

2016-01-01

Gender and Professionalization: Experiences of Veterinary Practice in Ciudad Juárez, México

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GENDER AND PROFESSIONALIZATION:
EXPERIENCES OF VETERINARY PRACTICE
IN CIUDAD JUÁREZ, MÉXICO

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to all those who helped me along the way. I especially dedicate this to Dr. Adriana Beall, who helped me contact participants, schedule interviews, and attended interviews. I also thank my parents, Enrique and María Eugenia García del Rivero, for their unconditional support and love. Gracias!

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by

DANIELA GARCIA DEL RIVERO, B.A. in Political Science

THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of
The University of Texas at El Paso
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of
Master of Arts

Department of Sociology
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO
May 2016

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank my committee, for their support, knowledge and input in completing this project. Thank you for meeting with me and helping me through the process. I thank my respondents for taking the time to participate in my study.

ABSTRACT

As more women enter science-based professions, barriers faced by women in terms of full participation in professional activities become useful to examine. This thesis focuses on veterinary practice in Ciudad Juárez, México, to understand gender differences in professional work. Women's enrollment in veterinary schools has increased substantially over time, and this thesis seeks to provide a case study of how this feminization is reflected in gendered experiences of education and professional practice. Based on semi-structured interviews conducted with women and men, the findings reveal how veterinarians negotiate gendered stereotypes in their field. This research argues that veterinary identity is performed by women and men under a framework of hegemonic masculinities. However, women and men also resist these gendered stereotypes through their work showing how veterinary practice is likely to be transformed in the future.

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INTRODUCTION

Studies of gender and work have drawn attention to two kinds of inequalities: gender gaps, which refer to inequalities in income and wages between women and men engaged in the same or similar occupations, as well as gender segregation, which refers to the tendency for women and men to undertake different kinds of work, or to specialize in different activities within the same field of work; women's work is often less remunerated or deemed in society as less prestigious (Jacobs, 1999). However, gender norms and differences are not always so clear-cut, and will vary by intersectional variables. Veterinary medicine is one example of how gendered work patterns change over time. Veterinary science was largely a masculine domain, and has recently become highly feminized, with women constituting the bulk of students in veterinary institutions (Irvine and Vermilya, 2010). However, whether and how this feminization translates into the realm of professional veterinary practice remains an issue that needs to be examined.

A number of studies have documented and sought to explain gendered dynamics in veterinary practice, but most of them focus on the Global North. Since increases in women's participation in veterinary medicine can be found worldwide, it is important to move beyond this geographic limitation. This thesis seeks to extend understandings of veterinary practice, and more broadly of gender and labor by focusing on men and women veterinarians working in Ciudad Juárez, México. There is very little existing research on women's veterinary participation in México (INEGI, 2012). Thus becoming an ideal location in which to study how gendered meanings of veterinary practice intersect with contextual cultural and social norms and transformations.

The central question for this research is: How does gender shape experiences of veterinary practice in Ciudad Juárez, México? Its main finding is that, despite increases in female enrollment in veterinary education, notions of masculinity continue to characterize veterinary practice, especially in terms of work with rural livestock. These findings are drawn from interviews conducted with women and men veterinarians that practice in both the city and surrounding rural areas. The remainder of this introduction discusses the theoretical frameworks for this research, details the methods that were utilized for data collection and analysis, and outlines the significance of this research.

Theoretical Frameworks

The theoretical frameworks used in this study are drawn from feminist and gender studies. Connell's (2005) notion of hegemonic masculinity is a central concept here. Hegemonic masculinity refers to a set of practices present within institutions that enable men's domination over women and shape the social dynamics that maintain gender inequalities (Connell, 2005; Schippers, 2007). The notion of gender utilized in this study borrows from West and Zimmerman's (1987) theory of "doing gender." Thus, gender is constructed through social interactions between men and women, and does not wholly exist outside the specific context of the interaction (Butler, 1998; Duncanson, 2005; Deutsch, 2007). In this thesis, the "doing" of gender through veterinary practice is shaped by hegemonic masculinity.

Hegemonic masculinity is defined by Appelrouth and Edles (2012) as a "pattern of practices that allows men's dominance over women to continue, including the gendered character of bureaucracies, workplaces, and educational institutions" (p.815). Connell (2005) was one of the first to utilize this concept, as an attempt to understand masculinity on a macro-level (p.1801). According to Connell,

Gender inequalities are embedded in a multidimensional structure of relationships between women and men, which, as the modern sociology of gender shows, operated at the very level of human experience, from economic arrangements, culture, and the state, to interpersonal relationships and individual emotions (p.1801).

Appelrouth and Edles (2012) highlight that Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity has the advantage of locating male dominance not solely in the micro-level and the interpersonal dynamics of the family but also in the macro-level and the public sphere (p.588). Hegemony here refers to "ascendency" through culture and societal norms (p.832). This means that gender inequality under hegemonic structures is embedded everywhere.

In Connell's (2005) formulation, hegemonic masculinity can be embodied by anyone, even women, as "it could be present in ideals and desires" (pp.836-838). Stainback et al. (2015) state that under hegemonic systems "even the disadvantaged tend to adopt the perspective of those in power ... women, too, may be more likely to hold lowered expectations for themselves and for other women, and devalue their own performance, as well as the performance of other women" (pp.6-7). Duncanson (2015) explained that there are times when hegemonic masculinity shifts and new gendered practices are adopted in order for men to retain power over women (p.232).

The notion of "doing gender" is one way to understand the practice of hegemonic masculinity as it reinforces gendered stereotypes and norms through interaction (West and Zimmerman, 1987). West and Zimmerman argue that gender "is not a role, a set of traits, nor a variable, but the product of social doings of some sort" (p.129). Resistance can also be present, which would be the 'undoing' of gender. Deutsch (2007) argued that the undoing of gender can

occur when gendered norms are challenged and this can ultimately change consciousness (pp.122-123) which could potentially begin to change institutions. Thus, structural changes are able to create resistance to hegemonic masculinity, though this resistance does not completely eliminate gendered discrimination within societal institutions (p.118).

The notion of gender as performance closely relates to the notion of ‘doing gender.’ Butler (1988) contends that gender is constructed through time and acted out through a series of gestures and movements (p.519). The individual begins to believe that this performance of their gender is “true” as it is accepted by an audience. For Butler, the way the body is utilized is based on the meaning it has carried throughout history (p.521). She agrees that individuals ‘do’ their gender but it is not an individualistic process. It is in “accordance with certain sanctions and proscriptions” (p.526). Thus, “the performance is effected with the strategic aim of maintaining gender within its binary frame” (p.526).

Within the notion of doing gender, masculinity becomes a subject position that is more widely available as performance. Schippers (2007) suggested that masculinity can be summarized as having three components.

First, it is a social location that individuals, regardless of gender, can move into through practice. Second, it is a set of practices and characteristics understood to be “masculine.” Third, when these practices are embodied, especially by men, but also by women, they have widespread cultural and social effects (p.86).

Schippers also views masculinity as being a set of skills, a social position, or a “gender project” (p.86), meaning that it could be embodied as well as performed (Butler, 1988). An important element of Connell’s argument is that hegemonic masculinities not only overpower femininities, but also other masculinities.

The ‘doing’ of gender as hegemonic masculinity is useful in explaining social dynamics present in workplaces where women and men work together. Through hegemonic masculinity, a form of gendered socialization occurs which reinforces gendered roles (Lester, 2008). Seron et al. (2015) argue that professional socialization is important because it is the formalized process whereby young men and women are first introduced to the beliefs and behaviors of the profession to which they aspire (p.179). Their study suggested that “day-to-day engagement with cultures of male-dominated professions during professional socialization is potentially an important factor in keeping men in and pushing women out” (p.187).

Methods

This research follows a qualitative and feminist research design. As a qualitative project, it seeks to understand veterinary practice from the everyday perspectives of veterinarians. As a feminist study, it seeks to be especially attentive to gender differences and inequalities, and assumes that gender constitutes a key site for social differentiation. Data for this study was gathered through in depth, face-to-face interviews with veterinarians who are currently practicing in Ciudad Juárez, which included both female and male respondents, and rural and urban veterinarians.

Recruiting Respondents

The initial contact with respondents was made through a female veterinary doctor of my acquaintance who also practices in Ciudad Juárez. This enabled access to a relatively closed professional group. A snowball method was also utilized to find respondents, as interviewed veterinarians would be asked to recommend other veterinarians who were suitable for this study. The interviews were conducted in spaces in which both the respondents and I were comfortable. In most cases, interviews were conducted in the workspaces of respondents.

One of the limitations of this project was that a number of obstacles were faced in terms of recruiting respondents for this study. One main problem was that the complex schedules of veterinarians often made it difficult to fix a time for interviews. Through my interviews, I was referred to 17 potential respondents, but ultimately was able to interview 10. I sought to overcome this limitation by visiting veterinarians without an appointment, and they sometimes were available in their offices and agreed to meet with me. However, in order to comply with IRB and by my ethics code, I did not attempt to interview respondents who seemed to be uncomfortable with unscheduled visits.

To increase the sample, I sought to contact potential respondents via email, and include veterinarians currently working outside Ciudad Juárez, but who had practiced in Ciudad Juárez at some point in their professional lives, when they were recommended by respondents. Thus, in a few cases, the interview form was completed by respondents via email. However, many potential respondents ultimately did not return emailed forms despite repeated reminders. I sent out 12 interview forms via email, but only 2 were returned.

Two other strategies were adopted to diversify the sample, both of which did not produce results. First, I contacted dairy companies and ranches that could provide access to information about local veterinarians or livestock farmers. Companies however did not want to provide this information, and their secretive attitude made it difficult to build a relationship with them. There was only one company willing to help with my research. Unfortunately, their veterinarians were not able to participate as they had constant work. Second, I attempted to broaden my research across the border to the U.S. by including rural veterinarians in and around Las Cruces, New Mexico. Similar obstacles related to lack of time on the part of veterinarians were encountered

here as in Ciudad Juárez. I also found that seeking perspectives on gender seemed to make veterinarians more reluctant to participate.

