

BEYOND HOME-HOST DICHOTOMIES: A COMPARATIVE EXAMINATION OF GENDER RELATIONS IN A TRANSNATIONAL MEXICAN COMMUNITY

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ABSTRACT: Based on a qualitative study with women from a transnational Mexican community, the authors examine how women's perceptions of gender empowerment, adherence and practice of gender ideals, and the household division of labor vary across generations and borders. Generally, immigration scholars suggest that employment and immigration experiences empower women and create greater gender equality among families. This study problematizes these assumptions because they are based on home-host dichotomies, which suggest that "home" countries are the sites of patriarchal oppression, whereas "host" societies offer women greater equality and freedom from patriarchy. This study finds that women in the United States report higher levels of familial authority than women in Mexico but experience a greater burden with household chores and wage labor. This study also finds that although women in Mexico and older generations of women across borders discursively uphold ideas of male dominance, there are gaps between gender ideals and practices.
Keywords: gender; immigration; employment; transnational; Mexico

"Men are more *machistas* in Mexico, and women are more liberal in the U.S. The man here thinks he is very *macho*. He wants the woman to shine his shoes, iron, cook, and treat him well, as if it's the woman's obligation. It should not be like that, because if you love your wife, you're not going to want a maid. But unfortunately, they, because of their *machismo*, feel that the woman has to do it."

—Rita, a woman from Michoacán, Mexico

Various racialized gender stereotypes of Mexican men and women, as well as of White men and women, abound on both sides of the U.S.-Mexican border. A

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popular stereotype circulating on both sides of the *frontera* (border), as suggested by Rita in the previous epigraph, and reiterated in much of the social science literature, is that Mexican men are more sexist, and Mexican women more submissive, than American (i.e., White) men and women, respectively. Social scientists have traditionally characterized Mexican-origin women as passive and subordinate, whereas Mexican men have been depicted as authoritarian, violent, and philandering (cf., Heller 1966; Madsen 1964). Moreover, Mexican-origin families are said to be uniformly patriarchal and to adhere to pathological constructions of ideal masculine (*machismo*) and feminine (*marianismo*) behaviors, though these traits can be ostensibly mitigated through the assimilation of American gender ideals (Gil and Vazquez 1996).

Despite vigorous critiques of such stereotypical representations of Mexican-origin people in popular and social scientific discourses (e.g., Baca Zinn 1982; Melville 1988; Mirandé 1985), the popularity and tenacity of these “controlling images” (Collins 1990) are such that even some Chicanos/Mexicanos(as) internalize them, as evidenced by Rita’s statement. Although Rita is hardly passive and acquiescent to patriarchal ideologies, as evident by her critique of women’s subordination within the home, she nonetheless believes that women in the United States are more “liberal” and seemingly less constrained by a patriarchal household division of labor than women in Mexico. It is interesting that she has formed these impressions without ever having visited the United States. Similarly, a growing body of gender and immigration literature, oftentimes devoid of a comparative, cross-border framework and analysis, also suggests that women in the United States are less constrained by patriarchy than women in Mexico. Clearly, such popular and social scientific understandings of gender relations in Mexican and U.S. contexts beg for further empirical research and analysis.

In this article, we examine and assess the relationship between Mexican women’s employment, migration, and gender relations from a comparative, cross-border perspective. Specifically, we examine how patterns of familial authority and the gendered division of household labor vary across generational cohorts and borders. Questions our study seeks to address are as follows: (a) Do women wield more authority in the United States than in Mexico? and (b) Does a woman’s employment lead to a more egalitarian household division of labor? We seek to answer these questions through qualitative data gathered from a Mexican transnational community with home bases in Michoacán, Mexico, and northern California.

According to much of the gender and immigration scholarship, paid work and/or immigration to the United States empower immigrant women and lead to greater gender egalitarianism among immigrant families (cf., Grasmuck and Pessar 1991; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994). Our study, however, problematizes these assertions, particularly because they have been based on “home-host dichotomies” (Alicia 1997), which suggest that “home” countries (i.e., third-world countries) are the sites of patriarchal oppression, whereas “host” societies (i.e., United States/Europe) offer women greater equality and freedom from patriarchal subordination. This dichotomy reproduces essentialist notions of immigrant cultures as uniformly patriarchal and of American society as gender egalitarian

and “modern.” Our study, however, challenges these presumptions by illustrating gaps in the discourses and practices of gender equality and inequality across borders.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Until relatively recently, the study of gender and immigration were estranged and disconnected bodies of knowledge. Spurred by the emergence of the second-wave feminist movement of the 1970s, immigration scholars have increasingly used a gendered lens to study immigration patterns and processes. Consequently, three successive waves of gender and immigration scholarship have produced an impressive array of empirical studies examining the gendered implications of immigration (for an excellent review, see Hondagneu-Sotelo 2003). Since its inception, the study of immigrant women’s employment has been an especially salient theme in this literature.

Employment, Immigration, and Women’s Empowerment

Early research on gender and immigration generally concluded that employment and/or immigration to the United States typically empower immigrant women within the domestic sphere (Chavira 1988; Curry Rodriguez 1988; de la Torre 1993; Grasmuck and Pessar 1991; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1992, 1994; Lamphere 1987; Rouse 1992). Much of the research has been grounded in resource theory, which suggests that paid work increases women’s control over resources within the family and thus increments wives’ power and authority vis-à-vis husbands. Consequently, paid work is expected to reduce women’s and increase men’s contributions to household labor. The conventional account concerning the effects of immigrant women’s employment has thus been the following:

[D]espite gender inequities in the labor market and workplace, immigrant women employed in the United States gain greater personal autonomy and independence, whereas men lose ground. . . . For example, women’s regular access to wages and their greater contribution to household sustenance frequently lead to more control over budgeting and other realms of decision making. It also provides them with greater leverage for male assistance in daily household chores. (Pessar 2003: 27)

Other scholars underscore the immigration and settlement process, rather than wage labor, as the contributing factor to immigrant women’s empowerment. For example, Curry-Rodriguez (1988) and Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994) suggest that lengthy spousal separations induced by the settlement/migration process prompt shifts toward more egalitarian relations among Mexican immigrant families. Similarly, other researchers (Hagan 1994; Hirsch 2003; Rouse 1992) contend that by migrating to the United States, Mexican immigrant women gain a greater sense of empowerment, particularly as a result of their increased spatial mobility, access to resources and economic opportunities, opportunities to realize companionate/marriage ideals, and/or access to legal protection from domestic violence.

