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Navigating Multidimensional Borderlands: How Spatial Politics and Inequalities Shape the Working Conditions and Lived Experiences of Mexican Women Farmworkers in the San Joaquin Valley

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by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Navigating Multidimensional Borderlands:
How Spatial Politics and Inequalities Shape the Working Conditions and Lived Experiences of Mexican Women Farmworkers in the San Joaquin Valley

by

Evelyn Pruneda
Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in Sociology
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Dr. Ellen Reese, Chairperson

California's San Joaquin Valley is one of the most fertile agricultural expanses in the United States, producing nearly 40 percent of the nation's fruits, nuts, and vegetables. The agricultural abundance, however, belies the challenges that exist for some of the nation's most impoverished and vulnerable populations. My dissertation examines how intersecting inequalities based on gender, race, class, and citizenship interact with spatial politics to shape the working and living conditions of Mexican women farmworkers in the San Joaquin Valley.

Based on an analysis of 35 semi-structured, in-depth interviews with Mexican women farmworkers, this dissertation focuses on three key domains of women farmworkers' lives, including paid labor conditions, unpaid reproductive labor in their homes, and community conditions. I bridge multiple theoretical frameworks, including intersectionality, feminist geography, and Chicana feminist scholar Gloria Anzaldua's (1987) 'Borderlands' theory to develop a concept called *multidimensional borderlands.* This concept provides a framework for understanding the social, political, and spatial inequalities affecting this region, where a farmworker labor structure stratified by gender

and citizenship status exists in an isolated rural geographic context where many residents, most of whom are Latinx, lack access to basic services, and which has been heavily impacted by climate change.

My research finds that the intersection of sexism and anti-immigrant policies impact women farmworkers' experience in the workplace through exploitative labor practices and vulnerability to sexual harassment and assault in the male-dominated agricultural industry, particularly for undocumented women. Women farmworkers also face inequalities in their communities through residential segregation, subpar housing conditions, and lack of access to clean air and water, which have serious health implications for this community. In addition, low incomes combined with spatial inequalities that result from living in isolated, rural communities, often leave farmworking women without access to affordable, reliable transportation to work, grocery stores, healthcare providers, and their children's schools. Finally, women face added challenges at home with their families due to the grueling nature of farmwork, while volatile work schedules and labor precarity make it challenging for mothers to attend to their children and their gendered domestic responsibilities, including facilitating childcare and housework.

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CHAPTER I:

INTRODUCTION: MULTIDIMENSIONAL BORDERLANDS AND WOMEN FARMWORKERS IN THE SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY

> "The US-Mexican border *es una herida abierta* where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds. And before a scab forms it hemorrhages again, the lifeblood of two worlds merging to form a third country-a border culture. Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish *us* from *them.* A border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge. A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition. The prohibited and forbidden are its inhabitants."
>
> -Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands: La Frontera*

INTRODUCTION

For many communities of color in the United States, living in the borderlands (Anzaldúa 1987) means straddling two languages, two cultures, precarious citizenship statuses, under-resourced communities, and challenging working and living conditions. These borderlands have manifested themselves as political borders that separate nations, states, and cities; social borders that include sexism, racism, and segregation, and cultural borders that reproduce patriarchal family dynamics. For the Mexican and Mexican-American women in California's fertile San Joaquin Valley (hereafter, the Valley) who making their living as farmworkers in rural communities, they experience the borderlands in the places they live, work, and raise their families.

This dissertation focuses on the experiences of Mexican and Mexican-American women farmworkers in the Valley. My central research question is: How do inequalities based on gender, race, class, and citizenship interact with spatial politics and inequalities to shape the working conditions and lived experiences of Mexican and Mexican-American women farmworkers in rural California? My research finds that paid labor

conditions that are impacted by the women's race, gender, and citizenship status. In particular, undocumented women face high levels of exploitation and discrimination in the workplace as well as heightened vulnerability to sexual harassment and assault in these male-dominated work spaces. In addition, the backdrop of the climate crisis is having material and physical impacts on these workers in the form of less work due to droughts and higher temperatures and more extreme fires impacting their working conditions as they labor outside.

Women farmworkers also face inequalities in their communities through residential segregation, subpar housing conditions, and lack of access to clean air and water which have serious health implications for these workers. In addition, the history of racist and xenophobic exclusion of immigrants and exclusionary municipal boundary-making in the Valley has resulted in the proliferation of low-income unincorporated communities which lack access to basic city services, transportation, and political representation. Although these communities have traditionally lacked resources in the form of city services, the devastating drought created a shortage of jobs and in some cases completely depleted their underground water sources (Greene 2018; Faunt, Sneed, Traum, Brandt 2016; Cagle 2020).

Finally, women face added challenges at home with their families due to the realities of working backbreaking jobs, while volatile work schedules and labor precarity make it challenging for mothers to attend to their children and their gendered domestic responsibilities, including facilitating childcare and housework. This is particularly true for migrant farmworkers who are engaged in transnational motherhood, with their

children living abroad while their mothers work in the United States (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997). Older siblings, particularly daughters take up the brunt of this carework while their mothers work and thereby reproducing gendered domestic responsibilities. The impacts women and their children face as working mothers is compounded by the spatial inequalities that result from living in isolated, rural communities often leave them unable to find affordable, reliable transportation to work, grocery stores, school, and doctors' appointments. Finally, women farmworkers have faced unique challenges related to the Covid-19 pandemic's resulting shift to virtual education. Many women in these communities have limited English proficiency and technological literacy, making it difficult to support their children in online schooling.

By conceptualizing these issues as borders, including political, social, and cultural, we have more analytical tools to understand the interconnected impacts of social and geographic boundaries across multiple spheres in the lives of women. A multidimensional borderlands framework also gives voice to the transnational experience of immigrants and speaks to gaps in intersectionality's attention to the experience of Latinx/Chicanx folks in the U.S., abroad, and those in-between. While there is a substantial amount of research conducted on spatial inequalities in urban areas, there is a lack of research on how spatial inequalities have impacted poor and working class Latinxs, women in particular, in the rural Valley.

My research advances intersectional literature and Chicana feminist borderland studies by examining at how women farmworkers, who exist at the nexus of multiply marginalized identities navigate their paid work and unpaid reproductive labor. I bridge

multiple theoretical frameworks, including intersectionality, feminist geography, and Chicana feminist theorist Gloria Anzaldúa's 'borderlands' (1987) concept to address both the work and home lives of women in this community. I argue that the rural context and spatial elements of their lives are crucial in creating a unique experience that deserves attention from sociologists. The concept of living a life on the borderlands is multidimensional. It is present at work, at home, and in the community where you live. All three of these spaces are intimately connected by the struggles for economic survival and dignity as well as individual, familial, and community resistance to the forces creating these borders.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

This project uses a feminist intersectional perspective and it builds upon Anzaldúa's concept of 'Borderlands' (1987) as a theoretical foundation. This section will provide an overview of both the concepts of intersectionality and borderlands, which serve as the foundation for my *multidimensional borderlands* lens. Multidimensional borderlands provides a theoretical framework for understanding the lived experiences of women farmworkers who embody multiple identities and who traverse social, political, and geopolitical borderlands that manifest themselves in inequalities based on their gender, race, class, place of residence, and citizenship. The gendered, racialized, and classed realities affect their productive and reproductive labor in the form of limited job opportunities and create gendered expectations for their role in the family in terms of childcare and household duties. In addition to their work and home lives, these women also experience borderlands in the form of the U.S.-Mexico border, which many of the

women in my study have either crossed themselves or have familial ties to someone who has crossed. The physical landscape, whose lush agriculture serves as the livelihood for thousands of farmworkers and whose unforgiving isolation, lack of access to clean air and water, lack of public transportation, and history of exclusion of poor Mexican workers have resulted in the growth of disadvantaged unincorporated communities, further compound the challenges these residents face.

