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Labour Conditions of Female Seasonal Workers in the Cherry Harvest in Chile

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Dedication

A las mujeres que trabajan en la agricultura. Aquellas mujeres que han dedicado parte de su vida a hacer labores fundamentales para la sociedad, no siendo reconocidas por este sistema económico.

To women who work in agriculture. Those women who have dedicate part of their lives to carry out fundamental work for society, not being recognized by this economic system.

Con esta tesis espero visibilizar las historias no contadas desde sus voces, haciéndoles un reconocimiento público.

With this thesis, I hope to make the untold stories from their voices visible, giving them public recognition.

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List of Acronyms

BCN	<i>Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional del Chile</i> (Library of National Congress)
CAF	<i>Censo Nacional Agropecuario y Forestal</i> (National Agricultural and Forestry Census)
CASEN	<i>Encuesta de Caracterización Socioeconómica Nacional</i> (National Socioeconomic Characterization Survey)
DOE	Department of Epidemiology
FONASA	<i>Fondo Nacional de Salud</i> (National Health Fund)
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GVCs	Global Value Chains
INE	<i>Instituto Nacional de Estadística</i> (National Statistics Institute)
NENE	<i>Nueva Encuesta Nacional de Empleo</i> (New National Employment Survey)
NIDL	New International Division of Labour
NTAXs	Non-Traditional Agricultural Exports
ODEPA	<i>Oficina de Estudios y Políticas Agrarias</i> (Office of Agrarian Studies and Policies)
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
WTO	World Trade Organization

List of Spanish Concepts

<i>AL DÍA</i>	Fixed daily compensation payment structure.
<i>A TRATO</i>	Piece rate payment structure.
<i>CHANCHADA(S)</i>	Chilean slang for a fraudulent behavior.
<i>CHANCHERA(S)</i>	Chilean slang for a fraudulent person.
<i>IMPOSICIÓN(ES)</i>	Social security payment.
<i>TEMPORERA(S)</i>	Female agricultural seasonal worker(s).
<i>TEMPORERO(S)</i>	Male agricultural seasonal worker(s).
<i>TOTE(S)-CAPACHO(S)</i>	A bag used to store fruit during harvest.
<i>TRATERA</i>	<i>Temporera</i> who gets compensated via a piece rate payment structure.

Glossary

CASEN	A survey that is carried out every two years in Chilean households to find out the socio-economic situation of households. The national population is divided into five equal groups according to income levels. Each cover 20% of the population. As a result, households are located from the first quintile to the fifth quintile, the first being the lowest income and the last being the population with the highest income.
FONASA	Is a Chilean public agency that finances health services of the population amongst other things. An employee contributes to 7% of its wage to the fund. This contribution can be made either directly to FONESA or a private institution. Most of the working population contributes to FONASA.
NENE	A survey that aims to determine the employment status of people living in Chile. The survey is conducted annually, phasing differs per region.
SPUR(S)	Center of fruit development, where there are buds that will produce fruit and leaves. A structure that gives it light and obtains nutrients can produce fruit and leaves for several years.
STEM(S)	The fruit pedicel that is the link between the parent tree and the fruit, serving as a vital conduit for delivering nutrients and water to the fruit (Cui <i>et al.</i> , 2022, p. 1). The cherry stem is the green part of the cherry, which is an excellent indicator for determining whether cherries are still fresh (Palma <i>et al.</i> , 2021).

Abstract

This study focuses on the labour conditions of female seasonal workers in the Cherry harvest in Chile. This research describes their working conditions, analysing their impacts, perceptions, and resistances through the stories and experiences of 21 seasonal women. The main findings of this study are the resistances and the power they have in the production chain. However, the essential part of this research is that it gives a voice to indispensable workers in the global cherry chain.

Relevance to Development Studies

This study presents the voices of a fundamental workers in the cherry market. Which, in turn, labour with precarious working conditions, impacting their lives to meet the requirements of consumers in the global north, increasing the capital of companies. Several quantitative data in this area and institutional instruments account for the national agricultural reality. However, this study is relevant because it reveals their working conditions, listening to their impacts, perceptions, and resistance beyond a number.

Keywords

Agricultural Seasonal Workers, Gender, Global Value Chains, Labour Conditions, Non-Traditional Agricultural Export

Chapter 1

Contextualization

Introduction

Since the 70s, with the change to neoliberal policies, Chile became of great agricultural importance globally, being a relevant actor in producing fruit for export. Currently, the country is the biggest cherry exporter on the planet (Valenzuela, 2022), distributing 80% of its production mainly to global north. To increase productivity, the Chilean Cherry market in the year's high season¹ uses seasonal contracts (Bamber and Fernandez-Stark, 2016, p. 475). The National Agricultural and Forestry Census (CAF) in 2007, directed by the Office of Agrarian Studies and Policies (ODEPA) indicated that in the cherry orchards, 28,48% of the workers have permanent contracts, and 71,52% work temporarily from November until Abril (ODEPA, 2012, p. 56). The harvest is the stage with the most labour demand.

Women had an essential role in export agribusiness (Barrientos *et al.*, 1999, p. 1). Nevertheless, the previous results of the CAF 2022 directed by the National Statistics Institute (INE) indicate that more than 90% of women who work in agricultural jobs have contracts of three months or less (INE, 2022), working mainly as seasonal workers. As a general characteristic, seasonal work is challenging to plan since it is an irregular and heterogeneous job, hard to prepare the schedule before, and with a dynamic work demand; therefore, temporary workers are needed at a specific time and place (Vargas, 2022, p. 129). According to a human development report of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) (2008, pp. 14-15) on rural Chile, temporary employment is not chosen but is found as the only option. As UNDP points out, who does not work by skills but by disposition: it is unskilled work, because that is a lower social category. So, the information mentions that it is the option for those who do not have any options.

This study focuses on the working conditions of female seasonal workers in Chile's cherry harvest due to the rise in female engagement in seasonal agricultural employment and the nation's cherry production's explosive expansion. Additionally, it displays how the conditions are seen, how the work affects them, and how they resist. Finally, the results are presented through the voices of the participating.

The study has five sections. First, it relates the historical context of the country and its agricultural importance at a global level. Subsequently, the theoretical framework presents different concepts of the Global Value Chains (GVCs) in the production of Non-Traditional Agricultural Exports (NTAXs), which will support the analysis of results. The third chapter describes and justifies the methodology used. Finally, the last two chapters present the results, which relate women's experiences with the previous sections. These describe how the current neoliberal policies of the country, with the sexual division of labour, make the working conditions of female seasonal workers more precarious and continue to enrich them to benefit the most privileged.

¹ The country's high season is from the end of November to the beginning of March.

Background to the Proposed Study

This chapter discusses the cherry's participation on a national and international scale, as well as its various features that need to be considered for this study. It is divided into the following four sections: first, are presented the characteristics of cherry cultivation at the national level. The country's involvement in international agriculture is then described, along with Chile's current engagement in that market. Lastly, the harvest's qualities. Lastly, this study considers seasonal workers, national labour laws, and the reasons for studying women who work during the harvest.

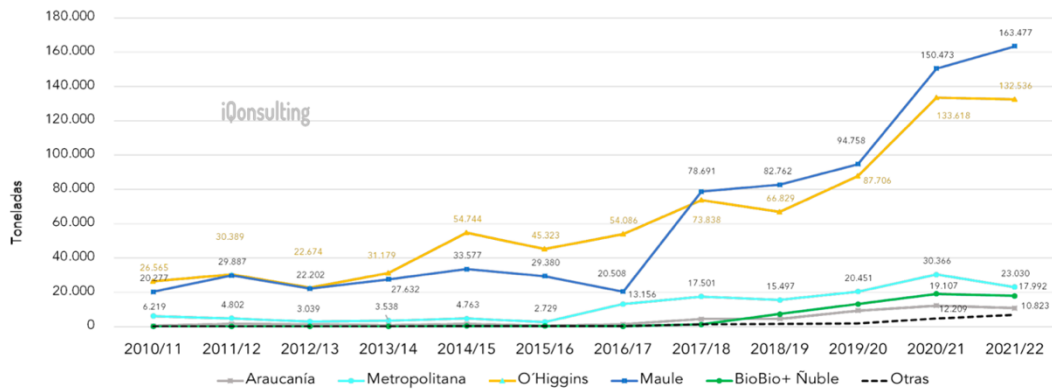
1.1 National Cherry Production

Chile is a country located in the south of Latin America, with a population of approximately 19.000.000 inhabitants mostly living in urban areas, distributed in 16 regions (Appendix 1). The most important economic sectors are (copper-)mining, services, and agriculture. Agriculture only accounts for 4,4% of the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2007 (Foster *et al.*, 2022, p. 5). However, its modest GDP contribution does not reflect the employment opportunities this sector creates (ODEPA, 2017, p. 48). At a regional level, more specifically, the O'Higgins and Maule regions, where most of Chile's agricultural economic activity takes places, the importance of the sector is unmistakable. There, the sector contributes almost 15% to the regional GDP, generating more than 22% of jobs opportunities (ODEPA, 2017, p. 48).

One of the sectors that stand out in agriculture is the fresh fruit industry, being this of importance to employment, GDP, and presenting new investment opportunities (Bain, 2010, p. 347). In 2018, 347.973 hectares of land were used to produce fresh fruit in Chile (Apey, 2019, p. 7). The primary products by land-use were table grapes, walnuts, and cherries respectively (Apey, 2019, p. 7). During the last 20 years, the cultivation of cherries has been having a sudden growth (IQonsulting, 2022, p. 12). In 2018, 36.605 hectares of arable land were used to grow cherries (Apey, 2019, p. 7); in 2023, 59.000 hectares are projected for cherry farming (Trebilcock, 2020), and for the 2026/2027 season, the production of cherries will double with 830.000 tons (IQonsulting, 2022, p. 11).

During the season 2020/2021, the production of this crop was concentrated in the O'Higgins and Maule regions, mainly due to the availability of water (IQonsulting, 2022, p. 12). Graph 1-1 details the distribution of cherry production by region over time, highlighting the concentration of cherry production in the O'Higgins and Maule regions and the significant growth of cherry farming over recent years.

Graph 1-1: Cherries, Chile. Exports by Region of Origin in Tons²



Source: IQonsulting, 2022, p. 12

1.2 Chile in the International Cherry Market

From 1973 to 1990, Chile lived under the military dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet. He began a neoliberal economic policy, a regime that has continued until the current government (Murray, 2002, cited in Bain, 2010, p. 347). During that time, with this economic system, “the state supports policies that generate favorable conditions for the development of a profitable and competitive agricultural sector capable of competing in the global economy” (ODEPA, 2005, cited in Bain, 2010, p. 347). This is how in the 70s, the country, culminated in growth in agricultural exports (Deere, 2008, p. 110), becoming a leader in the international market of fresh fruit (Murray, 2002, cited in Bain, 2010, p. 350).

Under this neoliberal economic policy, some comparative advantages favouring the rapid expansion of fruit exports were made visible. Those included climate and the terrain, and others were related to the country's level of development, reflected in the availability of good road infrastructure in central Chile (Barrientos *et al.*, 1999, p. 3). The adoption of technologies and innovation from California (United States of America), and the entry of transnational companies facilitated the use of agricultural advances for fruit production and new methods to prolong the shelf life of the products during export to other countries (Barrientos *et al.*, 1999, pp. 3-5). Nevertheless, these policies favoured some sectors and people in the country, but not all agricultural participants (Gwynne and Kay, 1997, p. 3).

Large-scale producers were advantaged in the production of crops for exports (Gwynne and Kay, 1997, p. 4). However, only a limited number of small-scale farmers began growing them due to the high risk associated with producing these crops and the disadvantageous position of small-scale farmers due to the high investment demand (Kay, 2006, p. 474). Some of them, were forced to sell their fields to larger companies or transnationals (Murray, 2002, cited in Kay, 2006, p. 474). Therefore, due to the policies peasants disappeared (Gwynne and Kay, 1997, pp. 7). In parallel, to reduce personnel costs, improve products, and incentivize customer focus, the working conditions were made more flexible (Echeverría and Uribe, 1998, Urmeneta, 1999, *Dirección del Trabajo*, 1999, Echeverría, 2010, Ramos, 2009, Ramos, 2013, cited in Cárdenas, Correa, and Prado, 2014, p. 2). This involved banning

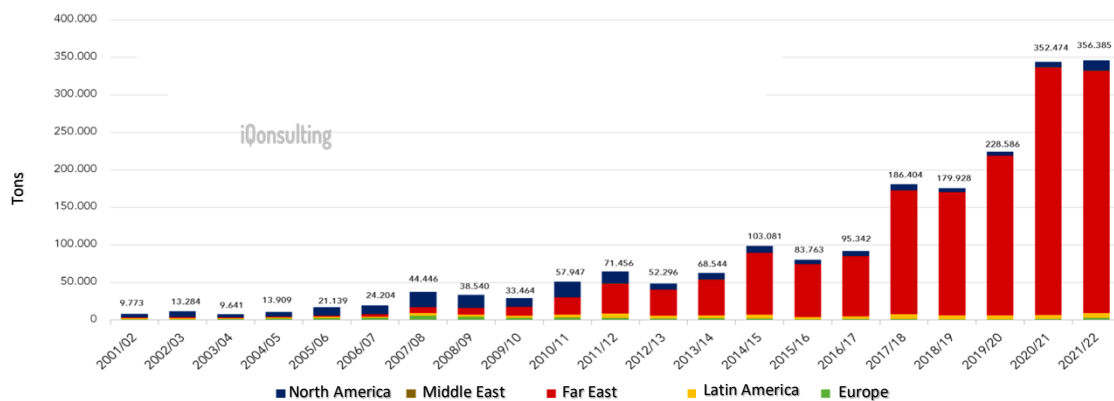
² The illustration is a translation from Spanish. The original graphic can be found in the reference.

unionization, weakening the organization of the workforce (Tinsman, 2004, pp. 261-262), which continue to have remnants today (Riquelme, 2015, p. 89). As such, Chile remains to have comparative advantages related to the workforce due to its availability and productivity, favouring the competitiveness of Chilean exports in sectors with high demand for labour (Vargas, 2022, p. 127).

