This study explores generational and migration-related changes in gender and marriage in two locations of a transnational community of Mexicans: the sending community in western Mexico and the receiving community in Atlanta. The principal method was life histories, focusing on 13 women in Atlanta and their sisters or sisters-in-law in Mexico; life history informants ' mothers and husbands were also interviewed. A generational paradigm shift in marital ideals has occurred, from an ideal of respeto (respect) to one of confianza (trust), characterized by cooperative decision making, heterosociality, a less gendered division of labor in social reproduction, and a new role for marital sexuality. Although women on both sides of the frontera (border) share this companionate ideal, economic opportunities, more privacy, and some legal protection from domestic violence gave women in Atlanta more leverage to push for these companionate marriages.

Women and men in rural western Mexico and their relatives in Atlanta discuss differences between life in the United States and Mexico in terms of gender: They say that "en el norte la mujer manda"-that in the North, women give the orders. Young Mexican women on both sides of the frontera (border), however, call our attention to the role of history rather than migration in the transformation of gender: They say they are not as easily pushed around as their mothers. Although older women in this community were hardly powerless, in the space of a generation men and women have begun to express a different, companionate ideal for marriage-an ideal with significant implications for the politics and emotional terrain of marriage. Younger women (and some of their husbands) on both sides of the frontera articulate a vision of intimate partnership influenced both by the true love of soap operas and by the increasing economic and social possibility of leaving a violent or even just unsatisfying marriage. There is a reason, however, that people say "en el norte, la mujer manda": Young Mexican women have greater opportunities for realizing these companionate ideals in the United States. This article discusses two trajectories of change-generational and geographic-in gender. Each story would be incomplete alone, but interwoven the stories form the complex recent history of gender in this transnational community.

Beyond presenting an ethnographically grounded description of migration and historical changes in marriage, this article also makes two substantive points aabout transnationalism. First, theorists of transnationalism have presented a valuable critique of simplistic ideas about assimilation by pointing to the ways in which strong social ties, frequent travel, and constant communication facilitate the construction and maintenance of cross-border social identities (e.g., Glick Schiller, Basch, & Blanc-Szanton, 1992). In doing so, however, they tend to underemphasize the real contrasts in social context between sending and receiving communities. Here, I explore differences in women's lives on both sides of the border-differences that exist in spite of shared ideas about sexuality, gender, and marriage. Second, transnational communities are located in time as well as in space, and so to understand the gender regime (Connell, 1987) of a transnational community we need to talk not just about migration-related change but also about history, and in particular the history of the sending community. In sum, I aim to show that there are important cultural changes that accompany migration but that these changes can only

be understood in the broader historical context of how the sending communities themselves are changing.

This articles speaks as well to some of the debates regarding how migration reshapes gender. Although migration scholars have made great strides over the past two decades in including women in migration research (e.g., Cornelius, 1991; Goodson-Lawes, 1993; Grassmuck & Pessar, 1991) and even some significant progress in exploring how gender shapes and is in turn shaped by migration (e.g., Foner, 1997, 1998; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994; Pedraza, 1991; Pessar, 1998), it is time to reorient the question of whether migration empowers women and to move away from the relentless search for one or two universal causes for this empowerment. The emphasis on women's relative empowerment with migration has become a set of theoretical blinders, focusing our attention excessively on the question of women's resources and bargaining power, making male gender invisible, and obscuring the fact that what changes with migration may not just be the bargaining but what couples bargain for-that is, their marital goals.

After a discussion of the research design, I present an overview of the study's key findings on gender and marriage. Describing first the generational changes in marital ideals and practices-that is, the transition from respeto (respect) to confianza (trust)I then list some of the reasons this new ideal appeals to men and women in this community. After noting some migration-related changes in marriage, the article closes with an analysis of the implications of these findings for research on gender, sexuality, and migration.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

This article presents the results from an ethnographic study with two generations of Mexican women. The sample is composed of 26 women, ages 15 to 50, all from the same sending community in western Mexico; half lived in Atlanta, whereas the other 13 (their sisters or sisters-in-law) have remained in or returned to the sending community. Most of these women's mothers were interviewed as well. (Throughout the article, references to younger women mean the younger of the life history informants-generally speaking, those younger than 35whereas references to older women include the opinions and experiences of the older life history informants and the mothers of the life history informants.) The primary method was life history interviews, consisting of six interviews on the following topics: childhood and family life; social networks and stories of U.S.-Mexico migration; gender and household division of labor; menstruation, reproduction, and fertility management; health, reproductive health, sexually transmitted diseases, and infidelity; and courtship and sexuality. Interviews were also conducted with 9 of the life history informants' husbands.