For the residents who live in these rural areas, the borderlands that engulf them has also given way to strong, resilient communities who continue to fight for the survival of their families. This dissertation will weave together insights from intersectionality theory with Anzaldúa's notion of the 'borderlands' to analyze the realities of the social and spatial inequalities that women farmworkers face. By doing so, I show how the lived realities are much more multidimensional than previous literature has portrayed. I begin by providing an overview of the development and key ideas of intersectionality theory, followed by a discussion of some of the questions surrounding its usefulness as both a theory and a methodology. I then introduce Anzaldúa's concept of the borderlands and discuss how I will build upon it in my theoretical perspective and research.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality as a conceptual tool, methodology, and transformative practice is continually evolving. Beginning with its formal coining in 1989 by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), it is argued that intersectionality is the most important theoretical contribution that feminist theory and women's studies, in conjunction with critical race theory, has made so far (McCall 2005). This framework has become integral

to both theory and research, as it emphasizes the interlocking effects of race, class, gender, and sexuality, highlighting the ways in which categories of identity and structures of inequality are mutually constituted and defy separation into discrete categories of analysis (Collins 1990). Intersectionality provides a unique lens of study that does not question difference; rather, it assumes that differential experiences of common events are to be expected given variation in people's social locations (Dill and Kohlman 2012).

Collins (1990) introduces the concept of the "matrix of domination," which refers to interrelated domains that organize power relations in society. She explains that "the matrix of domination is structured on several levels. People experience and resist oppression on three levels: the level of personal biography; the group or community level of cultural context created by race, class, and gender; and the systemic level of social institutions (Collins 1990: 227). Collins (1990) argues that the significance of seeing race, class, and gender as interlocking systems of oppression instead of additive models of oppression creates a paradigm shift where other oppressions such as age, sexual orientation, and religion are thought of more inclusively, "This type of analysis also opens up possibilities for a both/and conceptual stance, one in which all groups possess varying amounts of penalty and privilege in one historically created system. In this system, for example, white women are penalized by their gender but privileged by their race. Depending on the context, an individual may be an oppressor, a member of an oppressed group, or simultaneously oppressor and oppressed" (Collins 1990: 225). Dill and Kohlman (2012) argue that because intersectional knowledge is grounded in the everyday lives of people of diverse backgrounds, it is seen as an important tool linking

theory with practice. As such, intersectional work can validate the lives and histories of people or groups who have been previously ignored or marginalized, and it can be used to help empower communities and the people in them.

Although intersectionality is a powerful tool, it is important not to essentialize the experiences of those who share multiple identities. Dill and Kohlman (2012) ask, "How do we benefit from comparison and interrelationships without negating or undermining the complex and particular character of each group, system of oppression, or culture?" Zavella's (1991) work on Mexican and Chicana cannery workers, problematizes the idea that these women who share a socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and gender all have the same experience in their work and home lives. She acknowledges the commonalities and affinities with other women of color, but she emphasizes the diversity that exists within this group, including multiple histories, regional settlement patterns, certain cultural practices, sexual preferences, and "occasionally radically dissimilar political outlooks. Our solidarity as Chicanas can be undermined by these differences among us" (Zavella 1991: 74). Furthermore, she argues that there exists commonalities in subordination produced by the intersection of race, class, and gender, but that it is important to examine the Chicanx/Mexicanx culture that is "also socially constructed in ways that are misogynist, homophobic, internalized racist and class prejudiced" (75). In order to have a better understanding of Chicanas, she calls for closer attention to women's particular social locations.

Yuval-Davis (2006: 199) describes social location as a person's belonging to a particular gender, race, class, nation, age group, kinship group, or certain profession,

which, at each historical moment, "have particular implications vis-à-vis the grids of power relations in society." A nuanced understanding of how social location differs for individuals but is directly related to power relations is important to this study because of the unique situation in the San Joaquin Valley and because women farmworkers have historically dealt with multiple axes of inequality along which their social locations vary; they are Mexican, working class women, and many of them are immigrants and might also face discrimination as either younger or older workers. In addition to race, class, and gender, and age, my initial research findings highlight the role of inequalities based on immigration status and levels of cultural assimilation and the relative distance between workers' place of residence and jobs as important factors to understand the lived experiences of Mexican women in this community.

Because I am looking at spatial politics and inequalities stemming from rural isolation, unequal access to clean water, transportation issues, and the proliferation of disadvantaged unincorporated areas resulting from residential segregation, I am also including perspectives from feminist and intersectional feminist geography. Feminist geography can make significant contributions to advance intersectionality by appreciating the significance of space. Valentine (2007) argues that although research within the field of feminist geography has explored particular interconnections such as those between gender and race, and how they operate across space, the theoretical concept of intersectionality as debated in the wider social sciences has not been addressed.

Despite the literature that theorizes about intersectionality from a spatial perspective (Brown 2011; Rodo de Zarate 2014; Ferre and Rodo de Zarate 2016;

Valentine 2007), Hopkins (2017) argues that geographers have not always been as attentive to the contested histories of intersectionality, arguing that greater attention is needed to the contributions of black and anti-racist feminist academics and activists who have been so crucial to shaping the field of intersectionality. In terms of the former, the scholarship of Collins (1990, 2000), Crenshaw (1989, 1991), hooks (1984), and Yuval-Davis (2006) have been paramount. Visibility and inclusion are crucial for using intersectionality; yet, scholars have expressed anxieties about the whitening of intersectionality as the work of Black feminists and other minoritized scholars are overlooked (Bilge 2013). Here the concern is that intersectionality is seen to belong to disciplinary feminism, which displaces the key role of race. Valentine's (2007) research, for example, addresses feminist geography and locates intersectionality within feminist social science. This essentially connects intersectionality to gender studies rather than to antiracism and so centers gender rather than race as the focus of inquiry when the origins of intersectionality sits within both feminism and antiracism rather than only the former (Hopkins 2017). As Bilge (2013) argues:

> A grim irony: a tool elaborated by women of color to confront the racism and heterosexism of White-dominated feminism, as well as the sexism and heterosexism of antiracist movements, becomes, in another time and place, a field of expertise overwhelmingly dominated by white disciplinary feminists who keep race and racialized women at bay (Bilge 2013: 418).

Despite intersectionality's importance as a powerful analytical tool that is rooted in critical race and feminist scholarship and activism among women of color, much of this scholarship fails to analyze the role of political or physical boundary-making in shaping intersecting inequalities. Baca Zinn and Zambrana (2019) join the ongoing

dialogue about intersectionality's continued potential for decolonized knowledge production and activism. They highlight how Chicana feminist intersectionality has much of its roots in analyzing the impact of national political borders but that it offers important theoretical and empirical value beyond its situated U.S.-Mexico origins (Baca Zinn and Zambrana 2019). Indeed, the significance of borders and boundaries will continue to expand as international migrants and refugees continue to flee poverty, oppression, war, and natural disasters, and as unincorporated communities continue to grow in size and number. Yet, despite Anzaldúa's *Borderlands* framework being inherently intersectional with potential for global reach, "The absence of Anzaldúan thought in mainstream intersectionality is striking" (Baca Zinn and Zambrana 2019: 693).

This project's focus on spatial inequalities also necessarily looks at residential segregation based on race and class, which has resulted in the formation and existence of under-resourced and disenfranchised unincorporated communities. Collins and Bilge (2016: 65) argue that "in the confines of racially and ethnically segregated neighborhoods and communities in the late 1960s, women of color were in conversation/tension with the Civil Rights, Black Power, Chicano Liberation, Red Power, and Asian American movements." However, social geography continues to be about mapping, measuring, and monitoring of patterns of ethnic and religious diversity and change, lacking an intersectional perspective about residential segregation and its impacts on women in particular (Bilge 2013; Hopkins 2017). This project helps to fill this gap in the literature by examining the impacts of living within disadvantaged unincorporated communities among Chicanx/Latinx farmworking women.

