

# *Temporeras* and shifting gender relations in Chile's fruit industry

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## **ABSTRACT:**

This paper analyses the incorporation of women in Chile's fruit industry and the impact of this on gender relations in the documentary *Ethical Court no more violence against women in the workplace* (2011), produced by the National Association of Rural and Indigenous Women ANAMURI, with further subsidies from fieldwork interviews with the *temporeras* carried out in February and March 2011. There is evidence of the feminisation of that seasonal labour force and a partial reconfiguration of gender relations within households.

**Keywords:** *Temporera*. Chile. Gender. Labour. Feminisation of agriculture.

## **Introduction**

The expansion of female employment in the fruit-export industry is one of the most unprecedented and dramatic phenomena of the neoliberal model implemented in Chile during Pinochet's military dictatorship (1973-1990) (LAGO, 1987; VALDÉS; ARAÚJO, 1999). With the increase of fruit export production, women were incorporated in seasonal, cheaper and deregulated employment, as *temporeras*. The concept of *temporera* carried "political and ideological baggage as it represents the most unprotected sector of workers and illustrates the extreme effects of the neo-liberal model on the labour market" (BEE; VOGEL, 1997, p. 85).

The economic liberalisation and the counter agrarian reform, key features of Pinochet's policy, led to the rapid expansion of capitalist export-oriented agriculture. Land expropriated during Frei Eduardo (1964-1970) and Salvador Allende (1970-1973) agrarian reform was "reconcentrated in the hands of medium-sized growers, who took advantage of state credits, U.S. technology transfers and the near-total repression of organised labour" (TINSMAN, 2006, p. 12). The dispossession and displacement of large numbers of peasant and indigenous communities reinforced the urbanisation of Chile and contributed to the creation of a new rural-urban labour force, dependent on temporary waged jobs.

Chile's major changes in the countryside have deeply impacted the structure of society. The oppression faced by women is deep-rooted not only in the patriarchal culture, but also in a dehumanised system that has generated social exclusion and inequalities to the detriment of economic growth and accumulation. Women's histories clearly reveal that Chile's integration within a global economy has a high social cost. Behind the international acclaimed Chilean grapes and its refined wine there is a taste of poverty and dehumanisation.

It was the condition of poverty, political repression and the increase in demand for female labour in the fruit industry that brought women to the forefront of the economy, which has notably shaped gender relations in the countryside. Heide Tinsman (2000) demonstrates that the political repression of male unionising activities<sup>1</sup>, the necessity to work as *temporeras* in the fruit industry, the resistance against exploitation, the organisation in rural unions and the struggle for democracy have together had a considerable influence on changing some traditional patterns in gender roles. During

the dictatorship, women's wages gave them relatively increased authority within their households and in their relationships with men in comparison to the past and during the agrarian reform. Nevertheless, Tinsman argues that it was not the miserable work conditions that increased women's power, but the access to work and wages on a par with men's. Also, it was not State terrorism that contributed to women's organisation, but their previous involvement in agrarian reform, even in the role of mothers and wives and their ability to struggle for democracy and human rights.

Based on the documentary *Tribunal Etico "no más violencia hacia las mujeres en el trabajo"* (*Ethical Court "no more Violence against Women in the Workplace"*) – part 1 and part 2, produced by the Asociación Nacional de Mujeres Rurales e Indígenas (ANAMURI) – National Association of Rural and Indigenous Women, and fieldwork interviews with *temporeras* and leaders of ANAMURI, carried out in February and March 2011, this study analyses to what extent the incorporation of women in the fruit industry has led to gender emancipation. It examines the conditions under which women have been integrated into the economy and the impact of this on gender relations. In this study I hypothesise that the feminisation of agriculture has generated a "subalternising emancipation". I borrow this term from Else Vieira (2011). Vieira has described subalternising emancipation in the context of Brazilian migration to Europe, and its feminisation. In the international division of labour, Vieira argues, women's integration in the labour market via informal economy represents a gain in terms of economic capital, but the exploitative condition and the declining social capital describes a paradoxical process which she has coined "subalternising emancipation".

In this regard, taking patriarchy and capitalism as profoundly heterogeneous and contradictory, rather than as coherent systems, Tinsman (2000, p. 154) underlines the contradictory ways female waged work, even though exploitative, might affect women's lives in a positive way, such as the increase of their power in family relations<sup>2</sup>. In the specific case of the *temporeras*, their work has empowered women and changed some elements of gender relations, but this has happened under precarious and dehumanised working conditions, including double exploitation, in the workplace and at home, since women continue to bear the burden of housework and child care.

