks is continuously challenged by immigrants' legal instability and economic scarcity that often curtails their ability to meet the obligations expected of them (Mahler 1995; Menjivar 2000).

This process is also highly structured by gender (Curran and Rivero-Fuentes 2003; Hagan 1994, 1998). Male migrants tend to earn more and to have more experience in the United States than migrant women, and thus are provided with more to offer others in exchange. The sex segregation of migrant occupations also limits the networks of migrant women. Hispanic migrant men tend to concentrate in construction, manual labor, and services in which they have

extensive and varied contacts with other men. Hispanic migrant women, on the other hand, are concentrated in domestic and small-scale service occupations, which are more isolated and have fewer avenues for advancement than the occupations of migrant men (Hagan 1998). Networks forged through employment circles thus tend to confer more benefits to migrant men than to migrant women (Gilbertson 1995; Portes and Jensen 1989; Zhou and Logan 1989).

Women also face hurdles in establishing social networks outside their employment. Migrant women generally are restricted in cross-gendered exchanges between neighbors and friends because taking favors from unrelated males might threaten their reputations or even lead to sexual exploitation (Menjívar 2000). Migrant women also are limited in forging networks through recreational activities, such as soccer leagues, because these activities tend to be oriented toward men (Hagan 1998). Even within families, social networks are not always shared between husbands and wives, and can be a highly contested resource (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994).

Taken together, the broad literature on migration and gender highlights the need to distinguish between domains in which migration has led to gains in women's autonomy and those in which inequities are maintained or reinforced. However, most previous analyses have been limited in their capacity to assess variation in gender responses to migration. The gendered dimensions under consideration are not always clearly specified or comparable across studies. These dimensions range from budgetary decision making and household division of labor to domestic violence and gender attitudes. Moreover, the vast majority of studies have used small sample qualitative designs that although instructive in providing in-depth information about the processes and worldviews undergirding cultural change, are limited in their capacity to assess differences in gender practices according to factors such as age, education, labor force participation, or migration experience (Pessar 2003).

Another limitation of many prior studies is that information about gender practices in communities of origin often is not available. Instead, such information often is inferred from migrant women's recollection of their past experiences

or derived from findings of other studies that are not directly comparable (Mahler 2003).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The recognition that particular domains of gender relations might be differentially affected by migration paralleled theoretical developments in the gender and power literature stressing the need to move away from unidimensional understandings of gender. The two literatures, however, have for the most part remained disconnected, limiting the capacity to identify theoretically relevant areas of gender relations in which the practice of migration can have an effect. Thus, our theoretical framework elaborates on Connell's practice-based theory of gender and power and integrates the sociological literature on migrant adaptation to derive empirically testable hypotheses addressing the multiplicity of gender responses to migration.

According to Connell, instead of alternative manifestations of a single structure comprising women's subordination and men's superordination, the social relations of gender reflect three substantially different structures: labor, power, and cathexis. Taken together, these three structures define the pattern of constraints on gender practices. They are present in all gender interactions and can be empirically identified and compared across situations. Breaking down gender relations into structures or substructures captures the internal complexity and even contradictory nature of gender practices, resulting in a type of structural analysis that more completely explores the different levels and dimensions of gender involved in a particular situation.

In contrast to monolithic accounts of gender relationships, this perspective produces "structural inventories" of historically constructed patterns of power relations between men and women that also involve definitions of femininity and masculinity. These structural inventories describe the "gender order" of a given society. As applied to a particular institution, such as a school, an organization, or as in our case, the family or domestic sphere, the structural inventory approach accounts for the "gender regime," which follows the same logic of different structures, but at a lower stage. The fact that this perspective breaks down the gender regime within an institution into substantively different substructures does not mean that they

are *separate* (Connell 1987:97). Instead, the three structures are interwoven. Their distinction is based on fundamental differences in the ordering of the social relations involved and in the major organizational principles guiding gender practices.

The main principle guiding the structure of labor is the separation or allocation of particular types of work according to an individual's sex. The resulting "sexual division of labor" has been at the center of most discussions about gender in the social sciences and a focus of particular attention in the gender and migration literature. Within the domestic sphere, two major principles conceptually separate different realms of labor practices. The first principle is the gendered logic of accumulation that tends to allocate economic benefits to men and economic losses to women. Specifically, a relatively rigid distinction between market work, usually the realm of men, and household activities, traditionally performed by women, translates into a differential command of resources because market work is paid and domestic activities tend to go unremunerated.

The second principle is the political economy of masculinity that socially distinguishes the tasks pertaining to men from those pertaining to women. The main distinction is in household responsibilities. The common allocation of child care and cleaning responsibilities to women and household finances to men reinforces men's interests and helps them control relationships.

The main organizational principle guiding the structure of power is unequal integration, which leads to differential control and authority over decisions. As applied to the domestic sphere, the structure of power embodies the subordination of wives to decisions made by husbands in various domains. These include relationship control, personal authority, and coercion within sexual relations. In general, women tend to be psychologically, socially, and economically more dependent on their spouses than men. Associated with the sexual division of labor, men tend to bring more financial resources to the household, and women become dependent on these resources. This process results in a gender imbalance of power that gives men more decision-making authority and limits women's bargaining power within the household.

Finally, the main organizational principle guiding the structure of cathexis is emotional and symbolic differentiation. The elaborate set of emotionally and symbolically charged social relations that construct "the other" as an object of desire and define what it means to be a man or a woman is an integral aspect of a gender regime.² As applied to the family, emotional relations define patterns of attachment and commitment between husbands and wives, and emanate from the reciprocity constructed around the sexual differences between partners. Expectations of romantic love within the couple's relations undergird an individual's attachment to the relationship and define patterns of trust and distrust, jealousy, and solidarity in marriages. Symbolic relations, in turn, provide meaning for the role of being a husband or a wife. They mobilize a historically constructed and well-defined system of understandings and expectations that dictate appropriate behavior for men and women. These expectations may or may not correspond to the actual arrangement of roles within a given household (Menjívar 1999), but they define norms of femininity and masculinity through which interpersonal relationships are evaluated.

The analytical distinction between three gender structures is particularly instrumental for understanding the connection between gender and migration. Instead of leading us to expect an overall positive or negative impact of migration on women's subordination, the three structures allow us to disentangle theoretically meaningful areas of gender in which migration can have differential effects. However, the theory of gender and power does not provide specific predictions about the nature or direction of such effects. The reconstruction of gender relations at the place of destination can be conceptualized as one specific aspect of the general process of migrant adaptation, and as such may be subject to hypotheses derived from the sociological literature on immigration.

Recent sociological literature on migrant incorporation has stressed the multiplicity of responses to migration (Portes 1997; Portes and Borocz 1989). Portes and Zhou (1993) argued that migrant incorporation does not necessari-

² Emotional and symbolic relations also can be treated as specific substructures (Connell 2002).

ly follow a linear pattern whereby migrants discard traits and values from their communities of origin and adopt "American" ones. Instead, assimilation often is selective, involving a wide diversity of outcomes within and between migrant groups depending on personal characteristics, migration experiences, and the context of exit and reception, including issues such as social networks, family support, and legal status.

A central element in this perspective is the concept of selective assimilation or "accommodation without assimilation" in which migrants actively select the components of the dominant culture they wish to adopt while simultaneously maintaining other social practices and values from their communities of origin. Selective assimilation may serve as a protective mechanism through which migrants improve their economic position or isolate themselves from forces they deem threatening.

The maintenance or reinforcement of cultural traits might be particularly important in the area of gender. Social psychological studies of migrant adaptation stress that the disruptive effects of migration, especially on networks and support, might encourage migrants to resort to rigid and idealized gender behaviors as a defense mechanism against massive loss. In this context, women's roles become the "bastion" of continuity and tradition, and gender practices the site for struggles concerning disorienting cultural differences (Glenn 1983). As Espín described (1999:7), "for people who experience a lack of control over their daily lives, controlling women's sexuality and behavior becomes a symbolic demonstration of orderliness and continuity and gives them the feeling that not all traditions are lost."