Interview Process

I provided my respondents with a consent form that explained the main questions and procedures of this study. At the outset of the interview, demographic and professional information was collected to obtain a background on the respondent. After this, an open-ended questionnaire was used to guide the interviews and to gather their experiences of veterinary practice, and their perspectives on gender issues related to their practice (see Appendices A–D for interview guide). Interviews were conducted in Spanish and English, and I am fluent in both languages. Interviews lasted from 20 minutes to 55 minutes, and were recorded with the permission of the participants. Only one participant did not allow their interview to be recorded. I transcribed each interview verbatim as well as translated it into English. Both the Spanish original and English translation are reported in the findings so as to keep the data close to the original voice of the respondents.

All respondents were interviewed in their workspaces. I did offer to meet with them after their work hours but they felt most comfortable in their clinics. These clinics are located in urban settings and these professionals usually commute to rural areas. However, this did limit the times that I could meet with them. I could not meet with them during the weekend as they expected their workload to increase during the weekends. I usually met with them during the mornings or during surgeries. There was only one instance where I was allowed to interview a woman during surgery. Ironically, the male doctor who she worked for did the customer service, which has been traditionally linked to women. The other interviews were conducted in the waiting areas for clients, or their offices (if they had one). Some were very interested in my study; others were

more cautious of my project. I believe that one possible explanation for this could be competitions between veterinary practices, so that each of them was cautious until they could be sure of the aim of my research.

There was one question in my interview guide that I ultimately I decided to drop. This was the direct question about earnings, and instead of a numerical figure., I asked if respondents had other sources of income besides veterinary practice, and if they believed their wages had any correlation with their gender. However, the veterinary profession is associated with high earnings since it often serves the urban middle class and well-off farmers. Interview respondents also mentioned that each veterinarian charged differently depending on their knowledge and service. The value of rural livestock was also made clear to me when I visited a dairy farm near Ciudad Juárez in an attempt to study dairy companies. As I toured these grounds, the man in charged mentioned that the cows (European Holstein breeds) were worth about \$2,000 each. This particular farm exports to the U.S. and adheres to sanitary regulations there. Thus, veterinarians treating these cows require extensive knowledge of regulation in both the U.S. and Mexico.

Interview Respondents

Interview respondents are described in Table 1. There were six females and four male respondents in my sample. Five of the women and three of the men practiced in both urban and rural areas. One woman and one man practiced in urban settings only. The women in this sample were younger and had less experience than the men. The age range for women was 20 to 30 years old and their experience was between 5 to 12 years, while men ranged in age from 30 to 55 years and had 17 to 29 years of experience. Four interviews with women respondents were conducted face-to-face and two via email. All of the male interviews were done face-to-face. The women and men interviewed were working with a range of animals, including cats, dogs, cattle,

horses, sheep, goats, and pigs.

Table 1: Characteristics of Interview Respondents

Interview number	Gender	Age	Ph.D. or specialization	Type of practice	Experience in years	Type of interview	Length of interview in minutes
1	M	55	Yes	Urban and rural	29	Face-to-face	20
2	M	46	Yes	Urban and rural	25	Face-to-face	25
3	M	57	Yes	Urban and rural	24	Face-to-face	20
4	W	29	No	Urban	12	Face-to-face	20
5	W	31	No	Urban and rural	6	Face-to-face	25
6	W	27	No	Urban and rural	5	Face-to-face	45
7	M	30	No	Urban	17	Face-to-face	35
8	W	24	No	Urban and rural	Did not mention	Email	--
9	W	32	No	Urban and rural	7	Email	--
10	W	33	No	Urban and rural	7	Face-to-face	55

The men interviewed for this study were older than the women; this could be attributed to how I recruited respondents for my study. The doctor of my acquaintance introduced me to prominent male veterinarians in the community first. This is understandable as they are important figures in Ciudad Juárez and they have established their careers in urban and rural areas. The women on the other hand were recruited through her network of contacts, which

included younger women closer to her in age.

Data Analysis

For the purpose of data analysis, I kept a journal to document and record each interview as well as any recommendation, referral, or idea. To ensure confidentiality, actual names of respondents and the location of their practice are not mentioned in the reporting of the interview findings. Interview data was manually coded on the basis of key themes initially derived from the interview questions. I analyzed interview data after every two interviews, to check that the study questions were being addressed and whether interview themes were reaching saturation.

Positioning Myself in the Interview Process

I decided to work on the topic of gender and veterinary science because I grew up around individuals who practice veterinary medicine. When I decided to focus on women veterinarians, it seemed that they would be difficult to find, hence I was grateful to have found a female veterinarian who provided me with an introduction to others in the field. The lack of studies on women and veterinary science in the context of México also made this a difficult study. I tried looking into governmental and university-level databases that record enrollment figures but there were large gaps in the information available. Even as veterinarians are valuable to maintaining human-animal relations in rural and urban contexts, it seemed that this value was not being adequately recognized.

There were also difficulties associated with seeking perspectives on gender differences. The men had to critically think about the way gender intersected with their profession. Other than one male respondent, men did not mention any discrimination towards them. It was always directed at someone else. Women also had to think about their experiences in terms of their

gender. Some did not acknowledge that there were disparities or did not notice that it was discrimination.

While I did approach the practice of veterinary science as an outsider, I consider myself familiar with the experience of discrimination within the educational system, so I could relate to the questions I was asking. My respondents never made me feel as if I was inexperienced, but there were times when I had to learn veterinary terminology in order to be more fluent during the interview. In asking questions, I had to be careful to not ask things that might jeopardize their livelihoods or their reputations. I did have power over their stories, and I tried my best to write in a way that reflected their experiences as they understood them.

Significance of Research

This research seeks to contribute to sociological analyses of gender, work, and education. The results of this research become significant in two ways. First, by focusing on a case study from México, this study draws attention to an understudied region in terms of veterinary practice. In the case of northern México, a substantial amount of research has focused on the political economy of industrial and urban development in the region and gendered forms of labor exploitation in maquiladoras. In contrast, a focus on veterinarians draws attention to the continuing presence of the rural in this region. Second, this study contributes to understandings of gender and education by showing the ways in which women become included in and yet remain excluded from science-based professions. Thus, this study seeks to contribute to existing studies of gender inequalities in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) disciplines and professions.

The remainder of this thesis is organized into two main chapters. The literature review chapter provides an overview of the studies that shape the conceptual frameworks for this

research as well as a background on agriculture and veterinary education in Ciudad Juárez that characterizes the empirical context for this research. The findings chapter provides details on each interview and the overall findings for this research. In the conclusion, the findings are connected to the notion of hegemonic masculinity in order to reflect on the theoretical contributions of this research to gender studies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter outlines existing studies on gender and work, beginning with studies on women in scientific professions and then specifically on women in veterinary science. These studies provide the broader context within which this research on veterinary practice in México is situated. This chapter also provides the empirical background for the research by introducing the agricultural economy and veterinary education in Ciudad Juárez.

Gender and Professionalization

Professionalization involves the process of obtaining credentials, following professional ethic codes, and the implementation of standardized practices of professional-client relations (Abbott, 1991). An important aspect of such practices of professionalization is that it tends to center power within professional organizations (p.357). According to Acker (1990), organizations are “arenas in which widely disseminated cultural images of gender are invented and reproduced” (p.140). Through these gendered images, there has been a systematic institutionalization of inequality in the professionalization of women. Acker argues that there is no gender neutrality within organizations, especially in the context of hierarchical jobs (pp.148-151). Thus, “the maintenance of gendered hierarchy is achieved partly through ... controls based on arguments about women’s reproduction, emotionality, and sexuality, helping to legitimate the organizational structures created through abstract, intellectualized techniques” (Acker, 1990, p.152).

Jacobs (1999) has determined that there is a more complex mechanism working alongside professionalization. Work segregation and the gender-gap can be found within any job, but especially those which are considered to be male dominated (Jacobs, 1999). Stainback et al. (2015) mention that

numerous studies have established that gender segregation reduces women's status in the workplace. When women dominate particular jobs and occupations, there is a financial devaluing of the position, regardless of the human capital it requires or the job's utility to society (p.4).

An explanation for disparities found within occupations could be the so-called "Old Boy's Club" formed by men that control entry into professional work. According to Klepp (2008), there has been a historical pattern of educated men wanting to keep their professions as exclusive as possible. This has led to women's exclusion from highly paid professions (p.397).

Within the U.S., women were given fewer opportunities within the academic realm, and this especially holds true for STEM professions (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math). Hubbard (1985) states that "science as both product and activity has come to be thought of as essentially masculine" (p.91). Legewie and DiPrete (2014) focused on the way gendered socialization begins during education. They studied high school students as a way to understand why women were not pursuing STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) degrees in higher education. Through a series of longitudinal studies, they found that "local academic environments strengthen or weaken gender stereotypes related to occupations" (p.276). They also suggest that "boys tend to be more concerned with violating gender stereotypes than girls," meaning that boys are less likely to challenge gendered norms (p.276).

Taasoobshirazi and Carr (2008) argue that gender differences stem from level of expertise. During primary education, girls tend to do better in school than boys; yet when they enter higher education, women tend to do worse (p.150). They suggest that teacher and parental support are valuable components in the success of individuals: "In the classroom and at home,

males receive more attention, instruction, and feedback about science than do females; this is particularly true when it comes to physics” (p.157).

Rhoton (2011) provides a case study focused on women in the engineering profession. According to her study, “gendered structures and cultures impose sets of masculinized expectations on scientists that limit the range of acceptable behaviors and professional demeanors” (p.696). She mentions that some of these attitudes are not intentional but reproduce “cultural gender expectations” within the STEM profession (p.667). Rhoton’s study was based on semi-structured interviews with 30 women who had faculty positions in STEM disciplines, which include engineering, veterinary medicine, and mathematics (pp.669-701). The study found that women tend to downplay their femininity in order to be part of the hegemonic masculinity within these fields (p.698). The study also found that women in the STEM disciplines “distance” themselves from other women who are not considered to be part of the “process of professional socialization,” which in this case refers to women who actively display femininity (p.703).