## **Dramatic changes in Chile's countryside**

The shift in women's working condition must be contextualised within the dramatic changes that Chile has undergone since the 1960s, particularly during the 1980s. Chile's history of the *latifundio* and *inquilinos* system changed dramatically with the implementation of an ambitious and revolutionary agrarian reform with a socialist and nationalist orientation, undertaken by the Salvador Allende government of Popular Unity (UP) (1970-1973), which combined strong state action and peasantry agencies. Radical political action, through unions' organisations, strikes and occasional land seizures, which had started earlier under the agrarian reform of Eduardo Frei (1964-1970)<sup>3</sup>, increased the political power and the importance of the *campesinos* movement in the shifting agrarian context<sup>4</sup>. Allende's agrarian reform substantially reduced land concentration – 55.3 per cent of existing farms with over 80 "basic irrigated hectares" (BIH) in 1965, were reduced to 2.9 per cent by 1972<sup>5</sup> – but, gender-wise, persisting exclusionary legislation barred women from direct participation and benefits (GARRET, 1982).

The coalition of domestic right-wing forces and the military put an abrupt and violent end to the major advances achieved in Chilean society during previous years<sup>6</sup>. Pinochet's counter-agrarian reform became a key factor in his neoliberal policy, designed to destroy the reformed sector and peasant organisation<sup>7</sup>, in order to eliminate opposition to the implementation of a more flexible and

competitive agrarian system, based on market efficiency and temporary wage labor. According to Kay (2002), with the liberalisation of the land market, a new process of land concentration increased the number of farms over 80 “basic irrigated hectares” – BIH, from 16,9 per cent in 1979 to 26 per cent in 1986. In fact, almost half of the original agrarian reform beneficiaries were expelled due to the privatisation of the reformed sector (KAY, 2002)<sup>8</sup>.

Kay (2002, p. 480-1) argues that Chile’s neoliberal changes have had a strong influence on Chilean agriculture and work conditions. The agro-export model, especially with the boom in fruit exports, encouraged land concentration since capitalists’ entrepreneurs bought land from peasant farmers who did not have the capital to take part in this economic context. Murray (2006, p. 669) demonstrates that small farmers are compressed “by global competitive forces and by the withdrawal of state support systems dismantled by neoliberal programmes and policies”, which have to a large extent persisted under the Concertación government. These processes had a dramatic effect on the composition of rural labour<sup>9</sup>, especially in terms of gender, with the increase of temporary jobs (KAY, 2002). “Today, the majority of people work in seasonal wage labour, in the industries, because the countryside has largely been industrialised with all these grapes” (C. A., *temporera*’s union leader, interview, 2011)<sup>10</sup>.

“The neoliberal agro-export model has led to an increasing shift from permanent to seasonal wage employment as well as to a feminisation and urbanisation of rural labour markets” (KAY, 2002, p. 481). In fact, Pinochet’s model of economy impoverished the peasantry and made countless landless workers dependent on poorly paid, temporary waged jobs in the fruit-export industry. Valdés (1994, p. 40) demonstrates that an estimated 42.8 percent of the rural sector was qualified by indigence or extreme poverty in 1990. In the context of widespread impoverishment, “rural households became economic and labour units wherein all family members have complementary responsibilities” (LAGO, 1987, p. 25). More importantly, the emergence of the fruit-export industry led to a predominantly female work force (BEE; VOGEL, 1997; DEERE; LEON, 1997; TINSMAN, 2000). Nevertheless, the degree to which women became involved in the productive process depends on the social differentiation of rural workers. This is conditioned by “specific forms of capitalist expansion and by specific labour requirements of the dominant regional productive industry” (LAGO, 1987, p. 26).

Pamela Caro (Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo de la Mujer (CEDEM), interview, 2011) shows that around five to six hundred thousand Chileans work in the fruit industry. Two hundred thousand are permanent; the other four hundred thousand are temporary workers. In 1992-1993, it was estimated that permanent employment in the fruit industry was 95 per cent male; and the seasonal labour force was 52 female (BARRIENTOS, 1997). In the Aconcagua Valley it was found that over 70 per cent of employment in packing was female (RODRIGUES; VENEGAS, 1989, apud BARRIENTOS, 1997, p. 79). Men’s work in the fruit industry in Chile tends to be concentrated in field work, which is more stable, with less flexible employment conditions. Even though many work as *temporeros* during harvest, this seasonal work is however, predominantly feminine. Women are also heavily involved in fruit packing, which is also seasonal and involves the longest working hours. ANAMURI demonstrates that around 70 per cent of women work without written agreement, under the role of the contractors (CIPER, 2007). Another important dimension is the temporary internal migration of women. Many live in urban areas and commute to the rural ones during the harvest and packaging period, usually from December to March. Such intense internal displacement will be seen to have a great impact on family and gender relations.

