

Urban dimensions within rural territories: a study about gender dynamics in the labor market in O'Higgins, Chile

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1. Abstract

The study focuses on gender dynamics within the labor market in rural territories in the region of O'Higgins, Chile, and addresses how the absence or presence of cities within rural areas affects the gender systems. The paper identifies constraints and opportunities for both men and women to participate and contribute to the development of the territory, in the context of a study based on an exploration of literature, earlier DTR-studies, national statistical data provided by Rimisp, and a qualitative field study. The fieldwork was based on interviews and focus groups in two selected territories of the region; one urban-rural and one rural. The study documents ways in which existing gender systems are affecting men's and women's participation in the labor market and how their participation differs with the presence or absence of an urban core. It identifies gendered stereotypes and assumptions that naturalize certain cultural beliefs, and thereby affect labor market participation and division of work between men and women. Finally, we discuss social implications of these beliefs and expectations, including how they pressure rural men to do arduous and dangerous work and how they influence migration patterns leading to masculinization of some rural areas and a higher urban female population.¹

2. Introduction

Objectives

The Rural Territorial Dynamics (RTD) program seeks to understand the processes of change in economic structures and institutional frameworks of rural territories and the effects these changes exert on economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability. Thereto the program wished to influence policy changes supported by its findings. One part of the project is to study if and how the presence of a small or intermediate city in a rural territory enhances the capacity of that territory to grow with social inclusion and environmental sustainability. The purpose of this paper is to identify gender constraints and opportunities for both men and women to participate and contribute to the development of a rural territory with and without a city, and the

¹ I would like to acknowledge the extensive and invaluable help and assistance from Ricardo Fuentealba, who has been participating in the field work, supported the writing process, and engaged in many fruitful discussions. Thereto, Benjamin Jara who has provided the statistical data, graphs and tables. In addition, I am very grateful for the essential supervision and invaluable guidance from Julio Berdegué, RIMISP, Chile, and Susan Paulson, Lund University, Sweden.



study should be seen as a contribution to the main DTR-study about Intermediate Cities. Existing gender systems shape dynamics in which men and women interact and differentiate their engagement in the labor market, making them choose different types of work and engage in different sectors. The DTR research framework conceptualizes gender as socio-cultural systems that are shaped and evolve historically through the interaction of patterns of social constraints, behaviors and ingrained habits, different capabilities and competences; and various formal and informal institutions. We hypothesize that the impact of an urban core in a rural territory is affected by and affects gender systems. The paper is based on a comparison of gender systems in one purely rural and one urban-rural area and the purpose with this is to find differences and similarities between them.

Research question

This study focuses the investigation around the following research question;

- ❖ *How do gender dynamics within the labor market in rural territories interact with rural-urban dimensions?*

In order to answer this we will look into the practices and expectations of men and women between rural and urban areas, the participation of men and women in the labor market, and in which sectors they participate. We will also look into some basic assumptions about stereotypes and the division of work based on gender. Finally, we want to investigate whether there is a difference in predominant gender systems between rural and urban-rural areas within the labor market.

The study analyzes the labor market on a territorial level within the context of the administrative region O'Higgins in Chile, where agriculture and agro industry are the main components of the economic sector. This region is chosen based on the results from national Census proving success and prosperity in development, and it is therefore interesting to investigate the drivers behind this progress, as well as the adversities working against it.



3. Literature Review

Rural Development and Intermediate cities

Tacoli (2004) emphasizes the advantage of an intermediate center within a rural area as it creates a dependency-relationship with the surrounding hinterland, as people travel to urban centers to sell their agricultural products and use services available, all of which stimulates economic growth. *"Exchanges of goods between urban and rural areas are an essential element of rural-urban linkages"* (Tacoli 2007:4). Baker (1995:118) suggests that small towns contribute to the development of the countryside in a more dynamic way than a larger urban city. Primarily since they are more accessible, and the mutual dependency is greater between a small town and a rural area, than for example a larger city and rural surroundings. Small town for territorial development may also advance development strategies to stimulate growth in all sectors of local economy. This could be reached through dynamic migration between the town and the rural area by, for example, providing employment opportunities in both areas stimulating people to travel and thereby enhancing the interdependence between both the town and the rural area (Courtney & Errington 2000:281).

Tacoli (2004) argues that investments in rural towns will benefit the growth of the rural non-farm economy (RNFE) which in turn will stimulate economic growth in terms of increased income for more rural farmers. It is further claimed that that most rural farmers are engaged in multiple activities; either as a protection against insecurity of farm income, or as an additional source of income, stability and diversification (Tacoli 2004:6). Ashley and Maxwell 2001:410 argue that this will in turn contribute to the development of the entire region. When larger urban centers grow at the expense of smaller urban centers, the people with least access to resources, economic incentives and possibilities are the ones losing out. For them, the presence of a rural town or small city may be crucial for improving livelihoods. Studies from Latin America have shown that secondary urban centers attract new investment which previously would have been directed to larger cities, and they create labor opportunities as well as increase average income (ibid).

Tacoli (2004) states that the basic assumption is that the presence of an urban centre, even though very small, has proved to have importance beyond provision of service and infrastructure, and that the absence of a central place may constrain development. According to Courtney and Errington (2000) the size of the urban centre does matter, and the reasons for small towns being so successful in contributing to the development within rural areas are that they usually reflect more on the heterogeneity of the rural economy within the region than a larger city does (ibid:280). Courtney and Errington (2000:281) further present results stating that the



strength of the integration between the rural area and the town is a function of existing economic structure. But if this is not acknowledged by local policies, nature of economic process in the rural economy may hinder the positive effect of the interdependence between small towns and the surrounding rural areas.

Gender = men and women

In both scholarship and applied work there has been a significant shift from the previous notion of 'Women in Development' to 'Gender and Development' (Ashley & Maxwell 2001:396) and two important notions here are (1) to acknowledge that gender necessarily entails men and women and that efforts to encourage gendered opportunities and reduce gendered constraints must be made for both men and women, and (2) to recognize that far greater differences and inequalities exist among individuals and groups within the category of "women" and within the category of "men" than between women and men as general categories. Social systems have created gendered, as well as racial, class and/or caste, differences that always intersect and interact to influence access to resources, ownership of land, and value of human labor.

Gender constraints and socially constructed difficulties in societies all over the world are affecting both men and women, and as co-victims of patriarchy many men also suffer gendered violence and exploitation (Coldwell, 2009:173). *"Men face major disadvantages due to their masculine roles, particularly in the destruction of human capital through communicable disease, occupational injury, violence, substance abuse, and institutionalization. In the area of human capital accumulation, specifically in formal schooling, men also fare worse than women..."* (Jacobson, 2002:IV). The same study presents data on Latin America showing that injuries, substance abuse, violence and certain illnesses are affecting men disproportionately. Such statistically clear disadvantages for men need to be acknowledged in any gender study, and in this study we are investigating whether in fact men are exposed to more danger at the work place than women.

Labor Market in Latin America

According to Ballara (2007) rural women in Latin America are key contributors to food production. They are heavily engaged in agricultural production and should be acknowledged as an important part of the economy (INE Censo 2007:10). Ballara (2007:240) further states that there has been recognition of women's contribution to the economic sector, but this contribution is not sufficiently quantified or represented within the economic system and part of the production chain. The lack of recognition of women's economic contribution in many studies is in tension with other studies that



demonstrate significant contribution. According to a household survey made by ILO 2004, women constitute 40 percent of the economically active population in urban areas in Latin America, and between 1990 and 2004, 33 million women joined the labor market (Abramo & Valenzuela 2005:369). Paulson (2007:181) emphasizes the importance of documenting both material practice and discursive representation, which are never mirrors of each other. On one level is the practical division of men's and women's work and the work empirically carried out by men and women, on the other is discursive practice in which different activities are labeled as masculine or feminine, and differently counted, valued, or represented in discourses about economic activity.