Another study on the experiences of women engineers is provided by Dryburgh (1999). She conducted focus groups, in-depth interviews, and participant observation with 15 engineering students and one working female engineer. Dryburgh found that woman professionals in engineering had to adapt to the professional culture while also having to adapt to the professional identity of the program (p.664). Her study shows that women tend to side with the dominant view when it comes to perceptions of gender inequality. Thus, women do not overly mention or overtly challenge gender inequalities since “professionalization generally entails a commitment to group solidarity” (p.667). The author argues that women have to accommodate to existing masculine norms within the professional realm, as they want to appear as competent as their male counterparts and be included in the profession (p.666). Importantly,

adapting to gendered norms occurs during the process of education and before entering the formal workplace. Subsequently, women might experience more inequalities in the workplace as they work with older men who might not be willing to change their views of gendered work.

Similarly, Hirshfield (2011) examined the professionalization of women scientists within the field of chemistry. She focused on how graduates and Ph.D. students negotiated their gender identity within the academic workplace. Through ethnography, semi-structured interviews, and observations, she analyzed processes of impression management. Impression management refers to the behaviors and practices individuals use to control others' feelings or perceptions about themselves (Hirshfield, 2011, p.4). She found that a gender wage gap still existed alongside a gradual feminization process of the field, and also found that women tend to "conform to the existing masculine norms that are produced by competition in the field" (p.xii).

Gender differences in the choice of specialization are an aspect of gender segregation that has received some attention. One study was provided by Ku (2011) who constructed a longitudinal research design in which she questioned a cohort of students and then followed them as they became physicians. Ku points out that men and women physicians tend to choose different specializations, which correlate with "gender-socialized values" (p.223). This means that women tend to choose their specialization such as pediatrics and men tend to choose fields such as cardiovascular surgery. Her study makes various references to why women are still underrepresented in the medical profession, attributing this to family responsibilities, lack of mentors, lack of role models, and difficulties breaching the "old boys' club" (p.225). However, Ku believes that much of these differences are embedded in individual mindsets before they enter medical school, so that societal gender norms then shape educational and career experiences and choices. The study's findings partially support Ku's hypothesis about gender

differences occurring earlier in medical careers. However, while gender segregation is present “it may not always reflect differences in job values or work attitudes between women and men” (p.248).

Gendering Veterinary Education and Practice

Veterinary medicine has recently experienced rapid feminization within developed countries. For instance, in the U.S., veterinary medicine was only 8% female during the 1970s. This proportion has dramatically increased over time (Irvine and Vermilya, 2010, p.58), so that women now make up 53% of those practicing veterinary medicine (U.S. Bureau of Labor, 2015). Discussing the history of veterinary practices, Fogle (1999) states that veterinary professions began through the practice of furriery, which was a physically demanding male trade. However, when companion animals became more valuable within the household, women started to become recognized as veterinary practitioners. It should be noted that similar strides have not been made in terms of racial diversity, so that the field remains heavily dominated by white veterinarians in the U.S. (Cross, 1996).

Lofstedt (2003) summarizes “explanations that have been put forward for the feminization of the veterinary profession [which] include: (1) elimination of discrimination in admission to education, based on gender; (2) improvement in chemical restraint for large animals; (3) an increase in the number of female role models, especially in physically challenging aspects of the profession; and (4) the caring image of veterinarians portrayed in books and on television” (p.533). These explanations are especially important because they challenge the assumption that women cannot work with large animals. But Lofstedt’s study also points out that men are becoming less attracted to this field because of its feminization (p.534).

According to Irvine and Vermilya (2010), while veterinary practice is “dominated by members of one sex (female), it is actually gender typed in an opposite way (male)” (p.58). Their study is based on interviews conducted with women, who were either practicing veterinarians or veterinary students. Interviewed women mention the prevalence of various sexist attitudes and practices, and Irvine and Vermilya argue that this could be considered a form of opposition to the rapid feminization of the profession. The study also mentions that women are more likely to be involved with domestic animals (cats and dogs), rather than livestock or large animals (horses and cows). This is problematic as veterinary education actually seeks to provide training in the treatment of all animals, rather than only encourage one specific specialization. Yet, the notion that women are more delicate persists into the professionalization or integration of women into this field.

Statham (1968) provides a detailed inquiry into why women are not going into rural veterinarian practices and attributes this to family responsibilities. She conducted surveys and interviews with a variety of professional women, including veterinarians and lawyers. Her study mainly sought to understand how successful these women were in following a traditional model of professionalization. It was found that professional women tend to have families after they have settled into their careers. Most women also mentioned that they felt they needed to negotiate between their professional and family responsibilities – either due to societal norms or spousal pressure (p.30). Statham (1986) found that among the women interviewed, those who deviated from a traditional model of professionalization were more prone to unemployment, and those who did follow the professional model had a harder time having families.

A study by Stolz (2006) on women veterinarians in rural settings in the U.S. discusses the gendered challenges of this profession. Stolz surveyed 26 women, who were already working in

rural settings, to find out how they managed their professional work as veterinarians. Her survey asked about factors that might discourage women from working in this field, and what respondents thought should be done to ensure both genders participated in this field. Stolz found that many women have decided to work with large animals because they wanted to be challenged as professional veterinarians (p.554). She also found that even though these women were already working and had built strong client networks, they still defined this line of work through masculine traits such as determination, emotional and physical strength, and perseverance (p.555).

In a study that included both men and women, Villarroel (2010) conducted a quantitative survey on individual attitudes towards “rural veterinary practices.” He found that men who are interested in rural veterinary practices are those who have had some previous exposure through family work and mentors (pp.852–853). He further suggests that there are men and women who do want to work in rural areas with large animals in places where agriculture is significant to the economy.

Lincoln (2010) studied the demand and supply mechanism which shapes change in terms of gender segregation at work. According to Lincoln “on the demand side, employers may prefer male employees if they believe that men will be more productive or provide other advantages over women” (p.5). On the supply side, “prospective employees weight occupations on the basis of their wages, flexibility, promotion, and prestige relative to other occupations with similar characteristics and requirements” (p.5) For Lincoln, most social contracts occur between people who are similar in some respects, and therefore there should be an increasing trend of women going into the veterinary field. Lincoln also mentions that “men dominate the less lucrative domain of large food animals” (p.24).

This seems to suggest that women may not just be increasing in numbers within the veterinary field but also entering more lucrative specializations.

Wang et al. (2015) created a conceptual model to examine how different kinds of animals shape the presence of male and female veterinarians in rural areas in the U.S. They found that “the percentage of male veterinarians in most rural places has remained roughly the same, while the percentage of female veterinarians located in these areas has gradually declined” (p.16). Moreover, male veterinarians are more likely to be present in areas with large food animals while female veterinarians show the same relationship with companion animals. This study thus also supports the notion that women are moving into the more lucrative companion animal sector.

A recurrent theme of many studies on veterinary practice is the differences in wages earned between urban and rural settings shaped by veterinary practices. According to Roos and Gatta (1999) “it is a social truism that women earn less than men” (p.95). This inequality is present “regardless of how you define earnings, in all race/ethnic groups, across educational categories, over the life cycle, within detailed occupational categories, and across cultures (p.95). A study by Smith (2002) compared both companion animals and large animal veterinarians. This study used about 3,000 returned mail interviews to show that men earn more wages than women do, even though they work similar hours. However, he also found that men did have more experience in years and this may have translated into higher wages (p.496). Despite this obvious wage gap, it does not mean that women are not satisfied with their jobs (p.506). Thus, attitudes towards veterinary practice are not wholly dependent on wages even though it is still an important issue.

Villarroel (2010) deals with the reasons why men and women veterinarians do not want to work within rural areas in the U.S. Through his surveys, Villarroel found that men and women

tend to choose careers in rural areas as their first jobs but tend to leave when there are more opportunities in urban settings and better pay (p.865). Wages is one prominent factor for both genders. However, there are other factors that could be gendered. Family is an issue because women tend to choose family over work (p.860). Villarroel states that problems regarding the lack of retention of veterinarians in rural areas are linked to individual priorities and lack of interest.

A number of studies have thus been conducted regarding gender and professionalization of veterinary medicine in the Global North. Overall, these studies suggest that the gender segregation in veterinary medicine is occurring in terms of urban-rural differences, with men seeking to work with less remunerative food animals in rural areas while women are working with more remunerative companion animals in urban areas. México becomes an ideal location to examine the relevance of these gender gaps and segregations in a developing region. The next section seeks to provide a brief introduction to the study site in terms of its animal economies and veterinary science institutions.

Livestock Economy and Veterinary Education in Ciudad Juárez

Ciudad Juárez has a rich history of urbanization which began in the 1960s. This was a new era in which industrialization was implemented through economic ties to the U.S. and Juárez's economic development became organized around maquiladoras (Álvarez, 2002). According to Álvarez, this allowed for the "reconfiguration" of urban spaces reducing the presence of an economy tied to agriculture. Alongside, there was the growth of a 'middle class,' and this enabled the formation of a market for services for companion animals (Bradley and King, 2012). Agriculture however continues to be important in the city's surroundings leading to demand for both urban and rural veterinarians to co-exist.

In terms of the broader history of the region, the introduction of livestock through Spanish colonialism changed the lives of indigenous populations in México and affected livelihoods, land, food practices, and forms of transportation (Álvarez, 2013, p.111). In Chihuahua, the cattle industry began in the late 1600s (Álvarez, p.24). Álvarez mentions that *haciendas* and *vaqueros* were important to the proliferation of the industry as they were in charge of the movement and safety of cattle and land (p.73). These cowboys or *vaqueros*, an occupation open only to men, were the ones who were managing the animals on ranches (p.100). In the 1800s, the cattle industry became highly lucrative through sales of meat and leather (p.91). During the colonization period, only rich individuals were able to secure cattle (Ochoa, 2003, p.102). This period brought new techniques and jobs into Chihuahua and livestock became indispensable for economic development. Currently, the importance of livestock is connected to the supply of food to cities, and its value for entertainment purposes, such as in rodeos (Álvarez, 2013).