Emergent Perspectives

Researchers have increasingly reassessed their initial conclusions concerning immigrant women's "liberation" effected through employment and/or migration and settlement experiences in the United States. A growing cadre of immigration researchers suggests that wage work and migration can be simultaneously empowering and burdensome for immigrant women. For example, more scholars now challenge the economically reductionistic and gender-neutral presumptions of resource theory and express a less sanguine view about the expected increase in gender equality brought about through immigrant women's employment (Espiritu 2003; Foner 1998; Lim 1997; Menjívar 2003; Pessar 2003; Zentgraf 2002). In effect, this scholarship suggests that the relationship between immigrant women's employment and gender relations is rather complex and is not simply determined by economic resources alone. Instead, a host of mediating structural and cultural factors, such as class and racial/ethnic background, patriarchal ideologies, and societal discrimination, complicate the relationship between women's work and gender relations within immigrant households. Thus, immigrant women's employment does not inevitably lead to greater gender equality.

Some studies also find that the migration/settlement process does not unvaryingly empower immigrant women. For some immigrant women, particularly those from middle-class backgrounds, migrating to the United States has resulted in downward mobility (Zentgraf 2002) and loss of supportive kin networks (Kibria 1994; Menjívar 2000; Parreñas 2001). Moreover, research finds that migration does not entirely erode or diminish immigrant men's patriarchal privileges, as these are oftentimes simply reasserted at the immigrant community and organizational level (George 2000; Kurien 2003) or reproduced in the general societal structure (Toro-Morn and Alicea 2003).

Beyond "Home-Host Dichotomies"

The emergent gender and immigration scholarship reflects a more complex and nuanced analysis of the effects of wage labor and migration on gender relations in immigrant households, as opposed to earlier waves of scholarship, which assessed these effects in polarized "emancipatory" versus "subjugating" terms (Pessar 2003: 27). The emergent body of gender and immigration literature, however, remains imbued with limitations associated with earlier waves of gender and immigration scholarship. In particular, the literature remains entrenched in a "home-host dichotomy" (Alicea 1997), which suggests that "host" societies offer immigrant women of color more freedom from gender oppression than "home" countries do. According to this ethnocentric interpretation, which has been prominent in liberal feminist discourse and modernization theory, immigrants of color are "moving into a more liberated or enlightened or emancipated society than the one from which they have come" (Carby 1982: 217). These ethnocentric assumptions are reproduced in current studies, for example, which suggest that when employment does not translate into egalitarian household arrangements among immigrant families, it is primarily because immigrants of color, particularly Asians and Latinos, retain their traditional patriarchal ideologies and fail to

assimilate into reputedly egalitarian, American/Western (i.e., Anglo) values (Foner 1998; Lim 1997; Min 1997). Pyong Gap Min (1997), for example, posits that "Asian and Latino immigrant women's employment role has not significantly improved their marital power and status, mainly because of the traditional patriarchal ideology and social structures brought from their native countries" (p. 177).

Though immigrants' patriarchal traditions do ostensibly contribute to the subordination of immigrant women of color, an exclusive focus on immigrants' cultural traditions ultimately parallels cultural deficit discourses that locate the sources of oppression among people of color rather than the larger society. After all, the unequal division of household labor is also buttressed by American social structures and cultural ideologies that reinforce and denigrate women's traditional roles in productive and reproductive labor. The U.S. labor market, for instance, is structured around policies reinforcing the patriarchal ideal of males as breadwinners and women as stay-at-home moms (Kimmel 2000).

Furthermore, the assumption that through assimilation into middle-class American culture immigrants of color learn to become more gender egalitarian is belied by research demonstrating that White and middle-class men are often resistant to change in a direction of a more egalitarian household division of labor (Coltrane 1998; Kimmel 2000; Pesquera 1993). Moreover, White, middle-class women also often adhere to the traditional view that domestic work is "women's work" (Rollins 1985: 104, 183, 184). By hiring another woman (typically an immigrant woman of color) to fulfill what they consider "their" obligations, employers of domestics may only contribute "to the continuation of gender [as well as race and class] subordination" (Rollins 1985: 184). The assumption that by emulating White, middle-class families (particularly those that employ domestic workers) immigrants of color become more gender egalitarian is thus highly questionable.

In short, grounded in home-host dichotomous thinking, the emergent gender and immigration literature still presumes that employment and migration/settlement experiences in the United States ultimately "narrow the material and social foundations for gender inequities" (Pessar 2003: 20). However, changes (if any) in gender relations among Mexican immigrant families cannot be attributed with certainty to the employment or migration experience without comparing these women to those in Mexico. Yet with few exceptions (e.g., Hirsch 2003; Rouse 1992), gender and immigration scholars have studied women on just one side of the border (usually the United States). To advance a critical understanding of gender relations among Mexican-origin families, we examine the relationship between employment, immigration, and gender relations from a comparative, cross-national perspective.

METHODS

This article is based on an extended case study of a *Jaripo* transnational community that has a home base in Michoacán, Mexico, and in Stockton, California (Barajas 2002). Although both men and women were interviewed in the larger study, this article reports data from qualitative interviews and observations with women respondents only. Thirty-three women were interviewed: nineteen from

California and fourteen from Michoacán. Most of the participants originate from *Jaripo*, a small and rural town with indigenous roots in Michoacán that has a longer history than both nation-states of Mexico and the United States (Fonseca and Moreno 1984). Members of the *Jaripo* community have been migrating to and from the United States for at least a century, and as members of a transnational¹ community, *Jaripo* men and women “develop and maintain multiple relations—familial, economic, social, organizational, religious, and political” that span the U.S.-Mexico border (Glick Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton 1992: 1). *Jaripas/os* typically have a sense of belonging and connection to family, friends, community, and institutions both in Michoacán, México, and in Stockton, California, though some maintain these links more actively than others.

A variety of qualitative methods were employed, including in-depth interviews (both open ended and semistructured), participant observation, and informal interviews to gain a qualitative understanding of the labor, immigration, community, and family experiences of *Jaripos* across borders. The research was conducted in both California and Michoacán during the course of three years (1999 to 2001), and all interviews were conducted by the first author, who is an immediate member of the *Jaripo* community. As an insider of the *Jaripo* community, the first author was able to benefit from shared experiences working in the fields (every summer from age four to twenty), living in the same neighborhoods (1973 to 1987), and participating in celebrations and other social gatherings (from infancy to present). The second author is related to the community through marriage and has actively participated in social activities (e.g., weddings, baptisms, and family gatherings) with members of the *Jaripo* community. These close and intimate connections thus afford an insider’s view into this community’s experiences.

