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**ANTES DEL AMANECER [UP BEFORE DAWN]: WORK-FAMILY STRATEGIES OF
ASPARAGUS AGRICULTURAL WAGE WORKERS**

A Dissertation in

Rural Sociology

and

Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

by

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the impacts of the global shifts in agricultural organization and the feminization of labor on the everyday lives of agricultural wage workers in one of the most successful industries in the Non-Traditional Agricultural Exports (NTAE) in Latin America, the Peruvian asparagus industry. By looking at the intersection of labor conditions, household labor, and gender and family dynamics in a context of global economic restructuring, this study seeks to understand workers' gendered experiences and family dynamics to manage and overcome the challenges presented when trying to reconcile their work responsibilities both at asparagus farms and in their homes. Moreover, this dissertation examines the institutional responses put in place to respond to worker challenges.

This study followed a case study approach in two asparagus-producing villages in the major region of green asparagus production in Peru, Ica. Between November 2015 and 2016, more than 70 qualitative interviews with key informants and female and male agricultural workers employed on farms with differing scales of production were conducted. Interviews were complemented with observational notes in order to record and understand everyday activities in the context of asparagus agricultural production.

The key findings suggest that gender differences, scale of production, and household dynamics shape the labor workload and dynamics both at the asparagus farm and at home. The data also suggest that asparagus workers' "temporary" status—a feature of this industry— but ongoing commitment to the industry, lead to labor informality and flexibility. Additionally, the study finds that women workers have greater responsibility in the home and with regard to their children.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Problem Statement

Since the 1990s and with the advent of economic liberalization, Peru's Non-Traditional Agricultural Exports (NTAEs) grew rapidly by approximately 1300 percent from 1990 to 2012. Equally important is this sector's advancement of employment, given that it generates about 200,000 direct and indirect jobs. Within the context of rapid global economic integration, researchers have produced a number of accounts regarding the economic and employment generation capacity of NTAEs, as well as the Global South's leading role as the major supplier of agro-industrial and high-value commodities (Patel-Campillo, 2012).

Even after several decades of adhering to export-led development strategies, however, poverty, marginalization, and poor working conditions still remain prevalent among NTAE workers (Flores Mego, 2011, p. 117; Ferm, 2008). This is particularly the case for women who now comprise the majority of the temporary waged labor force in agro-industrial production (Ballara & Parada, 2009; Soto Baquero & Kelin, 2012a; Soto Baquero & Kelin, 2012b). Although women's participation in agricultural activities may have a positive impact on their earning capacity, their new roles in agricultural activities could actually increase their vulnerability, dependency, and oppression at both work (Collins, 1995; Sachs & Alston, 2010) and home (Grados Bueno, 2013). It is nevertheless important to note that this situation is not limited to women: due to the dynamic nature of gender roles (Patel-Campillo, 2012), changes in agro-industrial production also affect men and notions of masculinity in both the domestic and economic settings.

When examining the intersection of labor and gender dynamics in a context of changing labor relations, and the influx of women in the job market at the turn of the 21st century, studies in family sociology and gender studies in the Global North observe that workers experience the existence of conflicts or dilemmas when negotiating their work with their personal and family responsibilities. It is also a challenge for women workers who, despite the gender revolution, still have the most responsibilities at home (Hochschild & Machung, 1990). The challenges of negotiating these responsibilities appear to be exacerbated for low-income families (Henly & Lambert, 2005).

The existence of work and family conflicts for women also appears to be relevant in the context of the Global South. Studies in countries such as Peru suggest that women workers face high levels of responsibility in relation to housework that might influence their work aspirations and family dynamics (Fuller, 1993; Kogan, 1992; Sara-Lafosse, 2009). Despite the importance of previous studies, which unveil the unexpected outcomes of women's participation in NTAEs, a large industry in the Global South, there has been relatively scant attention devoted to examining the labor and gender relations of workers and their household responsibilities and family dynamics.

This dissertation rests on the assumption that the gender division of labor at home, and, more precisely, the household and caregiving responsibilities of males and females, greatly influences the employment options available for both genders. In the same line, working conditions deeply influence the arrangements of male and female workers to fulfill their housework and family responsibilities. Looking at the everyday lives of agricultural wage workers and the connections between the paid labor at asparagus farms and housework, this dissertation engages with the dynamics of both the workspace and the private domain of the home in the context of agricultural production, more specifically in the NTAEs. Examining the impacts of agro-industrial production on working conditions and the private domain through a relational

gender perspective that accounts for women and men engaged in NTAEs production will offer a valuable understanding of how individual workers and families cope with sustained vulnerability. It also provides a basis for how they might encounter possibilities for transformation. Furthermore, this dissertation aims to shed light on the institutional responses taken by the local, regional and national government, as well as other interested parties, to the challenges faced by agricultural workers in the Global South.

Specifically, this dissertation examines one of the most successful industries in the NTAEs in Latin America and in Peru, the asparagus industry. With a gross production value of \$365 million, Peru's asparagus production makes it one of the world's top five suppliers of the crop (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Food and Agriculture Data [FAOSTATS], 2017). At the national level, the NTAE, with asparagus one of their most important crops, represents an important source of national revenue and employment (Soto Baquero & Klein, 2012b). Regionally, asparagus syndicates employ over 70,000 workers, approximately 60 percent of whom are female (Ferm, 2008; Moura, 2010; Flores Mego, 2011). Despite its importance as a source of employment and revenue, the asparagus industry has been denounced by local organizations because of its poor working conditions for temporary workers (Federacion Provincial de Mujeres de Ica [FEPROMU-ICA], 2007), who are primarily female (Flores Mego, 2011).

Research Objectives and Questions

Through an examination of the Peruvian asparagus industry, this dissertation explores the intersection of labor, gender and family dynamics within the NTAEs in the Global South. By starting a dialogue about the intersection of workspaces and the private domain of the home, this dissertation features two main objectives. First, it aims to understand the everyday lives of

asparagus wage workers within the context of paid work at agricultural farms and housework through assessing working conditions, household responsibilities and gender and family dynamics. Second, it seeks to identify the set of strategies developed to respond to work-family dilemmas by interested parties such as agricultural wage workers, asparagus growers, governmental representatives, community leaders, and non-governmental organizations among others.

This dissertation has the following research questions:

RQ 1: How do agricultural workers experience the organization of labor and the labor conditions when working at asparagus farms? What are the gender divisions of labor for female and male agricultural workers at asparagus farms?

RQ 2: What are everyday routines of asparagus workers in relation to the arrangements of their work outside and inside the home? What are the gender divisions of labor for female and male asparagus workers at home?

RQ 3: What are the family and gender dynamics that arise from workers' daily arrangements for their work at asparagus farms and at home?

RQ 4: What are the institutional responses to the challenges that asparagus workers face in relation to the arrangements of their work outside and inside the home?

Methods

This research uses a case study approach in two major asparagus-producing villages located in Ica, the largest asparagus-producing province and region in Peru. Qualitative field research was conducted during the major asparagus harvest, from November 2015 to January 2016. During this period, more than 70 recorded interviews were conducted. More than 30 face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with key informants were carried out, alongside over 40

interviews with female and male agricultural workers who worked in small, medium, or large asparagus farms. Interviews were complemented with observational notes in order to record and understand everyday activities.

Background

This dissertation was influenced by previous research conducted on the labor conditions of agro-industrial temporary women workers in the Region of Ica (Ruiz-Bravo & Castro Bernardini, 2012) as well as my involvement in a social responsibility project developed by the Academic Direction of Social Responsibility of the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru (PUCP) in the same region. While the study and social responsibility project carried out previously by PUCP researchers laid the foundation for this dissertation, it also raised important and unanswered questions regarding the domestic sphere and its labor dynamics. For this study, different research sites were chosen based on indicators of level of production and diversity in the scale of farms.

Scholarly Contribution

This dissertation builds on scholarly work on NTAES, gender, and labor but deepens such discussions through a fine-grained analysis of four major points. First, it explores the intrinsic relationship between the organization of labor and the feminization of labor in agro-industrial production. Second, the everyday arrangements and strategies of agricultural wage workers in the private domain of the home (household and caregiving responsibilities) are analyzed. The third aspect analyzed is the role of men and female agricultural workers within the

production system and everyday lives relates to the agency. Finally, the last major point of analysis is the forms of resistance at the community level.

The scholarly contribution of this dissertation lies primarily in its relational and comparative approach to gender. Because academic inquiries into gender often entail the study of women, this project, by utilizing a relational approach between women and men, will demonstrate the scholarly interest and value of examinations into the gender systems of NTAE while simultaneously broadening theoretical understandings of gender and family relations in both value chain systems of production and the domestic domain of the home.

This dissertation is among the few that compare gendered working conditions and household and caregiving responsibilities within Peru's largest and most profitable agricultural export industry. Furthermore, it also incorporates the resistance capacity of wage laborers as well as the institutional responses to asparagus workers challenges.

To conclude, this dissertation will offer a valuable understanding of the nexus of work and family dilemmas in the NTAEs. By doing so, this dissertation seeks to contribute to the fields of sociology of agriculture, family sociology, and women's and gender studies from the context of the Global South. Furthermore, research findings will enable Peruvian policy makers to make more informed policy and planning decisions concerning the asparagus industry and its impacts at the household level alongside gender and family dynamics.

Dissertation Organization

This dissertation is organized in eight chapters as follows:

The first chapter of this dissertation, *Introduction*, presents the problem statement by outlining the purpose the research problem, the research objectives, the primary questions,

methodology and background. Furthermore, the chapter discusses this work's intellectual merit and the dissertation's organization.

The second chapter, *Literature Review and Theoretical Framework*, provides a review of the literature on three main topics. First, it examines the global shift of agricultural organizations and production at the turn of the 20th century with one outcome being the development of the NTAEs in the Global South, as displayed by the Peruvian asparagus industry. Second, it describes the economic context and labor legislation in relation to the incremental increase of agricultural wage workers in a context of industrial agriculture. Finally, it analyzes women's role in agriculture and the implication of the feminization of labor in the everyday lives of women workers.

The third chapter, *Methodology and Research Approach*, states in depth the research questions guiding this dissertation, the research design and execution of the field research located in the major fresh asparagus-producing region in Peru, the data preparation, the analysis of the qualitative data, and finally the researcher's positionality.

The fourth chapter, *Permanently Seasonal Workers: Labor Relations and Working Conditions of Asparagus Agricultural Workers in Ica, Peru*, examines the material labor relations and working conditions of asparagus workers. This chapter combines descriptive statistics as well as workers' narratives regarding their gendered experiences in asparagus farms and their self-reflection regarding their working experiences and labor satisfaction in asparagus farms.

The fifth chapter, *In the House there is Always Something to do: Asparagus Worker's Daily Routines and Domestic Responsibilities*, analyzes the everyday lives of asparagus wage workers in the domestic sphere by examining workers' daily routines, the gender division of household labor and childbearing responsibilities as well as the work-family conflicts when negotiating their family responsibilities and job responsibilities at asparagus farms.

The sixth chapter, *Gender and Family Dynamics of Asparagus Wage Workers*, explores the family and gender dynamics of asparagus wage workers by paying attention to workers' relations and the roles of the extended family.

The seventh chapter, *Institutional Responses to Asparagus Workers' Work and Family Dilemmas*, discusses societal responses -formal and informal- to asparagus workers' everyday challenges regarding their material and working conditions, household labor and caregiving responsibilities and gender and family dynamics.

Finally, the eighth chapter, *Discussion and Conclusion*, presents a summary of the findings and conclusions organized by the research questions.

Chapter 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

This chapter's main objective is to develop a theoretical framework that links micro and macro analyses when examining the impacts of agriculture's industrialization on the life of female and male agricultural wage workers, specifically those of the Peruvian asparagus industry.

Global Restructuring of Agriculture

In the late 20th-century, scholars in the fields of rural sociology, the sociology of agriculture and agricultural economics noted the onset of a transformative process occurring in the agricultural production and consumption of food. This transformation related to the rise of modern agricultural systems, such as contract farming and agribusiness, which were components within an early 21st century economic system, neoliberalism (Little, 1994, Preibisch & Grez, 2010; Sachs & Alston, 2010; and Patel-Campillo, 2011). Scholars argued that modernized agriculture's trend toward the industrialization of production maintained uneven trade relations in agricultural production and food consumption between the Global South and the Global North, where consumers' demands reconfigured the international agricultural market. By the turn of the 21st century NTAEs in Africa, Asia and Latin America accounted for more than 50 percent of agricultural production worldwide (Hallam et al., 2004 as cited in Patel-Campillo, 2010, p. 76).

The globalization and industrialization of agricultural production and food consumption have not only continued but also deepened around the world, particularly in the Global South. This context calls for analysis to understand the impacts of modern agricultural production in international trade, labor organization, peasant communities, agricultural wage workers, consumer demands and sustainable development.

Global Changes in the Organization of Agricultural Production

Carolyn Sachs and Margaret Alston (2010) have pointed out that the main transformations in agriculture consist of "globalization of markets, declines in trade subsidies, concentration of agricultural production, increased power of retailers, and consumer demands for healthier and safer food" (p. 277). Another feature of international agriculture relates to the incremental increase of production and processing of developing countries' NTAEs, which were stimulated by international trade agreements and "loan repayment policies" in the international arena (Patel Campillo, 2010, p.76; Sachs and Alston 2010, p. 278; Preibish & Grez, 2010; Radel, Schmook, Mcevoy, Mendez, & Petrzelka, 2012. et al. 2012). Following this line, Latin America's NTAEs have undergone an unprecedented rise in the last three decades. As observed in the global scene, the development of the NTAEs in the Latin American region have changed the structure of agricultural production and employment from subsistence agriculture towards the increasing participation of agricultural wage laborers (Ballara & Parada, 2009; Soto Baquero & Kelin, 2012a; Soto Baquero & Kelin, 2012b).

According to Alain de Janvry and Philip LeVeen (1986) global changes in the organization of agriculture followed that of other productive sectors, which shifted from "pre-capitalist" to "capitalist" modes of production (p. 84). The authors demonstrated the deep impacts of such capitalist modernization on all aspects of agricultural production, consumption, and trade. Furthermore, the authors pointed out that this new agricultural model in fact had detrimental economic and social consequences for rural and peasant communities worldwide, who have been losing their land and commodifying their labor.

Additionally, de Janvry and LeVeen showed that this capitalist organization widened the unequal division of labor and distribution of resources between the so-called "First" and "Third World Nations." (1986, p.83). The authors observed three main processes occurring in the

transformations of agricultural organization: first, “the commodification of agriculture” in all its components (p. 84), second, the displacement of the traditional farm by agro-industrial production, and finally, the prevalence of an international division of agricultural labor that maintained patterns of uneven development among “industrialized” and “non-industrialized” countries.

Considering that late 20th-century agricultural organization shifted toward a more capitalist mode of production, it should come as no surprise that the first process identified by de Janvry and LeVeen (1986) is the commodification “of the product and of the means of [its] production” in world agriculture (p.85). In other words, under this new system land, labor, agricultural products, capital, and technologies in agriculture represent “commodities” and are therefore market-oriented with the goal of profit maximization (p. 85). The second main process identified by de Janvry and LeVeen (1986), “agribusiness” overtaking traditional farm production, implies an industrial revolution in agricultural production that not only introduces modern technologies but also subordinates farmers and peasants to the production process. Under this model of agricultural production, the labor organization experiences a transition from the peasant to the agricultural wage worker. Furthermore, the industrialization of agriculture transforms the scale of production from small to large, relies largely on monocrops, and sells to transnational consumers of the Global North rather than to local communities. The third main process identified by the authors is the asymmetric relations among nation-states. Such problematic relationships place “Third World Nations” in risk conditions, and demand “food self-sufficiency” because the agricultural production seems to be dictated and oriented toward the needs of Global North (p. 92).

The concerns regarding capitalist agricultural organization worldwide identified by de Janvry and LeVeen in the late 20th century appear to be relevant not only for “Third World Nations” but also for “First World Nations” such as the US. Lobao and Meyer (2001) have

examined the impacts of what they call the “dramatic transformation” of United States farming through the second half of the 20th century. Although the analysis of Lobao and Mayer differs in time and scope from de Janvry and LeVeen’s work, both stress global agriculture’s movement toward the hegemony of the “agricultural industrial complex”. Additionally, both groups of authors emphasize that this transformation negatively affects traditional forms of agricultural production and organization in the United States (the family farm, for example). Lobao and Mayer have noted that farm populations during the 20th century experienced a steep decline, while large agricultural firms underwent an incremental increase.

Likewise, Margaret Gray (2014) has explored the labor organization and working conditions of agricultural wage workers in alternative agricultural production in the United States. Gray argued that despite the efforts of the alternative food movement to challenge the norms and practices of the agro-industrial complex, farm production in New York’s Hudson Valley demonstrates that alternative modes of production do not necessarily negate the exploitative conditions faced by wage workers (and present similar features to the labor organization of the “agricultural industrial complex”). Similar to Lobao and Meyer (2001), Gray suggested that United States agricultural wage workers, who are mostly immigrants with vulnerable legal statuses, experience challenges due to their marginalized socioeconomic status and racial segregation. In this sense, Gray’s work explores the contradictions of alternative movements in agriculture, which despite this movement’s efforts remains under the international division of labor that relegates “Third World Nations” to suppliers of cheap and vulnerable labor.

Women’s Roles in Agriculture and the Feminization of labor

Among the changes in agricultural production and organization, several studies agree that the one of the most significant changes is the feminization of agriculture, understood as the

incremental increase of women's participation in agricultural activities. Sachs and Alston (2010) have stated that current shifts in agriculture have resulted from changes in the gender division of labor as well as from changes in the perception regarding women's roles in agriculture beyond that of the farm-wife. Where traditional analyses of women's agricultural participation used to link them primarily with the family farm (especially in western countries), contemporary analyses examine such roles through the lenses of "gender, race, ethnicity, class, [and] citizenship" (p. 278). In the same line the study conducted by Ballara and Parada (2009) found that rural women in Latin America have high rates of participation in agricultural activities. The authors also argue that the assumption that women's roles are mainly related to their domestic duties is not always the case. This is especially true in countries like Bolivia and Peru where indigenous women have an ancient tradition of being involved in agriculture.

In other words, women's participation in agriculture extends beyond the farm and traditional agricultural production, such as their participation as agricultural wage workers in the NTAEs. The literature's analysis of the feminization of agriculture has primarily addressed the increase in female wage labor as result of the modernization of agriculture and the emergence of the NTAEs since the 1990s (Collin, 1995; Appendini, 2002; Deere 2005; Allen and Sachs, 2007; Sachs and Alston, 2010; Patel-Campillo, 2012; Radel et al., 2012). As Patel-Campillo stated:

The twin processes of the feminization of agricultural labor and flexible employment practices associated with the production of export-oriented agricultural commodities place women as active agents in the restructuring of neoliberal capitalist agriculture, or what has been termed as – the third corporate food regime (2012, p.273).

The women's rights agenda as well as the international development's agenda¹ have been the demand for paid labor with the understanding that income allows female economic independence, therefore narrowing the employment gap between men and women. Consequently,

¹ For example, the Millennium Goal N.1. Target 1. B seeks to achieve "full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people" (United Nations, 2015, p.17).

there is a perception that women's participation in agricultural activities may have a positive impact on their livelihoods and their families.

Despite the existence of positive gains from women's participation in agriculture different voices argued that an analysis of women's participation in the agricultural labor market is needed since there are instances that show that females' new role in paid agricultural activities are not necessarily improving their livelihoods, but instead are creating new contexts of dependency and oppression that deserve to be examined (Soto Baquero & Kelin, 2012a; Soto Baquero & Kelin, 2012b). Along these lines, several studies regarding women's participation in paid agricultural activities have been conducted worldwide. In Latin America, the focus is more specifically on female work in the NTAEs.

Collins (1995) found that since the 1980s, female participation in the NTAEs in Latin America (particularly in the fruit and vegetable industries) has increased, and this seems to be changing labor relations. This author has pointed out that the reasons behind this increase in female participation relate to the perception of women as a flexible, easily tamed, and apolitical labor force. Collins has also noted that the vulnerable labor conditions of women agricultural workers not only lowered the labor costs but also improved the quality of the production process.

In a similar vein, Sachs and Alston (2010) have noted that in general, NTAE industries tend to see women as having lower wage demands and greater flexibility to work temporarily. These industries also perceive female employees as easily replaceable due to the high number of women seeking supplementary income (p. 278). For the authors, the fragile conditions of the labor market render female workers invisible and vulnerable to such labor practices (p. 278). According to these authors, these practices seem to redefine gender relations into a dynamic that disadvantages women while allowing businesses to profit (p. 280). Additionally, Patel-Campillo (2012), stated that female employment in the NTAEs in the global south "comprise the bulk of

the workforce” with labor flexibility and therefore lower cost, factors that permit this sector to produce high-quality products with lower employment costs (p.273).

The Peruvian Asparagus Industry

To understand the success of Peru’s asparagus industry within the process of agricultural modernization, it is important to recognize the economic and legal context that undergirds the rise of this economic sector, which had the support of the private sector at its beginning before also gaining the support of Peruvian government in the last 25 years.

The development of the Peruvian asparagus industry is tied to the movement, both economic and historical, toward modernization experienced by countries in the Global South in the second half of the twentieth century (Rostow 1959; Inkeles 1975). Much of the developmental process also stems from the implementation of economic liberalization policies at the late 20th century (Marañón 1993; Patel-Campillo, 2010; Patel-Campillo, 2011). The asparagus industry reflects historical, social, and political development at the national level (internal) while also connecting with the international system (external). Following Cardoso and Falleto (1979), this section employs an integrated analysis of development that leaves aside the conceptual dichotomies often used in development approaches, such as the existence of traditional and modern societies (Rostow, 1959). To fully examine the intricacies of the asparagus industry, one must step away from "dependency" on only the perspective of external domination. Instead, the researcher must account for historical, social, and political dynamics that are central to defining the dependency of relationships in the production and formation of national economies (Cardoso and Falleto, 1979). In the case of the Peruvian asparagus industry, development represents a process of economic modernization on the one hand, and on the other, it acts as a sociopolitical

process. Recognizing development as such permits the examination of trends and contemporary models in the agricultural and food systems described in the first section of this chapter.

Peru's asparagus production was introduced in the north of the Peruvian coast during the 1950s (Valcárcel, 2003). Initially considered experimental, asparagus was not produced as a commercial crop at the start of its production. It was not until the late 1970s that asparagus production rose due to modernization and industrialization. Figure 2-1, shows the asparagus production and area harvested from 1960 to 2014.

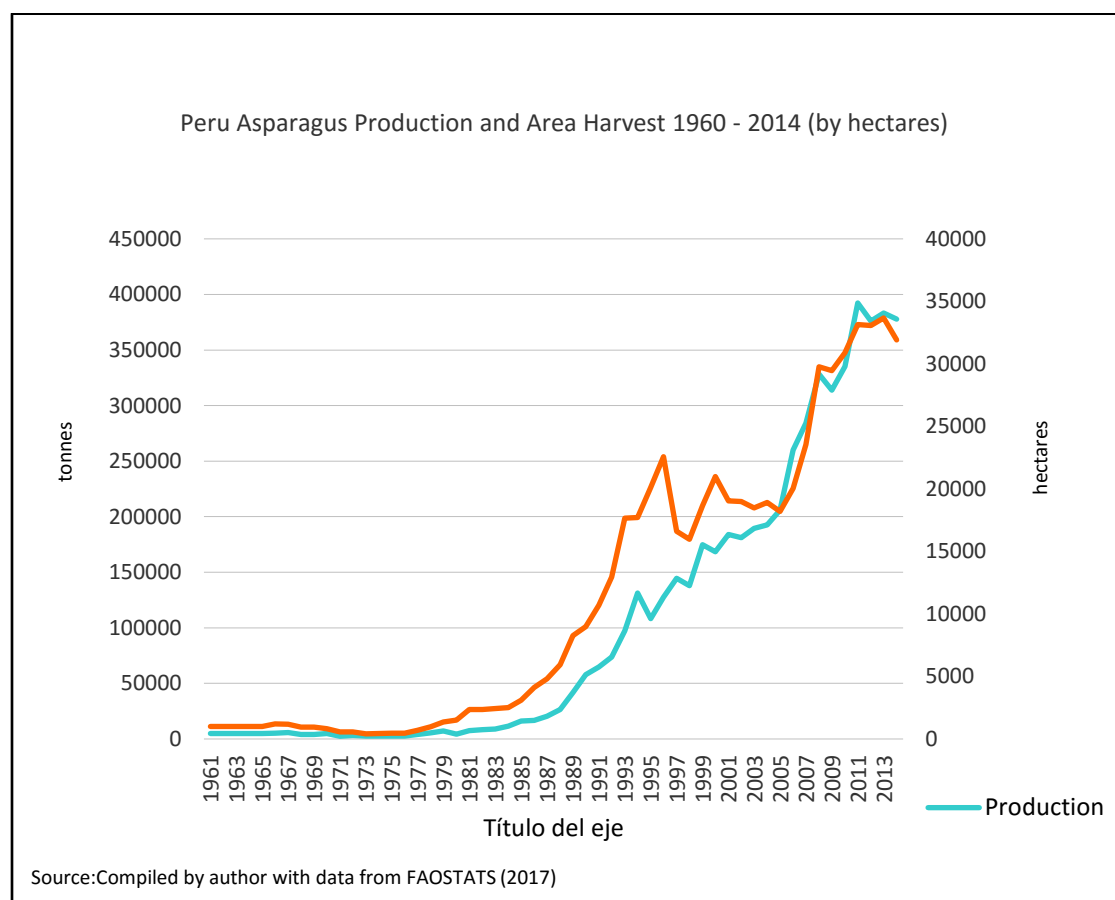


Figure 2-1. Peru Asparagus Production and Area Harvest 1960 -2014

By the end of the 1980s, Peru had experienced the so-called “asparagus boom” with its exportation of “white gold” (white canned asparagus) to Western Europe and the United States

(Valcárcel, 2003). The development and success of this NTAE led to the creation of agricultural complexes throughout the Peruvian coast², extensively in the north to the south-central region.

Asparagus still represents one of the leading crops in Peru's NTAEs although in the last decade producers have been diversifying their production with the cultivation of other crops such as table grapes (Chacaltana & Yamada 2009; Meade, Baldwin, & Calvin, 2012). In fact, by 2014 Peru was among the top producers of asparagus in the world as can be seen in Table 2-1. Particularly, Peru is a top exporter of the fresh green asparagus variety, which is mainly destined for the US market (Nichols, 1990; Benson, 2008; Díaz Rios, 2007, Chacaltana & Yamada , 2009; Meade, Baldwin, & Calvin, 2012).

Table 2-1. Top Asparagus Producing countries (by production quantity) by 2014

Country	Tons
China, mainland	6848320
Peru	377701
Mexico	170225
Germany	114090
Spain	48814
Italy	43357
United States of America	33700
Japan	28500
France	20494

Source: Compiled by the author with data from FAOSTATS (2017)

The production of this nonnative crop in Peru in the middle of the 20th century, along with the later development of a successful agroindustry, appears to be related to the worldwide shift in agricultural organization experienced in the late 20th century. Different features of the global transformation observed in the first section of this chapter also appear in Peru: large-scale industrial production, preference for monocultures, economic orientation of

² Piura, Lambayeque, La Libertad, Ancash, Lima and Ica.

production toward the Global North, and the shift in the organization of labor from peasant to agricultural wage labor described by the work of de Janvry and LeVeen (1986).

Over the last twenty-five years the production for exports of asparagus has increased worldwide due to a large demand for year-round production in the Global North as well as the “changes in the economic conditions in the producing and consuming nations” (Benson, 2008, p. 495). China, Peru, and Mexico experienced the greatest impact from the incremental increase in production in the last decade. In this regard, the organization of asparagus production coincides with the international division of labor described by de Janvry and Leveen (1986). It is interesting to note that even when some countries in the Global North are leaders in the asparagus production, such as the United States, Germany and Spain, their production is primarily intended for internal consumption. With China, Peru, and Mexico, however, the asparagus industry is designed primarily for export (Marañón 1993; Meade, Baldwin, & Calvin, 2012). For the latter countries, asparagus represents a commodity for export. In this sense, as de Janvry and LeVeen point out there is a division between producers and consumers of this crop that aligns with geographic and political division between the so called “First” and “Third” Worlds.

Regarding the success of the Peruvian asparagus industry, asparagus experts have pointed out three comparative advantages that have allowed this sector to become a global leader. First, taking into account that asparagus production in the Global North occurs during the spring season (from January to July), the demand during the remaining seasons has to be supplied by importing asparagus from other countries in the Southern Hemisphere. However, in most cases, the Global South can only supply such demand from September to December. Peru’s location in the tropics, as well as the climate conditions of its coastal desert, permit the production of asparagus in stable conditions with year-round sunlight (at least two harvests per year) (Gallo, Zamorano, & Yegüare 2008; Chacaltana & Yamada, 2009). According to Gallo, Zamorano, & Yegüare:

The characteristics of the seasonal supply and the and year-round increasing demand for asparagus in the USA, present an opportunity for Peruvian exporters; California and Mexico suppliers dominate the green asparagus market from Mid January to July; Peru dominates the off season demand from August to Mid January, when prices increase due to the lack of local supply (p.490).

Because of this advantage in seasonality, Peru is able to supply the demand for fresh, green asparagus when the North's market is off-season, particularly in the United States (Nichols, 1990, p.26; Gallo, Zamorano, & Yegüare, 2008).

A second advantage relates to the “open windows opportunities” to trade with the United States which have significantly increased US imports of Peruvian asparagus over the last decade (Benson, 2008). The existence of the United States' political favor to the Peruvian asparagus industry parallels the success of other NTAEs, such as the cut-flower industry in Colombia in the US market (Patel-Campillo, 2010). According to Patel-Campillo, the existence of the US political favor “relates to its political interest in the Andean region” (p.77) such as the Andean Trade Preference and Drug Eradication Act [ATPDEA]. This act gives preference trade agreement to Andean countries for cooperation with the US to combat production and drug trafficking (Andean Trade Preference and Drug Eradication Act of 2002). Additionally, Peru and the US signed in 2006 a Free Trade Agreement which came into effect in 2009 (The United States - Peru Trade Promotion Agreement Implementation Act of 2007). Importantly, these agreements also offer incentives and benefits for the export sector such as eliminating or reducing tariffs (Díaz Ríos, 2007; Meade, Baldwin, & Calvin, 2012). For instance, the ATPDEA had a direct impact in the increase of US imports of asparagus from Peru due the preferential treatment given to Peruvian exports. As a collateral effect, the US asparagus industry experienced a decrease in local demand(Grubbs, 2010).

Finally, the third comparative advantage deals with asparagus production costs. Entrepreneurs see the high availability of cheap labor, which decreases the cost of asparagus production, as one of the appeals of producing from Latin American countries such as Peru

(Villachica & Toledo, 2003, p. 65; Meade, Baldwin, & Calvin, 2012). Because asparagus production is a price-sensitive and labor-intensive industry with high standards in quality maintenance, business owners seek regions with cheap and competitive costs. As Paske points out, “(the) production will increase in the less developed countries where labor is cheaper. I find it difficult to see how producers in developed countries will be able to compete with suppliers from emerging countries” (1996, p. 23). In other words, producers in the Global North see the low labor rates of Global South countries as unfair competition.

Former president Barack Obama in a presidential visit to Peru in 2016 as part of the APEC Summit, mentioned that some of the greatest challenges to establishing the U.S. Peru Free Trade Agreement between the United State and Peru were related to the labor issues, with the demand that Peru improve labor standards. As the former US president Barack Obama stated:

When we established the U.S.-Peru Free Trade Agreement, one of the requirements was for Peru to strengthen its protection of labor rights, workers' rights. And we did that in part because, with all of our trading partners we don't want to be disadvantaged because we're dealing with labor that has no rights, and so it gets the lowest wages and can be exploited. But we did it also because that will help lift the wages and benefits and protections that workers here in Peru enjoy, because ultimately that's good for everybody.

(November 19, 2016).

Some authors, however, such as Villachica & Toledo (2003), downplay the importance of this advantage in relation to the industry's success, instead arguing that the “abundant labor and low wages are” not exclusive to Peru (p. 65). For instance, the asparagus industry success can also be related to the quality of the asparagus and the high yield existence in Peru as observed in Figure 2-2³.

³ Data from <http://www.earthstat.org>

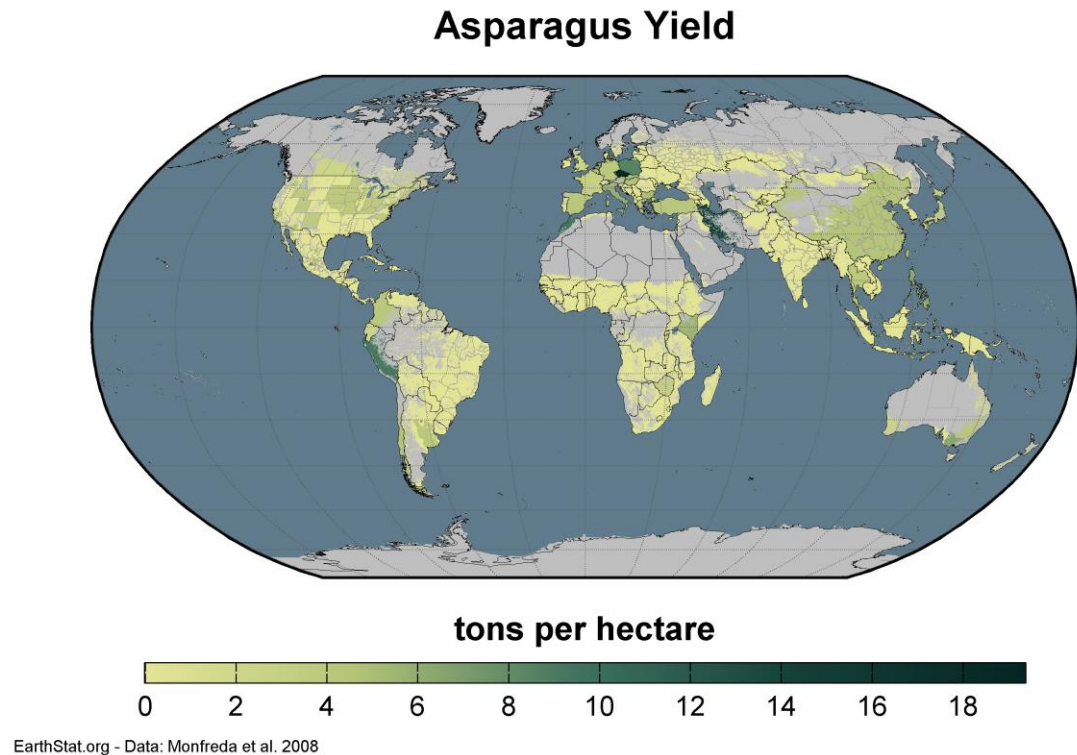


Figure 2-1. Average Yield for Asparagus 1997-2003.

In line with the argument of Villachica & Toledo (2003), Ipsen (2016) argues that the only economic rationality – such as the existence of lower production costs as cheap labor – appears to be limited to explain the logic behind agricultural transnational firms to define the location of their production site.

Regardless, the role of the workforce, specifically in its transition from peasant to wage workers, is central in understanding Peru's industrialization of agriculture. Workers' demands for increased labor rights, the improvement of working conditions and occupational health in the NTAEs has become a national debate and has reached the Peruvian congress. Such a situation challenges the sense that the industry is wholly beneficial for Peru. Along the concerns presented by Lobao and Meyer (2001) and Gray (2014) regarding the impacts of modernization and

globalization of agriculture in contemporary US, cemented by the living conditions of US-based peasants as well as agricultural workers are also present when analyzing the development of the NTAE in Peru, particularly in the asparagus industry, which employs nearly 70,000 workers (Moura, 2010).

Additionally, the analysis of the asparagus industry brings into conversation the gendered division of labor and its impacts on the lives of agricultural wage workers. This is because one of the central features of this sector's employment is the predominance of female temporary agricultural workers in the field, a population made up largely of migrants from the Andean region. Contrary to corporate discourses that present the preference of female hiring as stemming from females' ability to handle asparagus, feminist scholars such as Ferm (2008) and Flores Mego (2011) and women's organization such as the Provincial Women's Federation of Ica (FEPROMU-ICA, 2007), pointed out that the presence of female wage workers in this sector emerges from fragile social conditions and from an adaptability to temporary work statuses.

Another allegation made regarding the development of the NTAEs, and specifically to the asparagus industry, is related to its environmental impacts. As noted, the development of the asparagus industrial complex took place in the Peruvian coastal region, a desert region. Taking into account that asparagus production demands a large amount of water resources, the rise of this industry goes in parallel with the development of high irrigation techniques in the Peruvian Coast. However, researchers and organizations such as the Human Rights Commission of Ica (CODEHICA) pointed out that the incremental increase of asparagus production through the use of groundwater is generating serious water scarcity problems in some asparagus producing regions such Ica, most importantly the depletion of the Ica aquifer (Ore and Damonte, 2014).

An important feature of the Peruvian asparagus industry is related to the role of civil society in the defense of women's rights, the improvement of labor standards and the assessment of the environmental impacts. Due the pressure executed by local organizations, in the last decade

civil society organizations, government representatives, labor unions, environmental advocates and entrepreneurs have passionately organized around the economic, social and environmental impacts of Peru's asparagus industry.

Among the diverse organizations and civil society groups that enhance the battle for labor rights in Peru is the Provincial Women's Federation Ica (Ruiz-Bravo & Castro, 2012). One of the actions taken by the organization is linked to the development of research regarding the situation of female workers in the asparagus industry⁴. A second area of work of the FEPRMU - ICA is linked to raising awareness of labor rights between male and female workers of agribusiness as well as giving workers legal support in the process of collective bargaining with NTAEs corporations. A third line of work has been working with other organizations of civil society in the quest to develop proposals to promote national policies. Finally, the FEPRMU - ICA, developed in collaboration with other institution a childcare service in an agricultural producing village in the Ica Region with the aim of responding to female agricultural workers' demand for childcare facilities.

According to civil society organizations, the development of this thriving asparagus industry depends on the violation of working rights for Peru's most marginalized population as well as the depletion of water resources. On the other hand, entrepreneurs assert the importance of the sector for the economic development and employment generation for the country.

⁴ This had as an aim the exposure of the existence of poor labor conditions. In more than 20 years of work, the federation has collaborated in different investigations and it has published at least four studies on the matter. Among the research conducted by the FEPRMU - ICA are the examination of working conditions, the effects on health of workers, the existence of occupational diseases and accidents and the international and local financial context of the industry.

Female Participation and Gender Division of Labor

Corresponding with international trends on NTAEs, studies carried out in the last decade on the Peruvian asparagus industry indicate that one of the main characteristics of this sector is the presence of female workers. Even though there are no official statistics disaggregated by gender, studies have indicated that at least 50 percent of the labor force is female (Flores Mego, 2011; Ferm, 2008). Additionally, studies indicate that women workers tended to be in their reproductive age and the majority of them were mothers (Flores Mego, 2011; Ruiz-Bravo and Castro, 2012). In some producing regions, such as Ica, the major producer of fresh asparagus in the country, the percentage of female participation goes up 60 percent (Aurora Vivar Association, 2006 as cited in Ruiz-Bravo & Castro, 2012; Moura 2010).

Employers point out that given the delicate nature of this crop, asparagus planting and harvesting requires abilities considered feminine, such as fine motor skills and meticulousness (Calisaya and Flores, 2006). In contrast, the male workforce remains higher during field maintenance (after planting and before harvesting) and in the factory after the product is frozen. Consequently, there are far more female workers during the intensive period of production (which is seasonal) than there are during the maintenance period (which is stable during the year). As a consequence of this gendered labor division, male employment has the potential to last year-round, and this stability thus increases responsibilities and positions during the production process.

Even though female workers comprise the majority of workers, they usually have positions as wage laborers (in the fields or in the factories) rather than positions as farm managers or supervisors (Ferm, 2008, p. 13). The temporary nature of their employment and the positions of low-responsibility make female work the most unstable and the lowest paying in the asparagus industry. As Calisaya and Flores (2006) have pointed out, the discourse surrounding the existence

of specifically feminine skills and traits belies the real motivation of producers, namely the lower cost of female labor due to the flexibility of contracts.