The interviews were conducted during IS months of participant observation in Atlanta and in the sending community in western Mexico. The substantive focus on gender and sexuality dictated working with a relatively small sample of women in order to develop the necessary rapport. At the same time, the goal was to produce results that would be generalizable to the experiences of Mexican women in transnational communities. As I

discuss in greater detail elsewhere (Hirsch, 1998; Hirsch & Nathanson, 1997), a method of systematic ethnographic sampling that built on existing social networks was employed. In brief, this method entailed several months of preliminary research in the migrant receiving community (Atlanta), both to select the sending community and the research participants in Atlanta and to understand how their specific experiences might compare to those of the larger Mexican migrant population. The sending communities were Degollado, a town of approximately 15,000 in Jalisco, and El Fuerte, a small ranchito outside of Degollado. In Atlanta, some informants lived in Chamblee, an urban neighborhood of small apartment complexes with good public transportation and a heavy concentration of Mexican and Vietnamese immigrants, whereas others lived in trailer parks on the outskirts of the city.

Once the first group of life history informants had been interviewed in Atlanta, I traveled to Degollado. As with others who move between locations of this transnational community, my arrival was no secret; those I was hoping to interview were expecting me, looking forward notjust to meeting la gringa who had been visiting their sisters in Atlanta but to receiving the letters, photos, and small gifts that their sisters had given me to carry. These encargos put my introduction to the families in Mexico in a familiar context-that of any member of their transnational community who, as a routine part of the frequent back-andforth travel, aids in the construction and preservation of social ties across borders. In the course of the six trips I made between Atlanta and Degollado, I carried huaraches, wedding videos, yarn, baby clothes, jewelry, cash, herbal remedies, birth-control pills, letters, and photographs for the families of the women I was interviewing. As a U.S. citizen, my border crossings were quite different from those of my informants, many of whom were more likely to cross with a coyote than in an air-conditioned jet. Nevertheless, my deliberate insertion into these migrant social networks, and the use of these networks to build a research sample, helped identify informants and build rapport.

Flexibility was another key aspect of the research design. My interest in generational changes in marriage grew in response to being told repeatedly that "ya no somos tan dejadas como las de antes" (we are no longer as easily pushed around as the women of the past). As the months passed, I saw that in spite of having neatly constructed two similar groups of women, the women themselves would not sit still to be compared: During the course of the fieldwork, several of those interviewed in Atlanta either moved permanently back to Mexico or else spent months at a stretch living there, whereas some of the women interviewed in the Mexican field sites have since journeyed north. Women's physical mobility makes it hard to compare those who go to those who stay-perhaps one of the reasons that studies of transnational communities have focused more on cultural continuity than on change. The analysis of differences between the communities focused of necessity much more on differences in social and economic context (and, thus, in women's opportunities) than on a strict comparison of women in Atlanta and Degollado.

KEY FINDINGS

FROM RESPETO TO CONFIANZA

A generational change is evident in the shift from the older women's focus on respeto to the younger women's discussion of confianza. The change goes beyond ideals: Young couples were more likely to make decisions jointly, to regard a spouse as a companion, to share the tasks of social reproduction, and to value sexual intimacy as a source of emotional closeness. Dona Elena, now 62 and a widow, still remembers vividly how more than 40 years ago her grandmother instructed her in the art of the successful marriage: "Just be quiet-don't answer back, and don't talk to him this way or that way.... You need to serve them with love." To have a good marriage, Dona Elena said, she tried to "have his food ready for him, his clothes all nicely ironed, and all mended like we used to do, and . . . take care of him as best I could." He, in turn, should "provide all that one needs, food and clothes, and not run around misbehaving." At the core of this marital bargain is the idea of separate spheres (with women in the house and men in the street) and respect for one's spouse. Women of this generation evaluate their marriages against a gold standard of gendered respect rather than in terms of intimacy or sentiment. (Some were also quite fond of their spouses-Dona Elena started to cry while telling me how much she missed Miguel.) Dona Elena credits her marital success to her husband's gentle character-she notes that he never hit her-and to her own ability to get what she wanted "por las buenas" (through his good side). This meant keeping conflict underground and carefully managing her speech to stay within the bounds of respect. Dona Elena was lucky to marry a kind man, but other women were less so. Any inability to get along, to saberse levar, cast shame on the woman's natal family; women knew their parents would not take them back once they married. "Mi'ija," they would say, "es tu cruz" (My daughter, it's your cross to bear).

The interviews with the older women ended with a question that I hoped would tell me what their marriages were really like. "Senora," I would say, "some people tell me that in Mexico the man has to be the boss at home, but it seems to me that you all are not so dejadas [easily pushed around], that you let the man think that he is in charge but that you know how to get your way. Is this true?" Those women whose husbands had histories of being violent or otherwise abusive said to me that no, this was not true-that really one does have to obey. Other women, though, would smile conspiratorially in response. As long as you are respectful, they would tell me, you can do what you want.