Our analysis is guided by the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1. The structure of labor is the dimension of gender most directly affected by migration to the United States. Relative to power and cathexis, we expect the greater economic opportunities in the United States to affect most directly the structure of labor, increasing female labor force participation and altering the household division of labor toward greater egalitarianism. The effect is expected to be direct on women's employment, which in turn is expected to mediate

the effect of migration on the household division of labor.

Hypothesis 2. Selective assimilation leads to the reinforcement of some unequal aspects of power and cathexis that are viewed as enhancing the success of migration. Migration often engenders a period of sacrifice as families face short-term hardship and uncertainty to achieve their long-term economic objectives. In this situation, the importance of the family as an economic unit often is magnified, and women may subordinate personal interests in areas such as decision making and relationship control to ensure the success of the family.

Hypothesis 3. The effect of migration on gender structures is mediated by factors associated with the context of reception, particularly the availability of social support and contact with family and friends. Most of the effects of migration on gender are not direct, but rather, are mediated by the transformations in the structure of social support experienced by migrants. Lack of social support is expected to be a particularly important factor limiting women's capacity to achieve greater autonomy in the United States.

Hypothesis 4. The effect of socioeconomic and social support characteristics on gender behaviors differs between the United States and Mexico. Migration holds the potential to alter gender relations not only by changing the characteristics of Mexican women (i.e., leading to greater labor force participation or reducing social support), but also by altering the effect of these characteristics on gender. In particular, attributes of the social environment are likely to differ substantially in their impact on gender inequality across migrant and nonmigrant women.

DATA

Quantitative data for the analyses are drawn from 219 surveys conducted with migrant Hispanic women ages 18 to 49 years in Durham, North Carolina (161 of whom were Mexican) and 400 surveys (100 women in each) in four sending communities in Mexico: two in the state of Michoacán and one each in Guerrero

and Veracruz.³ Durham is a particularly interesting setting for examining the impact of migration on gender. The Durham Hispanic population has experienced explosive growth in recent years, increasing from 2,054 in 1990 to 17,039 (8 percent of the total population) in 2000. Part of a larger trend toward increasing migration to nontraditional destinations throughout the southeastern United States, Hispanic migrants were increasingly drawn to Durham in the 1990s in response to the high tech boom in the nearby research triangle and the concomitant demand for workers in construction and service industries.

The relatively recent arrival of Durham Hispanics is evident in data from the 2000 Census, which shows that nearly 75 percent of area Hispanics are foreign born, with more than 85 percent migrating to the United States after 1990 (Ruggles et al. 2004). Not surprisingly, the vast majority of these Hispanic migrants are undocumented (nearly 90 percent), exhibit relatively low levels of English fluency, and are concentrated in low-skill employment with little occupational diversity. More than 60 percent of employed migrant women work in only two areas: service occupations (primarily cleaning, janitorial service, and cooking) and manual operatives (primarily laundry, meat cutting, and a large number of unspecified kindred operatives). In addition, like many areas of new migrant destination, the gender composition of the Hispanic population is highly uneven (Suro and Singer 2002), with 2.3 men ages 20 to 29 years for every woman in the same age range.

The relatively recent development of the Durham Hispanic community required special considerations to approximate a representative sample. Based on our knowledge of the community, we identified 13 apartment complexes and blocks that house large numbers of migrant Hispanics. We then collected a census of all the apartments in these areas and randomly selected individual units to be visited by interviewers. Although our survey may have been less likely to capture established migrants, this method was far superior to nonrandom methods of recruitment such as snowball or convenience

sampling. To evaluate potential bias arising from targeted random sampling, we compared our sample with data from the 2000 Census. The results show no statistically significant differences in main sociodemographic characteristics such as age, education, employment status, wages, and time in the United States (Parrado, McQuiston, and Flippen forthcoming).

The four communities in Mexico were purposively selected to represent different areas of out-migration based on the place of origin for the first 100 Mexican interviewees in Durham. The communities represent variation in population size and economic conditions across sending areas in Mexico.⁴ To evaluate the representativeness of these four communities, we compared sociodemographic characteristics in our sample with those obtained from the Mexican Migration Project (MMP), a large sample of 93 migrant sending communities throughout Mexico.⁵ The results show that the residents of our four communities do not differ substantially from those in the much larger, more representative sample of the MMP (Parrado, McQuiston, and Flippen forthcoming). Respondents in each community were randomly selected using sample frames from the 2000 Mexican Census.

The bi-national survey design was well suited for assessing the relationship between migration and gender practices among the Mexican

⁴ Two of the communities are more isolated and maintain a stronger agricultural base, with 30 percent of men employed in agriculture. The other two communities are located on main roads that directly connect them to urban centers in Mexico, with commercial and professional activities as the main source of male employment. The four communities differ also in their rates of female labor force participation, which is 33 and 49 percent in the agricultural communities but nearly 57 percent in the other two communities. In all cases, the main source of female employment involves commercial activities, followed by teaching and nursing.

⁵ The Mexican Migration Project (MMP) is a bi-national effort directed by Jorge Durand and Douglas S. Massey aimed at collecting representative and reliable information about international migration in Mexico. The data from the MMP is publicly available at <http://mmp.opr.princeton.edu>, which also contains more detailed information about the project design.

³ Surveys were collected between April 2002 and July 2003 in Durham, and between December 2002 and April 2003 in Mexico.

population. The survey collected identical information in Mexico and the United States on several life course domains including labor, family and fertility behavior, and migration. In addition, the survey incorporated several measures of gender dimensions, including established scales for measuring power within relationships and gender role orientations. Aspects of migration experience, including perceived social support and contact with friends and family, also were captured. The survey followed a face-to-face, semistructured design that combined elements of a closed and highly structured survey instrument with the guided conversational techniques prevalent in ethnographic research. This design was specifically tailored to the variability in educational levels and literacy of our target population, and their sensitivity to questions regarding migration. Because our focus included power dynamics within relationships and the household division of labor, we restricted our analysis to Mexican women co-residing with their partners. This restriction resulted in a total sample of 216 women in Mexico and 134 women in the United States.

We buttress our quantitative findings with qualitative data obtained from ongoing community-based participatory research (CBPR). The CBPR approach uses a critical theoretical perspective that includes the “local theory” of community participants as collaborators in the research process (Israel et al. 1998). In our case, a group of 14 Hispanic men and women from the Durham community were directly involved for more than 4 years in every stage of the research, including formulation and revision of the questionnaire, identification of survey locales, and development of strategies to guarantee the collection of meaningful information. In addition, the CBPR group was trained in survey methods and conducted all the interviews in Durham. The group was instrumental in allowing us to reach the still nascent Durham Hispanic community and in ensuring the quality of the information collected. The CBPR group helped us to achieve a refusal rate of 7.6 percent for the female survey, a figure that compares favorably with those reported in other studies of recent migrants (DaVanzo et al. 1994; Stepick and Stepick 1990). We use data from these group meetings to give voice to the participants of social change and to provide culturally grounded interpretation to the analyses.

MODEL SPECIFICATION

OPERATIONALIZATION OF GENDER STRUCTURES

The survey was designed to collect data on the three dimensions of gender previously outlined. The structure of labor is relatively straightforward to operationalize because we can use women’s reported division of activities within the household. Three dependent dummy variables capture the structure of labor, showing whether the respondent is currently working (either full- or part-time), whether her partner shares in household work, and whether she shares in household financial responsibilities. The latter two indicators come from responses to the questions: “Who does most of the housework in the household (e.g., dishwashing, cooking, laundry, and child care)?” and “Who handles paying the bills, keeping track of the savings, and the like?”⁶

Operationalization of the structures of power and cathexis, however, required specific scales and factor analysis for the construction of reliable measures. Our survey included the Relationship Control Scale (RCS), a 15-item subscale of the Sexual Relationship Power Scale, specifically designed by Pulerwitz, Gortmaker, and DeJong (2000) to measure the power component in Connell’s theory of gender relations. Information for the cathexis component of gender relations was collected using a 6-item scale evaluating the sex-role orientation among Mexican women proposed by Markides and Vernon (1984).