## Hidden stories of Chile's fruit industry

Chile is often seen as a model for other countries in Latin America, and its 'miracle' fruit-export economy proclaimed. Nevertheless, behind the success of Chile's export-led growth model there lies a "hidden ingredient" – a huge army of female temporary workers, the *temporeras*, who have largely been marginalised and unrecognised by employers, the media and governments (BARRIENTOS, 1997, 1999). Behind the exotic fruits and the famous Chilean wine distributed worldwide, there are many stories of violence against human beings, which have been denounced by women, through their organisation.

Since 2002 the National Association of Rural and Indigenous Women (ANAMURI), the major women's movement in the countryside, formalised in 1998, has carried out a campaign to denounce the violation of rights of the waged workers in the countryside. ANAMURI represents not only an important political space that addresses gender and agrarian issues, but also one of the most representative and active movements of Chilean peasant and indigenous organisations (SCHWENDLER, 2011).

In 2009, ANAMURI instituted an Ethical Court "No more Violence against Women in the Workplace", as part of a World Campaign "For an End to Violence Against Women", launched in 2008 by *La Via Campesina*<sup>11</sup>, which is an international alliance of peasant and family farmer organisations, rural women and indigenous people from the Americas, Asia, Europe and Africa (DESMARAIS, 2009). The integration of ANAMURI with transnational social movements has substantially contributed to enhanced publicisation of gender and class struggle. Alicia Muñoz, ANAMURI's president, states that: "In our meeting in the Latin American Congress of the Latin American Co-ordination of Rural Organisations<sup>12</sup>, we realised that we need to indict the transnational companies, taking the oldest cases of people from different countries and bringing them to the public's attention".

The basis for the establishment of an Ethical Court were the cases of temporary workers who died in work accidents. In its documentary, ANAMURI (2011) demonstrates the significance of safety labour and denounces the indiscriminate use of agrochemicals and pesticides. Importantly, it has been evidenced that not only the women who work in the agro industry will be affected by the use of agrochemicals, but also their families and the communities who are living around them. This may have contributed to Chile's high rate of cancer problems and congenital abnormalities. "Here in Casa Blanca, 80 out of 100, are dying from cancer" (B. F., *temporera's* union leader, interview, 2011).

Alicia Muñoz (Documentary, 2011) advises that the delicious fruits that can be eaten all over the world carry a high social cost; and this cost is the women and their children. For women to be able to work as *temporeras* their children are often abandoned. This can be clearly seen through the emotional testimony of Ingrid Rivera's, who has been working for over 25 years in temporary waged jobs. "The work of the *temporeras* is not easy.... for me to work I need to leave my daughter under the care of relatives... Now, she is 18, but she grew up without seeing me" (Documentary, 2011). This is a general pattern faced by the *temporeras*, who must give up on their relationship with their children. "The children stay alone. During the harvest time I used to leave my home at 7 am and returned at 7am or 8am on the following day. I had seven children and I needed to feed them" (C. N., *temporera's* union leader, interview, 2011). The union leader S. M., who has been working for over 20 years as a *temporera*, also states that:

We, the *temporeras* go out early in the morning... we do not know if our children are going to school, if they have breakfast or lunch. We do not know because we were all day working... When we come home tired, after we had worked

all day for a minimum wage, we need to cook for the following day, to do all the housework, to see if the children have done their homework, and so on... (Interview, 2011).

Despite the fact that childcare provision has been institutionalised by SERNAN (Servicio Nacional de la Mujer)<sup>13</sup>, it provides the “particular demands of capital and the export-oriented economic model for a temporary labour force, more than it meets women’s gender-specific needs to enter the labour force” (MATEAR, 1997, p. 101). Actually, the *temporeras* continue to rely on the family network, combining double shifts, which deeply modifies motherhood for both mothers and children.

Gender discrimination and “symbolic violence”, a term I borrow from Bourdieu, are also in place in the fruit industry’s temporary jobs. Pamela Caro (documentary, 2011) argues that because of these gendered conditions, women face bigger drawbacks in comparison to men; one is the labour threat. There is much evidence of sexual harassment in the workplace. What is worse is the fact that if a woman refuses or questions it, immediately the labour threat will be in place. “If you want to keep your job you must go out with the boss. Otherwise, he will fire you” (Ximena Callardo, *temporera*, documentary, 2011). “For the young women to continue to work, the supervisors take advantage of the situation” (C. N., *temporera*’s union leader, interview, 2011).