In contrast to their mothers' emphasis on respect, younger women talk more about confianza. Confianza implies trust, particularly trust that one's secrets will be kept. Confianza denotes a relationship among social equals, in contrast to respect, which describes a hierarchy appropriately acknowledged. Confianza also suggests the ability to admit to sexual knowledge: Women say they did not ask their mothers about menstruation because they had a lot of respect for them and not enough confianza, and it is a mark of that same confianza to tell a sexual joke among married women. Young women say that they waited until they had confianza with their boyfriends before giving in to their requests for a kiss, and they talk about the importance of having confianza with their husbands. These women have imbued the word with new meaning, combining previously separate concepts of privacy, sexual behavior, and the freedom to be oneself into an idea of a special, shared, sexual intimacy. The younger women did not downplay the importance of respeto-many of them, for example, talked about courtship as a time of

testing how respectful a young man might be as a husband-but they have also redefined respect, using it to claim new areas of power in marriage, such as expecting the basic respect of being able to voice an opinion; for their mothers, in contrast, direct disagreement with one's husband was hardly an indication of respect on anyone's part. Although space does not permit a discussion of heterogeneity among younger women's marriages, it should be noted that not all the younger women achieved this new ideal of confianza combined with respeto-but they all surely believed that it was the ideal.

In these marriages of confianza among the younger generation, both men and women were likelier than their parents to say that they make decisions together. In response to the question, "Qui6n manda en su casa?" (Who gives the orders in your house?), they each (separately) told me that they both give orders or that neither one does. The meaning of women's speech has been redefined: Whereas for their mothers, to voice disagreement with their husbands would have been resongona (sassy), some of the young couples took pride in the fact that they did not always automatically do what the man said. Unlike their fathers, these younger men do not automatically interpret a woman's disagreement as an attack on their authority and thus their manhood. As one young woman in Atlanta said, "tengo opiniones" (I have opinions). Her mother, doubtless, also had her own opinions, but she had to be much more careful about how she shared them with her husband.

A second feature of marriages of confianza is heterosociality, expressed as the erosion of the gendered boundaries of space between the house and the street (Gutmann, 1996; Rouse, 1991). In the context of explaining what it meant to share el mando (the power), men and women frequently mentioned spending time together. Whether staying at home together or going to the plaza or the mall as a family, this heterosociality stands in strong contrast to the idea that men belong in the street and women in the house and that choosing to be in the house somehow lessens a man's masculinity just as too much time in the street imperils a woman's moral character. The notion that men and women can be companions lessens the social distance implied by respeto.

A third feature of the younger generation's marriages is the slipping of gendered task boundaries. Although there were myriad ways in which their mothers helped their fathers, income was perceived to be generated by the men. In the past, women worked, but the labors of social reproduction were defined into invisibility by being quehacer (that which must be done). "El hombre tiene que mantener la casa," (The man has to support his house), they said. Both in Degollado and Atlanta, men are still publicly evaluated by their ability to provide, and women are still judged by the tidiness of their daughters' braids and the spotlessness of their floors, but there has been a generational movement toward ayudando (helping) with the other person's job. Although helping does not change the gendered primary responsibility for certain tasks, offering to help-or accepting an offer of help-no longer casts feminine virtue and masculine power in doubt. Behind closed doors, some men sweep, cook meals, clear the table, and wash dishes. Women's helping is even more widespread: Almost half of the women interviewed in Mexico and most of those in Atlanta were involved in some kind of income-generating activity.

In other ways too, the younger men and women were striving to create families different from the ones in which they had been raised. They continue to say, as did their mothers, that "los hijos son la felicidad de la casa," (children are the happiness of a home), but none of them aspired to have as much of that happiness as did their mothers: The average parity of the life history informants' mothers was just above nine, whereas the life history informants (admittedly much earlier in their reproductive careers) had an average of three children each, and many wanted no more. This striking fertility decline reflects, among other things, the transformation of sexuality's role in the work of making a family.1 Young couples want smaller families so that they have the time and energy to focus on each other; the affective relationship that is at the core of the family seems to have shifted from that of the mother and her children to that of the husband and wife. Whereas for their mothers, children-the sooner after marriage the better-were the bond that built a family (tener familia means to have a child), for the younger women and men sexual intimacy has become in and of itself constitutive of family ties. Sexual closeness has taken on a new, productive (as opposed to reproductive) aspect.

For older women, sexual intimacy within marriage held a husband's attention (and his resources) and served to generate children; a woman's sexual pleasure was certainly a bonus but hardly a requirement. For younger women, the mutual pleasure and emotional sharing are in and of themselves a goal. For example, many of the older women-even those who seem to have shared a pleasurable intimacy with their partners-employ the word usar (to use) to describe vaginal intercourse-for example, they might say "cuando el me usa" (when he "uses" me) to describe sexual relations. Usar describes the utilization of an inanimate object; it is the word one might employ to talk about an iron or a plow. Younger women, in contrast, talk about making love (hacer el amor), being together (estar juntos), or having relations (tener relaciones).