Instead of taking the scales as a whole, however, we conducted an exploratory common factor analysis to identify underlying dimensions and eliminate responses that did not significantly load on specific factors. Appendix Table A1 elaborates on the description of the scales and reports results for the common factor analysis and internal consistency measures. Four substantive factors were identified: two

⁶ The options for both questions were that the wife was solely responsible, the husband was solely responsible, they both were responsible, or someone else was responsible for housework and family finances. If the respondent indicated any husband involvement in housework or any personal involvement in family finances, then these variables were coded as 1.

(relationship control and sexual negotiation) reflecting the structure of power and two (emotional dissonance and symbolic differentiation) corresponding to the structure of cathexis. The items included in each factor were as follows:

Structure of power

Relationship control

1. When my partner and I disagree, he gets his way most of the time.
2. My partner tells me who I can spend time with.
3. Most of the time, we do what my partner wants.
4. My partner does what he wants, even if I do not want him to.

Sexual negotiation

1. If I asked my partner to use a condom, he would get violent.
2. If I asked my partner to use a condom, he would get angry.
3. If I asked my partner to use a condom, he would think I'm having sex with other people.

Structure of cathexis

Emotional dissonance

1. I feel trapped or stuck in our relationship.
2. My partner gets more out of our relationship than I do.
3. I am more committed to our relationship than my partner is.
4. My partner has more to say than I do about important decisions that affect us.
5. When my partner and I are together, I'm pretty quiet.

Symbolic differentiation

1. Married women have the right to continue their careers.
2. Women should take an active role in solving community problems.
3. Men should share with women household chores such as doing dishes and cleaning.
4. A woman should do whatever her husband wants.

For each of the four subscales, the sum of agreements with less egalitarian statements represents our dependent variables in the analysis.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE CONSTRUCTION

For a full understanding of differences in gender power across groups we must consider the ways in which migrants and nonmigrants differ across other dimensions. Four broad classes of independent variables in the analysis are listed in Table 1. The first class, migration characteristics, captures the overall relationship between

migration and gender structures via a measure to determine whether a woman is residing in the United States. In addition, years of U.S. experience are included to assess whether gender domains change with time in the United States.⁷

The second set of variables consists of human capital characteristics such as women's age, years of education, employment status, and ability to drive, an important prerequisite to greater independence in the suburban setting of Durham. The third set of variables reflects household factors that have been shown to influence women's authority within the family, including age difference between spouses, years in a relationship, husband's education, number of children, and household size (Parrado, Flippen, and McQuiston 2005).

Finally, we incorporate measures of social support. These include measures of whether respondents' parents reside in the same community and the frequency of contacts with family and friends as indicators of structural social support. However, social contact does not necessarily ensure that women actually receive support. We therefore also include a measure of the extent to which women perceive that they lack emotional, instrumental, and informational support. This variable is constructed as the number of times that a woman reports not having anyone to listen to her or make her feel secure, anyone knowledgeable about the local environment to whom she could turn for help, or anyone who could give her a ride if needed.

The main factor differentiating migrant and nonmigrant women is age. Mexican women in the United States are significantly younger than their counterparts in Mexico, and thus average shorter relationships and fewer children. Whereas migrant and nonmigrant women do not differ with respect to education, differences in social support are considerable. In the United States, parents' residence in the community and weekly visits with family are far less common and perceived lack of social support is considerably higher than in Mexico.

⁷ For women in the Mexican sample, these data are derived from return migrants, and are 0 for never-migrating women.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for the Independent Variables across Mexico and the United States

Characteristics	Mexico		U.S.	
Migration				
In the U.S. (%)	.0	—	1.0	—
Years of U.S. experience (mean)	.1	(.4)	6.1	(4.3)**
Human Capital				
Age (mean)	32.5	(6.5)	29.1	(7.3)**
Years of education (mean)	8.0	(3.4)	7.6	(3.4)
Currently working (%)	25.0	(2.9)	50.7	(4.3)**
Drives (%)	19.4	(2.7)	43.2	(4.3)**
Household				
Spousal age difference (husband-wife) (mean)	2.1	(4.2)	1.8	(4.8)
Years in relationship (mean)	10.9	(6.7)	7.4	(6.7)**
Husband's years of education (mean)	8.1	(3.6)	7.6	(3.1)
Number of children (mean)	2.5	(1.6)	1.9	(1.5)**
Household size (mean)	4.8	(1.9)	4.7	(1.5)
Social Support				
With parents in community (%)	69.9	(3.1)	11.1	(2.7)**
Visits friend 1x/week (%)	34.3	(3.2)	33.5	(4.1)
Visits family 1x/week (%)	61.6	(3.3)	41.0	(4.2)**
Perceived lack of social support (mean)	.3	(.8)	1.0	(1.2)**
N	216		134	

Note: Data are shown as mean or percent, as indicated, with standard error in parentheses.

† $p \leq .10$; * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$ (two-tailed tests).

METHODS

The statistical methodology varies depending on the distribution of the dependent variable. For the three dichotomous variables capturing the structure of labor, we applied a probit specification, such that

$$y_i^* = x_i\beta + \varepsilon_i,$$

$$y_i = 1 \text{ if } y_i^* > 0, \text{ and } y_i = 0 \text{ if } y_i^* \leq 0,$$

$$\varepsilon_i \sim N[0,1],$$

where y_i^* is the latent continuous probability of an event occurring, y_i is the observed binary indicator that equals 1 when y_i^* is greater than 0 and 0 otherwise, x is the vector of independent variables listed earlier, β denotes the parameters to be estimated, and ε is an error term assumed to be normally distributed, with a mean of 0 and a variance of 1 (Greene 1997).

Because the scales measuring the structures of power and cathexis sum the number of less egalitarian responses, they can be viewed as the realization of a negative binomial process and modeled using count data techniques (Cameron and Trivedi 1998). With negative binomial regression, it is assumed that the dependent variable (i.e., the number of times less

egalitarian responses occur) follows a negative binomial process such that

$$\ln(\mu_i) = x_i\beta + \varepsilon_i,$$

where the log of the mean μ is assumed to be a linear function of the independent variable x , β denotes the parameters to be estimated, and $\exp(\varepsilon)$ is the random error term assumed to be gamma distributed with a mean of 1 and a variance of α .

Care should be taken, however, in estimating the relationship between U.S. residence and gender structures because unobserved factors affecting both migration and gender could bias parameter estimates. Mexican women are not randomly selected into migration (Kanaiaupuni 2000). Instead, some have argued that, like migrant men, migrant women are positively selected in terms of risk taking, entrepreneurial predisposition, propensity to work (Greenless and Saenz 1999; Segura 1991), and willingness to challenge patriarchal arrangements (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1992). Alternatively, it has been argued that because most women migrate as part of family reunification, men (primarily husbands and fathers) ultimately determine whether and when women migrate (Cerrutti and Massey 2001; Donato 1993). It could thus

be that women are positively selected with respect to submissiveness and obedience to male authority. If either scenario were true, it would substantially influence the observed relationship between migration and gender inequality. In statistical terms, the problem is one of endogeneity bias, in which the correlation between unobserved factors affecting both migration and women's power leads to inconsistent parameter estimates.

To test for the potential endogeneity of migration to gender, we extended our probit and count data specification by formulating statistical models that treated U.S. residence as endogenous to gender structures. More specifically, we estimated recursive bivariate probit (Greene 1997) and Poisson models that included controls for unobserved factors and endogenous switching (Terza 1998). In both specifications, the models imply joint estimation of two equations: one predicting the dependent variables reflecting gender domains, with U.S. residence as an endogenous covariate, and another predicting the likelihood of residence in the United States.⁸ To control for endogeneity, the errors are allowed to be correlated across equations. In both the recursive bivariate probit and count data specification, the correlation between the error terms measures the degree of association between gender and U.S. residence, and a likelihood ratio chi-square statistic can be used to test significance. Results (available upon request) show that the correlation between the error terms was not statistically significant and nearly 0 for all analyses, with no significant improvement in model fit by treating U.S. residence as endogenous. Thus, although theoret-

ically relevant, our analyses show that observed predictors capture the central differences between migrant and nonmigrant women, and that unobserved characteristics do not appear to be driving our results. Accordingly, we report models that treat migration/U.S. residence as exogenous.