As referenced above, intersectionality has been applied to multiple disciplines and discursive spaces. However, the proliferation of the concept has not necessarily made it easier to describe and employ. Cho et al. (2013) distinguish three loosely defined levels of engagement with intersectionality. The first consists of applications of intersectional frameworks or investigations of intersectional dynamics, the second consists of discursive debates about the scope and content of intersectionality as a theoretical and methodological paradigm, and the third consists of political interventions employing an intersectional lens. They argue that the divisions between them are fluid; the theoretical and applied segments of the field are not mutually exclusive. As they persuasively argue, an understanding of intersectionality in terms of multiple dimensions is crucial to fully engage with the concept, especially if the lines of one's research, like my own study, do not clearly fit into just one of these three categories of engagement.

For this project, I am using intersectionality as a frame of analysis by looking at the ways that race, gender, class, and citizenship shape labor conditions and family dynamics, as well as how these categories interact with spatial inequalities. I am also applying intersectionality as a theory and methodology by questioning the shortcomings of a literature that has historically excluded the examination of Mexican women farmworkers in rural California, one of the most vulnerable populations in a region beset with poverty and at the frontlines of challenges exacerbated by climate change. I am adding to intersectionality by bringing in the role of space and reconceptualizing the concept of borders in order to attend to a more transnational and transcultural experience

faced by many working-class, immigrant women who face inequalities in multiple dimensions of their lives.

Finally, I am working on this project with social justice and policy changes in mind. I seek to bring theory and praxis together by not only developing theory that can help us to better understand the lived experiences of women farmworkers, but that also sheds light into the realities, diversity, and needs of this community so that they can be addressed by activists and policy-makers. By highlighting the multidimensional nature of women's work, home, and community lives and the challenges that exist with being on the margins of each of those spaces, it is my hope that this population will no longer be ignored by policymakers and social justice organizations.

This research adds to intersectional feminist literature and begins to develop a theory on the multidimensional borderlands that many communities exist in and push back against. This dissertation is a case study that focuses on Mexicana farmworking women in one particular region, but my theoretical approach can be applied to other groups and communities as well. In particular, the connection between social and cultural inequalities *in the context of* spatial inequalities is becoming more important to address as the struggle for land and clean air and water becomes more critical and as the realities of climate change become more intense, volatile, and pervasive within disadvantaged communities. This case study looks at the history of the region and of the people who inhabit it, all while taking into account the dramatically shifting realities of life in this era of growing political division, inequalities, and environmental catastrophes related to

climate change that disproportionately impact those whose livelihoods depend on the land.

The Borderlands

Gloria Anzaldúa, queer Chicana feminist theorist, coined the term 'borderlands' (1987) in her foundational book *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. The concept of 'the borderlands' informs a variety of disciplines at the start of the twenty-first century, with many studies focusing on the boundaries where two or more disparate conceptual, social, or political entities overlap productively (Ybarra 2009). Anzaldúa's formulation of the borderlands as a dynamic site for identity formation and political resistance, as well as a place of contradictions, remains widely influential across multiple disciplines and is one of the foundational works of Chicana feminist writing.

Mixing both poetry and prose, Anzaldúa describes, a mestiza consciousness emerging from experience of life as a mestiza and from surviving in the "borderlands." Being mestiza means to be of mixed heritage-Spanish and Indian; but it takes on more significant implications in Anzaldúa's work, signifying a blending of cultures, languages, sexual orientations, colors, and ideas. "[It] means learning to cope with and surviving within this amalgam. The 'borderlands' can mean the concrete border between the U.S. and Mexico; the historical/mythical Aztlán-the homeland of the Chicanx people; the bridge between worlds" (Martinez 2002: 171). This framework is useful for my work because as Anzaldúa (1987) argues, mestiza consciousness involves both/and thinking (Collins 1990) which emerges from the experience of life as a woman with multiple identities and contradictions in the borderlands she traverses. As Martinez (2002:172)

argues, “In the ‘borderlands,’ divergent cultures, paradigms, and worlds meet not to become combatants-dichotomous opposites that can never tolerate each other-but to become something more.”

The early multidisciplinary roots of borderlands studies were in large part shaped by the theoretical insights of Anzaldúa. Chicana feminist scholars have described Anzaldúa’s use of the term “borderlands” in two overlapping but separate ways. First, Anzaldúa builds on the perception of the borderlands as a specific geographic location, namely the physical and political border between the U.S. and Mexico. Second, she expands this idea to include psychic, spiritual, and sexual borderlands as well (Anzaldua and Moraga 1981, Baca Zinn and Zambrana 2019, Keating 2009). For Anzaldúa, the border was a metaphor for many types of crossings, including nationalities, political boundaries, citizenship status, gender, racial, linguistic, and cultural contexts (Perales 2013; Naples 2010; Baca Zinn and Zambrana 2019). A critical feminist borderlands perspective provides a nuanced framework to examine the complex conflicts and contradictions of living in “in-between” spaces and social identities as well as allowing for space to understand the unique cultures that are created in every borderland region.

Key critiques of borderlands studies include the conflict between scholars who use the *borderlands* as a metaphor to represent socially marginalized situations and those who believe that borderland studies should focus on the structures that have created the actual geopolitical U.S.-Mexico border and the lives of those that reside in those regions (Vila 2003; Alvarez 1995). Segura and Zavella (2008) argue that in addition to borderlands’ framework’s utility in providing an analytical lens of the complex

relationships between structure and agency, the concept of borderlands must also be situated regionally and historically. This dissertation addresses these debates within borderlands studies by arguing that borderlands are multidimensional and by examining how different types of social and political borders, which operate at different scales, including interpersonal, community, national, and transnational scales, interact and intersect within a particular regional context.

The 'borderlands' concept has also been applied to various disciplines, including cultural studies (Yarbro-Bejarano 1994) and literature (Aigner-Varoz 2000). Historian Emma Perez (2003) applies this framework to lesbian history and queer studies. In her study of Chicanas, she argues that we must move into what she calls the *decolonial imaginary* to decolonize all relations of power, whether gendered or sexual or racial or classed. The context of the decolonial imaginary includes the various borderlands that Chicanas face, "The borderlands are geographic and spatial, mobile and impermanent**.** The borderlands have been imprinted by bodies that traverse the region, just as bodies have been transformed by the laws and customs in the regions we call borderlands" (Perez 2003: 122). In her archival and ethnographic work, Reyes (2019) uses a "global borderlands" framework to examine foreign-controlled, semi-autonomous zones of international exchange. While using a Subic Bay, a former U.S. military base in the Philippines, her research highlights the ways in which these "spatialized units of globalization" elicit multiple meanings for folks depending on their nationality and class. It also provides important insight about the potential for using a borderlands framework

to explore the ways in which geopolitical borders are complicated by colonialism, inequalities, and meaning-making.

Sociologist Theresa Martinez (2002) makes the case for parallels between W.E.B. Du Bois' concept of 'double-consciousness' (1903) and Anzaldúa's (1987) concept of the 'mestiza consciousness.' She argues that both are resonant issues and significant forms of oppositional culture and consciousness. Du Bois describes 'two warring ideals in one warring dark body,' the consequence of the 'vast veil' of racial prejudice and injustice (Du Bois 1903: 44-45). Meanwhile, Anzaldúa shares stories of the cultural collision' of 'two incompatible frames of reference in the racist, sexist, and homophobic borderlands' (Anzaldúa 1987: 78). There are also parallels in the ways that both Du Bois and Anzaldúa can point to the lived experience of oppression and they also describe a resultant "gift" or faculty that emerges from the struggle with what Collins (1991) calls the 'matrix of domination' (Martinez 2002). For Du Bois, the gift is a 'second sight' born in an American world 'which yields no true self-consciousness' for African Americans (1903), and for Anzaldúa, the gift or faculty is literally 'la facultad'-born of being "pushed out of the tribe for being different" (1987:38).