Together, these qualities (an emphasis on a new kind of confianza in addition to respect, more room for explicit disagreement, a growing heterosociality, increased helping, new meanings for marital sexuality) combine to form a new marital ideal. Both women and men self-consciously see this ideal as modern: Women (whether in Mexico or the United States) told me repeatedly that they were not as easily pushed around as their mothers, whereas many men strove to convince me that they were not macho like their fathers. A thorough discussion of how these ideological changes are the product of deliberate choices men and women make in response to changing social conditions-an explanation, in other words, that integrates both structure and agency-is beyond the scope of this article (but see Hirsch, 1998), so here I will just note some of the macrolevel changes and strategic advantages that have facilitated this trend. In addition to the influence of migration (both on the migrants themselves and, via return migration, on the sending communities), factors worthy of mention include increasing neolocal residence, access to mass media through satellite dishes, rising rates of female education, three decades of government-sponsored familyplanning programs and sex education, and even the Catholic church's efforts to co-opt this new discourse of sexuality (see Hirsch, 1998).

The question arises, of course, of the benefit women and men think they will derive from being modern. Some men say that living as bachelors in the United States has taken away

the shame of grabbing a broom or heating a tortilla-but it did not do so for their fathers, and some of the men who help their wives have spent little or no time in el norte. Men's helping women can only be understood together with the ground that men have ceded in decision making and the fracturing of the sharply gendered distinction between the house and the street as part of a larger redefinition of masculinity. These men are not just helping with the housework: They are helping with the work of making a family. What men stand to gain is carino (tenderness). The benefits to men of a marriage of confianza are emotional; they gain access to an intimacy that their fathers sacrificed as part of the cost of being respetados (respected). Some men in the sending community see this new masculinity as a strategy for social mobility; the way that Mexican telenovelas and advertisements portray modern, successful men with cellular phones who speak softly to their wives, rather than machos with mustaches and guns who shout at them, does not escape notice among men and women in Degollado.

For male migrants, there are additional advantages to this alternative masculinity. The aggressive postures of the stereotypical macho are just the behaviors most likely to catch the attention of the migra (the Immigration and Naturalization Service) or the local police. Furthermore, many Mexicans in Atlanta work for gringo bosses who care more about whether they show up on time and work hard than whether they are suspected of being maricones (a deprecatory term for homosexuals) because they refuse to go drinking with their buddies. More subtly, Mexican men in Atlanta see the pervasive image of the leisure-time togetherness of the gringo nuclear family at the mall, in television commercials, in public parks, and in church. Ultimately, men's embrace of this alternative masculinity seems due to a combination of influences: their family histories, their ages, and situational factors that make it advantageous. It is a strategy for social mobility and self-protection, but it also feels really good.

The companionate marriage has many benefits for women, and women press their husbands as far as they can toward this model. One benefit women see is pleasure in the possibility of closeness. Another is a path to power and a means to ensure marital security. Women who felt that they had significant input in matters pertaining to their families (whether economic or social) told me proudly that "I have opinions" (i.e., opinions that count). Companionate marriage gives women a moral language with which to define the limits of acceptable behavior. Women believe that these strong emotional ties guarantee not just a better marriage but one that is likelier to endure, so that maintaining affective bonds is part of the work women do to strengthen their marriages. Finally, some women use this new marital ideal as ajustification for migration and for working outside the home. For example, young women make marital togetherness an explicit negotiation point during courtship: They tell their boyfriends that if they are planning to go north, they should save or borrow to pay the coyote for both of them because "Ano me voy a casar para estar sola" (I am not getting married to be alone). The companionate ideology lends weight to women's desire to participate in the previously largely male adventure of migration.

Although women may see a promise of power in these new ideas about confianza, companionate marriage as an ideology has more to say about the emotional intimacy

couples can achieve through talking than it does about who gets the last word. Furthermore, these ideas about marriage emphasize the extent to which it is a bond of desire rather than of obligation-which may put women in a difficult position when, as is so often the case, desire falters. Several women mentioned that the negative aspect of knowing that they could support themselves is that their husbands know it too-that is, that seeing their wives work and earn money could diminish men's feeling of obligation to take care of them. In the United States, the transformation of marriage into a relationship that ideologically (though not actually) is a purely affectionate (as opposed to both affectionate and economic) relationship has lessened women's claim on men's resources after a marriage breaks up (see Giddens, 1992, on the "pure relationship"). It is easy to see how the continued incorporation of this ideology, which privileges the emotional work of a relationship over men's economic role, could lessen men's feeling of obligation to their families. Furthermore, these companionate marriages can be very isolating for women, especially for migrants, as the ideal encourages women to invest time and energy primarily in the marital relationship rather than in a wider social network of female friends and relatives.