In 2017, more 60% of total fruit production in Chile was destined for export, making Chile the largest exporter of fresh fruit in the southern hemisphere, and world leader in the export of blueberries, grapes, and cherries (Domínguez *et al.*, 2019, p. 81). In the 2021/2022 season, the country remained the largest exporter of cherries in the region, accounting for 95.7% of the export supply (IQonsulting, 2022, p. 9). The exponential growth of worldwide cherry demand, which is predominantly fuelled by Asian demand and particular from China, is shown in

Graph 1-2 (IQonsulting, 2022, p. 14). In 2021/2021 season, China accounted for 88.1% of the total Chile's (IQonsulting, 2022, p. 14), generating USD 1.700 million for Chile, according to the United States Department of Agriculture (Lee, 2022). That great demand from China for Chilean cherries is the product of its intense red, which is given as a gift during the Chinese New Year (January 22) (Santander, 2021). If the cherry did not have that coloration, the Asian demand could be lower (Olave, 2020).

Graph 1-2: Cherry, Chile. Exports per Season in Tons³

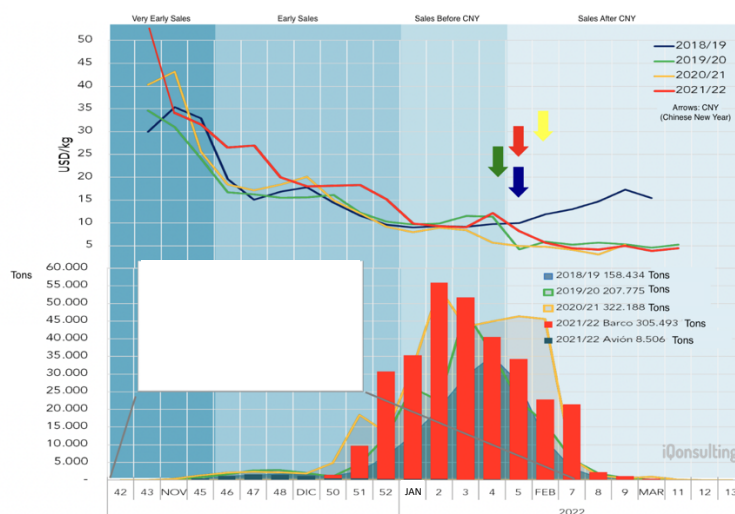


Source: IQonsulting, 2022, p. 11

To maintain a profitable cherry business and to sustain growth, producers must be productively efficient, understanding this concept as “achieving maximum output from given resources” (Elson, 1999, p. 618). To achieve this, producers take into consideration that the price of the fruit varies per market, cherry variety, date of arrival, size of the fruit, among others (IQonsulting, 2022, pp. 22-34). As an example, the Graph 1-3, shows the behaviour of Chilean cherry prices in the Chinese market. It shows that, to achieve better prices in the cherry business, producers need to arrive at destination early. With this, it is implied that during the cherry harvest, the profitability of the market will depend on several factors that are controlled in some way during that stage.

³ The illustration is a translation from Spanish. The original graphic can be found in the reference.

Graph 1-3: Cherry, Chile. Weekly Arrivals and Average Prices in China⁴



Source: IQonsulting, 2022, p. 22

1.3 Characteristics of the Cherry Harvest

The main characteristics of cherry production is that the harvest cannot be mechanized because the fruits are “particularly delicate” (Zoffoli, 1995, p. 3), with a significant risk of loss of quality leading to an inability to export the product. Several problems can occur during the harvest stage, resulting in loss of fruit quality. Some of them are: “pitting” produced by a hit because of the manipulation of the fruit (Candan and Gomila, 2008, p. 3), and the cherry must be harvested within the first five days from its maturity (Correia *et al.*, 2018, p. 5) with its stem (Appendix 9). Regarding the export, the harvest is the most critical stage for post-harvest processes (Zoffoli, 1995, p. 3).

Cherries are typically harvested from November until March, which is the high season for agriculture in the country. Cherries are typically harvested in the morning to prevent the dehydration of the fruit (Johnson and Vesely, 2021). To prevent the mistreatment of the fruit is done in individual bowls (IQonsulting, 2022, p. 4), in a “*capacho*”, “*tote*” or a bucket, that can store between two and nine kilograms, depending on the delicacy of the variety of the cherry. Mainly the workers must pick cherries using ladders from orchards that can reach 6 meters in height (Long *et al.*, 2015, p. 4). Roughly 60% of the annual operating costs come from agricultural workforce; 30% of those costs are attributable to the harvest (Salamanca, 2016).

⁴ The illustration is a translation from Spanish. The original graphic can be found in the reference.

1.4 Seasonal Agriculture Labour Harvest

1.4.1 *Temporera* or *Temporero*

Different classifications for seasonal workers in Chile have been proposed. In research by Caro (2012, p. 153), there are three kinds of women who work in an agricultural seasonal job as a *temporera* in Chile: (1) Summer *temporera*, who work two or three months, during the harvest peak, which matches with the school holidays of their children. (2) Long *temporera*, who work between four and eight months, starting before December, working in different jobs at the same company; and (3) False *temporera*, who works between 10 and 11 months, renewing the contract every year. Another study suggests seasonal employees worked for three to six months, specifically from December to March (Barrientos *et al.*, 1999, p. 5).

This study will consider as a *temporera* or *temporero*, all people who do not have an indefinite employment contract and work as seasonal workers on specific activities related to fruit production. It is important to mention that although this study focuses on *temporeras* during the harvest, seasonal workers are required throughout the year for activities such as pruning, budding, tying, orthopaedics, and thinning. Moreover, during the summer, they can work in the cherry harvest, picking the fruit or preparing and packaging the fruit (Flores, 2020, p. 36). As such, this research focuses on *temporeras* who work during the harvest season in the orchard at the first stage of the GVCs (Appendix 7).

1.4.2 The Chilean Norm

In Chile, all workers should have a contract. The norms for Chilean workers are anchored in the Labour Code. This document defines seasonal agricultural workers as: all those who perform transitory or seasonal tasks in land cultivation, commercial or industrial activities derived from agriculture and in sawmills and wood exploitation plants and other related (*Dirección del Trabajo*, 2018, p. 60). People who work seasonally sign a contract that ends after the required work (in this case, the harvest). With such contract, they have their rights, such as toilets, availability of water, Social Security payment, legally protected (Appendix 6).

Seasonal workers are recruited and hired as temporary workers, either directly by the companies or via an intermediary. Contractors are most used as intermediaries (subcontracting regime) (Caro, 2012, p. 170). The contractor manages the contracts, pays social benefits, and gives orders to the workers (Foster and Aguirre, 2015, p. 71). Suppose the leading company hires workers through a contractor. In that case, its role is responsible for providing hygienic and occupational safety services and taking charge of the payments in case the contractor does not comply (Foster and Aguirre, 2015, p. 78).

1.4.3 Why study female seasonal workers?

The proportion of temporary jobs in agriculture has been increasing over the years compared with indefinite contracts (Silva, Valdés, and Foster, 2022, p. 165) and have played an essential role in the development of agriculture (Anríquez *et al.*, 2016, p. 1). The most significant number of national seasonal workers work in the fruit harvest (Anríquez and Melo, 2015, p. 54), the cherry harvest being one of the most labour-intensive (Valdés, 2020, p. 51).

Women have not been exempted from joining agriculture; however, there are several studies that have shown that they participate mainly as seasonal workers (Anríquez, 2015, p. 22; Silva, Valdés, and Foster, 2022, p. 162). The previous results of the CAF 2022 indicate that 257.436 women have agricultural jobs (INE, 2022). Nevertheless, more than 90% of them have contracts of three months or less, whereas only 52.1% of men belong to that group (INE, 2022). In 2017-2018, the proportion of women working as seasonal workers in fructiculture even increased to 93.4% (ODEPA, 2020, p. 14).

According to the CAF 2007 and the New National Employment Survey (NENE) 2010–2011, the proportion of women working during the high season declined from February due to the start of the school year for students under the age of 15 years (Caro, 2012, p. 151). However, during the off-season, from May to July, temporary female workers outnumber by a factor of two permanent female workers, demonstrating gendered labour segregation (Caro, 2012, p. 151). Additionally, according to the 2013 Census, women earn less money due to less work time and discrimination based on gender (Anríquez *et al.*, 2016, p. 1). This is a dichotomy; several authors indicate that women played a fundamental role in the development of agriculture in Chile (Deere, 2008, p. 111; ODEPA, 2017, p. 206), they are rewarded with a different treatment based on their gender.

The Chilean agricultural labour market has not been well studied (Anríquez *et al.*, 2016, p. 1). Concerning quantitative methods, only nine years ago, seasonal workers participated in a representative survey (Anríquez and Melo, 2015, pp. 46-47). Unfortunately, that survey had no gender perspective, causing bias against women. On the other hand, many female qualitative studies have been done in-depth, but few have had their voices heard. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to study women who work in the cherry industry as it is growing exponentially and remains labour-intensive. It is urgent to understand the impacts this work has on their lives, perceptions, and the forms of resistance they have, listening to their voices.

Chapter 2

Theoretical Framework

Introduction

This chapter has two sections. The first explains how globalization makes the working conditions of agricultural workers in exporting non-traditional products more precarious. While the countries and the producer from the global north raise their capital accumulation, the workers of the global south have precarious working conditions. The second section presents how, through the sexual division of labour, the production of non-traditional products further deteriorates the conditions of women. Finally, it ends with the benefits agricultural work brings to women, without forgetting the precarious conditions they face.

2.1 Working Conditions in the NTAXS

The process of globalization is characterized by GVCs, which can also be described as the set of actions carried out by workers and companies to produce a product from the cradle to the grave (Gereffi and Fernandez-Stark, 2011, pp. 2-4). Such value chain becomes global when the actions are “carried out in inter-firm networks on a global scale” (Gereffi and Fernandez-Stark, 2011, p. 4). The GVCs are the ones that produce most products worldwide supplying the world population, nevertheless, have created adverse effects on people's working life conditions and labour practices, including “**exploitation, low wages, dangerous sites, unsafe materials, excessively long hours, intimidation and sexual harassment**” (McCarthy, Soundararajan, and Taylor, 2021, p. 2052). These situations will be discussed in this study.

GVCs of food production and distribution have been studied under the **food regime concept**. This concept “historicised the global food system: problematising linear representations of agricultural modernisation, underlining the pivotal role of food in global political-economy, and conceptualizing key historical contradictions in particular food regimes that produce crisis, transformation and transition” (McMichael, 2009, p. 140). The food regime presents forms of the geopolitical system, generating an organized vision of the different forms of capital accumulation and power connectors (McMichael, 2005, p. 276). There have been three food regimes since the 1870s; the most recent, named the “corporate food regime”, which started in the 1980s and is still in development, is based on the neoliberal global order, regulated by the World Trade Organization (WTO), and structured under a free trade regime between countries, with persistent implicit norms that favour the northern hemisphere's nations (McMichael, 2009, pp. 141-148).

The **third food regime** is a fundamental carrier of global development since, through economic liberation, it supports measures such as the low value of the currency, the decrease in agricultural support, and the greater corporatization of the market (McMichael, 2005, pp. 270-271). Defining the price of products, the agricultural products in the international trade, are very different from their cost, through dumping and overproduction policies, making farmers more likely to be dispossessed during the creation of global agriculture (McMichael, 2005, pp. 270-271). Dispossessed peasants became company employees, or

unemployed, generating national and international migration (Otero, 2013, p. 62). Due to the magnitude of people available for labour, wages decreased, making working conditions more precarious (McMichael, 2005, p. 289). Therefore, from the standpoint of political economy, various studies show that maintaining a food regime is associated with industrialization, favouring the preservation of wealth accumulation and the abuse of workers (McMichael 2013, Friedman, and McMichael 1989, cited in Legun, 2015, p. 4).