There are large discrepancies and active scholarly debates concerning what should be counted as work and who is doing what. For example, studies like the UN General Assembly (2009) show that women in fact constitute 70 % of the world's agricultural labor force, and declare that while women's participation in the labor force increases in the whole of Latin America, men's participation has decreased. Women have less ownership and control over the land (Leon & Deere, 2003) and little doubt that there are many differences in terms of access to resources, division of labor and share of household work, and the full implications this have on the global economy are still uncertain. However, we do note that women in Latin America, at the same time as increasing their participation in the labor market, still are the main caretakers of the children and the household (Chant, 2002).

Various factors interact to affect the differential participation of men and women in labor markets, for example regulations and national legislation designed to help workers get fair and equal employment; gendered expectations, norms and constraints prevalent in local culture; gendered expectations assumed, projected and/or imposed by specific work-places, corporations, or economic sectors, and gendered division of labor (Paulson, 2007; Ballara, 2007). These factors are just some that affect the labor market and participation of men and women differently.



4. Methodology

Triangulation

The study is based on a triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data from the region O'Higgins, combined with a literature review of secondary sources. The quantitative data is based both on the whole region of O'Higgins as well as specified on the selected territories, and analyzed with a gender perspective. The data spans over a time period from 1992 to 2009. Graphs and tables are shown to demonstrate differences and correspondences in participation and employment, for both men and women. With this data we are able to portray an overview of key dimensions of the gender systems in the entire region and how it has changed over the timeframe. Some graphs will also be displayed to show data for the whole of Chile. In these cases, the data are divided per five territories; 1) rural based on one municipality, 2) rural based on two municipalities, 3) urban-rural with 18-40 thousand inhabitants, 4) urban with 40-80 thousand inhabitants, 5) urban with 80-250, and 6) metropolitan cities with more than 250 thousand inhabitants. When referring only to O'Higgins, the last area will be excluded as there are no metropolitan cities in this region.

The qualitative analysis is based on two selected territories within this region, one multi-communal rural area; Litueche, and one urban-rural territory made up of four municipalities, with the small city of San Vicente at its core (Berdegué et al 2012). With the qualitative data we are able to gain a deeper understanding of the contextual gender dimensions that are predominant in the territories, how they are affecting and are affected by labor markets, and how they are affected by the absence or presence by an intermediate city. Various terms will be used, including 'small town,' 'intermediate city' and 'urban-rural'. The term 'region' refers to the region of O'Higgins.

Territorial and contextual description

The capital city of the region O'Higgins, Rancagua, is located 90 km south of the capital and largest city of Chile, Santiago. The population of the O'Higgins region is 780 627, and that of the city of Rancagua is 206 971 (INE 2002). Of the regional population, 50% are women. The O'Higgins region is made up of 33 municipalities (comunas), the largest of which being the municipality of Rancagua, followed by San Fernando (population 63 732), Rengo (50 830), San Vicente de Tagua Tagua (40 253) and Santa Cruz (32 387). The main economic activities of the region are agriculture, agro industry, mining (with the biggest subterranean mine of the world, called El



Teniente, located in the commune of Machalí and extracting copper²) and tourism. The Colchagua valley, part of the region, has a highly developed fruit, vegetable and wine production sector; the wine industry attracts tourists from all over the world. According to the government's survey that measure socioeconomic features, the poverty rate³ of the region was 13% by 2009 (MIDEPLAN, 2009).

The territories that will constitute the base of this study are the multi-communal rural territory of Litueche and urban-rural territory of San Vicente de Tagua Tagua; both located in the region of O'Higgins. With a total population of 92 199, the urban-rural territory of San Vicente consists of four municipalities: Las Cabras, Pichidegua, Peumo and San Vicente de Tagua Tagua, the latter containing the main urban center with a population of 18 940. According to the 2002 Census, the female population in this territory was 45 147 (49%). According to the socioeconomic survey of the government (MIDEPLAN, 2009), the poverty rate for this territory is 9.2 percent. It is a territory with a high importance of agriculture and agro industry, together employing more than 45% of economically active population (INE, 2002).

The territory of Litueche consists of two communes: Litueche and La Estrella. Both are very rural and the total population is 9 747, spread out over a large area (INE, 2002). The very small town of Litueche (population 2 479) is seen as an urban center by its inhabitants, as this is the closest town within a large distance. An important feature of Litueche, common in many rural territories in Latin America, is the difference between men and women in the population, as men constitute 5 698 (58.5%). Being a highly rural territory, its main productive sectors are agriculture and agro industry, with 30% of the economically active population in this kind of work (INE, 2002). The poverty rate of 14.6% is slightly higher than in San Vicente.

By comparing the differences between the two territories, and analyzing factors that influence differences between men and women within the labor market, we can outline the importance of an intermediate city in rural territories and how gender systems are affected by this.

² Copper represents the main productive activity in the country, being both public and private. Along with El Teniente, the other big public mine it's Chuquicamata, located in the Region of Atacama, in the north of Chile. <http://www.minmineria.gob.cl/574/w3-propertyvalue-1983.html>

³ The poverty rate is based on a minimum income that a household should have to fulfill its basic needs. In 2009, this level was defined by an income of approximately 135 USD for urban areas, and of approximately 90 USD for rural areas. The poverty rate indicates the % of the population who does not reach this minimum of income, per capita. <http://www.mideplan.gob.cl/>



Data collection and sample

The qualitative data collection was based on interviews and focus groups with both men and women in the selected territories. The selection of interviewees was based on availability and convenient sample with both men and women within different sectors of the labor market, hence both people working in the agro industry, and in the agricultural sector, but also from the service- and the public sector. Thereto people unemployed and/or seasonally employed were interviewed. All of the interviews took place in both territories of the study, multi-communal rural Litueche and urban-rural San Vicente.

The complete data collection was based on the following;

- 18 interviews during September 2011 with in total 9 men and 9 women in San Vicente de Tagua Tagua and Litueche, held with employees, employers, un-employed.
- 6 focus groups (5 participants each) during September 2011 with workers from different areas and sectors, as well as employed seasonally. Two focus groups were mixed with men and women and the rest separated.
- Statistical analysis of data from the 1992-2002 Census⁴, and from the 2009 household survey CASEN⁵ of 6645 rural and urban households in the region O'Higgins. All data is provided by the governmental agencies INE and MIDEPLAN.

Qualitative Analysis with gender perspective

Gender analysis examines the different roles, rights, and opportunities of men and women, and the relations between them, both within systems that offer differentiated constraints and disparities in the distribution of assets and capitals, and in the institutions that govern these. The use of a gender perspective in research involves attention to at least three levels: 1) generating and presenting sex-disaggregated data, 2) interpreting the data by considering the differences between men's and women's needs, priorities, responsibilities, status, perspectives, strengths, activities, opportunities, and constraints, and 3) analyzing the socio-economic, political and environmental institutions that work to produce and reproduce these realities.