Currently, most of Chihuahua's population, around 85%, lives in urban settings (Chihuahua hacia la Competitividad, 2014). Chihuahua has two of the largest cities in México, and Ciudad Juárez is one of them. About 1.2 million people reside in this city and it is one of the leading sites for maquiladoras (Anderson and Gerber, 2009). The livestock economy, including cattle, is another major business in Chihuahua but only accounts for 7% of the economy (Chihuahua hacia la Competitividad, 2014).

In the Ciudad Juárez region there are about 40,000 cattle (Chihuahua hacia la Competitividad, 2014). These cows are mostly Holstein cows or "fancy" cows. One large company, Zaragoza-Escobar, controls most of the milk production in the city (Ochoa, p.116). According to Pérez Martinez (2013), veterinarians have been present in Chihuahua since the

1970s to improve genetics and control diseases among livestock (pp.188-196). According to SAGARPA (2015) and INEGI (2015), the milk industry in Chihuahua includes about 100,000 ranchers (Chihuahua hacia la Competitividad, 2014). According to INEGI (2015), while there has been an increase in women ranchers, men are still the majority in this group. The majority of ranchers are in the age range of 60 or higher and most of them only possess elementary education.

While the cow was one of the most important European domestic animals to be introduced into Chihuahua (Álvarez, 2013), it was not the only one. Pigs, goats, and sheep are also part of the agricultural landscape of México (pp.62-63). Another important animal is the horse. In Chihuahua, there are about 117,750 horses (INEGI, 2007). Horses were already present in Chihuahua as “wild” animals and were then turned into the patrimony of the richest individuals in the industry.

The history of veterinary medicine has been difficult to document because this field has existed for many years, but its formal history begins when professional veterinary education became available. México started its first veterinary program in 1853 in México City (Lomnitz and Mayer, 1994, p.144), and it was initially offered within the broader umbrella of the agriculture program. According to Lomnitz and Mayer (1994), when veterinary science became professionalized, the veterinary school became an autonomous entity within México City’s Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM). To begin with, veterinary science in México mainly focused on horses, until knowledge and techniques were expanded to include other forms of livestock and pets (pp.148-152). During the 1920s, veterinary programs within México became international and had ties to the rest of the world. Professors were being trained abroad and brought back ideas on livestock treatment and care into México. Women were

already present within the field and they were “highly esteemed, both nationally and internationally” (p.150). In fact, women veterinarians were an important part of the eradication of the foot and mouth disease epidemic.

The eradication of foot and mouth disease was an important event in the history of veterinary science. “The vaccine produced for foot and mouth raised the profile of veterinarians and demonstrated the practical value of their profession and, in turn, won them improved institutional support, higher salaries and social esteem” (Lomnitz and Mayer, 1994, pp.147-148). Through this increased prestige, veterinarians moved from treating animals to becoming scientists, administrators, and small independent producers (pp.156-157).

In Ciudad Juárez, a department of veterinary science was created in the Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez (UACJ) in 1982 after a professionalization process occurred. Currently, this department offers training in both the management of smaller and larger animal species. The program consists of an admission exam, coursework of four to five years, field practices, and culminates with either the completion of final exams or a thesis. This situates veterinary science in Ciudad Juárez as an ideal location to examine professionalization within the context of gender.

This chapter has reviewed existing studies on how gender differences become salient in the broader context of scientific education and professions, and the specific case of veterinary education and practice. The overall finding is that gender does continue to matter in terms of work experiences, especially in the context of professional practice. The next chapter seeks to contribute to these existing studies by examining how gender shapes professional practice for veterinarians in Ciudad Juárez.

FINDINGS: GENDER AND VETERINARY EXPERIENCES

This section discusses the five major categories that were utilized to classify and analyze interview data. These are: experiences of veterinary education, earnings through veterinary practice, relationship between veterinary professionals and clients, gendering the veterinary body, and gendered futures of veterinary science. In each of these themes, the ways in which the practice of veterinary science occurs within a context of hegemonic masculinity becomes apparent. Yet, interview responses also nuance a generalized hegemony of masculinity to show how being a woman veterinarian may also be an advantage.

Experiences of Veterinary Education

The discussion of educational experiences during interviews mainly focused on why the respondent had chosen to become a veterinarian and how gender may have shaped their access to specific kinds of veterinary training. There were similarities across the respondents in terms of how they explained why they had become veterinarians and what kind of support they had received to be able to pursue their education. Both women and men respondents mentioned their connection with rural settings and their love for animals as reasons for entering this career. As one participant said,

I was born in a rural community, where there were cows, sheep, lambs, and birds.

“Porque nací en una población rural. En casa había vacas, ovejas, cabras, aves.”

Out of the 10 total respondents, 7 expressed a love for animals as a leading factor shaping their choice of veterinary study.

Respondents had received some kind of support throughout their career. Some had mentors who supported them, others had scholarships or grants that allowed them to continue

studying, and most had the support of their families. Mentors were usually family members that were present during their college years. Educational experiences however were also gendered once they formally entered an institution and began the process of obtaining their degree. A woman respondent, who worked only in urban settings, mentioned that

The majority of the teachers were men but when we participated in class there was no problem. [Problems arose] when it came to the practices, as the “fun job” [of handling the animals] was given to the men and the work given to women was to take notes [of the process].”

La mayoría de los maestros son hombres, pero a la hora de participar en clases no hay problema, en las prácticas, el trabajo divertido se los daban a los hombres y el trabajo de las mujeres era apuntar.

This experience of women and men students being allotted different tasks during practices shows how veterinary education begins to reflect gender norms once it enters real-life settings of veterinary practice. Although, most of the respondents said that the set of skills received through veterinary education is equal between men and women. This means that veterinary medicine is not meant to be gendered.

The gendering of the field comes with the idea that animals are gendered. Cattle tend to be viewed as men’s work as these animals have to be dealt with great physical force. Three participants mentioned that there was a lack of opportunities for women in the profession due to machismo and kind of animals they managed. But differences between men and women in terms of ability to treat animals could also occur due to the need to protect women from particular animal diseases. As a male participant noted,

There is a difference in the type of work veterinarians do, women are prohibited to manage them [sheep and goats] due to disease [in the animals].

Sí, porque hay por ejemplo cuando estás trabajando con ovejas y cabras está prohibido que las mujeres las manejen por enfermedades.

There are limitations placed on women then in terms of what is deemed safe for them to handle.

The data showed that only three men out of the sample had a specialization or a Ph.D., which suggests that the seeking of higher education is not automatic (see Table 1). As one female veterinarian stated,

For now, I would like to do an online certificate, because sincerely I am very happy with my job [right now]. It would be very difficult to leave the job and take my time to attend a face-to-face specialty training. So it would be better to do something online. Probably from the UNAM [Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México].

Me gustaría hacer un diplomado en línea por lo pronto, porque sinceramente estoy muy contenta con mi trabajo. Es algo que me costaría mucho dejar el trabajo para tomarme el tiempo de hacer una especialidad presencial. Entonces más bien sería algo en línea; de la UNAM probablemente sea.

The pressure of work on this respondent also seems to suggest that a higher degree is not necessary to run a successful business.

Attendance at conferences, another arena where learning can be augmented, also seems to vary by gender. Lack of participation in conferences may limit opportunities to create networks and future job prospects. Expectedly, veterinarians with Ph.D.'s were also the ones who took part in conferences. When the women in the sample did attend these conferences, they mentioned that

the key speakers were mostly men. These spaces, where knowledge is shared, are tied to masculine traits even though there are more women attending. As a female veterinarian stated,

The majority of the speakers are men, 70%. In León, [where] the main conference [is held] in America, the key speakers are 70–80% men. When they ask for opinions, they try to maintain equality [between men and women], but there we start, since the majority of the speakers are men.

En su mayoría el 70% de los exponentes son hombres. En León es el principal exponente de América y el 70%-80% son hombres. Cuando piden opiniones tratan de darle igualdad, pero ahí empezamos, como la mayoría de los exponentes son hombres.

Another female veterinarian stated that she did not have time to attend any conferences. She mentions,

When one is a student, they send you to certain places to be prepared at a conference or a workshop. It has been a while since I have participated in any. When I was practicing [in veterinary science], I did not have an opportunity to attend any.

Cuando eres estudiante si te mandan a ciertos lugares para prepararte en algún curso o algún congreso. Hace mucho que no asisto a ninguno. Cuando estuve en mi trabajo de médico no hubo oportunidad de asistir a ninguno...

Male respondents mentioned that conferences were simply places to obtain certifications or to keep learning. They did not mention anything in relation to women within these spaces. They were focused mostly on networking and workshops. As one male veterinarian mentioned

“exchanges of ideas are always welcomed in all areas”. *“El intercambio de ideas es bueno en todas las áreas.”* Related to professionalization, a male veterinarian stated,

[these events] are very favorable because I can share and present results of what we are doing...in México when the events are international, [we speak of] what we do to support farmers.

Excelentes, muy favorable porque puedo compartir y presentar los resultados de lo que estamos haciendo ...en México cuando son eventos internacionales, de lo que hacemos para apoyar a los productores agropecuarios.

Conferences then seem to have different connotations for male and female respondents in the sample, with men having higher degrees preferring to attend conferences, whereas women who are at the beginning of their profession being more focused on devoting time to their practice.

An interesting finding was that veterinary institutions in their relationships with clients facilitated different opportunities for female and male students. One male respondent, who practices in urban and rural settings, mentioned that veterinary institutions had professional connections with rural communities and had to adjust to what the clients asked for and consider the infrastructure available on farms. In the words of this respondent,

They only accept men because they only have one trailer as a dorm. They prefer that we do not send them any women because it complicates the living conditions and they want to avoid conflicts, if they do not have appropriate areas [designed for both genders].