The fruit and vegetable industry has experienced one of the fastest increases in global commerce during the past three decades (McMichael, 1997, cited in Selwyn, 2007, p. 527), making these products an important element on the current diets (Le Heron, 1993, cited in McMichael, 2009, p. 149). In Chile, during the 1990s, fresh fruit was the main agricultural export product of the country (Gwynne, 1999, p. 213). This market is named the “Non-Traditional Agricultural Exports (NTAXs)” (McMichael, 1997, cited in Selwyn, 2007, p. 527), where **“non-traditional refers to a product (commodity) that has not been produced in a particular country (or region) before, to a product that was previously produced for domestic consumption but is now exported, or to traditional products produced to meet the needs of new markets”** (Barham *et al.*, 1992, p. 43, cited in Selwyn, 2007, p. 527). Regarding these products, the globalization processes have benefitted some part of the population, but they also have disadvantaged other parts. From a positive perspective, globalization gave residents in developed nations access to food that was not readily available elsewhere (McMichael, 2009, p. 150).

From a negative perspective, NTAXs production generated a dependency factor for countries in the global south, having an entry restriction for the farmer and, therefore, a risk factor. Many Latin America countries based their economic growth and political economy on the increase in the production and export of these products, which has generated a **dependence of these countries of the global south on the countries of the north** (Gwynne, 1999, pp. 212-213). One dependency is generated using advances in production, including chemical technology, by transnational companies from countries with advanced economies (Gwynne, 1999, pp. 212-213). A second dependency generated by **global export regulations and by the third regime is the increase in exports of “high value products (meats, fruits and vegetables)” from southern countries to northern ones, a situation that has forced southern countries to import basic products such as grains** (McMichael, 2009, p. 148).

The GVCs of NTAXs products have high domination by multinational companies; therefore, the same corporation is present in many countries; this has allowed standardized productions generating products with the “same variety, color, shape and size”, regardless of the country of origin, a situation that has enabled consumers in developed countries to have access to uniform products throughout the year (Barrientos *et al.*, 1999. p. 23). **These high-quality standards and the demand for a homogeneous production have generated high risks for the producers and precariousness** in the working conditions of the workers. According to Barrientos (2001, p. 88) a study made in Africa and Chile on fresh fruit export finds that this market requires products in perfect condition; otherwise, it could lower the price, causing a high risk for producers. She mentions that to reduce the risk, the producers manage the costs through seasonal workers' wages, having flexible salary systems varying from one week to another, concerning the productivity of each worker. That allowed the producer to reduce costs, a situation that would protect the producer when selling the merchandise to large buyers who, at the time of negotiating, will lower the purchase price in their favour. As she mentions, seasonal labour is the only section of GVCs where producers

can reduce business risks. Additionally, a study carried out in South Africa **on export fruit indicates that worldwide incorporation and political change have had difficult effects for producers and workers, which has generated a restructuring in the hiring of agricultural labour, and increasing flexible contracts, to meet production schedules and maintain labour costs low** (Kritzinger, Barrientos and Rossouw, 2004, p. 36). The globalization of the markets through the power of negotiation in the production time and the price of the product generates precariousness in the working conditions, reducing wages and increasing insecurity of the most vulnerable workers in the GVCs.

The precariousness of working conditions related to the development of NATXs and GVCs, can be explained through **New International Division of Labour (NIDL)**. The NIDL is an innovation of capital, which, reinforced by the conditions for expansion and accumulation, has resulted in the developing strategies of multinational companies and not independent countries (Frobel, Heinrichs and Kreye, 1978, p. 131). During the 1960s, many conditions for the expansion and accumulation of capital were met; with the support of an advanced transport and communication system, the world market encompassed developed and underdeveloped countries, the former increasing their capital and the latter participating in the manufacture of products (Frobel, Heinrichs and Kreye, 1978, p. 130). The NIDL enabled the relocation of the productive sectors, from the “core” to the “periphery”, in search of cheaper labour and greater profitability by developed countries, locating in third-world countries (Raynolds *et al.*, 1993, p. 1102). The first condition, according to Frobel, Heinrichs and Kreye (1978, pp. 126-127) was the existence of the green revolution, which left a large labour force reserve in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, allowing developed countries to pay less in salaries, which does not make it possible to cover the costs of generating a new workforce, nor the costs of workers exhausted by the burdened labour, which was covered by informality. As they mention, **this precariousness** is related to physical exploitation, with long and intense hours, also carried out by children and extreme poverty, allowing developed countries to have the same productivity with lower costs, the flexibility of contracts, and a greater choice in personnel selection. According to them, a second condition was the development of technologies that allowed **moving final or intermediate products faster and cheaper, making it possible to fragment production and, therefore, hire unskilled labour at each stage. In other words, the production and organization of work, and technology, would be supporting the processes of expansion and accumulation of capital** through the lower price for production, considering the different salaries in different countries and the skill of the workforce (Frobel, Heinrichs and Kreye, 1978, p. 128). Although the NIDL concept is related to the manufacturing industry (Gordon, 1988, cited in Friedland, 1991, p. 19) the increase in the production of NTAXs has had a slightly different evolution, but with the similar consequences (Barrientos *et al.*, 1999, p. 26). In the past, developed countries did not have access to NTAXs products. However, the current new form of production and export allows countries in the global north to access these products throughout the year because the production sectors, integrated into the GVCs, rotate according to the year's season (Barrientos *et al.*, 1999, p. 26). **Although the latter is different from the manufacturing industry because its production centers are static, the consequences of the search for cheap labour have also brought with it “insecure, flexible, low-paid employment”** (Barrientos *et al.*, 1999, p. 26). According to Sanderson (1986, cited Raynolds *et al.*, 1993, p. 1103), global agricultural firms have united both hemispheres through a uniform production and corporate operations. Nevertheless, he notes (1986, p. 17) that is less organized, more mobile, less expensive, and ineligible for social programs.

The type of experiences mentioned is part of human negligence, which can be avoided in favour of the care of the worker. Nevertheless, Hirschman (1970, p. 1) indicates “under any economic, social, or political system, individuals, business firms, and organizations in general are subject to lapses from efficient, rational, law-abiding, virtuous, or otherwise functional behavior”. According to the degree of repression, they are experiencing, the workers can switch between different forms of resistance, including “formal-informal, individual-collective, public-anonymous, those that challenge the system of domination-those that aim at marginal gains” (Scott, 1985, p. 299). However, Scott (1985, pp. 29–33) notes that the working class and peasants use “everyday forms” against those who want to “extract labor, food, taxes, rents, and interest from them” because of their lack of power, requiring a minimal level of organization. According to Scott, it is an informal type of resistance that looks for quick gains, usually for its own's profit and often in secret, avoiding conflict with the ruling classes or law enforcement and best defending one's interests.

Returning to what was declared in the “corporate food regime”, it is pointed out that capital accumulation is favoured over the protection of workers (McMichael 2013, Friedman, and McMichael 1989, cited in Legun, 2015, p. 4). However, the workers are not passive and have an agency; thus, workers have power in the GVCs. Wright (2000, p. 962) remarks workers have “associational power” and “structural power”, referring to the first as “the various forms of power that result from the formation of collective organizations of workers” and the second as the “power that results simply from the location of workers within the economic system”. Silver (2003, p. 13) separates “structural power” from “marketplace bargaining power” and “workplace bargaining power”. She mentions that the first “results from the strategic location of a particular group of workers within a key industrial sector”, and it can take various forms, among them the possibility for workers to withdraw from work and support themselves with money from other sectors. She indicates that “workplace bargaining power” is “the power that results from the strategic location of a particular group of workers within a key industrial sector”. This last could be linked with the “bullwhip effect”, referred to as a minor interference in the GVCs; its effects increase as it progresses through the process (Selwyn, 2007, p. 549). These concepts are related to the cherry's GVCs because seasonal workers are in the first stage.

2.2 How Gender Relations Affect *Temporeras* in the NATXs

Temporary jobs associated with the neoliberal model in this sector of the continent have also been linked to **feminization** and **seasonal migration** between countries and internally (Valdés, 2015, p. 40). Nevertheless, it is essential to mention, that although “the feminization of agriculture can have multiple meanings” (Deere, 2008, p. 108), this study is related to the increase in the female proportion of agricultural jobs. The growing participation of women in seasonal jobs in Latin America were related to the growth of NTAXs (Deere, 2008, p. 99). In Chile, the feminization of farm labour began during the 1970s due to the high need for temporary agricultural labour for export-led production (Stephen, 1993, p. 36), generating women started to work for the first time in the agricultural sector (Jarvis and Vera-Toscano, 2004, p. 2). However, Lago (1987, p. 27) argues that the main reason for female work integration was the family's need for income because the new state policies resulted in higher unemployment. Because of the policies, as Lago also noted, men's salaries were insufficient to support the household. Therefore, one of the direct impacts of neoliberal policies on the

economic demands of the population was an increase in women's participation in productive work, to increase in incomes, and diversified it (Deere, 2008, p. 102).

Due to its seasonal nature, temporary work is already a task with precarious conditions, regardless of who performs it (Gómez and Klein, 1993, pp. 3–4). Nevertheless, some authors (Barrientos *et al.*, 1999, p. 27; Valdés, 2015, p. 52; Barbosa, Cerda, and Almeida, 2021, p. 350), highlight that female temporary workers are even more precarious because of the gender division of labour, which will be discussed below. According to Elson and Pearson (1984, pp. 22–24), the gender division of labour, is based on social beliefs due to a “natural differentiation”, which is related to the concept of the “**nimble finger**”, known for attributing the “delicacy” of the fingers to women as a “natural” characteristic of them, related to childcare. They point out that contrary to these beliefs, **these skills are not genetically inherited but rather are learned among women in the invisibility of the home to carry out socially appropriate activities** for them. Therefore, they emphasize that these **skills, being learned in a place not visible to society, are assumed to be natural skills and, therefore, are classified as “unskilled” or “semi-skilled”**. They mention that these jobs are not unskilled because of the type of skill but because women enter the labour market determined as low labour. As such, the same work done by men would be better qualified since women enter the job in a subordinate position, defining the value of work in favour of gender and worker’s power (Phillips and Taylor, 1980, p. 79).

According to Elson and Pearson (1984, p. 25), the process of becoming invisible has not been accidental; instead, it has been typical of a “gender construction” that may be better understood by examining the roles and gender relations. As they point out, women's roles in society are mostly tied to reproduction, caregiving, and domestic responsibilities, which prevent them from fully participating in society; in contrast, men play productive roles in supporting their families financially. This relationship of subordination of women in the domestic area is extrapolated to work through the differences between genders in productive work (Valdés, 1987, p. 45). This would mean that women receive less remuneration for doing the same activity and are also seen as a labour reserve that can be easily fired (Elson and Pearson, 1984, p. 28; Valdés, 1987, p. 45). Therefore, this low societal valuation of women's abilities generates less recognition of their contributions (Barrientos, 2019, p. 98), related to a “secondary status” (Elson and Pearson, 1984, p. 23). According to the results of a Chilean study on the rural temporary labour force, there is a gender pay gap for employment in the same category, with **women earning less than men while performing the same tasks** (Silva, Valdés, and Foster, 2022, p. 166).

Some relations are “gender ascriptive”, thus, gender matters (Elson and Pearson, 1984, p. 26). Nevertheless, as a patriarchal society outcome, there are relations that gender does not account for, gender is considered a category, and therefore, those relations are carriers of gender (Whitehead, 1979, p. 11). In the different positions for the industrial job, society thinks of a woman for subordinated positions and a male for a superior position, which is attributed to a “gender selection” (Whitehead, 2006, p. 25) associated with faculties of power. The man is associated to a superior power, linked with collective power, unlike the woman, who is connected to individual power, related to the interior of the house (Elson and Pearson, 1984, p. 25). Occupational segregation by gender, is a social phenomenon where women are concentrated in specific jobs (horizontal segmentation) and are mostly positioned in lower positions (vertical segmentation) (Anker, 1997, p. 335).

Globalized agriculture is linked to the fragmentation of tasks between countries, intensifying the division of labour and generating new skills for the NTAXs (Barrientos *et al.*, 1999, pp. 26-27). These changes caused a gender division of labour because women were being hired for **designated positions with “feminine” skills, fundamental to maintaining the quality of the fruit for international marketing** (Barrientos *et al.*, 1999, pp. 26-27), such as “weeding, pruning, picking, sorting, and packing the fruit” (Bain, 2010, p. 358). In Chile, feminized tasks have been associated with the collection of fruits and vegetables or packing tasks (Arizpe and Aranda, 1986, and Nash, 1989, cited in Stephen, 1993, p. 34) because, according to the companies, the “fruit preparation requires fine motor skills and “gentleness” attributed to women” (Tonelli, 2021, p. 43).

Agrochemicals are frequently used in producing NTAXs, but it is also well known that their use is hazardous because of the health concerns associated with human contact with them. Furthermore, despite the labour code's regulation of these purposes, it only occasionally adheres to it in favour of capital accumulation. Intoxication, nausea, and headaches could be the immediate negative impacts of these items on the health of workers (Valdés and Godoy, 2016, p. 13). In addition, however, they would cause reproductive issues over the long term. According to studies, exposure to agrochemicals increases spontaneous abortions (Liliana, Márquez and Duk, 2007, p. 85) and abnormalities in neonates (Kelly, 2020, p. 59). The reproductive health and rights effect is related to reproductive justice, which is understood as social inequalities and other factors in the female community that harms the body's autonomy in reproductive and sexual terms (Cohen and Caxaj, 2018, pp. 91–92).