Being an insider to the *Jaripo* community provided many advantages. We knew who the *Jaripas/os* are and where they live, understood the dense web of community ties and the personal conflicts within, and had intimate knowledge of their day-to-day struggles at work and community. In general, participants had *confianza* (trust) in us. Moreover, both authors are fluent Spanish speakers, and the first author is culturally proficient in their local linguistic and cultural expressions, thereby reducing errors of interpretation in their oral and behavioral communication. Overall, insider researchers are less likely to elicit distrust and hostility, are better able to understand the nuances of a community’s language and culture, are more accepting and cognizant of internal diversity, and are less likely to produce stereotypical and inaccurate representations of the group under study than are outsider researchers (Baca Zinn 1979; Paredes 1977; Zavella 1993).

Being an insider to the community one studies, however, also has its drawbacks. The insider status could potentially conceal phenomena that would be more accessible to outsiders, such as information that respondents might consider too embarrassing to be revealed or involving delicate matters about members of the author’s family. This potential problem was addressed by reassuring participants of the study’s strict confidentiality. Qualitative field research generally, and insider field research in particular, is also associated with the risk of

researcher contamination and bias (Baca Zinn 1979). To guard against possible contamination and bias, the first author employed validity checks through the use of a variety of research methods, including in-depth interviews, informal interviews, and participant observation. When research questions are examined from different methodological approaches, the understanding of reality is enhanced, and insider bias is minimized; what might be missed from one angle (formal interview) is captured through another (informal interview/observation). Validity, therefore, was sought in this investigation through deep and genuine understanding of a people's experience within a context of social inequalities and through a triangulation of methods.

Interviewees were selected through a purposeful sampling technique to include respondents from diverse occupations, ages, and immigration backgrounds and experiences (see Table 1 for a description of respondents' background characteristics).

Respondents were initially contacted either by phone or by home visits, and they were then asked to participate or to refer potential participants that could fit the desirable characteristics (e.g., age, generation, gender, occupation). Although snowball sampling was not necessary in California because of the author's familiarity with most families, it was beneficial in Michoacán because of the author's infrequent visiting patterns (e.g., author visited every seven years from 1973 to 1999). The first author did field research in Michoacán during the months of May and June 1999, the month of January 2000, and two weeks in July 2001. This longitudinal approach was useful in documenting changes among the participants and observing them in different social contexts (e.g., when migrants were absent in Michoacán). In California, field research and interviews were conducted from January to April 1999, September to December 1999, and most interviews were done throughout 2000 and completed in January 2001.

Each in-depth interview, on average, was two hours long. With the exception of one interview, all interviews were audiotape recorded and fully transcribed. All of the participants' names and biographical information were changed so as to maintain confidentiality. All interviews in Mexico were conducted in Spanish, and those in the United States were conducted in English and/or Spanish, depending on the interviewee's preference. Interviews took place in respondents' homes, restaurants, park, or in the plaza. The open-ended questions examined gender relations by asking the women, "*Quién manda en la casa?*" ("Who has the authority at home?"), and structured questions focused on the amount of household chores women performed. Specifically, respondents were asked to report the number of hours per week they spent doing the following chores: cooking, washing dishes and laundry, cleaning the house, going to the market, doing home repairs, making bill payments, fixing the car, transporting household members, and supervising children. We provide both quantitative (descriptive numbers) and qualitative (observations) data on authority patterns and the gendered division of household labor. Although these descriptive figures are not generalizable to either men or women from Michoacán or California, we report these numbers to enhance systematic observation and to illustrate the intensity of nonwage, reproductive work

TABLE 1

Jaripo Women's Background Information: California and Michoacán

		<i>Name</i>	<i>Year Born</i>	<i>Birthplace</i>	<i>Marital Status</i>	<i>Years of Education</i>	<i>Occupation</i>
California	1	Olivia	1960	Jaripo	Married	14	Service
	2	Julia	1968	Jaripo	Married	12	Service
	3	Anita	1968	Jaripo	Separated	8	Factory
	4	Cecilia	1969	Jaripo	Married	12	Agriculture
	5	Delia	1972	Jaripo	Married	6	Agriculture
	6	Martina	1972	Jaripo	Married	16	Service
	7	Rosalía	1974	Stockton	Married	16	Service
	8	Tita	1974	Stockton	Single	18	Service
	9	Valencia	1975	Stockton	Single	16	Service
	10	Lucina	1976	Stockton	Single	12	Service
	11	Margarita	1910	Jaripo	Widow	5	Retired/seamstress
	12	Carolina	1925	Jaripo	Married	3	Homemaker
	13	Elena	1925	Jaripo	Married	0	Homemaker
	14	Paz	1928	Jaripo	Married	4	Homemaker
	15	Ana	1937	Jaripo	Married	4	Homemaker
	16	Martha	1940	Jaripo	Separated	5	Agriculture
	17	Maria	1941	Jaripo	Married	5	Agriculture
	18	Lupe	1941	Jaripo	Married	5	Agriculture
	19	Cristina	1943	Jaripo	Married	7	Homemaker
Michoacán	1	Angelica	1981	Jaripo	Single	10	Unemployed
	2	Chana	1960	Jaripo	Single	10	Unemployed
	3	Miranda	1962	Jaripo	Married	10	Commerce
	4	Alondra	1964	Pachuca	Married	16	Teacher
	5	Lorena	1967	Jaripo	Single	14	Notary
	6	Conchita	1976	Jaripo	Single	10	Unemployed
	7	Blanca	1977	Jaripo	Single	10	Unemployed
	8	Paula	1979	Jaripo	Single	10	Unemployed
	9	Nadia	1914	Jaripo	Widow	2	Homemaker
	10	Gloria	1929	Jaripo	Widow	0	Commerce
	11	Consuelo	1931	Jaripo	Married	0	Commerce
	12	Rita	1941	Jaripo	Single	5	Commerce
	13	Rosa	1949	Jaripo	Married	6	Commerce
	14	Modesta	1895	Jaripo	Widow	0	Homemaker

for women across borders. Our goal is to advance a qualitative understanding of gender relations among *Jaripo* families rather than generalize the observations to a larger population.