By imagining borders as multidimensional and multi-scalar, we have more analytical tools to understand social groups who embody multiple identities and traverse social, cultural, and political borderlands that manifest themselves in inequalities at work, at home, and within nested geographic contexts. It also helps to highlight the interconnected impacts of social and geographic boundaries across multiple spheres in the lives of women. Using this lens, my analysis provides a holistic understanding of the

experiences of women farmworkers in the San Joaquin Valley, a place residents commonly refer to as the Valley. In addition, my analysis illustrates how a *multidimensional borderlands* analysis can be applied to understand the experiences of both marginalized and privileged groups, including those who have certain privileges, such as citizenship, even while lacking others due to other identities, and those who might reproduce social or physical borders that oppress others. In the next section, I provide background on the community that is the focus of my case study.

RESEARCH SITE AND BACKGROUND

As the southernmost section of California's great Central Valley, the San Joaquin Valley is an eight county region that is one of the most fertile agricultural expanses in the United States. Stretching from Sacramento in the north to Bakersfield in the South bounded by the Coastal Ranges in the west and the Sierra Nevada in the east, this area constitutes less than 1 percent of U.S. farmland but produces one quarter of the nation's food, including 40 percent of the nation's fruits, nuts, and vegetables (U.S. Geological Survey 2018). The agricultural abundance, however, belies the challenges facing some of the nation's most impoverished and vulnerable populations. An article in the Sacramento Bee titled, "How the Central Valley became the 'Appalachia of the West," found that Fresno County has a poverty rate of 22 percent, compared with 13 percent for California as a whole (Kasler 2019). In 2019, six out the ten highest metropolitan unemployment rates in the country were found in the Valley (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2019). Additionally, the geographic context, including its vast rural isolation, is an important factor to consider and adds to both the social borders as well as *physical* borders that exist

in many of the women's lives. The social borders include the gendered experiences in the workplace and at home, as well as challenges stemming from their citizenship status and anti-immigrant climate, while physical borders manifest themselves in the form of their relationship with the U.S.-Mexico border and municipal borders that separate those who live in unincorporated areas from those in incorporated areas, resulting in vastly unequal access to public resources.

My research uses in-depth interviews with farmworking women in the San Joaquin Valley to understand their lived experiences and how they navigate socio-economic and spatial inequalities. With over 829,300 farmworkers employed in California agriculture each year, this workforce is the backbone of a $35 billion a year industry (Martin et al. 2016). Of these farmworkers, nearly half are employed in the San Joaquin Valley, with Kern County employing 116,500 and Fresno Country with 95,800 (Martin et al. 2016). Farmworkers tend to be employed seasonally, and average a salary of $17,445 per year. Of this population, official statistics reveal that 90 percent of California crop workers were born in Mexico, and at least 60 percent are undocumented immigrants (U.S. Department of Labor 2018). More than 80 percent of hired crop farmworkers are not migrant workers, but are considered settled, meaning they work at a single location within 75 miles of their home. This number is up from 42 percent in 1996-98, reflecting a profound change in the nature of the crop farm workforce (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2018). Of this entire workforce, women comprise about 30 percent, up from 23 percent in 2004 (U.S. Department of Labor 2018).

This work highlights the impacts of the historic drought of 2011-2017 which brought with it the hottest and driest years on record as well as record job losses in the agricultural sector which overwhelmed this community (Castillo 2015). While the state received sufficient rains to help alleviate the drought in 2017, 2016 was the worst year of the drought (U.S. Drought Monitor 2016), with nearly 20,000 farm-related job losses, 8,000 of them directly related to farms. Compared to 2014, there was an increase of 33 percent of cropland fallowing, and 67 percent (or about 1 million acre-feet) more groundwater pumping (Howitt et al. 2014). The drought's last year was catastrophic for the state in general and for farmworkers in particular.

In 2021, the western United States is in the second year of another extreme drought and half of California (including the entire San Joaquin Valley) is currently labeled as "exceptional drought," the most dangerous categorization (U.S. Drought Monitor 2021; National Integrated Drought Information System 2021). In addition, scientists believe that the western United States is in an extended long-term "megadrought" worse than any experienced in recorded history and that extreme warming will continue to exacerbate any dry spell making it longer, more severe, and more widespread (Park Williams, Cook, Smerdon, Cook Abatzoglou, Bolles, Baek, Badher, Livneh 2021). For farmworkers who work outdoors and who depend on crops for their livelihood, this forecast is daunting.

Despite these challenges, farmworkers remain an invisible population in much of the sociological literature, media coverage, and popular discourse. There has been considerable attention to the economic impact of the drought and the political battles

waged over policy responses to it, but little attention to the challenges of farmworkers, those most vulnerable to the effects of drought and other climate crisis-related disasters. Finally, discussion about the experiences of farmworkers tends to focus on men, leaving women farmworkers doubly silenced.

POSITIONALITY

My interest in, perspective on, and access to women farmworkers in the Valley is significantly shaped by my positionality. I was born and raised in the San Joaquin Valley and I am the granddaughter of migrant Mexican farmworkers and the daughter of packinghouse workers. I have experience working in packinghouses both as a high school student and during summer breaks as an undergraduate student. I have many family members who labor in either or both the fields and packinghouses. As such, I embody what Collins (1991) refers to as "outsiders/within," in reference to researchers who study community or identity groups they 'come from,' belong to,' or 'identify with' and seemingly have access to a setting or subjects because of their own identity, personal networks, or shared experiences.

As a feminist researcher, I was cognizant of the power dynamics that existed between myself and my participants. Hesse-Biber argues that, "feminist research is mindful of power differentials that lie within research practices that reinforce the status quo, creating divisions between colonizer and colonized" (Hesse-Biber 2012: 4). I ensured that I maintained reflexivity throughout the project, constantly examining the ways in which my prior assumptions, experiences, and beliefs influenced the research process. I also stressed reciprocity –doing research 'with' instead of 'on'" participants

(Pillow 2003). I encouraged my participants to speak about their experiences, reminding them that they are the experts about these topics.

Many critical methodologists have identified advantages when researchers and subjects occupy similar status locations (Baca Zinn 1979; Lewin and Leap 1996; Stanfield 1994; Contreras 2012). Status matching is thought to enhance a researcher's ability to frame questions and interpret data in culturally appropriate ways, build rapport with participants, and minimize social desirability bias, generating more valid data. In her discussion of empirical and methodological advantages of insider research, Baca Zinn (1979) argues that scholars of color have some empirical and methodological advantages over white scholars. Most importantly, the "lenses" through which they see social reality allow them to ask questions and gather information others could not. However, she also discusses the challenges that researchers of color conducting studies in their "own" communities face.

In her own experience of conducting field research on Chicano families, Baca Zinn (1979) describes the challenges of entering the field and establishing research relationships, casting doubt on the notion that racial minority scholars are 'privileged' insiders.' As she puts it, "Though I was an insider in ethnic identity, I was not an insider in the organization or in the community in which I had chosen to conduct research. Like all researchers, I entered as an outsider and attempted to move carefully toward successful acceptance by community families" (Baca Zinn 1979: 214). As such, she argues that researchers of color, particularly women of color researchers, are not necessarily more *free* from many of the problems that white researchers typically

encounter in terms of gaining trust and acceptance among her informants. Other critical scholars have similarly recognized that status is multiple, situated, and shifting (Beoku-Betts 1994; Collins 2000; Gallagher 2000; Twine 2000). For this reason, the statuses of researchers of color and their subjects do not always "match" based on a few shared identities.