Agribusiness production of NTAXs generates a duality in gender relations due to its temporary nature. According to Barrientos *et al.* (1999, p. 29), first, during the high season, women are financially active; however, the rest of the year, they return to their traditional role of reproductive activities, reinforcing their inferiority in a patriarchal society. As they mention, second, because multinationals sometimes hire services in fields, “patriarchal attitudes” could be favoured in this situation. As they point out, agribusiness would depend on the traditional subordination of women, supplying itself with a submissive labour force and favouring it because, on the one hand, it integrates women into the modern process, but at the same time, it expects that they return to their “reproductive role”, taking advantage of this workforce that supplies the requirements of the NTAXs market. This duality between reproductive and productive work has generated that women are a target for flexible work, entering and leaving the market during the year and moving between sectors of the economy (Deere, 2008, p. 114). Women have historically provided the bulk of the low-cost labour in the fruit industry and have also been the foundation for the industry's profitability on a global scale (Barrientos *et al.*, 1999, p. 28). This is the result of a patriarchal society (Cárdenas, Correa, and Prado, 2014, p. 3), where women are assigned a role within the home, and their job opportunities (Anker, 1997, p. 336).

In the household, the entry of women into jobs offered by the NTAXS contrasts with traditional gender interactions with contemporary ones, describe Barrientos *et al.* (1999, pp. 31–32). Latin America is a conservative society where women begin to contribute economically; they question the male authority identified as the primary breadwinner in the household as they will be in a stronger bargaining position. The temporary labour, as they mention, will, however, reduce their bargaining power. They also point out that research on seasonal employees shows that their burden increases when they simultaneously work paid and unpaid tasks. However, they point out that these experiences must consider that

women's lives are not uniform and that comprehending women's diversity is crucial to their integration into the workforce and the building of agribusiness capital.

Although the concepts seen previously in this study are mainly negative conditions for women related to agribusiness, on the other hand, **they have been favoured in some way with integration into the agricultural labour market.** Barrientos *et al.* (1999, pp. 32-34) point out that although the dissociation of work and conservative interactions have maintained female dependence, it has also given them greater autonomy than before. As they refer, after all, **they have group experiences, generating greater self-confidence and a better position inside the house to negotiate because they receive money from their work.** Moreover, as they point out, it also makes it possible for them to connect for group activities at work and may have the potential to expand to other areas of their lives. Since everyone has personal experience in each activity, they point out that while it is well recognized that briefly entering **would limit potential autonomy,** some women continue to work in this area throughout the year, maintaining the influence of this business for them.

Chapter 3

Research Questions and Methodology

Introduction

This chapter presents how the research was done and is divided into three sections. The research questions are presented first. Subsequently, the methodology is described as how the participants were recruited and the procedures that were followed to carry out the research, the considerations, the profile of the participants, the limitations, and the scope. Finally, it ends with the ethical considerations and positionality.

3.1 Research Questions

3.1.1 Main Question

- How do the labour conditions of female workers in Chilean cherry farms look like, and how do they affect them?

3.1.2 Sub-Questions

- 1. What **impact** does their work as a seasonal worker in the cherry harvest have on their lives in Chile?
- 2. How do Chilean female workers in the cherry harvest **perceive** their work in the export sector?
- 3. How do they resist poor labour conditions during the cherry harvest?

3.2 Methodology

In this research, a qualitative methodology was used. Specifically, two data collection techniques: semi-structured interviews, and focus group. The objective of the semi-structured interviews and focus groups was to delve into working conditions, women's perception of their work, the impacts it has on them, and how they resist. Two data collection techniques were chosen because interviews give more insights into individual experiences, which with the focus group, the information is to understand a range of experiences and opinions (Mella, 2000, p. 6).

3.2.1 Data Collection

3.2.1.1 *Semi-Structured Interviews and Focus Groups*

- **Interviews:** Nine semi-structured interviews were conducted and recorded online via Zoom videoconference. A guideline (Appendix 2) was used to delve into the core of the study. The semi-structured nature of the interviews allows for maintaining a structure, also enabling the interviewer to conduct the interview in the way they deem appropriate. This includes asking the respondent to explain situations or meanings in depth and have their own style during the interview (Corbetta, 2007, p. 353). Interviews lasted between an hour and one hour and a half.
- **Focus groups:** Two focus groups were held, with seven and five women respectively. The focus group were carried out in person and moderated by two assistants. In the focus groups, conversations were mediated with the intent to exchange opinions and points among the participating women. Each focus group was held in the home of one of the participants voluntarily. They lasted between an hour and a half and two hours. The voices were recorded, and I participated as a listener via Zoom videoconference.

ATLAS.ti was used to analyze the results in the interviews and the focus groups, generating categories of interest.

3.2.1.2 *Focus Group Team*

- **Assistances:** Two volunteers facilitated the focus group. Both have had previous experience with focus groups, one has a master's degree in education, and the other is a psychologist. Currently, both assistants work doing focus groups. The volunteers were onboarded to the research in a one-hour meeting. In this meeting, the topic of the thesis, the objectives of the focus groups and the questionnaire (Appendix 3) were presented and reviewed.
- **Technician:** A third volunteer was responsible for recording the session and establishing the Zoom videoconference connection with the researcher.

3.2.1.3 *Recruitment of Participants*

How working conditions can change in every company; a first attempt was made to leverage a network of agronomists who work in companies, to contact women who had worked as season workers. This proved to be difficult. Therefore, an announcement was placed on Facebook in groups of people searching for agricultural jobs in Rancagua, a city in O'Higgins region.

- **Interviews:** After contacting a few people, a "snowball" process started. This method of choosing the participants is used by identifying a person of interest, that

person then contacts more people to participate, and they invite others (Martínez-Salgado, 2012, p. 616).

- **Focus groups:** Were used a “snowball” process. Because of the announcement, Andrea⁵ contacted me. After having had a first telephone conversation explaining the purpose of the study, she offered to invite more well-known people who have worked with her as a partner and organize the place and the people to do the two focus groups.

3.2.1.4 Requirements to Participate

The people who participated in the interviews and focus groups attended freely and voluntarily. However, they had to meet four requirements:

- Must be female.
- Must be Chilean.
- Must work as a *temporera* in the cherry harvest.
- Must have experience working in O’Higgins region in fields that produce cherries for export market.

3.2.1.5 Procedure to start and end the interview and/or the focus group

Before beginning the interview, an informed consent (Appendix 8) was sent to each participant so they could read it. If they agreed, they sent signed. The interviews started with a review of the material to see if there were any questions. Before the focus groups, the material was sent to Andrea, who explained it to the participants. Each member signed the document on the focus group day.

- **Voluntary Participation:** Consent to record the voice and the image. In one case the person did not agree to record the image; therefore, it was not done.
- **Confidentiality agreement:** It was explained to them that their information would be used for academic purposes. The participant is asked to register their initial name or pseudonym, age, the number of seasons they have worked as seasonal workers, and the duration of their employment in the cherry industry.
- **Economy Compensation:** Payment for EUR⁶ 13 (CLP 10.000).

3.2.1.6 Payment

The participants were each made a payment to cover their expenses during their participation. The expenses considered were the following:

⁵ In addition to conducting the focus group's recruitment, Andrea took part in the first focus group.

⁶ EUR 1: CLP 920. Due to the exchange rate variability, 21 participants multiplied by EUR 13 do not fit precisely with EUR 250. For the rest of the research, it will be considered 1EUR: CLP 1.000.

- **Interviews:** The payment constituted a compensation for internet expenses and time spent.
- **Focus groups:** The payment constituted a compensation for the commuting expense and the time spent.

The money resources to compensate the participants were obtained in the AFES funds. These were EUR 250, which were distributed among the 21 participants.

3.2.2 Considerations

- Some respondents were hesitant to engage in the study because they initially mistrusted the Facebook contact, believing it to be a scam or a dangerous circumstance for them. To demonstrate how unsafe this virtual environment is, a man pretended to be a potential participant, masturbating, and flashing his penis when I unlocked the camera to begin the interview.
- All Chilean women who currently work or have previously worked in the O'Higgins region harvesting cherries were invited to participate in the study, with no exceptions. However, women from indigenous ethnic groups did not contact when asked to take part in the interviews. This may be because, according to the National Socioeconomic Characterization Survey (CASEN) 2017, there are 1.694.870 indigenous people living in Chile, mostly in the Araucana and Arica and Parinacota regions (*Observatorio Social*, 2017, p. 6). On the other side, the survey shows that in O'Higgins and Maule, 2.9% and 2.8% of the population are indigenous people (*Observatorio Social*, 2017, p. 8). Therefore, if the study's objective had been to integrate indigenous women, perhaps it would have had to be done in those regions and another crop because there are a few cherry hectares in those regions.
- As for migrant women who work in the fruit sector, no specific amounts are known (Araya, 2017, p. 4). In this research, migrant women are not considered because, according to Araya (2017, p. 3), informality reaches 70% in fruticulture. Therefore, understanding that it was challenging to recruit Chilean women to participate in the research due to the fears highlighted at the beginning of this section and their situation of informality, recruiting migrant women who work in the same situation would have been very restricted. They might have thought that giving an interview could have been detrimental to them, that they could be arrested by the police, to be deported. For these reasons, it could have been more limited to focus on them because of their undocumented status and ignorance of the environment.

3.2.3 Participant Profiles

The profile of the participating women is described in **¡Error! No se encuentra el origen de la referencia.** and Table 3-2, indicating their name, age, the number of seasons working, the number of children, and the date was made the interview/focus group. In the interviews, most of the participants lived near their workplaces. In the focus groups, the women who participated had met harvesting and were mainly neighbors.

Table 3-1: Participants in the Interviews

Name	María Jose	Jeannette	Diane	Natacha	Yessica	Rosa	Catalina	Solange	Constanza
Age (Years)	29	21	26	24	42	27	22	45	28
Seasons as a Harvester in Cherry (Years) ⁷	7	1	7	2	5	5	2	4	5
Seasons as a Harvester in Fruit (Years) ⁸	10	2	10	4	5	5	5	4	11
Children	1	1	1	0	2	3	0	1	0
Interview Date	17 September, 2022	19 September, 2022	17 September, 2022	18 September, 2022	18 September, 2022	20 September, 2022	18 September, 2022	19 September, 2022	22 September, 2022

Source: Author's Own-October 2022

Table 3-2: Participants in the Focus Groups

Name	1°							2°				
	Francisca (1)	Tamara	Berta	Isabel	Andrea	Yolanda	Viviana	Fabiola	Claudia	Karet	María Angélica	Francisca (2)
Age (Years)	24	32	44	37	42	55	50	50	27	19	40	47
Seasons as a Harvester in Cherry (Years)	9	13	10	15	15	14	15	6	4	5	8	7
Seasons as a Harvester in Fruit (Years)	10	19	30	23	33	30	16	6	4	5	8	15
Children	1	3	2	3	2	4	4	3	1	0	3	9
Focus Group Date	25 September, 2022							25 September, 2022				

Source: Author's Own-October 2022

3.2.4 Limitations and Scopes

- The interviews online led to a study constraint because the interviewees' non-verbal behaviors were not accessible.
- Even though I participated virtually in the focus groups, the participant's non-verbal behaviors could differ from those in person. To solve that gap as far as possible, I met via WhatsApp video call with both assistants after the two focus groups, where they gave me feedback.
- The scope of this study is the Chilean women who would have participated in the Rancagua harvest. Only those with Internet connectivity and Facebook users got access to the interviews because the call was made through that social network. Older people's participation may have reduced as a result. Seven of the nine contestants are between the ages of 21 and 29. The participants in the focus group were people Andrea knew because she was the one who planned the two focus groups. She resides in a Rancagua, and the participants were mainly locals. There was a lot of age variation in those.

⁷ 1 season working on the harvest is equivalent to 1 year.

⁸ 1 season working on the harvest is equivalent to 1 year.

- The scope of this research is a study of this moment of the cherry agricultural market in Chile. Understanding that the agricultural market is variable, growth projections could change in the following seasons. Additionally, working conditions were analyzed according to the current labour code. Chile is going through a process of political change, which could, in the future, change labour laws for workers and employers.

3.3 Research Ethics

In this research, ethical challenges were considered, which were handled in the following way:

- The document above ensures the participants' confidentiality, which states that this study is for academic purposes and that only their first name or pseudonym will be used. I decided to use her first name because the *temporeras* work in several companies during the season. The names of the companies are abbreviated as XX to protect identity and confidentiality further. Any specific sector of Rancagua will be identified by the research as well. As a result, it is impossible to recognize them.
- The neoliberalism is installed deep in society. It is transversal in developing all relationships; social, economic, productive, labour, and above all, consumption. In this way, the *temporeras* are not unfamiliar with this context. This reason would explain the need to pay for participation to recognize the time. The participants received the money for their participation in the research because, in neoliberal logic, everything must have value in money.