To study this, relevant data needs to be disaggregated by gender in the collection process. This study also strives for clear documentation of the number of men and women interviewed and studied, as well as separation of factors that influence them, followed by an assessment of roles and responsibilities, if there, for example, are

⁴ Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, INE

⁵ Encuesta de Caracterización Socioeconómica Nacional (CASEN), MIDEPLAN, 2009



different types of work that men and women are engaged in. Consideration of access to and control over resources can be an important factor to understand why men and women engage in different types of labor and wish to participate differently in different societal functions. On territorial, mezzo level this could be mapped by outlining number of men and women who hold titles to land, education and training, or credit, and the number of men and women who work as officials in the territory, or as managers versus different levels of employees within larger corporations or industries (USAID, 2008).

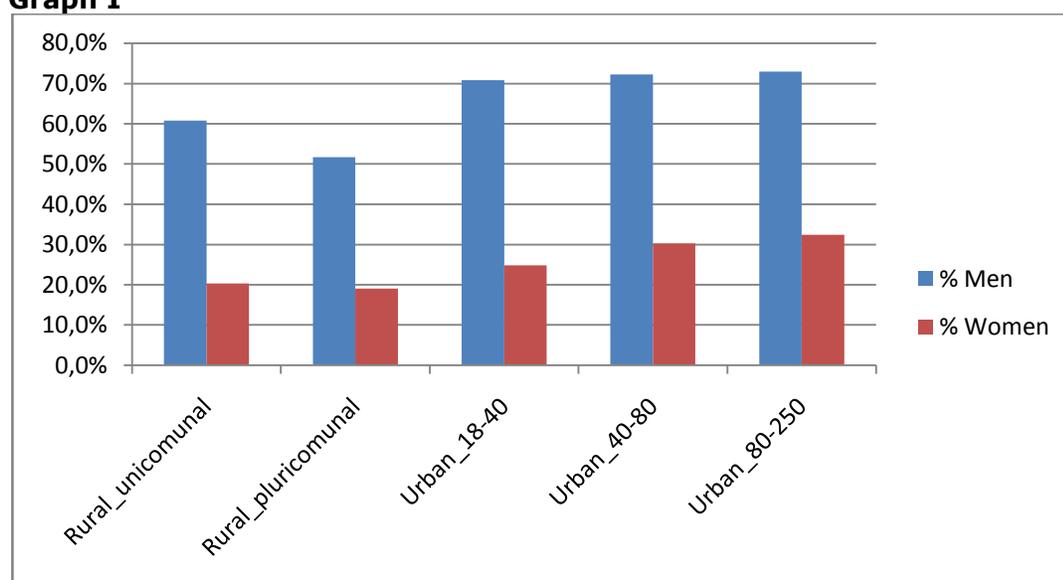


5. Results

Participation of men and women in the Labor Market

There is a significant gender gap in labor market participation between men and women who are able to work, hence part of PEA⁶. The following graph from O'Higgins 2002 shows the percentage of the population participating in economic activities (PEA) per type of area in the whole region. The graph shows a difference between rural and urban areas, and that the gap between men and women in participation remains regardless of the size of the urban area. In absolute numbers, more women in urban areas are reported as participating in economic activities than in rural areas. In 1992, the gender gap was larger and has hence decreased since. For men, the participation has remained and for women increased with about the same percentage in all areas.

Graph I



Percentage of men and women within PEA per area in O'Higgins 2002 (MIDEPLAN, 2009).

Between 67- and 69% of the total population in O'Higgins, both men and women, are part of PEA. These percentages have only minor differences between urban and rural areas, as shown in graph I (MIDEPLAN, 2009). The rest of the population, excluded from PEA, are those not counted as doing remunerated work, including those identified as students, pensioners, disabled and housewives (CEPAL, 2009). But not everyone included in PEA actually participates in the labor market (or the economic

⁶ PEA means the economic active population [Poblacion Economicamente Activa], and this entails the population between the ages of 15-65 that are able to participate in the labor market, including people that are working and/or looking for work.



sector) and there is a large discrepancy between men and women. In rural areas of O'Higgins, only 25% of the women of PEA actually participate in the economic sector while 60% of the men do. However, the number of participating women in the whole of Chile has increased and the gap between men and women decreased from 40% in 1997 to 33% in 2006 (OIT, 2007). Still however, even in urban areas, less than half (45%) of all the women of PEA participate in the economic sector, while the same number for men is 73% (MIDEPLAN, 2003).

OIT argues that women have more difficulties than men to integrate into the labor market due to family responsibilities. In a report from 2008, OIT also declared that the participation of women in the labor market in Chile is among the lowest in Latin America. If compared to countries with the same level of socio-economic development, like Argentina and Uruguay, Chile shows 10 percent less participation by women (OIT, 2008). One reason for the low participation of women might be that domestic work is still a large occupation for women, and counted into the informal sector. According to the 2002 Census, in rural areas of Chile women do 87% of the domestic work.

Even though the number of participating women in PEA is low, and actually at a similar level in the whole of Chile, there was a regional change occurring about 20 years ago entailing an increase in women's participation. On a global scale, Perron (2004) explains economic changes including massive incorporation of women into certain labor markets in relation to a division and feminization of labor that occurred due to increased manufacturing and packing. This in turn has created chains of cheap and unregulated labor due to structural adjustment that have reduced regular paid employment, for both men and women. Territorial actors provided different explanations for the increase in women's employment. A common explanation is that it was motivated primarily by the increased demand for work; that women were needed in the labor market to complement men who could not compensate for it all. In the region of O'Higgins, agricultural production changed from basic food crops to cash crops, mainly for export, and as this is much more labor intensive, an increased amount of workers was needed. Interviewees in the study expressed the opinion that women wanted to be able to work, earn their own money and be independent. This dimension has different starting points and is based on the institutional and legislative possibility for women to work and the availability of work (Matear, 1997). Several participants also stated that that in the context of rising prices and tougher living conditions, many women sought paid work to contribute monetarily to household survival, which earlier had mainly been supplied by men.

Competing explanations for shifts in the gender composition of labor force motivated different ideas about gendered abilities or lack thereof. Some interviewees characterized the new work options as easier and lighter than earlier labor



opportunities, which made it possible for women to work too, since they are seen as physically weaker than men. Others hypothesized that with the entering of the new crops and technology, there was a new specific need for women since they are believed to have a definite fine-technique motor skill in their hands that men don't have, which make them more suitable to work with packing of fruits produced mainly for export. Studies from the agro export industry in northern Brazil, show that in one period women and men were assigned to different tasks justified by naturalizing discourses that women have more nimble fingers and men are more fit for rough labor. However, in a later period, characterized by different labor regulations and technology, large numbers of men were hired in tasks formerly represented as "inherently feminine", and managers changed the gendered representation of these tasks (Selwyn, 2010).

Differences between work available to men and to women vary between rural and urban areas. In rural areas, it appeared as more work is offered for men throughout the whole year. This might be one reason for the large gap in participation between men and women. But what is the reason for not enough year-round work being offered for women? From the interviews, it was in general expressed by participants that it is easier for men to find work, and they are more popular among employers to hire due to that they don't get pregnant and are simpler in the use of toilettes. If a company hires both men and women, they have to provide certain facilities, such as separate bathrooms. Practical, institutional issues like these have been addressed with mixed success by SERNAM⁷, and they have, for example, advocated adjustments in maternity leave and prohibition of hiring discrimination based on maternity reasons (Matear, 1997). However, these efforts have not yet seen effects and many employers, as well as female workers, identify maternity and the risk of pregnancies as reasons for unemployment and exclusion from the labor market. We will look into this further under the section of sectors of participation. In the next section we will look at the division of men and women living in rural and urban areas.