While I am considered an insider ethnically, because I grew up in the community, and because my parents are agricultural laborers, my status did not always match that of my subjects based on these shared experiences and identities. There was a power dynamic that existed due to my positionality as a Ph.D. candidate and my affiliation with a privileged educational institution. Several potential contacts were hesitant to speak with me because of distrust about a person connected to a large institution wanting to speak to them about their work and home lives. I mitigated this by taking time to explain my role as a graduate student, to clearly describe my dissertation project and my research aims, and to ensure that they understood the steps I would take to maintain their anonymity. There was also a power dynamic in that although I shared an ethnic background with the majority of my participants, I am not undocumented. Given the sensitivity of undocumented immigrant status, I reassured my participants throughout the interview that the information they provided would not put them in danger of reprisal at their places of employment or put their families in danger of deportation.

Some of my participants expressed pride that someone from their community had achieved educational success and was now taking time to highlight their stories. One participant in her 60's said "*Nosotras somos mujeres trabajadoras, pero tú tambien eres*

una mujer trabajadora (We [women farmworkers] are hard working women, but you are a hard working woman, too)." This encouragement from my participants, a few of whom have known me for most of my life gave me the motivation to persevere through the challenges of graduate school and writing a dissertation during such an intense sociopolitical moment.

DATA AND METHODS

This dissertation is based on in-depth semi-structured interviews with 35 Mexican and Mexican American women agricultural workers who worked either in the fields where fruit is picked and/or the packinghouses where fruit is packed in California's San Joaquin Valley. Interviews covered topics ranging from their personal experiences of their work in the fields and packinghouses, labor conditions, effects of the drought, heat and other climate crisis related issues, coping strategies, questions about their family dynamics, about their communities and housing, and about the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on their lives. The in-person interviews were conducted before the Covid-19 pandemic in the communities of the interviewees, either at their homes or at an agreed-upon location chosen by them. Nine of the interviews were conducted in English and 26 were conducted in Spanish. Fifteen of the interviews were conducted over the phone due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The interviews were semi-structured, audio recorded, and transcribed. Interviews conducted in Spanish were initially transcribed in Spanish and then translated to English.

The multi-stage data collection process unfolded over several years during my graduate training. The first stage of interviews took place between October 2016 and

March 2017, during which time I interviewed 20 women farmworkers to capture how the historic California drought was impacting their working conditions and exacerbating inequalities *among* the women. The second stage of interviews took place between January and June of 2021, during which time I interviewed 15 women farmworkers using an expanded interview guide that delved deeper into their family and community lives. I also re-interviewed 10 of my original participants in order to collect data on the expanded project. The other 10 participants had either changed their numbers or were unavailable.

To code the interviews, I went through an initial line by line coding process where I examined common themes from an initial sample of interviews. I then employed a focused coding technique whereby I used my preliminary codes to direct my analysis of the interview data. During the first stage of interviews, my questions were heavy on the role of social support networks, but the underlying theme of inequality among farmworking women led me to refocus my questions to have a better understanding of the ways in which various identities and social locations of the women impacted the way they navigated social and political borders in their communities.

I used a snowball sampling technique and recruited participants through my personal networks in the Fresno County region of the Valley who provided the names of other potential interviewees. In my recruitment, I looked for Latina women over the age of 18 who worked either in packinghouses or the fields in the past five years. I recruited participants through personal invitations over the phone, in person, and through introductions made by my friends and family members. This approach was most appropriate due to the geographic isolation of my sample population, as well as the need

to gain workers' trust and confidentiality arising from the painful experiences with the drought, fear of employer retaliation for expressing criticisms about their jobs, and concerns about privacy, especially among undocumented immigrants who might fear disclosure of their legal status. To minimize the risk posed by revealing their immigration status, the interviewees are identified only by pseudonyms.

Respondents ranged in age from 21 to 75 years old with an average of 45 years. Respondents were U.S.-born (n=10), naturalized citizens (n=9), or undocumented immigrants (n=16). My sample included 28 women with children, of which 10 had minor children (0-18 years old) and (n=20) had adult children (18 years of age or older). Of the 35 participants, (n=18) worked only in packinghouses, (n=2) in the fields only, and (n=15) worked in both the fields and the packinghouses.

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND EMOTIONAL LABOR

Although my original data collection plan included in-person interviews and field work during the summer of 2020 in a fruit packinghouse in Fresno County, the pandemic forced me to adjust my data collection strategy to the reality of the public health crisis. I quickly adapted my data collection methodology and conducted my final 15 interviews via telephone. This created a new set of challenges, namely in building rapport with my participants, since face-to-face interviews lend themselves more to developing a more personal connection. As such, I ensured that during my phone interviews I took more time to discuss my own background and my connection the Valley and to the world of campesinos in order to build trust.

Given that these interviews were conducted during a time of heightened stress, anxiety, and grief, many of the interviews were very emotional. During my first round of interviews, many of the research participants expressed stress related to the intensity of the drought of 2011-2016 and ensuing job losses as well as the election of Donald Trump in 2016 and the extreme anti-immigrant rhetoric and policies associated with his presidency and electoral campaign. During the second round of my interviews, much of the stress and anxiety among the research subjects was pandemic-related, including discussions about losing work, getting sick, navigating virtual learning with their children, and struggling financially during the pandemic. There were several participants who had lost immediate family members due to the virus and they discussed how little time they had to grieve because they had to return to work. For undocumented women, these issues were compounded given the lack of a social safety net, lack of access to consistent or high-quality health care, and precarious working conditions. Many of the participants expressed interest in my educational journey and a handful of them asked if I would be willing to speak to their teenage children about college. I made sure to follow up with them to give them some advice on how to prepare for college and discussed some of the experiences and challenges I have had as a first generation college student from the Valley.

There is a significant body of literature that finds that qualitative researchers who explore sensitive topics expose themselves to emotional distress (Jackson, Backet-Milburn, Newall 2013; Dickson-Swift, James, Kippen, and Liamputtong 2007; Johnson and Clark 2003). Because of this, qualitative researchers are challenged with having to

manage their emotions during the research process. Hochschild's (1983) *The Managed Heart* is widely considered the foundational work in conceptualizing the idea of "emotional labor," or the process by which workers are expected to manage their feelings in accordance with organizationally defined rule and guidelines. Hochschild (1983) uses the term "feeling rules" to describe societal norms about the appropriate amount of feeling that should be experienced in a particular situation. As people work towards adjusting to these norms, they experience emotion management. During interpersonal transactions with participants, controlling emotional effects demands significant effort and planning for the researcher to limit or produce only verbal, facial, and physical reactions that are professionally appropriate (Wharton 2009). Hochschild (1983) argues that this work involves attempts to align privately felt emotions with normative expectations. She refers to the first process as 'deep acting' and the second as 'surface acting,' aiming to convey the fact that the first involves an attempt to change what is privately felt, while the second focuses on what is publicly displayed" (Hochschild 1983: 149).

During the interviews for this project, I led with empathy and listened to these women's stories both as a researcher, but also as a person for whom these experiences hit close to home. I was both surprised and grateful for the women's candor in discussing their experiences. After each interview, I took copious notes and also allowed myself to feel the emotions that the conversation evoked. I prepared for the emotional labor that this project would entail, but the pandemic and all the pain it has brought with it created additional and very intense emotional labor. I found myself needing to recharge and

reflect after completing an interview before I could continue with other interviews. For this project, many of the interviews became emotional for my participants and although I was there as a trained researcher who tried to maintain a cool and professional façade, there were times when empathy meant sharing those strong emotions with my participants. For the interviews conducted over the phone, I did not need to "adjust" my facial or physical reactions, but I did try to make sure that my participants felt like they were truly being heard by another person, not a detached machine.