RESULTS

STRUCTURE OF LABOR

Overall, there are clear indications of variation in some aspects of the structure of labor across migrant and nonmigrant women. Descriptive results show that migrant women are more than twice as likely to work as their counterparts in Mexico (51 vs. 25 percent). They also are more likely to be involved in family finances (46 vs. 38 percent), although the difference is not statistically significant. Despite the much higher rate of labor force participation in the United States, the division of household work is fairly similar across contexts, with roughly 37 percent of women in both locales reporting that their partners participate in household chores.

Results from the multivariate analysis predicting the likelihood of employment, reported in Table 2, confirm that women are far more likely to be employed in the United States than in Mexico, with the likelihood of employment rising from 20 to 53 percent across nonmigrant and migrant women. Most Mexicans acknowledge a woman's right to work (Cazes 1988; Del Rio Zolezzi et al. 1995; González de la Rocha 1986), and female labor force participation, particularly among married women, is an increasingly important strategy for supplementing male incomes in times of economic uncertainty (Parrado and Zenteno 2001). However, lack of employment opportunities limits the extension of women's labor force participation in Mexico (González de la Rocha 1986; Parrado 2003). In the United States, on the other hand, the proliferation of low-skill service jobs enhances the employment opportunities of migrant Mexican women.

Other effects are consistent with results found in standard female labor supply models. Older age and higher levels of education increase the likelihood of employment for pay among Mexican women. Interaction effects reported in Model 2, however, show that the positive effect of education is significantly greater in Mexico

⁸ These include indicators of women's personal resources, such as age and education, that predict female migration from Mexico (Cerrutti and Massey 2001; Kanaiaupuni 2000). In addition, the vector includes relationship characteristics that predict migration, such as age at union formation and age and educational differences between partners (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1992). Although the models are identified through functional form, we include two variables indicating whether women's first employment and first trip to the United States occurred before their first union. These two variables did not significantly predict women's power. However, making a trip before the first union did predict U.S. residency.

Table 2. Structure of Labor: Probit Models Predicting Female Labor Force Participation among Mexican Women

	FLFP			
	Model 1		Model 2	
Intercept	-4.217**	(.745)	-4.611	(.782)
Migration Characteristics				
In the U.S.	.941**	(.305)	1.728**	(.512)
Years of U.S. experience	.007	(.030)	.002	(.030)
Human Capital Characteristics				
Age	.094**	(.020)	.093**	(.020)
Years of education	.082**	(.028)	.130**	(.038)
Currently working	—	—	—	—
Drives	.634**	(.174)	.654**	(.175)
Household Characteristics				
Spousal age difference	.016	(.019)	.021	(.019)
Years in relationship	.012	(.016)	.016	(.016)
Husband's education	-.042*	(.026)	-.050*	(.027)
Number of children	-.247**	(.087)	-.254**	(.087)
Household size	.059	(.062)	.070	(.064)
Social Support				
Parents in community	-.065	(.203)	-.091	(.206)
Visits friend 1x/week	-.123	(.177)	-.119	(.177)
Visits family 1x/week	.242	(.172)	.228	(.174)
Perceived lack of social support	-.007	(.085)	-.014	(.085)
Interaction Terms				
In the U.S. × Years of education	—	—	-.094**	(.049)
In the U.S. × Working	—	—	—	—
In the U.S. × Visits friends	—	—	—	—
In the U.S. × Visits family	—	—	—	—
χ^2	97.9**	—	101.6**	—
N	350	—	350	—

Note: Data are shown as mean with standard error in parentheses. FLFP = female labor force participation.

† $p \leq .10$; * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$ (two-tailed tests).

that in the United States. In Mexico, the probability of employment is 23 percent higher for women with 12 relative to 6 years of education, as compared with only an 8 percent difference in the United States. Most of the jobs readily available to migrant Mexican women are in low-skill positions, particularly domestic work. Educational credentials from Mexico are not directly transferable to the U.S. labor market, particularly if women do not speak English, lack legal authorization to work, or do not have postsecondary education. The end result is that although it is easier for all Mexican women to find employment in the United States, more-educated women lose their comparative advantage over their less-educated counterparts.

Ability to drive also is associated with an increased likelihood of employment in Mexico and the United States, although this factor is not totally separate from the work decision because

many of our interviewees reported learning to drive so they would be able to work. Household characteristics also affect women's labor supply because a greater number of children and higher husband's education both reduce the likelihood of employment. Social support indicators do not have a significant impact on women's employment once sociodemographic factors are taken into account.

Results also show data of probit models predicting husbands' assistance with household chores (Table 3) and wives' involvement in family finances (Table 4). Models 3 and 5 show that U.S. residence has no direct effect on the household division of labor, and the same applies to the effect of accumulated years of experience in the United States once other factors are taken into account.

Not surprisingly, older women, who typically were socialized under a more rigidly tradi-

Table 3. Structure of Labor: Probit Models Predicting Partner Sharing of Housework among Mexican Women

	Partner Sharing of Housework			
	Model 3		Model 4	
Intercept	.453	(.628)	.332	(.632)
Migration Characteristics				
In the U.S.	-.246	(.288)	.335	(.346)
Years of U.S. experience	-.018	(.032)	-.008	(.031)
Human Capital Characteristics				
Age	-.047**	(.019)	-.048**	(.019)
Years of education	.013	(.027)	.005	(.027)
Currently working	.536**	(.176)	.810**	(.233)
Drives	.212	(.172)	.216	(.173)
Household Characteristics				
Spousal age difference	.031*	(.017)	.031*	(.017)
Years in relationship	.006	(.019)	.004	(.019)
Husband's education	.012	(.025)	.010	(.025)
Number of children	-.101	(.083)	-.090	(.083)
Household size	.040	(.053)	.026	(.054)
Social Support				
Parents in community	.026	(.186)	.001	(.190)
Visits friend 1x/week	.303**	(.157)	.406* *	(.162)
Visits family 1x/week	.180	(.159)	.486**	(.205)
Perceived lack of social support	.026	(.081)	.007	(.082)
Interaction Terms				
In the U.S. × Years of education	—	—	—	—
In the U.S. × Working	—	—	-.573*	(.323)
In the U.S. × Visits friends	—	—	—	—
In the U.S. × Visits family	—	—	-.806**	(.321)
χ ²	51.1**	—	60.4**	—
N	350	—	350	—

Note: Data are shown as mean with standard error in parentheses.

† $p \leq .10$; * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$ (two-tailed tests).

tional gender structure, are less likely to exhibit a more egalitarian division of household activities. The main factor resulting in a more egalitarian division of labor within the home is female employment. The results from Model 3 in Table 3 and Model 5 in Table 4 show that for an average woman, working for pay increases the probability of the husband sharing housework (by 20 percent) and of the wife participating in family finances (by 49 percent). The effect, however, varies dramatically across migrant and nonmigrant women. Labor force participation has a much stronger equalizing effect in Mexico than in the United States. The results show that for an average woman in Mexico, labor force participation increases the probability of a husband sharing household work by 30 percent, whereas among migrant women, the increase is only by 9 percent. Likewise, working for pay dramatically increas-

es women's probability of involvement in household finances 58 percent in Mexico, as compared with 34 percent in the United States.

There are several plausible explanations for these findings. Female employment is far more selective in Mexico than in the United States, which could render work a more empowering experience in Mexico. Moreover, for many migrant women, employment reflects more the severe economic marginality of their families than female independence (Fernandez-Kelly and Garcia 1990; Zavella 1987). For migrant women, other dimensions of social inequality, particularly their status as undocumented workers, often overshadows gender. For instance, the CBPR group discussions suggest that the extremely demanding work conditions affecting migrant men may heighten the importance placed by women on fulfilling traditional "female" responsibilities in the home, even if

Table 4. Structure of Labor: Probit Models Predicting Wife Assisting with Finances among Mexican Women

	Wife Assisting with Finances			
	Model 5		Model 6	
Intercept	-1.959**	(.652)	-1.856	(.667)
Migration Characteristics				
In the U.S.	-.508	(.299)	-.205	(.375)
Years of U.S. experience	.047	(.032)	.045	(.032)
Human Capital Characteristics				
Age	.018	(.018)	.015	(.018)
Years of education	.056**	(.028)	.051*	(.028)
Currently working	1.321**	(.183)	1.665**	(.252)
Drives	.117	(.179)	.142	(.182)
Household Characteristics				
Spousal age difference	.006	(.017)	.006	(.017)
Years in relationship	-.031*	(.018)	-.035*	(.018)
Husband's education	.011	(.026)	.011	(.026)
Number of children	-.028	(.081)	.001	(.084)
Household size	.066	(.056)	.039	(.059)
Social Support				
Parents in community	-.190	(.195)	-.158	(.200)
Visits friend 1x/week	.629**	(.168)	.455*	(.215)
Visits family 1x/week	.148	(.167)	.275	(.214)
Perceived lack of social support	.066	(.085)	.057	(.086)
Interaction Terms				
In the U.S. × Years of education	—	—	—	—
In the U.S. × Working	—	—	-.714**	(.346)
In the U.S. × Visits friends	—	—	.705**	(.372)
In the U.S. × Visits family	—	—	-.575*	(.355)
χ^2	107.7**	—	118.2**	—
N	350	—	350	—

Note: Data are shown as mean with standard error in parentheses.