EN EL NORTE LA MUJER MANDA: MIGRATION-RELATED DIFFERENCES IN GENDER

In addition to discussions of the changing nature of gender, another constant refrain in both Atlanta and Mexico was that "en el norte la mujer manda" (in the North, women are in charge). When Dona Elena criticized Maria and her other daughters in Atlanta for answering back to their husbands, she said that Maria explained to her, "No, mom, here the woman is the boss, it's not like back in Mexico where the men are the boss.... No, here they don't hit you.... Here, the men are the ones who stand to lose" (No mama, aqui uno manda, no es como alla en Mexico que los hombres mandan alla.... No, aqui no me friegan.... Aqui los hombres la llevan de perder). Comments such as this direct our attention to differences between various locations of the same transnational community. In terms of shared culture, the intensity of physical movement, and social and economic links, Degollado and El Fuerte are typical of the kinds of transnational communities others have discussed (e.g., Glick Schiller et al., 1992). When people in Mexico asked me, for example, how long I had been "here" doing my research, they expected an answer dated from my first entry into the community in Atlanta and including all the time I had been talking with their relatives in either place. "Here with us" encompasses the expanded social space of their transnational community. There are, however, important differences between geographic locations of a transnational community-many of which are cast in terms of the social organization of gender. I identified key differences between the sending and receiving communities in three areas: privacy and the social organization of public space, domestic violence, and economic opportunities for women. Combined, all of these factors make women less socially and economically dependent on men, thus revealing some of the meanings underlying the assertion that "en el norte la mujer manda."

Gender does not mark the house-street division in the United States quite as strongly as it does in Mexico. As noted above, in the United States, the danger of being picked up by

the migra while in the street raises the costs of a certain type of flamboyant behavior. As Rouse (1991) has pointed out, Mexican men do not "own" the street; they are well aware they are just visiting. Women's widespread participation in the formal labor market in Atlanta further neutralizes the street's gendered aspects; going to and from work gives women as much justification to be outside as men have. Women use the ideology of family progress (salir adelante como familia, making it as a family) to justify other previously masculine privileges such as driving and owning a car. In Degollado and El Fuerte, only women from the wealthiest families drive at all, and very few women own cars. For migrant women, mobility is power. The Mexican women I know in Atlanta who do drive never tire of the thrill of the freedom of being able to go wherever they want without having to ask, of their new mastery of the street.

Furthermore, the audience in the street is not the same as in small-town Mexico. The sense of shared vigilance of all public behavior (characteristic perhaps of any small town) is lost in the urban United States. A feeling of freedom accompanies the realization that "aqui nadie te conoce" (here, no one knows you). In the field sites in Mexico, women put on stockings and hairspray to walk two blocks to the market to buy tortillas. In Atlanta, they relax this resolute appearance management, dressing more for comfort than to express social status. Older women whose husbands never would have let them wear slacks, let alone jeans, go out in sweatpants (without asking permission). Upon her return to Mexico after living with her older sister, one unmarried woman left behind all the Bermuda shorts she had bought in Atlanta; she knew without asking that her father would never let her wear them in the rancho.

Women in Atlanta still dress up to go out at night with their husbands, but on a day-to-day basis they feel almost invisible and thus freed from some of the performative demands of gender and class. Although they delight in the relatively low prices and wide selection in U.S. stores, they stockpile their treasures to wear for the first time on visits back to Mexico. This invisibility is expressed as well in other ways. In Mexico, women sweep outside their front doors first thing in the morning and sometimes again in the afternoon, but never in all my visits in Atlanta (some quite early in the morning) did I see anyone sweeping outside her door. Women hint at how privacy expands the range of the possible,joking about how easy it would be to take a lover-all one would need to do would be to hop on the bus, or in the car, and go meet him. In Degollado, to be seen riding in a car with an unknown man would at best need some serious explaining and at worst be ground for divorce; in all likelihood, it would pass completely unnoticed amid Atlanta's urban anonymity. Staff at family-planning clinics-or even abortion providers-are not inevitably the comadre of one's mother's cousin or some other relative. More than likely, they do not even speak Spanish, which complicates service delivery but certainly increases the feeling of privacy. The lack of an audience that monitors gendered behavior as an indicator of prestige greatly increases the possibilities for experimentation (and transgression).

One example of the greater privacy in Atlanta is the way the Catholic church loosens its hold on women's reproductive behavior. Couples who marry in Degollado and El Fuerte are routinely (although not always) asked if they will accept "todos los hijos que Dios les

manda" (all the children God sends them). Women and their husbands are scolded in confession (the priests ask them directly) for using anything but periodic abstinence as a method of contraception. The women and men who do use a method either forgo communion altogetherwhich also means forgoing any compadrazgo (godparent relationship) that would be formalized at a mass-or else confess their sin once a year, do penance, take communion, and then resume using contraception. The authority of the confessional is absolute; lying in confession is a mortal sin, perhaps even worse than the initial sin of nonprocreative sex. In Atlanta, in contrast, there are some priests who ask about contraception and some who do not, and women can cannily choose their confessors. Furthermore, some women-especially those who do not drive and live far from public transportation-sidestep the question altogether by no longer attending mass. Others drift toward other Christian sects such as Southern Baptist or Jehovah's Witnesses.