It is important to recognize the significance of emotional labor in qualitative research and to unpack the personal consequences of conducting research with vulnerable populations or that deal with sensitive topics. Jaggar (1989) acknowledges emotion as a central aspect of knowledge building. According to her, it is unrealistic to assume that emotions and values do not surface during the research process. Our emotions, in fact, are an integral part of why a given topic or set of research questions is studied and how it is studied. Other critical ethnographers (Kleinman and Copp 1993: 33) argue that emotions can enhance our cognitive faculties, "it is ignoring or suppressing feelings that divert our attention from the cues that ultimately help us understand those we study." In my research experience, I found that emotions were not simply a result of my participants' stories or testimonies, instead, they were also shaped by my own positionality as someone who grew up in the same community and whose family also deals with many of the challenges highlighted in this work. Reflecting on how my own personal biography shaped my feelings and the feelings of the women in my study can help guide the understanding of participants' lived experiences.

Finally, another key component to the emotional labor I experienced was the long periods of isolation that is endemic to many in the dissertation phase of their graduate careers, but was much more intense during the global pandemic. Johnson and Clarke (1993) argue that although feelings of isolation might be common among most researchers, they take on greater significance for those examining sensitive topics. There is also evidence that interviewing on sensitive topics can lead to feelings of hopeless and impotence (Johnson and Plant 1996). In the context of the pandemic, high levels of political division, a national racial reckoning, and the worsening effects of the climate crisis, it was challenging to see a light at the end of the proverbial tunnel when it came to imagining improvements in the working and living conditions for farmworking women in the Valley. I had to battle through these feelings in order to be able to move on and remain committed and engaged to my project. The responsibility I felt to this community and the inspiration I felt from the women in my study are what ultimately kept me going during challenging moments.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

In the next three chapters, I examine how multidimensional borderlands shapes the work, community, and home lives of farmworking women in the Valley. Chapter 2 focuses on how labor and employment are shaped by race, gender, age, and immigration status. In this chapter, I examine how multiple and intersecting relations of domination impacts the types of jobs women farmworkers have access to and their working conditions. I explore the hierarchies that exist in this industry that is largely determined by gender and citizenship status, with undocumented women facing discrimination from

employers and coworkers alike. This chapter also highlights the vulnerabilities to sexual assault and harassment that women farmworkers face in the workplace. My research also explores how extreme drought, heat, and other climate change related challenges, including extreme drought and heat and the ways in which it impacts women's working conditions and limits their job opportunities.

Chapter 3 examines community conditions and spatial inequalities related to housing, transportation, climate change, and health. In particular, I discuss how unincorporated rural communities arise as a result of a legacy of racialized exclusion and municipal boundary-making, further exacerbating race, class and gender inequalities. I explore how spatial inequalities contribute to women's lack of access to public transportation, clean public water, and decent housing. Each of these areas disproportionately impact women in myriad ways, given their responsibilities associated with their paid employment and unpaid reproductive labor. Finally, I discuss health disparities by examining gaps in health insurance, access to primary care physicians, and high rates of chronic illnesses that are exacerbated by environmental factors such as air pollution. This chapter builds on intersectionality theory and research through its appreciation of the significance of spatial inequalities in the lived experiences of marginalized groups.

Chapter 4 focuses on the challenges of navigating multidimensional borders as working mothers and how it impacts their families. The challenges that emerge from the inequalities in the labor market and from social and spatial inequalities that exacerbate the effects of poverty greatly affect women's home lives. This chapter investigates

women's role in unpaid reproductive labor, including housework, childcare, and other carework and how patriarchal dynamics are reproduced among children, with girls doing much of the unpaid labor in homes while their mothers work.

I conclude my dissertation with Chapter 5 by presenting an overview of my major findings and scholarly implications. I discuss the ways in which the multidimensional borderlands framework can be applied to other communities and research sites. Using a borders framework can be used to expand intersectional analyses by appreciating the role of borders at different scales. This allows for researchers to attend to transnational and transcultural perspectives and for allowing a lens by which to understand the ways in which people are also complicit in creating borders. I end with policy implications and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER II:

MUJERES TRABAJADORAS: WOMEN FARMWORKERS' PAID LABOR CONDITIONS

> "This work is so hard, but you have to put the idea in your head that this is your work and this is what you have to do. This is how I find the will to continue to do what I do, even though it is exhausting. You have to remind yourself, 'get over it, this is your work.' You have to prepare yourself mentally to be able to find the will to this work."
> -Chayito, 50 year old undocumented migrant farmworker and mother

INTRODUCTION

Women farmworkers face structural barriers as well as challenges associated with political, geopolitical, and social borders on both national and local levels that impact their work lives. In this chapter, I use the *multidimensional borderlands* framework to analyze the findings from my interviews with Mexican farmworking women regarding the many inequalities and barriers they face at work and in the labor market. My analysis highlights how multiple and intersecting inequalities shape and constrain the employment and working conditions of low-wage women workers in this region.

Women farmworkers in the Valley face borders on multiple fronts and in myriad forms at the workplace. My findings reveal that these political borders impact the types of jobs workers have access to and how they are treated at the workplace. Specifically, women who work alongside men in the fields are discriminated against because of their gender and perceived physical "weakness." In the packinghouses where fruits and vegetable are packed and shipped, undocumented people have a much harder time getting hired because of stricter background checks that verify social security numbers. For undocumented women, they face barriers in getting hired in either space because of the

intersection of their race and immigration status. In addition, these social locations also create conditions for the distinct threat of sexual harassment and assault in the workplace for women who lack power in the workplace and have little to no options for recourse.

Additionally, the inequalities based on geography, including the lack of public transportation infrastructure in the poorest and most isolated communities which has limited options for the most vulnerable residents. As the realities of the climate crisis have become more prescient, the extreme droughts of recent years have impacted farmworkers livelihoods as more and more farmers have fallowed fields due to lack of water. In order to find work, farmworkers have had to travel further from their homes and communities, creating unique challenges for women who often do not have private transportation and rely on paid carpools and their networks to get to work. There are gendered implications of this situation because women are forced to balance their paid labor and unpaid domestic and carework responsibilities while navigating these transportation issues in a way that is often not required for men.

Next, my work also finds multiple factors that have created more competitive work environments, including California's historic droughts which have limited the number of jobs, and the increasing anti-immigrant policies and rhetoric following the campaign and subsequent election of Donald Trump. These events have allowed resentments to build between the workers in which those who are citizens or legal permanent residents have coopted the rhetoric of undocumented immigrants as "freeloaders" who take advantage of public benefits. My research finds that many undocumented workers are more hesitant to disclose their status not only because of the

fear of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) workplace raids and threats of deportation, but also because of fear that their coworkers will treat them differently.

I begin this chapter by discussing literature that highlights the ways in which spatial inequalities limit paid work opportunities, including how geography, residents' social locations, and rural isolation reproduce inequalities that impact job prospects. Rural residents also face challenges in accessing reliable transportation, particularly in isolated, unincorporated communities. I then discuss how social borders, including how citizenship status intersects with gender and poverty shapes the experiences for many women workers. I next highlight the ways in which citizenship status impacts workers vulnerability to exploitation and mistreatment and how it intersects with gender discrimination and the threat of sexual violence in the workplace. Finally, I explore the inequalities *among* women farmworkers which serve to reproduce social borders and sustain hierarchies based on levels of assimilation and immigration status.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Spatial Inequalities: Limited Paid Work Opportunities

Critical scholars have argued that geography and spatial dynamics are intertwined with the creation and reproduction of inequalities. Social isolation in poor or minority neighborhoods in the US has been linked to labor-market insulation and increased reliance on local contacts, while feminist scholars have shown that women's social ties also tend to be more locally proximate (Gilbert 1998; Joassart-Marcelli 2009). Immigrants to the US, especially recent arrivals and low-income earners, are likely as well to have geographically reduced social circles (Zavella 1987**).** Along a similar line,

Hondagneu-Sotelo (1997) describes how feminist geographers have focused on how gendered orientations to space influence the way women organize their daily work lives; women tend to take jobs close to home so that they can fulfill child rearing and domestic duties.