Nos aceptan únicamente varones por el hecho que solo tienen un tráiler de dormitorio. Ellos prefieren que no enviemos mujeres porque se les complica. En algunas granjas pudieran ocurrir lo mismo que solo tienen un dormitorio y en

estas situaciones para evitar conflictos, si no tienen áreas apropiadas solo piden de un solo género.

However, just as much as gendered notions favor men, they could also favor women. Thus, one respondent mentioned that there are clients who only want women veterinarians, since women “are more responsible.” These tend to invoke the idea that women are more nurturing than men.

También he visto empleadores que solo requieren mujeres. Porque dicen que son más responsables que los hombres.

The preponderance of women in veterinary science thus has to contend with the fact that clients would still prefer male veterinarians, and this aspect becomes apparent when veterinary education moved from the classroom to the field, especially into rural settings. Yet, these particular respondents state that there is enough work for both men and women in the field, and that women are prepared to enter the workforce irrespective of particular gender notions held by clients. On a personal level, therefore, gender does not shape the desire to be a veterinarian; rather it is broader social and cultural norms related to gender that shape access to veterinary opportunities. This will be discussed in the next section through a focus on relationships between veterinarians and their clients.

Earnings through Veterinary Practice

Women and men who were interviewed for this study were content with their jobs and their pay. Both women and men mentioned that they were able to adjust prices for their services in order to stay competitive while also being paid commensurate to their skill levels. Men and women expressed that they would not think about leaving their jobs as veterinarians despite obvious problems. Women respondents did mention that they had to prove their capabilities in order to be paid for their services, though they did not seem to mind doing this. A female

respondent explained that it depended on certain situations whether her gender affected her income. Thus, sometimes she is paid less for being a woman, and sometimes it depended on the relationship established.

It depends for example, yes, sometimes they pay you less for being a woman because they do not have trust in you or believe that won't meet the requirements or experience either.

Depende por ejemplo, si a veces si te pagan menos por ser mujer, por la confianza o creen que no cumples con los requisitos o la experiencia también.

Another female respondent said, she had to be “creative, so that it was cheaper for the clients when she provided her services,” but that this had to occur in any case in order to stay competitive in the labor market. At times, being a woman was an advantage, as one could use her attractiveness to obtain more money for her services. It was “part of the job.” Another woman participant said that she had to establish a relationship with clients before in order to be paid. Gender-based obstacles to being hired and paid thus seem conquerable, especially to younger women.

There was also a difference in terms of age within interview findings on income, where younger individuals connected their profits to their quality of their work and did not perceive it as being affected by their gender, while older veterinarians did acknowledge that gender may play a role in income differences among veterinarians. This may suggest that gender-based inequalities have changed over time. Across all interviews with women and men, it was mentioned that they had help from their families to deal with additional expenses that could not be covered by their veterinary practice. Others felt that this profession does not provide sufficient

income, so they have other businesses. In 5 out of the 10 interviews, women and men stated that they had another income source.

At a simple glance, there are some disparities in the wages women are paid for their services. There are certain conditions placed upon women to which they have to conform in order to be paid by clients. However, wages were not viewed as biased by gender, but women did have to come up with strategies to ensure they were hired and paid. These strategies were not being utilized by the men who were interviewed.

Relationship between Veterinary Professionals and Clients

Women and men do experience veterinary practice differently through the relationships they have with their clients. To begin with, however, it may be useful to consider how veterinary practitioners view their clients. Across all interviews, respondents mentioned that the physical work is not the most difficult aspect of their work; rather it is their interaction with clients that often becomes difficult to handle. One issue that was raised by both men and women is the lack of knowledge among clients about how animals should be managed. A woman respondent stated that,

I think that the most difficult aspect of my job is dealing with people who do not want to be responsible for their animals, just like it is difficult working with animals that are hard to manage.

Yo pienso que el aspecto más difícil de mi trabajo es tratar con personas que no quieren hacerse responsables de sus animales, así como lidiar con animales difíciles de manejar.

A difference was also mentioned between clients in urban and rural areas. According to a male participant,

They [urban and rural clients] are different in the sense of education. I am not referring to school education. I am referring to the way they should take care of animals. People out in ranches do not understand how to take care of their animals. People in the city have a greater inclination to take their dog to the veterinarian if they see something is wrong.

Son diferentes porque en la educación, no me refiero solo a la educación si no a como debes de cuidar a tus animales, la gente que es de rancho tiende a no tener educación acerca de cuidar a su animal y la gente de ciudad tienen más inclinación si un perro lo ven raro y lo llevan al veterinario.

This seems to suggest that veterinarians themselves have ideas about ‘good’ and ‘bad’ clients, such that those who do not seek professional veterinary help or do not manage animals in accordance with the norms of veterinary science are considered to be problem clients. The professionalization of veterinary knowledge itself may be producing this notion of clients needing to be dependent on veterinarians.

Respondents mentioned that clients sought veterinarians on the basis of the gender biases and stereotypes held by them, so that gender inequalities are formed and reproduced through veterinarian-client interactions. This was especially true in rural settings. Thus, sometimes rural clients seemed to have a harder time accepting professional advice or consultation from women. Respondents mentioned encounters with a “middleman” or a rancher’s aide. Often these aides functioned as gatekeepers on particular farms. As one-woman respondent said,

They [rancher's aide] are the ones who take care of the horses, the ones who auto-medicate them. They think they know everything about horses and when a woman comes, they do not like it. You have a bigger problem with them and you do not deal with the owner directly. Yes, they see you as different, they think that you know less, that you are not going to be able to manage the animal. They see you as weak. The people that take care of the horses are the most difficult; they are the ones that I struggle with the most ... They think that they know everything about the horses and when they see a woman arrive, they do not like it.

Ellos son los que los cuidan, los que los auto-medican. Ellos piensan que saben todo de los caballos y el que llegue una mujer no les gusta. Si con ellos tiene un poco más de problema y no trata uno tanto con el dueño, trata siempre uno con ellos. Si, Te ven diferente, piensan que sabes menos, que no vas a poder manejar al animal. Te ven débil. Las personas que cuidan a los caballos son más difíciles; con ellos batallo mas Ellos piensan que saben todo de los caballos y el que llegue una mujer no les gusta.

One-woman veterinarian mentioned that she had lost job opportunities due to the preconceived notions held by the rancher's aide. She states:

For example, I have lost [jobs] once the rancher's worker does not like it [my work] or does not like me, they never call me for another job or just because I am a woman, they do not speak to me or they say things that shouldn't be said.

Si he perdido por ejemplo una vez y así o los mismos caballerangos no les gusta, o no les caigo bien y no me vuelven hablar por el simple hecho de ser mujer no me hablan o me dicen así como que no.

The historical presence of a male-dominated cowboy culture is possibly reflected in this distrust and discomfort with women veterinarians in rural settings.

Similar gendered experiences also occur in urban contexts. One woman veterinarian stated with frustration:

Older clients always come in asking for the veterinarian, and when they are told that a woman veterinarian is present, they will wait for the male veterinarian to finish with his work unless they already know how I work. Clients over 40 do make a difference. Unless they are people who already know my work; if it is a new client, they ask for the [male] veterinarian.

Hay muchas personas de la tercera edad...Ellos siempre al entrar preguntan está el veterinario, se les hace énfasis, está la doctora y dicen espero a que llegue el doctor. Pacientes de 40 años para arriba si hacen diferencia. A menos que ya sea gente que ya conozca mi trabajo pero si es un cliente nuevo si llegan preguntando por el veterinario. Queda mucho el que sea hombre.

Gendered attitudes of clients thus become an important way in which veterinary practice becomes gendered. Credentials then are not as important as gender stereotypes, and this does have a significant impact on women. When clients hold traditional notions of gender roles, they reproduce these expectations when they seek veterinary services.

Gendering the Veterinary Body

The physical work associated with treating and managing animals was mentioned as one aspect of the gendered nature of veterinary practice. Some respondents view physical labor as an immediate problem for veterinarians in general. As a male participant, working in urban and

rural areas, mentioned, weather conditions, such as rain or snow, and injuries are part of the hard work that accompanies the veterinary profession. In his words:

The [hard] work has to do with the climate and the physical work. It has to do with lesions. It is work that requires physical effort as I mentioned [before]. One has to work when it is snowing, when it is raining, and during the night time.

Trabajo pesado, que tiene que ver con el clima y trabajo físico. Tiene que ver con lesiones, es un trabajo que requiere esfuerzo físico, ya lo mencioné. Tienes que trabajar cuando está nevando, cuando está lloviendo, en la noche.

Women respondents, however, pointed out that there are ways to challenge the notion that women cannot cope with the physical demands of the job. For one-woman respondent, who worked in urban and rural areas, “driving out to rural settings could have been a problem,” but she addressed it by having someone accompany her on these journeys.

Solo tienes que tener cuidado de a dónde vas, Pero en sí, no (me molesta ir sola lejos), o me llevo alguien.

She thus came up with a strategy to deal with a possible limitation to her practice.

Especially illuminating was the perspective of another woman respondent, who works in both urban and rural settings, who showed how she had not let the physical nature of the job be utilized as an excuse to exclude her. Based on her first-hand experience, she mentions that:

It depends [whether the physical nature of veterinary tasks excludes women], because for example when I started working here, the position was not for a woman because I needed to carry heavy loads [of food] so they preferred a man. The response I gave my employer was that I carried dogs up to 30 kilograms. The heaviest [load] you carry around here is 15 kilograms. For me it was not a

problem. Also a question was if I drove stick. The employer had a few comments suggesting that the work was for a male, even though I have almost five years here [with this organization]. It does suggest that the work is for a male and women cannot do this. I have shown them that I can.

Depende, por ejemplo al entrar yo aquí a trabajar no me quería dar el puesto porque necesitaba cargar bultos pesados, entonces prefería a un hombre. Entonces el comentario que yo le hice fue que yo cargaba perros de hasta 30 kilos. Y pues lo más pesado que cargas aquí son 15 kilos. Para mí no era problema, así también como que manejas estándar (haciendo el movimiento al conducir un auto estándar). Me puso así varios que era un trabajo de hombres y pues ya casi tengo 5 años. Así como que incrimina, porque así como que eres mujer no puedes hacer esto. Ya se lo demostré que no.