Participant observation supplemented the formal interviews. Participant observation consisted of involvement in social activities as a member of the community being studied. This approach was partly facilitated by the author's insider status and by full participation with both communities in Michoacán and California during informal social gatherings, community meetings regarding hometown projects (e.g., restoration of the 1692 Church in Michoacán), soccer and basketball

games, and community celebrations. Field notes were typically sketched out daily and developed further each night. Among the topics examined were social interaction between groups, such as between migrants and nonmigrants, men and women, and various generations, and typical daily activities. Direct observation enabled the researcher, for example, to examine how gender discourses and ideologies are enacted in actual life and provided valuable insights about what people say and what they actually do, further contextualizing the research findings and revealing power inequalities (Burawoy 1991).

The research strategy our study employs—asking “*Quién manda en la casa?*” in the respondents’ native language, followed by informal conversations and participant observation—represents an improvement over extant immigration research. Existing research is limited insofar as it is typically based on just one method (e.g., interviews/surveys) and focuses on respondents’ rhetoric and discourse about gender roles. Yet as Baca Zinn (1979) suggests, it is problematic to assume that family/gender roles can be explained by cultural ideals, as these oftentimes differ from their actual performance “backstage.” Indeed, when researchers employ traditional research methods, such as formal survey research, women oftentimes articulate their experiences within a traditional discourse of female submission to male authority—even if in practice they actively challenge patriarchy—because it represents a “safe” and “respectable” text (Pessar 2003: 29). It is through field research, such as interviews coupled with participant observation, that scholars can thus gain a more nuanced understanding of gender relations in immigrant communities.

For analytical purposes, respondents were classified as belonging to one of four possible age cohorts: *retiradas* (ages sixty-five and older), *mayores* (ages fifty to sixty-four), *hijas* (ages thirty to forty-nine), and *chicas* (ages twenty to twenty-nine). Among women in California ($n = 19$), there are five women in the *retiradas* age cohort, four women in the *mayores* age cohort, four women in the *hijas* age cohort, and six women in the *chicas* age cohort. Among women in Michoacán ($n = 14$), there are four women in the *retiradas* age cohort, two in the *mayores* age cohort, four women in the *hijas* age cohort, and four women in the *chicas* age cohort. The decision to examine *Jaripas/os* by age cohorts was based on the effort to highlight both historical particularities and generational changes among them.²

An important distinction between *Jaripas* from California and *Jaripas* from Michoacán was their employment and marital status (see Table 1). Whereas the majority of the women in California were married, less than half in Michoacán were married. Generally, women on both sides of the border are from working-class backgrounds, though a few from Stockton occupy middle-class (mostly service/clerical) occupations. Most of the women in California were employed year round, as compared to only about half of the women in Michoacán. More women (and men) from Michoacán were employed during December and January, when *Jaripos/as* from California visited and created employment opportunities (e.g., domestic work, restaurants, construction).

In short, through a triangulation of methods—in-depth interviews, participant observation, and informal interviews—we examine *Jaripa* women’s perceptions of gender empowerment at home, the household division of labor, and adherence

and practice of gender ideals. Specifically, we sought answers to the following questions: (a) Do women wield more authority in the United States than in México? and (b) Does a woman's employment lead to a more egalitarian household division of labor? Our findings are presented below.

FINDINGS

Quién Manda en la Casa? (Who Has the Authority at Home?)

In her study of a transnational Mexican community, Jennifer Hirsch (2003) found that men and women on both sides of the border believed that "*en el norte, la mujer manda*." In other words, women are said to have more authority in the United States than in México. Findings in our study also suggest that women appear to wield more authority in the United States than in México. For example, in response to the question, "*Quién manda en la casa?*" ("Who has the authority at home?"), four of nineteen respondents in California said women exclusively had *el mando* (the authority), twelve reported sharing *el mando* with their husbands, and three said men alone had *el mando*. On the other hand, in Michoacán, no one reported women exercised exclusive authority at home, seven reported that both men and women shared *el mando*, and six said men alone had *el mando*. The interviews thus suggest that these women in California exercise more individual authority than their female counterparts in Michoacán, though the majority of women across borders reported men and women shared *el mando* at home.

Authority within the home was also examined by questions about who decides how money is used in large purchases and in day-to-day home expenses. These accounts also suggest that women in California have more individual say on how money is used in both large and daily expenditures than do women in Michoacán. However, the majority of women in California (twelve of nineteen) and in México (nine of fourteen) report that decisions are made on an equal basis. Hence, the interviews suggest that although women do enjoy more individual authority in California, women and men across borders tend to share *el mando* and decision-making power on an equal basis—a finding consistent with research on marital decision-making and authority patterns among Chicano/Mexican families (Baca Zinn 1980; Cromwell, Corrales, and Torsiello 1973; Cromwell and Ruiz 1979; Ybarra 1982; Zavella 1987).

Qualitative data gathered from in-depth interviews and participant observation reveal information about authority patterns and gender relations in Mexican households not discernible through descriptive survey questions alone. In the following section, we report qualitative data from the different age cohorts that provide a more nuanced portrait of authority patterns and gender relations among Mexican men and women across borders. The qualitative data reveal gaps in the discourses and practices of gender ideologies.

Chicas

When asked "*Quién manda en la casa?*" ("Who has the authority at home?"), the *chica* cohort (twenty to twenty-nine years old) in California spoke about their

parents rather than their own relations of authority at home. This focus came as no surprise given that all but one respondent in this cohort was single and unmarried. Most reported that both their mother and their father tend to share authority, though many believed their mother wielded significant power in the home. For example, Lucina reported that her mother had *el mando*, and when asked why, she said, "*porque ya lo amanzó*" ("because she has tamed him").

The interviews with these young women also revealed that authority within the home is divided along gender lines, insofar as the mother typically holds the authority over the children, whereas the father attempts to wrest control over the mother. Although it is problematic to infer about a couple's relationships based on their children's impressions, some of these young women's observations corroborate the stories of control and domination that their mothers (generally women from the Mayores cohort) experience in their conjugal relationships; their statements also suggest that their mothers derive their power and authority from their roles as primary disciplinarians. For example, Tita noted that her mother exercised authority over the children, whereas her father attempted to control her mother. She said, "My dad wants to have my mom under his control, but in terms of who has authority . . . I'd say my mom, because she is the one who decides whether I can go out or not." When asked who had the authority at home, Valencia reported similar observations. She said, "I think my mom *manda* [has authority]. . . . She is the one who is more in touch with us. She is the one that does not sleep if we don't get home early. . . . She is the one who we ask for permission to go out."