† $p \leq .10$; * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$ (two-tailed tests).

they work. As a young married Mexican woman in the CBPR group put it:

The majority of women, they think that a man's work is really difficult. The majority of women say, "The poor thing comes home so tired, I am not going to make him [do chores]." . . . Because a man's work is a lot harder here [in the United States]. And even though she works as well, usually a woman's work is considered less difficult. And besides working, she has to come home and keep cooking or working. I think that they are both equally difficult. But the woman—a majority of women think like that.

Overall, the differential effect of work on household responsibilities across migrant and non-migrant women illustrates that the association between migration, work, and women's empowerment is not direct and straightforward. As compared with their counterparts in Mexico, migrant working women face greater hurdles in altering the sexual division of labor within the

household. As a result, the potential gains in women's position that accrue from working for pay are significantly reduced among migrant women in Durham.

The effects of social support on household responsibilities also differ dramatically across migrant and nonmigrant women. In general, women who visit friends once a week average more egalitarian gender practices than women who lack such contacts. The results from Models 3 and 5 show that visiting friends once a week increases the probability of the husband sharing housework (by 11 percent) and the wife participating in family finances (by 24 percent). The effect on finances, however, is significantly stronger among migrants. Friends are a crucial source of support and information leading to more egalitarian household arrangements. Because of language and cultural barriers, this information is far more restricted in the United

States than in Mexico, heightening the importance of friends among migrant women.

Also noteworthy is the opposing effect of visiting family on household labor arrangements across migrant and nonmigrant women. Models 4 and 6 show that whereas family contacts are associated with greater male involvement with housework in Mexico (coefficient .486), the opposite is the case in the United States (coefficient $.486 + [-.573] = [-.087]$). As a result, for the average woman, regular visits to family in Mexico increases her husband's probability of sharing household work by 17 percent, but *decreases* it by 11 percent in the United States. Similar results are found for the effect of regular visits to family on a woman's participation in household finances, although the positive effect in Mexico is not significant.

The main explanation for this reversal is the differential role that family plays in the structuring of gender expectations in the two countries. Studies in Mexico have shown that the family is an important resource enabling women to protect themselves against abuse and unlimited male control. Mothers and mothers-in-law in Mexico have been identified as especially instrumental in pressuring sons to become more involved in family responsibilities (Gutmann 1996; Lewis 1949).

In the United States, this is not necessarily the case. While viewing the United States as a superior environment in terms of economic opportunities and social mobility, many Mexican migrants are worried about what they see as corrupting influences of some American cultural aspects. In this context, the familistic orientation of Mexican culture often is regarded as a valuable asset in need of protection (Malkin 1999). Whereas family members may not see women's demands on their husbands as a threat to their culture in Mexico, among migrants, challenges to the traditional order are more seriously questioned. Moreover, in many cases it is the husband's family that resides in the United States, further limiting women's ability to benefit from family contacts. Although we cannot separate these two effects, the end result is that in the United States, the family pressures women to maintain traditional roles. The following exchange between two CBPR participants illustrates this point:

Rita: Yes, here, between men, they say, "She is bossing you around, you are a "mandilon" [colloquial saying: the man is dominated by the wife, "he wears the apron"]. Look at you doing that stuff!" It is like that when you have more family around. And yes, it is true, there is familial pressure.

Manuel: Mothers are like that. My mother was here, and she thought that it was terrible that my brother was doing the wash and mopping the floors. And she says, "Well, but this woman (the daughter-in-law) isn't worth a thing! Look what she has that poor boy doing." And my brother was fine with (helping around the house).

STRUCTURE OF POWER

The next set of analyses concentrates on changes to the structure of power. Table 5 reports differences across migrants and nonmigrants in the proportion of women agreeing to the statements included in the relationship control and sexual negotiation factors. Contrary to the often-held expectation of increases in women's power associated with migration, average scores for both relationship control and sexual negotiation indicate *lower* reported power (i.e., a significantly higher number of agreements with fewer egalitarian statements) among migrant women than for their peers in Mexico.

The extent of the difference varies, however, across individual items. Two items in the relationship control scale show the highest discrepancies. Whereas 20 percent of women in Mexico agree with the statement "When my partner and I disagree, he gets his way most of the time," 29 percent of migrant women do so. At the same time, the share of women agreeing with the statement "My partner tells me who I can spend time with" is 9 percent among nonmigrant women and 19 percent among migrant women. The same pattern is evident, although the difference is not as pronounced, for the other two items: "Most of the time we do what my partner wants" and "My partner does what he wants, even if I do not want him to." Overall, the results show that 43 percent of nonmigrant women agree with at least one item in the scale, as compared with 55 percent of migrants, and that the difference is statistically significant. Furthermore, whereas only 1 percent of women agree with all four statements in Mexico, 6 percent do so in the United States.

The context of reception and women's position within the Durham community is of cen-

Table 5. Structure of Power: Comparison of Relationship Control and Sexual Negotiation in Mexico and United States

	Mexico	U.S.	Diff.
Relationship Control, Percent Agree			
1. When my partner and I disagree, he gets his way most of the time	20.1	29.1	-9.0*
2. My partner tells me who I can spend time with	9.3	19.4	-10.1**
3. Most of the time, we do what my partner wants	29.2	35.8	-6.6
4. My partner does what he wants, even if I do not want him to	16.2	21.6	-5.4
Mean Aggregate Score (Sum of Agreements)	.8	1.1	-.3**
(SD)	(1.0)	(1.2)	
Percent Agreeing with Given Number of Items			
1	43.1	54.5	-11.4**
2	21.8	29.1	-7.3
3	9.7	16.4	-6.7
4	.9	6.0	-5.0
Sexual Negotiation, Percent Agree			
1. If I asked my partner to use a condom, he would get violent	9.7	18.7	-8.9**
2. If I asked my partner to use a condom, he would get angry	13.9	21.6	-7.8*
3. If I asked my partner to use a condom, he would think I'm having sex w/other people	18.5	23.8	-5.3
Mean Aggregate Score (sum of agreements)	.4	.6	-.2*
(SD)	(.9)	(1.1)	
Percent Agreeing with Given Number of Items			
1	22.7	29.1	-6.4
2	11.6	20.1	-8.6
3	7.9	14.9	-7.1
N	216	134	

Note: Diff. = difference.

† $p \leq .10$; * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$ (two-tailed tests).

tral importance for understanding these patterns. Previous research shows that migrant networks often are precarious, not always shared within the household, and a highly contested social resource (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; Menjivar 2000). Because the Durham Hispanic community is of relatively recent arrival, and still predominantly male, independent female networks are underdeveloped, heightening women's dependence on men. As a young woman in the CBPR group described:

Usually it's men who can help with transportation and information. Normally it's men who drive, who can get around or who know more or less how things are here, things that women don't know. And that's how this big problem starts for women—out of loneliness, fear, or those types of difficulties, transportation, communication. For example the language—to not know one drop of English when they arrive, to not know anything at all—that obliges you to accept the situation on the man's terms, although you really don't want to be in that situation. . . . I have found myself with women who tell me "it's because he gave me a ride, so I had to get involved with him"; "I stayed with him because (of similar motivations)."