Women are thus often expected to demonstrate that they are capable of carrying out the heavy work associated with veterinary practice. In the case of this respondent, she challenged the notion that heavy work can be carried out only by men, and showed her employer that she was as capable of doing all kinds of veterinary work. This could be considered as her conforming to the masculine atmosphere, or her ability to clearly show that gender stereotypes do not actually predict women's actual ability to perform a range of veterinary activities.

Interview respondents did not always speak of veterinarians as possessing bodies with muscles, but also mentioned intellectual capabilities, especially in terms of the value of women veterinarians. One respondent stated that he had worked with a woman veterinarian who "had an advantage [because] ... she is brave and smart, so then there is that balance."

Fíjate que la doctora tiene una ventaja, muy a favor a ella, aparte de que es entrona es lista, entonces ahí se compensa.

Another participant states that,

Aside from being a great professional, a man should strive to form his work team with women because in my experience ...when women are on my team things go right.

Si es hombre que trate aparte de ser de primer nivel que trate de formar su equipo de trabajo con mujeres, porque mi experiencia...siempre que tengo mujeres las cosas salen bien.

In this case, a positive gender stereotype associated with women can benefit their access to veterinary work.

This means that men could also experience gender inequality due to their being identified as ‘bodies’ rather than ‘brains.’ Veterinary science does have hyper masculinity embedded within the profession and it is not always an advantage. As one male respondent mentioned,

In my experience it is difficult to be a man because people see me, they see more the muscular type, the one that performs the job instead of being the leader. For example, it happened when I worked in El Paso, I worked like a medic but I was not paid as such. I would do surgery but sometimes I would go and move hay. Then I would think: am I a doctor? What am I?

Porque las personas cuando me ven, me ven más como el tipo muscular, tipo así como que el que hace el trabajo en vez de dar órdenes. Por ejemplo me pasó cuando trabajaba en El Paso, trabajaba como médico pero no me pagaban como

tal, por ejemplo hacia cirugías pero muchas veces iba y movía pacas. Entonces pensaba ¿soy acaso el doctor o qué soy?

The hyper-masculinity associated with veterinary work thus could both privilege and marginalize men, as male bodies are considered only good for the physical work of veterinary practice. This also refers back to the educational experience mentioned by one respondent above, where men handled the animals and women took the notes. The notion of women as more adept to the intellectual aspects of veterinary practice could become established through such gender divisions, and work to the detriment of men as well as women.

How Both Women and Men Experience the Gendering of the Veterinary Body

To further understand how gendering is experience in veterinary practice, this section considers two interviews in some more depth, and in the process enables a comparison of female and male viewpoints. Interview 6 was conducted with a female veterinarian, who is married but does not have any children yet. She grew up in a rural city in Chihuahua and had previous experience of agriculture. The clinic she works in is situated within an urban area, but she also commutes to rural areas, and her work takes place both in México and the U.S. She thus is experienced with a range of animals, from companion animals to horses and lambs. At the outset of her interview, she mentions that she did not experience gender discrimination within her education as she took it upon herself to not be excluded. *“No, siempre me metía yo en la escuela. Nunca hubo esa separación.”* She thus suggests that gendered socialization can be deliberately circumvented by the individual. But her experiences of veterinary work provide more detail on the way women are put under careful examination until they can prove that they are competent. As she states,

The client tends to go for the man even though the skills they receive or the service provided is the same between most veterinarians. Today, this has changed a little, for example I have work, but clients see that you can do the job correctly and they accept you. They evaluate you to see if you can do the work and they will keep hiring you.

El cliente se va mucho al hombre. Hoy en día ha cambiado un poco, por ejemplo tengo trabajo, pero los clientes ve que uno trabaja bien y si te acepta. Te ponen a prueba a ver si lo puedes hacer y ya te siguen hablando.

This respondent also manages her family's animal feed business. She briefly mentioned that,

It is worse there [in agriculture] ... for example there are a lot of women in veterinary science. In agriculture there are no women there. They [farmers or producers] do not look upon you kindly and they think I am only there with my father.

Ahí es peor...por ejemplo en veterinaria hay muchas mujeres y en agricultura ahí si no hay nada. Te ven feo, piensan que solo estoy acompañando a mi papa...

These instances portray some of the difficulties of being a woman in agriculture and veterinary science, and show that the feminization of veterinary education still has to be reflected in experiences of veterinary practice.

Interview 7 was conducted with a male veterinarian who only works in urban areas. This respondent is also married but does not yet have children. He mentions that men and women feel different pressures within the profession and their practice, but that both do face pressures.

[Equally] if you are a woman or a man, it is a little difficult. If you are a woman, there are men who feel intimidated by women who can hold a dog, carry the dog,

and knows more on how to handle that. And it is precisely in that branch that they practice with large animals. How is it possible that a woman is going to tell me, a cowboy, how to do these things? In my experience, as a man, it is difficult because I feel that people do not take me seriously or for example it has happened a lot that women flirt with me instead of taking me seriously [as a professional].

Igual si eres mujer o eres hombre, si se te dificulta poquito. Si eres mujer, hay hombres que se sienten intimidados que una mujer agarre un perro, cargue el perro, sepa más al manejo de eso y es precisamente en la rama que se dedica a los animales más grandes. ¿Cómo es posible que una mujer me va decir, a mí un vaquero, como hacer las cosas? En mi experiencia siendo hombre, si se me dificulta porque siento que a veces la gente no me toma en serio o por ejemplo me ha tocado mucho que las mujeres coqueteen mucho en vez de tomarme en serio.

This is important to highlight as it shows the way men also feel social pressures so that masculinity in itself is not sufficient to feel in control of one's professional practice. Women are acknowledged as being intelligent beings even though they are not considered to be as strong as men. He mentions that,

...if you go to a dairy farm, the one who is herding the cows is not a woman, it is a man because the task is more physically demanding. For example, I know a place where the boss is a woman, but she is the one who give orders to others, she uses her brain instead of her physical force.

... si tú vas a la lechería, el que está arreando a las vacas no es mujer, es un hombre porque es más trabajo laboral físico. Por ejemplo conozco un lugar

donde la mera mera es una mujer, pero ella en si manda a los demás, ella usa su cerebro en lugar de su fuerza.

This demonstrates how men and women have to negotiate their gender in terms of their work settings, and are held accountable to their gendered performance.

Gendered Futures of Veterinary Science

An important part of interview responses were the articulations of desires for change. Across all interviews, women and men had an idea of what gender equality entailed. Differences between the professionalization of women and men was acknowledged, and a narrative emerged where the future meant equal opportunities and equal pay for women and men. Each one presented strategies for overcoming gender-based obstacles. While they understood that their gender, sexuality, class, and age pose certain restrictions, they look towards a future that will change this situation. After all, they viewed their profession as essential to society and personally satisfying, whether they were men or women. A woman veterinarian stated,

I believe that this profession is beautiful, full of challenges and obstacles, but it is also comforting to help and comfort animals. If you think it is for you, you must do it. It is a very gratifying profession and I simply would not change it for anything.

Creo que es una profesión muy bonita, llena de retos y obstáculos, pero de igual manera es muy reconfortante el poder ayudar a un animal, y pienso que si es algo que tu creas es para ti, debes hacerlo, es una carrera sumamente gratificante y simplemente no la cambiaría por nada.

One male respondent stated that gender differences should not prevent one from building on one's ability to become a professional veterinarian. He states:

If you are a woman, give it everything you have. You have the capacity to do it, to be a first class veterinary medic.

Si acaso eres mujer, pues échale todas las ganas del mundo porque tienes la capacidad de hacerlo, para ser una médico veterinario de primero nivel.

A similar notion of going beyond gender stereotypes was mentioned by another male respondent:

Do not be guided by stereotypes and paradigms that have to do with money or customs that have to do with gender.

Que no guie por estereotipos y paradigmas que tienen que ver con dinero, costumbres que tiene que ver con el género.

Interview respondents therefore anticipated a hopeful future for their profession, one which would continue the positive changes that had already occurred in terms of gender.

Discussion

These interviews have demonstrated the ways in which gender inequalities are experienced within the educational sphere. There were instances where the interactions between students and professors were reinforcing gendered stereotypes or adhering to the masculine traits found within the profession of veterinarian science. Yet, as most respondents stated, veterinary practice is not meant to be gendered. Women are entering in great numbers into veterinary science, yet are subjected to gender segregation through their field practices and upon entering the labor force. Within the sample of this study, more men were attending conferences than women, where conferences tend to be important spaces for cultivating networks and obtaining future work opportunities for professionals in the field.

In terms of practice, relations with clients are the most significant sites for experiencing gender inequalities. Clients perpetuate gendered norms and stereotypes by expecting a ‘male’

veterinarian. In both rural and urban settings, women have to prove their capabilities in the field. In various cases, these women had to perform masculine traits like strength and have values such as determination in order to demonstrate their disposition to be hired. Men were also held accountable to hyper-masculinity traits as they were solely measured in terms of their bodily strength.

Yet, both women and men respondents were hopeful that the profession was changing and that gender disparities would vanish over time. The hegemonic masculinity which characterized professional veterinary practice thus did not seem to characterize the viewpoints of the respondents. The interviews therefore suggest that both women and men are seeking strategies to transform the performance of gender through veterinary practice.

CONCLUSION

The central research question for this study was: How did gender shape experiences of veterinary practice in Ciudad Juárez, México? Overall, women and men respondents were gendered through interactions with clients who hold traditional cultural norms. In some cases, they have adjusted to social norms related to gender within veterinary practice (for instance, in the case of the woman respondent who adjusted the prices of her services to be more competitive); in other cases, they seek to challenge these norms (for instance, in the case of the woman respondent who showed herself to be capable of carrying heavy loads). Both women and men respondents have the desire to change the gender inequalities that characterize their profession, and believe that the change will come through their own efforts.