To sum up, this dissertation considers that the analysis of the labor organization and feminization of labor in the asparagus industry follows the trends of early rural sociological research (Zimmerman, 2013) and the more recent interest in the lives of gender individuals, particularly women's lives. Such an investigation must take a holistic approach when studying the impacts of agro-industrial production. Moreover, this analysis must also attempt to link the local and global scope while charting the process of globalization and industrialization in agricultural organization..

Wage Workers: Working Class, Low-income Workers and the Working Poor

Due to the fragility of their employment status and working conditions, wage workers provide an interesting subject for analysis, especially in regard to the extension of flexible labor standards and changes to labor organization worldwide in different economic sectors. As mentioned before, in Latin America and in Peru in particular NTAEs has shown an unprecedented rise in the last two decades, having as one of their impacts the transformation of the structure of agricultural employment from subsistence agriculture toward the increasing participation of agricultural wage laborers (Marañón 1993; Ballara & Parada, 2009). Wage workers in agricultural production receive wages or salaries as exchange for their labor in agriculture related activities and do not necessarily own the means of production, the land. In this sense, this dissertation focusses more specifically on agricultural wage workers in contrast to farmers or peasants.

Considering that this study seeks to examine the situation of wage workers in agro-industrial settings, it is important to offer a clear definition of what this study understands as

wage workers. This study categorizes wage laborers into working class, low-income workers and the working poor (Marx, 2001; May, 1982; Gerson and Jacobs, 2004; Henly & Lambert, 2005; Young, 2008; Williams, 2010; Damaske, 2011).

Following a classic tradition in sociology, from a Marxian approach, workers are considered commodities in the capitalist mode of production who depend primarily on the demand for their labor. In this line, Marx (2001) pointed out that the commodity of the workers is their labor, which workers sell as their product just as the capitalists do with their manufactured goods (p.130). And the value of labor, like the value of a commodity, is determined by the amount of labor performed (p.137).

More contemporary literature tends to offer different, sometimes competing definitions of working class, wage laborers and low-income workers. Under the umbrella of low-income workers, we encounter different types of labor skills (skilled, semi-killed, low-skilled, and unskilled), incomes (consistent or inconsistent wages), and employment statuses (standard and non-standard). These differences, therefore, have varying impacts on labor, labor demands, and labor conditions (the salaries and benefits workers receive). However, the notion of the low-income worker commonly relates to less privileged groups of workers with low levels of education and low skilled, lower-paying jobs (Gerson and Jacobs, 2004, p. 30; Henly and Lambert, 2005, p. 473; Williams, 2010).

Young's (2008) definition of low-income or working-class workers (and families), however, is not necessarily related to their conditions of vulnerability, but to their role as workers who can provide for their family. Under this definition, a working-class individual could be "skilled or semi-skilled" and earn "consistent wages" (p. 87). Young also has noted that an important group of the working class and their families struggle to satisfy their most basic needs; in such a context, this group fits better under the label of "working poor" (2008).

Wage Labor in the NTAE and the Peruvian Asparagus Industry

Following previous work, it will be important to put the characteristics of agricultural wage workers into dialogue with approaches examining low-income, working-class and working poor. Studies on NTAE in Peru in general and in the Ica region in particular examined the labor relations within this sector by focusing primarily on agricultural wage workers [trabajadores asalariados].

When studying the labor relation in the asparagus industry in Ica-Peru in the 1990s, Marañón (1993) defined wage laborers [trabajadores asalariados] in asparagus production as “temporary peasants without land or those that have land but still need to supplement their income” (p.28). At the same time, these workers earned low salaries and were employed under vulnerable working conditions. As mentioned previously, this author relates the incremental increase of agricultural wage workers to the process of modernization of agriculture in Latin America and in Peru. This process for Marañón goes hand in hand with the detachment of agricultural workers from their land as a mean of subsistence, the commodification of their labor activities and the temporary nature of their employment.

Similarly, to Marañón, for Moura (2010) the notion of wage workers in the agro-industrial complex of Ica relates to the existence of wages or salaries, which define the relation between workers and agro-industrial firms. Moura (2010) has argued that Peruvian agricultural wage workers (of the Ica region) find themselves impoverished because they fail to receive a salary that allows them to provide for their basic needs. (p. 101). The situation of impoverishment in which these workers live according to Moura not only relates to the changes or the organization of production of agriculture as pointed out by Marañón (1993) but are in relation to Peru’s labor regulatory framework as well as to governmental establishment of the “minimum wage”. Moura argues that Peru maintains a distinction between the “minimum living wage,”

which is "the official name of the minimum wage" (p. 99) and the concept of "living wage" which he refers to as that which "allows workers and their families live comfortably" (2010, p.99; see also May, 1982, p. 113). Along with Moura's argument, the General Confederation of Peru's Workers (CGTP) states the existence of a gap between the minimum wage set by the government and the living wage calculated in relation to the basic household's basket of goods (Vildoso, 2011, p. 82; CGTP, 2016). Consequently, even when the agricultural wage workers will be around the government's minimum wage, it will not necessarily meet the basic necessities of the worker and her or his family. Thus, the situation of agricultural wage workers seems to fall under Young's (2008) previously mentioned definition of "working poor".

The existence of lower salaries identified by both, Marañón (1993) and Moura (2010) as one of the characteristics of the employment of agricultural wage workers appears to relate to the comparative advantages of the Peruvian asparagus industry mentioned previously, the low production costs and the use of cheap labor (Paske, 1996, p. 23). Another advantage are specific labor regulations for the agricultural sector such as the Law 27360 which reduces production costs as a way to create incentives for producers (Chacaltana & Yamada, 2009). The increased demand for asparagus in the Global North has affected an increase in production; this in turn has generated greater demand for workers in the Global South. The hiring of cheap labor in the Global South has met the demand, as is the case in Peru, which is made up of a large contingency of temporary and unskilled workers. However, the demand for labor, initially positive for workers in its creation of jobs, has not necessarily led to an increase of wages or labor stability.

Labor Flexibilization and Instability

Gerson and Jacobs (2004) have argued that in the US wage workers experienced an increase in job instability, non-standard employment statuses, and nonstandard schedules at the turn of the 21st century. Even though wage labor involves a wide range of employment statuses that can include full-time, part-time, temporary, or seasonal, low-skilled workers within this group appear less likely to have full-time employment or standard schedules (Young, 2008). Because the control of work schedules and the extension of labor benefits (vacation leave, health insurance, training opportunities, etc.) are offered only to those with the full-time employment status (Henly & Lambert, 2005), wage workers face high levels of job insecurity, an inability to control work schedules, and poor working conditions in the US (Williams, 2010).

According to Henly and Lambert (2005), the non-standard employment status for the working class connects with workload reduction in working-class jobs. One should not, however, interpret workload reduction as a product of labor rights (like the reduction of working shifts), but should instead see it as an incremental increase of job instability stemming from changes in the organization of labor, which now depends on less skilled or at least less well paid workers (Gerson and Jacobs, 2004 & Henly and Lambert, 2005).

These trends in the Global North regarding labor flexibilization and uncertain employment statuses of wage laborers appear to be in conjunction with the existence of labor deregulation and flexibility in the Global South. In the case of Peru, the increased flexibility of labor standards has led to the reduction of labor benefits due the temporary employment statuses in the case of the NTAE.

Liberalization Policies, Labor Deregulation and Seasonality in Peru's NTAE

Situated in a national context of internal armed conflict, widespread poverty, productivity stagnation, and the imposition of international economic sanctions, the Peruvian government of the 1990s, led by Alberto Fujimori, implemented economic liberalization measures forced by the international financial community. This enactment of structural adjustment policies, consistent with the Washington Consensus, began in the early 1990s and continued through the following decades (Klarén, 2005). With the implementation of these economic measures, Peru focused its economic policies on liberalizing markets, strengthening the private sector, promoting foreign investments, and increasing export-oriented development (Valcárcel, 2003).

After twenty years of implementing economic liberalization measures, Peru presented the best macro-economic indicators of its recent history (from 1975). According to national institutions, the country is experiencing a period of consistent economic growth, reduction of poverty, diversification of production, as well as the rise of national exports (such as the NTAEs). This is evident with a 23.5 percent decrease of monetary poverty between 2001 and 2010⁵; a sustained growth in GDP⁶ and exports over the past decade (Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática [INEI], 2010, p.35; FMI, 2013, p.73).

The implementation of liberalization policies through structural adjustment programs and the changing of the economic model of development (which in the case of Peru changed to an “Open Market Economy”) aligned with the process of modernizing agriculture and the NTAE’s production in the Global South (Marañón 1993; Patel-Campillo, 2011). Under this economic model of development, the Peruvian’s NTAEs have experienced an exponential growth without precedent from the 1990s to the 2010s, with asparagus as one of its leading crops. For this

⁵ From 54, 8 percent in 2001 to 31, 3 percent in 2010.

⁶ This is with the exception of 2008 due to the international financial crisis (Ruiz Bravo & Castro, 2012, p.202).

reason, the NTAEs had been considered one the most profitable and most competitive industries in the country⁷ (Casas & Sánchez 1999; Díaz Rios, 2007; Agrarian Commission of the Peruvian Congress, 2012 & Gamero, 2011 as cited Ruiz-Bravo & Castro, 2012, p. 207).

Despite the improvement of Peruvian economic indicators, some authors argue that with the economic liberalization policies and the implementation of a development model oriented toward the market and foreign investment, Peruvian labor standards have become increasingly deregulated in the last two decades (Moura, 2010). As Moura (2010) points out, in the late 1970s and 1980s Peru faced an intense debate on the effectiveness of existing labor legislation. During that time, many argued that in a situation of deep informality, Peru's rigid and poorly enforced labor standards were negatively impacting formalization of labor (Moura, 2010, p. 22-23).

In this context, the economic liberalization policies in the early 1990s had national and international support due to the crisis and inability of Peru to "generate volumes of investment needed to create jobs" (Moura, 2010, p. 24). Moura has argued, however, that contrary to expectations, the deregulation of labor did not contribute to an increase in the rates of formal employment or to an increase in wages. Rather, labor deregulation affected the "dismantling of sectorial collective bargaining and the weakening of labor authority" (Moura, 2010, p. 33). In this context, the author states that the modifications of Peruvian labor law from the late 1980s to the 1990s were characterized by a pro-business and anti-union orientation (p.35).

Together with the process of deregulation of Peruvian labor standards, Marañón (1993) argued that the radical transformation of the agricultural labor structure in Peru was one of the consequences of the modernization and industrialization of agriculture. The author noted a shift

⁷ According to Sanchez and Casas "in the twelve-year period from 1984 to 1995 [the] asparagus growing area has increased an average of 29 percent per year. During this same period, producers have seen an increase of 28 percent in their spear yields" (p.57). In a similar vein, the Agrarian Commission of the Peruvian Congress states that the number of NTAEs has grown over 1300 percent in the last 20 years, and employs nearly 200,000 workers by 2012 (In: (Ruiz-Bravo & Castro, 2012).

from permanent agricultural wage labor (who resided in old plantations) to seasonal agricultural wage labor (who are hired for a period shorter than six months).

The International Labour Organization for Latin America and The Caribbean (2016) observed that the seasonality of employment in Latin America, particularly in the case of agriculture, in direct relation to the seasonal production of different crops, have important implications in the level and type of participation in agricultural activities, more so for women. Moreover, “it has direct impact in the type of employment and salary of workers and their household” (p.27).

Among the different impacts of the seasonality of employment in agricultural related activities in the life of workers are; i) the wide diversification of labor activities performed by workers cyclically. The performance of multiple jobs is a common respond to the seasonality of employment in rural areas, especially in countries such as Peru and Guatemala, ii) the temporary nature of their employment, iii) the existence of barriers to social benefits such as social security, insurance, and “maternity protections”, iv) “variations in the labor demand” which relates to the existence of labor migration patterns locally and internationally, and v) vulnerable labor conditions, especially for migrant workers (p. 27-29)

The labor flexibility initiated in the 1990s according to Moura (2010) and the existence of a massive presence of temporary agricultural labor according to Marañón (1993) continued to intensify during the 2000s, particularly for the NTAEs. In 2001, the Peruvian government enacted Law 27360⁸, “Law on the Promotion of the Agricultural Sector,” to provide incentives to agro-industrial producers for a period of 10 years. On the one hand, according to Gamero (2011), this legislation differentiated the working conditions and benefits between ordinary workers, and workers of the NTAEs industries. Such differences include the legality of carrying out

⁸ By 2011 the Peruvian Ministry of Labor registered 211,078 formal workers under the Law (Gamero, 2012. In Ruiz-Bravo & Castro, 2012, p.207).

undetermined and seasonal job contracts; the existence of cumulative working shifts longer than eight hours; and the reduction of some salary benefits and vacation time due to the temporary contracts of the workers (as cited in Ruiz-Bravo & Castro, 2012, p. 228). In contrast, some authors such as Chacaltana & Yamada (2009) argued that there was an incremental increase in the formalization of the employment in the agricultural sector in the 2000s, in particular in large agricultural firms. For these authors, the implementation of the Law 27360 appears to have positive impacts for the formalization of temporary labor in the NTAE, primarily by the type of contract in the sector. By 2011, five amendments to the Law 27360 that would have improved worker's benefits and wages had been introduced in the Peruvian Congress⁹. However, the legislation never progressed past the committee. The private sector argued that due to the financial crises in the US and Europe in 2008 (the main export destinations of NTAEs as well as Peruvian asparagus), the NTAEs faced a period of instability and therefore a substantial increase in wages would be detrimental (Agrarian Commission of the Peruvian Congress, 2011, p. 5 & 8 as cited in Ruiz-Bravo & Castro, 2012, p.229 & 254). At the end, incentives for the NTAEs have been extended until 2021.

Work-Family Divide

Another concern regarding the challenges faced by wage workers in industrial settings is related to the arrangements and strategies by laborers to accomplish both their work and family responsibilities. The changes to the labor organization in the NTAEs and other industrial sectors faced at the turn of the 21th century which is characterized by labor deregulation, instability and

⁹ At the end of 2016, another Law project was introduced to the Congress with the aim of eliminating the Law 27360.

seasonality negatively impacts benefits and wages and brings up questions about the ability of workers to achieve work-life balance.

Research on work-family dilemmas in white-collar or working professionals in the US proved the existence of a gender division of labor in the household. Studies in the 1980s and 2000s proved the existence of a double shift for women workers, whom despite working full-time outside of the home usually realized a second labor shift when returning home since they are considered primarily responsible for performing or managing the household and caregiving responsibilities (Hochschild and Machung, 1990). Despite the gender revolution, the load of work in the household appears to be greater for women workers (Gerson & Jacobs, 2004; Gerson, 2010).

Gender Division of Labor

Studies regarding the household division of labor in the Global South, in countries such as Peru, share similar findings with studies conducted in the US, both concluding that women have the major responsibilities in the household (Sara-Lafosse 2009, MIMDES-INEI, 2010). The Peru's Time Use National Survey (ENUT) conducted in 2010, reveals that females from 12 years old and older have more participation in household related activities than males. Moreover, they dedicate more time to performing domestic activities than their male counterparts (MINDES-INEI, 2010, p. 31). ENUT's final report concludes the traditional gender division of household and care labor still exists (p.84). According to the ENUT's report, as can be seen in Table 2-2. in general terms females have more involvement in household activities such as "cooking", "cleaning", "clothing", and "shopping". While men also perform household related activities such as "cleaning" and "clothing" related activities, men have greater participation in other activities such as "repair, construction and house maintenance" (p.31).

Table 2-2. Household Activities by Gender by 2010

Household Activities	Female	Male
	Number of hours per week	
Cooking	13 hours and 43 minutes	4 hours and 2 minutes
Cleaning	6 hours and 38 minutes	2 hours and 5 minutes
Clothing	5 hours and 34 minutes	2 hours and 5 minutes
Shopping	3 hours and 37 minutes	2 hours and 38 minutes
Repair, construction and house maintenance	2 hours and 8 minutes	3 hours and 33 minutes
Childcare related activities	12 hours and 14 minutes	5 hours and 49 minutes
Taking care of ill family member	4 hours and 16 minutes	3 hours and 37 minutes
Taking care of family member with disabilities	16 hours and 47 minutes	8 hours and 55 minutes
Helping in another household	5 hours and 35 minutes	3 hours and 31 minutes

Source: Compiled by the author from the ENUT's final report as cited in MINDES-INEI (2010). From graph: "Peru: Average hours per week that the population of 12 years and older dedicates to daily activities, by sex" (p.33)

The ENUT also report gender differences in the participation and time dedicated to childcare related activities and care work, understood as taking care of ill family member, family member with disabilities as well as helping in another household (page 31, 32, 33, 83 and 84).

Violeta Sara-Lafossee (2009) points out that in the 20th century, the gender division of labor in Peru underwent a dramatic transformation processe with the massive increase in the number of Peruvian women entering into the labor market. This participation has led to the establishment of shared economic responsibilities between men and women within the household. For this author, the participation of women in the workplace has positive impacts on the lives of women not only because of her economic contribution to the household or the existence of better communication between couples (Piel 1968 as cited in Sara-Lafossee, p.385) but for the women's well-being. For instance, women who do not work outside appear to have high level of health problems, in particular mental health issues (Scanzoni, 1980 as cited in Sara-Lafosse). The feelings of "isolation" and alienation produced by the reclusion of women at home when their families have education and labor experience outside of the household have been extensively

documented by feminist and women's scholars since the 19th century (Gilman, 1999) and are also given as an explanation by Sara-Lafosse when trying to understand the reason behind the negative effects that women experience when exclusively performing domestic labor at home (Sara-Lafosse p.386).

Family Types

The study of the gender division of labor within the household has new nuances when examined through the dynamics between the couple and family members. Sara-Lafosse (2009) developed a typology of Peruvian families taking into account three dynamics among couples and members of the family; "daily labor activities", "decision making" and "sexuality" (p.385). The author argues that the Peruvian families are in a process of transformation and transition from a more traditional family type, under the model of the patriarchal family type, towards more contemporary family types -under the model of the egalitarian family. Studies conducted by the author during the second half of the 20th century reveal the existence of four types of families in Peruvian society: i) the "patriarchal family" ii) the "egalitarian family" iii) the "family in transition"; and iv) the "unstructured or despotic family" (p.396). These first three types appear to go in line with the other typologies developed in the US. For instance, "three types of ideology of marital roles" have been developed by Arlie Hochschild and Anne Machung (1990) in their well-known study titled "The Second Shift". These typologies are: i) the "traditional", ii) the "transitional" and iii) the "egalitarian" (p.15). Similarly, Susan Shaw and Janet Lee (2007) identified in the family structure literature, three model structures of "marriage or domestic partnerships": i) the "head-complement", ii) the "junior partner/senior partner", and iii) the "equal partners" (p.383).

Within the patriarchal family, there is a clear division of daily work between the couple. There is a family member who provides economically to the family (usually the father) and another member who is primarily engaged in household chores and childcare (usually the mother). In this type of family, decisions are mediated by the authority of the head of the household (father or mother) (Sara-Lafosse, 2009). Sara-Lafosse's depiction of the patriarchal family shares similar features with the definition of the "head-complement" (Shaw and Lee, 2007, p.383). However, in a slightly different approach, for Hochschild and Machung (1990) the ideology behind the traditional marriage does not necessarily lie in a factual division of labor between spouses but in the ideal attached to their marital roles. For these authors, even when women can work outside of the home under this marriage type, women "wants to identify with her activities at home (as a wife, a mother, a neighborhood mom)". Similarly, "the traditional man wants the same" (p.15).

At the other extreme are the families that Sara-Lafosse defines as egalitarian, which other authors refer to as companion (De la Mata as cited in Lafosse, 2009) or democratic families. The egalitarian families have cooperative models in everyday work outside and inside the home (Sara-Lafosse, p.384). They are composed of dual-earner households. This family type is characterized by the cooperation and participation of all members of the family in domestic work, including the children. In addition, this type of family operates under a democratic model in decision making (p.387). For Hochschild and Machung (1990), in the egalitarian marriage ideology, women aspire to participate in the "same spheres their husband does" as well as share "equal amount of power" (p.15).

The third type of family is the family in transition from patriarchal to egalitarian. This family type is according to the author, the one that best reflects the Peruvian family type (Sara-Lafosse, 2009, p.391). The author points out that with the entry of women into the labor market, a significant percentage of Peruvian families are dual-earner households. The existence of dual-

earner families challenges the notion of the patriarchal family and the couple and family dynamics but this does not mean that other dynamics are completely transformed. For instance, this does not necessarily mean that work at home is shared in equal term by the couple or family members. Likewise, Hochschild and Machung research findings suggest that the transitional marriage ideology is the more common type among their study participants and function as a blend type that emerge from the other two types [traditional or egalitarian] (1990). As the author explains:

A typical transitional [wife] wants to identify both with the caring for the home and with helping her husband earn money, but wants her husband focus on earning a living. A typical transitional man is for his wife working, but expects her to take the main responsibility at home too (p.15 & 16).

Interestingly, the description provided by Shaw and Lee (2007) of the “junior partner/senior partner” model appear as a transitional model of domestic relationship from a more traditional model. Under this model “(...) both member of the couple work outside of the home, although one member (usually wife or female domestic partner) considers her work to be secondary to the senior partner’s job. She also takes primary responsibility for the home and childcare” (p.384).

In addition to these three family types, Sara-Lafosse finds another type of family, “la familia no estructurada” [the unstructured family] (Sara-Lafosse 1995 & 2009). The “unstructured family”, which other authors define as “despotic” (Goode, 1964 as cited in Sara-Lafosse 2009), is related to single-parent families conducted by a woman, a widespread situation in Peru and Latin America (p.397). According to the author, in this type of family women live as single mothers in the company of their children and are “disintegrated” or “unstable” due the abandonment of the father. Moreover, this type of family lives in conditions of poverty. For the author, although this family type exists in all societies, it does as a "marginal" or "deviant" type of family. In contrast, the unstructured family has been normalized in Latin America and Peru as an

expression of a macho, racist and authoritarian culture of our societies. Sara-Lafosse also argues that the widespread development of this type of family in Latin America needs to be understood in the historical context of Spanish colonization in the region (Goode 1964 as cited in Sara-Lafosse, 2009). Although "encouraged" at the beginning of the Spanish conquest marriages or unions between the Spanish population and the indigenous population were banned during colonial times. However, the unions between Spanish men and indigenous women continued due to the lack of Spanish women and to an existent higher status of the mestizo population - compared to the indigenous populations. The descendants of these unions, mestizos, were mainly raised by their indigenous mothers. For Sara-Lafosse (2009) and Goode (1964), the development of this type of family was a consequence to the process of "weakening" of the "internal control systems" of indigenous women and indigenous community ties as part of the Spanish conquest (as cited in Sara-Lafosse, 2009, p.398).

Despite the positive impacts of women's participation in the labor market Sara-Lafosse points out that when women's participation in the labor market is not accompanied by a more equitable sharing of the household labor within the couple and among family members, women experiences an overload of work "due the performance a double shift" (2009, p.386). For the author, the transition from division of labor models within the household to the development of more shared labor models among couples and family members will not only have a positive impact on women's life but also on Peruvian society as a whole which had a "tradition of authorism" and sexism (p.387).

Work and Family Dilemmas

When observing the challenges women workers face to reconcile their work outside and inside of the home, studies conducted in the US reveal that a gender division of labor in the

household appears to have serious implications for women's job performance and development in the job place as well as the type of employment status and working conditions they experience. For example, several scholars pointed out the challenges faced by women professionals to balance their work and family responsibilities is in most cases an obstacle for professional achievement (Gerson, 2010). Similar findings were documented regarding the career path of professional women in Peru at the turn of the 20th century. Different Peruvian scholars argue that despite the high levels of participation of Peruvian women in the job market, professional women in urban settings were still struggling to balance domestic and professional obligations, a situation that more often than not limited their possibilities to have successful careers. The impossibility of balancing both, a successful professional career and a family life has led in some cases to the delay of -or in some instances abandonment - of maternity and with that to the responsibilities attached to it (Castro, 2005).

More particularly, the examination of work-family dilemmas on working class or low-income families should be given more attention than other types of workers due the precarious conditions of their labor and also since this group has received less attention in comparison with other groups such as white-collar professionals (Young, 2008; Williams, 2010).

In this vein, Young (2008) states that low-income families in the US, in particular low-income African American families, face specific challenges in maintaining work and life balance (...)" (p.87). To the author, these challenges seems to be more related to developing strategies that allow low-income families to maintain their subsistence rather than to achieve professional success that white-collar professional families struggle to gain as observed in the case of the US and Peru. The existence of economic pressures to provide for their families as well as the difficulty to secure housing, maintain standard jobs, and have labor benefits appear to be the most common challenges faced by working class families (Henly & Lambert, 2005; Young, 2008 & Williams, 2010). The non-standard status of employment and consequential nonstandard

workload will have serious implications on working-class families' ability to have standard arrangements within the household or caregiving responsibilities. Furthermore, the existence of dual responsibilities in the workplace and household, especially for women, could have negative impacts on the health of workers (Maume, Sebastian & Bardo, 2009).

As Young (2008) points out, taking into consideration that the life of working class families is strongly tied to their work; their struggles of balancing work and life are grounded in a context where stable and standard jobs are not necessarily a goal to be accomplished. The dilemma for this particular group is how to maintain both aspects of their life, work and family, rather than have job quality as is the case of white-collar professionals. Following the argument that the lack of standardized work schedules has an impact on the arrangements of household and caregiving responsibilities, Henly and Lambert (2005) point out that one of the most important concerns for parents is childcare during working hours. Temporary work and part-time work are some of the strategies followed by low-income workers as ways to fulfill their family responsibilities, since this group may not have other childcare support systems that middle class workers such as child care facilities or household paid labor. Low-income workers' non-standard schedules make it very difficult for working class families to plan their caregiving responsibilities ahead of time.

Studies about the strategies followed by African American and white families show the existence of a kinship network that facilitates "practical", "financial", and "emotional" support among families. Specifically, African American Families, with the lower incomes of both, appear to rely on "practical support" from their families in activities such as "household help", "transportation help", and "childcare" (Sarkisian and Gerstel, 2004, p. 830).

Despite the multiple strategies implemented by low income workers, the literature suggests that the process of planning childcare arrangements is a very stressful and frustrating process for working class families (Henly & Lambert, p.2005). Literature on the work-family

divide acknowledges the existence of poor working conditions as a response to global changes in labor organization and production in different industries. By looking at the challenges that working conditions and this type of labor organization of labor have on households and caregivers as well as the type of couple, it is possible to address dilemmas faced by female low-income workers. The aim of this dissertation is to contribute to this debate in the context of the NTAEs in the Global South.

Female Participation in NTAEs as Subsidiary Work

In the particular case of female workers in the NTAEs the non-standard, temporary and vulnerable condition of women's wage labor had been related to the notion of "subsidiary work", where women's participation in the agricultural labor force is viewed as only supplemental to their primary responsibilities of the home (as cited in Collins, 1995). However, for Collins (1995) this explanation is problematic for female agricultural wage workers, particularly those in the fruit and vegetable industries, since they are often the primary income earners for their families.

The Peruvian asparagus industry, as well as in other NTAEs, is characterized by the seasonal production process (Marañón, 1993). The recruitment of workers occurs mainly during planting, harvesting, and processing; in the case of asparagus this period lasts six months. Several studies have found that there is a predominance of female workers in the fields as well as during the early steps of asparagus processing (Válcarcel, 2003; Ferm, 2008). Producers cite the dexterity of women as one of their primary rationales for hiring female labor during harvest time and the early stages of the asparagus production process. However, some scholars have argued that asparagus producers prefer to hire women workers because they are usually more willing to enter and leave the labor market according to the season (Calisaya and Flores, 2006; Ferm, 2008:

Ruiz-Bravo & Castro, 2012). This relates to the characterization of women as primarily responsible for household labor and caregiving responsibilities in their households. In this sense, women's household and caregiving responsibilities make them choose flexible jobs that do not require a stable commitment.

Among the studies conducted regarding this subject, Grados Buenos (2013) examines the challenges that mothers face when working at the NTAEs in the region of Ica-Peru. Grados Buenos stated in the first place that despite the challenges that female agricultural wage workers face as workers, their main concern is related to their caregiving responsibilities. This concern appears to be more problematic in a context of lack of economic resources and childcare facilities as is the case of this group of workers. As a way to cope with different responsibilities, Grados Buenos found that mother workers in the NTAEs established a network of relations with other women in their families, neighborhood and community. The author pointed out that there is a traditional division of labor regarding the tasks performed by men and women. Furthermore, Grados Buenos pointed out that the overload of responsibilities in the household not only increases the work for the mothers in the household, but for other members of the household such as the oldest daughter.

Feminist Conceptual Framework

The Feminization of Labor

“Disposable Bodies”

During her investigation regarding manufacturing plants in Mexico, Wright (1999) points out that women workers at the maquila fit into the “model of variable capital whose worth

fluctuates from a status of value to one of waste” (p. 454). Variable capital is defined by the author as “the labor power –what the worker provides in exchange for wages– that produces a value in excess to itself” (Harvey 1982, as cited in Wright, p.454). “Labor power is a form of variable capital since it is worth less than the value of what it produces” (p.454), Wright argues that Mexican female labor power’s value decays over time and is worth less than the value that the labor power produces. Furthermore, the value of female labor power in this case is also related to the temporary nature of her labor; in other words, female labor at the assembly plants is valuable because it is not necessary to invest in her permanent employment to ensure the production process.

In this vein, according to Wright (1999), the maquila exhibits a difference between what the author calls “untrainable” and “trainable” workers, the former being those who are unreliable and placed in temporary and unskilled positions. In contrast, the trainable workers are referred to as loyal, or those who remain working and are worthy of training. Moreover, the author argues that “gender is a critical marker for differentiating between these worker brands” (p. 455). Her research shows how women are perceived by the managers as untrainable workers due to their lack of skill and unreliability, so the nature of temporary work seems to be perpetuated by this dynamic. In contrast, the “masculine subject” appears in Wright’s frame as the other type of capital variable, one in which his labor power’s value is considered worthy beyond its disposable nature. In contrast to the female laborer, the male worker in the maquilas is perceived as a “potentially skilled” personnel who will be worthy of being trained and “who will support the high-tech transformation of the maquila sector into the twenty first century” (p. 456).

This finding parallel with Damaske’s (2011) study regarding the role that class and gender have in women’s work trajectories. The author observed that companies that hired non-fulltime or non-long-term employees usually translated, for the women’s participants in her study,

into the existence of low-skilled job with precarious working conditions, and little value from employers to their employees' work.

The temporary nature of female labor in the asparagus industry parallels the work done by Wright (1999), arguing that the value of female workers' labor directly relates to the temporary nature of their labor. Moreover, Wright has shown how the industry perceived female workers, in contrast to male workers, as un-trainable due their unreliability and lack of skill creating a "dual-tiered" or "two-tiered" system of employment. The nature of the female temporary worker in this industrial enterprise thus seems to be perpetuated through this dynamic, fulfilling the role of "disposable" labor. Although this work examines a different type of industry, the characterization of a "dual-tiered" or "two-tiered" system of employment could be useful when examining the process of recruitment (temporary or permanent) of female and male agricultural workers in the asparagus industry of Peru and shed light on the reasons behind the division of labor in this industry as well as the conditions of female wage laborers.

The characterization of female workers as replaceable, wasteful, or disposable labor power also goes in line with studies conducted in Latin America about the impact of agricultural work (in the field and at the factory) on the well-being of female agricultural wage workers in the NTAEs. Taking into consideration both the fragile nature of the crops that have been traded in the NTAEs industries combined with the demand for fresh products by consumers in the Global North, the NTAEs industries are characterized as labor-intensive (Ballara & Parada, 2009; Soto Baquero & Kelin, 2012a; Soto Baquero & Kelin, 2012b). In order to guarantee that the quality of the crop can be exported, the production process should be conducted in the most efficient way possible, follow strict protocols and use the latest technology for the production and conservation of fruits and vegetables. These conditions of production have resulted in the existence of prolonged and intensive working shifts and the use of pesticides and agrochemicals, conditions considered potentially hazards to wage workers' health (Soto Baquero & Kelin, 2012a; Soto

Baquero & Kelin, 2012b). Moreover, the health risks increase when involving vulnerable populations such as temporary female agricultural workers, especially when they are elderly, pregnant, migrant and low-income workers.

“Homework Economy”

In order to examine the new dynamics of labor relations, Haraway introduces the notion of 'homework economy' developed by Richard Gordon when analyzing what she calls the "New Industrial Revolution" (1985, p.166). The author notes that this new production context is itself generating a new class and new types of sexuality and ethnicity. The flow of capital to the emerging extreme division of labor at the international level is linked to the existence of "new collectivities and the weakening of family grouping" (p.166). The homework economy makes reference to the specific features of associated female or activities traditionally performed by women, even if they are performed by women or men. This work is designated as feminine or feminized by Haraway since its features are related to the vulnerability and perception of the worker's labor force on reserve (p, 166).

The notion of feminized types of labor, associated with a vulnerable labor force rather than a gendered laborer presented by Haraway (1985), under the definition of the homework economy, appears to be useful when analyzing the composition of agricultural wage laborers in the NTAEs, which also employ an important contingent of migrant laborers.

Studies about the Peruvian asparagus industry have documented the existence of seasonal migration as a pattern of the seasonal asparagus production (Marañón, 1993; Calisaya & Flores, 2006). In the study conducted by Calisaya and Flores (2006), asparagus migrant workers usually migrates from the Andean zones located within the asparagus productions regions or from Andean regions located close to them. As a trend, the authors observed that the migrant labor

force in the asparagus industry – especially the women, who come from other regions-, occupied lower labor position in the asparagus production process. Usually, women migrant from other regions work agricultural labor performed in asparagus farms, with less participation in the processing plants. Furthermore, the authors argue migrant laborers experience challenges when negotiating their labor rights and wages due the lack of experience holding a wage labor experience in agriculture (p.35). According to the author, both situations locate migrant workers in the asparagus industry in a situation of vulnerability with respect to other work. Using Haraway's approach (1985), a feminist analysis on the feminization of labor in the NTAEs should neither rest only in the women's participation nor in the analysis of the gender division of labor but also on the existence of power dynamics in the process of recruitment and organization of labor that are also related to class, place of origin, age and ethnicity.

Asparagus Female Workers as Victims of Oppression?

This section seeks to place this study within the theoretical approaches of Third World Women and transnational feminism while incorporating this perspective in the analysis of the Peruvian asparagus industry. In the previous section of this chapter, I described the vulnerable conditions of wage workers, specifically female agricultural wage workers, under the current organization of agricultural production.

Under the necessity of understanding gender issues within a broader approach, feminist scholars in the late 1960's, 1970's and 1980's in the US, sought an analysis that considered women's struggles under the intersectionality of gender, class, and ethnicity. Self-identified radical women of color, urgently expressed that the women's movement and the feminist academy needed to address women's issues in a wider scope, one that takes into consideration the existence of multiple identities (Anzaldúa, 1990).

The Third World Woman

Under the same framework, Chandra Talpade Mohanty (2004) questioned the use of “woman” as a universal category of analysis. For this author, the singular concept of the Third World Woman coupled with the notion of scientific generalization led to the production of the "average Third World woman" in western feminist writings. Furthermore, the characteristics associated with this average "Third World woman" were typically negative and related to an overly broad context of dominance and oppression. (p. 22). In a similar vein as Haraway, who questioned a narrow and deterministic understanding of the worker and women’s struggle, the danger of this narrow conceptualization is its deterministic frame that subordinates them. Mohanty stated that it is not a surprise that the searchers for solutions to the problem of the "average Third World woman" when discussing international development, encounter universal solutions such as educational and economic development and access to healthcare among other possible explanations for women’s struggles (p. 29).

To avoid falling under the notion of the “average Third World Women”, Mohanty pointed out that “Third World feminists” have an arduous and dual-faced task, “dismantling” and “constructing” a feminist epistemology based on the examination of women’s problems in a particular historic, cultural, and geographic context (p. 17).

Following Mohanty (2004) and Women of Color Theory, a first step to challenging the victim’s paradigm approach when analyzing the Peruvian asparagus industry will be by acknowledging the differences among these groups of women. Research regarding female agricultural workers commonly presents this group of workers as a coherent group that suffers from labor exploitation that impinges on their health and domestic lives. Here, it is important to reflect among the possibilities of examining the labor organization and division of labor in the context of the industrialization of agriculture while at the same time moving beyond the victim

paradigm and the scope of the "average Third World woman". The analysis must address the different job positions and divisions of labor among women workers; studying the gendered division of labor should focus not only on the male and female divide but also in the complexity of this division.

In this sense, a second strategy in avoiding the western ethnocentric approach relates to the need for a new framing of feminization of labor. Building on the notions of "feminine work" (Haraway, 1985) and "disposable bodies" (Wright, 1999) this study demonstrates a context of vulnerability among female wage workers in the industrial and agro-industrial settings. However, these notions should not be only applied to female agricultural workers but to vulnerable workers, including males, which also could be understood by the industry as vulnerable labor force. In this regard, the feminist approach used here not only accounts for female-male power dynamics but for a system of agricultural production that deals with vulnerable labor conditions as a way of maximizing profits (Patel-Campillo, 2012).

In examining of working conditions and its impacts on agricultural wage workers everyday lives (in relation to their household and caregiving responsibilities) it is necessary to allow space to explain the benefits of employment in this industry as well as the strategies proposed by agricultural wage workers to overcome vulnerable working conditions and transform the system. It is important to note that even with an ongoing public debate regarding the vulnerable conditions faced by agricultural workers, Peruvian society tends to view the participation of women in the industry as a part of the narrative of women's success and their free exercise of economic rights. Furthermore, the industry presents women's responsibilities and dexterity as positive elements of the labor experience. Previous researchers have drawn attention to the high level of job satisfaction among females who see their work as providing opportunities to learn and participate in the country's development while also enabling monetary contributions to the household.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Research Approach

Introduction and Overview

This chapter presents and discusses the methodology of this dissertation, focusing on the approaches used throughout the research process, alongside an analysis of my positionality and its implications. Four main aspects are included: the research design, the data-collection, the data preparation and analysis, and my standpoint and positionality.

Research Design

This dissertation employs an extended case method approach of the Peruvian asparagus industry by examining asparagus-producing towns located in one asparagus-producing district of the Province of Ica, within Peru's Ica Region. The rationale behind the use of an extended case method, given its systemic approach, aims to encompass a wider scope to understand the everyday lives of agricultural laborers (Burawoy, 1991).

For Michael Burawoy the extended case method needs to be put in conversation with a larger discussion regarding the way that conventional methods and non-conventional methods address the link between social structure and individual agency. Burawoy notes that the extended case method reformulates the traditional discussion between the macro and micro analysis in sociology in a different manner than other non-conventional methods (p.275 & 276).

By understanding the value of methodology in its ability of linking “empirical work” and theory, Burawoy (1991) argues that empirical field work needs to be founded in theory and in turn contribute to “the reconstruction of existing formulation of theory” (p.279). The extended case method reformulates the relationship between ethnography and theory, by distancing itself from abstract and ahistorical ethnographic approaches with the aim to link the case study with macro social processes that are defined by historical and institutional frameworks. As Burawoy explains, “the significance of a case relates to what it tells us about the world in which it is embedded. What must be true about the social context or historical past for our case to have assumed the character we have observed?” (p.281)

As the grounded basis of this approach, I target villages revolving around asparagus production (asparagus villages). Under this umbrella, I look at labor practices, household division of labor, workers’ narratives as well as how workers’ lives and their families are organized around asparagus production.

Following, an extended case method approach, the study of asparagus productions villages accounts for a micro analysis of the place of asparagus production but also seeks to establish a relation with the theory discussed in Chapter 2 in terms of processes of transformation in the second half of the 20th century. In this sense, this approach seeks to contextualize the existing working conditions of female and male agricultural workers, their household responsibilities and family dynamics in relation to the organization of labor and the system of asparagus production in Peru.