Men say that one reason Mexican women have more power in the North is that a man cannot hit his wife without the government interfering. In contrast to Mexico, where police are reluctant to intervene in cases of men's violence toward their wives or parents' toward their children, Mexicans-whether or not they live in the United States-know that in the United States help is literally a phone call away. Consider the difference between Maria in Atlanta and Josefina in Degollado, both of whom had been slapped by their husbands. Josefina admitted it to me, saying that the reason that Pedro could always get the last word ("la mujer con el hombre nunca va a poder") was that he could always beat her up ("me puede chingar"). Maria, meanwhile, spoke with great bravado to her mother about how men could not hit women in the United States, about how they were the ones who stood to lose if it came to violence. As suggested by Maria's and Josefina's experiences, it is of course a myth that men's violence against women does not exist in the United States, just as it is untrue that there are no social controls against men's violence in Mexico. But domestic violence does take on new meaning in the United States, and the U.S. legal system-combined with the legal vulnerability of many Mexicans who live in fear of deportationgives women important leverage. Eva and Pancho, for example, were fighting constantly during the time I was getting to know her, but she said she could usually get him to calm down by threatening to "call her lawyer." Whether she really had a lawyer or (more likely) a domestic violence counselor, the function of having a lawyer was clear; she and he both knew that if things got bad enough she could get a restraining order and throw him out of the house.

Some women do call the police, but the reasons not to involve the authorities are as significant as the possibility that they might. Juan, who has been working in the United States since before he turned 20, is now in his early 30s and a U.S. citizen. He and Mercedes have one son, born in Atlanta. He spoke of Mercedes's right to have her own opinions, even to correct him, and of wanting to create a family bonded by warmth and physical affection rather than the respectful reserve his parents showed each other. The most important way a man respects his wife, he said, was in not forcing her to have sex against her will; intimacy should always be mutual and voluntary. Yet Juan reserves the right to slap his wife "to get her to calm down" and to remind her that he is ultimately the boss. He suggests that "getting along well" and having a "happy and harmonious home" depend on her accepting that there is only one pair of pants in their home, and they

belong to him. Their interactions around violence-his slapping her, her refraining from calling the police-are messages not just about gender hierarchy per se but also about the gendered nature of Mexican identity for immigrants to the United States. He is not just showing her her place; he is making sure that it is the same place that she occupied in Mexico. By not dialing 911, she allows him to continue to believe that he really has the last word, that although they are in the United States, she has not forgotten what she learned as a girl about how to get along por las buenas (by being nice). Under these conditions, direct resistance resonates with meaning; just because a woman lives in a country in which the police will respond to her call does not make it easy to pick up the phone. This may explain at least in part why a woman like Maria, who has been in the United States for 10 years, drives her own car, speaks English, and earns more than her husband does not call the police when he hits her. By enduring the violence, she allows him to reassert his power; she pays for her mobility and economic success with bruises.

The other reason Mexican women have more power in the United States than in Mexico, men say, is that they work. El mando, the power to give the orders, is conceptualized at some level as an economically earned right: Men should have the last word because they have the ultimate responsibility of supporting their families. Women's labor force participation in the United States is perceived to somehow encroach on men's sole right to el mando, but this is hardly just a case of female employment translating directly into domestic power. Leaving aside the point that social reproduction is work as well, albeit unpaid and undervalued, women also work in Mexico. Three of the 13 life history informants in Mexico had their own businesses, and another 5 occasionally sold cheese, needlework, goats, or chickens or did housework. Older women were economically active as well. One of the older women was only available to be interviewed on Wednesday afternoons because in addition to running a small grocery store she manages her son's restaurant (he lives in the United States), which is open every night of the week except on Wednesdays. Another ran a workshop out of her home, sewing piecework for a factory in a large town nearby. And though it was hardly the norm, I met a number of older women who had accompanied their husbands north at least once to try their hands at factory or fieldwork.

The difference, then, is not that women work in the United States and that they do not in Mexico; rather, it is that women's labor in the United States brings them much closer to economic independence than do their sisters' efforts south of the border. In Atlanta, it is eminently possible for a woman to support her children earning just above the minimum wage-especially if she has only a few children or if they are U.S. citizens (and hence qualify for access to Medicaid) or if she has her own family nearby to help. In Degollado and El Fuerte, few jobs available to women of limited education pay even half the weekly minimum wage (about 300 pesos-not quite $40-at the time of my fieldwork). A housekeeper who works from 8 in the morning until 3 in the afternoon, for example, earns 70 pesos a week; by taking in washing and ironing, it might be possible to earn another 70. One hundred and forty pesos a week would not feed a family of four (which would be a small family) even the barest meals of beans, tortillas, and chiles, much less provide for housing, clothes, shoes, schoolbooks, and the occasional medical emergency.