Chicas in Michoacán reported similar impressions to those in California; that is, they reported that parents generally share authority. However, in comparison to their counterparts in California, these young women reported that their mothers expected their children to show a greater level of deference toward their fathers, thus suggesting that the ideals of male authority were stronger in their case. For example, Blanca said:

When I want to go out, I ask my mom, and she says, "Ask your father for permission, and if he lets you go out, well go." Both decide, but first we ask for permission from our dad, and if he let us go, she also lets us. And if my dad doesn't give us permission, then she won't either.

Hijas

In California, women from the *hijas* cohort (thirty to forty-nine years old) tended to be married, and their responses describe the gender relations characterizing their own marital relationships. Most of these respondents reported sharing *el mando* with their husbands. For example, Martina said, "No one has *el mando*. My husband and I have very good communication, and we can come to agreements about what we are going to do with regard to bills, children, vacations, and everything else." Because some of the interviewees in this cohort were especially close to the researcher (in age and familial relationships), they tended to express a playful and humorous response to the question of "*Quién manda?*" For example, Delia laughed when asked who had *el mando* at home and said, "*Los dos. Ni me*

manda ni lo mando" ("The two. He doesn't have authority over me, or I over him"). Rosalía also found humor and asserted, "Me! Just kidding. I don't see any difference between both of us. I think we both do." Other interviewees also reported sharing authority with their spouses. For example, Julia answered, "The two, because if he has an opinion over something, I have to agree with it. And if I have an opinion, he has to agree with it." Finally, Olivia noted that "if the decision involves something that he knows about, well he has the authority. But if it is something that I know more about, well I decide. What matters is that both of us reach an agreement."

In Michoacán, married women in the *hija* group also reported sharing *el mando* with their husbands. For example, when asked who had the authority at home, Miranda said, "The two. Well, look, sometimes neither him nor I, because we both make decisions together." Like single women from the *chicas* cohort, single women from the *hija* cohort spoke of *el mando* among their parents. For example, Lorena reported:

We always gave the *mando* to our father, but he never had it, for example, if there was a problem. My dad was a good person, but in a sense he never supported us. If we had a problem, we'd say, "Papá look at this," but he would say, "No, I don't know, you resolve it however you can." But even like this, we'd say that who had the authority was my dad. . . . *In practice we decided, but because of respect we'd say he had the mando. The man has to hold the authority.* (emphasis added)

Lorena's response was rich in meaning and very insightful, particularly because she explicitly articulated the culturally inscribed gender norm that women are expected to uphold ideals of male dominance and authority, even if these ideals are not actually practiced.

More often the case, however, is where the ideals of gender equality are expressed but their actual practice is absent. For example, Chana, a single and unemployed woman from Michoacán, stated the following:

The men [in Michoacán] are used to having their laundry washed, clothes ironed, and ordering the women. Ultimately, they have the *mando*, even though they say that they are not *machistas*, that they help and support [women]. . . . In their homes, women do things for them. They get married, so they have someone who will do things for them in the house. . . . When those from the U.S. come, I have noticed the same thing. Even though the women want to order them . . . and the men support women's liberation. . . . But [men from the U.S.] are as sexist as those here. When they come, the woman stays inside the home, while they are out in *fiestas*. . . . It is the same *machismo*.

Chana's statement is insightful because it suggests that despite professing commitment to the ideals of gender equality, men attempt to exercise domination over their wives—both in the United States and in Mexico. Across borders, the interviews with women from this age cohort thus suggest that there are significant gaps in the ideology and practice of both traditional and liberal gender norms.

Mayores

Interviews with women from the *mayores* cohort (fifty to sixty-four years old) in California suggested that although women shared authority with their husbands, gender relations were a lot more contested, strained, and generally less egalitarian than among the families of the younger (*hija*) cohort, thus suggesting that generational differences are at play. For example, María observed, “The two of us have *el mando*. He is the one that screams, but who knows if the children listen to him. . . . He doesn’t even talk to them, much less supervise them [the children].” María shared that she decided to buy the house where they live, but she also revealed, with resentment, that he had greatly influenced where she worked (mostly in the fields with him). It was only recently that she sought and was able to obtain employment at a place where she preferred to work (at a cannery and packing-house), as opposed to the fields. Martha also felt she had *el mando* at home and believed that because of her assertiveness and authority, her husband left her.

In Michoacán, two interviews were conducted with this age cohort, and only Rosa was asked the question,³ and she reported that her husband had *el mando*. However, her response, which suggests adherence to traditional gender norms and ideologies, was at odds with her gender behavior. Rosa has the reputation of being a strong and assertive woman, and people who get on her wrong side will try to steer clear from her path, including men. Some field notes, for example, illustrate her transgressive gender behavior in public:

I was walking on La Calle Nacional in *Jaripo* nearing la plaza, when I came across Gloria’s store. She and her daughter Rosa sat just outside the store eating *pinzanes* or *guamuches* [They look like long green beans on the surface, but inside the green surface there is a white meaty substance and black, bean looking seeds. One eats the white stuff]. They invited me to sit with them and eat. I accepted, and they talked to me about my family, migrants, and U.S.-Mexico relations, and also school. . . . While we sat there, Rosa and Gloria talked to most of the people that passed by. Rosa appeared to be a strong and aggressive woman, with a good sense of humor. On one occasion, a man was passing by across the street, and she screamed at him, “Hey *cabron* [expletive]! I heard you were talking *chingaderas* [expletive], just keep it up, and *ya veras* [you’ll see]!” The man seemed intimidated and denied the rumors. Later, a young woman was walking down the street with her baby, and Rosa graciously praised her for looking nice.

Rosa’s behavior is noteworthy because it challenges stereotypes of *Mexicanas* as passive and demure women who willingly submit to patriarchal dictates of male authority.