Research Sample

The selection of the extended case approach follows a non-probabilistic purposive sampling design. Despite constrained generalizability, a non-probabilistic purposive sample is

committed to achieving depth and significance in its findings (Singleton and Straits, 2010, p.172).

The case selection process first took into consideration the major asparagus-producing zones within the country, on the regional and provincial levels. The focus on major asparagus-producing zones implies the areas will have a high concentration of asparagus workers. Second, the study accounted for diversity in scale of production at the district level. By taking into account the diversity of growers among asparagus producers, a focus on the scale of production will capture the different types of labor organizations and their correspondingly different impacts.

Selection Process

As the first step, I used the IV Asparagus Census of Asparagus Producers [IPEH] (2009) to develop an initial sample frame with major asparagus-producing zones at the, provincial and regional levels in Peru. Figure 3-1, shows the six main regions where asparagus is produced: Piura, La Libertad, Lambayeque, Ancash, Lima and Ica.

The Asparagus Census (IPEH, 2009) provides information about all asparagus production areas in the country (regional, province and district level), as well as their volumes of production, area harvest and yield. This information allowed me to develop an updated list of asparagus-producing regions, sorted by district, province and region¹⁰, which served as a point of cross analysis with secondary sources, such as the IV Censo Nacional Agropecuario 2010 [IV CENAGRO.]

¹⁰ Peruvian geopolitical administration levels.



Source: Compiled by the author with the data from the IPEH (2009)

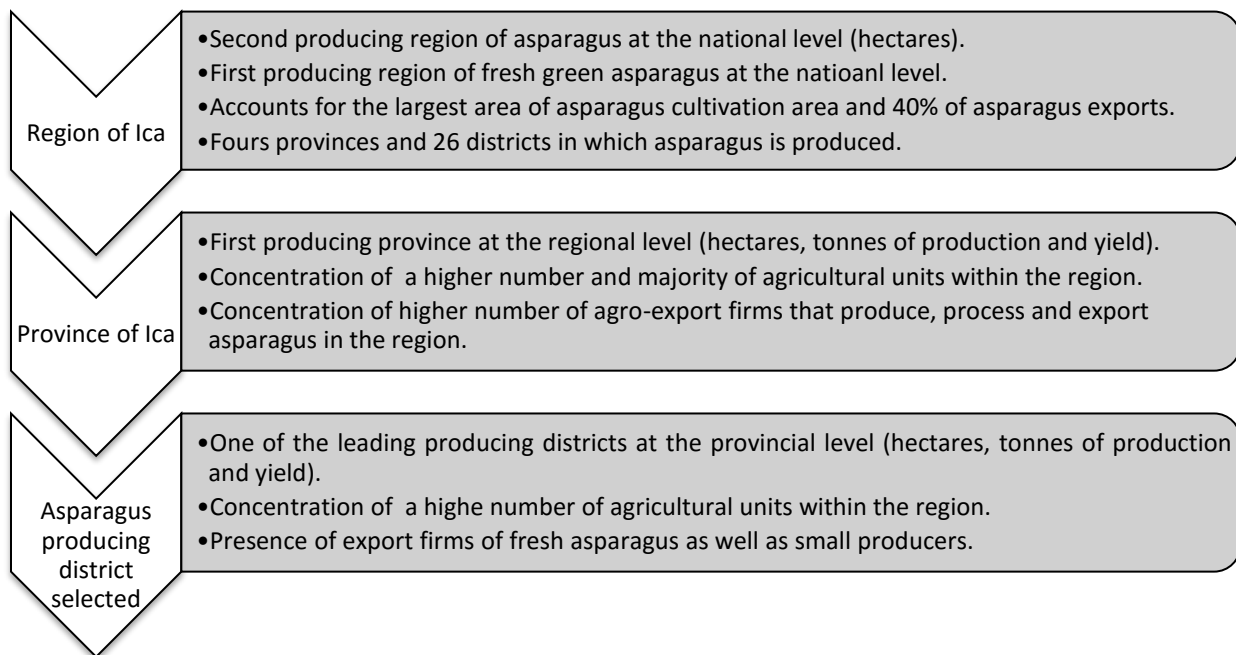
Figure 3-1. Asparagus Producing Regions

In the second step, I did three scouting trips to the asparagus-producing regions in Peru (From La Libertad to Ica) in November 2013, January 2015 and June 2015. These visits aimed to confirm the information provided by secondary sources and to observe the major producing areas within the regions included in the final sample frame. The updated list of asparagus producing regions served as the final sample frame to identify the region of Ica and within the province of Ica to conduct the extended case study. Additionally, the case selection also considered the scale/type of asparagus growers within the province of Ica. Through the scouting trips, informal conversations with stakeholders and key informants also validated information provided by

secondary sources and enabled me to evaluate the diversity on the scale of production among asparagus producing villages as well as the accessibility of the research sites.

Within the province of Ica, I selected one asparagus producing district and in that district two asparagus-producing villages. The inclusion of the scale/type of growers is related to previous studies that noticed that the scale and the type of asparagus farms might present differences in the labor standards and employment conditions of asparagus workers (Chacaltana, & Yamada, 2009).

In the third step, the case selection was finalized while conducting the research through continuous fieldwork in which I confirmed the selection criteria of volume and diversity. Several trips to the asparagus-producing villages, as well as information provided by the Regional Ministry of Agriculture in Ica [Dirección Regional de Agricultura], were fundamental to validate the selection of asparagus producing villages.



Source: Compiled by the author with the data from the IPEH (2009), Rios Díaz, 2007 and Chacaltana and Yamada (2009)

Figure 3-2. Sample Selection Process

The Research Sites

Following the three steps mentioned above, I selected two asparagus producing villages located in an asparagus producing district, in the Province and Region of Ica in Peru: i) a village which produce mostly asparagus at small and medium scale (from 3 to 5 hectares) and ii) a village which produce asparagus at large scale (more than 80 hectares).

Ica is the major regional producer, processor and exporter of green asparagus within the country. In the region, the Province of Ica (one of Ica's five provinces) is the major area of green asparagus production. This is the predominant variety of the crop grown in the country (IPEH, 2009) which has made Peru one of the top producers of green asparagus in the world (FAOSTATS, 2014). Within the Region and the Province of Ica, a producing district was chosen, not only for its important role in the production of asparagus within the region but for the wide variety of asparagus farms and firms located within the district (information that was corroborated by secondary sources, scouting trips and the field research).



Source: Compiled by the author

Figure 3-3. Map of the research site: The Province of Ica

The district chosen within the Province of Ica (which I will maintain in anonymity for confidentiality reasons) is predominantly rural (94 percent) with agricultural activity as the most important source of economic revenue (Municipalidad, 2015). According to the district Municipality, although only 9.8 percent of the land within the district is dedicated for cultivation, agricultural related activities constitute the district's most important economic assets. In contrast to the other districts of asparagus production in the region, which allocates a scattered number of farm/firms, this district is characterized by the presence of a high number of agrarian units, with different sizes and types of asparagus growers. Studies indicated that although there is a concentration of production by large firms, asparagus production combines the presence of small, medium and big producers (Díaz Ríos, 2007; Chacaltana and Yamada, 2009; Municipalidad, 2015).

The selected villages have two characteristics sought during the case selection: first, they develop agricultural production that is oriented to the market which generates employment; and second, the inclusion of two asparagus villages with different scales of productions account for the wide variety of asparagus firms and farms. The large asparagus producing village is home to more than three of the main large-scale asparagus producers in the country, including a national leading corporation, while the small asparagus producing village is home to more than 100 small and medium asparagus producers.

Data-Collection Methods

The research followed qualitative methodology in which field research was conducted during the major asparagus harvest, from November 2015 to January 2016 in the Province of Ica,

in the district chosen in two asparagus producing villages. This dissertation followed IRB protocols approved in November, 2015 before conducting research. To gain familiarity with the area, I moved to the city of Ica in November 2015 to establish residence later in the district chosen.¹¹

Asparagus-Producing Villages

This dissertation reports on the results obtained from field research and interviews that took place primarily in two asparagus-producing villages. The first village featured a large presence of small and medium asparagus farms owned and managed by smallholders. The second village featured a small number but large presence of large agricultural farms owned and managed by agricultural and agro-export firms.

Located in the Ica province, one of Peru's largest producer provinces of green asparagus, both villages present stories of complex asparagus agricultural organization and high production in the country. No more than thirty minutes apart by car from each other and sharing a great number of commonalities, these villages present dissimilar stories when examining the labor relations and working conditions of agricultural workers at asparagus farms. They share features including geographic landscapes, climate conditions, and socio-demographic features. The differences in the scale of asparagus production appears to be a factor that could explain the observed differences between villages when examining the experiences and perceptions of workers about their working conditions.

¹¹ The place for establishing residence was recommended by key informants and local authorities.

A Small Asparagus Producing Village

Located to the west of a major highway, this asparagus small producing village has a long history of agricultural production that antecedes the agrarian reform performed in Peru more than half a century ago. According to study's participants, the residents of this village are former agricultural workers and their descendants of a cotton plantation located in this village. With the agrarian reform performed by the military government (1968-1979), and the succeeding government, workers received agricultural parcels of three to five hectares, which altogether formed the cooperative.

Following secondary data, corroborated by on-site interviews with governmental officials of Ica's Agriculture Division, I arrived at the former cooperative (now a small holder organization), located in the ranch house of the village's old plantation. After I have learned how the history of agrarian reform transformed the lives of former plantation workers, asparagus growers from an association informed me that more than 150 small and medium producers are associated with their organization, an association that commercially sells the asparagus production of the majority of the small and medium producers in the village.

This process of agrarian reform was not unique to this village but corresponds to the agrarian history of Peru and the Ica Region in particular. What appears to be different in the case of this village, from the words of governmental representatives, smallholders and workers interviewed, is that this small village kept their land and had not sold it to large farms or agro-export firms.

With a history of cooperation agreements with the Ministry of Agriculture, national and international NGOs, and fair-trade certification firms, the association is considered by their representatives and associates as an example of small-holders surviving in a context of modernization and the industrialization of agriculture. According to the association's representatives, the association is building a processing plant to process and export their own

asparagus, making this future plant one of first asparagus processing plant of smallholders in the country. It is important to note that the association only facilitates the asparagus storage and commercialization of the product of the associates. However, the labor organization and labor relations are up to the discretion of each owner or asparagus small -holder.

The connections made through the association, as well as the rides in this association's asparagus pick-up truck, allowed me to get in contact with smallholders, visit asparagus agricultural fields and talk to agricultural workers. Further walks around the town and proximity to asparagus plots allowed me to make new contacts with farmers and workers beyond the organization's contacts. After some time in this village, I realized that beyond the organization and their associates, there are also smallholders and producers in the village who produce and commercialize asparagus individually or through other channels. Moreover, there were also large farms in the vicinity of the village.

The familiarity and time spent in the village and its surroundings allowed me to observe the extended agricultural activities on which asparagus production is articulated. Smallholders, associated or not, are required to establish contract relations with agricultural laborers to develop agricultural activities and therefore fulfill the market demands of asparagus. These contract relations appear to be under an umbrella of close-ties within family members, relatives or neighbors of the village. Important parts of the labor force working in the village are the adult children or adult grandchildren of former plantations workers.

During my presence in the village, I observed different activities related to asparagus agricultural production as well as everyday events that went beyond the asparagus production process.

The entrance to the village is through an unpaved road that lies perpendicular to the highway that connects the country from North to South of the coastal region. In my frequent walks to the village by foot, motorcycle or taxi, I was continuously passed by streams of linear motorcycles,

motorcycle taxis, taxis, trucks, SUVs and pick-up trucks. The movement of residents, local students, workers and asparagus buyers was constant during my visit to the village, especially during the day. SUVs and pick-up trucks arrived to collect the product from the association's collection center, located on the entrance road to the village center, or directly from the plots that were not associated with the association.

I repeatedly saw groups of two or three workers walking covered from head to toe in cotton clothing, wool gloves and sneakers, driving their motorcycles or getting taxi rides in the neighborhood of the village. Workers' attire, which only left an open space around the face or eyes, as well as their working tools, enabled me to identify who was an asparagus worker and who was not one.



Figure 4-1. Workers' attires and tools
(Drawing by the author)

In contrast with the high movement of people and transportation vehicles, nights were calm and not very transited by outsiders. During the holidays, I observed the development of social gatherings called "chocolatada", in which women of the community get together to share a glass of hot chocolate and distribute Christmas gifts among children. On summer vacation, I observed the setting up of playgrounds in the main square and the arrival of the circus of street comedians, which performed at night time.

A Large Producing Asparagus Village

Following secondary sources on villages which on the one hand had high production of asparagus on a large scale and on the other account for diversity of asparagus producing farms, I arrived at this village. In contrast to the small asparagus producing village, described above, this village is the home of large size asparagus farms. Taking into account that the asparagus industry demands a large amount of labor, particularly in the harvest season, the selection of this village was based on the assumption that the presence of these large asparagus farms in the village also implied a high presence of asparagus workers. Likewise, the existence of more than one large-scale asparagus farm in this village assumed that the experience of asparagus workers in the village would not be limited to a single asparagus farm.

I was received in the village, which is also located on the west side of the highway with the question “how did you find us?” From the highway, without signs or some kind of signposting, an unpaved road that crosses other villages and asparagus farms leads to this village. By motorcycle taxi, the only means of transportation available at all hours, the trip to this town takes between 20 and 30 minutes from the highway. Located at the end of large extension of asparagus fields, which belong to more than one company according to key informants, this village is formed by permanent houses as well as temporary housing for workers who migrate from other regions during the harvest season.

During my visits to the village, in taxi or motorcycle taxi, no major activities were observed during the day. In a different manner from what I observed in the small asparagus producing village, I did not observe villages’ residents or workers walking in the surroundings of the village, nor did I observe the continuous presence of trucks, pickup trucks or SUVs. However, one evening around 5 p.m., at the end of the work shift, this situation changed. As a way to find myself transportation to leave the village, concerned for my safety because it was getting dark, a

community leader suggested I to ride one of the farm's buses that transported workers from the village to the district capital.

Once on the bus, I observed persons, dressed from head to toe in cotton clothing, entering the bus. Between 20 to 30 male and female passengers, I assumed workers, were on the bus listening to music, eating a snack, watching through the windows or resting their eyes. Besides their attire, passengers were carrying small bags, small radios hung on the neck, and in some cases working tools in their hands such as long knives. After leaving the village, passengers got off in surrounding villages and on the highway, with the major amount of passenger -including me- getting off in the district capital, the last stop.

Once the season ended, around Christmas time and the beginning of January, according to community leaders, temporary workers left the village, and farms' buses stop picking up or dropping off workers on the asparagus farms located in the villages. During the off-season, some permanent residents of the asparagus farms keep their employment cleaning, weeding and providing maintenance in asparagus fields.

Important to note is that not all the asparagus workers interviewed for this study were residents in the two villages where the study was primarily conducted. During the field research, I observed asparagus workers commuting to these two villages. I observed the arrival and departure of large groups of workers, especially in the large asparagus-producing village where the presence of large farms attracted an equally large labor force. Inversely, I also encountered workers who reside in these villages but worked in other places. Contrary to the big asparagus-producing village, the small producing village appears to be not only a source of labor for its residents, but also one that supplies labor to farms outside the village.

First Methodological Approach

With the aim of understanding the socio-economic, political and legal contexts in which the lives of female and male workers and their families take place, I conducted semi-structured interviews with key informants in the region of Ica, in the asparagus-producing district selected to conduct the study, and in the two asparagus-producing towns. A total of 31 face-to-face recorded interviews with local authorities, governmental officials, asparagus growers, civil society organizations, certification institutions and other participants were conducted in Spanish during the field research¹².

Table 3-1. Interview with key informants (Field Research 2015-2006)

Key informants Type	Numbers
Government officials (Region and Province)	2
Local authorities (District)	5
Local authorities and Key informants (Villages)	6
Contractor (Villages)	1
Childcare providers (Villages)	2
Civil Society organizations (Region and Province)	3
Certification granting institutions (Country)	1
Growers associations (Villages)	1
Asparagus Producers (Small and Medium)	10
Total	31

The interviews lasted on average 38 minutes and were audio-recorded. In total, 20 hours of interviews were recorded. Among the topics covered in these interviews were: i) standards that farms and/or firms must adhere to when addressing labor rights or maternity leave policies, as well as the practices in which organizations deal and respond to workers' work-family dilemmas; ii) civil society organizations' responses to addressing work-family dilemmas; and iii) the

¹² Most of them were conducted at the beginning of the field research.

existence of government programs that provide support to agricultural and agro-industrial workers in their everyday lives. (See Appendix, Interview Schedule). The key informant interviews allowed me to gain more familiarity with the subject of analysis and to gain access to the research sites.

A purposive sample design was used first to conduct interviews with representatives of public institutions at the local, district and regional levels that had jurisdiction in the selected asparagus-producing villages. The criteria behind the selection of public institutions were determined by two factors: first, their political importance at the regional and local levels; and second, their relation with agriculture, labor and gender-related issues. In order to schedule the meetings, I visited the public organizations and asked for a meeting with representatives. In some instances, at the regional and district levels, officials requested I submit a formal letter to their office with the aim of coordinating a formal interview. At the local level, leaders requested I meet with a member of the development committee.

Later, snowball sampling was used to conduct interviews with asparagus associations, asparagus growers and civil society organizations. Governmental officials helped me contact a small grower association, an institution which in turn helped me gain access to small and medium asparagus growers and other private or civil society organizations.

I took informal observational notes when interviews were conducted at the governmental or associations' offices, small and medium producers' asparagus fields, collection centers and informal childcare care facilities. Furthermore, I attended public events or participated in activities within the period in which the field research was conducted. Among those events were a town-hall meeting in an asparagus-producing village, and a municipality's inauguration of the public swimming pool. Additionally, I attended an all-day workshop about agro-exports and development in the Region of Ica. I also joined the asparagus harvest pick-up truck of a small

grower's association and performed frequent visits to the asparagus-producing towns, in which I observed the town's infrastructure and communal rooms.

Second Methodological Approach

As a second methodological approach, this dissertation explores work-family dilemmas of agricultural workers from the standpoint of the main social actors involved in the subject of study, the asparagus worker. Face-to-face in-depth interviews were conducted with female and male agricultural workers involved (currently or previously) with small, medium or large asparagus fields in 2015¹³ in the selected research sites. The use of interviews allowed participants to tell their stories about their everyday lives around asparagus production, as well as to deepen the bond between them and me in the process (Miller and Crabtree, 2004, p.185).

The selection of two asparagus producing villages with different scales of production sought to ensure the inclusion of laborers that work in large-scale farms and in small-scale farms with the assumption that a difference in the scale of production and the type of growers might result in different status and types of employment. Paying attention to this distinction, while conducting the field research I noticed the existence of a third scale of production, the medium asparagus farm. Thus, the sample of workers' interview included workers holding jobs in small, medium and large asparagus producing farms. Additionally, in order to address workers' responsibilities at home and in relation to their children, all participants in this dissertation had to have a child under twelve years old living in the same house¹⁴.

¹³ With exemption of one, all the interviewees worked in the asparagus harvest between august 2015 and January 2016.

¹⁴ 12 years old is defined as the age when child transition from childhood to adolescent by Peruvian regulations. Also at this age, students start secondary school.

In order to ensure diversity of networks when selecting the sample, only one worker per household was invited to participate in the study during the field research's early stages. However, due to cultural and social norms alongside the difficulties of male participants' acceptance of my invitation to participate in the study, as a female researcher, the interviews were conducted with worker's partners if the male laborers preferred that his female companion be present during the interview. To this end, a number of interviews were conducted with couples.

Considering that obtaining a sample frame of asparagus workers in each town was implausible, given that this industry employs mainly seasonal and temporary workers¹⁵, this second methodology approach follows a snowball sample design in each town. In order to avoid sampling bias, I used multiple starting points in each village to ensure a wide diversity of networks among workers as detailed below.

Workers were contacted mainly through small producers who were themselves contacted through a small growers' association. As a primary strategy, I visited small and medium farms when joining the asparagus harvest pick up and established contact to return to later. Joining the asparagus harvest pick up of the major growers' association ensured trust among growers, who let me approach the workers and talk to them once their shift ended. After the first couple of weeks conducting research, I gained confidence in navigating the small asparagus village and proceeded to visit asparagus-producing areas that were not included in the asparagus harvest pick up. Growers referred their neighbors or gave information about other small growers.

I visited around 10-20 asparagus plots ranging from three to five hectares. After workers' shifts were finalized, I approached them, gave my business card and invited the workers to participate in the study. If and when they accepted it, I usually made an appointment to go to their houses later or call them on their cellular phones to make appointments. Only in one case was the

¹⁵ If it does exist.

interview done after the shift was over. In most of the cases, workers left as soon as they finished with their tasks. Since workers finished at different times, I approached workers individually. Not all workers whom I spoke with accepted the interviews. In some cases, I had a zero-response rate when visiting certain asparagus fields, in particular when I visited the asparagus farm close to the end of the working shift. In others, I had more acceptance.

Taking into account that workers might be in a hurry to leave after their shift is over, I started visiting the asparagus fields between 5:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. to ensure that the growers and workers would be there. Since the field research was conducted in the summer time, the shift started earlier and ended earlier. After noon, it was difficult to find anyone. Workers preferred to give interviews in the afternoon since they had to go back home to prepare lunch, take care of their kids, rest or eat. Around 1 or 2 p.m. was the preferable time since some workers had a second shift from 3 to 6 p.m. Regarding the preferable day, workers preferred to give interviews on Sundays since they worked less hours in the afternoon.

On average, I conducted one interview per day after visiting the fields and making contacts. In some cases, especially with males, I had to come back to their houses more than once since the interviews were re-scheduled. Workers mentioned being busy, that something came up and that they were unable to be interviewed. Although this might be true, I restrained myself from going back after a third time since this might have been a strategy for workers to decline the interview.

The second starting point was through asking for referrals among workers after interviews were completed. The snowball sample ended up yielding family/close friends of respondents who worked both in the small and large asparagus farms. Workers preferred not to establish the contact and also preferred that I do not use their names for contacting other workers.

They thought this might upset their co-workers. Only on one occasion did a worker voluntarily contact me to participate in the study¹⁶.

I used different starting points that were not as successful as the two previous strategies described below but were pursued with the aim to have a wide range of starting points. For instance, the producers and growers themselves recommended to knock door to door of village's residents as a strategy to contact workers. Although this strategy was not successful in recruiting workers, it enabled me to interview other growers who ultimately referred me to other workers. Also, I used motorcycle-taxis' services in the villages, that with the help of the driver guided me through the village and to possible participants. In addition, I used the support of local leaders to guide me in the district and the villages. After establishing contact with village's residents through local leaders, I introduced myself and invited potential participants into the study. This strategy was helpful but limited to a few days due the time restrictions of leaders. Additionally, I attended a restaurant opened on Saturdays in one of the villages to make connections with workers or other contractors. Although this strategy did not work very well, this was another starting point. Finally, workers were also contacted through an informal nanny who introduced me to some of her clients.

Regarding the different strategies for workers employed in farms with different scales of production, the interviews with workers employed in large asparagus were conducted in the evenings, after workers' shifts ended. Some workers employed in large asparagus farms, requested conducting the interviews inside their home and did not want others to know they were giving interviews¹⁷. This sentiment of privacy also made it nearly impossible to pursue snowball sampling.

¹⁶ Although this worker did not fit the criteria by having children over the age of 14, I conducted the interview to hear what the worker had to say.

¹⁷ This for fear that their employer knows about the interview.

Participants

In total 42 face-to-face interviews with female and male agricultural laborers working in the three scales of production (small, medium and larger asparagus) were conducted between Nov. 2015 and January 2016 (See Chapter 4). As mentioned above workers interviewed -with the exception of one- were parents with children of twelve years old or under.

In the initial phase, the interviews were conducted individually with one female or one males' asparagus worker. However, after having a low response from male asparagus workers, the workers themselves recommended to me to interview them in company of their partners. Some workers suggested that male workers might feel intimidated to be asked to have a conversation with another female. Taking this in consideration, when doing the interviews, I asked the interviewees if they would like their partners to be present. In some case, the partners were also asparagus workers, in these situations I was able to collect information for both partners. Although the inclusion of their partners could present challenges for the data collection, it facilitated the recruitment process as well as made the interviews more comfortable.

The interviews lasted an average of 60 minutes (range between 50 minutes and two hours) and were audio-recorded. In total, 42 hours of interviews were recorded.

Themes

The interviews with asparagus workers explore five main topics. The first is the daily responsibilities of workers at home and regarding their children. Second is their employment condition. The third topic revolves around questions regarding workers' affiliation to civil society groups or governmental programs. Additionally, the interviews include demographic questions

regarding the participants as well as their living conditions and access to basic services. During the interviews gender and family dynamics were also discussed.

In the same manner, as with key informant interviews, observational notes were taken when interviews were conducted at workers' houses (outside or inside of the houses), at work places, or grocery stores. Furthermore, notes were also taken during the recruitment process. The visits to asparagus fields, enabled me to observe labor activities, paying special attention to schedules, sanitary conditions, work wear, transportation services, and gender division of labor among other labor related issues. By the initiative of local authorities or the invitation of asparagus growers, I three times boarded provided transportation services for workers. Additionally, frequent visits to the asparagus-producing towns allowed me to observe laborers' access to basic services (such as water, electricity and drain), housing conditions (building materials), access to transportation services as well as to everyday life activities such as recreational activities and economic activities besides asparagus production. Finally, some workers preferred to be interviewed in their home and in the company of their family and children. Conducting interviews in the homes of workers and in the company of the family, allowed me to ask more specific and relevant questions regarding the gender and family dynamics.

Data Preparation, Analysis and Synthesis

In the data preparation, recorded interviews were transcribed by two transcription services. This yielded a total of 62 hours transcribed. In order to ensure anonymity and confidentiality among participants, confidentiality agreements were signed between the transcribers and myself. Observational notes and drawings were taken in the researchers' fieldwork notebooks.

In data analysis, interviews were coded through both "top-down" and "bottom-up" approaches.

On one hand, under the top-down approach, the aim was to systematize and quantify the data planned to be collected by the interview guides regarding factual aspects of interview labor dynamics in asparagus farms and laborers home. For this purpose, a coding sheet was elaborated and the data was codified using SPSS software. On the other hand, emerging themes developed during the interviews and observations, as well as workers' narratives were coded using the computer software for data analysis ATLAS. TI. (See Appendix. List of codes).

The Researcher's Positionality

This section presents my reflection about my own positionality throughout the research process.

The Starting Point

After finishing my first year of graduate school in the US, I returned to Peru for the summer to work as research assistant to my former undergraduate advisor, a specialist in gender and development who was commissioned by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to study temporary female employment in the Peruvian agro-industry. Dr. Ruiz-Bravo chose to study the industry in Ica, a region responsible for much of Peru's green asparagus production. Because our home university had a social responsibility project in that region, contacting wage laborers was not an issue. During the project, I listened to more than 30 interviews with female wage workers. Besides analyzing the interviews, I also conducted further interviews with other

female wage workers, entrepreneurs, NGOs, unions, women's organizations, and government officials.

During the field research (after more than seven years working as a qualitative researcher in Peru), I felt that this was the first time I was conducting interviews and listening to the stories of women who were experiencing vulnerable living and working conditions. The narratives of labor were never explicitly described by the respondents as exploitative but instead, euphemistically described as "hard work". Such stories resonated with the allegations of poor working conditions made by women's organizations and unions, and shocked me in an indescribable way. The female agricultural workers described performing long hours of standing work and the possibility of being penalized for not following labor standards, while the Peruvian entrepreneurs also struggled with having zero capacity for negotiating with US businesses. Listening to their stories firsthand brought deepened meaning. I was stunned by the women's struggles and the complexity of global market relations, and was surprised that I could comprehend some of the importance inherent in their experiences in a way I never did before.

The complexities and contradictions I observed while studying the development of this successful but severely criticized industry resonated with my previous encounter with both Women of Color Theory as well as my new positionality as a "women of color" in the U.S. Growing up in Peru, a country with one of the largest indigenous populations in the Americas and highest rates of poverty, as a native Spanish speaker from a middle-class background, my experience was a relatively privileged one. My training as sociologist and subsequent professional experience in the Peruvian academy propelled me to examine critically social inequality in Peru. An abiding concern for expanding my understanding of gender and deepening my knowledge about populations facing discrimination and intolerance has pushed me to discover new methodologies and frames of analysis while pursuing graduate studies in the United States. Having arrived in the United States identifying as a native Spanish speaker, I became

automatically part of the Latino/Hispanic community and furthermore a “Woman of Color,” an identity that seemed strange upon initial confrontation.

Women Studies introduced me to both Women of Color Theory and to the work of scholars such as Gloria Andalzúa, Grace Kyungwon Hong, Rachel Lee, Chandra Mohanty, and Chela Sandoval, among others. These concepts and theoretical approaches, especially the “theorizing from the flesh” notion used by Women of Color feminists in *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (1990), not only broadened my views of gender theory and women and men from underrepresented populations, but also helped me deal with my own experience of navigating through United States society and scholarship.

Facing linguistic, cultural, and economic barriers in the United States, although privileged, I no longer experienced the same privilege enjoyed as a middle class, Spanish-speaking woman in Peru. Reading Women of Color Theory during that time helped me understand that advantage and domination only acquire meaning within the specificity of context and through our own experience. Through such distancing, I started to experience, in my own flesh, what self-identified radical women of color expressed in my readings—what it meant to be part of an underrepresented population. Women of Color Theory shed light on the contradictions of my everyday life in the US and allowed me to recognize the existence of multiple identities, struggles, and, most importantly, how gender, race, class, and country of origin intersect.

While conducting the interviews in 2012, I met with a women’s organization that fought for the improvement of working conditions in the NTAEs. The organization had achieved great results over 20 years; a member told me that the conditions had changed significantly, that the women’s movement had achieved many of its goals for labor rights issues. Among these successes, they pointed out that most agro-industrial companies implemented two shifts instead of one, and in doing so they reduced the regular shift from 18 to 10 hours on average. Furthermore, the first national labor union of agro-industry was created in Peru. Eventually the allegations

concerning the industry's labor exploitation reached the national level, both publicly and governmentally as explained in previous chapters. Even so, the coalition between women's organizations, NGOs, unions, and governmental officials was able to denounce and demand for the improvement of labor conditions of women in agriculture and affect some change. After members of the women's organization completed their interviews, the interviewees mentioned their interest in contacting women's studies program and hopes for students willing to study this social problem. They also mentioned that even though they were pleased with their achievements, it was still not enough until the NTAEs fully embraced appropriate labor conditions.

This last interview made me remember the political component of feminist projects and the claims of women of color feminists such as Angela Davis (1983), to attend to specific contexts of oppression and give voice to those women who suffer the most. Furthermore, this made me reflect on the agency of "Third world women", which stimulated my goal to develop this subject of study for my doctoral studies.

"Writing to Humanize"

Using the theoretical frame of 'writing to humanize', Farha Ghannam (2013) examines the gender dynamics of becoming a man in Egypt to challenge Western perceptions of Middle Eastern men. More than simply describing her difficulties with gaining access to the research site while doing research (an occurrence that some "outside" researchers complain about when working in the "Third World"), Ghannam also reflects on how her research contains a particular embedded interest that targets a specific audience, the United States. She notes that her struggles related neither to gender nor to Egyptian culture, "but rather in translating [her] knowledge of being there [Egypt] to a text that can be read by people here [the United States]" (p.26).

In this sense, Ghannam's positionality not only affected her fieldwork but also the writing and publishing of her work. She had to carefully choose what to mention, what to present, and what to omit in achieving her main objective—humanizing men from the Middle East whom the US media represent as violent, dangerous, and female oppressors. Ghannam was at times pulled between the competing demands of avoiding Western ethnocentrism and of critically examining the gender dynamics of her own culture.

Farha Ghannam's self-reflection spoke to my own experience throughout this dissertation research process, and to the possibilities and limitations of my geographical locations in the U.S. and in Peru. My dissertation is embedded in transnationally feminist theory, not only in its examination of women of color's struggles in the Global South or its case of analysis of international trade and world-system interdependency, but also because of its conceptualization, development, and future publication, all of which commence within a transnational locale—my experience as a Peruvian researcher in the United States.

Regarding audience, I will write my research about female and male asparagus workers in English, employing a framework of theories developed in the United States and as part of the requirements to seek a degree in the US academy. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that my work targets a Spanish-speaking audience (at least during the first phase of research). This fact has several implications, perhaps most importantly regarding the proposed impacts. If the audience of the research is located in the United States, how will this research contribute to the lives of Peruvian agricultural wage workers? I encounter these questions not only in the U.S. (when U.S. audience seem concerned about the roles of U.S. consumers) but in Peru when more than one participant asked if I was taking all the information here [Peru] to there [U.S] as a subtle way to inquire what I will do with all the information I was collecting from there and how this will benefit them.

While presenting the case of the Peruvian asparagus industry, I strive to show the connections with a global model of production and development. I do not, however, note how this projects parallels with the United States' consumption of asparagus in a counter movement for eating healthy and the changing modern lifestyles. In this sense, the significance of the work in the United States, more than in Peru where there is a deep and heated debated about the existence of labor conditions in this industry, is to expose the links of agricultural production in this interconnected system. As part of the worldwide initiatives to challenge modern lifestyles and capitalist modes of production, as many movements in the Global North do, this research project's impact could be to build a coalition with these movements, incorporating the unrelenting pervasive division of labor worldwide that is still part of even the most alternative food movements (Gray, 2014).

As an epistemological exercise, this project is put in conversation the notions of "frontera" and "bridge" used for Anzaldúa (1990). These approaches can help to envision the complexities of the local and global relations embedded in the asparagus production and international division of labor in agriculture with women at the center. Rather than focus on the challenges and contradictions of being between two worlds, this project –and my role on it- needs to be able to acknowledge its potential to connect and heal –using Anzaldúa approach- the division of the Global South and Global North -in the economic mode of production, as well as the "geography of knowledge production" (Sangtin Writers, 2012). In this sense, as the Sangtin Writers argued from their own experience, this dissertation will only achieve the transformation it seeks for asparagus wage workers when it articulates 'wage worker's or women's problem' with wider struggles, global struggles.

Chapter 4: Permanently Seasonal Workers: Labor Relations and Working Conditions of Asparagus Agricultural Workers in Ica, Peru

Introduction

Despite the importance of previous studies that unveiled the negative impacts of women's participation in the Non-Traditional Agricultural Exports (NTAEs), there has been relatively scant attention devoted to examining the complex labor relations and working conditions that intersect in the seasonal production of asparagus. The characterization of workers' employment statuses as temporary, although true, may not be sufficient to describe the complex matrix of workers' labor relations and participation in an industry that operates year-round. Furthermore, the public portrayal of these workers as either a sign of economic progress or labor exploitation does not thoroughly take into account workers' labor conditions in the context of what the literature defines as a seasonal labor, workers' gendered narratives of job satisfaction and the reasons behind their adherence to the asparagus industry. Built upon previous studies analyzing Peruvian asparagus agricultural workers, this chapter's main objective is to examine how asparagus agricultural workers experience the labor organization and labor conditions at asparagus farms. Furthermore, how these experiences differ by the gender of the workers.

Through an extended case study approach in one of the largest fresh asparagus-producing district in the region of Ica, 42 semi-structured qualitative interviews were carried out with female and male asparagus wage laborers working on small, medium and large asparagus farms between 2015 and 2016 (See Chapter 3).

In this chapter, I argue that the characterization of the asparagus industry and its laborers as temporary needs to be revisited and challenged to include a broader conceptual framework.

The new framework should more fully incorporate the permanent nature of their seasonal work as well as gendered narratives of job satisfaction.

Who are the Asparagus Agricultural Workers?

Both female and male laborers were interviewed with the aim of observing gender differences when examining the labor and working dynamics in asparagus production.

Table 4-1. Gender of the Workers

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	18	42.9
Female	24	57.1
Total	42	100

Table 4-1, which outlines the distribution of workers interviewed by gender, shows that the number of female workers interviewed exceeds the number of male workers interviewed by more than 10 percent. The greater number of women interviewed also match the secondary data that established that around 60 percent of the workers were women.

Sociodemographic Characteristics

Regarding demographics, as can be seen in Table 4-2, the average age of interviewed workers was 35 years old, with the total range spanning 21 to 51 years old.

Table 4-2. Age of the workers

Age	Descriptive Statistics			
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Valid	35	21	51	35.83
Missing	7			
Total	42			

In relation to workers' families and their offspring, Table 4-3 shows workers' marital status. As can be seen in this table, 83.4 percent of workers reported to be married or cohabiting while 16.6 percent reported to be divorced or separated. A group of workers reported that their current marriage (or cohabitating status) was not the first one but the second and in some cases the third marriage. This data were not captured systematically during the interviews since it was a finding that emerged during the field research and therefore it was not possible to quantify for all workers interviewed. It is interesting to note that all workers who reported being divorced or separated at the moment of the interview were women. Taking into consideration that it was mostly women in the sample who reported being formally separated or divorced, it will be important to examine how their separation impacts their responsibilities at work.

Table 4-3. Marital Status by Gender of Workers

Marital Status	Male	Female	Total
	Frequency/ Percentage	Frequency/ Percentage	Frequency/ Percentage
Married or cohabitant	18 (100%)	17 (71.03%)	35 (83.33%)
Divorced or separated		7 (29.17%)	7 (16.67%)
Total	18	24	42

Among married or cohabitating couples, a small group of mostly women reported to be separated or in process of separation (7.41 percent) but still cohabitating with their partners while others reported to be in a relationship with their partners although they maintain a long distance relationship (4.76 percent).

Regarding their offspring, all workers interviewed had children with a range from one to five children. As shown in Table 4-4, workers had on average 2.5 children, with no observable differences among male and female workers. Regarding their children's age, almost all workers –with exception of one- had children of the age of 12 or under¹⁸, while 61.9 percent of workers reported having children under six years old.

Table 4-4. Workers' Children by Gender

Children	Male	Female	Total
	Average/ Frequency	Average/ Frequency	Average/ Frequency
Number of Children (n=42)	2.44	2.58	2.52
Children living with me (n=42)	2.17	1.88	2.12
Children under the age of six (n=42)	14 (33.33%)	12 (28.57%)	26 (61.90%)

It is important to note that not all children were from their current marriage, for instance in the case of workers who had previous marriages, usually they had children with their previous partner. The number of children reported includes all the children independently of their marital status. In contrast, the number of stepchildren also reported was not included in the final count since this data was not systemically captured for all workers because it emerged during the field research.

As can be seen in Table 4-4, when asking workers if they lived with their children, the number of children decreased. Among the reasons workers do not live with all of their children are: i) separation or divorce from their first partner, this reason being more prevalent among men; ii) children leaving home to start their own families or work, especially in the case of females; and iii) children living with their grandparents. The number of stepchildren was not captured systematically.

¹⁸ This was a requirement for the interviews.

As Irene, an asparagus female cutter working on a medium asparagus farm explained to me, she is a separated mother of five children. Her first two sons are over 25 years old and moved out of her house, “(...) One lives in downtown Ica, and the other lives [in a nearby village]” (W08, female, medium farm, separated, 5 children).

Studies about this industry suggest that asparagus farms in Peru, in particular large farms, require large amounts of labor power that cannot be met by the local supply, a situation that leads to the demand for workers from other regions. The regions of Ayacucho and Huancavelica, due to their proximity to the Ica Region alongside high levels of unemployment and poverty rates, are the areas that provide a larger number of workers to Ica’s asparagus industry. Following the literature, this study also included questions regarding the migration patterns of the workers interviewed. With the exception of one, the interviewed workers permanently lived in Ica, with almost three quarters of the sample being born in this region. As shown in Table 4-5, at least 69 percent of workers interviewed were born in Ica, while around 18 percent reported to be originally from other regions such as Ayacucho, Huancavelica, Lima and Lambayeque.