3.4 Positionality

I am an Agricultural Engineer and worked for ten years in the agricultural sector in Chile. During that time, I worked in different private companies, which allowed me to get to know, in some way, the different actors in agriculture. However, from my role as a worker for a private company, I never stopped observing women who work seasonally and the realities to which they were exposed—keeping me in a duality. On the one hand, I was maintaining a stable job that continued to perpetuate their conditions. But, on the other hand, studying to make this reality visible. This background gave me the motivation to investigate the women who work precariously in the cherry business and to want to make them visible in some way.

Through this research, I position myself as a woman, feminist, and agricultural engineer with a background in agriculture in Chile, with interest in making visible the injustices experienced by agricultural workers. Although I am interested in studying their conditions, my position remains an outsider's. Having university studies and living in the Netherlands places me in a privileged position above the participants.

To promote a conversation with greater confidence so that the participants could express themselves freely, I did not mention that I had ever had ties to private companies in the agricultural area. Understanding that if I had pointed this out, the investigation could

have been affected. In addition, being a woman helped me empathize with the participants and discuss the questions in depth. Finally, being an agronomist made me feel comfortable researching because I know cherry orchards and understand the technical vocabulary, they use to explain situations.

Chapter 4

A Season Working as *Temporera*

Introduction

This chapter describes the general conditions experienced by *temporeras* who harvest cherries. This chapter is divided into three sections. The first part recounts a typical workday of a female *temporera*. This fictitious story has been based on the common discourses of the participants in the study. The second part deeply dives into the working conditions, their impacts on women, and how they perceived them. Finally, the third part explains why they like to work and what benefits they receive.

"I get up around 5:00 am. I dress in my work clothes and fill a bottle with water because I do not know if fresh water will be to drink at work. The bottle goes into my backpack with a snack and sunscreen. Before I leave, I need to go to the toilet as it is uncertain if one will be available in this field. I leave the house and walk towards the square, where I will be picked up in the van of the contractor I contacted yesterday. Several people are gathering at the square. I think that they will be my co-workers today. While commuting to the field, I put on some sunscreen and slept for a while before starting the day. At the field, first, I must find a ladder that will be my partner for the day. I hurry into the cellar to ensure I find a ladder in good condition made from aluminum. They are not always well-maintained, and the aluminum ones are lighter. It is 6:30 am, and after taking a ladder, I walk to the orchard where we are assigned today. In the orchard, I greet a colleague in my neighborhood. The contractor told me I would earn CLP 3.000⁹ per "tote" harvested. In reality, I will receive only CLP 2.000¹⁰ per unit because the contractor always takes a CLP 1.000¹¹ cut. I need to hurry to reach today's goal! With the money, I can buy Christmas gifts. After three hours of going up and down the ladder, I decided to take a break, but I must do it quickly because I needed to harvest twelve more "totes" today. During my break, I enjoy the shade of the cherry tree and eat the snack I brought. After the break, I continue to fill another "tote". The supervisor inspects the fruit in the "tote". Upon looking, the supervisor tells me everything is okay. The cherries meet the specifications discussed in the morning talk: with stem, pay attention to size and color. It is noon already, and the heat is starting to pick up. I put on sunscreen again to avoid sunstroke like last season. At 2:00 pm, the supervisors tell us we cannot continue because the temperature is too high for the fruit to be harvested. I worked fast today! I filled 20 "totes". With the CLP 40.000¹² I made today, plus what I have earned the other days, on Saturday, the contractor will pay me the total for the week, and with that, I will be able to buy what I need. The contractors' van is waiting to take us back, so I quickly walk to where I must leave the ladder. On the way back, I talked to a very nice lady, who told me tomorrow she would work again with the same contractor, that although I think I will also return... On the way back, some people discussed that one of my companions had fallen from the ladder. Thankfully, nothing serious happened to her! With the work, the conversation I had with the lady, and what I said about the accident, I even forgot that I must cook for the children, who have been alone all morning

⁹ EUR 3 approximately.

¹⁰ EUR 2 approximately.

¹¹ EUR 1 approximately.

¹² EUR 40 approximately.

because they are on summer vacation. I do not like to leave them alone, but I must take advantage of earning money during the cherry harvest season”.

The working conditions experienced by the workers are described, the significant informality proportion, highlighting subcontracting, the type of payment, and poor services provided by the company. These labour conditions were assembled into two groups to analyze their consequences and perceptions. The first group is about the informality and subcontracting regime, and the second is about pay by piece-rate and services from the company. These conditions have an impact on workers. There are specific female consequences, which are discussed below, and later their perceptions are pointed out.

4.1 Informality and Subcontracting Regime

This section describes the high rates of informality, how workers get the work in a company and its impacts and perceptions of working conditions. Direct contractual relationships with production companies or contractor arrangements are the two methods to work. The participants' results concerning their contractual situation and those working with contractors are shown in Appendix 4 and Appendix 5, respectively. Informality rates are high, and contractors almost always recruit them.

Concerning informality, the participants sometimes point out that if there is a contract, it is not valid, *“the contract is not a contract, it is a piece of paper, it is useless”* (Berta, Focus Group, 2022). In parallel, if the contractor recruits, it should make the workers' contract. However, they point out that the contractor rarely makes the contracts.

“They give you a work contract in almost any field¹³ because you work with contractors. I have asked several contractors if they can make me a work contract, and they say yes, but mainly never do. So, the days go by ..., and in the end, they never make you an employment contract because it is not convenient for them to make you one. After all, they must pay the “imposiciones” (Natacha, Interviewed, 2022).

If employees work informally, the contractor retains a portion of each unit harvested as compensation. However, if the workers work formally, the contractor keeps the same portion and the worker's social security payment. Nevertheless, the women point out that even though the contractor makes the discount for social security, they sometimes pay in the national system¹⁴. *“The contractors always charge you the “imposiciones”, but they do not always pay you”* (Solange, Interviewed, 2022).

Workers who lack a work contract do not have the benefits and the rights associated to the contract mentioned in Appendix 6, such as social security, related with worker protection in case they have an accident. The absence of these generates consequences for all workers. However, there are specific impacts on women that are presented below.

¹³ To the interviewees, “field” means the cherry production company.

¹⁴ It refers to national institutions that receive the payment for: pensions, National Health Fund (FONASA), disability, survival insurance, the health center, and unemployment insurance, as mentioned in Appendix 6 (Social Security).

4.1.1 Impacts of the Informality and Subcontracting Regime

This section first explicates women's options in agricultural work because of the sexual division of labour. Subsequently, it presents the consequences of this division. Finally, it explains the impacts of this division linked to informality.

The patriarchal culture has developed the sexual division of labour through “gender construction”, which results in occupational segregation by gender. Different expressions of this division, referred to as horizontal segmentation and vertical segmentation, allocate women to jobs and positions (Anker, 1997, p. 335).

The horizontal segmentation separates men and women into distinct professions corresponding to gender roles. For instance, jobs requiring “feminine skills” like “nimble fingers” are often associated with women.

“I see many women working on cherries because men have little motor skills in their hands; they are clumsy to cut and dirtier” (Tamara, Focus Group, 2022) ... “The woman has the delicacy to remove the cherry carefully ... the woman has the delicacy that all the cherries come out with a stick!” (Francisca 1, Focus Group, 2022).

Physically demanding jobs or driving a tractor are made mainly by men. Moreover, the duties of masculinized occupations are correlated with annual activities and hence tied to indefinite contracts.

“In many places, I have seen that the man is taken more into account the work during the year. For example, when they ask for people to work, they ask for men; they do not ask for women, very rarely. Well, I have seen it several times” (Diane, Interviewed, 2022).

Even though some women operate tractors, they are not typically hired for this position. The scarcity of women driving tractors is reflected in what was pointed out by Andrea (Focus Group, 2022), who says, “if I see a woman driving a tractor, I will applaud her”.

“I drive the tractor, but without a contract for that function... I had a work contract in the field, but it was not a contract to drive the tractor. In the contract, I had other functions, but I drove the tractor every” (Tamara, Focus Group, 2022).

The vertical segmentation separated women and men into different positions at work linked to their faculties of power created by society. Related to this segmentation, the participants manifest that almost all their bosses are men. Women are indeed overrepresented in lower positions in the hierarchy. In Chile, CAF information mentioned that in 2007, 30% of the leadership in the fields was carried out by women (ODEPA, 2020, p. 11). Even this is not a small number, but still less than men in positions with more power. Further research would be necessary to confirm that women may be taking higher positions.

The first impact of the informality of this employment for women compared to men can be explained by the sporadic nature of their income, the lower probability of obtaining a permanent contract, the low likelihood of achieving better vocations, and therefore poorer purchasing power. In addition, women would be riskier than males if they suffered an

¹⁵ The workers mention the stem as a “stick”.

occupational illness or were injured at work since men would have more opportunities to maintain higher jobs and have stable incomes due to their gender. Even women can work in every task and position; in both segmentations, gender has been taken as a category associating women with subordinate positions (Whitehead, 1979, p. 11). Therefore, the sexual division of labour would make women's conditions more precarious, occupying lower paid and inferior positions.

The inability of women to obtain government benefits, particularly the bonus for working women, has an additional negative effect on them. The interviewees make the point that working without a contract forbids them from receiving this yearly bonus, which they must present a contract to receive. In parallel, cherry-producing businesses have access to economic benefits from the State, such as the nullity of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) tariff payment product with China, according to the Library of National Congress (BCN, 2010), as part of the steps to promote the fruit market. Therefore, there is a contradiction between the benefits of women and the royalties given to the companies. The companies can access benefits, and their workers cannot apply due to the labour informality the company is generating.

4.1.2 Perceptions of the Informality and Subcontracting Regime

This section mentions the perceptions of women regarding their informal situation and their employment relationship with contractors.

Related to the perception of informality, most interviewees prefer to work with a contract for the stability of having a salary every month and access to social security.

“If I could choose, I would work with a contract because it brings me benefits such as health care...social prevention. If something happens to me on the way, the company will pay the expenses. The company will take over” (Jeannette, Interviewed, 2022).

However, some participants prefer to work without a contract because they perceive benefits from it. Catalina (Interviewed, 2022) and María Jose (Interviewed, 2022) prefer to work informally to receive more money per unit, even understanding the risks that this would entail. Francisca 1 (Focus Group, 2022) mentioned that informality benefited her because she worked at 17¹⁶ years old and could study simultaneously.

Related to the perceptions about the contractors, although the contractors negatively impact the workers, the participants mention positive aspects of working subcontracted. For example, they mention that they save transportation payments with the contractor because they transported them to work. Moreover, they receive weekly income, compared to monthly income, as indicated by Diana and María Jose.

¹⁶ In Chile, young people over 15 and under 18 years old need notarized permission from their parents to be able to work.

“The field paid us CLP 22.500¹⁷ per day but did not provide transportation, and the contractor paid me CLP 22.000¹⁸, which is CLP 500¹⁹ less, but at least I had transportation every day” (Diane, Interviewed, 2022). On her part, María Jose (Interviewed, 2022) points out that *“with the contractors, it is better because they pay weekly...with the company, one has to wait for the salary all month”*.

The positive perception of informality and contractors could be linked to the economic needs of the participants. The results of the CASEN 2006 and 2009 indicate that the seasonal workers are mostly located in the 1° and 2° quintile (Caro, 2012, p. 156). The result of this national survey reflects that workers are in the lower incomes segments, with economic needs, which could lead them to value access to daily money savings and continuous salary payments. High informality causes the perception of contractors to vary according to the needs of each person; however, if everyone works regarding the labour code and a contract, there could be slight variability in the opinions on the above topics.

4.2 Pay by Piece-Rate and Services

This section explains the compensation the participants receive for their work and the services provided by the company. Subsequently, the impacts generated by these situations on women and their perceptions are discussed through their stories and theory.

They are paid for the harvesting mainly by piece-rate (*“a trato”*), meaning they receive an amount per *“tote”/“capacho”*/pail/kilogram harvested. However, when they need to harvest delicate varieties, the payment *“a trato”* changes to a fixed payment per day (*“al día”*). The aim is that the worker does not rush harvesting, therefore, does not mistreat the fruit.

“When we change to “Corazón de Paloma²⁰” we change everything. They pay “al día”. That process is slower because of that variety. When you take it out hard, the fruit spoils...The bosses say a lot to us about that...I believe the field earns more money with that variety” (Yessica, Interviewed, 2022).

The workers experience abusive policies from bosses in a position of power. The bosses tell them to harvest the fruit with the characteristics the producer needs. The bosses control them by not paying them if they do not comply or expelling them.

“When I was harvesting cherries, a boss turned the box over and checked it. There were five cherries without the stick...they discounted the entire box and did not pay me” (Tamara, Focus Group, 2022).

Developed countries, such as China, through the GVC, pressure producers. Buyers pay higher prices if they receive homogeneous fruit of good quality on time. If producers

¹⁷ EUR 22,5, approximately.

¹⁸ EUR 22, approximately.

¹⁹ EUR 0,5, approximately.