Retiradas

In contrast to the other cohorts in California, the majority of women in the *retiradas* (sixty-five years and older) group tended to report that the men had *el mando* at home, though some also reported sharing it with their husbands—again suggesting that the older generations adhere to more traditional gender values. However, observations made during the interviews revealed gaps between women’s

adherence to traditional gender ideals and their actual gender practices. For example, Nena, who was interviewed with her husband present, was assertive and quick to answer the questions and would often elaborate on the answers her husband provided. She would also interrupt and answer for him at times. Yet when asked "*Quién manda?*" Nena responded, "*él*" ("him"). The interview with Nena thus suggests that Mexican-origin women may discursively and ideologically uphold traditional gender norms and ideologies, such as the ideal of male dominance in the family, at the same time that they practice transgressive gender behavior (Baker 2004).

The majority of *retiradas* in Michoacán also reported that their husbands had *el mando*, and compared to all other age groups in Michoacán and California, they tended to uphold and reinforce the ideal of male dominance and authority to a higher degree. For example, Gloria said that even though her husband had already passed away, he continued to have *el mando*. She explained, "My husband has *el mando*, even up to this date. . . . Since he died, it seems to me, the strength of the house died." Nadia, who was in her eighties, also said with seeming pride that her husband had *el mando*. She also suggested that a married woman shows respect to her husband by avoiding conversations with other men. While she was living in Mexico City, for example, she had never asked her husband to take her to *Jaripo*, and once he asked why she hadn't expressed a desire to return to her hometown. Nadia responded that in *Jaripo*, everyone talked to her, and she thought it would be rude to have them talk to her and not to her husband. For "respect," she said, a married woman should not be talking to other men.

Modesta, age 105, bridged three centuries—from the nineteenth to the twenty-first century. When asked who had the *mando* in her home, she said her husband had it. Modesta also said, "Today all the women have *el mando*; they even get into physical fights with their husbands." Modesta thus suggested that during her lifetime, she has witnessed changes in gender relations in *Jaripo*, though these changes have been often wrought with conflict, as illustrated by the cases of domestic violence.

In summary, the interviews with women across cohorts and borders suggest that older generations of women, as well as women living in Mexico, are more likely to uphold the ideal of male authority than their counterparts, though there are gaps in gender ideology and practice. Although the ideal of male authority constitutes one dimension of patriarchy, the patriarchal order is also expressed through the gendered division of labor. In what follows, we compare the gendered division of household labor across borders to more comprehensively assess gender equity and inequity among Mexican-origin families.

The Gendered Division of Household Labor

Across nations, men and women generally experience a division of labor both inside and outside the home, which unfairly advantages men with unearned material and cultural rewards over women. As Coltrane (1998) observes, "men's household chores, in contrast to women's have tended to be infrequent or optional" (p. 70). However, he also notes that "since the 1970s . . . men's average

hourly contributions to inside housework have almost doubled in the past 20 years, and women's contributions have gone down by about a third, so that men now do about a quarter of the inside chores" (p. 71). Despite men's increased contributions to household labor, household chores continue to be unequally distributed and performed in U.S. society (Coltrane 2000).

Findings from our study also suggest that Mexican immigrant women in the United States continue to perform the bulk of household duties, even when they are employed. In fact, neither employment, immigration, nor women's authority in the home has significantly changed the division of domestic labor among *Jaripo* families living in the United States. On the contrary, women in California appear to be doing more housework than women in Michoacán. When asked how many hours of household chores they performed per week, for example, women in California reported significantly higher levels of domestic work (mean hours = 54) than women in Michoacán (mean hours = 31). Although paid work among women in California might have increased their decision-making power and authority in the home, it has not provided them with more leverage for male assistance in household chores, as suggested by some of the gender and immigration literature.⁴ Employed *Jaripos* in California must contend with the double day. Moreover, *Jaripos* in California, many of whom work in agriculture, cannery, and service-sector jobs, must contend with poor working conditions, lack of health care, occupational segregation, and discrimination on the basis of race and gender. Thus, *Jaripos* must contend with additional and different forms of gender, race, and class oppression in the United States (see also Alicea 1997). Field notes gathered through participant observation with Maria, a woman from the *mayores* cohort (fifty to sixty-four years old), for example, capture the typical experience of employed *Jaripa* women in California:

I was greatly moved by the unfair life conditions of immigrant mothers. For example, I gathered valuable qualitative information from a Mexican mother who coped with work at a tomato packinghouse and with her second-shift job as a nurturing mother/wife. Her days began at 5 a.m. as she got up to prepare lunch for her husband, a farm worker. When he left, she rested for about half an hour, and then got up at 6:30 a.m. to take her younger son to summer school. Upon returning home, she washed dishes, cleaned the kitchen/house, and prepared meals for when her family returned from school and work. At 9 a.m. she left home to work at the tomato packinghouse from 9:30 a.m. to 9 p.m., six days a week (for a total of ten to twelve hours a day). After her job, she returned home to do house chores for another two to three hours: cooking, washing, cleaning, nurturing, etc. (for a total of five to six hours a day). The two work shifts added up to fifteen to eighteen hours of work a day. Their jobs are minimum wage and seasonal, thus placing them below the poverty level in annual household income; however, while she works during the spring, summer, and part of fall, they have no medical or health insurance coverage. The injustices experienced by the working poor are outrageous.

Maria commented that when she worked outside the home, her husband was very affectionate, and she noted a significant change in his behavior when she did not work. Her husband became more demanding and verbally abusive when she

did not work for pay. Similarly, in the *hija* cohort, Olivia, who reported sharing authority with her husband, said that since she stopped working, her husband performed less household chores. When she was employed, he helped with cooking and washing dishes, but "now he comes home and just watches television." Olivia believed that it was because she was not working outside the house.

Research suggests that when employed men are laid off and women take up breadwinning roles, the gendered division of labor at home remains very unequal (Espiritu 2003; Menjívar 2000). For example, Linda (from the *mayores* cohort) was working at a nursing home during the evenings and had taken up the breadwinning role since her husband, Esteban, had been laid off. During a visit to their home, Esteban was watching television and welcomed the first author to sit with him in the living room. The division of household work seemed very traditional and patriarchal. He asked Linda to get some drinks, while she was busily making dinner and washing dishes, trying to get things done before she left to work. He was just relaxing and enjoying television. Linda was upset because he felt that he was "too good" to work in the fields, where he could easily find work like most of her family. On a separate visit, Linda shared more intimate details about her life. She shared that they were struggling financially and that her older, married son, rather than helping, was only adding to their burdens. The son visited her on weekends and often left his children with her. She would care for them and feed them while her son and his wife went out to the movies. Thus, on her work breaks, she babysat for free and did not know how to put an end to this arrangement. She said, "I love my children and grandchildren and enjoy spending time with him, but my son should at least understand that we are financially limited and should help by at least bringing some sodas or something to eat and not just take and take from us."