Joassart-Marcelli (2009) argues that, along with individual characteristics, socio-spatial forces shape employment opportunities and incomes of recent Latina immigrants to U.S. within metropolitan areas. In her analysis of the "spatial mismatch" theory that refers to the geographical barriers between home and work that have negative effects on the employment and wages, she argues that one of the key limitations of this concept is the narrow conceptualization of distance as *physical.* Instead, she calls for an expansion of this idea to examine the ways in which distance is not only experienced spatially, but also social and socially constructed. She cites the social distance stemming from gender and ethnic occupational segmentation that limits the job options for women, in particular women of color, as well as distance applied to social networks that provide connections to jobs through referrals or shared information. Additionally, she suggests that a hierarchical gender system could enforce the idea that home or places close to home are more appropriate for women. "These forces-occupational segmentation, social networks, and gender hierarchy-contribute to increasing social distance between individuals and jobs and, along with actual physical distance, result in broadly defined spatial mismatch between places of residence and employment opportunities" (Joassart-Marcelli 2009:36).

The theory of spatial mismatch is important in understanding labor market inequalities, but Ong and Miller (2005) consider access to automobiles, something that is

missing in much of the spatial mismatch literature. They argue that most researchers measure only the number of jobs within a reasonable distance and disregard differences in the levels of transportation access. This is relevant to my research because as the number of jobs has declined, many women have to travel further to get to their job sites. Without reliable personal transportation, many women need money to pay for a daily ride or rely upon their personal networks to get a ride to work. If they are working mothers, they also need to secure transportation to obtain appropriate childcare as well. In addition, much of the spatial mismatch literature focuses on urban spaces, but the challenges in a rural community are very different due to the lack of *any* public transportation and the physical distance between towns.

Transportation Challenges in Unincorporated Communities

For Latina farmworkers who live in low-income unincorporated areas, the transportation challenges they face are compounded by class, political disenfranchisement, and lack of access to public transportation. Often, the issues associated with living in these areas are often not addressed by policymakers or visible to those living or working outside of them. In addition to their precarious statuses and history of racist and classist exclusion, many of the challenges of these communities comes from the political disenfranchisement associated with their status. Legal scholar Michelle Anderson (2010) argues that one of the main causes for unincorporated areas is municipal underbounding: annexation policies and practices in which cities grow around or away from low-income minority communities, thus excluding them from voting rights and in city elections and, in many cases, municipal services.

The inequalities and political disenfranchisement that residents of unincorporated communities face create obstacles at home and that translate to challenges with getting to work and lower health outcomes. They often lack access to public transportation and clean public water, among other vital resources (Gomez Vidal and Gomez 2021; Burke et al. 2005). For women workers in this region, these spatial challenges are compounded by their dual roles as wage earners and as wives and mothers with disproportionate unpaid household responsibilities, such as taking care of children and other family members and grocery shopping, including purchasing clean drinking water (McCoy, Moronez, Pruneda, and Reese 2020). Women's commuting time is often shaped by the expectation that they be available to fulfill the needs of other family members throughout the day. As Blumen (1994: 228) argues, "commuting is considered to be the most tension-producing activity by mothers of young children, but not by fathers, and this is because mothers' commuting, unlike fathers', connects two sets of inflexible responsibilities." A feminist analysis of the life challenges created by these political borders provides a clearer picture of the roots of various gendered work hierarchies and the interconnections between women's dual roles that include unpaid reproductive labor and paid market labor.

Social Borders and Intersecting Inequalities at Work

By focusing on the role of paid labor in women's lives, I am highlighting an area that is instrumental in their lived experiences and that also serve as a microcosm of the ways that systemic inequalities manifest themselves in these women's everyday lives. As Ribas (2016) argues, work is where working-class people spend the majority of their waking hours, and "it is the context through which different groups are most likely to

encounter one another in structured and structuring ways" (Ribas 2016:9). A substantial body of literature documents the complex ways in which race, class, and gender shape employment opportunities and work experiences for women of color (Zavella 1987; Baca Zinn and Dill 1994; McCall 2005; Browne and Misra 2003; Joassart Marcelli 2009; Flippen 2014). In line with this research, I use an intersectional feminist framework which views race, ethnicity, gender, and class relations as intersecting systems of power relations that produce different outcomes in different historical and political contexts (Crenshaw 1989, Crenshaw 1991, Collins 1990). By utilizing an intersectional lens and taking into account the role of borders in perpetuating inequalities and creating divisions, we are better able to understand the ways in which different identities and social locations overlap, including how citizenship intersects with gender and poverty.

How Citizenship Status Impacts Workers

Citizenship status is a border that shapes the experiences of many women farmworkers on a daily basis. In the workplace, the construction of migrant illegality creates and sustains low-wage labor by reproducing political and physical borders for workers through the threat of deportation (Gleeson and Gonzalez 2012). For undocumented workers, fears of deportation keep them in the shadows of their communities and their workplaces, increasing vulnerability and precarity. As De Genova (2002) argues, the construction of illegality is not made to exclude undocumented workers from the workforce; instead, it is to include them "under a condition of enforced and protracted vulnerability" (423). The construction of "illegality" thus comes into play both from outside forces in terms of the fear of deportation, as well as challenges with

trying to secure a job, being vulnerable to bad workplace conditions, from bullying or maltreatment by coworkers and supervisors, and when coupled with their gender, can determine what types of jobs within farm labor they are able to secure.

Holmes (2011) ethnographic work in rural California focused on the hierarchies of ethnicities and citizenship in agricultural work using a structural vulnerability framework. His work revealed a "hidden structure of farm labor"; or segregated continuum of the farm labor structure based on an ethnicity-citizenship-labor hierarchy: from US citizen white American to US citizen Latino, undocumented mestizo Mexican, to undocumented indigenous Mexican. The closer to US white citizen, the more access to less laborious and more lucrative jobs (Holmes 2011). Although the threat of deportation often forces undocumented workers to hide their immigration status, in public spaces immigrants are often hypervisibilized, subject to racialization and suspicion by law enforcement and the general public (Guzmán and Medeiros 2020; Garcia 2017). De Genova (2002) frames this process as "the social and institutional productions of visibility and invisibility. For farmworkers in the Valley, this adds to the hierarchies and to the constant borders that surround the women in different forms.

Gender Discrimination and Threat of Sexual Assault in the Workplace

Women also face discrimination in the workplace due to gendered hierarchies in agricultural labor. Horton's (2016) ethnographic work found that the gendered constructions of "male prowess and female frailty" are part of the division of labor in agricultural work and an axis upon which hierarchies and vulnerabilities are exacerbated. Her work uncovers the gendered dynamics in which men take pride in the working the

most physically taxing and dangerous jobs, while women tend to work the less strenuous jobs that have the least amount of exposure to the sun, "Men establish a work ethic in which all workers are judged-one in which hard work is equated with masculinity." However, despite the notion of women having "easier" jobs in the fields, they often contend with more gender-based hiring discrimination as well as vulnerability to sexual assault and rape (Kim, Vasquez & Torres 2016; Castaneda and Zavella 2008; Murphy, Samples, Morales and Shadbeh 2015).

Inequalities Among *Women Workers*

My research also highlights inequalities that exist *among* the women farmworkers. Although the women in my sample all have experiences with social borders at some level, it is important not to essentialize those experiences, even within groups. Pyke and Dang (2003) contend that the majority of research on racism's effects on the oppressed has focused on overt manifestations, like violence and discrimination. Far less attention has been given to the subtle processes by which racial inequality shapes the way the oppressed think of themselves and other members of their group. They use the term "intraethnic othering" to describe the specific othering processes that occur among coethnics in subordinated groups. They describe the ways in which intraethnic othering often involves the ridicule and isolation of some coethnics-usually the more ethnically-identified, by other coethnics, usually the more assimilated can generate resentment and resistance within the ethnic group.