²⁰ Delicate variety.

meet these requirements, they increase their capital accumulation. At the same time, the pressure generates precarious working conditions through “*a trato*” payment and abusive policies. Payment “*a trato*” is a flexible compensation plan that increases the worker's productivity, decreasing labour costs and raising the company's capital (Barrientos, 2001, p. 88). GVC power relations describe the interaction between the buyer/company and company/worker; therefore, women, due to their gender, are positioned in flexible positions lowering the weaker companies' financial risks (Barrientos, 2001, pp. 88-89).

According to the Labour Code, seasonal agricultural workers must receive services from the company. Understanding the workers should work with a contract, these services were analyzed under the existing regulations. The participants pointed out that although the services vary according to the company, most still need to comply with the minimum services. These were reported in the initial context of this chapter, characterizing the precarious conditions of the toilets, the distance in which they can be found, the lack of maintenance on the ladders, and the absence of water, lockers, dining room, fitting room, sunscreen, and childcare.

“The working conditions are bad, apart from the fact that they do not give us lunch, the conditions are not there for a person to be working there. Some fields have toilets for the workers, and some do not. Sometimes they do not have drinking water, and you must carry it. One must carry food, water, sunscreen and manage to go to the toilets sometimes” (Jeannette, Interviewed, 2022).

4.2.1 Impacts of the Pay by Piece-Rate and Services

This section mentions four impacts related to women due to gender, generated by the payment “*a trato*”, and poor working conditions. The first impact for women due to the pressure imposed on them by payment “*a trato*” is the increase in accidents. With the payment “*a trato*” workers, if they do not harvest, do not earn money, which would cause them to work in a hurry to earn more money, increasing the chances of having an accident.

“There are people who, up the tree taking out the cherries from above, want to hurry up to make more and more boxes, and suddenly they have fallen from the ladder with the whole box with the cherries” (María Jose, Interviewed, 2022).

As explained in section 4.1, the risk of having an accident at work would have a more significant impact on women due to their lower income and the conditions of informality explained by the sexual division of labour. Additionally, according to what was pointed out by the participants, the pressure imposed through the “*a trato*” payment on working faster is very high, causing some people to stop doing their biological needs and reading a contract to avoid wasting time.

*“I carry a liter bottle. If I drink it in the morning, I run out of water because the faucet is at the entrance to the field. So, it is not convenient for me to walk so much to get a drink of water and then go back; I waste time. On that walk, I can fill another “*tote*”* (Natacha, Interviewed, 2022).

The second impact for women is related to the transgression of their bodies, exposure to sexual abuse, and reproductive problems. Women point out that the distance from the toilets increases the probability that they can suffer sexual abuse.

“We are constantly working with men as well. In the countryside, men are not very respectful, so they should improve their working conditions... I have suffered... from colleagues, as well as sexual harassment. Compliments, depraved looks” (Rosa, Interviewed, 2022).

To reduce the risk of sexual abuse, women protect each other by walking in a group and accompanying each other to the toilets.

“Women have to go around in a group to have more protection, groups of women, and work together...we have to accompany each other, we make pairs of couples and go to the toilet together to protect ourselves from abuse” (Rosa, Interviewed, 2022). *“If I am working, and my partner wants to go to the toilet, I accompany her; I tell her to let go”* (María Angélica, Focus Group, 2022).

The third impact is related to agrochemicals; women point out that when they are harvesting, they meet these products without protection, which causes itchy faces, headaches, and atopic dermatitis (inflammation of the skin).

“I have never applied chemical products but have had contact with them. It was a year that I had atopic dermatitis all over my face and hands because of the liquids as well.... Another year, the tractor passes by throwing liquids. Then it came directly to the whole body.... It came to me from the front, all the liquid on the face, in the nose and the nose was very itchy. Our eyes wept. It is not very good. In addition, the problems that can be associated with that?” (Rosa, Interviewed, 2022).

It was not stated that they had issues with childbirth while in touch with agrochemicals. Nevertheless, studies show that contact with agrochemicals produces malformations in newborns (Kelly, 2020, p. 59), and spontaneous abortions increases (Liliana, Márquez and Duk, 2007, p. 85). Moreover, even though some of them did not have direct contact with agrochemicals, according to the Department of Epidemiology (DOE) in Chile, there is still a health risk (Bain, 2010, p. 356).

The second and third impact is linked to “reproductive justice”. The deficient services provided by the company would be violated for their “reproductive health” and their “reproductive rights”, transgressing the autonomy of their bodies in favour of saving money and reducing their spending through the deficient services.

The fourth impact is related to the absence of childcare services. The consequences of the company not providing this service impact female workers because some stop working to care for their children and other women in their close circle, such as their mother or mother-in-law.

“I have my mother-in-law who sees them. I give her an amount every week for taking care of the children. However, that is nothing compared to a woman who must hire a person to care for her children. In the end, she spends all the money paying that person to see the kids?” (Rosa, Interviewed, 2022).

The “gender construction” through “gender roles” has associated women with “reproductive roles” in society, associating them to care roles. Therefore, the absence of the childcare service impacts working women, who depend on another person to work, and other women using their time so that the mother of the children can work.

4.2.2 Perceptions of the Pay by Piece-Rate and Services

This section mentions the perceptions of the women regarding the “*a trato*” payment and the services provided.

Regarding “*a trato*” payment, as mentioned, this type of payment negatively impacts on female workers, and some women perceive it that way. Nevertheless, some participants mentioned that they prefer payment “*a trato*”, because they earn more money per day than receiving a fixed monthly payment (regarding the minimum wage²¹) or “*al día*” payment. Moreover, they also manage their time. According to what they mentioned, the daily amount that is made “*a trato*” has a variability between CLP 10.000²² and CLP 100.000²³ daily. Andrea (Focus Group, 2022) and Berta (Focus Group, 2022) call themselves “*tratera*”²⁴, showing they like it and are proud to work “*a trato*”.

“I am “tratera” because I handle the times. If I do not want to go to work during the week, I notify the contractor and do not go. That is the guarantee we have. We will not win for what we did not do, but we have freedom. If I cannot go today, I am not going” (Berta, Focus Group, 2022).

Women's perceptions of the services provided are generally not good. However, some point out that they do not care if the service is good or bad; they care about the unit's price because they live daily. The success of the production of cherries and the accumulation of capital of the exporters is partly due to the exploitation of temporary labour, taking advantage of their vulnerable condition.

“People today want to make money. So, in the end, they are no longer interested in the conditions in which they are working; they focus only on earning money. I think that is why working conditions disappeared... people do not claim their working conditions because they want to earn money, and that is why it is happening today with the actual conditions ... The bosses take advantage because of that. They see you need to work. So, they treat you as they want because they know that you will not leave the working place. After all, you need it” (Rosa, Interviewed, 2022).

Globalization, although it allows underdeveloped countries to integrate into globalized production and consumers of NTAXs to have products available from sectors where they do not reside, would also be favouring job insecurity and exploitation through the power of the multinationals on producers and seasonal workers.

4.3 Perceptions of their Work

This section analyzes the benefits that working in the cherry harvest gives women, its impact on them as women, and their perception of their role in the cherry market. According to Barrientos *et al.* (1999, pp. 32-34), although this work maintains female economy

²¹ The minimum wage in Chile is CLP 400.000 (EUR 400), which would mean EUR 13.3 per day, considering 30 days a month.

²² EUR 10 approximately.

²³ EUR 100 approximately.

dependence, due to its seasonality, at the same time, it generates a certain level of autonomy for them. As they say, they become part of a collective, which allows them to take on new experiences with other aspects of their lives.

The participant's need to work arises from an economic need within the households. Specifically, the cherry harvest is before a time of the year that generates various expenses, such as Christmas, summer vacations, and when students enter school. Therefore, the possibility of working at that time generates a feeling of economic relief.

“For us, it is like, wow! The cherry is going to start; that is good! It is great... it is the blessed cherry for us, and the first weekend of the season is already waiting to go to harvest?” (Francisca 1, Focus Group, 2022).

Apart from the date on which the cherry harvest is, they choose to work on this fruit because the work schedule is mainly until early (6:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. approximately); they make less effort than in other crops²⁵, and pay better per unit. However, understanding why they like to work very early and leave early, they mention that it allows them to return home to be with their children, who are on summer vacation, to cook or clean the house.

“For a woman, is complicated because you must get home, you must get to cook, you must get to see the children ... that they want to go out, they must do some paperwork, it is very busy for us” (María Angélica, Focus Group, 2022).

Therefore, although they mention that the schedule is a personal benefit, the perpetuation of gender roles, and the relationship of women with “reproductive work”, it would be overloading them with work, working during the morning in the productive work in the cherry and reproductive work during the afternoon. The fact that women work in flexible work is a social acceptance that they burden multiple roles (Barrientos, 2001, p. 89). Therefore, the gender division of labour is increasing their workload because even though they work, they are still associated with domestic tasks (Barrientos, 2001, p. 89).

There were different opinions when mentioning what they spent the money they earned that season. For example, the participants who do not have children spend it to pay for their studies and vacations; those who have children spend it on things for their children or their grandchildren; they save for the year to fix the house and the holidays.

“Women worry about Christmas for their children. Moreover, December already begins to worry about March; school is coming, then women begin to save money for shoes and uniforms they are going to go to school with ... I at least take care of that to prepare a little bit for the winter, to invest, to save” (María Angélica, Focus Group, 2022).

Despite the negative impacts in the workplace, which have been mentioned, the participants recommend other women to work in the cherry harvest. They point out that this is a good option for women to work; because they leave the house, they would have a good time at work and meet more women. In addition, they mention that when they work, women get together, give each other advice, and help each other, which makes them feel better psychologically.

²⁵ In the cherry harvest, they carry until 9 kilograms. In harvests, such as pears and apples, they carry approximately 15 kilograms.

“It is very good for women to work, especially when women are in the house all year. It is like taking a break. You have a good time in the field; it is like a vacation” (Andrea, Focus Group, 2022).
“I see it that way... I did not work all year, but I wait for the cherry harvest?” (Isabel, Focus Group, 2022).

In addition to the benefits mentioned by socialization, the generation of money means that they are more economically autonomous and more independent from their partners, demonstrating to themselves that they can support themselves and that they do not depend on anyone.

“When the woman does not go out to work and has been at home for a long time, one kind of submits, and women do not have to be like that. At work, one talks with other women, and they say, you know that my husband... one tells them, look, you must be like that; you do not have to put up with it... So, we advise each other. Going out to work gives freedom, saying I work, one can support oneself and maintain the house alone, without depending on someone” (Tamara, Focus Group, 2022).

The role of women in GVCs has been vital for the market's development; however, the precarious working conditions are contrary to their key contribution. Regarding their perceptions of their work, the participants mentioned that it is crucial. They emphasize that their work is essential for the country's economy, declaring that they should have better conditions and that the employers should worry about the workers who generate their profits.

“Every work is important, but regarding the fruit, because if there is no person to harvest that fruit, then... how are we going to generate more economy? That is why agricultural work should be the best paid, but in the end, it is the worst paid” (Rosa, Interviewed, 2022).

As a final reflection, listening to the perceptions, experiences, and values that women give to their work is somewhat paradoxical. On the one hand, they know how valuable the harvest is in the business, that without them, the chain would not exist and that the work of many people depends on the raw material they extract. Nevertheless, on the other hand, they know first-hand the impacts and feel alone as “a number” to the companies. Additionally, they felt abandoned by the State, several pointing out that everything could improve if more and better control were carried out. Despite being conscious of their poor condition, the participants value the harvest by utilizing its advantages. The high proportion of informality in the workplace, the accidents, and the ongoing precariousness they face because of their gender impressed me as a professional in agriculture. Despite the latter being somewhat predictable, the effects—such as sexual molestation and first-hand encounters with agrochemicals—were not on my conscience.

Chapter 5

Resistances

Introduction

This chapter explains the resistance and powers the harvest workers have in the GVCs. The first part of the introduction presents the powers to which the workers are exposed. Subsequently, their forms of resistance during harvest are analyzed. Next, the power section examines the consequences of a bad harvest and its bullwhip effect on the GVCs. Finally, structural power and associational power will be justified.

Within GVCs, there are power relations between their connections. These relationships generate pressure on producers and, in turn, precariousness for seasonal workers because this is the only section of the value chain where producers can reduce business risks in the NTAX (Barrientos, 2001, p. 88). From their privileged position, the business community and the contractors take advantage of the economic need that the workers experience, giving them precarious conditions to work in favour of their capital accumulation. The previous section mentioned only some power relations in the harvest. However, the situations were reported intrinsically. Some of these situations are the contractors' power over the workers through (1) informality, which allows them to save the costs associated with the contract, to collect taxes without paying them, and with abusive policies in treating workers. The company has power over the workers through the following methods: (2) subcontracting, which allows them to avoid paying the costs associated with workers; (3) payment “*a trato*”, which encourages workers to work more quickly; and (4) poor service delivery, which allows them to cut costs.