Women in Michoacán, like those in California, are burdened with performing the bulk of household chores, even when they are employed. However, household chores and wage labor were less separate, given that women typically engaged in family commercial activities (e.g., restaurants, corner stores, dairy production for local consumption, and service work). As observed by Yen Le Espiritu (2003) of Filipino family entrepreneurs in the United States, women in *Jaripo* typically engaged in both productive and reproductive activities in both work and home sites. For example, Consuelo (from the *retirada* cohort) tended the family store by herself, while simultaneously caring and feeding her grandchildren. Her day began at 5:30 a.m., preparing breakfast and organizing the store and assessing what was needed; she opened the store at 7 a.m.; sent her husband to the *mercado* (open market) to get fresh vegetables; received her grandchildren, whom she babysat while tending the store for most of the day, at about 8 a.m.; she would occasionally take breaks to eat and to make errands when her grandchildren's parents came to pick them up around 5 p.m.; she closed the store around 9 p.m.; and cleaned up the store afterward. In Consuelo's case, the store and her home were literally one integrated space.

Similarly, Olga (from the *hija* cohort), who was in her midthirties, was a full-time homemaker but also sold dairy products, such as milk, deserts, and cheese, from her home. Her husband tended livestock and also small-scale crops for most

of the day, from about 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. At times, he would drop by to eat lunch, and sometimes, she would drive to a given location to take him his freshly made *almuerzo* (lunch). In the evening, Olga went out for walks in the pueblo and/or socialized in the plaza. Her husband would also make time to watch over his children play in the basketball court or playground and sometimes discuss work with fellow small farmers.

Across borders, then, women continue to perform a disproportionate share of household labor, even when they are employed. Neither migration, employment, nor women's authority within the home have altered the traditional division of labor among *Jaripo* families residing in the United States. In fact, Mexican immigrant women living in the United States engage in greater amounts of household labor than their female counterparts in Mexico. In Michoacán, women are also responsible for the bulk of household chores, though their homes and workplaces are often integrated spaces. Overall, women's narratives, particularly those of women in California, reveal the emotional and physical costs associated with the double shift.

DISCUSSION

Our study examined whether Mexican immigrant women living in the United States wielded more authority and were less constrained by a traditional division of labor than their female counterparts in Mexico. Overall, our findings contradict prevailing assumptions concerning women's greater freedom from patriarchy in the United States than in Mexico. Our findings reveal that across borders, younger generations of Mexican women are less likely to uphold traditional ideals of male authority than their older counterparts. Our findings are consistent with empirical studies documenting the evolving and shifting character of gender subjectivities within Mexican society. In his study of a working-class community in Mexico City, for example, Gutmann (1997) found that younger generations of Mexican men were more likely to consider the traditional meanings associated with "macho" and "machismo" as pejorative and not worthy of emulation, as compared to older men. Similarly, Hirsch (1999: 1332) found that, across borders, Mexican women from younger generations consistently remark, "*ya no somos como las de antes*" ("we are not like women before our generation"). Our findings thus suggest that sending communities in Mexico are subject to historical changes and cultural shifts in gender as are those in the receiving communities in the United States (see Hirsch 1999, 2003). However, many gender and immigration studies, oftentimes lacking a comparative cross-national and cross-generational perspective, have assumed that gender relations in Mexico (and other developing countries) are static and traditional, whereas those in the United States (and other industrialized nations) are modern and dynamic (Hirsch 2003).

Our findings also revealed that the ideals of male dominance and authority are stronger in Michoacán than in California. Yet the data also illustrate glaring gaps between women's adherence to, and actual practices of, traditional gender ideologies. *Jaripas'* responses to "*Quién manda?*" are evidently mediated and influenced by normative ideals concerning appropriate gender norms and behavior.

According to traditional Mexican gender ideology, "men have authority over women, the husband has authority over the wife as does the brother over his sister; and while the older have authority over the younger, the father remains the ultimate authority over the household and family matters" (Del Castillo 1996: 212). However, *Jaripa* women in both California and Michoacán oftentimes do not live up to traditional ideals of "appropriate" female behavior, and though some discursively uphold ideals of male dominance, they do not necessarily adhere to them in actual practice (see also Baca Zinn 1980; Baker 2004; Benería and Roldán 1987; Ybarra 1982).

In making sense of these "gender discontinuities," Adelaida del Castillo (1996) suggests that structural forces impinge on women's discursive articulations of gender. Women's recitation of traditional gender discourse and ideology is especially salient in cases where men are not able to fulfill traditional economic provider roles because of unemployment, alcoholism, illnesses, and so forth (del Castillo 1993). Indeed, this situation is most pronounced in *Jaripo*, Michoacán, where men and women are dependent on U.S. remittances as a result of a lack of employment opportunities. That women in Michoacán report men having the ultimate authority in the home thus reflects an effort to avoid undermining or damaging "gender-based norms of manhood commonly referred to as '*ser un hombre*' or '*ser macho*'" (del Castillo 1993: 244). In California, on the other hand, men are generally employed and can, at least in public, enact the traditional role of male as breadwinner; women may hence feel less compelled than those in Michoacán to report their husbands as having *el mando*.

Although an overwhelming majority of women in California reported sharing or exclusively wielding authority at home, the ideology of gender egalitarianism invoked by these women "turns out to be a recitation of normative cultural ideals contradicted in actual practice" (del Castillo 1996: 216). That is, although the ideals of gender egalitarianism appear more strongly embedded in American culture, there are gaps between gender egalitarian ideals and actual practices. In other words, American society is not as gender egalitarian as is commonly assumed. As Pyke and Johnson (2003) have observed,

the fit between egalitarian gender attitudes and actual behavior in the United States is rather poor. Patriarchal arrangements that accord higher status to men at home and work are still the norm, with women experiencing lower job status and pay, greater responsibility for family work even when employed, and high rates of male violence. *Indeed, the belief that gender equality is the norm in U.S. society obscures the day-to-day materiality of American patriarchy.* (p. 38, emphasis added)

Jaripas' conviction that they wield significant power and equality in the home certainly resonates with the dominant ethos of gender egalitarianism embedded in American culture. However, such beliefs can obscure the gender inequities that they experience on a daily basis, such as an unequal, gendered division of labor at home. Indeed, as our study finds, women in California are actually burdened with a greater level of household chores than women in Michoacán despite working for wages and living in the United States. Concomitantly, *Jaripas* in California

labor in race- and gender-segregated occupations that mirror and reinforce their traditional roles in reproductive labor. Thus, *Jaripas* in California must contend with private (i.e., household) and public (i.e., societal) forms of patriarchy. Clearly, such realities belie the myth of gender egalitarianism that Mexican immigrant women presumably experience as they migrate/settle and work in the United States.

