

COMMUNITY BASED PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH: MEXICAN MIGRATION AND GENDER ROLES

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Purpose: The purpose of this gender and Mexican migration study is to demonstrate the use of an ethnographic approach to community-based participatory research (CBPR) methods by describing the development and conduct of an ethnosexual survey and cultural interpretation of the research findings by community and academic researchers. Our findings question the expectation that Mexican migrant women and men easily incorporate gender roles and US cultural values and illustrate the importance of selective adaptation for understanding of the diversity of changes in gender relations resulting from migration. **Method:** Community members as researchers collaborated with academic researchers to develop the survey, collect data and culturally analyze the data. Data for the analysis draws on data from 689 (474 men and 215 women) Latino community dwelling adults in Durham, North Carolina and a total of 800 (half men and half women) adults from four sending communities in Mexico age 18 to 50. The Durham sample was randomly selected from 13 apartment complexes and blocks that house large numbers of immigrant Latinos. The survey follows a face-to-face, semi-structured interview design that combines elements of a closed and highly structured survey instrument with the guided conversational techniques prevalent in ethnographic research. Descriptive quantitative data from the survey and qualitative data from field notes are presented here. **Findings:** After analysis comparing labor force participation, the division of household responsibilities (housework and family finances), relationship control, and gender attitudes among married Mexican women in Durham, North Carolina and in Mexico, ethnosexual survey findings were presented to the CBPR group. The academic members facilitated the discussion by asking the group to guess the percent of married women working and the percent of husbands sharing household work in the US and Mexico. What is striking is that in most cases the group over-estimated the traditional orientation of Mexican women in Mexico, and under-estimated traditional gender orientations in Durham. Specifically, they tended to think a greater percentage of women worked in the U.S. than was actually the case, and they tended to grossly underestimate the share of men who assist with housework in both Mexico and Durham. **Discussion:** While initially surprising, these results prompted a re-examination of original stereotypical ideas about gender roles in Mexico and the U.S. Even though employment opportunities for women are more plentiful in the U.S. than in Mexico, the group suggested that the constraints imposed by family life might be stronger in the US. Compared to Mexico, lack of family support in the U.S. complicates employment for women with children, as the kin-provided childcare common in Mexico is not available. The group also argued that time was a central issue underlying the husband's involvement with housework and that differences in men's work environment in Mexico and the U.S. might explain why men do not become more involved in Durham, especially since many more women work in Durham than in Mexico.