Table 4-5. Workers’ Place of Birth by Gender

Place of Birth	Male	Female	Total
	Frequency/ Percentage	Frequency/ Percentage	Frequency/ Percentage
Ayacucho	4 (22.22%)	1 (4.16%)	5 (11.90%)
Huancavelica	1 (5.55%)	0	1 (2.38%)
Ica	10 (55.55%)	19 (79.16%)	29 (69.05%)
Lambayeque	0	1 (4.16%)	1 (2.38%)
Lima	0	1(4.16%)	1 (2.38%)
Missing	3 (16.67%)	2 (8.33%)	5 (11.90%)
Total	18	24	42

The regions of Ayacucho and Huancavelica, are located in the Andean region with a traditional majority native population. In the case of this study, at least 14 percent of workers,

mostly males, reported being from this region. Regarding their ethnicity, as can be seen in Table 4-6, Spanish is the native language of at least 64 percent of workers. However, at least a quarter of the sample reported a native language -usually Quechua- as their native tongue. This number was higher for men 33 percent compared to 4 percent (just 1) women.

Table 4-6. Workers' Mother tongue by Gender

Native Tongue	Male	Female	Total
	Frequency/ Percentage	Frequency/ Percentage	Frequency/ Percentage
Native language	6 (33.33%)	1 (4.16%)	7 (16.66)
Spanish	9 (50%)	18 (75%)	27 (64.29)
Missing	3 (16.67%)	5 (20.83%)	8 (19.05%)
Total	18	24	42

To sum up, the majority of the workers interviewed for this study are from the coastal regions of the country (particularly Ica), where Spanish is the first language. When looking at gender differences, male workers reported higher rates than females being from the Andean region and, consistent with their region of origin, have a native language as their mother tongue. It is important to note however that the migration patterns and ethnicity characteristics of the workers in this sample are not necessarily representative of the larger community of workers in Ica's asparagus industry. Indeed, the overall industry is known to have a higher number of migrant workers from the Andean regions of Peru.

Among other sociodemographic characteristics of the population, previous studies of Peruvian agroindustry workers stated that this population has a higher level of education in comparison to the national average (Valcarcel, 2003). As can be seen in Table 4-7, more than 50 percent of the sample reported to have completed high school, around 20 percent of the sample reported to have attended some time on higher education, and finally 7 percent reported finishing their studies at higher education institutions such as colleges or technical schools.

Table 4-7. Workers' Highest Level of Education Achieved

Highest level of Education Achieved	Male	Female	Total
	Frequency/ Percentage	Frequency/ Percentage	Frequency/ Percentage
College – complete	1 (5.55%)	2(8.33%)	3 (7.14%)
College – incomplete	0	1(4.16%)	1 (2.38%)
Technical school – complete	4 (22.22%)	0	4 (9.52%)
Technical school – incomplete	0	8 (33.33%)	8 (19.05%)
Secondary school – complete	2(11.11%)	5 (20.83%)	7 (16.66%)
Secondary school – incomplete	2 (11.11%)	4 (16.66%)	6 (14.29%)
Primary school – complete	1 (5.55%)	1 (4.16%)	2 (4.76%)
Primary school – incomplete	2 (11.11%)	1 (4.16%)	3 (7.14%)
Missing	6 (33.33%)	2 (8.33%)	8 (19.05%)
Total	18	24	42

I observed that workers who reported to be born in the Andean region and had a native language as their mother tongue appeared to have the lowest level of education in comparison with the rest of the sample.

Socio Economic Status: Is there an Agricultural Proletariat?

As stated previously, the entire sample worked in asparagus fields at some point during 2015, with agricultural labor being their primary job. In fact, as Table 4-7 shows, more than half of the workers interviewed stated that their previous job was as an agricultural worker in asparagus or another crop.

Table 4-8. Workers' Previous Occupation

Occupation	Male	Female	Total
	Frequency/Percentage	Frequency/Percentage	Frequency/Percentage

Asparagus farms	9 (50%)	10 (41.66%)	19 (45.23%)
Other crops	3 (16.66%)	2 (8.33%)	5 (11.90%)
Agricultural Factory	2 (11.11%)	1 (4.16%)	2 (4.76%)
School teacher	0	1 (4.16%)	1 (2.38%)
College student	1 (5.55%)	1 (4.16%)	2 (4.76%)
Housewife	0	4 (16.66%)	4 (9.52%)
Other	2 (11.76%)	0	2 (4.76%)
Missing	1 (5.55%)	5 (20.83%)	6 (14.28%)
Total	17	19	36

When looking at the gender differences by previous occupation, Table 4-8 shows female asparagus workers also reported as a previous occupation their primary commitment to their house and family, as housewives--a situation that was not reported by any male worker. Furthermore, along with their history of employment, for workers who reported to be married or cohabitant, around 70 percent reported that their partners were also laborers in agriculture-related occupations such as wage laborers in agricultural fields (asparagus or another crop such as grapes) or processing plants.

Along with workers' status as salaried agrarian laborers, Table 4-9 shows, that more than 60 percent of workers reported having direct or indirect access to land besides their wage work on asparagus farms. Their indirect access to land is either because they inherited from their parents (who are small growers), a small piece of land, or because their relatives have. Half of the workers dedicated time to work on their own or family-owned (or rented) plot when not working for other producers in asparagus production. It is interesting in this case, that most workers who have direct or indirect access to land are residents in the small asparagus-producing village. As stated in Chapter 3, the small asparagus producing village is among a few villages in the province which maintain their small plots, having an important number of small asparagus growers.

Table 4-9. Workers' Access to Land

Access to Land	Male	Female	Total
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	Frequency/Percentage	Frequency/Percentage	Frequency/Percentage
I own or rent land to produce	6 (33%)	6 (25%)	12 (29%)
My partner, parents or relatives own or rent land	4 (22%)	10 (42%)	14 (33%)
I do not have access	8 (44%)	8 (33%)	16 (38%)
Total	18	100	42

When examining gender differences, a larger percentage of male agricultural workers reported having access to their own land while women largely reported having access to land through their partner, family or relatives.

The land access appears to mean different things and have different benefits, especially in relation to the type of access and the gender of the workers. For instance, in the case of workers like Margarita who has access to land through her partner, the access to land is seen as source of employment in small asparagus farms. As Margarita explained, “When [it’s] harvest [season], I work there (...)” (W05, female, small farm, married, 3 children). However, this type of access does not necessarily offer economic benefits beyond the labor since Margarita is considered the same as “any other worker” on her partner’s plot. Otherwise, for workers such as Hernán --even when this is “a bit” of land-- having access to land means dedicated time set aside to work on the family’s land to supplement their food basket or earnings. As Hernan explained “Together I go with her [my partner]. It's because there's a little asparagus that we have there, we're flashing there. Cleaning so that there is no grass, because when there is grass, everyone drowns the asparagus” (W29, male, small and large farm, married, 3 children). Although female members benefit from work as laborers in family plots or receive indirect profits, while male members appear to directly manage the land that their fathers or grandfather received through agrarian reform, especially in the small asparagus producing village.

In a different manner, not having access to land is perceived by workers, such as Juan, as an uncommon situation, especially in the small asparagus-producing village. For Juan, there is a big difference between being an agricultural wage laborer versus coming from a smallholder family, which according to him is the circumstance that benefits most. His status as non-smallholder left him with no other option but to work as an agricultural laborer in large farms outside of his town of residence. As Juan states:

Here, I am the only who is not parcelero [smallholder], it is me and my dad and my mom, we are not parceleros (...) Because my father, his father-in-law have a lot of children and one of his sons grabbed the farm and my dad is not a parcelero [smallholder] because [of that], [he] is temporary worker, he works around here, just like me. I have to go get me, as they say, [a] life, right? Because I have no other income, it is the only income I have. (W15, male, large farm, married, 2 children)

Juan's narrative regarding land access needs to be examined in relation to the asparagus industry and its types of employment. With this aim, the following section focuses on the workers' experiences working at asparagus farms.

Organization of Labor at Asparagus Farms

Employment by Scale of Production

Asparagus workers interviewed in these two villages, and surrounding villages and the district's capital, hold employment in asparagus farms with different scales of production. As can be seen in Table 4-10, 38.1 percent of the workers interviewed were employed by small asparagus farms, 16.7 percent by medium farms, and 40.5 percent by large farms. It is interesting to note however that 4.8 percent of the workers reported working on both small and large asparagus farms at the time were the interviews were conducted.

Table 4-10. Workers Interviewed by Scale of Production

Scale of Production	Frequency	Percent
Small	16	38.1
Medium	7	16.7
Large	17	40.5
Small and Large	2	4.8
Total	42	100

In order to achieve diversity, the selected interviewees not only worked in different scales of production but also on asparagus farms owned or managed by different producers. Among the sample of workers interviewed, workers were employed by eighteen different producers: i) ten small farms, ii) two medium farms, and iii) and six large farms¹⁹.

The different scale of production as well as the large number of asparagus farms in which laborers interviewed worked allowed me to identify patterns, as well as assess differences, in the labor organization and working conditions of asparagus production.

Seasonal Production: Equals Temporary and Informal Employment?

Perhaps one of the main characteristics of the employment status of agricultural workers presented in previous research and public narratives is related to the temporary nature of the employment offered in this industry. This is a feature which is tied to the seasonal nature of the production of asparagus.

Although produced year-round, asparagus harvest occurs at the research sites of this study for at least four to six months of the year, depending on the farm and scale of production. This finding goes along with previous research that characterizes the asparagus industry in Peru as seasonal. For this reason, it is throughout the harvest season when the industry requires a greater number of laborers and therefore there is less of a demand for labor in the off-season. In

¹⁹ Among them are at least two important agro-industrial firms at the regional and national levels.

other words, this situation leads to a high fluctuation of workers between the harvest season and the off-season.

Table 4-11. Worker's Employment Status

Employment Status	Male	Female	Total
	Frequency/Percentage	Frequency/Percentage	Frequency/Percentage
Temporary	12 (66.67%)	23 (95.83%)	35 (83.33%)
Permanent	6 (33.33%)	1 (4.17%)	7 (16.66%)
Total	18	24	42

As a result, the interviewed laborers work mostly as temporary workers, meaning a short-term period (which usually extends to the harvest season). As can be seen in Table 4-11, at least four-fifths of the sample report to be temporary workers, working through temporary contracts²⁰. Almost all of the female workers and two thirds of the male workers are temporary.

Despite the self-identification as temporary for workers in general, temporary labor appears to acquire a different meaning depending on the scale of production. Laborers working in small asparagus farms pointed out that among small asparagus farms, all workers are “eventuales [temporary]” meaning that they do not have written contracts, but commitment is established by oral agreement in the season of production. As Jessica, an asparagus worker at a small family farm, described “(...) here the harvest is mostly not by contract. When you are told to work, you work” (W02, female, small farm, married, 2 children). On the other hand, laborers working on large asparagus farms understand their employment status as temporary by the duration of their contracts. As Rosa, an asparagus worker employed at a large farm, explained “(...) right now, we are all temporary. Yes, temporary because we signed a [temporary] contract” (W1, female, large farm, married, 4 children). In other words, workers in larger farms reported mostly to have

²⁰In the case of workers who work in both type of scales of production, when analyzing workers labor experiences in asparagus farms this study only examined the labor experience of the primary source of employment.

written contracts but that their contracts have a temporary duration, usually from three to six months. Thus, in the case of workers employed at small asparagus farms, the temporality of their employment status relates to both the informality and temporality in terms of time of their contracts while for workers of large asparagus firm, the temporal status relates to the temporality of their contract.

As can be seen in Tables 4-12 and 4-13 when examining the employment status and type of contracts by scale of production, it is clear that among workers employed at large farms, the existence of permanent position and written contracts is higher in comparison to small farms.

Table 4-12. Worker's Employment Status by Scale of Production

Employment Status	Small	Medium	Large	Total
	Frequency/ Percentage	Frequency/ Percentage	Frequency/ Percentage	Frequency/ Percentage
Temporary	16 (100%)	6 (85.71%)	13 (68.42%)	35 (83.33%)
Permanent	0	1 (14.29%)	6 (31.59%)	7 (16.66%)
Total	16	7	19	42

Table 4-13. Worker's Type of Contract by Scale of Production

Type of Contract	Small	Medium	Large	Total
	Frequency/ Percentage	Frequency/ Percentage	Frequency/ Percentage	Frequency/ Percentage
Oral	14(100%)	5 (71.42%)	1(6.66%)	20 (55.55%)
Written	0	2 (28.57%)	14(93.33%)	16 (44.44%)
Total	14	7	15	36

This is also true when examining the employment status by the gender of worker. As Tables 4-14 and 4-15 show, among male workers the existence of more permanent positions and written contracts is also higher.

Table 4-14. Worker's Employment Status by Gender

Employment Status	Male	Female	Total
	Frequency/Percentage	Frequency/Percentage	Frequency/Percentage

Temporary	12 (66.67%)	23 (95.83%)	35 (83.33%)
Permanent	6 (33.33%)	1 (4.17%)	7 (16.66%)
Total	18	24	42

Table 4-15. Worker's Type of Contract by Gender

Type of Contract	Male	Female	Total
	Frequency/Percentage	Frequency/Percentage	Frequency/Percentage
Oral	6 (33.33%)	8 (50%)	14 (38.88%)
Written	14 (66.66%)	8 (50%)	22 (61.11%)
Total	18	24	36

Permanently Seasonal Workers: Informality vs. Flexibility and Instability

Surprisingly, the existence of temporary contracts in large firms does not necessarily mean a temporary presence in the workplace. A group of workers reported signing contracts continuously (every three or six months) on the same farm while maintaining a temporary employment status because every time they sign a new contract, which in simple terms means that they are hired again as new employees. Along the same lines, workers employed in small farms pointed out that their informal contract during the harvest season does not mean necessarily that they work temporarily.

Workers' histories of employment for the year in which they were interviewed permit us to observe the existence of constant employment in asparagus fields throughout most of the year. Following their histories of employment, it can be noted that a large group of workers interviewed (more than half) have had a constant labor relation with asparagus farms in the year when the field research was conducted. In this sense, despite the existence of the temporary employment status and informal contracts that characterize the industry, interviewed workers work permanently as seasonal workers in this industry. For instance, when asking asparagus laborers about the time they spend working in asparagus fields in the year of the interview, at

least 75 percent of the workers reported²¹ that they were working at least seven or more months in asparagus fields, within which 61 percent reported working more than nine months. As Margarita pointed out "[In April] I have also harvested, but I have harvested most of the time, the whole time I have been harvesting. This year, I had spent [it harvesting]" (W05, female, small farm, married, 3 children).

Moreover, when examining the general time that participants worked in asparagus fields, an important group of workers reported being employed repetitively through the years (with intermissions) in asparagus farming for as long as they can remember.

As can be seen in Table N 4-16, 64.3 percent of the workers interviewed reported to have worked in asparagus fields, independently of scale of production, for six or more years.

Table 4-16. Time Working in Asparagus farms in General

Type of Contract	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent
Less than one (1) year	3	7.1	7.9
Between one (1) and five (5) years	8	19.0	21.1
Between six (6) and then (10) years	12	28.6	31.6
Between 11 and 15 years	8	19.0	21.1
More than 15 years	7	16.7	18.4
Total	38	90.5	100.0
Missing	4	9.5	

For instance, Juan had the longest labor commitment, with 30 years working on asparagus farms. As Juan stated "(...) at asparagus, let's see. If I am forty-seven, at asparagus I am at least thirty-five years. Thirty years in asparagus, at least thirty years working" (W 20, male, medium farm, separated, 2 children). Although the interviews did not account for possible intermissions or breaks in workers' histories of employment, the long and constant commitment

²¹ This information was registered for 37 workers. With 32 workers reporting working seven or more months in asparagus farms.

to their work in asparagus fields illustrates workers' status as a continuous or permanent labor force of this industry despite the existence of informal and temporary contracts with one farm.

Rotation Patterns

The existence of a constant labor relation through the years does not necessarily mean that laborers have or have had permanent contract relations with one asparagus producer or one asparagus firm. On the contrary, when examining the rotation patterns among laborers interviewed, it is clear that workers had not worked exclusively at one particular farm over time or in a particular scale of production.

Regarding their employment rotation patterns in 2015, 70 percent reported working for more than one farm in that year, within which 30 percent working on at least three or more farms. In contrast, only 30 percent of laborers worked exclusively on one asparagus farm. Workers worked for both small and large farms and moved among different growers during the year to secure their employment in the asparagus fields. For instance, 70 percent of the workers' reported having worked in both small or big asparagus farms previously despite their current employment or labor preference for one type of farm. More workers reported having worked on large asparagus farms (88percent) than in small farms (70percent) in their labor history.

The existence of rotation patterns, which are also linked to the employment status, scale of production and gender of the laborers, appears more clearly when examining the organization of labor and the existence of labor positions in asparagus agricultural fields.

Labor Positions and Gender Division of Labor

Table 4-17 shows the wide variety of job positions in asparagus farms reported by workers in this study.

Table 4-17. Worker's Job Position by Gender

Job Position (most recent employment)	Male	Female	Total
	Frequency/Percentage	Frequency/Percentage	Frequency/Percentage
Asparagus cutter/harvester	4 (22.22%)	17 (70.833)	21 (50%)
Day laborer/ General laborer	1 (5.55%)	6 (25%)	7 (16.66%)
Field collector and packager	4 (22.22%)	0	4 (9.52%)
Field evaluator	1 (5.55%)	0	1 (2.38%)
Field security guard	1 (5.55%)	0	1(2.38%)
Irrigation specialist/ water well engine operator	3 (16.66%)	0	3 (7.14%)
Pest control/Pesticides applicator	2 (11.11%)	1 (4.17%)	3 (7.14%)
Right-hand man	2 (11.11%)	0	2 (4.76%)
Total	18	24	42

The most common job position among workers was the “cortador o cosechador de espárragos [asparagus cutter or harvester]” with half of workers reporting to work in this position.



Figure 4-2. A portrayal of female asparagus cutters (Drawing by the author)

Workers employed as asparagus cutters or harvesters encounter high levels of job availability during harvest time since there is a great demand of labor power in this season. However, despite the existence of a large number of opportunities, to access a job as a cutter, workers do not work constantly on a single farm, even a large farm. If asparagus cutters or harvesters decide to continue working in the same position, they must usually find a job with another farm and continue rotating from farm to farm.

In general, an asparagus farm has two main harvest seasons during the year that last between two to four months depending on the scale of production, with two or three months of off-season time in between. A significant point, however, is that all asparagus farms do not necessarily plant and harvest at the same time of the year. My research indicates that a rotation cycle among farms can extend the harvest period to four to six months per year. In other words, since workers work on more than one farm throughout the year, they are able to extend the duration of their employment longer than they would otherwise be able to if they were to only work through one harvest period on one particular farm.

Furthermore, the stable weather conditions that allow Ica's asparagus producers to cultivate and harvest asparagus year-round will permit job availabilities to exist for longer periods of time. I observed that especially for workers of small farms, the system of rotation is continuous from one producer to the other. As Raúl explained:

Look, the harvest normally, didn't I tell you? They used to last three months (...) now [the harvest] minimum lasts two months. From there to two months, and sometimes [the producer] close a field, as he is working an average of five hectares. [He] kill three and two later. For what? So, that we do not lack the work. (W03, male, small farm, married, 3 children).

In this sense, there appears to be a silent consensus among producers to produce in different months, thereby allowing workers to move around from farm to farm. This is also

possible due to the strong ties among the communities, more prevalent in the small asparagus producing town, where everyone knows who is harvesting and when.

This situation is not only convenient for workers but also for producers who will not have to fight to ensure the labor power needed for their production. As Graciela explained, “(...) I've been working there, but it was eventually, they laid me off-- that is, for 6 months the harvest was over, they laid me off. I went to work elsewhere and then when the season started, I went back there. ” (W07, female, large farm, married, 2 children). Asparagus cutting appears to be the most flexible job position since it depends entirely on the seasonal production.

According to data gathered through the interviews, the existence of multiple rotations appears to be more prevalent for workers in small asparagus plots. Generally, smallholders' harvest time lasts up to two months after four months of asparagus growing time. In the best-case scenario, smallholders will have a harvest time of four months if they cultivate and harvest asparagus all year long. Ensuring constant or permanent jobs on a small farm necessitates rotating among different plots through the year or to work as a day laborer during the maintenance time.

Although working in maintenance is an option that many workers consider, the demand for labor drops during this season and it is only available for a small number of workers, those who are usually family members or right-hand workers. As Cirilo pointed out, “always when asparagus is low, people is low” as a way to described how the asparagus labor market depend on the demand to harvest the asparagus produced (W21, male, small farm, married, 1 children). Therefore, when there is not asparagus to be harvested, the demand for labor power diminished.

In contrast, large corporations have a longer period of harvest time since their larger scale of land enables large-scale production, with many plots operating simultaneously. Furthermore, informal conversations with asparagus producers demonstrated that the quality and size of the asparagus plant used by large farms ensures large-scale producers have a major production, which

requires more laborers. Moreover, the large scope of farms at this scale of production requires laborers to perform other activities besides harvesting such as planting, watering or cleaning. When there are no job opportunities as asparagus cutters, laborers can perform other tasks in asparagus fields. As can be seen in Table 4-15, approximately 17 percent of the interviewees worked as day laborers in asparagus fields, a position that requires them to perform general task besides harvesting such as watering, planting or weeding asparagus fields. In the off-season, this position is common among asparagus workers.

Among the laborers interviewed, job positions other than asparagus cutters and asparagus day laborers include day field collectors and packagers, pesticides applicators or pest controllers, field security guards, irrigation specialists or water-well engine operators, right-hand men, and field evaluators. Workers reported that even when their job title is “peon de campo [wage laborers]”, their labor responsibilities and job locations differ from asparagus cutter or day laborer workers. When examining gender differences in job positions as can be seen in Table 4-16, there is a clear gender division of labor among workers interviewed. For instance, female workers mostly performed jobs as asparagus cutters or day laborers. On the contrary, male workers reported performing a wide range of jobs such as day field collectors and packagers, pesticides applicators or pest controllers, field security guards, irrigation specialists or water-well engine operators, right-hand men, and field evaluators. These job positions usually respond to jobs that require specific skills, are required throughout the year or require a higher degree of trust. Thus, this gives men more opportunities to hold a job in the off-season as well as to hold job positions at a higher pay.

Asparagus Workers Working Conditions

Working Shifts: There is no Rest at Harvest Time

Asparagus labors reported a wide range in the number of working shifts. The variations were related to their time commitment to their jobs, their job positions and the season of asparagus production. It is interesting to note that the majority of workers work full-time, with 74 percent of the workers having said to work more than seven or eight hours per day in asparagus fields. Among the full-time workers, 64 percent report working an average of eight hours per day while 10 percent worked more than 14 hours per day. These were mostly male workers. On the other hand, 25 percent of the workers reported working part-time in asparagus fields, with an average of three to five hours per day.

I identified at least two different working shifts among full-time workers interviewed, the continuous shift and the split-shift. The continuous shift is from 6:00 a.m. to 1 or 2 p.m. and generally occurs during the off-season, when the asparagus plant is growing and the asparagus does not need to be harvested every day. During this season, workers -as day laborers- perform different type of activities such as weeding, planting, watering the plants, cleaning the fields, applying pesticides or controlling pests. Since these types of activities can be performed at any time of the day, workers fulfill their activities in the morning until noon, returning home after the shift is over, usually at 1 or 2 in the afternoon. According to workers, working under continuous shift is intense but allows them to leave the asparagus farm early and have the rest of the day for themselves. Rosa describe for me how a day under continuous shift looks like:

Once at work, we arrive, we have a control, we have breakfast because there is a dining room, a dining room where we sit and everything. We have breakfast until the field manager, who is there the manager tells us 'you know ladies that today we are going to carry out this work' (...) 'Already girls, I have sent them to call you because I need [you] to pulled ribbons or I need [you] to weed'. Sometimes there is [a call] for support also during harvesting [time] because when there is el

reventón [the blowout] they need support also. (...) Sometimes the engineer says ‘now, [I will] give [you] tasks to all’, so many ‘lines’ and so many ‘lines’. We do we kill [ourselves], we do not go to the bathroom to finish the task quickly, to get to the house (W1, female, large farm, married, 4 children)

In a different manner than the continuous-shift, the slip-shift generally occurs during harvest time from 6:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., and then from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. approximately. According to workers, the asparagus is a crop like no other since it requires being cut (or picked up) every day and all day long during the sun light hours. The asparagus plant grows by sunlight every hour and therefore it needs to be cut at a very precise moment, when it reaches 22 or 23 centimeters (largely due to commercialization specifications). If, for any reason, the asparagus plant grows beyond this size, it will not be useful to be commercialized. As Jorge described, “[Asparagus] harvest cannot remain from one day to another, cannot! [We] have to finish [it]. Whatever [the cost], [we have to] harvest!” (W31, male, large farm, married, 2 children).

What does this mean for the organization of labor in the fields? First, it requires that the asparagus is cut every day through the daytime and second that laborers finish cutting all asparagus plants in the fields that have reached the correct size. Why do workers stop at the middle of the day? As Julio explained “The people is resting in the dressing room during this time because here we stay, they do not go to the field, because in the field it burns in this time [of the year].” (W38.1, male, large farm, married, 2 children). Laborers report that it is almost impossible to work directly under the sunlight during the middle of day due high levels of sunlight in the region, especially during the summer time. Furthermore, after four or five hours of intense labor, workers need to rest in order to continue in the afternoon. During this period, workers seek respite from the sun, rest, eat lunch, and in some cases, if it is possible, return to their houses. After the break, workers return to work until 5 pm or 6 pm., depending on the amount of asparagus in the fields for that day.

When observing in detail workers' hours and shifts, the challenges faced by workers are not necessarily related to work during the longest hours but instead to the labor intensity, the exposure to the sun, as well as how their hours and working shifts are distributed during the day.

As Jessica stated,

Mostly when the day is cool we work smoothly, but when it is hot and the heat, the body itself dehydrates, you get tired. Then when it is sunny and you [be]come a little more tired, a little more. How can I can tell you? With the body in another way. However, when it is a cool day, you work smoothly. (W02, female, small farm, married, 2 children)

Workers emphasized the idea that the type of work that is demanded of them in the harvest season requires a full-time commitment, especially at large farms. This situation can limit their commitment to any other activity and it will be necessary to schedule a replacement if for some reason a worker will not be able to attend to their shift. As we can observe in the case of Irene:

The bad thing when you work in the field is that you cannot miss a day. (...) They do not give you permission, they do not even pay you the day. [In other words,] if you do not go one day, you have to look, to see the way who you will send to cut for you. Even in your birthday, you are ill, you have to go or send your replacement. Even if you miss a day, [they] do not pay the day, [it will be a] day lost. (W08, female, medium farm, separated, 5 children).

As Irene explained above, there is not a day off or holiday during the harvest period and workers acknowledged this by expressing that since the asparagus do not rest, they cannot rest either. According to workers, as Jorge pointed out before, missing one day of work generates problems for asparagus producers, particularly in losing out on potential asparagus production if the crop is not harvested at the precise time. Therefore, workers cannot miss a day of work or if they do, they will have to either find a replacement or lose a day of work in monetary terms.

When asking about the existence of overtime, the majority of workers did not report the incidence of longer working shifts (beyond the eight-hour period) and when this happened, workers reported that overtime is generally paid. This appears to contradict the literature that states that a major problem among asparagus workers is the existence of long shifts. However,

during the period of “el reventón [the blowout]”, what workers define as the period of major asparagus production soon after the harvest season starts, workers need to stay after their work shift to finish cutting all the asparagus produced that day. El reventón is described by Estrella as follows:

When you start for example the first week you kill the asparagus. Right now, it is as plant. I do not know if you've noticed. On the other side, I'm harvesting, and from that 4 months [will] pass and when you start harvesting you have to kill it and there a lot of asparagus come out, a lot [for] one week. Sometimes [we] leaves at 12, [you] enter at 6am, at 12 at 11 [you leave]. They put more people but it come out leaves a lot, for example we call it [the] blowout. (W06, Estrella, female, small farm, long distance relationship, 1 children)

As Rosa and Estrella described before, more labor power is required to finish harvesting asparagus during this period of abundant production. During “el reventón”, workers reported to work overtime. In this dissertation, I consider overtime when workers go over their shift, in other words when they have to stay later than usually. During “el reventón” workers go past their shift, having to extend their usually shift until the asparagus harvest for the day is over. During “el reventón” is difficult for workers to know exactly at what time their shift will end, but they know they will have to extend their shift a little longer.

Additionally, during the harvest season, workers are required to work seven days per week from the early morning to the end of the day. For instance, more than 65 percent of the workers reported working (or worked previously in their most recent job in asparagus fields) seven days per week while 30 percent work six days per week. This situation goes in line with Juana’s experience, who reported to not just work more intensively, but with overtime as well during the harvest season:

When there is harvest, it is every day. From Monday to Sunday, the same schedule. Sometimes even you leave at 6pm, at 6:15pm because of the harvest. You have to leave depending on the time you finish harvesting. (...) Sometimes you leave [for break] at 12:30pm. You do not have an exact schedule, you leave [but] if there is [harvest] remain no! You have to finish the harvest and at the hour that you finish, you leave. In the afternoon, if you finish the harvest, you go home. (W35, female, large farm, married, 2 children).

Another interesting fact that was observed regarding workers' hours and work shifts during the harvest season is that although the work shift appears to respect the eight-hour labor laws, workers will be working more than fifty hours per week since they work 7 days a week.

Another working shift is the overnight shift, although it is less common than the continuous and split-shifts. About 9.5 percent of laborers interviewed noted working all night long, from 5:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. Workers in the overnight shift performed different job positions such as being a security guard, an irrigation specialist or a water-well machine operator. In such cases, the laborers worked over 8 hours, generally a 12 hour-shift. In some cases, the overnight shift is complemented with a part-time shift during the harvest time as it is the case of Raúl, who works as right-hand man in a small asparagus farm, working in the morning time as field packager, then returning to the farm in the evening to stay all night as security guard. As Raúl described, "(...) one rises early, [then one] leaves the harvest, from there in the afternoon [I] was already in the farm, at night you do not return to your house. That is, when there is guardianship" (W03, male, small farm, married, 3 children). The overnight shifts however are not always stable and some workers rotate from the continuous shift to the overnight shift every other week or every other day. The schedule changes constantly, making it difficult to define the working shift of these types of workers. Of the group of workers who reported working an overnight shift, all were men workers with permanent employment status.

A last working shift identified among sampled workers is the part-time shift, between a three to five-hour work shift. The part-time shift is more prevalent in small asparagus farms. According to the interviewees, there are two main types of part-time work shifts, the morning shift and the afternoon shift. The morning shift "is from 6:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., which is the normal schedule" but can be extended until 11-11:30 a.m. (W06, Estrella, female, small farm, long distance relationship, 1 children) while in the afternoon shift, the cut [harvest] starts from 2 in the afternoon (...) until 5" (W12, Natalia, female, small farm, separated, 1 children). Although

the morning is the most common time to harvest asparagus among smallholders, there are also smallholders that harvest in the afternoon. The afternoon shift is shorter than the morning shift but is the same in terms of economic remuneration. In the same manner as the full-time workers, the part-time workers also are required to work seven days during the harvest season and six days during the off-season. When examining gender differences, women make up the majority of part time workers in this study sample.

Finally, there is group of workers that work seven to eight hours per day by combining two part-time working shifts in small asparagus farms, the hours are similar as the split-shift in the large farms but they are employed by two different producers. As José pointed out, “We have to look for something in the afternoon sometimes to help us, so we have something left for us to buy some socks, some slippers” (W20, male, medium farm, separated, 2 children). In this sense, working in the afternoon as a part-time laborer helps him to supplement his family’s their income with his morning part-time shift.

To sum up, workers’ schedules appear to be in constant change throughout the different seasons of production and depending on their job positions. In this instance, workers not only change or rotate farms as described before but change working shifts between seasons, with most of workers reporting to work with more intensity during the harvest season than the off-season.

Salaries: It Pays to Eat but It is Not Enough for More

Workers’ salaries differ by job position, employment status and the season of production. Although it is not possible to define one amount, it is possible to present some results from workers’ responses.

In the first place, for all the workers interviewed, the salary reported by workers was over the monthly minimum wage established by the national government²² when the field research was conducted but below the living wage established by national labor unions.

Workers report that this salary is higher than other non-agricultural related industries, especially in the harvest season. It is important to note that the grape industry appears to have higher salaries than the asparagus industry, a reason for which some of the workers interviewed try to work in the grape industry when there is not asparagus harvest, as in the case of Claudia (W11, Claudia, female, small farm, separated, 3 children).

There is a salary gap by scale of production, between small, medium and large farms that corresponds with the type of working shift and the number of hours. For instance, workers reported to have a salary of 193 nuevos soles per week [around 59 US dollars²³] as day laborers working six days per week, which occurs generally in the off-season. On the other hand, workers such as Marisol report earning more than the national minimum wage during the harvest season, from 210 nuevos soles per week [around 64 US dollars²⁴] on small asparagus farms (W04, female, small farm, married, 2 children) compared to workers such as Nikole who report earning between 300 to 350 nuevos soles per week [between 92-108 US dollars²⁵] on large asparagus farms. As Nikole explained "In that year that I entered in June to December, the payment of normal wage (24²⁶ and harvest) began with 300. From there [it] was raising [the] salary, raising [the] salary to 320, 330, until it arrived [to] 350 " (W09, female, large farm, separated, 1 children).

²² When the interviews were conducted, the national minimum wage was 750 nuevos soles [231 US dollars at current exchange rate], however the government raised the minimum wage up to 850 soles [261 US dollars] on May 1, 2016.

²³ Current exchange rate.

²⁴ Current exchange rate.

²⁵ Current exchange rate.

²⁶ The laborer is making reference to 24 of December, in other words working during Christmas.

In the harvest season, asparagus cutters appear to earn substantially more than workers working as day laborers, who fulfill this position generally during the off season. In the same regard, workers report earning higher salaries on large asparagus farms than workers on small farms. To explain the gap in salary between the small farms and big farms the difference in hours needs to be taken into consideration. The net salary of small farms is considerably less than the net salary of the large farms; however, it corresponds to a shorter work shift. Workers employed at small farms are in general part-time workers, working between three to five hours per day during the harvest season while workers employed at large farms are generally working a full-time shift between seven to eight hours a day. It is interesting to note that workers laboring for two shifts in small asparagus farms might earn more than workers laboring for one full-time shift. Due to the instability of their contracts and employment status, however, it is difficult to define a constant income for this group of workers.

Regarding the payment scheme, the salaries in asparagus farms are established by a flat rate per day or week, which is different from other agricultural industries that pay by task such as the grape industry. Besides the flat rate, there are other economic compensations that workers receive. By law, workers on large farms receive an extra payment for working on Saturdays (eight payments per week) another payment for extra hours for making their salary increase if they work more than 8 hours in the blowout period or if they work overnight shifts, or bonus payments for good performance. Valeria, who works half of year on a large farm remembers receiving a bonus of 50 soles [around 15 US dollars²⁷] for being “a good harvester or maintain the fields clean” (W10, female, medium farm, separated, 2 children). However, they will also get deductions to their salary if they miss a day of work as Irene pointed out previously.

²⁷ Current exchange rate.

As mentioned before, on the small and medium farms, workers did not report the existence of overtime payment, bonus or monetary incentives. They did however report having other non-economic benefits if a worker exceeded the maximum number of hours, such as providing them with refreshments or lunch. For instance, Milagros commented that when she did overtime on the farm where she is currently, the grower took all the workers to have lunch after the shift was over.

In this harvest, there was almost no [overtime], two years ago, yes. We stayed until 3pm because as there were no people and the harvest... because if we left [the asparagus] it will be broken and we were cutting until 3 pm. But to be honest, at that time the [grower] went out, [he] brought us a snack. Off course, [the workers] ate everything, right? and from there again [the workers] started to harvest and finishing at 3pm. [The grower] took us to lunch. (W17, female, medium farm, separated, 2 children)

Furthermore, some laborers working for family members reported that the profit of a harvest day is divided between the family workers during the last harvest season (W11, Claudia, female, small farm, separated, 3 children). They can also leave early if they finish their tasks and have more flexibility to miss a day of work, in which they will not be discounted if they send a replacement.

Although some workers perceived that large farms during harvest time “pays well” in comparison with small farms (W04, Marisol, small farm, married, 3 children) and during the harvest time the salary “does provide” (W26, Mercedes, large farm, married, 3 children) at least 50 percent of the workers noted in general dissatisfaction with their salaries.

Although workers reported receiving a salary that was equal to or above the minimum wage established by the national government, this dissatisfaction is mainly related to two reasons. First, in terms of the cost of living, workers argue that this salary -especially in the off-season- is not enough to fulfill their responsibilities. As Saturnino pointed out, “40[soles] it is just barely enough” (W24, male, large farm, married, 2 children). In a similar manner, Jimmy stated that their salary is just enough to eat but not adequate to go beyond that, it only provides “for the

weekly life, we work to eat” (W25, male, medium farm, married, 1 children). This dissatisfaction can also have a part to play in national debates about the national minimum wage that for some experts and representatives of civil society organizations, such as the CGTP, does assess as the living wage. For instance, Fernando stated that the only way to improve the lives of asparagus workers -or agricultural workers in general- is to match the minimum wage with the living wage:

As how is the situation now, things are very expensive. For example, the basket of good, or now that school is coming the notebooks: pens, the value is already doubling, tripling some things. Therefore, more than anything to measure that, then maybe raise the salary for informal workers like ourselves. For example, a minimum wage here in this country is 800 soles and those 800 hundred soles unfortunately [it is] not enough for everything. We are going to educate our children, we have to pay one thing, another thing, it is not enough. Then, minimally increase the salary. (W36.1, male, large farm, married, 5 children)

A second contributing factor to salary dissatisfaction is related to the intensity of labor that the workers must endure during the asparagus harvest. As Margarita states the work during the harvest season demands not only asparagus cutter’ commitment to all production seasons but the performance of longer hours “crouched down” under the sun, the position required to cut asparagus:

Well the asparagus is from six in the morning until eleven o'clock. And the heat, it gives you thirst. You are crouched from the time you enter until eleven o'clock and also it hurts the waist because, it hurts. It is a killing job as they said. (W05, female, small farm, married, 3 children).

The negative effects of this position and the constant contact with the sun are considered work hazards that are not compensated by the salary workers earn. In their narratives, workers remark that fieldwork cannot be compared to other types of work, such as in an office or factory, in which workers are protected by a roof and are not required to be “crouched down”.

An Extra Job

Workers also reported having an extra job at small farms or informal businesses to supplement their income. The number of hours and days per week dedicated to these activities were not measured, but captured by workers' narratives. Having a second job seems more prevalent among asparagus workers at small farms than workers that do not work permanently year-around in the industry. It is interesting to note that female workers who reported being separated from their partners also reported having a second job, like Reyna, who "has a business that sells fried chicken and *chanfainita* on Sundays". (W14, female, small farm, separated, 3 children).

The rotation pattern does more than just allow the workforce to adapt to the changing seasons or differing scales of production. Some workers report working on two farms at the same time because it allows them to work full time and increase their income to for example "not have too many debts to live in peace". (W29, male, small and large, married, 3 children). Men such as Hernan, working overnight shifts reported working as asparagus harvesters for a second job in the harvest season. Despite the many hours of work, in most cases, workers on the overnight shift complement their activities with another part-time shift as asparagus cutters during the harvest time. Taking into account that the job is temporary, workers state that it is necessary to take advantage of the job availability during the harvest season to save money for periods when there is not availability.