The theoretical argument of this research is that veterinary practice is characterized by an experience of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005), and interview findings support this argument. My study also supports the argument in Irvine and Vermilya's (2010) study of veterinarians in the U.S. However, my research findings also show that women did not think these limitations placed upon their capabilities were insurmountable. The fact that women had entered male dominant spaces had begun the process of undoing traditional gendered roles (Deutsch, 2007). Despite experiences of inequality, most women respondents expressed that they were content and satisfied with their work and profession. My study supports existing studies which show that even as more women are enrolling in and graduating from veterinary schools, this is not always being translated into professional opportunities, especially in rural settings. Yet, the work women do is not devalued as such. Rather, it is placed under careful examination until it is proven that women can meet the masculine ideal. As Hubbard (1985) states, women had to compromise the education they were receiving by abiding to the patriarchal structures that

have conditioned the female gender to household activities and submissiveness to the male gender (p.92).

Veterinary practice tends to also be shaped by relationships with clients. Clients are an important factor in the success of the professional individual and respond better to “client centered” performances (Kotler and Connor, 1977). At times, these clients seek a male version of the ideal worker (Lincoln, 2010) as was mentioned in my findings. In this sense, women had to embody masculine traits to “fit” this specific mold (West and Zimmerman, 1987, Duncanson, 2015). However, the hyper-masculine idea may work against men, as they are primarily viewed to be good for physical tasks, while women can be viewed as responsible and knowledgeable practitioners. Zimmerman and West (1987) contend that:

The doing of gender is undertaken by women and men whose competence as members of society is hostage to its production. Doing gender involves a complex of socially guided perceptual, interactional, and micro-political activities that cast particular pursuits as expressions of masculine and feminine natures (p.126).

Thus, the ‘doing’ of gender within veterinary science can both reinforce and challenge existing gender roles.

It is important to acknowledge that gender inequalities change through time. Connell (2005) mentioned that men are often the gatekeepers who impose masculinization, but can also be open to feminization. My findings show that male veterinarians are not averse to change and sharing the profession. There simply needs to be an awareness of these inequalities within the educational sphere so that gendered stereotypes are not learned nor reproduced. There are ways in which women and men can break out of processes of gendered socialization and move

forward to provide veterinary services in a way that enhances both care for animals and gender equality within society.

Limitations of Research

There were a few limitations present within this project. I had initially started with the idea of interviewing dairy companies in México. I would have liked to have access to their small dairy farmers so that I could interview these producers. I chose companies based on their location and their history in dairy farming. Before I had an opportunity to tell them about my project, I was rejected by three companies. It might have had something to do with the fact that they did not know me or my intentions as a graduate student. There was only one company that was willing to work with me but, unfortunately, it simply was not enough for a thesis project. As I did not have access to farmers, I shifted my focus to the experiences of veterinarians.

As previously discussed, there were issues with the scheduling of interviews with the veterinarians. Veterinarians seemed to be constantly working and it was difficult to reach them. I offered to meet them after work, but this did not seem to be appropriate as these professionals had long working days and needed their personal time. As such, I had to expand my data collection strategy to include online dissemination of the interview guide which could be self-completed. However, there were issues with this method. I sent out 10 interviews through emails and only two were returned. In another effort to expand my sample, I had decided to move my research across the border into the U.S. I looked into New Mexico as a case study, and was referred to an individual who could contact potential participants. Yet, I found the same obstacles in New Mexico as in Ciudad Juárez. Some veterinarians did not have time to meet for a face-to-face interview or answer emails. I also found that topics that deal with gender or inequalities tend to make individuals uncomfortable which may have limited my sample.

Future Research

Gender norms in México are mostly viewed in a *machista* connotation, but my research has shown that men are also sensitive to gender constructions, not only in the case of women but also in terms of themselves. This study documented a generational shift in veterinarian medicine, in which the older males reflected on some of the discrepancies and gender inequities they had observed over the length of their professional careers. This study therefore suggests that one possible avenue of research is to consider how gender norms are being transformed through the work of both women and men. Moreover, this study can also be considered as having broader connotations for understanding the entry of women into science-based professions as not only leading to a continuation of hegemonic masculinity (Statham, 1986; Smith, 2002; Dryburgh, 1999; Ku, 2011), but also becoming a means to transform gender inequalities in science-based professions. Future research thus needs to develop a framework that better connects gender transformations across education and professional contexts.

This case study of veterinary scientists in México provides an impetus for future research into how veterinary science education and practice can become a site for changing gendered cultures in rural and urban contexts across the Global North and South. This research could be extended to other parts of México and compare them to other places in the Global South. Another research opportunity is to examine connections between women farmers and female veterinarians across the Global North and South. This could lead into the study of clients and their constructions of gender, as well as possible gender framings of local and expert knowledge.

This thesis research has sought to address geographic gaps in social studies of veterinarians by focusing on a case study from México. Its main aim has been to direct attention towards masculinities that characterize scientific professions, and which gender professional men and

women in particular ways. In the process, it has sought to contribute to studies of the social construction and performative practices of gendered bodies through drawing on the voices of veterinarians. It has also sought to provide a framework for future studies on gender and veterinary practice that is attentive to both rural and urban contexts.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Survey

Date:

1. Sex:

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

2. What is your age? _____

3. Identify your current marital status:

- ☐ Single
- ☐ Married
- ☐ Divorced
- ☐ Widow/ Widower
- ☐ Other: (Please Describe) _____

4. Do you have children?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

5. Identify your employment status:

- ☐ Self employed
- ☐ Clinic
 - a. If you work in a clinic, what is your position? _____
- ☐ Academia
- ☐ Other: (Please Describe) _____

6. How many years of experience do you have in the veterinary field? _____

7. Where do you work? Check all that apply.

- ☐ Urban
- ☐ Clinics
- ☐ Field
- ☐ Rural
- ☐ Company

8. From what school(s) did you receive your education? _____

9. What is your specialization? _____

10. What animals do you work with? _____

Appendix B: Interview Guide

Date:

1. What made you enter veterinary science?

- a. How did you prepare to go into this profession?
- b. Why did you specialize in this profession or on a particular animal?
- c. Are you part of any organization? What has been your experience of travelling to conferences?
- d. Did your family support you? Did you have any mentors?

2. What kind of veterinary services do you offer and why?

- a. What kind of animals do you treat?
- b. What has your experience been working with these animals?
- c. Do women and men tend to work with different animals?
- d. Do women and men tend to specialize in different veterinary treatments?
- e. How do gender issues shape your interactions with clients?

3. If you work within both urban and rural settings, how would you compare your experiences in both? How does gender facilitate work in a particular setting?

- a. Where do you prefer to work?
- b. What is the most difficult aspect of your work?
- c. Do women and men tend to work in different settings?
- d. Do you work through companies or with individual farmers?

5. Is veterinary work your only source of income?

- a. If not, please specify what else?

- b. What other sources of income does your household depend on?
- c. Do you think your gender shapes the income you can earn?
- 6. What does gender equality mean to you?
 - a. Does it matter if you are a man or woman in your line of work?
 - b. Have you gained or lost a job opportunity due to gender?
- 7. Any advice that you would want to provide those who want to pursue this profession?

Appendix C: Spanish Survey

Fecha:

Su participación es voluntaria. Si no quieres contestar una pregunta, puedes saltarla.

1.. Sexo:

- ☐ Hombre
- ☐ Mujer

2. ¿Cuál es su edad? _____

3. Identifique su estatus marital:

- ☐ Soltero
- ☐ Casado
- ☐ Divorciado
- ☐ Viudo/Viuda
- ☐ Otro (Por favor describir): _____

4. ¿Tiene hijos? _____

5. Identifique su estatus de empleo:

- ☐ Clínica
 - a.Cuál es su posición: _____
- ☐ Escuela
- ☐ Empresario
- ☐ Otro (Por favor describir): _____

6. ¿Cuántos años de experiencia tiene? _____

7. ¿En donde trabaja?

- ☐ Clínica
- ☐ Zonas urbanas
- ☐ Zonas rurales
- ☐ Compañías
- ☐ Otros

8. ¿De cual escuela(s) recibió su educación? _____

9. ¿Cuál es su especialización? _____

10. ¿Con cuales animales trabaja? _____

Appendix D: Spanish Interview Guide

Fecha:

Preguntas de Entrevista

1. ¿Porque entro a estudiar veterinaria?

- a. ¿Como se preparó para entrar a esta carrera?
- b. ¿Tiene una especialización? Cuál es?
- c. ¿Es parte de alguna organización? ¿Cuáles son sus experiencias cuando viaja a conferencias o convenciones?
- d. ¿Tuvo el apoyo de su familia o de la escuela? (Algún mentor?)

2. ¿Qué tipo de servicio veterinario ofrece?

- a. ¿El servicio ofrecido es diferente entre el profesionista hombre o la profesionista mujer?
- b. ¿La relación con los clientes son diferente cuando el género del profesionista es hombre o mujer?
- c. ¿Cuál ha sido su experiencias con estos animales? ¿Trabajar con animales de especies grandes es más difícil o más fácil?
- d. ¿Los hombres y la mujeres tienen diferente trabajo en cuestión de animales?
- e. ¿Cómo interactúan el género del profesionista y los clientes?

3. ¿El género facilita el trabajo o lo separa de acuerdo a el tipo de trabajo?
 - a. ¿Trabaja en una clínica o en zonas rurales?
 - b. ¿Cuál es el aspecto más difícil de su trabajo?
 - c. ¿Trabaja con compañías o granjeros/rancheros individuales?
4. ¿Si trabaja en los dos lados (urbano y rurales), como se comparan?
5. ¿El servicio veterinario es su único modo de sueldo?
 - a. ¿Si no, cual otro?
 - b. ¿Que otro tipo de apoyo económico tiene?
 - c. ¿Cree que el género afecta el tipo de sueldo o precios que da en su trabajo?
6. ¿ Que significa la equidad de género para usted?
 - a. ¿Importa el género dentro de veterinaria?
 - b. ¿A perdido o ganado oportunidades de trabajo por género?
7. ¿Algún tipo de consejo que le gustaría dar a alguien que también quiere entrar a esta profesión?