Furthermore, the dramatic male overrepresentation in the migration flow leads to a concentration of young men in public places, who, in response to their own loneliness and isolation, often drink heavily and create an environment in which many women do not feel safe. Likewise, the proximity of most Hispanic settlements to African American communities and the mistrust between the two groups also inhibits women's sense of security in the local area. As a result, women's access to recreational facilities and other public forums for social interaction are dramatically curtailed, increasing their dependency on their husbands' authority. The male perspective illustrates this point with a paternalistic twist, as this exchange between Juan and Ana at a CBPR meeting illustrates:

Juan: I think the men come here to get work quickly—it's not necessary for them to speak English, so they just work in construction. And a woman comes here, and let's say that she comes with her husband, most of the time he thinks, "I'm the one who's going to work and you're going to stay at home." And that's how to trap her, so she stays by herself, so that her husband is working and

making friends, and the wife is at home and doesn't know anyone. She doesn't speak the language, and she can't even watch TV because there's only one channel . . .

Ana: And also, sometimes the husband threatens his wife. He tells her "don't go out, because there are a lot of blacks. Something could happen to you."

Juan: Ah . . . (indicating disagreement with Anna's assessment) I don't see how that is a threat. You see I don't see anything wrong with saying that to a woman. I don't think that's a threat.

Ana: Because the woman doesn't threaten you, you are the one who threatens (laughter and talking at the same time among the group).

Juan: No, no, I believe in my case, in the cases I have seen, I don't see how saying "be careful going outside because there are a lot of blacks" is a threat. I see that as a precaution, but *she* sees it as a threat. (emphasis in original)

Similar results hold for the sexual negotiation factor, with migrant women indicating lower average power. Our qualitative data have shown that couples are extremely concerned about the prospects of family disruption resulting from migration. In contexts of highly unbalanced sex ratios, the perceived risk of wives leaving their husbands might trigger defensive mechanisms among men (Kibria 1993), making them more sensitive about changes to traditional sexual practices within unions. As the social psychological literature on migrant adaptation shows, incorporating what could be perceived as "American" patterns of sexual behavior might be associated with promiscuity and viewed as a threat to the group culture (Espín 1999). As a result, whereas only 23 percent of nonmigrant women agree with at least one of the items in the sexual negotiation scale, 29 percent of migrant women do so. Moreover, whereas only 8 percent of women in Mexico agree with all three items in the scale, fully 15 percent in the United States do so.

We show results from negative binomial regression models predicting the log of the mean number of agreements reported in the relationship control (Table 6) and sexual negotiation factors (Table 7). Positive coefficients correspond to lower female perceptions of relationship power. We again estimate a pooled model and test for interaction effects between socioeconomic characteristics and U.S. residency.

The results from the pooled model (Model 1 in Table 6) show that controlling for women's

human capital, family, and social support characteristics eliminates the negative association between U.S. residence and women's perceived relationship control. Age and education are positively associated with relationship control, but women's employment has no independent effect on perceived power. This result supports the indirect relationship between working for pay and women's power (Oropesa 1997). Instead, factors such as the ability to drive, which reflects reduced isolation, are directly associated with an increased sense of control over the relationship.

As with the structure of labor, the effect of social support is of central importance and varies considerably across migrants and nonmigrants. Overall, visiting friends and families is positively associated with women's power. Regular contacts with friends are a central resource enabling women to reduce isolation and providing greater control within relationships. Thus, whereas 54 percent of women who do not maintain contacts with friends agree with at least one item in the scale, the figure is reduced to 43 among those who do.

The effect of regular contacts with family members, however, differs significantly across migrant and nonmigrant women (Model 2). Whereas family contacts are positively associated with relationship control in Mexico, the opposite is true in the United States. Thus, whereas in Mexico regular contacts with family reduce the likelihood of agreement with at least one item in the scale from 57 to 39 percent, among migrant women it increases it from 52 to 60 percent. This reversal again suggests the traditionalizing influence of family among migrants and the increased demands placed on women by the male overrepresentation of the migrant stream, both of which tend to undermine women's power. As a woman in the CBPR group explained:

Because, for example, the husband comes first and later he brings his wife. But while he was waiting to earn money and bring his wife over, he brought his cousins and nephews. So this woman is living with four of her husband's cousins, with five of her relatives. So she is playing the role of wife, cousin, friend and servant in the house, making food for all those people. And then, she has to go to work so that the husband can pay off the money from her trip here. So it is a rather ugly situation. Because for example in Mexico, everyone lives in difficult conditions. But at least they live

Table 6. Structure of Power: Negative Binomial Regression Models Predicting Relationship Control

	Relationship Control			
	Model 1		Model 2	
Intercept	1.243**	(.584)	.824**	(.289)
Migration				
In the U.S.	.177	(.272)	-.171	(.292)
Years of U.S. experience	.025	(.027)	.017	(.026)
Human Capital				
Age	-.028*	(.016)	-.024*	(.016)
Years of education	-.042*	(.025)	-.040*	(.024)
Currently working	-.002	(.170)	-.031	(.168)
Drives	-.438**	(.178)	-.413**	(.176)
Household				
Spouse age difference	-.003	(.016)	-.006	(.016)
Years in relationship	-.003	(.014)	-.007	(.014)
Husband's education	-.024	(.024)	-.022	(.023)
Number of children	.023	(.066)	.005	(.066)
Household size	.023	(.044)	.036	(.044)
Social Support				
Parents in community	.093	(.184)	.100	(.179)
Visits friend 1x/week	-.324**	(.163)	-.406**	(.164)
Visits family 1x/week	-.264*	(.153)	-.598**	(.191)
Perceived lack of social support	.020	(.071)	.046	(.070)
Interaction Terms				
In the U.S. × Visits family	—	—	1.288**	(.576)
In the U.S. × Lack of social support	—	—	—	—
α	.463**	(.151)	.405	(.144)
χ^2	37.5**		45.5**	
N	350		350	

Note: Data are shown as mean with standard error in parentheses.

† $p \leq .10$; * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$ (two-tailed tests).

in their little shacks, their little houses, whatever you want to call them. But (the houses) are their own and just the family lives there, the husband and the kids. And here they have to get used to living with 15 people.

The central role of social support for an understanding of women's power and its differential effect across migrant and nonmigrant women is highlighted in results predicting the sexual negotiation factor (Models 3 and 4 in Table 7). The only human capital and household characteristic connected to sexual power is age. Older age is associated with increased dependence in sexual negotiation. Perceived lack of social support and regular visits with family, however, have opposing effects by migration status. Whereas lack of social support does not significantly relate to women's sexual negotiation power in Mexico, it is positively associated with women's dependence among migrants. The effect of regular visits with family shows that in Mexico contacts with family *reduces* the percentage of

women agreeing with at least one item in the scale from 27 to 16 percent. In contrast, among migrants, visits with family *increase* the proportion of women agreeing with at least one scale item from 22 to 31 percent.

STRUCTURE OF CATHEXIS

The final set of analyses examines differences in the emotional and symbolic components of the structure of cathexis. Table 8 presents the descriptive results for the two dimensions, which show fewer differences across migrant and nonmigrant women than was the case with the other gender structures. With respect to emotional dissonance, migrant women compare favorably with their nonmigrant peers in Mexico. In general, both husbands and wives view remaining united in the context of migration as a clear sign of commitment to the relationship. As a result, whereas almost 32 percent of women agreed with the statement "I'm more commit-

Table 7. Structure of Power: Negative Binomial Regression Models Predicting Sexual Negotiation

	Sexual Negotiation			
	Model 3		Model 4	
Intercept	-2.367**	(.998)	-1.738*	(.971)
Migration				
In the U.S.	.401	(.449)	-.582	(.502)
Years of U.S. experience	.000	(.045)	-.002	(.045)
Human Capital				
Age	.057**	(.026)	.058**	(.025)
Years of education	-.029	(.043)	-.024	(.041)
Currently working	-.272	(.269)	-.292	(.260)
Drives	-.296	(.297)	-.395	(.290)
Household				
Spouse age difference	.024	(.027)	.028	(.025)
Years in relationship	-.003	(.022)	-.009	(.021)
Husband's education	-.037	(.038)	-.060	(.037)
Number of children	.045	(.121)	.042	(.115)
Household size	.041	(.089)	.025	(.086)
Social Support				
Parents in community	-.062	(.288)	-.083	(.278)
Visits friend 1x/week	-.402	(.275)	-.382	(.266)
Visits family 1x/week	-.204	(.249)	-.649**	(.301)
Perceived lack of social support	.255**	(.122)	-.273	(.208)
Interaction Terms				
In the U.S. × Visits family	—	—	1.146**	(.466)
In the U.S. × Lack of social support	—	—	.787**	(.252)
α	1.894**	(.468)	1.484**	(.415)
χ ²	41.1**		55.0**	
N	350		350	

Note: Data are shown as mean with standard error in parentheses.