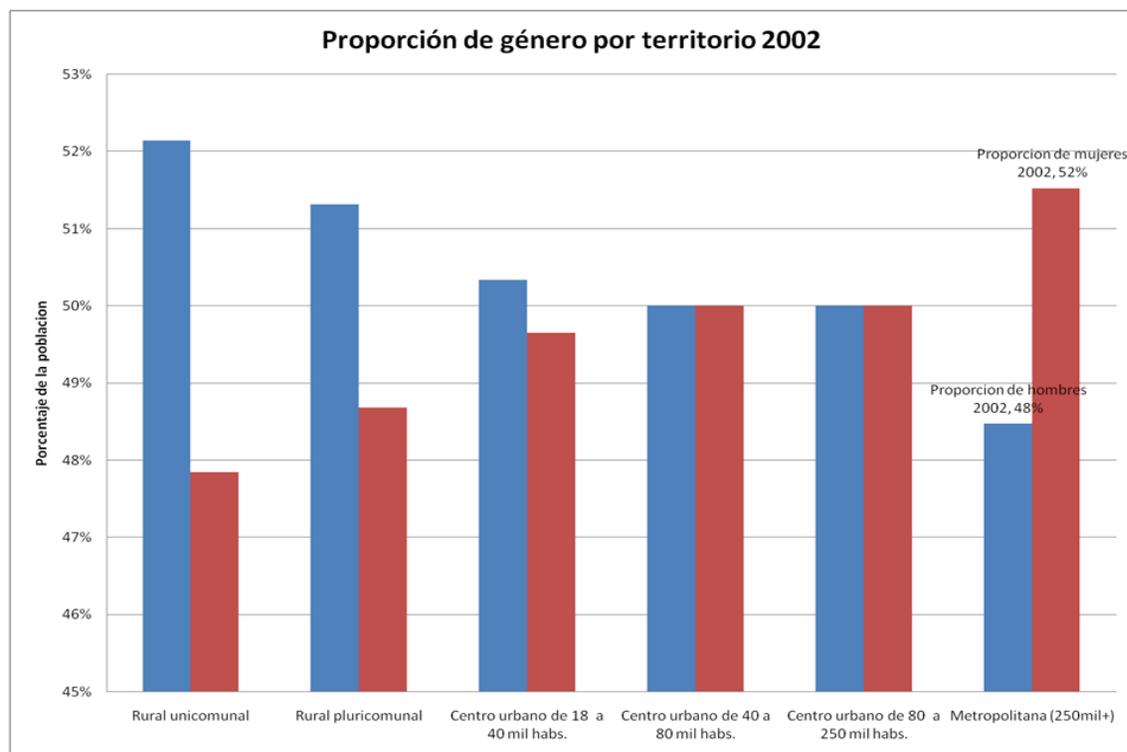
Division of men and women in rural and urban areas

In the whole of Chile, more women are living in urban areas than men, who constitute a greater part of the population in rural areas. Based on this, we have reason to believe that that women move from rural areas to urban areas to a greater extent than men (INE, 2002). The following graph from 2002 [graph II] shows the population of men and women in rural and urban areas in the whole of Chile, and how this changes depending on the size of the area.

⁷ Servicio Nacional de la Mujer - The state institution responsible for the incorporation of gender into public policy in Chile, with actions to benefit women employed in all sectors.



Graph II

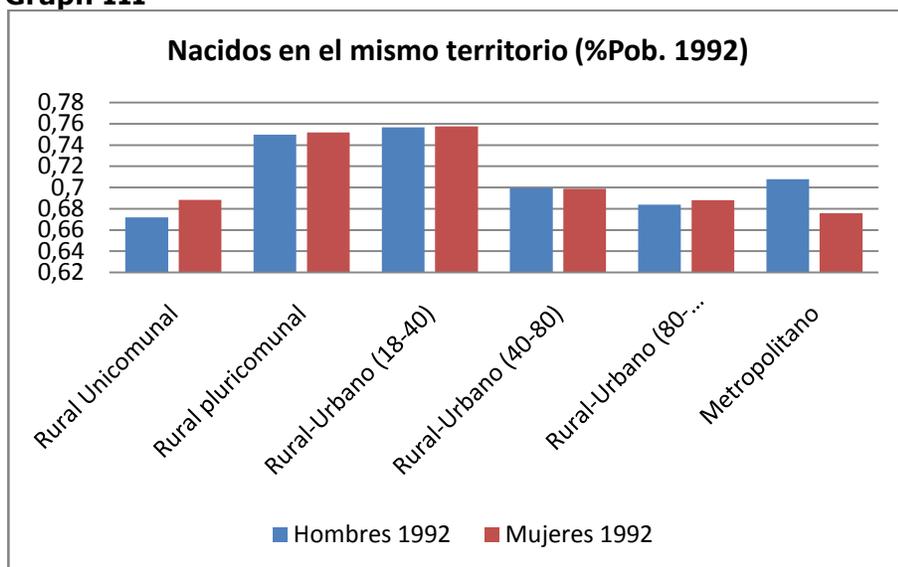


Gender proportion per territory in Chile, year 2002. Blue pillars men, red pillars women (INE, 2002).

In 2002, the percentage of inhabitants in the territories, were for Litueche: 52% men and 48% women. For San Vicente these numbers were 51% men and 49% women. During the period of 1992 and 2002, more women have left the rural area of Litueche, as the numbers of men and women were more even at this time. This tendency is the same in other territories within the region of O'Higgins, and in fact in the whole of Chile. In metropolitan areas the difference is 48% men and 52% women. This gendered demographic shift calls for further examination in order to identify push and pull factors that are motivating different residence patterns for men and women. The following graphs [III and IV] show the percentage of people who live in the same area as they were born, and have hence not migrated to another territory.

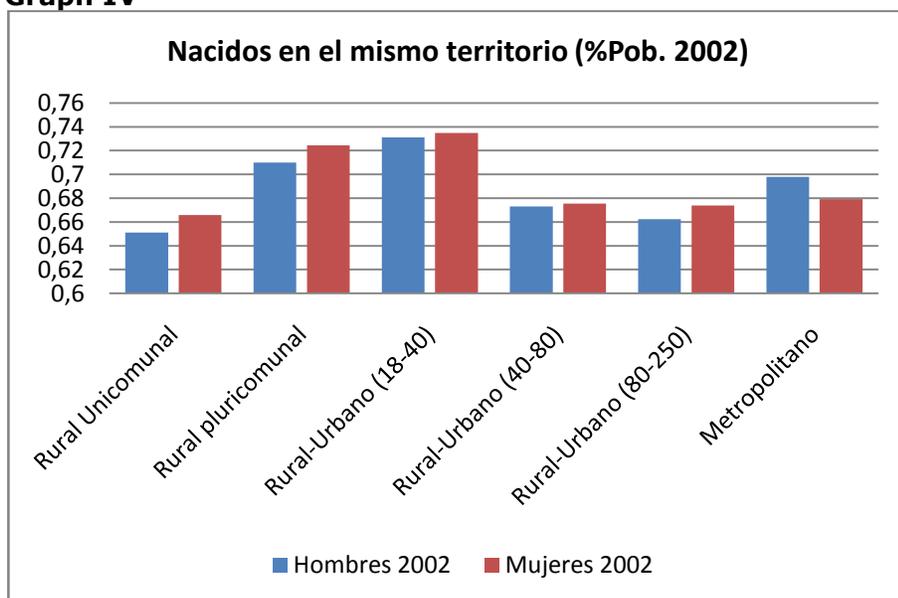


Graph III



Percentage of men and women living in the same area they were born, Chile 1992 (INE, 1992).