Resumen

El tipo de género es una categoría sobresaliente en la profesión de veterinaria. La profesión de veterinaria se ha convertido en una organización de género que ha inculcado diferencias entre hombres y mujeres. Estas diferencias se han institucionalizado a nivel educativo, sin embargo, es una profesión con gran evidencia de que está ocurriendo la feminización (Vermilya & Irvine, 2010). Las mujeres están presentes en gran número, pero todavía tienen que rendir cuentas al género masculino que se encuentra en esta profesión. Mi tesis se enfocó en la forma en que interactúa el género con el trabajo y en la profesionalización de la ciencia veterinaria. Mi pregunta de investigación es: ¿Qué efecto tiene el género sobre las experiencias de la profesión en veterinaria?

Llevé a cabo 10 entrevistas, que incluyeron 8 entrevistas realizadas en persona y 2 entrevistas por correo electrónico. Tuve que incluir entrevistas de correo electrónico porque algunas personas estaban trabajando en el extranjero y no pudieron reunirse conmigo. También hubo algunos problemas con la programación de estas entrevistas ya que estos profesionistas tienden a trabajar 24 horas 7 días a la semana. Se utilizó un cuestionario para cada entrevista. Mis cuestionarios constaban de dos partes: una fue para obtener información sobre sus antecedentes y la segunda fue para obtener información sobre las experiencias reales de veterinaria.

Mi muestra consistió de 4 hombres y 6 mujeres. La muestra varió en gran medida ya que los hombres participantes caen dentro de una categoría de edad mayor y con más años de experiencia que las mujeres entrevistadas. Las mujeres estaban entre los 20s y tenían alrededor de 7 años de experiencia. Esta diferencia en edad y experiencia entre participantes masculinos y femeninos es resultado del método de reclutamiento que utilicé en esta investigación de tesis. El

reclutamiento inició con el contacto con un médico que conozco personalmente, y después me presentó otros médicos en la comunidad. Los participantes que fueron reclutados a través de este método eran ampliamente conocidos en la comunidad y tenían vínculos amistosos por muchos años. Los participantes que fueron referidos posteriormente fueron resultados del reclutamiento de redes profesionales de tales personas. En consecuencia, esto afectó los resultados hasta cierto punto, que será discutido más adelante.

Los participantes fueron entrevistados en sus espacios de trabajo. Estas clínicas están ubicadas en entornos urbanos y por lo general se trasladan a las zonas rurales. Se les ofreció reunirse con ellos después de sus horas de trabajo, pero era más cómodo para los y las participantes hacer las entrevistas en sus clínicas. Sin embargo, eso hizo limitar las veces que podía reunirme con ellos. No podía reunirme con ellos durante el fin de semana, ya que esperaban gran cantidad de trabajo. Por lo general me reuní con ellos durante las mañanas. Sólo hubo un caso en el que se me permitió entrevistar a una mujer durante una cirugía. Irónicamente, el doctor de sexo masculino era quien trabajaba en el servicio al cliente, que ha sido tradicionalmente vinculado a las mujeres. Las otras entrevistas se realizaron en sus “áreas de espera” que regularmente son reservados para los clientes. Algunos participantes estaban muy interesados en mi estudio; otros tenían algunas reservas del proyecto. Creo que esto está ligado a la violencia que una vez estuvo presente en Ciudad Juárez.

Como plan de análisis, codifiqué manualmente las entrevistas para que pudiera crear ciertos temas y comprobar la saturación. Los resultados fueron divididos en cinco temas prominentes los cuales fueron experiencias educativas, las ganancias en la profesión de veterinaria, relaciones con los clientes, el futuro del género en veterinaria y la atribución de género al veterinario. Como tal, estos temas se incluyen con mayor detalle en las siguientes

secciones de este documento de tesis, por lo que he decidido proveer una breve exposición de estos temas en esta sección.

Las experiencias educativas se centraron en cómo el sistema educativo se ha fusionado con el género. Las mujeres declararon que las prácticas de campo fueron divididas en relación al género, ya que sólo se les asignaron tareas tales como escribir notas mientras que a los hombres se les permitió manejar el ganado. Otro hallazgo fue que la institución y su enlace con la comunidad a veces limitaba las experiencias de aprendizaje del hombre y de la mujer. Un veterinario de sexo masculino declaró que, las granjas con las que están en contacto sólo requieren hombres como una forma de hospedaje dentro de la infraestructura de sus granjas. El mismo individuo reconoce que existen otras granjas que sólo quieren trabajar con mujeres, ya que tienden a ser más responsables y cuidan mejor los animales. Estas relaciones hacen limitar las oportunidades a las que estos profesionales están expuestos. Sin embargo, todos los participantes mencionaron que el conjunto de habilidades que reciben del programa son iguales entre hombres y mujeres. Esto significa que la discriminación por género no ocurre durante la preparación profesional en veterinaria, sin embargo, ésta discriminación ocurre durante las interacciones entre los estudiantes, maestros, y clientes.

Por último, también se encontró que sólo 3 hombres de la muestra tenían una especialización a pesar de que todos los participantes tenían mentores o contaron con apoyo familiar durante toda su preparación académica. Estos individuos continúan participando en las conferencias. Esto es importante porque había 7 participantes que no asisten a conferencias y esto podría limitar sus oportunidades de trabajo. Esto no quiere decir que nunca asistieron a conferencias, sino que simplemente no es una prioridad. Lo importante es que cuando las mujeres participantes asistieron a estas conferencias, se mencionó que los principales expositores

eran en su mayoría hombres. Estos espacios, donde se comparte el conocimiento, están ligados a rasgos masculinos a pesar de que asisten más mujeres que hombres.

El salario fue un tema importante, ya que ha sido un tema controversial dentro del ámbito académico. Como ya se había mencionado antes, hay una brecha generacional que afecta la muestra y esto es importante porque los hombres mayores reconocieron que el género cambia la forma en como los individuos están siendo remunerados. Las mujeres más jóvenes, por otra parte creen que no hubo diferencias económicas que les afectan. Sin embargo, he encontrado que estas mujeres tenían que idear estrategias por el pago de sus servicios. Una mujer, que no quiso ser grabada, indicó que tuvo que ser creativa con el fin de mantener sus precios tan bajos para que sus clientes aceptaran pagar. Esto no surgió dentro de las entrevistas masculinas. Estas mujeres profesionales y sus servicios estaban siendo sometidos a una evaluación.

Como es de notar, estos temas se superponen entre sí. Esto sugiere que el género y la mano de obra se han entrelazado con cada uno. Esto es importante porque los salarios están ligados a las relaciones que estos profesionales tienen con sus clientes. Algunas mujeres explicaron que tienen que establecer vínculos con sus clientes con el fin de ser reconocidas. Los clientes eran en ocasiones los que perpetraban los estereotipos de género y las normas sociales sobre los hombres y las mujeres. Estos clientes fueron los que estaban en busca del veterinario “masculino”, a pesar de que actualmente hay más mujeres que ejercen en el campo. Esto también se traduce en los entornos rurales, por ejemplo en las relaciones de trabajo con los ayudantes de los ranchos que no quieren tratar con mujeres veterinarias.

Esto fue otro de los temas presentes en el estudio. Los clientes fueron quienes escogieron el género de los veterinarios. De acuerdo a la bibliografía, se especula que las mujeres adoptan la masculinidad con el fin de desempeñar las funciones de los veterinarios. Una vez más, las

mujeres tenían que idear estrategias para ser aceptadas en el campo. Por otro lado, los hombres encontraron que estas relaciones con los clientes reafirman los estereotipos de masculinidad. Un veterinario de sexo masculino declaró que no fue visto como el médico en varias ocasiones. Era visto como un cuerpo que tenía que hacer el trabajo pesado. Estos profesionales trabajaron duro para obtener sus títulos y quieren utilizar su capacidad para ser reconocidos.

El último tema trata con la igualdad de género. Se pidió a todos los participantes describir lo que significaba para ellos la igualdad y proporcionar consejos para los que en un futuro entraran a la práctica. Todos los participantes mencionaron que la igualdad de género tenía que ver con la igualdad de salarios y oportunidades de trabajo. En México, los hombres no están negando la entrada a las mujeres al campo de trabajo. Esta ideología de masculinidad se encuentra arraigada dentro de las instituciones, lo cual es difícil combatir (Connell, 2005). Sin embargo, todos ellos mencionaron que uno puede trabajar duro para ser considerado un gran médico y no limitarse debido a los estereotipos de género. Hay esperanza para el futuro, en cómo los hombres y las mujeres pueden trabajar juntos para crear una profesión, en la que ambos estén incluidos y tengan las mismas oportunidades. Simplemente es necesario que haya un conocimiento de estas desigualdades dentro del ámbito educativo para que los estereotipos de género no se adquieran durante la preparación académica ni se reproduzcan durante el servicio profesional. Hay manera en que las mujeres y los hombres pueden romper las reglas de la sociedad que tienen que ver con el género y seguir adelante para proveer servicios veterinarios de una manera que mejore tanto el cuidado de los animales y la justicia en la sociedad.

VITA

I have a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, and with the completion of my thesis will have a Master of Arts degree in Sociology. I have broad interests in sociology, political science, and law. My M.A. thesis was based on gender and labor in México specifically focusing on veterinary practice in Ciudad Juárez and its rural surroundings. I presented my work at the UTEP Women's History Month Conference 2016. I have been a research assistant since 2015 on a project dealing with gender and dairy farming in Kenya, and have completing various tasks including transcribing audio interviews, entering survey data in Excel, maintaining accurate records of interviews, and safeguarding the confidentiality of subjects. I have also supervised a grant based pilot program for UTEP freshman in 2014 which assisted students in their coursework needs through a set of tutoring sessions, and have worked as a Technology Support Specialist providing workshops on the use of video editing and web developing software.

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