† $p \leq .10$; * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$ (two-tailed tests).

ted to our relationship than my partner is” in Mexico, in the United States, only 22 percent did so.

Few differences emerge in terms of symbolic differentiation. Very few Mexican women openly support extremely traditional gender roles in either Mexico or the United States. Only 10 percent of women accept the idea that women should do whatever their husbands want, and roughly 90 percent support the idea that married women have the right to continue their careers. There is only one item for which a statistically significant difference is evident between migrant and nonmigrant women. More women in Mexico agree that men should share household chores such as doing dishes and cleaning (89 percent) than among migrants (82 percent). This difference relates to our previous findings regarding the structure of labor, which showed that working migrant women actually are less likely to receive help with housework

from their partners than their counterparts in Mexico.

Table 9 presents estimates from regression models predicting average scores for the emotional dissonance and symbolic differentiation factors. Migrant and nonmigrant women do not differ with respect to emotional dissonance once other factors are taken into account. The human capital characteristics reducing emotional dissonance are age and years of education. Every additional year of education reduces the likelihood of a less egalitarian score by 2.6 percent ($1 - \exp[0] - .026[c] = .026$). Household characteristics show that the demands associated with childrearing also negatively correlate with emotional consonance. Every additional child is associated with a 7.5 percent increase in women's emotional dissonance score. Regular contact with family members, on the other hand, is associated with greater perceived commitment between husbands and wives. Interaction effects

Table 8. Structure of Cathexis: Comparison of Emotional and Symbolic Relations in Mexico and U.S.

	Mexico	U.S.	Difference
Emotional Dissonance (percent agree)			
1. I feel trapped or stuck in our relationship	14.3	11.1	3.2
2. My partner gets more out of our relationship than I do	16.2	20.1	-3.9
3. I am more committed to our relationship than my partner is	31.5	22.4	9.1*
4. My partner has more to say than I do about important decisions that affect us	85.2	81.3	3.9
5. When my partner and I are together, I'm pretty quiet	33.7	32.0	1.7
Mean aggregate score (sum of less egalitarian responses)	1.8	1.7	.1
(SD)	(1.1)	(1.2)	
Percent agreeing with given number of items			
1	97.7	93.3	4.4
2	47.2	43.3	3.9
3	25.0	17.2	7.8
4	9.3	9.0	.3
5	1.9	4.5	-2.6
Symbolic Differentiation (percent agree)			
1. Married women have the right to continue their careers ^a	90.3	88.1	2.2
2. Women should take an active role in solving community problems ^a	77.3	81.3	-4.0
3. Men should share with women household chores (e.g., doing dishes and cleaning) ^a	88.9	82.1	6.8*
4. A woman should do whatever her husband wants	8.8	11.2	-2.4
Mean aggregate score (sum of less egalitarian responses)	.5	.6	-.1
(SD)	(.9)	(.9)	
Percent agreeing with given number of items			
1	31.9	36.6	-4.6
2	12.0	15.7	-3.6
3	5.6	6.7	-1.2
4	2.8	.7	2.0
N	216	134	

^a Inverse score† $p \leq .10$; * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$ (two-tailed tests).

for this model showed no significant differences between migrant and nonmigrant women.

Different results are obtained for the symbolic differentiation factor. Besides employment, this is the only dimension of gender relations in which U.S. residence has a direct effect once other factors are taken into account. The net effect, however, is in the opposite direction from the emancipating view of migration and gender relations. Model 2 shows that relative to nonmigrating women, migrant women are *more* likely to agree with less egalitarian symbolic representations of gender (coefficient 0.826). To illustrate, whereas the likelihood of agreeing at least one time with the items in the scale is 27 percent for the average woman in Mexico, it is 45 percent among migrant women. This effect does attenuate with time, however, as every additional year in the United States reduces the likelihood of a higher score by 6.8 percent (coefficient $-.066$). Thus, whereas the disruptive effect of migration appears to rein-

force rigid symbolic representations in the short term, this effect becomes weaker over time. It is important to note, however, that net of other factors, it will take 12.5 years of U.S. experience ($.826/.066 = 12.5$) to overcome the disruptive effect of migration.

Employment is the main personal characteristic reducing rigid symbolic gender differentiations. Whereas on the average, 39 percent of nonworking women agree with at least one item in the scale, only 25 percent of working women do so. Thus, the greater female labor force participation in the United States offsets some of the negative effect that migration has on symbolic representations.

Again, dimensions of social support, particularly regular contacts with friends and family, are central factors associated with reductions in traditional symbolic representations of gender. As before, however, the effect of family differs across migrant and nonmigrant women. The supportive effect of contacts with family in

Table 9. Structure of Cathexis: Negative Binomial Regression Models Predicting Emotional Dissonance and Symbolic Differentiation

	Emotional Dissonance		Symbolic Differentiation		Symbolic Differentiation	
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
Intercept	1.441**	(.350)	-.554	(.800)	-.446	(.795)
Migration						
In the U.S.	-.183	(.162)	.826**	(.373)	.546	(.397)
Years of U.S. experience	.003	(.017)	-.066*	(.041)	-.070*	(.041)
Human Capital						
Age	-.020**	(.010)	.020	(.022)	.022	(.022)
Years of education	-.026*	(.015)	-.026	(.033)	-.024	(.033)
Currently working	-.035	(.100)	-.667**	(.233)	-.678**	(.232)
Drives	.011	(.099)	.060	(.227)	.071	(.226)
Household						
Spousal age difference	-.002	(.010)	-.026	(.024)	-.029	(.024)
Years in relationship	-.002	(.009)	-.009	(.019)	-.013	(.019)
Husband's education	.003	(.014)	.005	(.032)	.003	(.032)
Number of children	.073*	(.041)	.083	(.098)	.074	(.098)
Household size	-.011	(.029)	-.063	(.078)	-.055	(.077)
Social Support						
Parents in community	-.021	(.104)	.201	(.233)	.193	(.231)
Visits friend 1x/week	-.117	(.093)	-.321*	(.213)	-.405*	(.219)
Visits family 1x/week	-.139*	(.089)	-.504**	(.198)	-.753**	(.242)
Perceived lack of social support	.008	(.042)	-.062	(.097)	-.054	(.096)
Interaction Terms						
In the U.S. × Visits family	—	—	—	—	.692*	(.388)
α	—	—	.840**	(.263)	.798**	(.258)
χ ²	23.9**		341.0**		34.2**	
N	350		350		350	

Note: Data are shown as mean with standard error in parentheses.

† $p \leq .10$; * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$ (two-tailed tests).

Mexico (coefficient $-.753$) essentially disappears in the United States (coefficient $(-.753 + .692 = -.061)$). Thus, whereas women in Mexico who do not visit family would agree with at least one of the items in the scale 35 percent of the time, the percentage is reduced to 20 percent among those who have regular contacts with family. Among migrants, on the other hand, whereas 50 percent of women who have no regular contacts with family would agree with at least one of the items in the scale, the percentage increases to 52 percent among those with regular family visits.

DISCUSSION

Using quantitative and qualitative data, our analysis compares three dimensions of gender (labor, power, and cathexis) among Mexican migrant women in co-residing relationships in

Durham, NC and their counterparts in four sending communities in Mexico. Our results challenge an assimilationist, emancipating view of migration and gender that would predict a gradual and unidirectional increase in Mexican women's power associated with migration and U.S. residence. Instead, the effect of migration on gender relations is highly variable, with gains in some realms offset by losses in others. In keeping with the selective assimilation literature, we find that Mexican migrants selectively incorporate some aspects of the receiving society while simultaneously reinforcing cultural traits and patterns of behavior brought with them from their communities of origin. Although this process of adaptation without assimilation may help insulate migrants from the destabilizing forces arising from residence in a foreign environment, the end result is that in some instances,

migration actually exacerbates gender imbalances.