Graph IV



Percentage of men and women living in the same area they were born, Chile 2002 (INE, 2002).

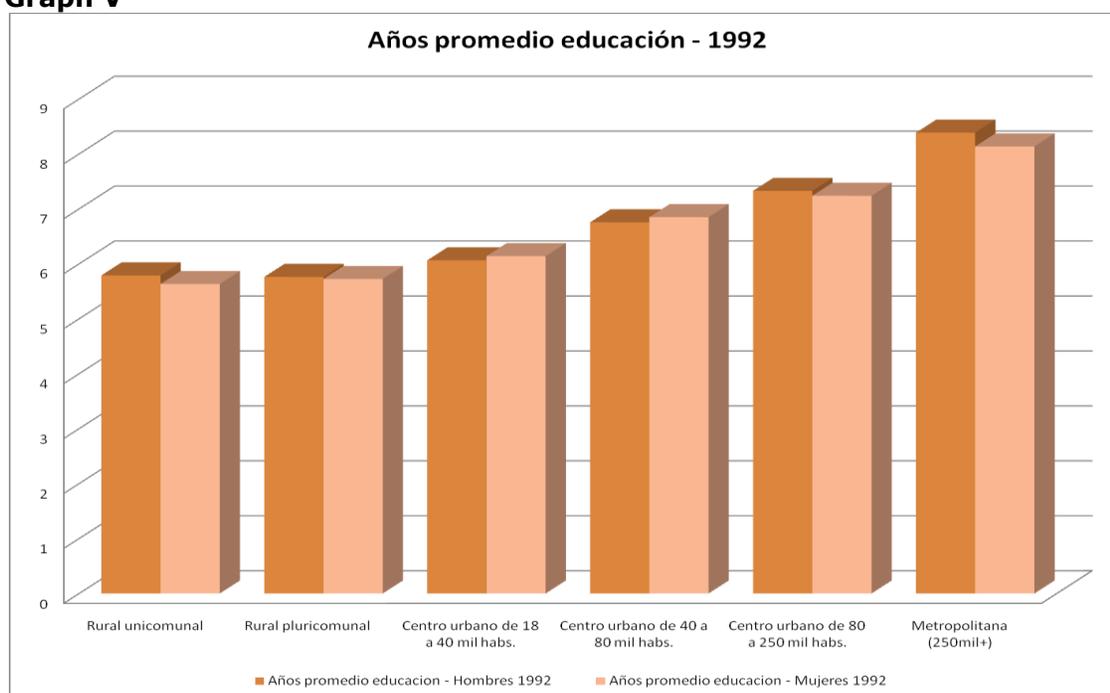
As shown in the graphs III and IV, rural-urban areas with a population between 18-80 thousand have the least movements of both men and women. In metropolitan areas,



a lower percentage of women than men were born in the same territory as they live, and if comparing 1992 with 2002, the gap is narrowing. As we now know that more women than men actually live in urban areas, we can draw the conclusion that women to a larger extent than men are migrating to urban areas. But we also know that more men than women live in rural areas, and from the pillars above we can extract that men are also migrating to a larger extent than women in rural areas. We can also see that the overall percentage of people being born and living in the same area has decreased between 1992 and 2002, and hence more people, both men and women in every type of area, are migrating today.

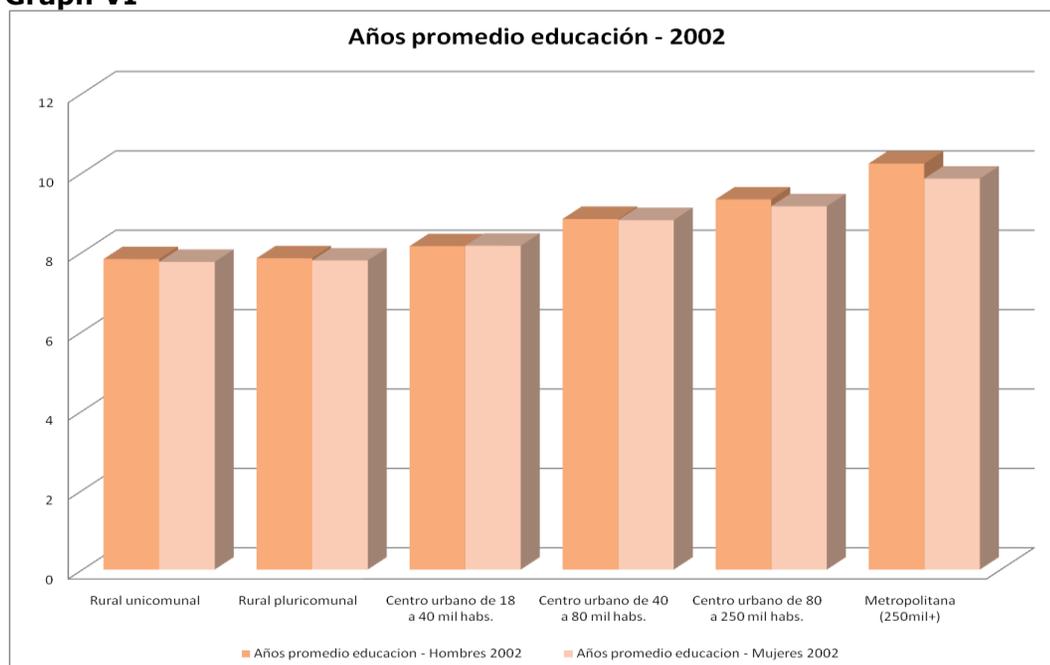
The aspiration for higher education is usually mentioned as a reason for women migrating to urban areas. Interviewees stated that women with higher education or women who wished to study superior courses, had a harder time finding work in rural areas than those without education. People living in rural areas have in general a lower level of education, and fewer years of education in total, than urban dwellers, as shown in the following graphs.

Graph V



Average level of years in education dependent on type of area, divided per men and women in Chile, year 1992 (INE, 1992).



Graph VI

Average level of years in education dependent on type of area, divided per men and women in Chile, year 2002 (INE, 2002).

As shown in the graphs above, the general level of education in every type of area has increased between 1992 and 2002, but still the difference between rural and urban areas is significant. If we look at higher education, the difference in percentage is even greater between rural and urban areas. In metropolitan cities year 1992, 7% completed university studies compared to less than 2% in rural areas. In 2002 these number were almost 12% within urban, compared to 3,5% in rural (INE, 2002). Gendered differences in educational levels are shifting: more women than men are completing secondary and university education, and the gap of women's advantage has been growing. More research must be done to determine causal relations between gendered differences in education and employment in urban versus rural residence, and the trend of widening gaps between more highly educated women and less highly educated men.

We know that larger cities offer more opportunities in the service sector, which is the greatest employer for both men and women, and more so for women. (This will be discussed more in the next section.) This could be the first reason for more women living in cities. It was also explained in the interviews that commerce and services during the last two decades had moved to urban areas and hence disappeared from rural areas. Participants stated that it was more profitable to move businesses to



areas with larger populations. One reason for the move of commerce might be the increase of agro industry which also rose after the change to cash crops, and the industries are usually placed outside of urban centers, where more workers can have shorter travel. But the effect may be that urban areas grows at the expense of rural areas, that simultaneously may become more rural whilst urban centers are growing. This might contribute to type of work remaining or concentrating in rural areas, leading to more men than women being engaged in this. These patterns are related to cultural notions that men are more suitable for physically hard work throughout the whole year than women, something that appeared in the interviews.