As in the case of Reyna, women who work as asparagus cutters on small farms and are separated, reported in large numbers that they complement their part-time job as asparagus harvesters with the development of small businesses as food vendors in their residing towns in the summer time or on the weekends. Natalia's description of her day captures this situation in which asparagus workers hold two jobs:

A normal day for me? No, for me there is no normal day because I work, I have work in the [asparagus] field, I have a business [in which] I sell ‘antojitos al paso, my raspadilla’ [snacks to go, my snowcones]. I get up early, at about four-thirty in the morning, because apart from having my mother sick, she has diabetes and I support her with my dad's breakfast. (...) Yes, I prepare my breakfast for my dad until five-thirty, from five-thirty I go to my corral [barn] which is retired from the house, to bring firewood, to arrest my stove, make my soda, prepare my potatoes, leave everything ready. When I have the opportunity, that the producers ask me to harvest asparagus, I go 6:30 am, I grab my bike and I go to work. (W12, female, small farm, separated, 1 children)

In the same vein, men work part-time to complement their asparagus jobs as taxi drivers, motorcycle drivers, animal breeders or doorman as in the case of Jimmy:

Sometimes I also have an extra job, which is to work in a ‘discoteca [Dance Club]’. It is Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. I enter at 9 at night and leave at 5 in the morning, 4 in the morning. (...) As security [guard] at discotheques (...) in the downtown. And from the discoteca, I came [home] and then I am going back to work. (W 25. Jimmy, male, medium farm, married, 1 children)

Labor Benefits

The social benefits that workers stated having access to are health insurance, pension and family allowance. Compensation for length of service, vacation time, year bonuses, maternity and paternity leave and breastfeeding are uncommon among workers in the sample.

The scale of production, the type of contract and the employment status are perhaps the deciding factors that determine which workers receive or do not receive labor benefits. As can be seen in Table 4-18, around 54 percent reported not receiving social benefits in their current (or most current) jobs while 42 percent reported receiving them.

Workers reported that social benefits are out of the question when working for asparagus smallholders, who argue that the labor benefits are included in workers’ daily salary, a salary that is comparatively higher than the salary of large farms.

Table 4-18. Worker's Social Benefits by Gender

Social Benefits	Male	Female	Total
No	7 (38.88%)	16 (66.66%)	23 (54.76%)
Yes	11 (61.11%)	7 (29.16%)	18 (42.86%)
Missing	0	1 (4.16%)	1 (2.38%)
Total	18	24	42

Workers with formal or written contracts, who generally work for large farms, have access to labor benefits. However, it is important to note that not all workers have access to benefits or to the same number of benefits when working at a large asparagus farm. The length of employment and employment status (temporary or permanent) will define when and what type of benefits workers have access to. When observing gender differences, female workers reported having less access to social benefits, which goes in line with their temporary job positions as asparagus cutters and their higher employment rates on small farms.

A formal or written contract allows workers to have benefits. However, it is their employment status as permanent workers that allow them to have full access to labor benefits. Since temporary workers have temporary contracts that fluctuate from three to six months, they are hired under Law 26360. This Law, as described in Chapter 1 regulates the employment of temporary workers in Peru and restricts some benefits that only permanent employees will receive under the General Labor Law. In the last decade, different voices in Peru have argued that the temporary nature of the contracts in Peruvian agroindustry, which informally employs workers rather than formally, allows large farms to avoid the cost of hiring permanent workers, which in real terms means workers will not have full rights and benefits. In this line, this study finds differentiated and limited access to labor benefits for asparagus workers in the sample. Besides workers under the Law 26360, some workers commented that they would not have benefits until after a probation time of three months, while workers employed for a period longer than a year reported having other labor benefits such as vacation and length of service.

Regarding social benefits for working parents, laborers mentioned receiving family allowance and economic compensation added to the salary if the worker has children. Mothers and fathers indicated having received maternity or paternity leave time when their kids were born. Peruvian law just recently included four paid days of paternity leave for working parents. Male workers interviewed mentioned that they received this benefit when they had their kids. Mothers also received maternity leaves if they were pregnant while working. Another benefit that working parents received is the breastfeeding time, which is managed through the national health insurance.

Job Satisfaction

Workers' perceptions about their job satisfaction and expectation were captured through the interviews. Two main points can be made in this regard.

First, despite the depiction of the work as intensive or sometime a "killing job" under the sun, workers also value different aspects of their labor at asparagus farm. Perhaps the most valuable aspect reported by workers related to the existence of friendships bonds that made this experience a "cool" one. As Margarita explains "at work you distract yourself, sometimes with, there with the [female] coworkers, there we are talking, we distract talking, [with the] jokes. Cool." (W05, female, small farm, married, 3 children). In the same line, Juan pointed out that the thing he liked the most by working at asparagus farms was the "social activities", such as the existence of sport championships for workers in which he has participated in the past. As he explained, "in the asparagus that I liked the most, the good thing that that farm also had its social activities, they did, this, internal championships of volleyball, of soccer, soccer of women" (W15, male, large farm, married, 2 children). At least two workers such as David value the physical

activity that working in asparagus provides, as he pointed out “At least there one is also exercising, as an exercise” (W19, male, small and large. Married, 2 children).

The perception that working in agricultural fields has a cool or fun side also relates with the value that some workers like Nikole give to the work on agricultural fields. Although the work on the asparagus farms is related to the economic needs of the workers, some workers mentioned their preference for the agricultural work and not for a city work. For example, “you go there with your friends, talking, everything calm, you tell your things. It's fun, cool, the hour fly. Instead of being in a position [such as] selling clothes [it is] boring.” (W09, female, large farm, separated, 1 children).

Second, workers’ narratives of labor satisfaction need to be examined in relation to their employment on small, medium or large farms. With dissimilar perceptions of their job benefits, workers employed at small farm valued the existence of more horizontal relations with other co-workers and the producer. They perceived that they carry out their work more independently, having more flexibility not only to do their work, but to manage their time and personal commitments. For workers on small asparagus farms, their working experience cannot be compared to the ones in large asparagus farms whom, from their point of view, are exploited by the strict controls and intense labor that in the end lead to “bad treatment”. For these reasons, Raúl expressed his preference to work in small farms:

They treat you badly, they treated you badly. In [a farm], down there like they treat you badly or sometimes they yell at you and I'm not one of those; I do not like to be boos. I'm better independent and I work my hours, what it is and [then] I rest. Calm, nobody is bugging me now. (W03, male, small farm, married, 3 children)

This independence however has a high cost according to workers employed in large asparagus farm. For instance, Rosa prefers to work in large farms because:

In the large farm, you have your benefits (...) On the other hand, in parcels, you only [get] pay your daily wage. There you are not paid insurance, you are not paid, you are not deducted from the AFP [Social Security], you are not paid your allowance, you are not paid any benefit, which is what the large farm does. (W01, female, large farm, separated, 4 children)

The lack of benefits and lower salaries offered on small farm is not a viable option for some workers, who value the existence of social benefits -even restricted ones-.

Chapter Summary

By using a “rich description” approach, this chapter presented an overview of asparagus agricultural workers labor experiences on small, medium and large farms. By looking at the village of production, worker’s sociodemographic and socioeconomic status, this chapter sought to emphasize the idea that asparagus production -and with its labor organization-is a central aspect that will define workers labor experiences and perceptions. Moreover, the examination of how asparagus production operates in relation with the co-existence of different scales of production and production seasons permitted me to observe the complex labor organization involved in the asparagus industry which has been defined in simple terms as temporary.

Gender analysis reveals the existence of a gender division of labor within asparagus farms and scales of production, which on the hand led to the recruitment of women to carry out one of the most important and well-paying jobs within the industry: the asparagus cutter. On the other hand, the temporary nature of this job position, led to women holding more seasonal and informal jobs, which subsequently limits their access –in whole or in part- to social benefits. Additionally, the findings of this chapter speak to the limits and possibilities of wage workers under different scales of production. While most workers reported financial stress and anguish because their wages are not enough to make a living, asparagus workers employed by large farms experienced better salaries and benefits than workers at small farms. On the other hand, workers

employed in small farms experienced a greater sense of independence and indirect access to the benefits of smallholders such as land access, profits, and labor flexibility.

Finally, this chapter explores workers' perceptions in their experiences of asparagus farms, which reveal complex overlapping situations of intense physical work -under adverse climate conditions- and economic pressures on the one hand and at the same time a job that provides opportunities for recreation and the establishment of ties with the other workers.

Chapter 5: In the House There is Always Something to Do: Asparagus Workers' Daily Routines and Domestic Responsibilities

Introduction

The existence of a traditional gender division of labor in the household, more often than not, demands greater responsibility and time commitment of women when performing domestic and caregiving related chores. The fact that women may hold jobs –outside of the home- does not necessarily change this traditional gender division of labor that assigns main household responsibilities to women. On the contrary, instead of being released from the domestic workload, studies have indicated that women who work outside of the house experience a double workload or “double shift” due to their dual responsibilities at work and at home (Hochschild, 1990).

The existence of this “double shift” for women who work outside of the house has been studied in different contexts and for diverse groups of women. However, a large part of the studies has privileged the experience of professional women from middle class backgrounds. Although research regarding professional women has contributed to a deeper understanding of the challenges and dilemmas faced by women workers in general, the experience of other groups of women such as working-class women workers or those from low-income backgrounds have not been examined to the same extent. Among women workers with low-income backgrounds, the study of the work-family nexus for women agricultural workers has received even less attention.

With this in mind, this chapter’s goal is to examine the gender division of household labor as it relates to the Peruvian asparagus industry. Examining the labor dynamics in the domestic sphere of agricultural workers, who work in a context characterized by the labor

intensity and instability of the asparagus production will help to delineate new understandings regarding the work-family nexus for this group of workers.

Following the methodology used by Hochschild (1990) I started the interviews by asking female and male workers to describe “a normal day”-when employed by an asparagus farm- from the time they wake up to the time they go to sleep. Moreover, interviewees were asked to define their major domestic responsibilities and responsibilities for their children.

Framed as constant throughout the year, domestic labor and family responsibilities are described by workers in different terms from the farm labor they perform in asparagus fields, which is subject to constant change due its seasonal nature. Workers’ recurrently expressed during the interviews that their domestic chores and family responsibilities are not subject to change in relation to the season of employment in asparagus farm but might be affected by other factors such as the school season, which required a higher workload and organization level according to workers.

With the motto of “In the house there is always something to do” asparagus workers denote the existence of a constant and endless workload which takes place in the domestic sphere and with regard to their families. The daily development of household tasks and family responsibilities in combination with the labor responsibilities on the asparagus farms demand workers follow tight and busy schedules. Workers’ daily routines and work schedules -in the home and at the asparagus farms- will be more flexible or rigid in relation to different factors such as the characteristics of their employment, the scale of production of the working farm and more importantly the gender division of labor in the household.

Regarding this chapter’s organization, it will first present a general description of workers’ daily routines, paying particular attention to how they spend their time when they are not working at an asparagus farms. Second, the chapter focuses on the household division of labor by looking at gender differences and strategies followed by workers.

Hectic Daily Routines

I get up at 4:30 a.m. I get up to make breakfast. I make my breakfast, I have to do... to leave everything clean, everything in the house. I have to leave everything ready for my daughter, ready for my son so he goes to school. Then I have to leave at 6:30 a.m. since I have to be ready to go to work. At 6:30 a.m. I go to work. [I] leave at 11:30 a.m. to come to the house to cook, to make lunch. I make my lunch, then I have to make my daughter have her lunch, [I] bathe her and then again, I have to be getting ready to go to work at 1:30 p.m. again. I have to go to work until 5 p.m. At 5 p.m. I go out from [the farm], I have again to nurse my daughter, I have already prepared dinner, see also my son... what else is [he] doing, homework. Sometimes (...) help [with] homework, see what [he] is doing. If I have my animals also attend [them], also see my animals. Until the evening my daughter does not sleep. I have to get through 11:00 [p.m.] watching her. (W27, Rafaela, large farm, married, 2 children)

The Start of the Day: Leaving Everything Ready

Before leaving home to start working at an asparagus farm (which usually occurs between 5 to 7 a.m.) workers interviewed reported carrying out a diverse range of domestic and childcare related chores that will help them prepare for the day.

Among the activities performed before going to work it is possible to identify two sets of tasks: i) workers' personal preparations and ii) family oriented preparations. Regarding the first type of task, workers' personal preparations, workers performed activities such as grooming, preparing and eating their own breakfast as well as preparing personal belongings to go to work. For instance, Victor dedicates sometime in the morning to groom, prepare his breakfast and get ready to go to work before leaving home at 5:30 a.m.

From 4:30 a.m. we are up to go out to the field while we prepare things, breakfast. That's why I have to get up to get ready and I to go to work. Then I leave 5:30 - 5:45 a.m. I am leaving for work. (W30, male, large farm, married, 2 children)

In addition to getting ready for work, workers interviewed stated that they have to carry out domestic chores for their families with the aim to "leave everything ready" before going to

work. Morning activities include making breakfast for the family, preparing children's lunchboxes, cleaning the kitchen and advance lunch preparations.

As can be seen in the next excerpt, Marisol describes the existence of a high workload before going to work specially in relation with their children's responsibilities. As Marisol explains, "It is a day (...) hectic (...). Yes, a hectic day because you have to do things quickly to go to work, get up, make breakfast, prepare the lunchbox, lift my baby to give breakfast, be changed... I'm running..." (W04, female, small farm, married, 2 children).

With the aim of fulfilling their domestic and caregiving related tasks before leaving home, workers wake up in early hours of the morning. Table 5-1 shows, the approximate time that participants wake up when employed at an asparagus farm. As can be seen, almost 60 percent of workers reported waking up before 5 in the morning.

Table 5-1. Wake Up Time when Working at Asparagus Farm (most recent employment) by Gender

Approximate Wake Up Time	Males	Females	Total
	Frequency/ Percentage	Frequency/ Percentage	Frequency/ Percentage
Before 4: 00 a.m.	3 (16.66%)	2 (8.33%)	5 (11.90%)
Between 4:00 and 4:59 a.m.	8 (44.44%)	15 (62.5%)	23 (54.76%)
Between 5:00 and 5:59 a.m.	4 (22.22%)	6 (25%)	10 (23.80%)
I work overnight	2 (11.11%)	0	2 (4.76%)
Missing values	1 (5.55%)	1 (4.16%)	2 (4.76%)
Total	18	24	42 (100%)

When examining worker's wake up time by gender as shown in Table 5-1, male workers appear to wake up slightly earlier than female workers. Moreover, Table 5-2 shows, workers employed at large asparagus farms appear to wake up slightly earlier than workers at other scales of production.

Table 5-1. Wake Up Time when Working at Asparagus Farm (most recent employment) by Scale of Production

Approximate Wake Up Time	Small	Medium	Large	Total
	Frequency/ Percentage	Frequency/ Percentage	Frequency/ Percentage	Frequency/ Percentage
Before 4: 00 a.m.	2 (12.50%)	0	3(15.79%)	5 (11.90%)
Between 4:00 and 4:59 a.m.	7 (43.75%)	4 (57.14%)	12(63.16%)	23 (54.76%)
Between 5:00 and 5:59 a.m.	5 (31.25%)	2(28.57%)	3(15.79%)	10 (23.80%)
I work overnight	1 (6.25%)	0	1(5.26%)	2 (4.76%)
Missing	1 (6.25%)	1 (14.29%)	0	2 (4.76%)
Total	16 (100%)	6(100%)	19(100%)	42 (100%)

In addition to the domestic chores in the house and for the family in general, workers have to make special arrangements for their children. To be sure their children follow normal daily activities while they are working at an asparagus farm, workers not only performed a set of childcare related chores, but also organized the time in which they will be absent. They take their children to childcare providers or to a family member's house at very early hours of the morning - around 5 am- appears to be a common practice among workers with small children.

As can be seen in Jessica's account, an asparagus worker on a small asparagus farm, the daily routine in the morning involves preparing their kids to take them to her sister's house before going to work.

Yes, I get up very early at 4 in the morning (...) Yes, I go to work, I make breakfast for my children, I get them ready to take them to my sister who take cares of them, and I leave early at 5 in the morning to work and sometimes [I am] back at 9, 10, 11 [a.m.] depending on the time we finish (W02, female, small farm, married, 3 children)

In addition, workers elaborate a detailed plan that assures their children go to school while they are working. Preschool or school starts around 8:00 a.m. in the morning. Taking into consideration that there is a time gap between the start of work at asparagus farm and when preschool or school opens, workers develop strategies to send their children to preschool or school. Some workers, as in the case of Graciela, pay transportation services to take their children

to school. “They already know. For example, I left her changed at night. I wake her up to take breakfast. She brushes her teeth and leaves. Transportation comes to pick her up.” (W07, female, large farm, married, 3 children)

In other cases, worker’s children are instructed to go to school by themselves or under the supervision of a sibling or a family member. This is the case of Patricia, who sets up an alarm to wake up their children so they get ready for school:

I already speak with my eldest son, I set the alarm for them to get up at that time and they know that they have to get up to go to school. (...) Yes, the oldest changed the little ones and my sister picks [them] them up, or takes them to school. (W16, female, medium farm, married, 3 children)

Despite the efforts of parents to “leave everything ready” for their kids, children without the direct supervision of their parents or an adult might fail in following their parents’ instructions to prepare themselves or attend school on time. For instance, Irene -an asparagus cutter on a medium farm- who also leaves an alarm to let her daughter know it is time to go to school, shared that her daughter was not able to make school in time since the alarm did not work as expected.

One day she had fallen asleep and gone to school late. They [the school] had called. Then, other times her friend has called. (...) I leave it so she wakes up with a cell phone, but sometimes I do not know that cell phone failures and [it] had not awakened her. (W08, female, medium farm, separated, 5 children)

In the same manner, Pilar comments that in the case of her children it is not enough to prepare breakfast and set up the table to make them eat. It is necessary that her husband watch their children eat because they have missed breakfast in the past for lack of supervision.

I leave them their breakfast, and as he [their father] still leaves around 6:30 - 6:40 a.m. Then he watches them take them [breakfast] because (...) when [he] is not [there], they do not eat [breakfast]. The oatmeal’ pitcher is exactly the same. (W34, female, small farm, married, 3 children)

Running Back: After or In-Between Work-Shifts

The noon and afternoon routines of asparagus workers interviewed are tied to the workers' shifts on asparagus farms. As described in Chapter 4, workers have different shifts with some of them working continuous, split, part-time and overnight shifts.

Table 5-3 shows, the approximate time workers go back home after finishing their working shifts at asparagus farms.

Table 5-3. Time that Workers go Back Home when Working at Asparagus Farm (most recent employment) by Gender

Approximate Time to Return Home	Males	Females	Total
	Frequency/ Percentage	Frequency/ Percentage	Frequency/ Percentage
Between noon and 2p.m.	7 (38.88%)	13 (54.16%)	20 (47.60%)
Between my split-shift	5 (27.77%)	8 (33.33%)	13 (31.00%)
At evening after my shift	3 (16.66%)	1 (4.17%)	4 (9.50%)
In the morning after my overnight shift	3 (16.66%)	0	3 (7.10%)
Missing values	1 (5.55%)	1 (4.16%)	2 (4.80%)
Total	18	24	42 (100%)

As this table shows, almost 50 percent of workers interviewed reported returning home after their morning or continuous shift is over (around lunch time). This group of workers is employed under part-time work-shift or continuous-shifts. Another group of workers, around 30 percent, returned home during the break of their split-shift, also around lunch time to go back to work around 1:30 p.m. This group of workers usually works on large farms during the harvest season. Additionally, 10 percent of workers reported returning home in the evenings at the end of their shift. Generally, this group of workers is employed on large farms outside of their place of residence, without the time to return during their break. Finally, a small percentage of workers return home at dawn after their overnight shift.

When looking at gender differences as Table 5-3 shows, we observe that large percentages of women workers return home at noon –after or between their shifts- while male workers present higher percentages when returning home in the evenings and at dawn, after their night shifts.

As can be seen in Table 5-4, when examining differences by scale of production, we observe that workers employed in small and medium farms reported returning home around lunch after their shift. Conversely, workers employed on large farms return home mostly during their break or when their shifts end in the evening or at dawn.

Table 5-4. Time that Workers go Back Home when Working at Asparagus Farm (most recent employment) by Scale of Production

Approximate Time to Return Home	Small	Medium	Large	Total
	Frequency/ Percentage	Frequency/ Percentage	Frequency/ Percentage	Frequency/ Percentage
Between noon and 2p.m.	8(50%)	5(71.43%)	7(36.84%)	20 (47.60%)
Between my split-shift	5(31.25%)	2(28.57%)	6(31.58%)	13 (31.00%)
At evening after my shift	1(6.25%)	0	3(15.79%)	4 (9.50%)
In the morning after my overnight shift	1(6.25%)	0	2(10.52%)	3 (7.10%)
Missing values	1(6.25%)	0	1(6.26%)	2 (4.80%)
Total	16(100%)	7 (100%)	19(100%)	42 (100%)

The domestic labor and childcare related tasks that asparagus workers perform at noon and in the afternoon, are cooking, having lunch with families, cleaning, doing laundry, feeding the animals, as well as spending time with their children doing homework or other activities related to their care. Taking into consideration that workers interviewed had different working

schedules, I observed different routines in the noon and afternoon related to their domestic workload.

Workers working a morning part-time shift report having the entire afternoon to dedicate time to what needs to be done at home as well as to spend time with their children. According to workers' narratives one of the benefits of working on small asparagus farm is working part-time, which gave workers time to attend personal and family responsibilities. As can be seen in Estrella's testimonies, part-time job's benefits are related to the free time that farms under this scale of production gives to workers to meet personal and family responsibilities while at the same time holding a job.

I picked her up, [then] I come to my house, [and] teach her homework. Then the whole afternoon free. The good is that the work here in the field is part time, then in the afternoon you dedicate to your children, to your things, what you have to do. (W06, female, small farm, long distance relationship, 1 children)

In the same line, workers who are employed under continuous shifts (from 7 to 2p.m.), which are generally performed by day laborers on medium farms or large asparagus farms during the off-season, also pointed out that continuous shifts in opposition to a split-shift allow workers to have the afternoon for themselves, their needs and their families. Although under this shift, laborers have to work double hours compared to part-time workers (seven to eight hours), this shift is highly preferred among workers because after 1p.m. or 2p.m., they can go home for lunch, rest and be with their families.

In contrast to workers under part-time or continue shifts, the discourse of having a free afternoon or time to spare with family is absent from worker's narratives under the split-shift. Workers who work in general in the split-shift in large corporations reported to experience extreme time restriction during the afternoon and evenings. The split-shift goes from early morning (6-7 am) until the day ends (5-6 pm). As noted in the Chapter 4, although workers under

this shift during the harvest season work around eight hours their shifts extended to 10 hours or more if we include the two hours break recess (between 11:30 or 12 to 2 p.m.).

As presented in Table 5-3, at least 30 percent of the workers interviewed return home during the break. Workers like Mercedes who live close to their work place, usually return home during the recess. Although hectic, this recess allows workers to continue with their lunch preparation if they did not finish in the morning, pick up their kids from the daycare or school, and eat with the family.

I make my lunch, and I clean my house a little. I'm going to pick up my son from the school that leaves at 12 p.m. [I] pick up my son, give him his lunch, take him back to the señora [the misses]. And already at 1:30 return to work to harvest my asparagus. At 5 p.m. we're leaving, and then we come to my house. (W26, female, large farm, married, 3 children)

In contrast, as mentioned previously, workers who hold full-time jobs in the harvest season but commute to work do not return home, and therefore reported having major time restrictions, compared to other workers in the study, performing domestic chores and being with their children. As Daniel states:

Sometimes it seems to me that for me time is very short because I get and sometimes she has already advanced work, the chores and since I come late. I do not enough help her. If I can come earlier, [I would] help, I know she also gets tired, [I would] help more. (W38.1, male, large asparagus farm, married, 2 children)

Similar to Daniel's experience of lack of time, other workers who used to commute to their work on large farms decided to transfer to asparagus farms closer to their houses because they felt they did not spend enough time at home and with their family. As can be seen in the testimony of Patricia, mothers in particular recalled that during the time they worked for large asparagus farms -outside of their town of residence- there was not enough time to do anything outside of work, not even to see their kids.

Well, in the fundo [plantation] the only thing you have (...) [they] give you your utilities, they always pay you work... That is the only thing because afterwards is working all day. If it is a faraway fundo [plantation], you have to go in the morning

and come in the night, so there is no time to be with the children because [I] was coming and my daughter was already sleeping, I no longer saw her. (W16, female, medium farm, married, 2 children)

As observed in Chapter 4 when examining labor-related issues, working on large asparagus farm was described by workers as more satisfactory in monetary terms as in relation to their labor benefits; however, when analyzing the workers' household labor, their perception appears to change since working on large asparagus farm is negative due to the time restriction and the perception that their labor obligation to the farm forces them to neglect their domestic and parental responsibilities.

The Evenings

According to workers' narratives, the evening -when workers finished their shift- appears to be the time of the day when workers have more spare time to spend in the company of their family and children. In the evening, usually dinner -and dinner preparation- takes place as well as some time to relax, watch television and then go to sleep. As Johnny explains, "(...) At seven o'clock I'm coming home to dinner with my children, from there we see television until ten-eleven [p.m.], from there we lie down to rest." (W32, male, small farm, married, 4 children).

Apart from preparing dinner and spending some time with the family, some workers, especially women, in the evenings prepare themselves -by preparing their clothes, food and personal belongings- and their children for the next day. As Pilar describes it, among childcare's related tasks are bathing their children, changing their children's clothes to take them to a childcare provider or family member, preparing uniforms and lunch boxes.

Also, before, when we are in the making of breakfast like at night, I'm already separating his uniform, his shirt, I'm hanging it and before he comes to sleep I say, 'son, your uniform is hung, there are your shoes, you change and you go, there is your dad will still look at you. (W34, female, small farm, married, 3 children)

Finally, regarding the group of workers that work the night-shift (from to eight to 12 hours), it is interesting to note that workers under this schedule appear to have a positive assessment of the impact that their night schedules have in the fulfillment of their domestic chores and family responsibilities. These workers, mainly males, consider that the night shift not only meets the economic needs of their families but also permits them to coordinate (and share) household responsibilities with their female partners.

Division of Labor in the Household

Gender Discourses on Household Labor

Regarding the domestic chores and childcare-related responsibilities, workers were asked to describe the distribution of labor in their households as well as to identify among family members who had the main responsibility for domestic tasks and childcare tasks. Workers were asked to describe in general their daily responsibilities in relation to their home, eleven specific chores/activities were addressed during the interviews. This includes cooking, cleaning, doing laundry, collecting water, managing the house, doing grocery shopping, doing house repairs, taking care of animals or hose garden, childcare, taking kids to school and taking care of others.

From workers' responses, it is interesting to note that while workers' domestic and childcare responsibilities are organized in relation to work-shifts and scale of production as presented in the previous section of this chapter, worker's workloads at home also relate to their gender, marital status, partner's occupation, and children's age.

“I Do It”

An expected finding, that corresponds with previous literature, is the existence of a gender division of labor in asparagus laborers’ households, with female asparagus workers having major household workload and childcare tasks compared to male asparagus workers.

Table 5-5. Domestic Chores with Women Mainly Responsible

Domestic Chore /Responsible	Males	Females	Total
	Frequency /Percentage	Frequency /Percentage	Frequency /Percentage
<i>Cooking</i>			
I	0.00	16 (66.67%)	16 (38.10%)
My partner	11 (61.11%)	0	11 (26.19%)
Both, me and my partner	4 (22.22%)	5 (20.83%)	9 (21.43%)
All family members	1 (5.56%)	1 (4.17%)	2 (4.76%)
Other female family members	2 (11.11%)	2 (8.33%)	4 (9.52%)
<i>Cleaning</i>			
I	3 (16.67%)	12 (50%)	15 (35.71%)
My partner	4 (22.22%)	0	4 (9.52%)
Both, me and my partner	8 (44.44%)	8 (33%)	16 (38.10%)
All family members	1 (5.56%)	2 (8%)	3 (7.14%)
Other female family members	2 (11.11%)	2 (8%)	4 (9.52%)
<i>Clothing</i>			
I	4 (22.22%)	13 (54.17%)	17 (40.48%)
My partner	1 (5.56%)	0	1 (2.38%)
Both, me and my partner	12 (66.67%)	7 (29.17%)	19 (45.24%)
All family members	1 (5.56%)	2 (8.33%)	3 (7.14%)
Other female family members	0 (0.00%)	1 (4.17%)	1 (2.38%)
Other	0 (0.00%)	1 (4.17%)	1 (2.38%)
<i>Grocery Shopping</i>			
I	2 (11.11%)	10 (41.67%)	12 (28.57%)
My partner	7 (38.89%)	1 (4.17%)	8 (19.05%)
Both, me and my partner	7 (38.89%)	7 (29.17%)	14 (33.33%)
All family members	1 (5.56%)	0	1 (2.38%)
Other female family members	1 (5.56%)	6 (25.00%)	7 (16.67%)
Total	18 (100.00%)	24 (100.00%)	42 (100.00%)

As can be seen in Table 5-5, for four specific chores, women report in higher numbers than men workers of being the main person responsible for (or engaged in) domestic chores of cooking, cleaning, doing laundry and grocery shopping.

Among the different activities, more than 50 percent of women reported to have the main responsibility of managing the house, cooking, cleaning, clothing, child-rearing as taking care of other family members. Women workers declared themselves to be in charge of their children and in the case that they cannot perform these roles, there is another woman who assumes the responsibility. During the interviews with women workers, it was recurrent in their stories the existence of a constant and permanent housework load that they had to carry through the day. As Antonia described:

Well, I get up at 5:00 o'clock in the morning. I grab breakfast, I make breakfast for my children, and I go downtown to my work. I leave my little girl in charge with a girl, and she already takes care of my babies, to see the house and everything, and I go to work. From there on the job, I work from 6-7 in the morning until 10:30 – 11:00 a.m. We are working cutting asparagus. From there I come to the house to cook lunch. Lunch comes and I make them their lunch. They eat their food and everything, and from there we start to watch television, or sometimes when they are studying, they just do their homework. As I have a girl who is in college, and [she] comes: 'Mamá, I have this', 'Mamá, I have to do the other', 'Mamá help me on this'. 'Ok, Ok, daughter' [I said]. Is that my husband, and he leaves from 5 in the morning, and he does not come until 6 pm, no longer comes, and I am the one I have to be there at home. (W36, female, small farm, married, 5 children)

The age of the worker's children and the marital status appears to play an important role for women workers, who appear to have higher responsibilities when having small children and when separated.

Women workers reported to work part-time on small farms since their kids are little and need more time to take care of them. Women workers at large farms also reported having larger responsibilities now that they have kids. When the children are younger, mothers have to take care of (or plan) school preparation and arrangement, but when older, the kids are more autonomous to do basic activities. Women also reported leaving the workforce for a period of

time when pregnant or giving birth until their kids were one or two years old. On the contrary, I interviewed multiple men who were working with kids under one year with one whose child was born two days before the interview. Concerned about the economic responsibilities the newborn will bring him, the worker will keep working and reported to have the help of his partner and mother to take care of his son (W28, male, large, married, 2 children). On the other hand, female workers that are separated or divorced, usually declared that their children's fathers are not involved in their children's life.

“I Do Help”

As table 5-6 shows, the chores that men reported to carry out without their partners in higher numbers were house repairs, water collections and taking care of their own clothing.

Table 5-6. Domestic Chores with Males as Mainly Responsible

Domestic Chore/Responsible	Males	Females	Total
	Frequency/ Percentage	Frequency/ Percentage	Frequency/ Percentage
<i>House Repairs (N=41)</i>			
I	14(82%)	2 (8%)	16 (39%)
My partner	0	9 (38%)	9 (22%)
Me and my partner	1(6%)	3 (13%)	4 (10%)
Other male family members	0	8 (33%)	8 (20%)
I pay someone	1(6%)	1 (4%)	2 (5%)
Other	1(6%)	1 (4%)	2 (5%)
<i>Collecting Water (N=41)</i>			
I	6 (35%)	10 (42%)	16 (39%)
My partner	2 (12%)	4 (17%)	6 (15%)
Me and my partner	5 (29%)	2 (8%)	7 (17%)
All family members	1 (6%)	4 (17%)	5 (12%)
Other female family members	2 (12%)	2 (8%)	4 (10%)
Other male family members	0	2 (8%)	2 (5%)
Other	1 (6%)	0	1 (2%)

In this regard, male workers interviewed stated being involved in house repairs, collecting water, clothing –washing and being in charge of their own clothes-, cleaning, doing grocery shopping, and childcare.

Table 5-7. Main Provider of Childcare Related Responsibilities

Domestic Chore/ Responsible	Males	Females	Total
	Frequency/ Percentage	Frequency/ Percentage	Frequency/ Percentage
<i>Childcare (N=41)</i>			
I	0 (0%)	14 (58%)	14 (34%)
My partner	7 (41%)	0	7 (17%)
Me and my partner	6 (35%)	6 (25%)	12 (29%)
All family members	1 (6%)	0	1 (2%)
Other female family members	1 (6%)	3 (13%)	4 (10%)
I pay someone	2 (12%)	1 (4%)	3 (7%)

Regarding childcare, as can be seen in Table 5-7, men also reported being responsible for childcare-related chores, however no male workers reported that they do it by themselves, while more than half of women workers do. In this case, male workers who reported performing childcare related chores were referring to tasks related to the idea of “watching” their children when their partners cannot do it. Although they “watch” them this does not necessarily imply they do chores such as preparing kid’s meals, feeding them, bathing them, or washing their clothes.

As can be seen in tables 5-5, 5-6, and 5-7, male workers reported that they also carried out domestic chores in their households and have childcare related responsibilities with their children. However, they highlighted their role as co-responsible, assistant or helper of their female partners.

In contrast to female workers, a group of male workers’ domestic labor is presented as a part of a team, with the narrative of “I help”. Furthermore, male workers also pointed out that their partners were in some instances, the main responsibility -holders of domestic chores with the exception of house repairs.

On the one hand, the narrative of “help” expressed -not only by male workers but by women when referring to their male partners’ participation in domestic labor- appears to be associated with the existence of an extended gender equality discourse. Workers agree, -at least at the discourse level- that men and women need to share responsibilities especially in a context where both are contributing to the household income.

When male workers reported carrying out domestic labor, a group of male workers did it by reporting they were proud of their involvement in domestic labor or by having a positive assessment of their own household work. Male workers reported their favorite chores as cooking, taking care of the animals, and playing with their kids. Male workers endorse the gender equality narrative by describing their pleasure in doing domestic chores and helping at home. For instance, workers expressed in positive manners being loving fathers to their children, and that their kids enjoy their company or attention even more than their female partners.

In the same line, women related their partners’ contributions in domestic work with positive attributes that define their partners’ qualities as good men in direct opposition to men’s representation as machistas [sexists].

He is not a man who you [would] say... I have seen a lot of men who go to sleep. He does not sleep, since he gets up, we go to the farm, do one thing, another thing, or come to the house. (...) Many people say that men are machistas [sexist] Right? My husband does not. He helps me, he helps me cook or he says: ‘I’ll mopped the house, I’ll wax [the floor] and you doing something else. (W33, female, small farm, married, 4 children)

It is important to note that male worker’s discourse bolsters the idea that domestic labor can also performed by a man, who can be even better than their female partners.

Although male and female workers alike reported that the women are the ones who have more responsibility in the home, the discourse towards male participation in household labor can be related on one hand to a transition towards new understanding of male identity and societal expectations towards male responsibilities. On the other hand, however, the narrative of “help” at

the same time appears to maintain a more traditional expectation regarding the division of gender roles in the household with women as the one who is mainly responsible. As a consequence, men do not need to be mainly responsible when carrying out domestic chores and taking care of their children, it appears to be just enough for them to help.

“A Team Effort”

The second interesting finding regarding workers’ domestic labor and childcare-related tasks relates to the idea of collaborative work. As can be seen in Table 5-5-6, and 5-7, at least a quarter of workers pointed out that both they and their partners both carry out domestic chores such as cooking, cleaning, clothing, shopping as well as taking care of childcare-related responsibilities. Interestingly, in comparison with female workers, male workers reported in higher number that their work is part of a group team.

While examining the division of labor between family members it is interesting to note that beyond the mother, two other female family members appears to have high levels of responsibility in the household. The oldest daughter and the grandmother, -either living in the same household or not, - appear as important “help” for male and female workers when carrying out domestic chores as well as taking care of the workers’ smallest children. Portrayed as help, the oldest daughter and the grandmother appear to be essential for a normal development of a working day, both in the asparagus farm and in the house.

High standards in Domestic Labor: Fresh Food Only Please!

When conducting a scouting-trip to define the study sites, -the taxi in which I was a passenger crossed in the opposite direction of another taxi. The narrow, unpaved road did not

allow the two of us to continue our trip, so my taxi driver moved to the right side of the road to give the right of way to the taxi that came in the opposite direction. When the other taxi passed, our car stopped and the conductor greeted the other driver while at the same time both exchanged a plastic bag with a package inside. After the exchange, we continued our path. Time passed and during the fieldwork I observed the scene of male drivers exchanging or delivering packages repeated several times. After a time of watching what was happening and being intrigued to know what was in the plastic bags, I noticed that the male drivers were delivering food in plastic containers at lunch time. In particular, Reyna's description of her daily routine was helpful to understand that families send food containers during lunch time to other members of the family in the area. For instance, during school time Reyna prepares lunch and sends it to her daughter, who is in secondary school, every day at lunch time:

If I have to do laundry that day, I do laundry. If I do not have to, I put the clothes away (...) I wait until eleven o'clock and I start cooking. (...) My little girl studies in secondary school and [the school] start the afternoon schedule until 3:30 in the afternoon, I came embalada [as bull]. [I] nothing resting at all, I started cooking fast to be able to. At 12 o'clock I have to send her the lunch. (...) Yes, I sent it to her. [I] stood up there [where the public transportation stop], gave them one sol [Peruvian currency] and told them: 'Please, took it there.' 'Ok.Ok'. As there is already a table there [at] school and you leave [it] there. (W14, female, small farm, separated, 3 children)

By listening to the stories of male and female workers about their daily routines and household domestic responsibilities, I understood that preparation and consumption of food appeared to be fundamental in the lives of workers. This preparation, as described in workers' testimonies, is done at least two or three times a day. Women such as Luciana emphasized the idea that they have to prepare food at the "instante [moment]" the food will be consumed. From breakfast to lunch, "another meal must be" cooked but the food will not be eaten (W27, female, large farm, married, 3 children). Preparing breakfast or lunch in advance, for example is not an option for many female workers, their families will not eat these meals since their children or

partners do not eat re-heated or cold food. In the same line, Rosa pointed out that she left lunch for her adult son, who comes back home in the middle of his shift as a taxi driver. However, her son “does not like re-heated food like that, he prefers [to eat] fresh [food]” (W1, female, large farm, married, 5 children).

Among the reasons why asparagus workers and their families do not want to eat overheated or cold food, respondents noted that cold or overheated food is not considered healthy and can make the stomach sick. This goes in line with previous studies (Moura, 2010) which have pointed out that cold or overheated eating is one of the harmful health effects faced by asparagus workers in Ica.

The discussion about the freshness of food in relation to a healthy diet appears to be relevant in the context of asparagus production since, as pointed out in the second chapter, the production of this crop relates to the dietary changes of the Global North’s population -an increased intake of fruits and vegetables as part of a healthier lifestyle (Valcárcel,2003). Although, workers do not seem to integrate asparagus into their diets, it was interesting to observe among asparagus workers a discourse that relates healthy consumption habits to the freshness of food. What are the implications of eating healthy for asparagus workers? In the case of the workers in this study, the demand for healthy eating as fresh, home cooked food can be considered an example of the high expectations that family members and spouses of asparagus workers have regarding the development of domestic chores. Furthermore, the gendered relations -women as cooks and men as transporters- embedded in the delivered of fresh cooked food as part of healthy dietary habits. In contrast to the literature, the high standards about the performance of quality domestic work does not seem to diminish for asparagus workers despite the heavy workload these workers reported to do in the asparagus fields as well as in the house. Eating fresh food appears to intensify the domestic responsibilities of women in particular who reported to be mainly responsible for cooking among this study’s sample.

Work at the House vs. at an Asparagus Farm

Compatibility of Schedules

In Chapter 4, it was stated that workers at small asparagus farms could be considered the most vulnerable in terms of job stability and labor benefits and how contradictorily workers at this scale of production expressed high levels of job satisfaction. The reasons behind this job satisfaction, in a context of limited access to labor benefits, can be understood in relation to workers' domestic workload. In contrast to full-time workers, part-time workers and workers in continuous shifts reported that their work, due to the short time commitment and the closeness to their homes, allows them to work and at the same time to carry out domestic responsibilities and be with their children. Such is the case with Milagros who stated that her work gives her time in the afternoon to carry out domestic chores like doing laundry (W17, female, medium farm, separated, 2 children).