The feminisation of the agribusiness in Chile is based on precariousness, informality and flexibility of labour relations. Deere (2005) argues that women are the ideal social subject for carrying out all forms of flexible labour, since they have been socialised to combine productive and reproductive work. In the context of Latin America, where neoliberalism is related to the decline of unions and the rise in poverty and unemployment, the incorporation of women into the economy has been made with “primitive or savage flexibilisation”<sup>14</sup>.

In fact, the category of *temporera* is part of the most unprotected and deregulated jobs, which embodies the “salarisation of poverty” (VALDÉS; ARAUJO, 1999), since it regards a precarious labour sector, with a high degree of social vulnerability. The *temporeras* report the dehumanised conditions of labour. “There is a specific time to start, at 1 pm, but there is no time to finish the working day, because it is determined by the production. When there are many grapes, we finish at 3:00 am or 5:00 am” (C. A., *temporera*’s union leader, interview, 2011). “The law allows eight, plus two hours. But, here, it is not respected. And people accept it because they need it, and they always want to get more” (M. T., *temporera*, interview, 2011).

Essentially, remuneration is defined by productivity. It depends on the amount they produce, not on the number of hours they have worked.

It is a deal. They say that if we do a certain amount, they will pay us the minimum wage. Bu if we do more they pay more. But the target is so high that we do not achieve it... and if we do not reach the minimum they will fire us... Many times, women work without a contract, accepting less than the minimum wage, 2000, 3000 pesos. And how can I say to them, do not accept it, if this is the money for their food (S. M., *temporera*’s union leader, interview, 2011).

Caro (interview, 2011) states that the tenancy *inquilinaje* model disappeared in Chile, but its culture persists. The oligarchic, authoritarian and paternalistic culture has remained in the modern entrepreneur. In fact, the administrative framework changed and Chile has pioneered flexible and deregulated working relations. Importantly, deregulation, flexibility and the precariousness of temporary labour might be institutionalised through the *Temporeros* Statute, which has been proposed

by the Permanent Round Table of the Fruit Sector, which clearly favours agribusiness<sup>15</sup>. It proposes that the working day can be extended to 12 hours. This can be seen as a clear measure to allow the fruit industry companies to adapt their needs to contingent situations regarding demands of the labour force. From a different perspective, ANAMURI and the Confederación Nacional Sindical Campesina y del Agro – RANQUIL<sup>16</sup> (2011) have an alternative proposal which considers a working day of 8 hours, with shifts, which implies that the industry increase the number of employees.

The statute does not represent the *temporero*, the peasant organisations who were involved in the round table do not represent us... We are workers and human beings; we are able to work only a certain number of hours. We cannot be exploited more than that. They are treating us as animals. If the agribusiness men need more, they must employ more people (S. M., *temporera's* union leader, interview, 2011).

Another element, which is not mentioned in the Statute, is the precarious conditions of work and the insufficiency of supervision.

In Casa Blanca we work the legal hours, but they go without so much security and hygiene, that is: we work without toilets, water, and a place to eat or to warm up our food... The Concha Y Toro for instance is a famous export company, but until 2 or 3 years ago, when I worked there, the *temporeras* still worked under these conditions and for a minimum wage (S. M., *temporera's* union leader, interview, 2011).

There are wine factories that have the Certification of Quality. However, they do not have the work instruments people are still eating on the floor and the water is not clean. The companies are not responsible for work accidents (B. F., *temporera's* union leader, interview, 2011).

The *temporera* M. T. (interview, 2011) states that in San Esteban changes regarding conditions of work were introduced when international organisations demanded the enhancement of the quality for export. However, despite some changes in the fruit industry, there are many labour rights that are still infringed, like the right to nursery school, prior and post maternity leave, the right of unionisation and collective negotiation. "Here, we have minimum rights. The few which are established by the labour code are not complied with, because there is no satisfactory supervision" (S. M., *temporera's* union leader, interview, 2011).

Another problem faced by the *temporeras* is the issue of organisation. Their testimonies reveal that many seasonal workers become afraid of being part of unions, or even of taking part in meetings promoted by unions, or working with union leaders. Ximena Callardo (Documentary, 2011), shows that after she started to become informed about labour rights many companies wouldn't give her a job.

I worked as a *temporera* from 1982 to 2007. Since then, they have not given me a job because I'm a union leader. We are marked in the companies... With all this repression, people are afraid to take part in unions. They have families to sustain (B. F., *temporera's* union leader, interview, 2011).