Under formal conditions, the worker has the right to belong to a union associated with the contractor or the company (Appendix 6). However, due to its static nature, the characteristics of a seasonal job reduce worker unionization because membership will end when the contract expires (Riquelme, 2015, p. 89). On the other hand, who work informally, cannot participate in a union.

According to the participants, they do not resist formally. They report that none of them have belonged to a union, and in general, they perceive that joining a union is not helpful for them. Nevertheless, they use informal forms of resistance in response to precarious working conditions. According to their experiences, the resistances are daily for their benefit, mainly in a hidden, individual, and anonymous way. Workers are not passive agents and have an agency to negotiate, given the ability to change jobs, the location of their work in the GVCs, and the characteristics of the cherry. Next, the forms of resistance and their power in the GVCs will be developed.

7.1 Everyday Forms

The peasants and the working class, due to their low power, do so with strategies of “everyday forms” against “who seek to extract labor, food, taxes, rents, and interest from them” (Scott, 1985, p. 29). These require a low level of organization, do not have a designated leader,

are generally hidden, and are own benefit (Scott, 1985, p. 29). The origin of this resistance is influenced by forms of labour control and the consequences they have for workers, where their objective is to satisfy needs such as “physical safety, food, land, or income” (Scott, 1985, pp. 34-35). This section analyzes the individual acts of resistance and what they perceive as a benefit.

According to their stories, they would resist the against poor working conditions from businesspeople and contractors. According to the strategies they mention, they would do it hidden from their bosses, anonymously and individually; otherwise, it would have disastrous consequences for them. In Chile, the worker can denounce in the Labour Inspection²⁶. In that institution, the worker can make a formal claim, which will later be verified. However, women do not formally complain about the consequences that these could bring later.

“When one sues, one looks terrible. Between contractors, they communicate with each other and recommend not hiring us because we sue. So, you must keep quiet, or you will not find a job. Where am I going to look next?” (María Angélica, Focus Group, 2022).

Therefore, visible, and formal resistance would have negative consequences for them. The objective of the hidden resistance is to avoid confrontation with the agents of power so as not to have later consequences (Scott, 1985, p. 34). When workers know that the consequences of visible resistance can be dire for them, such as permanent dismissal, they resort to resistance actions, such as shoddy work (Scott, 1985, p. 34). For example, the women mention doing “*chanchadas*” harvesting, which means that they fill the unit with the fruit they were asked for, but also with cherries without the required quality, hiding it among the other cherries to fill the unit faster.

“Because one is “chanchera” working “a trato” ... only fruit should go in the box, no leaves, no sticks, no spurs, nothing” (Tamara, Focus Group, 2022).

The theft of materials is another form of daily resistance, without being an immediate benefit to combat the deficiencies and the false acceptance of the norms (Scott, 1985, pp. 29-35). In the companies where they work, eating fruit and taking it home is forbidden; however, they declare that they do both. Regarding the first, Yessica (Interviewed, 2022) mentions, “*I harvest and eat, eat, eat cherries*”. The second action is to hide the cherries in the backpack to take home. “*I first save cherries in my backpack, and then I harvest them*” (Yolanda, Focus Group, 2022).

In the past, they gave them cherries to take home, so they did not take them hidden, and the companies had control over them.

“When we started working at XX years ago, every weekend, they gave us a bag of cherries so that people would not steal them; they gave us; they distributed” (Isabel, Focus Group, 2022).

Currently, they are not given cherries to take away, which is why Andrea mentions that it is worse for them not to give us cherries (Focus Group, 2022), because they do not have control. The actions are anonymous because it makes it difficult for the oppressors to

²⁶ Chilean institution that ensures compliance with labour laws in the country.

find the protagonist of the action to sanction him (Scott, 1985, p. 34). They perceive it as a personal benefit to eating the best cherry on the market.

“I know that the first, first quality, we eat it, we are the harvesters, and the rest of the cherry is exported... The fruit is delicious. It is the best of the best... I can get to my house with top quality fruit for my children, to give to my neighbors” (Rosa, Interviewed, 2022).

Dissimulation is the third form of resistance (Scott, 1985, p. 29). The companies ensure that the workers do not throw spurs when they harvest. Companies, as a control measure, to take care of next year's production, check if spurs are on the ground.

“They know which tree each harvested. So, then the bosses go and look where you harvested” (Tamara, Focus Group, 2022).

The consequence of throwing the spur is that they are fired from that company.

“If they see you have many spurs is on the ground, they kick you out... because they are interested in the tree bearing fruit again next year” (Solange, Interviewed, 2022).

To avoid those consequences when they throw the spur, they hide it so that it is not visible when they check.

“You have to move the spurs to the side, so they do not see them” (Andrea, Focus Group, 2022).

Harvesting without dropping the spur means that when removing the cherry, care must be taken not to drop the spur. This precaution makes the harvest slower; therefore, hiding the spur brings them the benefit of harvesting faster and earning more money daily.

Acts of resistance are often reinforced by a widespread culture of resistance (Scott, 1985, p. 35). They declare that they do *“chanchadas”* and that their colleagues know this is done. During the focus group conversation, the women mentioned that when they must supervise the harvest, they have problems with their colleagues because they all do it. Therefore, there is a culture among peers known to harvest with lesser quality.

“If they tell you there are many cherries without a stick, and she is already the boss, one is a friend, but even at work, one must respect them because they are the boss. Then later they come and tell him again, hey! do not be “chanchera”! when they have already worked just like you and you know they were more “chancheras” (Tamara, Focus Group, 2022).

7.2 Power

Due to their precariousness, the workers in their work have weak power. However, due to the location of the harvest in the GVCs, the importance of this stage for subsequent sections, and the workers' agency, they have bargaining power in this market. Therefore, this section presents the actions that depend on harvest workers to maintain fruit quality and the possible consequences for the market. Subsequently, “structural power” and “associational power” are exemplified.

The cherry is a delicate fruit, and the harvest is the most crucial stage for maintaining its quality in the GVCs (Zoffoli, 1995, p. 3). To maintain market profitability, the grower must deliver quality fruit. In the background, some care that must be taken during the harvest to avoid this loss was mentioned. In addition, the effects after possible damage during the fruit could generate a “bullwhip effect”, possibly deteriorating the business's profitability. Below are some consequences of the loss of quality of the fruit:

- The “pitting”, which is irreversible, manifests itself in the fruit after a few days, this being the principal cause of quality loss (Candan and Gomila, 2008, p. 3). However, a careful harvest could reduce more than half (Candan, 2006, cited in Candan and Gomila, 2008, p. 7).
- The fruit’s poor selection of fruit in the orchard and the presence of waste would generate up to a 30% decrease in the yield of exportable fruit (Barros, Rodríguez and Ivelic, 2020).
- The cherry must be harvested within the first five days of its maturity (Correia *et al.*, 2018, p. 5), to access as many markets as possible.
- The cherry should be handled by the stem to prevent harm the spur (Candan and Gomila, 2008, p. 6) and not removed. In addition, in order not to damage the fruit that is being harvested, spurs should not be placed in the bowls with cherries (Smartcherry, 2022).

Due to the delicacy of the fruit and the few days, it lasts hanging on the tree, the damages related to bad practices in the cherry harvest would generate losses for the market and the producers. The seasonal workers are in a position of low power concerning the company and subcontractors. However, the place they are in the GVCs and the characteristics of the fruit they harvest would favour their negotiating power. Next, their “structural power” will be analyzed, which, related to the characteristics mentioned, would give them negotiating power.

7.2.1 Structural Power

In the agribusiness “greater buyer demands, more complex production processes and farms' demand for an increasingly skilled workforce enhance workers' structural power” (Selwyn, 2007, p. 542). The “structural power” is the “power that results simply from the location of workers within the economic system” (Wright, 2000, p. 962). As part of this power, this section explains the “workplace bargaining power” that female workers have. This is “the power that results from the strategic location of a particular group of workers within a key industrial sector” (Silver, 2003, p. 13).

Harvest is the first stage of the GVCs (Appendix 7). The *temporeras* use their agency for what they consider a benefit, communicate with each other, or call various contractors.

“I call the contractors and ask them when we start the cherry harvest. ... I ask him, how much is the “tote” going to be? How much are you going to pay the kilo? How much will you pay? ... And there, I see what suits me best. I go where it suits me best” (Solange, Interviewed, 2022).

They move from one company to another, looking for better conditions without the commitment of staying in the same place.

“We are not faithful enough to work two or three months with a contractor. It is a week with one because the work is fast; it is finished quickly, then another week in another field, another field, and so on” (Berta, Focus Group, 2022). *“If the contractor does not have a good job, you go with someone who has a better job”* (Tamara, Focus Group, 2022).

Additionally, due to their agency, they do not return to work for specific companies due to situations that they consider harmful. *“If they ask me, I will not work at XX again”* (Isabel, Focus Group, 2022).

Due to experiences during cherry harvest, some people do not work the cherry again and work in another fruit or another area.

“They started to challenge me a lot...I remember that I took out the spur, the inspector was passing by, and he saw me throwing a spur and told me that it should not do, but he told me in a good way, but I was embarrassed, and from there I did not want to go anymore” (Catalina, Interviewed, 2022).

Nevertheless, this decision will depend on the circumstances of each worker. In the case of Catalina, she does not have children, and she uses the money to pay for her studies, factors that could give her greater freedom to act.

The short period in which the fruit must be harvested could increase the workers' bargaining power, understanding that the producers have pressure to deliver the fruit with a good quality to sell at a better price. On the other hand, resistance forms, such as *“chanchadas”* and the invisibility of *“pitting”* at the time of harvest, could have economic consequences for the business, understanding that even if the boxes in the orchard are checked, not all of them will be reviewed.

Therefore, the stage's location in the GVCs, the characteristics of the cherry harvest, the effects on the market, and the agency of seasonal workers, increase their bargaining power. However, when workers are not organized, their bargaining power decreases, favouring the company (Wright, 2000, p. 958). Therefore, their low organizational power, due to the seasonal nature of the work, this bargaining power could be more relevant in the business if they were better organized.

7.2.2 Associational Power

The *“associational power”* is *“the various forms of power that result from the formation of collective organizations of workers”* (Wright, 2000, p. 962). This section presents the *“associational power”* they have and the factor they consider affecting their bargaining power.

To improve the payment per unit, the women point out that sometimes they stop harvesting to pressure them to be paid more money.

“They offered us CLP 1.800²⁷ per box, but if we arrive at the orchard and more people are working with another contractor, we ask him, how much are they paying you for the box? At CLP 2.200²⁸, but with the other contractor, then, we say that we will only continue harvesting if they pay us CLP 2.200²⁹ for the box” (Solange, Interviewed, 2022).

The pressure from the producers to maintain the quality of the fruit and the few days that the cherry lasts on the tree, this bargaining power would pressure the businesspeople. However, some participants mentioned that negotiating has less impact with the presence of migrant workers in an irregular situation.

“It has affected us a lot with immigrants; sometimes, they are not interested in negotiating. They want to earn money, and they go to work. Chileans are stuck waiting for some options to access more money. They are very diverse opinions because if a group works and the other does not want to work, the contractor will always stay with the first group” (Rosa, Interviewed, 2022).

The women point out that migrant workers work to earn as much money as possible to send to relatives in their countries and that the exchange rate favours them. Therefore, migrant workers are willing to work for less money than Chilean workers. As it is not the focus of the investigation, the proportion of the bargaining power that this presence would affect them is unknown. However, this topic is recommended for another investigation.

As a final reflection, understanding how women increase their earnings and invest their time better during the harvest is interesting. The actions mentioned, such as adding fruit without the quality or the “theft” of the fruit, taking it away, or eating it in the garden, are “scamming the system”. They somehow manage to find benefits at work from their position as a worker without a contract and privileges. With the power they have collectively, the same thing is generated. So even though they know they cannot join a union due to their informal conditions; nevertheless, they somehow try to put pressure on the system collectively and face bargaining situations together.

Conclusions: Is Cherry Really that Sweet?

Regarding the initial questions of this investigation, all are answered. First, a general contextualization of the working conditions of seasonal workers was made. Their working conditions impact all areas of their lives. The sexual division of labour has consequences that make their working conditions even more precarious, which may have implications beyond work, such as the experience of abuse. Their work as seasonal workers and the job opportunities that agriculture gives them continue to perpetuate their gender role in raising children and domestic activities. In turn, it continues to perpetuate existing gender gaps.

Second, a paradox is installed that stresses the women themselves. On the one hand, they consider the cherry harvest attractive for them since it leaves them with significant profits quickly and allows them to do what has already been described. However, on the other

²⁷ EUR 1,8 approximately.

²⁸ EUR 2,2 approximately.

²⁹ EUR 2,2 approximately.

hand, they know that their conditions could be better and that the lack of existing regulations to regulate their working conditions is not met in favour of capital accumulation by the capitalists, favoured by the country's neoliberal policies.

Third, despite the conditions, they generate hidden resistance in the system, which is born from the need for reactive women. These resistances are invisible and minimal, but even so, it generates personal satisfaction and, from their perspective, allow them to benefit. The power they have in the GVCs, although it may be imperceptible during the harvest, could impact the business. However, if the workers had more instances to generate collective actions to resist, this power would increase substantially, considering the characteristics of this crop.

