

Domestic violence and women's power within the household: the roles of beliefs, values and attitudes.

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Gender violence is a public concern in Mexico

- Physical or sexual abuse in school spaces. 16 %
- Labor violence (gender discrimination or harassment). 30 %
- Sexual intimidations (public and private spaces). 40 %

Source: INEGI (2007).

High prevalence of domestic violence

- In the last 12 months: 30 – 40 %
- During marriage/union: 38 – 47 %

Source: INEGI (2008) and own calculations using ENDIREH database.

“Traditional” sex and gender roles

Mexican married/cohabitating women who believe that:

- “A good wife should obey her partner in everything he orders” 35%
- “Men alone should be responsible for breadwinning” 66%

Source: Own calculations using ENDIREH database.

Objective

How do women's beliefs, values, and attitudes (BVAs) regarding gender roles relate to the likelihood of experiencing domestic violence?

Conceptual framework

- Gender approaches to domestic violence (Anderson, 2005)
 - Interactionist: gender as performance
 - Structuralist: gender as a social construction
- Gender stratification theory (Seguino, 2007)
 - Unequal gender system
 - Gender attitudes and behaviors

Hypotheses

1. Deviations from accepted gender norms or expectations are responded by 'neutralization' responses (Bittman et al. 2003)
2. Men's perpetration of partner violence will, temporarily, reinforce their sense of masculine identity (Anderson, 2005)
3. Rates and experiences of partner violence will vary across structural contexts (Anderson, 2005)

Empirical analyses

- Database: 2006 National Survey on the Dynamics of the Relationships within the Household
- Linear probability estimations of domestic violence, any type: physical, emotional, sexual, economic.
- Basic specification: socio-demographic variables, income share, marital capital, social resources...
- Additional controls: non-domestic violence past experiences and past domestic violence (previous to last year, more than once).
- Variables on Beliefs, Values, and Attitudes:
 - Decision making
 - Personal freedom
 - Gender roles
 - Self-perception

Decision making

Reference group:
She decides alone

Domestic
Violence
(proportion)

Who decides whether/on...?

ALL CONTROLS

you work /study

Both

-0.018

(0.003)***

Partner's decision

0.049

(0.005)***

0.33

Doesn't do it

-0.027

(0.005)***

your own-money allocation

Both

-0.016

(0.003)***

Partner's decision

-0.007

(0.006)

0.31

Doesn't do it

-0.019

(0.006)***

Personal freedom

Reference group:
Doesn't do activity

Domestic
Violence
(proportion)

To...you need to....?

ALL CONTROLS

work for pay

...have partner's permission

0.051

(0.005)***

...do it with him, not alone

0.031

(0.016)*

0.31

buy personal items/change style

...do nothing

-0.020

(0.008)***

...inform or ask partner's opinion

-0.021

(0.008)***

...have partner's permission

-0.023

(0.009)**

0.30

Gender roles

	ALL CONTROLS	Domestic Violence (proportion)
A good wife should obey her husband in all he orders	-0.000 (0.003)	0.31
A woman may not freely choose her friends	-0.016 (0.003)***	0.33
Men are responsible of all household expenses	0.028 (0.003)***	0.26
A woman doesn't have same capacity as a man to earn money	0.010 (0.003)***	0.31
It is the obligation of a woman to have sex with her husband	0.010 (0.005)**	0.30
If a woman doesn't fulfill her duties, her husband has the right to beat her	0.002 (0.007)	0.30
All answers yes = most "traditional" women	0.033	0.27

Self-perception

You consider yourself/that you...	ALL CONTROLS	Domestic Violence (proportion)
...valuable/worthy?	-0.015 (0.008)*	0.40
...attractive?	-0.025 (0.003)***	0.38
...have rights?	0.010 (0.010)	0.40
...express your opinions?	-0.036 (0.008)***	0.49
All answers yes = "highest" self-perception	- 0.076	0.36

Conclusions

- This work is a contribution to the literature on domestic violence, gender and power within the household
- New empirical evidence on the impact of women's beliefs, values and attitudes on domestic violence:
 1. Women's neutralization responses: not participating in the labor market reduces domestic violence
 2. Men's sense of masculinity: use of violence to reinforce control over women's activities
 3. Women's ideas on gender roles: more "traditional" are more vulnerable to domestic violence
 4. Women's self-perception: thinking higher about themselves makes them less vulnerable

Policy implications?

- A complex issue...
- Understanding how the unequal gender system is reproduced to effectively combat violence against women
- Go beyond making new laws or implementing sex-segregation policies

Future research

- Analyze how effects of BVAs on domestic violence vary across different contexts:
 - How do long lasting patterns of domestic violence affect BVAs?
 - How do empowerment and agency relate to BVAs?

THANK YOU