We have been organised for over four years as trade unions. Five days after we became organised they fired all of us. I was fired four times, in seven weeks, by the same boss. It was always the same with union leaders. They know me, and

where I'm going, they fire all of us. Thus, my comrades would not invite me anymore; otherwise they will end up without a job (S. M., *temporera's* union leader, interview, 2011).

The *temporera* M. T. (interview, 2011) states that “it is so difficult to talk to the *temporeras* about unionisation. Some workers were persecuted. They become afraid of losing job opportunities”. This I could witness during my field work. I went to the VI Region to take part in a meeting for seasonal fruit workers organised by ANAMURI. No one came. ANAMURI's leaders hypothesised that the workers were afraid to participate in meetings, because they could lose the opportunity to remain in their jobs. Also, we did not succeed in our attempt to visit a packing house, where fruits are processed prior to distribution to market. Alternatively, I could visit a packing house in the III region, which supports more advanced work conditions, as a result of the *temporeras* union's organisation. Additionally, due to the lack of labour force in this region, and the high demand of the fruit industry, the workers have more power to enter into collective negotiation. This region also has better wages in comparison to the other regions.

Now it is different. We got many benefits through our struggle. There were no tables. We used to eat on the floor. In 94, it was the first time that they gave us lunch. It is like food for animals, but at least they give us food and water... There are changes because now women know how to defend themselves, but now the seasonal period is shorter, because they replace the workforce by using chemical products (C. N., *temporera's* union leader, interview, 2011).

Valdés (2010) argues that the seasonal workers have not taken part in the agribusiness unions because they do not have permanent jobs and have indefinite contracts, which means that they are excluded from the main channels of collective negotiation, in order to change capital and labour relations. However, despite adverse conditions, ANAMURI and the *temporeras* trade unions have been challenging the exploitation and the precariousness imposed by the fruit industry. Undoubtedly, women who are unionised highlight the significance of their organisation, particularly regarding citizenship. “Women who are in unions have more access to information, they know their rights” (B. F., *temporera's* union leader, interview, 2011). Nevertheless, the *temporera's* union leader S. M. reports that “under these working conditions, it means a great effort for the *temporeras* to take part in meetings. Therefore, to expect that they raise consciousness about their exploitation and take part in a class struggle is not an easy task”. The *temporeras* are afraid of losing the few gains they have. Additionally, there is evidence that the conditions of exploitation are so deep that other gender issues become marginal in their organisation.

## **Impacts on gender and household relations**

The category of the *temporeras* embodies shifting identities, which has had a profound impact on gender and household relations. The modernisation of agriculture and its incorporation into the global economy modified the gender division of labour and, consequently, the traditional pattern of family, in which women were associated with the home and men with productive work (VALDÉS, 2007). In fact, women's incorporation into the rural labour force as *temporeras* deeply modified the social and material sense of rural manhood and the basis of male dominance. “It was not that fruit work automatically shifted gender relations. Rural women had always made vital financial contributions to

the family” as unpaid family work. Nonetheless, after 1973, “cash wages were increasingly becoming the only means by which large numbers of rural people survived” (TINSMAN, 2000, p. 165).

Agricultural work was no longer touted as a means by which *campesinos* asserted a mature masculinity but instead came to represent the degradation of men and the exploitation of women. Breaking still further with the agrarian reform’s ideal of men providing for women, the new fruit work suggested new forms of gender parity in hardship. Paid work was now something that both men and women did. The realities of poverty implied that women and men needed to share the burden of sustaining households, collaborate in making ends meet and identify with each other’s common experiences of abuse (TINSMAN, 2000, p. 159-161).

Contradictorily, the feminisation of seasonal labour force, even under precarious work conditions, has contributed to the empowerment of women. It has been evidenced that women’s economic autonomy is crucial for the development of social, political and individual autonomies. Bee and Vogel’s research (1997) suggests that despite hard work and unprotected conditions, working in seasonal jobs is desirable to women, who have the opportunity to earn a substantial amount of money and renegotiate gender roles within their households. They tend “to earn more than men in agricultural jobs during the peak season, but less during the slack season” (JARVIS; VERA-TOSCANO, 2004, p. 11). Women’s control over a significant proportion of the household income increases their participation in the decision-making process and their autonomy relative to their male partners.