According to the interviewees, people living in surrounding areas to San Vicente are dependent on the city and the commerce and services available. In this area people travel to reach the city for work and for services, while people from the city travel to surrounding communes to work in agriculture or agro industry, which is a huge employer for the territory. Participants from the study stated that people in general living in and in the surrounding area of San Vicente are very dependent on the city and state that is it harder to live in a rural area without a city than with. Participants also stated that the importance of a city is greater today than before, as more commerce and services are moving into the city and all gathered at one place. "*Aquí está todo a la mano*" (Woman, focus group, San Vicente). In rural areas like Litueche, where there is no larger city close by, the people working in local commerce and services are people from the actual town, compared to in San Vicente, where people from surrounding communes travel to the city to work in services. In Litueche, the migration and flow of people is mainly within the region with reason for travelling to work, which is primarily agriculture.

It was also stated during interviews that childcare systems are more available in urban areas and travel to work is easier with commuting, and distances in general shorter. All of which were mentioned as factors that simplifies family life and taking care of children. Interviewees observed that for single-parent families (mainly women as our study got no evidence on single-parent families run by men) it is harder to live in rural areas as there are fewer opportunities for extended child care, like kindergartens with flexible or late hours, and hence the long travel makes it impossible for them to be away for long work days unless they have a family to take care of the children if those are under school age. In urban areas there are more opportunities for this and the conclusion made by the participating women, both in San Vicente and Litueche, was that working as a single mother is easier in urban areas.

In Chile, women are still seen as the major caretakers of the children and the household (Chant, 2002; Matear, 1997) and social-governmental systems that do not support fulfillment of these responsibilities for working women in rural areas appears

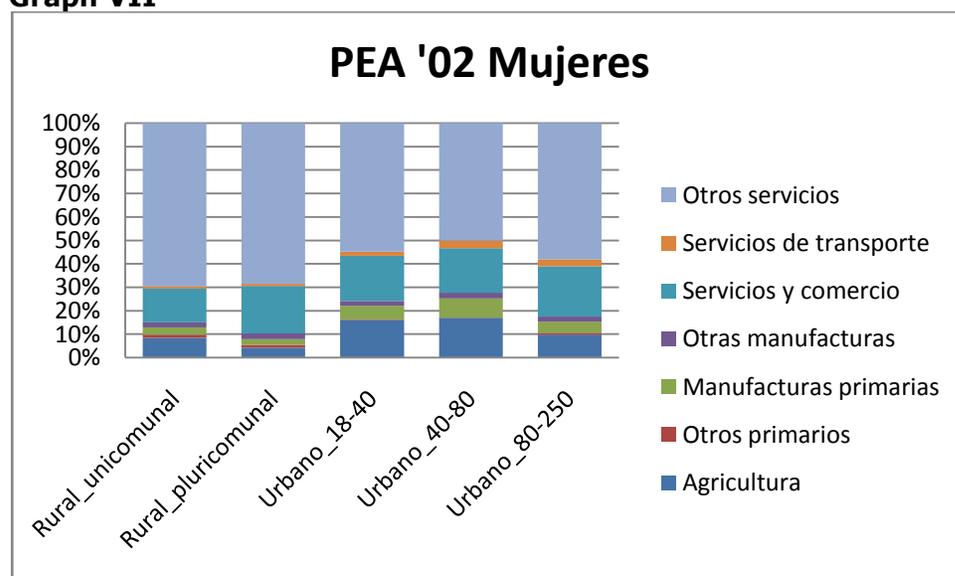


to be a factor for women moving into urban areas and working in the service sector, rather than the agricultural sector in rural areas. In the next section we look closer into which sector of the labor market men and women are engaged in.

Sectors of participation

In every type of area, more than 70% of all women within PEA that are employed, are engaged in the service sector. For men, these numbers are around 40 and 50%, and higher in urban areas (MIDEPLAN, 2009). The following graphs [VII and VIII] show the greatest employer for men and women year 2002 in the region of O'Higgins, divided per different type of area. The sector 'Other services' entailing for example the public sector, health care, child care, libraries, hotels and restaurants, are the greatest employer for women in every type of area.

Graph VII



Type of work sector for employed women within PEA in O'Higgins, 2002 (INE, 2002).

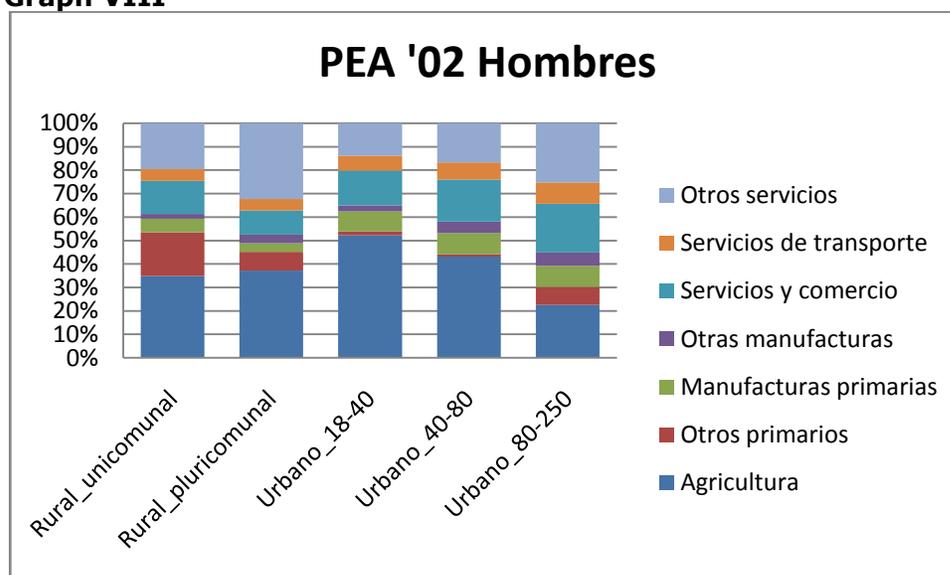
Even though the service sector is the biggest employer for women in the Census, agriculture was identified by the interview participants as the largest and most important sector in the territories of the study. Agriculture was especially important during the season and many participants claimed that they preferred to work within agriculture during the season, as that was a great opportunity for income. However, many declared that it for women is very hard to find permanent (year-around) work within agriculture and that there was a preference for hiring men. The reasons for this tie back to the things mentioned in the first section, like for example the risk of pregnancies, which particularly is a hold-back on women between the ages of 25 and



35. If they already have children, they are likely to be excluded from some sectors or types of works as well, according to the interviewees. According to the latest World Development Report, women are more likely than men to take part-time work all over the world, and it is not always a voluntary choice (WDR, 2012).

In the following graph for men, we can see that agriculture is the greatest employer in all types of areas, except for in urban centers that have more than 80 000 inhabitants, where also men are engaged primarily in the service sector (more than 50%). The graph refers to those men within PEA that are employed.

Graph VIII



Type of work sector for employed men within PEA in O'Higgins, 2002 (INE, 2002).

So what are the reasons for men and women working in different sectors, and why is this difference larger in rural areas than in urban areas? Education is, as already mentioned, one factor determining where men and women chose to work and in the following table we can outline the participation between the two territories within 3 sectors⁸, based on level of education (MIDEPLAN, 2009). The table below shows the percentage of men and women in each category of education, within the two territories of the study, with the purpose of investigating if the level of education (basic, medium, or higher)⁹ affects the choice of working sector.

⁸ The sector "other" entails the following: mining activities, electricity, gas, water industries; and construction.