As a final reflection, the country is currently enjoying the returns of a market that is on the rise. Nevertheless, at the same time, with the current legislation and little control, it is silencing the first link and, therefore, the most important in this chain. It is giving them precarious working conditions, which do not reflect their importance in the business.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Map of Chile with Regions



Source: BCN, 2018

Appendix 2: Interview Questions Form

1. What would you say are the working conditions of seasonal cherry farmers? Investigate lockers to store your things, spaces for snacks, and transportation. The number of toilets does the number of toilets increase according to the number of working people? Are the toilets located near or far from your workplace? Are they always available to you, or are there days when there are no toilets?
2. What is your contractual relationship: with the company or directly with the contractor? If you have worked through contractors, what is your payment agreement with him/her? (Pay per day, fees, payment of taxes, etc.). Is the payment different if the company hires you? Why do you choose one or the other? Can you choose which way you work?
3. How long is the working day per day? Please inquire about the number of hours they work in a day, how many days a week, and in the months that the harvest is carried out. How is overtime paid? Is it paid differently than regular hours?
4. Do you work in something other than agriculture or continue with agricultural work during the rest of the year? Investigate the economic importance of working as a seasonal cherry worker for her.
5. Do you work far away or close to your job? How do they get from home to work? Do you have to incur a personal expense for that?
6. Do they handle chemical products? If so, do they have any type of training to apply them? Do they have protection for it? Investigate the state of their health and how the employee is involved if they take them to a health center or train them in this area.
7. Do you have health problems associated with or caused by work?
8. If the weather does not allow them to work harvesting, what does the worker do?
9. In this case, the woman has children under two years old. Do you think they would hire you to work as a seasonal worker? If they have worked with children under two years, does the employer provide them with a nursery or someone to care for their son or daughter during work?
10. If you consider that any employment condition is not beneficial for you and your team, is there any way to communicate it? If it has happened, how have they done it?
11. Do you belong to any union? Have you belonged? If he belonged, why did he leave?
12. Have you suffered an accident at work harvesting?
13. Does the pressure to be faster at harvest make sense? If the answer is positive, find out if it is personal pressure imposed by their peers (the rest of the temporary workers).
14. Do you know what happens to the cherry after the harvest?
15. Do you consider your work important for the cherry market? Why do you consider that?

16. Do you like temporary work? Why? If you could work on something else, what would it be?

Appendix 3: Focus Group Question Form

1. Based on your work experience in the cherry harvest, do you think it is important for women to work? Why?

2. What possibilities does the work of harvesting cherries offer you in different areas of your life? (Family, personal, work)

3. How has the cherry harvest impacted your family and work life?

4. Have you seen changes before and after working in the cherry harvest?

5. In your household, are you the “main salary”, that is, the main economic income? Find out if they consider their salary to be a “contribution” to the household income.

6. Who manages the economic income(s) of your household? Investigate if she gives the salary to a partner or another person or if she manages it. Find out if it has changed now that you work (I think that here we will see if it gives them financial freedom of decision).

7. Do you like doing it? Does it feel good? Do you think it gives you some freedoms? What freedoms does it give you?

8. Do you prefer seasonal work, or would you like to have a more “stable” job, that is, with a contract or every day? Why? Do you think it would be easier for you to have a permanent contract in an agricultural company if you were a man?

9. Are your heads mostly young people, men, or women?

10. Are there differences between the payment to a man and a woman doing the same work in the harvest? If there is, why do you think they occur?

11. Do you like to work seasonally in the cherry harvest? What favourable/harmful aspect? If you could work on something else, what would it be?

12. Would you recommend this job to another person?

Appendix 4: Contractual Situation of the Interviewees

Contractual Situation	María Jose	Jeannette	Diane	Natacha	Yessica	Rosa	Catalina	Solange	Constanza
The number of times you have signed a contract.	1	0	Every season.	She mostly does not sign a contract.	Sometimes	3	0	0	Always
The proportion of times you have worked informally	Mostly she works without a contract.	Always	She works the first month of each season without a contract.	Mostly she works without a contract.	Sometimes	Mostly she works without a contract.	Always	Always	Never

Source: Author's Own-October 2022

Appendix 5: Ways to Work into the Company

Recruitment	María Jose	Jeannette	Diane	Natacha	Yessica	Rosa	Catalina	Solange	Constanza
By a contractor	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Direct hiring by the company					X				

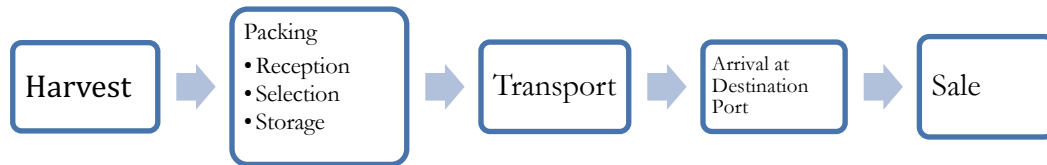
Source: Author's Own-October 2022

Appendix 6: Labour Code

Subject	Descriptions
Social Security	<p>The type of contract that seasonal workers have is the contract for work or finished work. This is terminated when the required task finish.</p> <p>As part of social security, the worker and the employer must pay for health, pensions, and insurance. According to <i>Chile Atiende</i> (2022), The discounts for each part are as follows:</p> <p>Worker discount:</p> <p>10%: Saving for the old-age pension.</p> <p>7%: To Access the National Health Fund (FONASA). This payment gives workers the right to Access to the health and people associated with care, such as children.</p> <p>Discounts the employer for each worker belonging to the company:</p> <p>2,21%: Disability and survival insurance, which covers workers if they have an accident and are left with a disability or die.</p> <p>0.93%: If the worker has an accident at work, he has the right to go to the care center associated with the employer.</p> <p>3,0 %: Unemployment insurance. When the contract is terminated or workers are fired, they are entitled to certain payments after their contract is terminated.</p>
Article 89: Fulfillment of Hours	If they cannot do the work due to weather conditions, they will be entitled to their daily payment, where they will be able to perform jobs other than those that appear in their employment contract (<i>Dirección del Trabajo</i> , 2018, p. 59).
Article 92: Chemicals	In case the worker must manipulate toxic chemicals, the employers must provide information about the appropriate use, elimination, symptoms of intoxication, and protection implements (<i>Dirección del Trabajo</i> , 2018, p. 60).
Article 92 bis: Intermediary Companies	The intermediary companies for the hiring of agricultural workers must be registered in the special registry of the labour inspection, otherwise, agricultural companies that use intermediaries that are not in the registry will be fined (<i>Dirección del Trabajo</i> , 2018, p. 60).
Article 95: Place to Eat and Transport	The employers must provide a clean space to hold, prepare and consume their food, and if the worker cannot buy their food for the distance, the employer should give meals (<i>Dirección del Trabajo</i> , 2018, p. 61). If the labour is 3 kilometers far from the worker's home, the employers must proportion mobilization for them (<i>Dirección del Trabajo</i> , 2018, p. 61).
Article 95 bis: Childcare	Companies with more than 20 female employees and the workspace in the same municipality, must have a space where workers with children under 2 years of age can feed them and take care of them while they work, and provided a nursery for the children of the workers (<i>Dirección del Trabajo</i> , 2018, p. 128).
Toilets, Lavatories, and Showers	The number of toilets, lavatories, and showers, depends on the number of workers, and should be separated between men and women (<i>Dirección del Trabajo</i> , 2022). The toilets cannot be installed more than 125 meters far from the workplace (BCN, 2003, p. 3), and should have hand soap, and disposable paper (BCN, 2019). The employer must provide drinking water to the workers (BCN, 2019).
Fitting Room	If it is necessary for the workers to change their clothes to carry out the work, the employer must provide a clean place for them to change their clothes, separate between men and women, a locker to store their clothes, and, if necessary, another to store work clothes (<i>Dirección del Trabajo</i> , 2022).
Hours per workday	The worker cannot exceed the working day of 7.5 hours per day, depending on the climatic conditions of each zone and the intrinsic situations of agriculture, reaching a total of 45 hours per week (<i>Dirección del Trabajo</i> , 2022). The extra hour must be paid with an additional 50% value and cannot be more than 2 hours per day.
Unions	The worker who is subcontracted does not have the right to belong to the union of the main company but can join the union of the company that subcontracts him. (<i>Dirección del Trabajo</i> , 2021). The temporary worker, hired by the company, can belong to the union while the person belongs to it (Riquelme, 2015, p. 89).

Source: Author's Own-October 2022

Appendix 7: Cherry's GVCs



Source: Author's Own-October 2022

Appendix 8: Participants Document

International Institute of Social Studies (ISS)
Master in Development Studies
Study: Labour Conditions of Female Seasonal Workers in the Cherry Harvest in Chile
Student: Pía Francisca Cisternas Olguín

Informed Consent

Date: ___/___/___ Time: _____

The objective of this study is:

1. To know the female labour conditions in the cherry harvest in Chile.

This research is part of the Master's in development studies of the International Institute of Social Studies in The Hague.

1. Voluntary Participation:

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary.

Do you want to participate in the Interview/Focus Group? Yes _____ No _____

Do you authorize recording the voice? Yes _____ No _____

Do you authorize recording the image? Yes _____ No _____

Do you authorize to be cited in the research with your first name (or Nickname)? Yes _____ No _____

2. Confidentiality Agreement:

Your first name is going to be included in the research.

First Name (or Nickname): _____

Age: _____ years.

Region where you have worked _____

Region where you live _____

Time you have been working harvesting fruit in general: _____ years.

Time you have been working harvesting cherries: _____ years.

3. Economic Compensation:

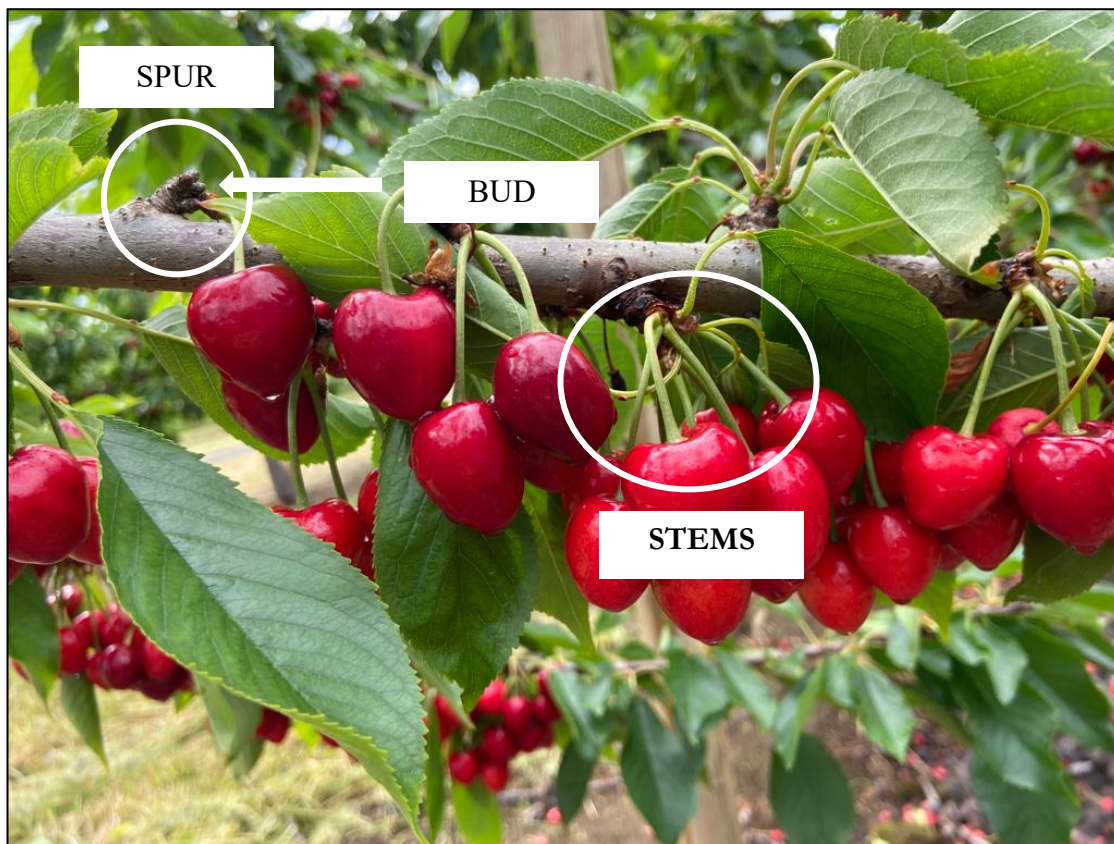
A deposit of CLP 10.000 (equivalent to EUR 13) will be made to the indicated account, for the duration of the online interview. To cover your internet usage/transportation and in recognition of your time.

Participant's Signature

I, Pía Francisca Cisternas Olguín, student of the Master's in Development Studies at ISS, certify that this information will only be used for academic purposes.

Student's Signature

Appendix 9: Photo of Cherries' growing on Tree



Source: Author's Own-October 2022

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