As we noted in the previous chapter and at the beginning of this chapter, workers observed that in order to balance their work and domestic responsibilities, the key is to organize themselves, as well as coordinate with their partners. However, workers working under the split-shift on large farms stated that despite this organization and coordination, there is not enough time to fulfill domestic and family responsibilities. The work of the asparagus workers during harvest time and especially on large farms is described as intensive, which does not allow space for any other activity. Thus, for workers employed at large asparagus farms under the split-shift, the fulfillment of both responsibilities will not be possible to the same degree since their work does not align with their daily routines and their responsibilities to be in their houses and with their kids.

Time and Energy Demanded

When workers were asked about what they considered to be the most time-consuming work at home, I observed gender differences in workers' discourses. On the one hand, female workers indicated that they work more in their houses since, as it was observed in Chapter 4, there is more workload as well as emotional labor in the house. Besides the high workload existing in workers' homes, the house is also seen by female workers as the place where domestic labor occurs. It is the place where they overthink about the family and its problems.

These problems relate to economic constraints, long lists of household chores, and preoccupation about their children. Household-related problems worry workers more than the workplace, since for workers at home the domestic labor is endless and constant. As Rosa points out, the work on asparagus farms has a beginning and an end, not the house. "(...) No, what demands me more time is my work in the house. In the plot, I finish with what[ever] they required to me and [then] I [can] leave. Instead, in the house already it is all day [labor] until the night." (W1, female, large farm, married, 5 children).

Contrarily, work in the asparagus fields, although perceived by workers as both physically and time demanding was also defined as "cool" and "fun" (see Chapter 4). The reasons behind this contradictory narrative appear to be in relation to the emotional workload generated by family responsibilities. In this sense, work on asparagus farms is intense and physically demanding, however it does not seem to be perceived as emotional as the house labor.

On asparagus farms, there is no emotional connection for what can happen in the field after female workers finish their shifts. The concerns that seems to occupy the minds of workers are related to financial and economic issues such as not making it to the end of the month, not being able to pay the debts contracted to buy their houses or other related expenses, as well as not being able to pay the children's expenses in food, education and health. Depending on whether

workers have social benefits or not, the issue of insurance and the health of children is a subject that greatly concerns the parents interviewed, who assume this responsibility as theirs.

Asparagus farms are seen by working women as a place where concerns of the household, the family's financial health, and the children are suspended for a moment, which allows them to think of something else, as well as share time with other farm workers. As Milagros states, "At work for a change you chat, you distract yourself and therefore it is not like being at home then." (W17, female, medium farm, married, 3 children)

This time outside of the home and in company of other workers, whom they usually call *chicas* or *amigas*, helps workers temporarily forget the tensions of their family responsibilities. Despite the difficulties faced by workers on the asparagus farms, female workers especially value this space for providing a momentary distraction from the house.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented an overview of asparagus agricultural workers' responsibilities in the domestic sphere and with their families. With this aim, three main themes were analyzed: workers' daily routines, gender division of domestic labor and caregiving responsibilities among the workers' households, and finally, workers' discourses regarding the existence of compatibility or conflicts when managing their domestic responsibilities and their work on asparagus farms.

Workers' routines and labor organizations in the household were defined by workers as hectic and strict. In contrast to the flexibility and constant change that characterize the seasonal organization of labor at asparagus farm as explored in Chapter 4, the household labor is constant and not necessarily dependent on the seasonal production of agricultural crops such as asparagus but on the housework load. Workers started their daily routines before dawn to be compatible with their employment on asparagus farms. To workers, the time before, in between and after

their work shifts at asparagus farms are also work shifts, in which they carry out a myriad of domestic chores. This appears to be the case specially for women, who reported to find in their job a space to forget about their multiple responsibilities at home.

When analyzing the type and amount of domestic responsibilities carried out by asparagus workers in their household, workers' responses revealed a gender division of labor with half of the female workers claiming the main responsibility of domestic chores such as cooking, cleaning, clothing, shopping, collecting water and taking care of the children. Similarly, male workers pointed out that their female partners were the mainly responsible for carrying out domestic chores in the household. Field observations also reveal the existence of high standards in relation to the labor carried out in the home, which related to a narrative of health and good eating habits and in an increase in the workload of women asparagus workers, who are responsible for the family's well-being and the daily preparation of fresh meals.

Male workers reported more frequently taking care of the house repairs, collecting water and cleaning. Furthermore, the field research observation showed men's involvement in the delivery of food. Interestingly, a group of workers pointed out the collaboration and assistance between partners in the performance of household labor. In particular, men workers pointed out that they did help their female partner carry out domestic chores in the household. Despite the reported participation of male workers in household work, research findings reveal conflicting gender discourses regarding the distribution of labor in the household. Female and male workers interviewed appear to have different narratives of how the work at home is being done. For instance, more often than not women workers define their household labor participation as "I am the main responsibility holder", while men workers described as "We do it together" or "I do help". Without arriving to a final explanation, the presence of contrasting gender discourses regarding the performance of household labor by asparagus workers can reveal on the one hand, the existence of a more egalitarian distribution of labor in the household with the increment of

male participation in domestic tasks and in childcare related activities. On the other hand, this discourse can also reveal the maintenance of a traditional gender division of labor in the household, in which men's help is more than expected and -because of that- well received.

Finally, the gender of workers, the scale of production and work-shift seem to be relevant when examining the existence of compatibility and conflict regarding workers labor responsibilities in and outside of the home. Workers employed in part-time and continuous shifts -usually at small farm and in the off-season- expressed the existence of more compatibility between their working schedules and the domestic responsibilities. On the other hand, workers under the split-shift -usually at large farms- expressed the existence of conflict and incompatibility of schedules, experiencing a lack of time to fulfill their domestic responsibilities. A woman's employment as an asparagus cutters in the harvest season or under part-shift appears to go in hand with her status as the person mainly responsible for the domestic labor.

In this vein, research findings suggest that asparagus workers household and caregiving responsibilities at home are tied to their employment responsibilities at asparagus farms. Workers interviews indicate the development of a complex set of strategies and arrangements that have been put in place to make both set of labor responsibilities -inside and outside of the house-work. For instance, workers -especially women- pointed out that their employment decision are deeply related to what is demanded of them at home. In this regard, workers decided to choose a particular shift, work on a particular type of farm or live in a particular village with the aim to be close to their families and fulfil with their family responsibilities.

Chapter 6: Gender and Family Dynamics of Asparagus Wage Workers

Introduction

This chapter's objective is to examine the family and gender discourses and dynamics that are embedded in workers' everyday lives when trying to fulfill their responsibilities at asparagus farms and at home and with their families. Furthermore, in this chapter, I examine the implications of these dynamics and discourses on workers' labor performances and family lives. First, this chapter examines the dynamics of asparagus workers' household when carrying out labor and family responsibilities inside and outside of the home. In this respect, gendered discourses and discourses about gender played a central part of the analysis. From this analysis, typologies of households were developed by considering workers' workloads at asparagus farms, domestic and family responsibilities, and distribution of labor among workers and their partners (if married or cohabitant). Second, going beyond the examination of household dynamics of labor, this chapter examined the gendered expectations for children within worker's nuclear family as well as the role of the extended family in workers' everyday lives.

Asparagus Workers' Household Dynamics

Dual-earner Households

As presented in the Chapter 4, more than 80 percent of workers interviewed reported to be married or cohabiting²⁸. From this group, the majority reported to be in dual-earner households (85 percent among married or cohabitating couples), meaning that both they and their partners work outside of the home and contribute financially to the household income.

Among dual-earner households, which constituted the 71.42 percent of the total workers interviewed- most of the interviewed partners also worked in agricultural-related occupations with a few working in other industries, such as construction operations, childcare services, and transportation services. Among the workers who reported that their partners were employed in agricultural-related industries, most of the workers' partners worked as agricultural laborers on asparagus farms, with some of them working in other crops such as grape farms or in agricultural processing plants.

Over the course of the field research and data analysis, I identified two types of household's dynamics regarding their labor responsibilities when examining the discourses regarding the workers distributions of labor and family responsibilities outside and inside of the house. On one hand, I identified a discourse that values the idea of forming collaborative relationships between partners. Under this type of relationship, which I have labeled as the collaborative household, both partners share similar workloads in and out of the home. They also financially contribute equally and reliably to the household. On the other hand, I identified another discourse among asparagus workers in which workers value the existence of high levels of negotiation and

²⁸ Among cohabitating or married couples, some interviews mentioned to be in process of separation while living together and cohabitating although having long distance relationships. For the purpose of this chapter and the typologies developed, these two subcategories will be included under the umbrella of cohabitating or married couples.

coordination among partners to target different but equal amounts of labor and responsibilities independently in the household. In this type of relationship, which I have labeled as the strategic household, both partners work and contribute to the household; however, they hold dissimilar workloads and roles in and out of the household.

In the next pages, I will present the household dynamics in relation to the gendered discourses and discourses about gender that arise when workers in dual-earner households try to balance their labor and domestic responsibilities.

The Collaborative Household: en las buenas y en las malas los dos nos apoyamos [In the good and in the bad we support each other]

When examining the partner dynamics of workers who were in dual-earner relationships with similar workloads outside of the house, workers expressed an egalitarian discourse regarding the division of labor among them and their partners. In line with a gender equality discourse, workers reported that they worked collaboratively, and in coordination, with their partners to perform labor activities outside of the house as well as in their domestic and childcare-related responsibilities. It is interesting to note that a gender equality discourse appears most strongly when asparagus workers and their partners both work full-time in large-scale asparagus farm operations.

The existence of a gender equality discourse among collaborative household appears to be related to the extended notion that the labor inside and outside of the home needs to be shared among the couple regardless of their gender. Although male and female worker interviewees present discourse towards gender equality, it is interesting to note that there are different nuances to this discourse depending on the gender of the workers interviewed.

Tú No estás en la Edad Piedra [You are not in the Stone Age]

Female workers who had workloads similar to their partners on asparagus farms expressed a strong preference toward gender equality in the labor distribution inside and outside of the home. In other words, female workers demanded an egalitarian division of labor, in which both men and women should have equal responsibilities at home as well as in their work on the asparagus farm.

When examining the discourses of women interviewed, it is noteworthy that their demand for gender equality appears to be supported by their participation in the labor market as asparagus agricultural workers. In other words, working in asparagus fields authorizes them to demand from their male partners a greater equity when performing domestic labor. According to their narratives, since women also work long hours in the asparagus fields and contribute financially to the household, there is no excuse for their male partners not to do the same. As Antonia stated:

Well, sometimes he's a little macho, because he says, 'Oh, I'm a male and why I have to be grabbing clothes, why I have to be watching the kitchen,' 'Oh yeah, and everything I? Note pases! [Don't get ahead of yourself!]. Here we man and woman do all. Here there is not that I am macho. No, here everything is done. Man, and woman we have to do [it] because you are not in the stone age, just to you know'. I say, 'here [we] have to do all the same', I say, 'and if not, you know what, [you] would better get out of the house that I can do the role of father and mother with my children.' I say, 'Oh yeah, because you work, right?' He tells me, 'Of course'. If we have to support, we have to support all of us, and if not nothing better then, but how you are going to move forward? The house is going to stay there, and there will be no progress,' I say. (W36, Antonia, small farm, married, 5 children)

The claim to go against a traditional gender division of labor, as Antonia strongly expresses in the previous excerpt, is in line with the demand for more male participation in household labor. This corresponds, and appears to be justified, with findings in Chapter 5, which suggests that women perform more responsibility at home than their male partners.

Interestingly, the need for more equality in the division of labor in the household is not only demanded by female workers, but a sentiment also shared by male workers. As discussed

below, the need for an equal division of labor appears to be part of workers' discourses in dual-earner household, of those with similar workloads, particularly when the worker and their partner participate in the same area of the job market.

Todos Somos de Carne y Hueso y Estamos Cansados. [We are all Flesh and Blood, and We are Tired]

In the same fashion as their female counterparts, male workers also presented an egalitarian discourse when referring to the division of labor on asparagus farms and in the household. Unlike the nature of women's discourse, men's discourses did not come in the form of a demand but as a sense of reciprocity towards the work performed by their partners, who work intensively in asparagus production.

Male workers recognized the need to be more involved in domestic and childcare chores when their partners perform intensive workloads outside of the home. In this case, male workers offer—at least at the discourse level-- labor reciprocity and empathy to the fact that their female partners work and contribute financially to the home. As can be seen in Julio's testimony, his willingness to carry out domestic chores in his household relates to the fact his wife works very hard on the asparagus farms. Therefore, it would be unfair if he does not collaborate in the house.

I do it without her telling me to 'help'. I also feel that she is tired. I go, I start to rinse [the clothes], to tend [the clothes] because no one is made from iron. We are all flesh and blood and we are tired. (...) It can be washing clothes, doing the cleaning. Sometimes, I am part-time [worker] and she also sometimes works in the afternoon and then I have to grab my washtub because she is working and I will not be here either with crossed feet watching the TV. (W38.1, male, large farm, 2 children)

As Julio pointed out, his discourses towards an egalitarian division of labor in the household is related to their conditions and daily struggles as asparagus wage workers. Consequently, there

is an understanding --observed in Antonia and Julio's discourses-- that regardless of who carries out certain responsibilities, there is always work to do outside and inside of the house, as explored in chapters 4 and 5. In this sense, the gender division of labor appears to be secondary to the reality of demands: mothers contribute financially to the home and fathers carry out domestic chores and watch their children.

For instance, Jorge stated that during harvest time, he and his partner, both share all responsibilities outside and inside of the house since the labor organization on asparagus farms demands them to do so:

(...) At harvest, it is more complicated. In harvest, we work all day. In harvest, I have to get up a little earlier, because if we work, for example the two of us, the two [of us] get up at 4 in the morning to make breakfast, to leave for my daughter, her tupperware [lunch box] to each one so they go to school. Even we left our little girls hair done. Her little head combed, with everything she's going to wear. Her, her, what's her name? Her fruit to be taken to school. Everything in her backpack, all her notebooks. Everything ready for them to leave at 8. (W31, male, large farm, married, 2 children)

In addition, male workers' willingness for more involvement in household chores and empathizing with their partners' participation in the asparagus labor market comes not only as a practical need to get things done, but from sharing the experience of working on asparagus farms or in agricultural processing plants. As Julio stated in the previous excerpt and as Jimmy states in the following, workers experienced first-hand the labor intensity required to work as wage laborers in this industry. Julio's awareness regarding the tiredness experienced by his wife also appears present in Jimmy's discourse. As Jimmy states:

(...) Well, I [help] with all the chores, sometimes as we share everything, I feel calm. I come, quiet rest, because I know that she is working, I am working, to get on [in life]. When she worked, I cannot force her to do her things [at the house], because I know what factory work looks like. I've also worked in the factory and it's hard, being more than 12 hours working, standing. (W25, male, medium farm, married, 1 children)

As seen above, this shared experience appears to shape male workers' narratives in favor of a more equal distribution of the gender division of labor in the household.

Together with the need of partners supporting each other to deal with their daily labor demands, male workers' willingness to have a more active role in domestic labor at the discourse level might be related also to workers' inability to reproduce a traditional gender division of labor between partners, given their material conditions. In this sense, women's participation in the job market, in asparagus farms in this case, is observed for interviewees like Margarita and Pilar as a livelihood strategy to complement their partners' salaries and henceforth as a response to their families' financial stress.

A mother has to work if she wants to give a little quality of life to their children because sometimes, as I say, 'you have to work' -and also as they say- 'to carry them forward'. (W05, female, small farm, married, 3 children)

Always when I get up, I give thanks to God. I [render thank] for it dawned, for the work that I have. The only thing, I just say, 'my God, if there [will be] some work for me and for my husband'. Well, it will be. On Saturdays with a platita [money] one can buy the groceries. You do not need [more]. At least, I say to him [my partner], 'at least now there is some work', sometimes 'before there was none' I tell him, and he also tells me, 'Yes, Pilar'. Because of that [I work] and I do not get bored either. (W34, female, small farm, married, 3 children)

For these interviewees, her involvement in non-domestic work relates to the material circumstances of her family, circumstances in which wealth is not abundant and the family could benefit financially by having two providers. Given such circumstances, female and male workers recognize the importance of women's work, which unintentionally appears to supplant the traditional division of labor, at least at the discourse level. It also challenges men's privileges to be the sole provider and the primary decision-maker for the couple, while not partaking in domestic work. As can be seen in the instance of Jimmy and his partner Pamela:

Pamela: If we want something more, we work more. Because as he tells me, 'I do not force you to work', but also, if he works alone, it is not enough. We have to adjust.

Jimmy: That is that what happens. As I say, the salary of a worker in the field are 300 soles, sometimes to maintain a house is not enough. You see it, 150 [soles] is spent in the groceries. There are 50 soles for electricity. Electricity is monthly. Suddenly, out there my son gets sick. Suddenly [he] wants a gustito [something special], then we do not reach to the point of saving. Only for weekly life, we work to eat. Instead, when I work with my wife, my wife's is to save, and mine is to eat.” (W25, male -and partner-, medium farm, married, 1 children)

Consequently, women who exercise their financial capacities and skills by working at asparagus farms present a strong demand for certain levels of equality in terms of household labor, which may or may not occur in reality.

To conclude, workers’ circumstances of intense labor, the struggle to financially contribute to the home, and the domestic responsibilities required by dual-earner households to “support” each other are challenges faced in the process of improving their livelihoods.

Que Esté con Nosotros [A Father Who is With Us]

Among this type of household -when mother and father have a similar workload in the home, workers value a higher-quality of paternal presence in the household by presenting an ideal of fatherhood characterized by a caring father who devotes time to his family. Male workers stressed that they consider their relationship with their children even closer and more affectionate than the relationship between the children and their partners, especially when their partners work more intensively than they do. In line with a positive discourse that values the existence of a caring father, female workers consider, that being a present father is the main responsibility of fathers. Some female workers pointed out with pride that their partners are not like other men; they instead share and spend more time with the family. For instance, Mercedes and Rafaela state that their partners should "be here with the three of us..."(W26, female, large farm, married, 2

children) or "Uhm, I think being more with your family, right?" (W27, female, large farm, married, 3 children).

The Strategic Household

Among workers who were in dual-earner relationships, I identified a group that presented a different manner than the collaborative household by partners holding dissimilar workloads and commitments in and out of the home. In contrast to the collaborative household who highlighted the need for equal labor performance and roles, workers in the strategic household pushed for a strategic combination of efforts between partners. Under what I identified as strategic household, female and male workers appear to have high levels of coordination, synchronization and negotiation with their partners, whether intentional or not. According to workers, the reason behind having different levels of workloads and commitments is to provide a balance with their partners through their domestic and non-domestic obligations.

Among the strategic households, it was common that partners worked in different scales of production, held different shifts or held different employment statuses in the asparagus industry. As an illustration, female and male workers reported that they (or their partners) were employed in full-time jobs under a formal contract or by large agricultural farms while their partners (or they themselves) worked part-time under temporary contracts, or on a small or medium asparagus farms.

Interestingly, the coordination and negotiation of workloads and work commitments between partners can be seen as a strategy chosen by workers to be able to have access to a fixed income or benefits (such as health insurance) through their full-time employment, while the flexibility

and time availability of part-time employment allows one parent to carry out domestic chores and spend time with their children.

From the interviewees' narratives, it appears there's a tacit agreement with the negotiator, who is often the partner that holds longer shifts and more permanent employment (usually on large farms) and has more financial responsibility with the family. At the same time, this partner often has less time and ability to do domestic work and childcare-related tasks. In this regard, the workers recognizes the need for holding jobs that complement each other in terms of demands and availability.

When doing a gender analysis of the strategic household's dynamics, I observed a slightly different discourse than that presented in the collaborative household. Although both men and women might work as full-time or part-time workers, it was more frequent for women to work part-time or by season and report having the main responsibility of carrying out domestic and child-care related responsibilities. Inversely, men generally reported holding full-time shifts under more permanent or constant employment. In this sense, in the strategic household it appears to be a more traditional gender division of labor in and out of the household as compared to the collaborative household. Female workers reported being the ones who usually choose to work as part-time laborers or by seasons while their partners work full-time and contribute more to the household. Conversely, men reported working full-time or holding two part-times jobs while their partners worked part-time and by season. As in the case of Milagros, who works as an asparagus cutter during the harvest season but does not work in the off-season, her full-time responsibility is in the household to take care of her family and children. In this particular case, women work appears to fall under the category of "subsidiary work" developed in previous studies (as cited by Collins, 1995).

Well, when I no longer work, I'm at home, I wake up to [make] breakfast, I send them to school, I pick up the cleaning, I start to do everything, from there to prepare lunch so they come to lunch. (...) I already take care of it, since he works also rests,

sometimes also a little that we go to the farm, we have to see the farm, as well.
(W17, female, medium farm, 3 children)

It is interesting to observe that the strategic household's dynamics also relate to the season of production. During the asparagus harvest, the dynamic in the household parallels the aims of the collaborative household, who state the need for a more equitable distribution of domestic tasks based on the fact that both partners have similar workloads outside of the home.

However, during the off-season or times of part-time work, the dynamics in the strategic household appear to change to a more traditional division of gender roles. For instance, there is an expectation by workers that the one who does not work consistently on asparagus farms --usually the women-- should be in charge of the domestic responsibilities. In other words, when couples have dissimilar workloads due the seasonality of production, workers' discourses appear to conform to a more traditional division of gender roles. As an illustration of this, Raúl indicates that if his wife does not work, he expects her to "do it [housework] alone but if we both work, we both help each other". (W03, male, small farm, married, 3 children). Similarly, Jessica points out that when it is not harvest season, she spends more time carrying out household responsibilities in the company of their children. This is demonstrated in following quotation where Jessica explains her routine when it is not harvest time:

I dedicate myself to my children, and I rest for more time too, and I'm already here in the house longer. Sometimes I go out this way to stay where my mom, where my dad. Like that I go too for a while, then I dedicate more time to my son. (W02, female, small farm, married, 2 children).

Finally, in the case of Isidro, the only seasonal migrant interviewed in this study, the labor and domestic responsibilities between his partner and him are shared when both work in Ica's asparagus fields. As he points out, both work full-time on the large asparagus farm and both share housework (W03, male, small farm, married, 3 children). However, when Isidro and his partner return to their permanent place of residence—in another region—there is a more traditional division of gender roles. When I asked Isidro about the work done by his wife in his

regular residence, Isidro notes that his wife is dedicated to the house as is customary, since "always women [are] in the house" (W37, male, large farm, married, 1 children).

Single-Earner Households

About 30 percent of male and female asparagus workers reported being the sole provider in their households. In the case of workers who claim to be the sole breadwinner for their families, there are important differences compared to workers in dual-earner households. Perhaps the most important differences relate to the gendered experiences of the breadwinners, which appear to have an important impact on the family dynamics. In this section, I will present two types of single-earner household: the free agent and the traditional household.

The Free Agent: Tengo que Poder [“I have to be Able to”]

Throughout fieldwork and in the recruitment process of female participants employed in asparagus fields, I was directed towards female workers who were heads of single parent households. Throughout the field research, I interviewed seven women who self-identified as single or separated mothers (16.6 percent of the workers interviewed) since they were living apart from the father of their children and were the main providers for their households²⁹.

²⁹ For this section, only single-parent families are considered (W08, W09, W10, W11, W12, W14 & W17). They declared living apart and separated from the other parent of their children and have not formed a new family. For this study, I differentiate this group of couples from others who reported being separated but still living with their former partners (of both men and women interviewed), having children from previous relationships but having established new relationships with other partners or living apart from their partner. Among worker interviews, two female interviewees reported to be separated but still living with their partners (W01 & W05). Another two interviews reported being in a relationship with the father of their kids but for different circumstances, they live apart from each other (W06 & W13). In these last four last cases, female interviewees also reported facing higher levels of family responsibilities due to the emotional or physical separation with their partners. However, the experiences of these last four differ from the first group of seven interviewees who reported to be physically and emotionally separated from their partners since they reported to be the head of a single parent family.

The existence of female heads of households in single-parent families corresponds with research findings on family dynamics in Peruvian society, which indicates high rates of single-parent households under the mother's leadership. This is a common feature in Latin America and in Peru, in which around 20 percent of households are single-parent households led by a woman (Sara-Lafosse, 2009). According to Sara-Lafosse, this type of household faces different types of vulnerabilities such as higher poverty rates (p.396).

Encounters with female asparagus workers leading single-parent families during the field research might be a reflection of this aspect of Peruvian family formation. However, it is important to note that during recruitment, the access to female heads of single-parent households may have been overstated by the assumption that these female workers might face many challenges in order to balance their responsibilities outside and inside of the home. It is interesting to note that, in the case of workers interviewed from single-parent families, I only interviewed female asparagus workers who were working on small and medium asparagus farms under part-time or continuous schedules.

Regarding this household's dynamic, even though the reasons for separation were not examined in the interviews, single or separated female workers suggested that their previous relationships ended on bad terms, with their partners being the reasons behind situations of jealousy or constant arguments.

This group of women described themselves as *madre y padre* [mother and father] of their kids since they claim to have the main responsibility (if not alone) to raise and economically support their children. In the situation of separation (or divorce), single mothers understand their single status as a challenging process that forces them to restructure their livelihood strategies and mindset to face the new status. As Reyna states:

Before [when I was] alone, I never worked. I was always my mother's daughter. Everything [they] gave me, everything, everything [they] gave me. (...) My mom, everything [she] gave me. (...) I married, I did not work either and when [I] got

separated [it] gave me the advantage that I suffered because I had to work for my children and when I started to work I suffered a lot because I did not know how to work. The sun (...) I started to work, the sun irritated my face. The sun started in my face, it turned red, my face was cracking all over. I cried, I cried in the field because the sun mistreated me, I felt that I was drowning. Yes, the sun ... (...) No, when I covered myself, I drowned, I had never got used to [it] After time, the time and [I] said 'tengo que poder, tengo que poder' [I have to be able to, I have to be able to.] (...) I cried, I cried, 'tengo que poder, tengo que poder,' until it was like this. Until I got used to it. And that was the suffering, and that was the harvest that I started, that is when I harvested asparagus, (...) [I] learnt (W14, female, small farm, separated, 3 children)

In order to restructure their lives, workers' extended families appear to play a crucial role. As a strategy after separation, some female interviewees moved with or close to their parents to share economic expenses and have assistance with childcare and household-related responsibilities. Taking into account that these women live in the small asparagus-producing towns, it was common that their parents were small asparagus producers who received land in the agrarian reform. Their parents therefore functioned as a source of employment on asparagus farms, allowing them to work near their homes part time and leave their kids with their mothers (W11 & W14). For instance, Claudia, who moved in with her parents, worked for her father on an asparagus small farm and received the help of her mother and sister in carrying out domestic chores.

That is [on] the plot of my father or any neighbor that we work there in the farm, and from 6 a.m. I go to work I do not leave [the farm] until 10 am. (...) I come to my house, mostly help my mom, because I live with my mom, help her cook. (W11, female, small farm, separated, 3 children)

Additionally, female workers such as Milagros, who separated from her husband on bad terms and then faced economic pressures, feel that the support of their families helped them through the difficulty of separation. In this case, to cope with the separation or divorce, Milagros turned to her extended family, particularly her parents, for both economic and emotional support. As Milagros described:

Well, at first it [the separation] kind of affected me a little because of problems, but from here, I'm saying I'm fine. I'm fine and it seems like I'm alone, I feel better. (...) I was supported by my family, who supported me a lot. They talked to me a lot because at first I was bad, as I say, and for what they have supported me a lot. They talked to me, they told me, 'you have to continue, the loans will be paid. Do not be like that' because I [did not] eat that I felt depressed. I did not leave my house. I cried and badly, badly and they supported me a lot and now since some time ago I am already cool and I like the life I have. Without anyone controlling me, nobody is telling me, 'you go and return early or where you've been? why you're laughing'? In that time, that was my problem. It was the jealousy. (W17, female, medium farm, 2 children).

However, the situation of being the single head of the family has an upside as well.

Interviewees stated that undergoing the difficult transitions have allowed them to be independent and self-sufficient, as we can see above in the case of Reyna and Milagros. Moreover, single mothers such as Claudia stated that after the separation, she experienced freedom to work, fewer responsibilities at home, and time to socialize and economically support her children:

Because I am more calm, I no longer worry that they are calling me, or that they are... that I wash him, that I cook him, that I take care of him, I do not have that anymore. (...) Yes, it was a lot of work, I almost did not rest because I used to come from work and if he was there, he did not help at all. I cooked, made breakfast, lunch, dinner, do laundry at that time, sometimes came 6:00 pm and at that time I would do laundry. (W11, female, small farm, separated, 3 children)

Single mothers view their work on asparagus farms positively since it allows them to support their families, even when they have to face the family responsibilities alone. Besides their work at asparagus farms, some of the interviewees had started small businesses like food stands in the afternoon or on weekends in order to have a second income, such as the case of Reyna and Natalia.

When examining their situation as single mothers, female workers expressed a certain pride for what they were able to accomplish by themselves. There appears to be a sense of empowerment as an outcome of the separation, from which they were able to assume primary family responsibilities:

I used to work in a factory. There was not enough [money] and [it was] worse when I was with my partner. I listened to what my partner told me and [I] did not

go out to work in the field. I used to go to my house, to do what he said to me, or sometimes for fear that he would put a hand on me, and I do not think that should happen. One must work even if you have a partner (...) And not depend on the man only. For being depending on him, I did nothing for my children. When I got separated from the father of my children, I had nothing, I was in the air. I did not have a house, I was [living] on straw [house], and he left me with my younger children, and I did not know how to work. And now, I thank the Lord, I separated the father of my children because, when I was with him, we fought and my children saw that. (...) I separated, I worked in the farm and I see my children calmer. (W08, female, medium farm, separated, 5 children)

In this particular case, far from holding a victim-oriented discourse, women express a pride in being able to carry out their childcare-related responsibilities without the support of the father of their children.

Demanding Fatherhood: The Absent Father and Child Support Demands

Regarding childcare-related responsibilities, separated or single mothers generally indicated that since their separation, the father of their kids is more absent than not from their son's and daughter's lives (W08, W10, W11, W12, W14), a situation that interviewees considered negative for their children since it emotionally hurts them. According to the interviewees such as Natalia the children suffer from the absence of the father and do not understand the reason for the distance.

It is interesting to note that even in the cases where female workers received a maintenance allowance from the father of their children, they indicated that the presence of the father is not frequent or active in their children's lives.

Single or separated mothers pointed out that the ideal father figure they expect from their ex-partners is to keep in touch with their children despite their separation. They would like their ex-partners to spend time with their children and be there for them such as Irene:

I think that the role of a father, even if they are separated [from the mother] must, not, should never forget their children, because if they separate, they separate from the woman

not from the children. That I think that should [be], that should always be with their children, give themselves time for their children, more if they live together, better that the father is there for a member, because it is not that the mother is just with the children, them also. (W08, female, medium farm, separated, 5 children)

A recurring theme in interviews is the child support pension. Without directly addressing the issue, when addressing their former partners' involvement in the lives of their children and distribution of responsibilities, the female workers mentioned either receiving monthly child support pension for their kids (W08, W09 & W10) or being involved in child support demands (W11, W12, W14 & W17). The lack of presence of a father in their children's lives is for some of the interviewees the reason behind why they decided to start child support demands from their former partners. This is the case with Natalia, who at the beginning of the separation did not consider it appropriate to start a legal demand from her daughter's father. However, the father's disinterest in his daughter's life motivated Natalia to demand more from his parental responsibilities. As Natalia states "I am on trial with him, he waited to be in trial".

No, I did not want to do it. I felt able to take my daughter forward and [I] did not want anything. If he left, well, he left. At least I know in my conscience that I have not been a bad woman. I like to work, I'm not lazy, but when I was good with him, it was not my intention. I always told him that I would never, ever, ever go to him if we ever got separated. Well, I can work, I always said 'I can work, I can work.' But a month, in the month of June of this year, on the 25th, my little girl gave him a call I had his number hidden; she called him and he answered. She says 'Daddy, I'm Monica', and he says 'I do not have children'. That was the saddest thing, miss. (W12, female, small farm, 1 children)

The legal battle for child support from the fathers of these women's children can be interpreted as a demand for parental responsibility, which goes beyond a simple supplementary finances demand. As mentioned previously, in cases where the ex-parents of the interviewees pay a maintenance allowance, the mothers still feel a sense of absence or abandonment of their partner toward their children.

The Traditional Household

As was the case of the self-identified single or separated mothers, there were five male asparagus workers (11.9 percent of workers interviewed) who mentioned being the primary family member to contribute economically to the household³⁰. In contrast to mothers who take care of their families alone, the male workers who assume the primary financial responsibility of their household indicated that they were married or cohabitating with the mothers of their children.

In contrast to the free agents, in the case of the traditional household, male workers' partners do not work in asparagus fields or in another activity. To support their families, the male interviewees indicated that they either work for full-time large or medium asparagus farms, hold two jobs, or complement their income with a second job as part-time laborer on small asparagus farms or in their own family plot. On average, the men in the traditional household claimed to work more hours than any other worker in the sample--more than eight hours-- as explored in Chapter 4. However, they also reported not having major responsibilities at home or with childcare. For instance, Cirilo stated that his participation in domestic chores is minimal since he spends most of his time at work. "No, I'm working, I do not have time. Sometimes, time is not enough" (W21, male, small farm, married, 1 children). In the same line, Miguel explained that his partner, who stopped working due to pregnancy and recently gave birth, stayed at home and was primarily in charge of the domestic chores. As he explained "[I do not do] so much me... because [she] is, since my wife stay here at home, she just ... prepares everything" (W28, male, large farm, married, 2 children).

Therefore, among this type of worker exists a more traditional gender division of labor with the partner. On the one hand, male workers indicated that they were the ones who work

³⁰ Worker interviews N. 18, 21, 28, 29, 30.

outside of the home and provided for the families. Male workers' partners, on the other hand, were dedicated exclusively to carrying out domestic responsibilities and childcare.

Among this type of household, workers' discourse regarding their responsibilities inside the home and with their families, I encountered discourses that aligned with a more traditional division of gender roles, in which father's responsibilities are related to ensuring the economic stability, safety and future of their children. As Víctor points out, his role as a father is to "be responsible for them, the responsibility. To fulfill all their obligations" (W30, male, married, large farm, 2 children).

Having two jobs at harvest time, working night shifts or investing in the family farm are strategies of the male breadwinners to financially fulfill their families. It is interesting to note that in most of the cases, the breadwinners had small children or newborns, a situation that more narrowly prevented their partners from working outside the house.

Other Family Dynamics

The Oldest Daughter: Learning Gender

Conversations with the district's representatives, local leaders, and NGO's representative pointed out that for them one of the biggest family impacts of the industrial agriculture in Ica is the overwork that older daughters face in homes of asparagus agricultural workers. In this line, female workers point out that their older daughters perform many of the household chores under their supervision. Cleaning duties, washing clothes, preparing food, supervising their younger siblings to get up, change, and taking them to school are among the most common activities that older daughters perform at home.

Daughters involvement in domestic chores are perceived by female workers as learning lessons they give to their children. Women workers have repeatedly stressed that it is important to teach children to be self-sufficient and to do the domestic chores. For female workers, this learning process has to start when their children are young. Thus, mothers first teach their daughters to perform activities related to their own personal care and grooming, such as changing themselves, and then starting with washing their own clothes and making beds. When daughters enter to adolescence, daughters begin to perform tasks for the whole family, such as preparing food, washing clothes, cleaning the house and taking care of their younger siblings. As Irene pointed out:

Now it is softer, because my daughter is already older. Of course, before my daughter was very young before, then I had to wash diapers. Now I do not, it is becoming softer. I do not wash a lot of clothes, rather I'm telling her to wash her underwear, now she is washing her underwear. Before, I just to all the laundry, sine now my daughter is eleven I'm teaching her to make more [chores]. [Making] rice, I'm teaching her. In contrast, when she was younger there I did get tired a lot because I had to come to cook, to wash her clothes, not now because I am already teaching her. (W08, female, medium farm, separated, 5 children)

Despite female workers' discourses highlighting the importance of teaching their children to perform chores at home, the involvement of the oldest son -or sons in general- in domestic labor is not portrayed as an essential help for workers' when carrying out household chores or taking care of their little siblings. On the contrary, the oldest brother is portrayed for some workers, as problematic since they do not help and generate more work. As Irene stated "she [my daughter] used to leave the house clean before leaving [home]. She cleaned for me, left everything clean, and I came just to cook. Not now, my son leaves and he leaves everything, the bathroom dirty, he leaves only mud" (W04, female, small farm, separated, 2 children). Here it is interesting to note that even when workers have a gender equality discourse when talking about the importance of father's participation in household labor -by women workers claiming that their

husband helps them or male workers that they do help. In the case of the oldest brother, workers report that their participation is minimal when it involves household chores.

Furthermore, a contradictory discourse exists regarding the importance of teaching children to perform household work since according to the worker themselves, the oldest son does appear to help or have the willingness to help in the house.

Strong ties: Kin-support and the Commodification of Childcare

The Grandmother

As mentioned in Chapter 5, the grandmother (or mother in law) appears as an important source of support for asparagus workers interviewed for this study.

The presence of the grandmother-or mother in law- appears to vary with the scale of production. In the small asparagus producing village, where there is a stronger communal tie, the grandmother (or the mother in law), appears to supersede female workers by taking care of their grandchildren. Living close by their parents or parents in law, workers working on small plots of the small asparagus village appear to have strong ties with their extended family, relying on kin-support not only to find employment, but to act as caregivers when working.

The activities performed by the grandmother or mother of the workers interviewed related primarily to childcare responsibilities and in a few cases to household domestic tasks such as preparing meals for the extended family. Grandmothers received their grandson or granddaughter before their kids go to work, feed them, take them to school and feed them again before their parents return home. For instance, as Estrella states “my mom sends it to [school for] me. In that part, my mother helps me and she sends her [my daughter] to school at 8 a.m.” (W06, female, small farm, living a part together, 1 children). Although the grandmother does not require

an economic compensation for their taking care of their grandchildren in the absence of the mother (or father), workers mentioned giving a small economic compensation to their mothers, which they call a “propina” [tip]. For example, Hernan pointed out that he gives his mother an economic compensation for taking care of his son. “Yes, sometimes she [my mother] ask for 50 soles. It's not that she asks me but sometimes I give her. Like ‘take Mamá’ because she's taking care of my son, I always give her me” (W29, male, small and large farm, married, 3 children). This tip can also be turned into gifts when the grandmother does not want to receive an economic contribution.

Although the grandfather does not appear as essential as in the case of the grandmother with respect of the childrearing responsibilities, the grandfather appears as an important source of help for female workers and specially for women who are separated, divorced or physically away from their partners. Grandfathers’ help is related to the economic support they given by allowing their kids to work with them on their own plots or by living in their houses. This however appears to be more recurrent in the small asparagus village.

Although thankful for their mothers’ support, a group of workers, male and female, pointed out that their mother is (parents) help raising their kinds resulted in losing their authority and responsibility over their own kids. Some workers, who worked on large farms outside of their place of residence, mentioned that due to the high numbers of hours and commitment required by large farms they missed the opportunity to raise their kids because their mothers were raising their kids. In other cases, when workers relied on their mother (parents) for help with their kids due to difficult circumstances, it ended up with the grandparents (mothers) taking the entire responsibility for their children, a situation that some workers regret since in two of the cases children lived with and called their grandparents parents. This is the case of Hernan, whose son has been raised by his mother after his first wife passed away. “My son, the second for my first marriage, live with my mother. (...) Because when his mother passed away, he was a newborn of

14 days and (...) he has been raised by my mother since he was born, he was used to my mother” (W29, male, small and large farm, married, 3 children).