The net effect of all these differences (violence, women's work, increased privacy) is that women do not need men in the same way in Atlanta as they do in the sending communities. Economically, they can take care of themselves in a pinch. Socially, a single mother can be respetada (respected) in a way that would be difficult in Mexico without a man. This is not just an abstract set of differences in the social construction of gender. Several years ago, Maria's husband began staying out all night drinking. In the morning, he would refuse to drive her to work. He stopped giving her any of his paycheck, and she suspected he was running around with other women. She threatened to buy her own car and learn to drive, but he just laughed-so she took her savings, called a friend, and bought a car. Once she could drive, she threw him out. She told him she did not need his nonsense-"mejor sola que mal acompanada" (better to be alone than in bad company)-and that he should not come home until he could be a more responsible husband and a better father to his two children. Several weeks later, he was back, asking for forgiveness. They still have occasional difficulties, but for the most part they live well together.

Maria had certain advantages that not all migrants have-that is, there is not one story to be told about women's migration from Mexico to the United States but rather many stories. As I discuss elsewhere (Hirsch, 1998), whether these stories have happy or sad endings depends in part on a number of factors (such as legal status, kin networks, the moment in the family cycle at which migration takes places, and women's and men's personalities) that make women more or less able to take advantage of the social and economic opportunities offered by life in the United States.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

On a methodological note, the life history method-combined with patient participant observation, hours spent knitting and watching telenovelas, and repeated visits-proved to be extremely useful for sexuality research with Mexican women. Once Mexican women had confianza with me, they were quite willing to talk about sex in a variety of ways, ranging from sharing the ribald jokes told among married women to answering questions (in the final life history interview) about the nature of desire, sexual positions, pleasure, and communication. The repeated visits and relationship building that were a necessary part of the life histories were crucial in promoting this confianza. A second methodological point is that the findings here underline the importance of flexibility in research strategy (and, by implication, in regard to the research questions themselves). I only turned my attention to generational change after being told repeatedly and by many women that their lives and marriages were different from their mothers'-that "ya no somos como las de antes." Those embarking on migration studies may want to remember that migrants can offer much more than just grist for an academic's mill-if we listen carefully, we can find in their words important directions about the theoretical and methodological approaches that best suit the problem at hand.

Furthermore, rather than looking at the sending community as the cultural and social control group in order to foreground the changes that accompany migration, we should explore how the sending communities themselves are changing. Without acknowledging

historical processes in the sending communities, we imply that we are comparing life in the traditional developing world with that in the modern developed world-an error that many of us have sought to avoid in the first place by adopting the transnational perspective with its emphasis on the intensity of connection between sending and receiving communities. After all, the sending communities are a moving target, subject to historical change just like the receiving communities. In addition, as Foner (1997) has pointed out, "traditional" migrant culture is not a fixed body of norms but rather a category manipulated deliberately by migrants as they forge new cultures, drawing both on the old and the new. The main point here-and this is both a theoretical and a methodological recommendation-is that studies of gender that neglect historical transformations in the sending communities miss key cultural developments without which migration-related changes cannot be fully understood. Even if our research designs are cross-sectional, our theoretical and methodological approaches can be longitudinal.

This study also speaks to theoretical concerns about migration and cultural change. At first glance, the emphasis on intimacy, choice, and cooperation that runs throughout younger women's and men's descriptions of their marriages might seem to be directly influenced by North American ideals of companionate marriage (see Giddens, 1992; Simmons, 1979). The comparative perspective employed here, however, highlights the way the cultural changes in this community are a result both of transnational linkages and of social processes within Mexico. Women in both the U.S. and Mexican field sites shared similar ideals for marriages of confianza; the key difference was that women in the United States seemed to have more leverage to negotiate toward that ideal-or, perhaps, that men are more willing to adopt this new paradigm away from the watchful eyes of their fathers and uncles in Mexico. The generational paradigm shift from marriages of respeto to marriages of confianza, which I have referred to here as a trend toward companionate marriage, has interesting parallels in Africa, Europe, and North America (see, e.g., Gillis, Tilly, & Levine, 1992; Inhorn, 1996; Simmons, 1979; Smith, n.d.)-parallels that suggest the value of exploring links between widespread processes such as industrialization and technological change and ideologies of the nuclear family. My point is not that Mexicans are adopting some universally homogeneous ideal of family relations but rather that they are actively transforming a globally available ideology into a specifically Mexican companionate marriage.