⁹ Basic education refers to the first 8 years of education, between the ages of 6 to 14. Medium level is from 14-18, up until last year of secondary school, called "cuarto medio". Higher education refers to education after 18 years, such as college or university.



Litueche

Economic sector	Men			Women		
	Basic	Medium	Higher	Basic	Medium	Higher
Agriculture including agro industry	65%	30%	9%	19%	19%	7%
Commerce, transport, public and financial services.	15%	40%	7%	2%	15%	9%
Other	20%	30%	84%	79%	67%	83%

San Vicente

Economic sector	Men			Women		
	Basic	Medium	Higher	Basic	Medium	Higher
Agriculture including agro industry	68%	39%	20%	45%	31%	19%
Commerce, transport, public and financial services.	14%	23%	24%	7%	10%	6%
Other	18%	38%	56%	47%	59%	75%

(MIDEPLAN, 2009)

It is clear that both men and women with higher level of education don't work to a large extent in agriculture. We can also see that more men than women are working within agriculture with all levels of education, but the highest percentage of people within agriculture, in both territories, have low levels of education. One reason for the difference between Litueche and San Vicente is the presence of agro industry in San Vicente, which requires its employees to have the last year of secondary school, which as mentioned is a problem due to poor completion in rural areas, mainly as it is not included in the basic education. Participants of the study claimed that women working within the agro industry must have the last year of secondary school, a demand that according to them is not the same for men. For a woman with higher education, it is according to testimonies of the participants, very hard to find a work in rural areas, and due to her education, she is likely to be discriminated as she is now seen as over-qualified.

A recurring example was that women have basically very few opportunities to work in construction or road side work, which both are mentioned by interviewees as 'masculine' work. At agro industry, women are generally not assigned work with the



large tools, drive the machines or be part of the slaughtering of the animals. The risk of pregnancies is a major hold-back on women, and if they already have children, mothers are likely to be excluded from some sectors or types of works as well. It is worth consideration that no participants in the study mentioned that fathers are extended special protections, nor did they articulate a sense of injustice by companies that assigned dangerous work to workers who are fathers, while “protecting” those who are mothers. Focus group participants expressed that, in general, many companies are more relaxed towards the men and there is a difference in rights at the same time as they put higher demands on the woman; *“Son mas exigente con las mujeres”*. (Woman in focus group, San Vicente).

There is also a gap between men’s and women’s employment as professionals and managers in rural and urban areas. According to the 2002 Census, in rural areas there is a gap of almost 14% leaning towards women in employment as professionals and managers. Professionals entail occupations which have some sort of higher education. These jobs include both the private and the public sectors. In urban areas, the gap is smaller, yet still with an advantage towards women. Looking only into managers, women are still more represented in rural areas but less than men in urban areas. If we separate the sectors by private and public, we find that in rural areas, women are still more represented in professional positions, whereas men are more represented in private sector, urban areas. In the public sector, this trend is the same; women are more represented in rural areas and men more in urban.

Why is it that women are more represented in these occupations in rural areas and men more in urban areas? This could be seen as a great opportunity for women, yet we assume from the data above that more women choose to move to urban areas based on lack of opportunities in rural areas. And knowing that the overall employment gap between men and women is almost 57% in advantage for men in rural areas, it is very interesting that more women than men are working as professionals and managers. Perhaps this is connected to the fact that people in rural areas mainly are engaged in agriculture, an occupation that is not professional, and to a larger extent employs men, while women in rural areas to a greater extent are engaged in the service sector which entails a lot of professional positions like nurses, social assistants, secretaries and municipal employees. This could explain the gap between men and women in professional occupations.

In the next section we will look into cultural stereotypes and gender assumptions that might influence division of work and occupations between men and women.



Division of work based on gender assumptions and stereotypes

Initially, the majority of the participants and all employers stated that men and women do the same work and are capable of it, and that they have the same opportunities. However, when asking more specific questions about labor specific tasks, it turned out that men and women in fact don't do the same work, don't have the same opportunities, and are divided due to their gender. All participants in the focus groups and interviews in both Litueche and San Vicente claimed that women are more sensitive, working with more warmth, love and care. These characteristics were used to explain why women are seen as better to select fruit in the packing industry as an example, which is a typical work that men according to the participants cannot do due to that they are crude and rough. "*Los hombres hacen la pega más bruta*" (Woman, focus group, San Vicente). Women were also described as daring (*aperradas*), hard working, ordered and engaged in the work and therefore more reliable at the same time as they perform better. Furthermore, women are also seen as better in work that requires planning and thinking, and that they learn quicker and more easy. "*Son más cachativas de pensamiento*". (Woman, focus group, San Vicente). But the sensitivity is also a reason why women are perceived as less appropriate in some occupations than men even though the general opinion is that "*las mujeres pueden trabajar igual de bien que los hombres...*" (Employer at agricultural farm, Litueche). One male employer also stated that women may work more slowly but with better quality. Men on the other hand were vividly described as lazy, both by men and women, and not doing more than they have to do. He claimed that men prefer working on a fixed salary and with automated work with machines, tools and other occupations that are monotonous.

If women are seen as more responsible, orderly and caretaking than men they might be more encouraged to seek professional occupations and higher education. For men, the stereotypes that they are crude, brutal, clumsy and irresponsible, may lead to men being discouraged to seek professional employment, and limiting their possibilities. This could also be a reason why fewer men are residing in cities. Perhaps rural men are feeling that they do not have a place in the urban and professional world? The opposite might go for women in rural areas. The assumption that work in rural areas in general is more "physical" (agriculture, fishing, mining etc) could attract more men, or lead to employers rather hiring men, who are culturally represented as "more physical". Men are preferred to hire in agro industry with the physical, hard parts of the work and with tools and machinery which is explained as "*complicado para una mujer*" (Male employer in agriculture, Litueche). Within transportation, the grand majority are still men and this is merely based on customs and habits than any other reason, according to the participants, but for construction, men do the work because it is physical and the general belief is that a women could not do this as well as a man. "*No he visto una mujer trabajando en la construcción*" (Male employer in



construction, Litueche). According to the Census from 2002, there are no women working in primary activities like mining, fishing, forestry, gas- and timber extraction.

Other examples of this are that both men and women in the study stated that women are not allowed to work with chemicals that are used in spraying plants and fruits to protect them from insects. They said that chemicals might harm the reproduction system and basically anything that might be dangerous for a woman; she is not allowed to do. There are, however, no written restrictions about this and they are hence only conventional gendered assumptions and constraints. The assumption is that if she will get hurt, it will also affect her children (based on the assumption that the woman is the primary caretaker). Basically any work that might be dangerous or with risk of injuries is assigned to men. Another belief that was expressed was that men have an easier time to get to work during the whole year, as they are more resistant to cold during winter and to strong sun during summer. One reason why women are assigned to administrative tasks and selling may be the belief, expressed by interviewees that women have "el don de la palabra" [the gift of the word] and it is harder for a man to express himself well and convince the client. *"Una mujer 'tira' más en una tienda para vender, es más útil"* (Woman working at Municipality, San Vicente).

These statements communicate gender expectations and reproduce stereotypes as well as reinforce roles for men and women, and all of these could be reasons for the gender gap in labor market participation. Hence, it seems like a lot of work that might be physically challenging, located more in rural areas, is rather assigned to men than to women. It is worrying that men, who in the whole of Latin America suffer much more work related injuries, accidents, disabilities and deaths than women (Jacobsen, 2002), are valued less than women while assigned to the dangerous tasks.