CONCLUSION

One of the most dominant assumptions over the past three decades of gender and immigration research has been that immigrant women experience greater gender equality in the United States than in their third-world communities. This scholarship rests on a paradigmatic host-home binary that suggests liberation in the "host" society and oppression in "home" countries. Our study, however, questions the prevailing assumption that women become more empowered and liberated from patriarchy in the United States than in Mexico.

Findings from our study revealed intergenerational changes in gender ideologies across borders, as well as gaps in gender ideologies and practices. Moreover, although *Jaripas* in California reported having more *mando* at home, their household division of labor was more unequally burdensome than for women in Michoacán. Altogether, our findings are significant because they illustrate that Mexican gender ideals are subject to change, in contrast to the stereotype of a static and unyielding patriarchal Mexican culture. Our findings are also important because they suggest that women in Mexico are not as submissive, and women in the United States are not as liberated, as popular theories and stereotypical representations suggest. Our study thus reveals a more complex reality, one that traditional research obscures with totalizing narratives about "Mexican" (and even "American") culture. Our research suggests that although the ideals of gender egalitarianism are increasingly becoming more accepted across borders, they are tempered by continuing unequal gender practices. Thus, despite the shifting character of gender ideals and subjectivities across national contexts, our findings underscore the continuing significance of gender inequality for Mexican families across borders.

Migration, wage labor, and settlement in the United States have thus not liberated Mexican women from patriarchy. Mexican women must contend with patriarchy not only within their home but also within the larger U.S. society. The seeming empowerment of women in the United States is more illusory than substantive. The perceived gender empowerment of *Jaripas* in the United States vis-à-vis those in Michoacán reveals how complex realities are simplified and distorted through stereotypical representations, which emanate from unequal power relationships between nations, between transnational migrants and nonmigrant relatives, and between researchers and subjects of study. Social scientists oftentimes uncritically accept these simplistic home-host dichotomies and reproduce them in their scholarship.

We urge future immigration research to move beyond the home-host dichotomy by engaging in comparative/cross-border analyses and field research and by

being attentive to internal diversity among Mexican communities. By including the voices and experiences of men and women on both sides of the border, we add complexity to women's (and men's) narratives of immigration/settlement experiences. Moreover, by recognizing diversity in the history, customs, and ideologies of Mexican communities, we avoid reproducing essentialist and stereotypical representations. Finally, we recommend that researchers engage in field research because it allows us to delve beneath the surface of these narratives and expose contradictions and gaps in ideals and practices. After all, as a popular Mexican folk saying so eloquently puts it, "*entre dicho y hecho, hay gran trecho*" ("between the word and the deed, lies a huge gap").

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NOTES

1. Although the concept of transnationalism lacks a clear and consistent definition (Guarnizo and Smith 2003; Menjivar 2004), scholars generally define transnationalism as entailing migrants with extensive and fluid connections (e.g., economic, familial, social, cultural) across national borders (Glick Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton 1992; Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997; Kearney and Nagengast 1989; Parreñas 2001; Rouse 1992; Trueba 2004). Moreover, many scholars highlight the centrality of transnational social relations based on shared history, interests, and meanings among migrants and their place of origin and destination (Goldring 2003; Guarnizo and Smith 2003; Mahler 2003; Smith 2003). In this extended case study, transnationalism is conceptualized as entailing three characteristics: (a) having homes in two nation-states (or a dual-home base); (b) having physical, mental, and/or emotional connections with both regions; and (c) making these material, cultural, emotional relations constant/active across the border. All these conditions generally apply more to the older *Jaripo/a* generations (ages fifty and older) than to the younger ones (ages forty-nine and younger). Although establishing the transnational character of the *Jaripo* community is not the main objective of this article, here we note that of the women in California ($n = 19$), twelve go to Michoacán once every one to three years, three once every four to six years, and four once every seven or more years. Among women in Michoacán ($n = 14$), none frequented California, but they maintained connections with those in California via telephone, letters, messengers, and gifts.
2. *Retirada* women typically experienced about twenty years of seasonal separations from their migrant husbands, whereas the *mayores* about ten years, more or less. Once they migrated to the United States, *mayores* worked more than twice as many years in farm labor than the *retirada* women, who soon became primarily homemakers. In addition, the distinction drawn between the *chicas/os* and *hijas/os*, who may be from the same family, is that the younger ones were generally born in the United States and did not have a direct farm labor experience. These qualitative differences are better captured by

a cohort analysis as opposed to a generational one. The cohort typology generally reflects diverse life experiences and historical contexts.

3. Rita, who is quoted in the introduction, was single and lived alone, so the question of who had the authority in her household was not asked. However, in terms of authority, Rita held public office in *Jaripo* in the 1980s, and she wielded significant power and authority. She was bold and assertive and was not afraid to go against the influence of the Church or *ricos* (rich) in the pueblo. She once scolded a priest for interfering in the politics of the pueblo, and some folks accused her of chasing the priest out of the pueblo. She is very religious but supports leftist political parties (e.g., Partido de la Revolución Democrática).
4. Men in California ($n = 8$) performed an average of twenty-three hours of domestic work per week, compared to an average of sixteen hours among men in Michoacán ($n = 8$). Although men in California performed more household chores than men in Michoacán, men in California share only a marginally higher level of household chores with their wives than men in Michoacán. For example, men in California perform only 57 percent of what women do in household chores per week, compared to 52 percent of men in Michoacán. Significantly, we also found that married women on average perform more household chores in California (mean hours = 66) than married women in Michoacán (mean hours = 48). Thus, that women in California on average report higher levels of domestic work per week than women in Michoacán is not due to differences in marital status.

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