Caro (Documentary, 2011) argues that agro industrial work is a significant means of changing this. The *temporeras* now have an income that they have never had before, which could contribute to their empowerment, economic autonomy and freedom. “We have always worked. But we were ignored, invisible. The issue was that they paid my husband, as he was considered my boss” (Alicia Munoz, ANAMURI’s President, interview, 2011). Under the system of *hacienda* which persisted in Chile until the mid-1060s, women’s role was seen to be dependent on her husband’s position as *inquilino*, permanent resident worker<sup>17</sup>. This made women’s contribution to the labour of the estate invisible. It also led to women’s exclusion from access to land in their own right; such discrimination persevered into the period of agrarian reform (BEE; VOGEL, 1997). In this context, access to wage and control over purchases has given women the conditions with which to challenge men’s established privileges that relate earning money to having authority at home, to spending and to personal indulgence (TINSMAN, 2006).

I came from a time in which women were more subaltern. They followed what men said. The women helped in the struggle, but the men gave the orders. Now the ideas are shared, and women do not ask for permission. Now, there is more gender parity, women can work and decide about their money (*R. C., temporera’s union leader, interview, 2011*).

In Chile, it is visible that “things have changed because now women know how to defend themselves. They work and have their own money”, as acknowledged by the *temporera’s* union leader C. N. Nevertheless, the fundamental aspects of gender inequalities are still preserved, which are deep-seated in “patriarchal gender regimes” (JACOBS, 2010). Silvia Walby shows how gender inequalities have been reproduced through both the domestic gender regime – “based upon household production as the main structure and site of women’s work activities and the exploitation of her labour and



sexuality and upon the exclusion of women from the public” –, and the public gender regime – “based, not on excluding women from the public, but on the segregation and subordination of women within culture, sexuality and violence” (WALBY, 1997, p. 5).

Generally, the incorporation of women into the labour market does not change their responsibility for domestic chores<sup>18</sup>. They are present in the public arena as social subjects with individual rights, but subordinated to different gender inequalities, discrimination and exploitation. In addition, they continue being constrained by the burden of domestic roles, which are reproduced by gendered ideologies and *habitus* (BOURDIEU, 1990). “In the *temporeras* home it is rare that men share the burden of housework” (S. M., *temporera*’s union leader, interview, 2011).

In the fruit industry, there are many tasks that are done by both male and female. But, when they come home, for instance, the woman does the housework. The woman must do her tasks: she cooks, washes, and does all her chores and the man rests... There are women who sleep two or three hours per day, because after an abusive working day in the fruit industry, they are responsible for all domestic chores and child care... I haven’t heard any one of my colleagues saying that their husband would cook the meal, no (C. A., *temporera*’s union leader, interview, 2011).

Bee and Vogel’s research (1997, p. 93) suggests that “while household relations remain largely unchanged in the face of rapid and dramatic economic transformation in the national economic environment, some household relations appear to have been reworked”. Actually, the modern coexists with the traditional, in which, on the one hand, women share with men the burden of sustaining households through paid work, but on the other hand, the traditional is rooted in a culture that resists the flexibilisation of gender roles. Nevertheless, the new generation is more open to change (VALDÉS; ARAÚJO, 1999, p. 270-271). Multifaceted elements must be considered in order to analyse this process. How deep the patriarchal culture is reinforced or challenged in each family; how the notion of gender equity is incorporated through generations; how the flexibilisation of masculine and feminine roles is accepted or rejected within households; to what extent gender consciousness has been raised inside families, unions and women’s organisations.

Despite the fact that domestic chores and childcare remain a feminine responsibility, there is a visible re-signification of traditional practices and the integration of new gender roles. In this context, the incorporation of the notion of gender equality related to equal opportunities and rights has played a significant role for the reconstruction of gender practices and representations through generations. Walby (1997) states that gender restructuring shapes women differently according to their location not only in class and ethnic relations but also within different household forms, and generational differences. “The new generation help each other more. In the oldest generations, all domestic chores become the women’s responsibility. The men feel tired” (M. T., *temporera*, interview, 2011). The *temporera*’s union leader R. C. (interview, 2011) also states that

it is very difficult for women, because they come home tired, and they need to do housework, and cook for the following day. In some places the men help, but in others they don’t because the men are very relaxed. Also, there are many women who are alone.

Another issue that has been recounted by the *temporeras* is that there are many women who are alone with their children. Maria Cartagena, *temporera*’s union leader in the III region, states

that “the majority of women who work in the fruit industry are single mothers”. Frequently, they play the role of being the lone breadwinner. In some cases, by law, men pay a pension. But, as many of them work without a contract, the application of the law has become more difficult. The *temporera*’s union leader B. F. (interview, 2011) also reports that: “My husband disappeared because he went off with another woman. It is common that men abandon their wives, who are left alone with the children”. According to Ximena Valdés (Director of Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo de la Mujer (CEDEM), interview, 2011), this pattern is rooted in the cultural matrix that has shaped Chile’s history since early colonisation, particularly during the nineteenth century, when Chile was involved in many wars; men crossed territories and women were left alone. However, during Allende’s government, the state developed the modern family model, based on social protection, which broke with the model of nomadic men. Valdés also underlines that during the 1930s, one third of children were illegitimate. Currently, over half of children are still born “outside” marriage.