The Commodification of Childcare: La Señora

In a different manner than the small asparagus producing village, female and male workers working at large asparagus farms reported leaving their children with who they call “la señora”. According to workers’ narratives, “la señora”, is someone in the neighborhood, a neighbor or even relative that watches kids in their house. “La señora” watches kids when parents are working, having a similar schedule to workers on large farms. In my field research, I identified two women that took care of kids in the large asparagus producing town but none in the small producing town. However, workers in both towns stated having experienced paid childcare services, especially when they do not have close family members living in their place of residence.

“La señora” receives kids in their house before workers leave for work (around 5-6 a.m.), changes their clothes, give them the snacks their parents bring them and watch them while their parents work. At noon, in the break time, the parents pick up the kids from “la señora” house to feed them and stay with them during the break time. Before going back to work, workers drop their kids to “la señora” at 1:30 -2 p.m. to pick them up after their shift is over. Workers take their kids to “la señora” usually during the harvest time but not during the off-season since they argue they do not have enough profits as day laborers to pay someone to watch their kids. It is important to point out that “la señora” watches in their house more than one child at the same time, becoming a kind of informal day care.

In a different manner than a grandmother or mother in law, for this service la señora charges parents from 40 to 50 soles per week [around 13 to 15 US dollars³¹]. Workers have different opinions of the services provided by la señora. Some of them (especially the ones with relatives living in the same town) prefer to rely on their family members since they consider that la señora cannot provide the same attention as a relative, however for some others “la señora” provided the possibility of leaving their children with someone else, allowing parents to work.

Chapter Summary

This chapter examined the gender and family dynamics of asparagus workers. To this end, the chapter explored two main themes: household’ dynamics and other family dynamics.

Regarding the couple dynamics, as can be seen in Figure 6-1, I developed four typologies of households in relation to the distribution of labor responsibilities outside and inside of the home.

³¹ Current exchange rate.

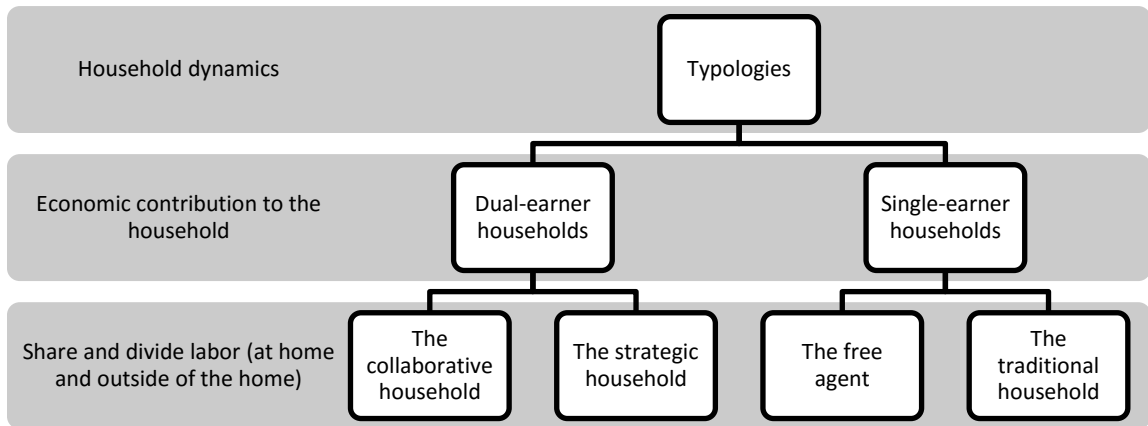


Figure 6-1. Household Dynamics

Among asparagus workers who were in a dual-earner households, two typologies of household were developed in relation to the couple's distribution of responsibilities and gender ideologies: the cooperative household and the strategic household. In contrast to workers in dual-earner household, another group of asparagus workers identified themselves as breadwinners or main providers. With clear gender differences, female asparagus workers who self-identified as main providers were single mothers or separated from their children parents while male asparagus workers were in a single earner relationship. In addition, this chapter examined the existence of other family members and ties that seem central in the life of asparagus workers such as the oldest daughter, the grandmother and La señora.

Chapter 7: Institutional Responses to Asparagus Workers' Work and Family Dilemmas

Introduction

This final chapter seeks to understand institutional responses to the challenges that female and male asparagus workers face when trying to integrate their work with their household and caregiving responsibilities.

Regarding the methodology, more than 30 face-to-face interviews were conducted in the Ica Region between November 2015 and January 2016. The interviews drew information from the following people: small asparagus producers, producer organizations, regional and local governmental officials, local leaders, NGO's representatives, fair trade certifier, and informal childcare providers. Institutional responses were examined in relation to this study's inquiries about work-life demands and findings related to: i) material and working conditions, ii) domestic labor and caregiving responsibilities and iii) gender and family dynamics.

Material and Working Conditions

Observations in the asparagus-producing villages and data gathered through asparagus workers and key informants have enabled me to identify a set of initiatives developed by the district municipality, non-profit organizations, and asparagus farms. Such initiatives have the goal of improving the living and material conditions of the resident's districts and villages included in this study.

Basic Needs

By 2007 only one third of the district's population had access to water and drainage public networks inside their houses (Municipalidad, 2015, p.49). More importantly, the access to water sources was restricted to two or three times per week for at least 60 percent of the district population (p.49). More than 50 percent of the district population used latrines (p.50). Electricity is the basic service which the population had relatively more access to, with at least three quarters of the population utilizing this service (p. 51).

The district's residents and municipal officials identified the non-access to these three basic services as one of the main problems of its communities. Paradoxically, despite the fact that the Ica Region and the district have the lowest poverty rates in the country³² relative to the country average, the lack of access to basic services in education and health situates some of the district's population in conditions of dire poverty. According to the Concerted Development Plan 2015-2016:

One of the most serious problems is given by the lack of access to basic services (water, drainage and electricity), important sectors of the population, lack of access that added to the various shortcomings and limitations that affect the conditions of health and education, place these populations below the poverty line (Municipalidad, 2015, p.4).

The assessment of the district municipality officials regarding the lack of basic services was informed through the Census Data and data gathered through participatory sessions with the district's residents. The report's findings follow in line with the data gathered through this study's observations and interviews with asparagus workers and key informants. For instance, in the two

³² The concept of "monetary poverty", used by National Institute of Statistics and Informatics of Peru (INEI), refers to populations who "have a spending level lower than the cost of the basic food basket composed of food and non-food" (INEI, 2016, p. 43). By 2015, this was established as 315 soles [around 107 US dollars at current exchange rate] (p.39). The population living in monetary poverty is declining compared to previous years, with the national average of monetary poverty having decreased from 33.5 percent in 2009 to 21.77 percent in 2014 (p.44). At the national level, Ica has the lowest rate of poverty incidence, which range from 3.22 percent to 6.70 percent (p.46).

asparagus producing villages where field research was conducted, residents had no formal access to three basic needs of running water, sewage and electricity. Access to public networks of water and drainage were most problematic. In this sense, the two towns appear to have lower access to basic services compared to the national and regional averages but are in more agreement with the district rates.

In the case of the small asparagus-producing village, the residents have formal access to power lines and water connections, but not public sewer connections that can run from the resident's home. According to local leaders, the water connections were constructed mainly by the village's residents more than 20 years ago, with some support of the district municipality. As the local leader stated:

Well, I've held a position in the drinking water's committee to bring drinking water to the area because we did not have water in those times. We had to bring water from far away, before it was loaded in donkeys. From faraway we brought buckets with water, until there was the idea of a peeler who said that why we did not put pipes? And we brought water by pipes to our town? Well, it was also an option, an idea that also began to work, bringing water from far away. We asked for support from the municipality, other people and they supported us with pipe and labor. (K 36, Community Leader)

This process, initiated and co-founded by the village's residents, allowed the residents to have "piped water, potable, water to drink" (K 36, Community Leader). Nowadays, the problems faced by the town's residents regarding water access relate to the restriction of the services, which only runs during certain hours two times per week. As the village leader stated, "We have water twice a week, we have to keep our water in containers to have water to drink [during] the days, for personal cleanliness. We have to keep our water" (K36, Community Leader). Despite this access to public water networks, the residents still do not have access to public drainage networks. Most asparagus workers interviewed in this town stated that although do they have toilets in their houses, their toilets are not connected to a public connection since the public drainage network is nonexistent in their village.

On the other hand, in the large asparagus-producing village, the access to these three basic facilities appears to be more limited than in the case of the small asparagus-producing village. Although local leaders and workers reported that the villages have access to two basic services -electricity and running water-, this access is not through public networks but through private arrangements with the asparagus farms located in the village. It is interesting to note that some of the large asparagus farms located in the village privately provide electricity and water to the village's residents through community agreement.

Yes, they [asparagus farms] send us water. I also had the role of leader here in the community, we manage to endow ourselves with water, we delayed a lot of time, but they did provide us with water, they send us water, they give us free electricity (...). They have, they have a line of water for pipes underground, they send us water for pipes for each village, one hour for every three days a week, one hour, and that we do for our reservoirs will be filled and there equitably distribute for each of our villages. (K14, Community Leader)

In this sense, one of the benefits that the community encounters due to its proximity to agricultural firms is access to running water in their households and electricity. According to the leaders of the large asparagus-producing village and asparagus workers, the water provided by the agricultural firms located in the village runs three times per week and it is not adequate for water consumption being used to carry out domestic chores such as cleaning and laundry. For water consumption, the district municipality provide potable water by sending water trucks to the village.

Similar to the small producing village, there is no access to formal connections to public sewers in this village. According to informal conversations with community leaders, the village expects to finalize a formal agreement with the district municipality to execute the development of electricity and sanitation projects. In this manner, the village seeks to resolve the limited access to basic facilities and the village's dependency on the large asparagus firms. In the same line, municipality officials stated in informal conversation that one of the priorities of the current

administration is to develop infrastructure projects in the district and specifically prioritize the development of water and drainage networks. These observations coincide with the Concerted Development Plan 2016-2021, which states that there is a “deficit in basic services (water, sewage and electricity), which limit[s] the improvement of the quality of life of the population” and therefore it is at the top of the district’s list of problems and priorities (Municipalidad, 2015, p.77).

The push for public investment projects, with priority given to sanitation projects, is part of the national agenda to address the national infrastructure gap. As an indication of this, the current Peruvian President Pedro Pablo Kuczynski stated in his inauguration speech that the main goal by the end of his term in 2021 (the year of the country’s independence bicentennial) is that Peruvian households have universal access to basic services such water and drainage. As the President Kuczynski stated:

In 2021, the year of the Bicentennial, all Peruvians must have access to quality drinking water and drain 24 hours. But I have to be realistic, public investment programs take time and I think if we do it in seven years that will be a great achievement. I invite this Parliament, to the whole of Peru, to proclaim a State policy for sanitation and health in all the homes of Peru. I know what the cost means, but I also know what it means in welfare, quality of life, impact on health and savings in the pockets of the poorest. The program will generate tremendous activity in construction and in the same service, which will generate hundreds of thousands of jobs. We will look for the best technological alternatives run by the State, to reach everyone, as soon as possible. (2016, July 28)

More Water for the Asparagus than for the Workers

The lack of access to basic services such as running water needs to be put in the context of water scarcity in the Region of Ica and the high quantity of water this crop demands. As stated in Chapter 2, despite the allegation of labor exploitation made against the asparagus industry -and the NTAEs in general- in this region, different studies have denounced the latent environmental

impact of the development of NTAEs in the region. Moreover, for different organizations the water crisis in the Region is leading to an environmental conflict between residents and agroindustry firms.

Although this conflict was not captured in the field research, the situation of water scarcity was indeed captured in the interviews with workers when identifying water collections as one of their domestic chores and in the interviews with key informants and local authorities. Frequent visits to the asparagus producing villages allowed me to observe water tanks placed on the roof tops of the houses as well as water containers next to resident's houses as strategies implemented by village's resident to have, collect and secure water. When attending the workshop "Logros y retos de la agro-exportación para el desarrollo económico y social de Ica al 2020" [Achievements and challenges of agro-export for the economic and social development of Ica by 2020], the water crisis in the region of Ica was addressed as a main concern by governmental officials and representatives of the business sector when discussing the future of NTAEs – or any economic activity- in the region.

Social Programs and National Regulations

Along with the demand for closing the infrastructure gap and offering universal access to basic services, the Peruvian administration between 2011-2016 pushed for the development of social programs. The aim in doing so was to improve the living conditions of populations living in poverty and thereby reduce the national poverty rates. In the Ica Region (due to its classification as the region with lowest poverty rates) not all the social programs implemented by the national government are in place. Some programs, however, are being implemented toward families living in poverty at the district and village level.

Through talks with district municipality officers, worker interviews and field observations, I identified at least three implemented social programs from which the asparagus workers might have access or might have the possibility of being beneficiaries. Among them are i) My Own Roof Program [Programa Mi Techo Propio]; ii) The Glass of Milk Program [Programa Vaso de Leche]; and iii) the Childcare Services [Cuna Mas]. The below sections outline each program and its impact in relation to the asparagus workers.

Housing Projects: Techo Propio [Own Roof]

Most workers interviewed reported to either have been or currently being beneficiaries of My Own Roof, a governmental program that funds the construction of beneficiaries' first house. According to asparagus workers' experiences, this program funds the construction of one cement module for Ica residents who did not own a house previously. The cement module includes the living-dining room space, one bathroom and one bedroom. The beneficiary must fulfill the requirements, present the proper documentation and make a payment. Once approved, the government will fund an amount to cover the cost of the house, which is directly spent through construction firms approved by the government. According to workers, they are able to choose the design and type of modules among three options and have the supervision and advice of an engineer through the process. The house's foundation can be upgraded by the beneficiaries, who are financially responsible for this upgrading. Furthermore, the single module can be designed to have a second floor if the owner decides to upgrade it in the future.

The interviewed asparagus workers see having a house built on concrete, instead of one constructed from canes or mud bricks, as a dream come true, as well as something to be proud of.

I thank God enough that they have made me my little house, if not how I would be living in that material. I lived in cane, that door, those windows that are there, it is from my old

house, from my living room my little house came out. (W03, male, small farm, married, 3 children).

Important to note is that the desire for having a house made of concrete materials acquires more relevance in the context of the Ica Region. This region has a history of earthquakes that have severely impacted the lives of its residents and the housing conditions. As an illustration, the Ica region in 2007 was at the epicenter of a magnitude 7.2 earthquake. More than 550 people died and over “46,000 houses” were destroyed. As part of the reconstruction process, more than “68,147 of houses were constructed” by 2016 through the different programs of the Ministerio de Vivienda y Construcción, y Saneamiento (Más de 68,000, 20016, August 15). Specifically, “the Techo Propio program disbursed 64,426 Housing Family Bonus in the Ica Region” (Más de 68, 00, August 15, 2016). These housing projects were developed in parallel with other infrastructure programs such as the “improvement of roads, sidewalks, communal centers, sports slabs”, as well as the delivery of “title deeds” (Más de 68, 00, August 15, 2016).

Asparagus workers showed a sense of pride towards their new module homes, not only as it related to their property rights but also to the quality of the materials used in the construction and to their own economic contribution to the building process. In order to have better foundations or materials, workers reported paying extra for an upgrade or adding new building attachments to the basic module offered by the program. The upgrade often required the establishment of credit loans in local banks as some workers pointed out:

No, they only make you your module and they paint your front, just your floor and your ceiling. Everything that is finished [tarrajead] inside, all that [work] we did it. We take out a loan between the two. Sometimes, more like in the afternoons, as I say, sometimes one comes out of my work as security guard. In other words, my work as security guard here has already been to put the tiles [bathrooms], the other week (...) was to do my sidewalk, the other week that I charged was already to put my porch [ramaditas], like that. (W03, male, small farm, married, 3 children)

My friend told me ‘you have to reinforce it [the foundations] because ‘Techo Propio [Own Roof] are going to put you thin steal [rebar]’ (...) To reinforce it [the foundations] (so that is for two floors at least), [I] had to get a loan. I got a loan of 2000 [soles] and that was why

and now I also want to get another loan forward. (W08, female, medium farm, separated, 5 children)

On the one hand, workers perceive access to credit positively. This can be directly related to their status as agricultural workers since they have the means to use economic income as collateral to obtain a loan. To put it simply, their work on asparagus farms, especially on large farms, allows them to be credit worthy and have access to credit. On the other hand, as I examined in previous chapters, bank loans also appear to be a source of “headaches” and “worries” for the asparagus workers, who feel the pressure of having monthly payments. Being unable able to make their monthly payments worries asparagus workers, considering that sometimes they get sick and are unable to fulfill their daily responsibilities. As can be expected, the access to formal bank loans creates a situation wherein workers are eager to work on asparagus farms. The employment by asparagus farms therefore functions in two ways: it allows one to have access to loans, but simultaneously produces the need to continue working and even increase one’s workloads in this type of industry, especially in the harvest season or later shifts to earn higher salaries.

The existence of housing projects in this study is not only related to governmental programs such as [Techo propio] but also to the work of non-profit organizations that were in the region at the occurrence of the 2007 earthquake. When asking asparagus workers as well as key informants about the projects or institutions in the area, workers regularly mentioned the name of a local non-profit organization, which worked in the region from which one of its main projects they remembered was the construction of houses in the context of the earthquake.

Vaso de Leche [Glass of Milk]

Among other social programs, a small number of asparagus workers reported to be beneficiaries of the Glass of Milk Program [Programa del Vaso de Leche]. This is a national social program that gives a glass of milk to children of families who live in poverty. This program has a long tradition in Peru and works hand in hand with mothers who store, prepare and distribute milk in their communities. Among asparagus workers, this program does not appear to be as popular as Techo Propio [Own Roof], largely given its targeted focus on families living in extreme poverty. Some asparagus workers expressed their discomfort with the program and the idea of being part of this program. They deem it not necessary for them since they can afford to pay for milk for their kids.

The Minimum Wage

Raising the salaries, as examined in Chapter 4, is one of the demands of workers in relation with their labor conditions. This demand relates to the argument that the salary is not enough to afford the cost of living and does not counteract intense labor conditions and requirements. In the same fashion with asparagus agricultural wage laborers, key informants also mentioned that one way to improve the workers' lives was through incremental increases to workers' salaries.

Related to the sought-after salary increments, the Peruvian Government under the administration of the President Ollanta Humalana (2011-2016) raised the minimum wage when this study was in the finalization period of the data collection. Raising the minimum wage, a campaign promise of president Ollanta Humala when he was running for presidency, was a promise that was implemented three separate times under his administration. First, from 600 soles

[around 185 US dollars³³] to 675 soles [a round 208 US dollars³⁴] in 2012; second, from 675 to 750 soles [around 231 US dollars³⁵] in 2013, and third from 750 to 850 soles [around 262 US dollars³⁶] in 2016 (Ollanta Humala, 2016, March 30). The minimum wage's incremental increase by 250 soles [around 77 US dollars³⁷] in a five-year period was a controversial measure. On the one hand, the working class supported this measure with the support of the national union. On the other hand, the measure faced opposition from the business sector due the anticipated impact it would have on production costs. Although this measure follows suit with workers' and unions' demands for higher salaries, the Central de Trabajadores del Peru (CGTP) (the national union) considered the last increase of the minimum wage inadequate since it did not reach the basket of food. The CGPT demanded the establishment of minimum wage as 1500 by 2017 [around 477 US dollars³⁸] (CGTP, 2016, September 08).

Regarding this policy's impact on the asparagus workers' working conditions, workers presented a similar discourse to the working class that pushed for an increment to workers' salaries. Workers stated multiple times the need for a salary that was better adjusted to their economic needs and costs of living. Workers expressed more satisfaction with the salary they earned during the harvesting season or by working on large asparagus farms. The salary from such activities can exceed 1000 soles [around 307 US dollars³⁹], which is superior to the current minimum wage.

Although the interviews were conducted before the minimum wage was raised in 2016, it can be expected that the increase will present benefits to asparagus workers who were earning a salary close to the previous minimum wage. This is specifically for asparagus workers who work

³³ Current exchange rate.

³⁴ Current exchange rate.

³⁵ Current exchange rate.

³⁶ Current exchange rate.

³⁷ Current exchange rate.

³⁸ Current exchange rate.

³⁹ Current exchange rate.

during the off-season, as day laborers or as part-time workers during the harvest season.

Indirectly, workers employed by small asparagus farms during the harvest time, who get paid in relation to the market price, may benefit from this measure if the market price also rises as a consequence of the national increase to minimum wage.

Labor Supply

A major institutional project in one of the study's villages was related to the development of projects that improve the productive and commercial capacities of small asparagus producers. Through coordinating efforts between the Ministry of Agriculture and various NGO's, small asparagus growers received benefits spanning from irrigation projects to commercialization capacity projects, enabling them to become one of the few small and medium producers to keep their land and commercialize their asparagus production in the region. Although the direct benefits of these projects are focused towards small/medium asparagus producers, the increased commercialization capacity of small asparagus farms creates a demand for labor supply in the village. The possibility of providing labor for the village's residents on the producers' own terms and not by the constraint of large asparagus farms is, for small producers who at one time were also asparagus wage laborers, one of the major benefits of small and medium-sized agriculture. Second, the indirect economic impact to the community from asparagus commercialization is another benefit. Engagement in projects with the Ministry of Agriculture and local NGOs allow access to innovations like drip technology, which allows small holders to retain their land and participate in industrial agriculture. Furthermore, having the capacity to negotiate the price of their product as an association and not be at the mercy of the buyer provides for both physical and tacit benefits of empowerment. Although small producers claimed an inability to compete with large farms to secure formal contracts and therefore social benefits and rights, small asparagus

producers considered their salaries as competitive with the market and that the treatment they provided to their workers (who are their family members, relatives or neighbors) are more horizontal to workers. Finally, as part of their economic activities and institutional agreements, small producers also engage in fair trade agreements, which demand from them a greater degree of social responsibility as well as the requirement that these growers follow certain standards such as not hiring children and enforcing safety conditions on their farms regarding pesticide.

Domestic and Caregiving Responsibilities

In this section, I have examined the institutional arrangements put in place to address the challenges of asparagus workers, who have children of 12 years or under, to fulfill their parental and maternal responsibilities. As examined in Chapter 5, institutional support does not extend into the area of childcare. In the absence of adequate institutional support workers must continue to develop strategies to meet the challenge of finding someone else take care of their kids while they are at work. Given the fact that asparagus workers' shifts usually start at early hours in the morning –with 7 a.m. being the latest start-- workers cannot count on school alone to leave their kids when they are working. They instead need to make different arrangements to leave their kids under someone's supervision.

It was interesting that at the moment of the interview none of the workers interviewed refer to using formal childcare services provided by the national government or by the asparagus farms where they work. Furthermore, the field research was conducted in a major asparagus producing area, where there is a high demand for employees, and at the time that the interviews were conducted did not provide formal childcare services for children under three years old. In both towns, there were pre-schools for kids over three years old and primary school, which goes until 12 years old. As examined previously, workers interviewed employ family networks to

fulfill this necessity and secure someone in their family to supervise and take care of their children while they are working. However, when workers cannot rely on the kinship network, workers employed the services of informal childcare providers in their town of residence.

Once Upon a Time

Another key point regarding the access to childcare services, informal or formal, relates to workers' discourse in remembering a time in which there were childcare services established in their places of residence. Among them there are Cuna mas, a governmental service, and private childcare service provided for asparagus farms.

Asparagus Farms' Childcare

Community leaders, asparagus workers and childcare providers remembered the existence (without clarifying when exactly) of childcare services provided by some of the large asparagus farms located in their village of residence. According to local leaders, the childcare service provided a high-quality service since it had highly qualified staff of professional educators and auxiliaries in charge of taking care of children. Although leaders stated that this was a great service offered by asparagus farms, the childcare only operated for a short span of time and was closed down unexpectedly. Leaders stated that they did not know the reasons behind the closure of the childcare facility. However, some interviewees speculated that there were rumors that the closure of the childcare was related to companies' fear of facing liability issues in case a child faced sicknesses or suffered any type of accidents under their care.

To respond to the lack of childcare services in the large asparagus-producing village, workers hired the services of women residents of the village. One of the residents interviewed

stated that she started accepting kids and taking care of them due to the demand of their neighbors who were employed full time by large asparagus farms. At the moment of field research, the caretaker not only received offers from asparagus laborers or town residents to accept their kids but she had also received the offer from one asparagus farm to hire her service and take other workers' kids under her care. Although the farm does not want to open childcare services, it is willing to pay her to take care of their employees' children.

Cuna Mas

Cuna Más is a childcare service provided by the government to address childcare needs of families who have children between zero to three years old. This service opens from 8 a.m. to noon and is funded by the Peruvian government. It is important to note that this social program is oriented to families living in poverty and therefore has a large presence in regions with the highest rates of poverty, not in the Ica region. According to the municipality official, there are Cuna Mas programs in the district.

The service, although present in the district, does not appear to be an option for asparagus workers interviewed since, first, it was not implemented in the towns where the majority of worker interviewees lived. Second, workers considered that the service was not adjusted to their daily schedule. In both asparagus-producing villages, workers and leaders mentioned that Cuna Mas was implemented but closed because the schedule did not fit the needs of asparagus workers and because it was very difficult to find a person who wanted to work as the childcare provider in the two towns. According to community leaders and workers, the childcare providers in Cuna Mas are local mothers who received a stipend for their work. This stipend, however, is seen by

asparagus worker interviewees as a very low wage in comparison to their salary on the asparagus farm. Therefore, it is not considered as a viable job option. By the time I was leaving the town, one childcare service was about to open up in the small asparagus-producing town.

Gender and Family Dynamics

Municipal Defender of Children and Adolescents

Regarding the institutional support for asparagus workers' concerns and challenges, I observed several different offices at the municipality level that work on children and family-related issues. Among them, we identified the *Defensoría Municipal del Niño, Niña y Adolescente* – DEMUNA [Municipal Defender of Children and Adolescents], psychological support and programs implemented by the municipal police.

Child Support Agreements

The DEMUNA is a service provided by the National System of Comprehensive Child and Adolescent Care which functions at Peruvian municipalities with the aim of defending and protecting the rights of children and adolescents. Among its function, the DEMUNAs were granted the function of carrying out extrajudicial proceeding or mediation by the Ministry of Women and manage cases regarding child support, visitation regimens and custody. As the representative of the Municipal's DEMUNA described "the work that is done [here], as I said [is] safeguard the rights of children and adolescents. The reconcilable materials are; child support, visitations and custody" (K8, DEMUNA's representative).

As examined in the chapter 6, women asparagus workers in single parent households pointed out the existence of current child support agreements between themselves and the father of their children. Some women workers also pointed out having lawyers or access to legal aid to open or reopen their child support cases. Female workers stated using the services of DEMUNA to assist with their child support agreement cases. It is interesting to note that among workers, child support is not only common but institutionalized among workers who are separated from their children's parents.

DEMUNA in this sense appears to have an important presence that frames the parental obligations of parents who no longer live with their children. It is interesting to note that the district municipality through their municipal police started a program in coordination with districts' agricultural firms to enforce the payment of child support among agricultural workers. This program appears to work in coordination with the DEMUNA which provides the list of fathers who are failing to pay child support, the police municipality which gives the information to agricultural firms which in turn matches the municipality list with their employee list to identify workers who are failing to pay their child support cases. This information is then returned back to the municipal police. According to the public safety officer, by 2016 the municipality was able to identify at least seven agricultural workers that had initially failed to pay child support and that the municipality then made them pay. Beyond the institutional support provided through the municipality services to enforce the payment of child support by agricultural workers, the police municipality also dealt with situations of domestic violence among agricultural workers. According to the municipality public safety officer, families in which the father or mother work in agricultural or processing farms encountered situations of domestic family violence that demanded the presence of its unit. For the public safety officer, the main reason for domestic violence among families related to the demand of female partners for their male partner's salary. According to the police officer, on payday, agricultural

workers have the habit of sharing drinks with their friends after receiving their salary, a situation which creates a negative response by their female partner who will reprimand their partners for spending their salaries and will demand the salaries. This situation will trigger domestic violence among partners, which requires the intervention of police municipality. According to the public safety officer:

Family violence is mostly for that reason, family violence is for that. In 90 percent, it is because of the carelessness of the husband to the wife, because he is going to drink the Saturdays, or because he rested on Saturday and went to drink (...) The highest rate [of family violence] is when the woman works, the man works and he does not contribute to the home. He is going to spend his Sundays, long holidays and on Monday he is no longer with any sol [Peruvian currency] in his pocket, and the woman at the moment of claiming him, begins the family violence, the aggression.
(K29, Public Safety Officer)

Domestic Violence

The existence of domestic violence among families whose members work in agricultural jobs was also considered a reality by the district municipality's psychologist. For the psychologist, the situations of domestic violence exceed the couple and include the children. For the psychologist, the labor intensity of work on agricultural farms or processing plants (expressed in the lack of time and tiredness) led parents with short-term patience towards their children to be in situations of domestic violence. In contrast to the open discussion of child support agreements by both workers and key informants, the existence of domestic violence was not addressed by workers in the interviews but was a main issue for municipality officials who see domestic violence as one of the impacts of the agricultural industry on the family dynamic.

Beyond the existence of domestic violence as an indirect impact on agricultural workers' families, key informants have concerns for the impacts that agricultural workers' work intensities have on the everyday lives of their children. Municipality officials, as well as NGO officers,

consider that the high commitment of fathers and mothers to the agricultural industry might be negatively impacting family cohesion since children have to face the absence of their parents, most particularly of their mother.

In contrast to workers' narratives, which indicate that fathers are the one who have less time to spend with their children, key informants' narratives express a concern for the females' participation in the agricultural labor market. The absence of mothers in the household is observed as negative since the mothers have a central role in families. Their labor engagement is seen as a source of abandonment of their families. Furthermore, the lack of children's supervision by mothers is seen to generate physical and moral risks to children. In a similar manner, mothers' engagement in agricultural labor might have negative impacts on the children vis-à-vis the distribution of household labor. This is primarily through the oldest daughter who might be the one substituting for the mother worker and carrying out the majority of household labor and maternal responsibilities. According to NGO officials, this overwork can have an impact on the oldest daughter's education by preventing her from attending school or performing educational activities.

Safety

When engaging in conversations with the district major, I asked about institutional programs implemented to respond to workers' family demands. The mayor responded that one of the programs implemented was the establishment of a security patrol by the municipal police.

To respond to family's demand for security that protects children, the municipality implemented a circuit of police patrol in the district's village. While walking in the villages, I found it interesting to observe at few times the coming and going of the municipality police

patrolling the village. Without fully understanding the function of the municipality police patrol in the villages and its connection to asparagus workers' family needs, when talking to asparagus workers about their institutional needs and demands, one of the parents' concerns regarding their family's wellbeing was related to their children's safety when they are working. Although workers stated that they made arrangements to leave their kids with their relatives or informal childcare providers, workers worry for their children's safety when they go and come to school by themselves or happen to be by themselves without adult supervision.

Furthermore, when attending a village meeting to discuss the village plans and concerns, the security aspect of the discussion took almost the whole meeting, even though there were other matters on the agenda, such as the implementation of the childcare services in the village. Community leaders proposed the construction of a security checkpoint at the entrance of one of the small asparagus-producing villages alongside hiring a security guard to control the checkpoint. The residents consider that their asparagus production first increased the presence of non-residents who come to the town by big truck to buy asparagus directly from asparagus producers. Second, this attracts the presence of robbers, who seek to cut asparagus at night and sell it at the market price. Residents expressed their concerns that non-residents walk around in the village when they were not present and were at work. In this sense, workers' concern for safety appears to be linked to the municipality patrolling the district villages as a security measure.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presents an overview of the institutional responses implemented to address the work-family dilemmas of asparagus workers. Organized in the three central themes of this dissertation, this chapter examines institutional responses in relation to material and working

conditions, domestic and caregiving responsibilities, and gender and family dynamics.

Research findings suggest that the implementation of projects that sought to impact the life of asparagus workers in this study relate mostly to the implementation of initiatives or projects (formal or informal) that seek to improve the living conditions of asparagus workers such as the implementation of sanitation, electrification, running water and housing projects. Moreover, the situation of restricted access to water for asparagus producing villages residents relates to a larger conversation regarding water depletion and scarcity in the context of the development of the NATEs in the region of Ica. Regarding the working conditions, the demands for higher salaries echo the national debate on the increase in the minimum living wage although workers demand for higher salaries will not necessarily be met with the increment of the national minimum wage. Additionally, productive programs implemented at the village appears to have had positive impacts for the development of small asparagus producer and the generation of employment. However, it is not clear what the impact of working conditions is on asparagus wage laborers. Among these programs the housing programs appear to be the most successful for workers interviewed.

The institutional responses to the challenges asparagus workers face to reconcile their labor demands at asparagus farms and at home appear to be nonexistent or disconnected from worker's needs. For instance, Chapters 5 and 6 described in depth the complex set or arrangements and strategies asparagus workers put in place to fulfill their labor responsibilities at work and home. These arrangements underscore the need for childcare facilities in the form of formal schooling, kin-support or informal childcare services. The existence of childcare facilities that function on schedule that are incompatible with the agricultural working shifts are an example of this disconnect between the workers' needs and the institutional support available to them. Moreover, the lack of childcare services that are compatible with the work shifts of

asparagus workers leads them to seek private and informal strategies to secure childcare support when working at asparagus farms.

Finally, the interviews with key informants reveal unexplored subjects regarding the family dynamics of agricultural workers in a context of labor intensity and lower salaries. In addition, a public officer of the district municipality raised concerns regarding domestic violence, lack of supervision to the children and public safety.

Chapter 8: Discussion and Conclusions

Introduction

This final chapter presents a general conclusion to the four research questions guiding this dissertation. First, I will re-state the main goals and research questions presented in the problem statement. Second, I will present a summary of the most relevant findings of each research question and link them with the scholarly work developed in the United States and in Peru, emphasizing the places in which this study reinforces or challenges previous findings and concepts discussed in the literature. Finally, I will present the limitations of the research, and identify areas where the dissertations findings suggest a need for future lines of research.

By conducting an in-depth analysis of the labor dynamics outside and inside of the home of female and male workers employed in Ica's asparagus industry, this dissertation examines the intersection of labor, gender, family dynamics and institutional responses within the NTAEs in the Global South context. As stated previously, this dissertation sought to reach two main goals: i) Understand the everyday lives of asparagus wage workers within the context of paid work at agricultural farms and housework through assessing working conditions, household responsibilities, gender and family dynamics; and ii) identify the strategies developed in response to work-family dilemmas by interested parties.

Research Question N.1.

The first research question of this dissertation sought to understand:

How do agricultural workers experience the labor organization and conditions when working at asparagus farms? What are the gender differences for female and male agricultural workers in such farms?

Before presenting the main findings related to this question, it is important to note that the participation of agricultural wage workers in the asparagus industry and the characteristic of their labor organization and working conditions must be understood in the context of the development of the agricultural industrial complex (de Janvry and LeVeen, 1986). The data collected mainly in two villages dedicated to the production of asparagus confirms the existence of an industrial production of asparagus for export, production which demands a large contingent of agricultural workers. The data collection in these major asparagus-producing villages brings to light processes of modernization and industrialization of agriculture in the Global South, as well as describes the situation of asparagus agricultural wage workers as part of the proletarianization of the peasantry examined by scholars such as de Janvry and Leven.

The selection of two asparagus-producing villages with different scales of production revealed the different nuances of labor organization and in the working conditions of the asparagus agroindustry complex in the region of Ica, with extensive agriculture under the organization of large-scale agricultural firms on one hand, and small-scale asparagus production under the organization of small asparagus growers, and former peasants on the other.

Regarding the characteristic of the workers, asparagus workers in this study primarily worked as agricultural wage workers of small, medium and large asparagus farms throughout 2015. With one exception, the asparagus workers were permanent residents in the region of Ica and the asparagus districts where the research was conducted. The workers' status as permanent residents in the area appears to be key to their access to the asparagus labor market, an industry characterized by its high demand for labor. The working experience in a particular labor organization and the conditions of this group of workers may not reflect the experiences of

migrant workers for instance, who do not live permanently in Ica and only migrate to this region in the harvest time. In this sense, I argue that due to the proximity to major centers of asparagus production in the region (and therefore nationally and globally) the workers included in this study are not simply employed in asparagus farms but that their residence, occupation, family situations, and access to land are largely defined (and revolve around) the development of the asparagus agricultural complex in Ica, Peru.

As pointed out in Chapter 2, agricultural wage workers in this dissertation are understood in relation to their contractual relationships, as mediated by salary, with the owners of the asparagus farms in which they are employed. For these workers, their main source of income is the salary they received for the agricultural work they performed on someone else's asparagus farms.

By observing the differences of employment by scales of production, this dissertation contributes to examining different nuances of the agricultural wage laborer, whose contract relations and access to land navigates the spectrum of the large agricultural complex and small-scale agriculture.

As an illustration, this study's finding reveals that agricultural wage workers employed on small farms work more often than not for relatives of members of their community. This situation appears to bring subtle differences for the labor organization and working conditions experienced by workers employed at large asparagus farm. On large scale farms no evidence exists other than the contractual relationship between the owner of the farm and the agricultural worker. For instance, asparagus wage workers employed on small and medium asparagus farms reported to having indirect access to land through close ties with relatives or community members. This indirect access allows them to i) have a secondary income when managing or inheriting their relative's land, even if it is a very small amount of land; ii) have access to employment by being employed by family members; and iii) enjoy the benefits of land ownership

such as receiving harvesting profits as well as having horizontal relations with their employees, who are family or community members.

It is important to note the gender differences as it pertains to access to land, with female asparagus workers having less access to land than their male counterparts, as well as fewer opportunities to produce or manage their relatives' land. Such research findings appear to align with previous research around the globe in general and in Latin America particularly (Deere and León, 2001). In the case of female workers, the benefits of their indirect access to land directly relates to their access to employment because they have been employed by their relatives.

The asparagus production is organized by seasons of production and commercialization to the Global North, which causes fluctuations in the demand for labor, labor activities and the type of employment available. The seasonal organization of the production and commercialization of the asparagus industry means that the labor activities and labor demands are constantly changing. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the shifting nature of this industry resonates with a global process of labor flexibilization in the NTAEs and other economic industries at the 21th century.

Research findings suggest that the notions of temporary and flexible labor appear to be limited in understanding asparagus workers' history of employment and employment status in this study.

I argue that despite the characterization by the literature and national legislation of the industry's categorization of employment as seasonal and asparagus wage workers as temporary labor force, the majority of workers in this study sample find themselves working constantly in the asparagus industry. For instance, workers report that because of the continuous rotation among asparagus farms, they have consistently worked throughout much of 2015 as they have in previous years. It is important to note that the use of categories of temporary and permanent workers do reflect in part the seasonal nature of asparagus production and agricultural production

in general. However, a strict distinction of both categories (temporary and permanent) might be problematic when defining the employment status of this contingent of workers. In this sense, although asparagus workers labor contracts (informal or formal) defined them as temporary workforce, my research findings suggest that this characterization might obscure workers' continuous commitment to the industry. More importantly, it can have negatives outcomes when assessing workers' labor rights and benefits.

Research findings suggest that workers' status as temporary in juxtaposition with their ongoing commitment to the industry might lead to labor informality, instability and flexibility. This can limit workers' access to labor benefits and labor rights in both small-medium and large-scale agriculture. For instance, large firms use the laws related to temporary employment to their advantage. The development of informal contracts in small-scale production and the implementation of Law 27360 in large-scale production are examples of the limitations placed on workers' benefits that can result from the mischaracterization of workers' status.

As discussed in Chapter 2, empirical studies conducted in Peru in the last decade have discussed in depth the arguments for and against the existence of Law 27360, which established a parallel labor regimen for industrial agricultural workers as a way to formalize the employment of temporary workers. Critics of the law denounced this labor regimen due the reduction of labor benefits and labor rights for agricultural workers due their temporary employment but not necessarily challenging the notion of temporary work.

In this regard, I argue that the notions of temporal and permanent employment in agriculture production need to be revisited. Research findings suggest that asparagus workers type of employment challenge the rigid notion of permanent employment, understood as an uninterrupted and exclusive labor relations with one asparagus farm. On the contrary, asparagus workers' labor relations in this dissertation exist on a continuum with constant relations with

employers through the year (and through the years) on the one hand and periods of intermittence in these labor relations on the other.