Consequences of biological assumptions and their social implications

In several interviews participants stated that men are seen as less responsible than women, and less trustworthy as they might show up at work with a hangover, or miss out on work completely, and that this was consistent for all men due to that they are men. Interesting with this assumption is that it does not only entail heavy gendered stereotypes, but it actually also implies that women don't do or wouldn't do this. What are the reasons for that assumption? It was mentioned before that employers' expectations of women are higher, and women have to prove themselves more than men. One element at play may be that women cannot risk making a bad impression or losing faith in their employer, and the consequences for showing up with a hangover might be worse for women. Another presumption is that women on average drink less than men, something that calls for further examination about the reasons for this belief.



Women might also be affected by the expectations on them to always behave well and proper, and are therefore acting ordered and well in every situation, because that is what is expected from them. A male employer in agriculture in San Vicente expressed a widely circulated gender stereotype when he said in an interview that if a man earns 100, he would spend 40 on alcoholic drinks while as the women would bring 95 of 100 to the household, and he stated that the reason for this is that women care more about their families. Women were also described as better to work in stores with selling. They are more kind, polite and naturally helpful, while men are usually angrier, and therefore cannot attract customers. These statements imply that a man is less good at attracting and selling because he is a man and that a woman cannot or should not get angry, frustrated or express negative feelings because of her femininity.

Several interview participants stated that women cannot do any kind of dangerous work due to physical abilities and the expectation that a woman has family responsibilities. For example on the field working with heavy tools or the chainsaw is not for women as it is dangerous and might harm her. When we asked if it might harm the man (to exclude the assumption that men are seen as too strong and too good and simply won't get hurt), we got the answer that men of course could also get hurt but at least then there is still the woman to take care of the family. Hence, if a woman gets hurt, it also affects the children and that is the main reason for not letting women work in construction or on other dangerous sights. This spurs on the institution that men should or could or are not taking care of the children. It also reinforces the assumption that women are the primary caretakers and should be careful with themselves as they have the family responsibility. For men, this means that 1) his human contribution to the family is less worth than the money he could bring, and 2) he is expected to be physically strong and tough enough to carry out heavy and/or dangerous work and "manly" enough to do risky and dangerous work. What happens with the self-confidence of the man who is not able or willing to perform this kind of work and/or to take these kinds of risks?

A male interview participant told us about working in the fridge in the agro industry, where in spite the protection clothing, it is still very cold to work there for an entire shift. Workers are hence allowed to take short breaks, and if they feel they cannot handle the work, they can ask and will be moved. During the time he worked there some women also working in the fridge asked to be moved, but some women were able to withstand the cold and never asked and even took very few breaks. He said that no man asked to be moved during this time. He experienced getting a lot of colds during this period, but he didn't want to ask to be moved and be seen as less capable to his employers. A possible conclusion of this is that men to a higher extent feel pressure of masculine expectations, making them avoid seeking help or complaining



of physical pain or health problems, with the risk of being seen as less of a man. This is a clear example of when local culture naturalizes men as physically stronger and resistant to for example cold, and there seems to be no room for individual differences. As mentioned above, men suffer much more negative physical consequences like injuries and accidents than women, all over Latin America.



6. Concluding remarks

Demographical changes, based on opportunities in the Labor Market?

One conclusion that derived from the study is that women seem to be migrating more to cities, while men seem to be staying in or migrating to rural areas. This might be the effect of lack of opportunities rather than a free choice. Vision of gendered spatial opportunities locates better opportunities for women in urban centers, and it seems, based on the study that women are understood as more urbane, simultaneously as rural labor markets pose greater opportunities for men to work all year, as these areas seem to offer more secure and continuous opportunities for men in particular. Urban labor markets seem to offer wider array of service sector jobs, from which women are not excluded as they are from permanent rural jobs. At the same time urban areas provide better social support with for example childcare.

In recorded discourses and interviews, men are identified with 'ruralness', often in a negative way: uncivilized, lazy, uncommitted, rough/not careful. These images seem projected on and internalized by men. Gender expectations are that women are better at service jobs, more friendly, attentive, and 'servicial' to clients. What does that entail? That they implicitly are more civilized, educated and/or sophisticated? The opportunities to work are usually great factors in migration and residence patterns, and what we can learn from the presented data so far is that urban areas provide greater work opportunities for women and rural areas for men.

Rural areas with and without a city

The study presented both narratives and quantitative/statistical data presenting the historical development of the region O'Higgins. These data provides a picture showing that urban-rural areas seem to be better equipped for sustainable development all year round, and providing more economic development with more equitable distribution of income in gender terms. In economic terms, this would suggest that rural areas with an intermediate city, where both men and women are contributing to the economy, are better for the dynamic territorial development.

To answer the research question: *How do gender dynamics within the labor market in rural territories interact with rural-urban dimensions?* we conclude that access to an intermediate city provides more opportunities for both men and women, and especially so for women. We also know that more rural areas pose a lower educated population and there is hence an undermining of human capital in rural areas where people that seek higher education choose not to return due to fewer opportunities and discrimination. If this continues in the future, the undermining of human capital in rural areas will eventually lead to an even greater uneven distribution of men and



women. Interesting and important to investigate are the future implications that the unequal distribution of men and women in rural areas may pose on the reproductive system, on the economic system, and on the development of these territories. It may well have fatale social as well as economic consequences as an unequal gender balance may harm both family-, social- and cultural reproduction.

Methodological lessons learned

A very interesting methodological discourse that derived from the study was the tendency among employers to eagerly talk about women and the employment of those in a very positive manner. Here we can find a contradiction between discourse and empirical reality as employers expressed themselves as very positive towards hiring women within agriculture in rural areas (discourse), at the same time as the empirical reality showed that women do not get employed permanently or to the same extent as men in these areas and sectors. The reason for this might be that there is a high social desirability tendency (Passer & Smith, 2004) to both employ women and for everyone to seem "gender-aware", and immediately talk a lot about women's participation in the labor market, also when they were not asked specifically about that. All employers wanted to use words like "good" and "equal" in their description of men and women as both capable of performing most kinds of work, and the employers of the study believed and/or expressed that women had the same opportunities as men. As we know, the opportunities are not the same and hence there is a discrepancy between the discourse and the practice. The political agenda and social changes in the country (when women entered the labor market) may have affected this desirability together with an increased awareness about gender issues.

A deeper thought about this is that the interest in employing and talking about women as important contributors to the labor force in areas where they in reality are not as acknowledged as men, and in fact not as privileged nor treated the same, may not be conscious. Instead it could be so heavily institutionalized that they don't notice that men and women receive different treatment due to their gender, and it is a cultural discourse that men and women are different and therefore assigned different tasks. By this I mean that it might not be of deliberate wickedness based on an underlying thought that women are less good or less appropriate, but rather that the employers just act out of instinct which tells them that women are, for example, better at caring the fruit and men better at cutting the branches. An example of this was an employer at an agricultural farm in Litueche that told us that men and women do exactly the same and in fact work together in pairs: "*Trabajan en pareja; el hombre corta, la mujer limpia*". And while explaining this, he was actually not aware of it entailing a major difference in work and gender bias in empirical reality versus discourse. Perhaps this is the case for many employers, that they themselves do not even notice or think of the differences as any differences of interests, and to them it is simply



completely natural and obvious that men and women are physically different to the extent that it makes them suitable and better for different types of work and hence should perform different tasks. As noted in the study, this gender bias provides the base for the difference in opportunities for men and women within rural labor markets and is hence also a reason for the uneven migration creating an unequal gender balance between rural and urban areas.



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