The rate of divorce has also increased as women have economic autonomy and have been more informed through social networks in the workplace, mass media and unions. During the 1980s, feminist struggle was crucial for the institutionalisation of the law against violence. The *temporera* S. M., a victim of domestic violence before getting a divorce, stated that: “there is domestic violence, but now women know better how to denounce this”. Despite the advances, she criticises the lack of social protection.

Valdés (2007, p. 295) argues that the issue of violence that marked the old and intermediate generations has been challenged by the new generations, mainly because women have increased their power to negotiate gender relations and it has been questioned in the public sphere. Private lives have become a public concern, which has limited masculine power and authority.

Hegemonic masculinities have been challenged as more equalitarian gendered authorities emerged. Nevertheless, the empowerment of women combined with the erosion of the masculine status of authority has led to tension, and in some cases to violence, since masculine posturing sometimes becomes more aggressive as part of a sense of powerlessness and lack of control over women. Masculine violence is embedded in a patriarchal culture, which contradictorily represents power and the absence of control over women.

The constructions of masculinities and femininities as a result of the feminisation of agriculture must be understood within wider and multiple structures of power. Mahler and Pessar’s “gendered geographies of power framework” (2001) provides some guidelines for analysing “people’s gendered social agency – corporeal and cognitive – given their own initiative as well as their positioning within multiple hierarchies of power operative within and across many terrains” (PESSAR; MAHLER, 2003, p. 818). The authors demonstrate that gender is embedded and operates across multiple spatial and social scales, such as the body, the family and the state, in which gender ideologies and relations can be strengthened or rearranged. They also show how social location, in terms of class, race, sexuality, nationality, generation and gender, placed in a historical context, affects people’s lives and how their agency is affected by their social location, expectations and initiatives.

Women’s incorporation into the fruit industry combines economic and symbolic representation with regards to gendered power. Women’s waged work has not only contributed to the reduction of poverty, but also to the creation of new forms of sociability and to the progressive change of the power relations within households. This represents a new element of flexibilisation of masculine and feminine roles, in which the “notion of shared authority within household is one of the most explicit changes in gender relations as a result of modernity” (VALDES; ARAÚJO, 1999, p. 234).

## Conclusions

Data obtained from the documentary and from fieldwork interviews reveal that women's organisation in trade unions and in the National Association of Rural and Indigenous Women has been crucial for the understanding of their rights, getting access to information, which has contributed to the challenging of some features of their exploitative working conditions and in some cases to the renegotiation of gender and household relations. Women have become the protagonists of their own stories. Considering Chile's history, there are clear signs of progressive gender emancipation, even under exploitation. Their visible and significant role in the economy has created the conditions for their organisation. Nonetheless, due to their history of repression and new forms of authoritarianism, many women (men as well) are still afraid of taking part in unions.

The feminisation of agriculture, through the category of *temporera*, has challenged the patriarchal gender regimes, which are still strongly in place. To some extent, the *temporeras* are moving from a domestic gender regime, in which they were confined to their home, to a public gender regime, in which they are subordinated to different gender inequalities, exclusions and exploitations. There is evidence that, even under precarious work conditions, the feminisation of agriculture has empowered women, fostering the phenomena of subalternising emancipation.

Women's incorporation into the fruit industry gave them economic autonomy, which has significantly increased their participation in the decision-making process and contributed to the renegotiation of gender relations in households. However, to a great extent, it has not changed women's responsibility for domestic chores and child care, which usually leads to them working a "double shift" and to their exploitation. Despite this fact, there is a visible re-signification of traditional practices and the integration of new gender roles through new generations, who have easily incorporated the notion of shared authority within households and gender equity related to equal opportunities and rights.

## As *temporeras*: mutação das relações de gênero na indústria frutífera do Chile

### RESUMO:

Análise da incorporação da mulher na indústria frutífera chilena e seu impacto sobre as relações de gênero no documentário *Tribunal Ético no más violencia hacia las mujeres en el trabajo* (2011), produzido pela Asociación Nacional de Mujeres Rurales e Indígenas – ANAMURI, e com subsídios adicionais de entrevistas com *temporeras* durante pesquisa de campo de fevereiro a março de 2011. O estudo evidencia uma feminização dessa força de trabalho sazonal e uma reconfiguração parcial das relações de gênero no âmbito das famílias dessas mulheres.