Moreover, I argue that the study might help to develop a new category of employment labor relations that might understand this relation as a continuum. In addition, this study can provide valuable information to policy makers that will allow them to first gain a better understanding of the differences and nuances of the labor relationships and statuses of workers employed in this industry, as in the case of the workers who are also permanent residents in the asparagus producing areas. Second, it will enable the development of a regulatory framework that is more aligned with this type of labor organization.

Regarding working conditions, the research findings suggest the existence of positive recognition by workers of the high labor demand in the asparagus industry that allows them and their families to be employed and obtain incomes around the national minimum wage. In this sense, the results are aligned with previous findings of high levels of employment availability that characterize the Ica region.

However, this dissertation's findings suggest that workers employed in asparagus farms are still subject to conditions of vulnerability, which previous studies about the industry also suggest (Marañón, 1993; Calisaya and Flores, 2006; Ferm, 2008; Moura, 2010; Flores Mego, 2011; Ruiz-Bravo & Castro, 2012). Among the critical concerns related to working conditions are the limited access and unavailability of benefits as a result of their categorization as temporary workers.

A second element connected to the vulnerability of employment is related to the producers' demand for high levels of commitment from workers, in terms of time (number of hours and days) and work intensity. Once again, despite the categorization of this employment as temporary, workers are demanded at harvest time to maintain steady jobs. This means working

seven days per week under stable schedules and performing physical work under extreme climate conditions that leads to physical wear.

Additionally, the research finds the existence of low levels of satisfaction with the salaries earned in the asparagus industry, despite the fact that this salary hovers around (and in harvest time, above) the national minimum wage. Workers in this study pointed out that their earnings are not commensurate with the intensity of the work performed on asparagus farms, as well as how these earnings do not allow them to cover their basic necessities. This corresponds with the empirical work about Peruvian agricultural workers and the discussion presented by Moura (2010) about the existence of a gap between the minimum wage and living wage, which for the author leads to agricultural workers to being defined as the working poor. The existence of low salaries in the asparagus industry in particular, and the country in general, can also be related to literature regarding the existence of the international division of labor, in which Global South nations act as suppliers of cheap labor (de Janvry and Leven, 1986). This access to cheap labor, is one of the comparative advantages to developed industries, such as the existence of NTAEs (Paske, 1996; Villachica & Toledo, 2003, p. 65; Meade, Baldwin, & Calvin, 2012).

Additionally, research findings reveal that working conditions differ depending on the scale of production of the farm and the gender of the worker.

Based on the narratives of workers, labor satisfaction relates to the type and scale of production. On the one hand, workers employed at small farms relate job satisfaction to the positive environment of their workplace, which they describe as featuring close labor relations between laborers and asparagus producers. Also noted is the considerable autonomy while doing their agricultural labor. On the other hand, asparagus laborers in large farms relate job satisfaction to the large amount of jobs provided by the asparagus farms in the region, as well as the salaries and benefits offered under formal contracts.

Empirical studies conducted in Peru regarding the labor organization of the asparagus industry point to the existence of a gender division of labor in both asparagus fields and processing plants (Calisaya and Flores, 2006; Ferm, 2008). In the same line, I found of a gender division of labor among asparagus workers. For instance, women work almost exclusively as asparagus cutters in contrast to men, who appear to have more employment options. The seasonal nature of the asparagus cutter's job increases the flexibility and instability of employment for women. Thus, more often than not, women hold less stable jobs and therefore have less access to labor benefits and rights. This situation may lead to the vulnerability of working conditions, as other authors studying industrial agriculture in Peru and Latin America have suggested (Soto Baquero & Kelin, 2012a; Soto Baquero & Kelin, 2012b).

Finally, I discuss the concept of disposable bodies developed by Melissa Wright (1999) when examining the workers' value in the *Maquilas* of Mexico. This notion appears to be helpful when examining the high demands imposed on asparagus workers in terms of working days and hours during harvest, as well as the physical demands faced under extreme weather conditions. Workers' characterization of labor within asparagus farms in relation to a lack of rest and extreme physical wear can be tied to the notion of disposable bodies. This is due to what the industry demands from its laborers, whose well-being appears to be subordinate to the industry needs. Despite the importance of this notion when analyzing the working conditions of asparagus workers, the notion of disposable bodies appears to take on new nuances when observing workers' perceptions about their own work. In this sense for example, workers appear to perceive their labor and participation in the industry as irreplaceable instead of disposable.

The notion of irreplaceability is derived from the understanding that the asparagus industry is dependent upon the existence of a stable and reliable contingent of workers. In this sense, the asparagus industry not only wears out workers but depends on them to function. High number of them working for many years in asparagus farms. More importantly, workers

acknowledge the central role of their labor by acknowledging the negative impacts for asparagus production if they miss a day of work. They also point out the lack of consistency between their earning salaries and the value of their labor. Finally, I argue that the use of irreplaceable workers can also highlight workers' own perceptions of the value of their labor participation and with that, overcome the victim approach as suggested by third world feminists such as Chandra Mohanty (2004).

Research Question N.2.

The second research question sought to understand the articulation of workers' daily routines between their household and family responsibilities as well as their job responsibilities at asparagus farms by looking at the workload and gender divisions of labor at home.

What are the everyday routines of asparagus workers in relation to the arrangements of their work outside and inside the home? What are the gender divisions of labor for female and male asparagus workers at home?

Research findings presented mainly in Chapter 2 reveal that the intensity of labor goes beyond the responsibilities of the farm and exists alongside the endless list of chores and childcare responsibilities to be carried out at home. In contrast to the labor on asparagus farms, which is fluctuating and characterized by constantly changing labor relations, the household labor and childcare responsibilities are described by workers as consistent throughout the year. Research findings suggest that workers' routines and the execution of domestic labor are intertwined with their working schedules in asparagus farms, which are organized by scale and season of production. Thus, in order to achieve an articulation between the work performed outside and inside of the household, workers develop high levels of organization, maximize the

use of their time, as well as employ a complex set of strategies and arrangements. My research findings suggest that female asparagus workers and asparagus workers in large asparagus farms working under split and overnight shifts experienced more rigid, longer routines when fulfilling domestic and caregiving responsibilities. Therefore, these workers experience more challenges to achieving a balance between their labor responsibilities outside and inside of the household.

Regarding the household labor, workers' workloads at home appear to intersect with their gender, marital status, partner's occupation and the age of their children.

Female asparagus workers have more responsibility at home, self-reporting in higher numbers than their male counterparts that they perform most chores related to their homes and their kids. The existence of higher workloads performed by women at home is consistent with other studies, both in the United States and in the Peruvian context (Hochschild and Machung, 1990, Sara-Lafosse, 2009, MIMDES-INEI, 2010). The in-depth study of the interlocking relationship between the daily routines at home and the work shifts at asparagus farms reveals the labor demands of men and women in the household. Women take on most of the bulk of household work. This finding can explain the preference of some women in our sample to work part-time shifts under informal contracts at small asparagus farms. In other words, the search for a balance between domestic and labor responsibilities can lead to the preference for particular shifts and places of work.

While men do not claim to have the main responsibility over domestic labor, the research findings suggest a growing egalitarian discourse among both female and male workers. Despite the existence of a clear gender division of labor in the household, with women holding more responsibilities, male workers do claim to help in domestic chores. The discourse of help used by asparagus male workers reveals changes in gender discourses as well as changes in new expressions of masculinities. However, the discourse of help can also be interpreted as a

continuation of a traditional division of gender roles, in which male domestic work is understood either in assistance or subsidization to that of the women.

Furthermore, workers' employment statuses and work shifts appear to be another factor when examining gender division of labor in the household. Female asparagus workers work part-time in small asparagus farms, which indicates that their decision of working less hours and by season are associated with their major involvement in the home. Female asparagus workers who are separated or divorced report having more responsibilities at home than those who are married or cohabitating. In general, asparagus workers also report having more help from their partners when both partners work on asparagus farms.

Research findings suggest the existence of a gender division of labor when carrying out domestic chores. Doing repairs, grocery shopping, taking care of the garden and animals, as well as collecting water appear to be the domestic choices of preference for male asparagus workers. Female asparagus workers, on the other hand, state involvement in every domestic sphere from managing the house to taking care of the children, especially when children are young.

Regarding the challenges workers face in making arrangements between their work and family responsibilities, this paper's findings suggest that time management appears to be one of the greatest challenges faced by workers, especially during the asparagus harvest season. The lack of time with family is considered by male workers and workers in large asparagus farm as one of the challenges that arise from their family and work arrangements (Grados Bueno, 2013).

In a different manner than the research on professional women suggests, the work-life dilemmas for women workers at asparagus farms do not appear to be related to their labor aspirations but to the labor intensity of their daily routines, from which the household responsibilities appear to be more challenging due its endless nature and emotional demand. To expand the notion of Hochschild (1990), the household labor and childcare responsibilities for asparagus workers constitute more than a second shift. Rather, these responsibilities appear to

take the form of multiple shifts of before, in-between, and after their working shifts on asparagus farms. In contrast, the work on asparagus farms, although intense and under vulnerable conditions, has breaks and comes to an end. Taking this into consideration, the notion of work-life balance for asparagus female workers appears to run counter to the case of professional women, who demand the need to reconcile their professional careers with their personal lives and family responsibilities. In the case of women working in the asparagus industry, I argue that the balance sought in their everyday lives actually occurs through their participation in the asparagus labor market.

The possibility of establishing friends, gaining economic independence and time off for emotional responsibilities are some of the positive aspects that women workers see in their work on asparagus farms. The existence of positive impacts of working in asparagus farms for women relates to Sara-Lafosse's assessment regarding the positive impacts women encounter when holding a job outside of the home (2009). The value of working on asparagus farms also needs to be understood beyond the simple economic need of their families, as previous studies suggest (Sarah Damaske, 2011). In the case of women in this study, the value of work might be a respite from domestic and childcare responsibilities.

Research Question N.3

The third question aims to understand the family and gender dynamics that arise from workers' daily arrangements on asparagus farms and carrying out household labor.

The analysis of the household dynamics in asparagus work falls within two typologies: dual-earner households and single earner households. Among the dual-earner households,

findings present two sets of households' dynamics based on workers' ideals of division of labor (both in housework and paid labor).

First, this research suggests the existence of strong discourse among asparagus workers supporting an egalitarian distribution of the labor carried outside and inside of the house. The idea of collaboration between partners, or what I have termed as the collaborative household, appears to be in parallel to what the literature identifies as "equal partners" (Shaw and Lee, 2007), "egalitarian marriage ideology type" (Hochschild, 2005) or "egalitarian families" (Lafosse, 2009). I argued that the material and working conditions of the workers, as well as their shared experiences and similar workloads on asparagus farms, seems to shape workers' discourse towards a more egalitarian distribution of labor among couples.

Interestingly, this discourse is not uniform among all workers in dual-earner households and appears to change in relation to asparagus workers' workload on the farms. Some workers in dual-earner households (whom I have labeled as the strategic household) the division of labor among partners aligns more with idea of "equally sharing" in which there is a negotiation on "who does what" in the household (Shaw and Lee, 2007, p.384), as well outside of it. This notion of strategic decision-making "to get things done" might likely cement the existence of a more traditional gender division of labor inside and outside of the home, despite the nominally "egalitarian" approach (Shaw and Lee, 2007, p.384). For instance, in this typology of households, women appear to have higher amounts of household tasks while working under part-time contracts in small asparagus farms or not working at all during the asparagus off-season. When this occurred, workers in the strategic household appear to have an affinity for the notion of "junior partner/senior partner" (Shaw and Lee, 2007) and the notion of "subsidiary work" (as cited in Collins, 1995), in which one partner's work functions as secondary to the other partner. The strategic household can also be examined under the umbrella of the transitional families, a term used by Sara-Lafosse when defining typologies for Peruvian families (2009) and the

transitional marriage ideology type developed by Hochschild and Machung in their study in the US (1990). Consequently, dual-earner households' dynamics in the division of labor appear to become more traditional for a group of workers in the off-season when both partners do not have the same participation in the labor market. For instance, some male workers reported that when they and their partners work in asparagus under the same work shifts or intensity of labor, they do household chores. However, this situation changes if their female partners are not working in the off-season.

My research also included single earners among asparagus workers. With clear gender differences, female asparagus workers who contribute solely or primarily to the family income are, in all cases, the single head of the household. After their separation or divorce from the fathers of their children, the free agents carried out the labor inside and outside of the home. Their status as breadwinners is associated with their marital status as separated or divorced mothers, as well as their employment on the asparagus farm. In this particular household typology, the notion of "subsidiary work" loses relevance since women's work at an asparagus farm appears to be the main income in their household. Although the free agents described their separation from their previous partners as painful, many also considered it a learning experience and opportunity to grow. The free agents appear to have relevance in light of Sara-Lafosse's analysis of the Peruvian unstructured family (2009). A single women head of household in the context of asparagus wage laborers is not only an interesting finding but a representation of the family structure within Peruvian society. My characterization of the "free agent" seeks to expand Sara-Lafosse's approach to the unstructured family type, which is characterized by being fragmented or unstable due the abandonment of the father. Some women's description of their separation process as an opportunity to be independent as well as their active demand for child support suggest the existence of novel understandings of the unstructured family, one that goes away for the one defined exclusively by the experience being abandoned.

In contrast, the male breadwinners have stable partners with a traditional gender division of labor, in which their female partner assumes the main responsibility in the home and in relation to the children. In this couple typology of the traditional household, male asparagus wage workers present a double narrative. On the one hand, they express contentedness to know that their partners are providing good care to their kids while on the other hand, they express uneasiness that they will not be able to adequately provide for their families and will not have enough time to spend with their children. The search for second jobs or shifts appears to be common among the providers of this type of couple, a strategy that allows the father to provide for the family but not necessarily spend more time with them. Worker's narratives suggest a rejection of the widespread notions of the absent father, as a portrait of fatherhood, a notion that can be related to the highest rates of father abandonment in Peru (Sara.Lafosse, 2009).

The notable presence of women workers in the asparagus industry, who were encountered in this study and observed throughout the field research, goes in line with literature regarding the existence of a phenomena in agriculture defined as the feminization of labor. The participation of women workers on asparagus farms appears to go in line with literature regarding the presence of women in agriculture who, far from being the traditional vision of women in agriculture, the farm's wife (Sachs and Alston, 2010),- are perceived as active participants of the asparagus labor organization. In a similar manner that Collins (1995) research findings challenge the notion of subsidiary work, although present in some cases such as in the strategic household, mothers who work in asparagus farms see themselves as important contributors to the family economy and more so when they are the main sources of income to the family. This can be seen in the experiences of women workers in dual-earner relationships (under the ideal of the cooperative couple) as well as the experiences of the breadwinner under the typology of the free agent.

Despite the existence of vulnerable working conditions, a situation that seems to be exacerbated in the case of women's workers, research findings reveal women's sense of pride for their work and the earnings of their work at the asparagus industry. This also resonates with the existence of an egalitarian gender discourse among couples. This finding echoes the scholarly debate regarding the existence of economic independence and autonomy as a positive impact of women's participation in agriculture on their livelihood and personal lives (Sara-Lafosse, 2009). In this sense, the research findings expose two sides of the same coin; when analyzing women's participation in the asparagus industry, the existence of positive impacts for women's empowerment and independence occurs within a context of labor vulnerability.

The existence of a gender difference in the workload performed at home by males and females described in the second research question, not only applies to female asparagus workers but for other female members of the family. The familial figures of the oldest daughter and the grandmother appear to be relevant when examining the gender division of labor in the household, including childcare responsibilities. Just as studies conducted in the United States show kinship support among African American families (Sarkisian & Gerstel, 2004), in the case of the asparagus workers, the grandmother often assumes the childrearing responsibilities. The basis for kinship support appears to be broader for workers employed in small asparagus farms due to the extended and close family networks in the small asparagus village. On the other hand, childcare responsibilities appear to be commodified in the large asparagus village with the existence of informal childcare and nannies in asparagus workers' villages.

In contrast with findings in the United States but in correspondence with studies conducted in Peru regarding NTAEs, such as that conducted by Grados Buenos (2013), the oldest daughter appears to be a central figure when carrying out domestic chores as well as the biggest help for some of the female workers. This finding can define new lines of research in the Global

South context, in which the involvement of the oldest daughter appears to be more prevalent than in the Global North.

In general, the research findings reveal the different sets of strategies and arrangements employed by asparagus workers for managing their work both inside and outside of the house. Research findings suggest that not only women but men have developed sets of strategies to secure employment while fulfilling their household responsibilities. Among these strategies are working in asparagus farms, taking a second job, negotiation among the couple, reliance on kinship, and the commodification of childcare.

Research Question N.4

What are the institutional responses to the challenges that asparagus workers face in relation to the arrangements of their work outside and inside the home?

The fourth and last research question of this dissertation sought to understand the institutional responses (formal and informal) to the challenges that workers face in their everyday lives when making arrangements for their work outside and inside of the home. Based on asparagus workers and key informants' interviews, this dissertation focused in the institutional arrangements, programs or projects set in place through which asparagus workers might benefit when making work-related arrangements. Toward this goal, Chapter 7 examined the existence of institutional arrangements connected to i) material and working conditions; ii) household labor; and iii) gender and family dynamics.

Based on participant observations and interviews with key informants and asparagus workers, research findings suggest that, at the moment of field research, most institutional responses directed to respond to asparagus agricultural workers' challenges related to the

improvement of their material and working conditions. From governmental programs or policies to non-profit organizations and asparagus producers' incentives, the institutional arrangements that are in place (or are planned to be) aim to improve the material condition of the workers through: i) access of basic services such as running water and sanitation in worker's household; and ii) improvement of the housing conditions through the program Techo Propio [My Own Roof].

Despite the access to employment opportunities, a situation that certainly places this group of workers in a better position than the average Peruvian, asparagus workers' material conditions appear to still constitute a situation of vulnerability given their lack of access to at least one (if not two) basic services such as drainage, water and electricity. Access to basic services appears to correspond to the town of residence's quality of infrastructure. Workers living in the small asparagus-producing village seem to have better access to basic services compared to workers residing in the large asparagus-producing village.

Regarding the improvement of working conditions, the institutional responses established by the national government target the improvement of the minimum wage. Although the governmental increment does not necessarily benefit all asparagus wage workers in this study since an important group reported to have salaries higher than the minimum wage, the policy at least parallels asparagus workers' demand for higher salaries under the claim that their salary is insufficient to access the food basket. As examined in Chapter 2, previous research regarding the working conditions of asparagus workers explores in depth the impacts of Law 27360 "Law on the Promotion of the Agricultural Sector". This law provides incentives to agro-industrial producers and establishes a different labor legislation for agricultural workers hired by seasonal production. Some researchers claim that this law is detrimental for workers since it reduces workers' labor rights. At the second decade of the 21st century, different initiatives carried out by Peruvian civil society (with projects elevated to the Congress) unsuccessfully sought to repeal or

modify this legislation. Despite the importance of this initiative, research findings did not reference this legislation or its impacts on asparagus workers or key informants. The claim made for workers regarding their working conditions or labor rights related to the existence of seasonal labor, lower salaries, bad treatment by the farm managers and the lack of rest due the intense labor this job required. In the same line, asparagus workers were not affiliated with labor unions or other kinds of organizations. Thus, for this study sample, the discussion about labor rights and institutional responses did not directly indicate a demand for repealing or modifying this legalization.

Additionally, a program developed by the Ministry of Agriculture in cooperation with national and international non-profit organizations sought to implement productive projects to improve the technical, administrative and marketing capacity of small asparagus producers in the region. According to small-scale asparagus producers as well as their workers, asparagus production at the small scale has positive impacts not only for producers but for workers. The positive impacts relate to the different conditions in work compared to large asparagus farms. The possibility of working close to their homes, working part-time, as well as receiving better treatment are some of the positive impacts that the development of small-scale asparagus production brings to the community.

In contrast to programs meant to improve the material and living conditions of workers, unofficial programs or projects are created to respond to the challenges faced by asparagus workers when making arrangements in relation to their housework and family responsibilities. Among the concerns raised by workers, particularly female workers, is the need for childcare providers during work hours.

According to asparagus workers and key informants, the government and asparagus farms previously formed childcare services for the working mothers in their towns of residence. However, these services discontinued for various reasons. For instance, in both villages, the

program Cuna Más did not fulfill the asparagus workers' demands since the schedules of this program did not match with asparagus workers' schedules. In the large asparagus village, the farms established childcare services for their workers. Although this program does not currently exist, workers and local leaders remembered it as a program that greatly benefitted asparagus workers. In order to resolve the need for childcare services, asparagus workers draw upon their kinship network, specifically their mothers, daughters, or siblings, or hire the service of female neighbors who informally provide childcare services.

Regarding the disconnect between the need of workers to secure childcare (in diverse forms) for their kids while working and the lack of institutional facilities to response to this need, this study provides valuable data to understand the reasons behind this divide. Bringing light to the existence a conflict in schedules between the existing childcare facilities (at the governmental level) and the work-shifts of asparagus workers can be valuable to policy makers when designing childcare programs or facilities geared towards meeting the needs of workers employed in the NTAEs. Furthermore, the interest and need for childcare facilities by large scale asparagus farms may present an opportunity for the government, civil society and workers to work collaboratively with the private sector to secure childcare for workers.

Finally, concerning the programs or projects that address asparagus' workers gender and family dynamics, my research findings suggest the existence of local programs executed at the municipality level that i) mediate and execute child support agreements, ii) manage domestic violence and iii) ensure safety in asparagus towns by providing municipal patrol.

Limitations and Future Research

When reflecting on the conclusions and contributions of this study I realize that it is not possible to examine this study's contributions without acknowledging its limitations and the future lines of research.

As mentioned in the first chapters of this dissertation, this study had as a main objective to understand the every daily life (in relation to daily work inside and outside the home) of agricultural wage laborers of the asparagus industry. This study was influence largely by previous studies in Peru which concluded that laborers in the NTAEs and in the asparagus industry encountered a situation of labor vulnerability. Taking into account that the experience of oppression, and with that, of the marginalized groups, is at the center of the discussion of women's studies scholars, this dissertation takes a feminist approach to highlight the importance of contextualizing the experience of male and female workers. This is also a way to examine in depth, the complex impact of contemporary agricultural processes and organization that are central to the study of rural sociology.

As important as it is to capture asparagus workers experiences as a way to examine the impact of this industry, it is also important to acknowledge that this approach is a partial explanation of the complex labor relations that exist in the asparagus industry in particular and the NTAEs in general. As for future research, the experience of asparagus workers can be enriched by integrating the experiences and narratives of asparagus growers (in particular at the large scale) as well as other actors higher up in the commodity chain.

A second reflection regarding the limitations and future research lines relates to the research design. This study used a qualitative methodology and a case study approach with the aim of reaching an indepth understanding of the core processes and the labor dynamics of workers at the asparagus farms and in the domestic sphere. For instance, through the case study I

was able to identify a system of labor rotation that challenges notions of temporality associated with workers in previous studies. It is important to note, however, that this research design has limitations of generalization. To overcome this limitation, future research is needed to understand if these processes are relevant for other type of workers in the asparagus industry such as migrant workers as well as for agricultural workers employed in other industries such as the grape industry, which is growing and expanding in Ica. This understanding would contribute to the development of public policies that can adapt labor standards and regulation to the labor dynamics of NTAEs.

Finally, this dissertation integrates an examination of the gender and family dynamics of asparagus workers, as part of the analysis of their daily work in the domestic sphere. This analysis allowed me to take a deeper understanding at how the lives of workers run between their labor obligations in the asparagus industry and at home, as well as to understand how the family dynamics are articulated to the structure and demands of the asparagus farms.

The study findings have allowed me to identify new lines of research in relation to the gender dynamics within families such as gender expectations for the children and the role of the older sister and the grandmother. The role that the older sister and the grandmother have in performing housework and helping the female asparagus worker to fulfill their domestic and childcare responsibilities needs to be studied in greater depth. Furthermore, the role of the oldest daughter as helper and the grandmother as caregivers need to be put also in conversation with the couple typologies identified. The analysis of this connection might be helpful when examining couple dynamics and the process (or not) towards a more egalitarian model of family. Additionally, the study of the use of informal childcare providers, as a way male and female asparagus workers to outsource childcare responsibilities, can bring light to other situations of labor vulnerability experienced by women in the NTAEs.

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Appendix

Interview Schedules

Interview Schedule 01. Agricultural and agro-industrial workers

Objective: Explore the work-life dilemmas of female and male agricultural and agro-industrial workers who work in the fields and processing plants of farms and/or firms which produce, process and/or export asparagus in the region of Ica. Particularly, in asparagus workers who has household and caregiving responsibilities with kids in the childhood stage.

Theme 1: Personal Information (Demographics)

- What year were you born?
- Where are you from?
- What is your current place of residence? How long have you been living there?
- If the place of residence differs from place of origin, ask for the reasons behind the moving/migration.
- What is your native language?
- What is the highest level of education you have achieved?
- What is your marital status?
- How many children do you have? (Ages, school year)
- What is your main occupation?

Theme 2: Socioeconomic indicators

- Does your current place of residence is own by you, owned by a family member, rented or assigned by the farm/firm?
- How do you characterize your housing conditions? Why?
- Does the place you live have access to running water, electricity, and sewer?
- How many people live in your place of residence?
- What is the main source of household income? (who contributes?)

Theme 3: Labor conditions and job satisfaction / Characteristics of employment and labor conditions

- When did you start working for asparagus farms/or firms? How did you get this job? For what reasons you started working in this farm/ or firm?
- What is the name of farm/firm you currently work? What type of asparagus farm/ form is it? (Size, type of activities)

- What is the status of your employment? (Permanent, temporary)
- Do you have a contract? What is the duration of your current contract? (Do you know under what legislation is your current contract?)
- What times of the year do you work do you work in the asparagus production?
- How long have you been working for asparagus farm/firms? How long have you been working for your current employer?
- Regarding your job at the asparagus farm/firms, could you describe it to me what is a normal day for you at work (from the start to the end of your shift)? (Main activities and responsibilities)
- How long does it take you to get to your work place? What is the mean of transport you use to get to your workplace?
- What is your working shift? (daily and weekly) How many hours did you work in total last week?
- How does working shifts are defined? Do you do overtime? Do you have the option to choose or decide your work schedule and overtime hours?
- Do you have breaks? (Please mention all of them)
- If you do mind talking about numbers, what is your current salary? (By month, weekly or per day). Would you say this salary meets your salary expectations?
- What are the benefits you receive under your current contract? (Pay attention to health insurance, compensation for time served, vacation, bonuses. Also extras such as lunch, transportation, maternity leave, childcare facilities, breastfeeding time, pension.)
- Do you have any concern regarding hazard at work? Did you experience any health problem when working in the asparagus?
- In case there you suffered from an accident of occupational health, where has you been attended?
- In farm/form where you work are worker's organizations (labor union)? Do you participate in any of them?
- How would you describe the relation with your co-workers and other employees at the farm/firm where you work? (Friendship, conflicts)
- What would you say are the major satisfactions you have working in this asparagus farm/form? (What do you like the most)
- What would you say are the major challenges you face working in this asparagus farm/form? (What do you dislike the most)
- If you were the owner/manager of this farm/firm what would you do to improve the well-being of the workers?
- Do you see yourself working in this job in the future?
- Apart from the asparagus, did (do) you in another crop of agricultural exports?

Theme 4: Household and caregiving responsibilities

- Regarding your responsibilities at home and with your family, could you describe it to me what is a normal day for you (since you wake up until you go to bed)? (Pay attention to personal needs, cooking, clothing, house's repair, construction and maintenance, caring for children, shopping, home payments and organization)
- What are the responsibilities of the other members of your household? (partner/spouse, family members, main task, responsible and time)

- Do you have help to perform your household and caregiving responsibilities from people outside of your home? (family members, neighbors, friends, domestic workers, and informal caregivers). If so, ¿In which occasion?
- What would you say are the major satisfactions you have performing your household and caregiving responsibilities?
- What would you say are the major challenges you face working at your house and taking care of your child (children)? What would you change if you will able to?

Theme 5: Worker's strategies

- How do you manage your time between your job and your household and caregiving responsibilities?
- Which activities take more of your time, your work at the farm/firm or your house and caregiving responsibilities?
- What are the main challenges you face trying to manage your time and responsibilities at your job and your home? (Pay attention to household chores and caregiving responsibilities when the worker is at the farm/firm, when the child is sick, when the worker is sick)
- How do you address those challenges?
- What kind of institutional support do you receive to manage your responsibilities at work and home? (Pay attention to current employer, social organizations in the area, community, governmental programs and others).

Thank you very much for your time.

Interview Schedule 02. Representatives of farms and grower's associations

Objective: Have a better understanding about the regulations within the organization regarding labor rights, occupational health, maternity leave and childcare. This data will permit an understanding of the standards that farms and/or firms must adhere to.

Theme 1: Farm and/or firm's information

- As a farm/firm dedicated to asparagus production, processing and/or exports, how do you assess the current situation of the asparagus industry in Peru and in Ica in particular? (Comparative advantages, challenges)
- Could you please tell me a little bit about this farm/firm? (History of development, type of productive activities, main objectives and philosophy?)
- Regarding the asparagus production, processing and/or exports, what are the main activities that this farm/firm executes? (Type, variety, products)
- What is the extent of farmland dedicated to asparagus production?
- What is the market destination of the asparagus production, process and/or exports in this farm/ firm?

Theme 2: labor legislation, labor standards and labor organization

- In broad terms, could you please tell me how the farm/firm is organized in term of labor? (Fields, plant, exports)
- What are the type of employees that the farm/ firm hire to perform their main activities?
- What are the degree of specialization required (for activity)?
- What is the approximate number of employees of the farm/ firm? (Differentiate for type of employee, type of activity and season)
- What is the proportion of permanent / temporary employees?
- What is the proportion of male/female employees? Do you see any difference between the performance of male and female employees?
- What is the average age of employees?
- Under what regimen of employment are the employees of this farm/firm hired? (Informal, Law 27360, General Employment Law)
- What are the main responsibilities of the employees in this farm/firm? (hours, regulations, conduct code)
- What are the benefits that the employees received? (Differentiate by type of employment)
- Taking in consideration the great demand of employment in the area, how the farm/firm accomplished the manpower needed for production, processing and/ exports of asparagus? (Comparative advantages from other firms)
- What would you say are the mayor concerns regarding this farm/firm's employees? (performance, well-being)

Theme 3: occupational health hazard and regulations

- What are the main occupational health hazards in production, processing and exports of asparagus? (Pay attention to pesticides).
- What are the measures that the farm / firm is implemented to avoid them?
- What occupational health policies followed by this farm/firm? (Pay attention to the Law on Health and Safety at Work?) How is taking place the implementation of these policies.
- Besides the national regulation, are there other health and hygiene related regulation or standards that this farm/firm follows?

Theme 4: Policies for working mother/ fathers

- Do employees in this farm/firm have children? In what proportion?
- Taking into consideration that a great amount of employees in the asparagus production, process and export are mothers and fathers, what are the challenges that working parents in this firm/ farm face when taking over its domestic and caregiving responsibilities? Do you observe difference between female and male employees?
- What are the measures that the farm / firm is implementing to address these challenges? (Pay attention to working shift, childcare, sick leave)
- Is there any policy for working mother/fathers that this farm/ firm is following? (maternity leave, maternity allowance, breastfeeding time, breastfeeding allowance, family compensation, health insurance for pregnancy and kids). If so, how is taking place the implementation of these policies?

Thank you very much for your time.

Interview Schedule 03. Social organizations and civil society organizations

Objective: Understand social leaders' perspectives regarding the general challenges faced by wage workers when working in farms and/or firms that produce, process and/or export asparagus, as well as the collective demands and strategies followed to improve the everyday lives of workers. The study will pay attention to civil society organization's response to address work-life dilemmas.

Theme 1: Organization's information

- Could you please tell me a little bit about the organization? (History of development, main objectives and philosophy, members, and main projects/ activities)
- What are the areas in which your institution allocated more human and economic resources?
- Does this organization work or give services to other organizations or institutions in the area? What is the organization's founding sources?

Theme 2: General challenges faced by wage workers

- As a representative of a local organization how do you assess the current situation of the asparagus industry in the area? (Comparative advantages, social benefits, challenges)
- What is the situation of employment in the area? How would you say, the asparagus industry contributes to generation of employment?
- How do you assess the quality of employment in the asparagus industry in the area? (Working conditions, benefits)
- What are the major demands of employees of the asparagus industry regarding their working conditions?
- Taking into consideration that a great amount of employees in the asparagus production, process and export are mothers and fathers, what are the challenges that working parents in this firm/ farm face when taking over its domestic and caregiving responsibilities? Do you observe difference between female and male employees?
- What are the major demands of employees of the asparagus industry in this matter?

Theme 3: Civil society organization's response to address work-life dilemmas of asparagus wage workers

- Which are the main organizations or institutions in the area that address the situation of workers in the asparagus industry? Could you please describe briefly the work done by those organizations? (Main objective and goal, time and achievements).
- Does this organization have a program or project that involve the work with asparagus workers in the area? If so, could you please describe the program or project? (Main objective and goal, time and achievements).
- Is there any specific project that addresses the challenges face by working mothers/ fathers in the asparagus industry? If so, could you please describe the program or project? (Main objective and goal, time and achievements).
- What do you think should be done by the civil society to improve the everyday lives of asparagus workers (working conditions, work-life dilemmas)?

Interview Schedule 04. Local authorities and government officials

Objectives. To gathered contextual information regarding socioeconomic indicators, agricultural production and agro exports and labor standards. Moreover, to explore the existence of government programs that provide support to agricultural and agro-industrial workers (mothers/fathers) in their everyday lives such as childcare, “school breakfast”, conditional cash transfer or another program.

Theme 1: Government office’s information

- Could you please tell me a little bit about the government office you represent? (History of development, main objectives, and main projects/ activities)
- What are the areas in which the office allocates more human and economic resources?
- Does this office work or give services to other organizations or institutions in the area?

Theme 2: Socioeconomic indicators and agricultural production and agro exports

- As an authority how do you assess the current economic situation of your locality? (Poverty, well-being, employment, industries)
- As an authority how do you asses the current situation of the agro-export industry in the area? (Comparative advantages, social benefits, challenges)?
- Regarding the asparagus industry, how do you asses the current situation of this industry? (Comparative advantages, social benefits, challenges)? What are the major varieties? Extent of farmland? Number of farms/ firms? Employment generation? Destination of production?

Theme 3: General challenges faced by wage workers

- As an authority, how do you assess the current situation of the asparagus industry in the area? (Comparative advantages, social benefits, challenges)
- What is the situation of employment in the area? How would you say, the asparagus industry contributes to generation of employment?
- How do you asses the quality of employment in the asparagus industry in the area? (Working conditions, benefits)
- What are the major demands of employees of the asparagus industry regarding their working conditions?
- Taking into consideration that a great amount of employees in the asparagus production, process and export are mothers and fathers, what are the challenges that working parents in this firm/ farm face when taking over its domestic and caregiving responsibilities? Do you observe difference between female and male employees?
- What are the major demands of employees of the asparagus industry in this matter?

Theme 4: Government programs or projects that response to response to address work-life dilemmas of asparagus wage workers

- Which are the main governmental offices in the area that address the situation of workers in the asparagus industry? Could you please describe briefly the work done by those offices? (Main objective and goal, time and achievements).

- Does this office have a program or project that involve the work with asparagus workers in the area? If so, could you please describe the program or project? (Main objective and goal, time and achievements).
- Is there any specific project that addresses the challenges face by working mothers/ fathers in the asparagus industry? If so, could you please describe the program or project? (Main objective and goal, time and achievements).
- What do you think should be done by the government to improve the everyday lives of asparagus workers (working conditions, work-life dilemmas)?

Interviews Analysis

List of Codes

Employment
Employment_AcosoSexual [Sexual Harassment]
Employment_Benefits
Employment_History
Employment_History_Onset
Employment_Labor organization
Employment_Others
Employment_Perception_Big and Small Farm
Employment_Perception_Work aspirations
Employment_Perception_Work place
Employment_Salary
Employment_Type of Contract
Employment_Work hazards
Employment_Workshift
Gender and Family Dynamics (GFD)
GFDynamics_Decision making_spending and work
GFDynamics_Family's relation
GFDynamics_Parenting_Family's assesment
GFDynamics_Parenting_Father's role
GFDynamics_Parenting_Mother's role
GFDynamics_Parenting_Working mothers
GFDynamics_Time distribution_Free time
GFDynamics_Time distribution_Work and Family
Household Labor
Household_Domestic labor_Childcare & Carework
Household_Domestic labor_External help
Household_Domestic labor_House's chores
Household_Normal day
Household_Perceptions

Household_Schedule variations
Socioeconomic Status (SES)
SES_Acces to land
SES_Basic Needs
SES_Education
SES_Houseing_Number of people living in the house
SES_Housing_Conditions and materials
SES_Housing_Type of property
SES_Occupation_of family members
SES_Occupation_Main occupation
SES_Occupation_Previous occupation
SES_Source of income
Sociodemographics
Sociodemo_Age
Sociodemo_Children_Age
Sociodemo_Children_Number
Sociodemo_Marital Status
Sociodemo_Migration_Parent's origin
Sociodemo_Migration_Place of birth
Sociodemo_Migration_Place of residence
Sociodemo_Migration_Reasons
Sociodemo_Migration_Time in place of residence
Sociodemo_Mother tongue
Strategies/Responses
Strategies_Agency
Strategies_Challenges
Strategies_Ideal
Strategies_Institutional Support
Programas Sociales [Welfare Programs]

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EDUCATION/DEGREES AWARDED

- 2017 Ph.D. Rural Sociology & Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, Penn State University
2012 Graduate Certificate in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, The University of Kansas
2006 Licenciatura [Professional Degree in Sociology], Pontifical Catholic University of Peru
2004 B.A. Social Sciences with major in Sociology, Pontifical Catholic University of Peru

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

- 2013 – 2017 Research Assistant, Department of Agricultural Economics, Sociology, and Education, College of Agricultural Sciences, The Pennsylvania State University
2011 – 2012 Research Assistant, William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications, The University of Kansas
2003 – 2004 Research Assistant, Group of Analysis for Development (GRADE)

COURSES TAUGHT & TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- Peruvian Social Reality, Pontifical Catholic University of Peru (Fall 2007–Spring 2011 & Spring 2013)
Qualitative Methods and Introduction to Research, University of Lima (Spring 2007– Spring 2011)
Contemporary Ideologies II, Marcelino Champagnat University, (Summer 2007)
Workshop in Qualitative Research, Cayetano Heredia University (Fall 2006 – Spring 2007)
Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies, The Pennsylvania State University (Spring 2017)

PUBLICATIONS

- Castro Bernardini, M.R. (2016). Review of California Dreaming: Boosterism, Memory, and Rural Suburbs in the Golden State by Paul J.P. Sandul. *Rural Sociology*, Morgantwon, WV: West Virginia University Press, 2014, 220pp. ISBN: 978-1-938228-86-5. *Rural Sociology*, 81: 135–137. doi:10.1111/ruso.12101
- Castro Bernardini, M.R. (2015). The Political Economy of Agriculture in Colombia: An Unfinished Business. In: A. Bonanno & L. Busch (Eds.). *Handbook of The International Political Economy of Agriculture and Food*. MI: Michigan State University, 97-109.
- Ruiz-Bravo López, P., & Castro Bernardini, M.R. (2012). Caso de Peru. In: F. Soto Baquero & E. Kelin (Eds.). *Empleo y Condiciones de Trabajo de Mujeres Temporeras Agrícolas*. Tomo 2. Rome: FAO, 194-268.
- Ruiz-Bravo López, P. & Castro Bernardini, M.R. (2011). La Situación de las Mujeres Rurales en América Latina. In: *Mujer Rural: Cambios y Persistencias en América Latina*. Lima: CEPES, 1-36.
- Calado, A., Castro Bernardini, M.R. (2004), Lossio, F. & others. Las Tiendas E. Wong: un Análisis Organizacional. *Debates en Sociología*. N. 29. 160-186.

LANGUAGES

- Spanish: Native Speaker.
English: Speaking (fluent), Reading (fluent), Writing (advanced).