Residence in the United States clearly contributes to more egalitarian gender relations by expanding the employment opportunities available to women. The impact of migration on other dimensions, however, is more modest, and in many cases tends to reinforce women's dependence on men. The results show that in areas such as the division of labor within the household, relationship control, sexual negotiation, and symbolic differentiation, Mexican women in the United States exhibit higher compliance with traditional gender arrangements than their peers residing in Mexico.

A central finding of the study is that it is not U.S. residence per se or exposure to a more liberal climate that drives the evolution of gender structures, but rather the interaction between migrants' characteristics and the social environment in which they operate. Residence in the United States has no direct effect on the allocation of chores and financial responsibilities, relationship control, sexual negotiation, or emotional dissonance. Instead, the effects of migration on gender are mediated through increased female labor force participation and changes in the structure of social support. The effect of migration on gender is further complicated by important interactions between the effects of employment, social support, and context on women's position.

For example, although twice as many women work in the United States as in Mexico, these gains do not translate into a more egalitarian household division of labor or more liberal gender attitudes, as would be expected, because the impact of work on women's power is significantly *weaker* among migrant women than among their counterparts in Mexico. Our results show that in Mexico, the husbands of working women are more likely than other men to share in household chores, but the effect is insignificant among Mexican women in Durham. Moreover, the positive effect of employment on women's financial involvement is almost 50 percent weaker among migrants than it is in Mexico. Thus, working Mexican women in the United States face greater obstacles in altering traditional household arrangements than their peers in migrant sending communities.

These findings show that the connection between migration, work, and female inde-

pendence is not direct and unidirectional. Instead, the contribution of employment to female autonomy is dependent on the migrant's broader structural position within the U.S. society. Mexican women's employment in the United States is concentrated in poorly paid low-skill service work, and more often reflects the economic vulnerability of migrant families than it does female liberation (as reflected in the weakening of the association between education and labor force participation among Mexican women in the United States). Moreover, migrant men are equally marginalized in the U.S. labor market, and often face relatively harsh working conditions. Thus gender subordination may be felt less acutely by migrant women than subordination relating to social class and their status as undocumented workers. In this context, women may tolerate household inequalities perceived as unnecessary or unjustified in Mexico.

The results also indicate an important interaction between social support and migration in the structuring of gender relations. The migrant experience has been described as one of prolonged loneliness, isolation, and deprivation (Organista et al. 1997), in which recent and undocumented migrants survive in the shadows of the U.S. society (Chavez 1998). Although social support is a critical resource enabling women to challenge traditional gender practices, our results show that its effect differs considerably between migrant and nonmigrant women. In the Durham context, wherein the position of Mexican women is vulnerable and their dependence on men is increased, friends are a key source of information, transportation, and support that is clearly associated with reduced gender imbalances within relationships. Contact with friends is associated with higher male involvement in household chores, greater female participation in household finances, greater relationship control, and more egalitarian symbolic representations. In most cases, the effect is significantly greater among migrants than among their peers in Mexico.

Family contacts, on the other hand, have opposing effects across migrant and nonmigrant women. In Mexico, regular contact with family allows women to gain more control over their relationships and mitigates the traditional division of labor within the household, encouraging the participation of men in chores and women in financial matters. In addition, fami-

ly contact also increases women's power and is associated with more egalitarian gender attitudes. In the United States, the protective effect of contact with family either disappears or is reversed. Among migrant women in Durham, regular contact with family members actually reduces men's involvement in housework; undermines wives' financial participation, perceived relationship control, and sexual negotiation power; and leads to more unequal symbolic representations. This is not to say that family is not an important resource among migrants. But because family members add to women's domestic responsibilities, tend to reinforce more traditional family values, or are disproportionately skewed toward the husband's side of the family, extended contact with family members hinders the capacity of migrant women to negotiate more egalitarian gender practices.

To understand why migration does so little to modify gender inequalities, one must move beyond the traditional focus on the material benefits that accrue to women's more plentiful employment opportunities in the United States and pay closer attention to the disruption and reconstitution of social support structures that are central to gender practices. Migration is inherently disruptive of social bonds and networks, and thus tends to increase the dependence of husbands and wives on one another. This impact is particularly detrimental for women because their migrant networks are less well developed, and because the U.S. environment often is perceived as threatening. The difficulties migrant women encounter in rebuilding social networks and reconstructing their lives outside the home could be exacerbated in new areas of migrant settlement such as Durham due to the absence of a sizable Hispanic community, relative underdevelopment of most Hispanic organizations, and dramatic male overrepresentation of the migrant population. It is likely that these patterns may attenuate with increased time in the United States, as was the case for symbolic differentiation, although the effects are long-lasting and likely hinge on legal,

political, and economic conditions. Subsequent comparative studies on historical receiving areas in the United States could more clearly disentangle contextual from individual effects.

Taken together, our findings illustrate the difficulties that Mexican women face in maintaining even the status quo in gender relations after migration. We cannot adequately capture this dynamic adaptation with information collected only at the place of destination. Prior theorizing about the effect of migration on gender has in many cases portrayed the vestiges of traditional gender arrangements from communities of origin as an important constraint on migrant women's socioeconomic advancement. Contrary to this interpretation, our research suggests that the causal connection is likely to work in the other direction as well. It is not that migrant women fail to "progress" toward more egalitarian norms because of their cultural background or patterns of behavior brought from their communities of origin. Rather, it is their structural position within the U.S. society including their precarious legal status, unfavorable work conditions, and lack of social support that undermines their well-being and power within relationships. Extended and more elaborate research connecting Latin American countries and the United States is necessary for more precise measurement of the effect that migration has on gender and how it may vary according to the place of origin and destination.

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APPENDIX

Table A1. Factor Loadings

	%	%	%	%
Structure of Power				
Relationship control				
1. When my partner and I disagree, he gets his way most of the time ^a	57 ^c	5	24	14
2. My partner tells me who I can spend time with ^a	50 ^c	8	14	-2
3. Most of the time, we do what my partner wants ^a	49 ^c	29	4	13
4. My partner does what he wants, even if I do not want him to ^a	47 ^c	0	26	26
KR-20	.64			
Sexual Negotiation				
1. If I asked my partner to use a condom, he would get violent ^a	8	90 ^c	9	7
2. If I asked my partner to use a condom, he would get angry ^a	13	89 ^c	13	3
3. If I asked my partner to use a condom, he would think I'm having sex w/other people ^a	10	66 ^c	22	11
KR-20	.86			
Structure of Cathexis				
Emotional dissonance				
1. I feel trapped or stuck in our relationship ^a	31	9	53 ^c	-1
2. My partner gets more out of our relationship than I do ^a	28	11	51 ^c	7
3. I am more committed to our relationship than my partner is ^a	37	4	48 ^c	5
4. My partner has more to say than I do about important decisions that affect us ^a	-6	13	44 ^c	-1
5. When my partner and I are together, I'm pretty quiet ^a	27	7	40 ^c	3
KR-20	.64			
Symbolic Differentiation				
1. Married women have the right to continue their careers ^b	-5	6	3	67 ^c
2. Women should take an active role in solving community problems ^b	0	1	-4	59 ^c
3. Men should share with women household chores (e.g., doing dishes and cleaning) ^b	8	10	-8	56 ^c
4. A woman should do whatever her husband wants ^b	11	4	10	41 ^c
KR-20	.62			
Items Dropped for the Analysis				
1. My partner always want to know where I am ^a	33	10	26	-3
2. My partner might be having sex with someone else ^a	25	22	18	19
3. My partner won't let me wear certain things ^a	39	0	9	4
4. A woman should vote the way her husband tells her to ^b	25	7	-5	23
5. Husbands should make all the important decisions in a marriage ^b	20	-3	9	27

Note: KR-20 = the Kuder-Richardson 20 coefficient.

^a Included in the Relationship Control Scale.

^b Included in the Sex-Role Orientation Scale.

^c Factor loading higher than 40 percent.

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