**Palavras Chave:** *Temporera*. Chile. Gênero. Trabalho. Feminização da agricultura.

## Notas explicativas

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<sup>1</sup> The repression of rural unions broke the political vehicles by which working-class men had challenged the authority of elite men. The militant strikes and massive land occupations, which were essential in the agrarian reform, disappeared. Repression eliminated the social spaces in which *campesino* men developed the male class militancy.

- <sup>2</sup> The author argues that “exploitation narrative has paid insufficient attention to patriarchy and to gender relations other than those structurally related to coercing women’s labour” (TINSMAN, 2000, p. 154).
- <sup>3</sup> The Christian Democratic Eduardo Frei (1964-1970) implemented an agrarian reform programme with a dual purpose: restructuring the agrarian property regime to sustain the capitalist modernisation of agriculture and deal with the social exclusion of peasants.
- <sup>4</sup> Kay (2002) demonstrates that the number of agriculture workers belonging to unions rose from 2,000 in 1965 to more than 140,000 in 1970. In 1973, before the coup, peasant unionisation reached 280,000 affiliates. Under Allende, “the peasantry gained a political thrust and importance that had never before been asserted in national affairs” (BELLISARIO, 2007, p. 2).
- <sup>5</sup> According to Kay (2002), the main goal of Allende’s agrarian policy was the elimination of the *latifundia* through the expropriation of all farms over 80 “basic irrigated hectares” (BIH).
- <sup>6</sup> The military killed, imprisoned and tortured thousands of *campesinos* and other revolutionaries. Peasant unions were repressed and many of their members were killed.
- <sup>7</sup> “A labour code instituted in 1979 officially eradicated most of the political leverage the Chilean working classes had won since the 1920s. In the countryside, it strangled the rural organising efforts begun under the agrarian reform, which had unionised more than a quarter of a million *campesinos* by 1973. The new legislation so greatly restricted organising requirements and labour actions that it effectively made *campesino* unions illegal” (TINSMAN, 2000, p. 149).
- <sup>8</sup> Tinsman (2002) demonstrates that the military junta dismantled the CERAS (Agrarian Reform Centres) and many *asentamientos* (settlements) returned over one third of expropriated land to former owners; a third of the agrarian reform land was auctioned to elite and middle-class entrepreneurs, which led to the development of fruit-export oriented agribusiness; another third of the agrarian reform land was redistributed to individual peasants in the military concept of land reform, in which one third of these peasants were forced to sell their parcels to larger growers – they could not afford the unfair competitive market due to lack of credit and technical incentives and the increase of their debts.
- <sup>9</sup> “While in the early 1970s about two-thirds of agricultural wage labour was permanent and a third temporary, by the end of 1980s these proportions had been reversed” (FALABELLA apud KAY, 2002, p. 481).
- <sup>10</sup> The *temporeras* will hereafter be cited through pseudonyms and initials, in order to preserve the anonymity of their life history shared during the interviews.
- <sup>11</sup> *La Via Campesina*, in its Fifth International Conference and the Third Women’s Assembly held in Maputo, Mozambique in October 2008, acknowledged the “relationship between capitalism, patriarchy, machismo and neo-liberalism, in detriment to the woman, peasants and farmers of the world”. They decided to break the silence on these issues and launched the World Campaign “For an End to Violence Against Women”.
- <sup>12</sup> *Coordinadora Latinoamericana de Organizaciones del Campo* – CLOC. The majority of rural social movements that belong to CLOC are also integrated with *La Via Campesina*.
- <sup>13</sup> SERNAN, Chile’s state institution responsible for the gender demands, created the Childcare programme for children of *temporeras*, which provides childcare during the peak season (December –March).
- <sup>14</sup> This process has been analysed by Lara Flores (1995).
- <sup>15</sup> In January, 2011, representatives of agribusiness men and peasant organisations who took part in the Permanent Round Table of the Fruit Sector handed the new proposal in to the Ministry of Labour Evelyn Matthei.
- <sup>16</sup> RANQUIL is a national confederation, a union organisation in defence of peasant and rural waged workers.
- <sup>17</sup> “In exchange for the residence, the *inquilino* was obliged to work on the estate, as were other members of his family” (BEE; VOGEL, 1997, p. 84).
- <sup>18</sup> They usually combine them especially because they work in seasonal jobs. However, in certain circumstances, they re-negotiate gender roles. For instance, the opposition from the male partner usually changes after female contribution to the household income.

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