This study suggests a route to disaggregating the ideological and material components of cultural change that would also hold true for areas of interest other than gender; that is, comparative historically grounded research in migrant sending communities could lay a solid foundation for sorting out which aspects of cultural change in migrants are actually a product of migration and which are the result of changes in the sending community. Of course, changes in the sending community cannot be separated from migration-related changes: One of the key historical processes in these sending communities is their increasing integration into international migrant circuits. A comparison of the gender culture of towns and ranchos such as Degollado and El Fuerte to other towns and ranchos less intensely tied to migration might disentangle the influence of migration and return migrants from those of more specifically Mexican historical changes-if it were possible to find any such towns.

Most important, I hope to suggest here that the time has come to move away from bargaining as the metaphor guiding our approach to gender and migration. Although the idea of bargaining and negotiation has been useful for the way it highlights the constrained agency (see Pessar, 1998) of migrants, the ethnographic evidence presented here suggests that our focus on the causes of women's empowerment has limited our understanding of gender and migration in a number of ways. First, the debate about the relative importance of wage labor versus the broader cultural and legal differences of life in the United States (see Gibson, 1988; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994) in giving women more power misses the interrelatedness of these factors-Maria would not have thrown her husband out if she could not have supported herself, but she never would have been working as a waitress in Mexico because the contact with unknown men that such a job entails would have risked her, and her family's, honor. Second, whether women can take advantage of these economic, cultural, and legal opportunities depend on a number of other factors such as legal status, kin networks, and labor force experience. There is not, and never will be, just one answer to the question of how migration affects gender. A simplistic focus on how migration affects gender takes us back two decades in gender theory, to the idea of "woman" as a unified category. As Pessar (1998) has argued, gender may not even be the defining axis of women's lives; we need to look at race and class as well. Although this article focuses on ideals and practices within married couples, there are certainly other relationships that are relevant to broader issues of how migration affects the social construction of gender. As Donato (1993) and Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994) point out, not all women who migrate do so with their husbands; some move north under the moral protection of other male relatives such as fathers or brothers, whereas other women (in particular, those who become pregnant outside of marriage) migrate to distance themselves deliberately from their male kin. Further research should go both beyond a narrow emphasis on women's resources within marriage and beyond looking at gender as if it only structured relationships between the married couples. In addition, we should not assume that migration to the United States is always beneficial to women; in fact, this may not be so. There are important ways that migration can limit some women's power; rather than being able to walk next door to her mother's house, a Mexican woman seeking social support may have to struggle with language difficulties and public transportation-if in fact she is lucky enough to have her own kin nearby. Again and again, women who do not work told me "me siento como en la carcel" (I feel as if I were in jail); others have found similar experiences (e.g., Pessar, 1995, p. 45).

Most important, the question of why migration empowers women, or even about which women are empowered, makes other aspects of changes in gender invisible. As di Leonardo (1991) has argued, gender is relational; that is, it is not possible to understand gender without interviewing both women and men. As described above, men's preferences are perhaps the most important constraint on the kinds of marriages that Mexican women in this community can negotiate. Without attention to how masculinity is changing, it is impossible to make sense of these new marriages of confianza. Looking at the issue of gender and migration by focusing on women's changing resources takes male gender as the invisible, immutable, reference category; it assumes that men continue to want what they wanted in Mexico and that what they wanted in Mexico has not changed. Although some, such as Rouse (1991) and Pessar (1995), have looked at how

male migrants' resources (especially their social power as men) change, not enough attention has been paid to the way the goals themselves may be changing.

Foner (1997) notes that the Jamaican women she interviewed were influenced by "American values extolling the ideal of marital fidelity and `family togetherness' " (p. 967). The Mexican couples in this study are influenced both by those "American values" and by new, Mexican ideas about marital intimacy and togetherness. Some Mexican men, although they may not long to pack their children's lunches or clean the toilets, do yearn for a different kind of family life, and they are remaking their families to achieve that goal. As Juan said, talking about his parents' marriage, "I've never seen them kiss, or even hug." He said he wants to do both, to act "closer [mas unido] so that the children really know you love each other, that you feel both tenderness and respect [que conozcan que uno se quiere y que tiene uno carino y que hay respeto]." Ethnography can remind us to listen to the voices of our research subjects; here, those voices remind us that, although they are poor and struggling and sometimes undocumented, they deserve the basic humanity of being understood to make decisions not just out of strategy and advantage but out of love and longing as well.

[Footnote]
NOTE

[Footnote]
1. A number of other factors have contributed to this sharp fertility decline. Although the subject can hardly be discussed adequately here, factors worthy of mention include social changes such as rising rates of education among both men and women and a concurrently rising age at first marriage; economic transformations such as women's increased labor force participation and the increased availability of nonagricultural jobs for which a secondary education is desirable, if not necessary; and political factors such as the Mexican govemment's concerted effort, since the 1970s, to slow population growth through national family-planning campaigns.

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[Author Affiliation]

JENNIFER S. HIRSCH Emory University

[Author Affiliation]

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