In this model, they argue that internalized racial oppression is a reaction to the forces of racism, not a source of racism, "Internalized oppression does not define into

existence a group of exploitable others. Rather, it is an adaptive response" (Pyke and Dang 2003:151). Anzaldúa (1987) describes a process that takes the opposite form. She describes the testing of "authenticity" in which ethnic traditionalists resist the intraethnic othering of the more assimilated by engaging in another form of othering that ridicules those who are not ethnic. This creates the dichotomy of those who are "one of us" and those who have "sold out" (Anzaldúa 1987). My research highlights the ways in which both of these processes operate with women farmworkers and how they often reproduce social borders based on race and immigration status.

For farmworkers in the Valley, the politics of immigration fuels internal hierarchies and keeps them vulnerable to exploitation. My research finds that some of these internal hierarchies include resentment over undocumented women accessing public benefits using other people's social security numbers. These resentments and the policies that make it nearly impossible for undocumented residents to access public benefits add to the social and political borders that undocumented folks face, further exacerbating financial and social inequalities that affect undocumented workers and their families.

In 2019, the Trump administration passed a more stringent version of the so-called *public charge rule* that made it more difficult for immigrants to obtain legal status if they use public benefits like food stamps and housing vouchers (National Immigration Law Center 2020). Under the previous regulations put in place in 1996, it only counted cash benefits, but under the new rule the definition of who is expected to be dependent on the government has been widened by including more benefit programs and denied green

cards to immigrants who are thought to be likely to make even occasional and minor use of public benefits like Medicaid, food stamps and housing vouchers. After widespread fear and confusion around the new rule, a federal judge ruled the new rule unconstitutional (U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services 2021).

The attempt to frame these women as undeserving "public charges" strips them of their humanity and the impacts are felt beyond the undocumented mothers (Park 2011; Perez Huber 2016; Yukich 2013). For example, Enriquez (2015) found that U.S. citizen children and their undocumented parents often share in the risks and limitations in multiple aspects of their lives associated with their undocumented immigration status, a phenomenon she calls *multigenerational punishment*. The impacts of these laws transcend immigration status and impacted everyday social interactions, leading citizen children to experience a de facto undocumented status. This process has a potentially devastating effect on entire families and speaks to ways in which inequalities are reproduced over generations. For all immigrants regardless of their citizenship status, legal categories determine rights, levels of social acceptance, treatment by authorities and employers, and, ultimately, levels of suffering (Menjivar 2006, Holmes 2007). Thus, immigrants with uncertain legal statuses are positioned not only as "illegal" and deportable, but also as suspects, enemies, criminals, and in the eyes of the public, as deserving of the harshest treatment (Massey 2007). The public charge frame impacts women at work not only because the combination of the precarity of their labor (lack of social safety net, low-wages, seasonal nature of the work, climate change vulnerability), but also because of the resentment their colleagues with legal status have over their

perceived "underserving" status, thus, exacerbating hierarchies *among* the farmworkers and reinforced by mayordomos and hiring contractors.

INTERVIEW FINDINGS

My interviews with women farmworkers reveal a complex picture of commonalities and differences in the ways these women experience working conditions and how they navigate political and social borders. In this section, I begin by discussing their experiences with political borders, which include workplace hierarchies based on citizenship status and spatial inequalities associated with living in unincorporated communities that create distinct challenges for women and limit access to paid work. I then focus on social borders which include workplace inequalities based on gender and type of farm work. My research finds that women farmworkers experience labor precarity and discrimination due to intersecting discriminations based on citizenship status, gender, and municipal boundary-making that results in unequal access to resources. Furthermore, the climate crisis is exacerbating labor precarity due to extreme droughts limiting the number of jobs and creating hostile working conditions, particularly for undocumented women.

Workplace Hierarchies Based on Citizenship Status

Interviews with women farmworkers revealed that a person's immigration status impacted their employability and shaped how other workers treated them. My findings reveal that a person's citizenship status and gender intersect to create more challenging for women workers. The majority of participants described the drought-related job losses as having a disproportionate impact on women, since many of the male *mayordomos*

(foremen) in the fields were less likely to hire women because of their perceived lack of physical strength. In the packinghouses, where the majority of workers are women, participants described a stricter work environment with higher levels of scrutiny of social security numbers, especially in the packinghouses. “It’s harder now. They say that they’re checking the socials (Social Security numbers) a lot more now. Maybe it’s just certain packinghouses, but it’s hard to know which ones. In the fields though, they don’t really check anything. If they did, they wouldn’t have any workers,” says Mayra, a 32-year-old undocumented mother from Tijuana. This speaks to the multiple layers of discrimination that farmworking women face: they are less likely to get hired in the fields because of their gender, and they are less likely to get hired in the packinghouses because of their immigration status.

Many of the participants felt that packinghouses have become much more stringent in recent years in verifying the social security numbers of their employees, increasing the challenges for undocumented workers to find work. Bianca, a 27-year-old third-generation packinghouse worker, believes that part of this trend is in part due to the “changing mindset towards undocumented people.” Bianca is a U.S. citizen with a high school diploma. She has taken courses at the local community college and has worked in a local packinghouse for the past ten summers with family members. She has had mostly positive experiences, particularly given her English language fluency and relationship to other workers who have been there for decades, but she describes the situation faced by her undocumented coworkers who “shy away from anybody that’s an authority figure.” As she describes:

> They [employers and supervisors] just pounce on that, like, 'We can do whatever we want with you and we're gonna use you for doing the dirty work. Then we can get rid of you and we won't think twice about it.' I feel bad for most of these girls because they bust their ass at anything that they're told to do and they don't [get] rewarded for it. Their reward is getting fired.

Every undocumented woman I interviewed acknowledged increased challenges with their citizenship status (or assumed citizenship status) under the Trump Administration. Many of the women described the "othering" of undocumented immigrants that existed before the drought and expressed that the anti-immigrant sentiment had worsened in the past ten years. Chavela, a soft-spoken 36-year-old undocumented mother of three arrived in the United States four years prior to the interview. She described the first packinghouse she worked at as hostile, which she attributed to the large size of the packinghouse and the highly competitive nature that existed at all levels:

> In large packinghouses, people make you feel inferior to them. Its more competitive and there's more bullying. In a small packinghouse, there are less workers and we feel more united. There's not as much gossiping. When I first started at a big packinghouse, I heard the other women referring to me as "la mojada" (the wetback), so I did struggle a little bit.

In addition to the prejudice that workers faced from their co-ethnic, documented or naturalized coworkers, many of the respondents described a general fear and uncertainty that exists for undocumented immigrants. Tere, a 65-year-old Mexican indigenous woman from a small town in Oaxaca, who was able to get her permanent residency less than ten years prior, "It was difficult, so difficult. Sometimes we used other people's names, sometimes for just a week to make enough money to eat." She describes being homeless when she first arrived in the United States over 30 years ago. "I had to sleep in

the fields and wake up there ready to work. I didn't know anybody here and I was so scared."

Lourdes, a 61-year old *mayordoma* and self-proclaimed *Tejana* (a Mexican-American from Texas) was asked about job prospects for undocumented workers, she stated her preference for hiring undocumented women because "they complain less." She elaborated:

> The girls that have papers they start, "Hey, *ya es la hora de la quebrada*." [It is time for our break already.] Why are you not giving us our break? They make me mad. But people that don't have any papers, they don't complain as long as they have their job. They are very, very hard working people. I worked my entire life with illegal people and I work more comfortably with illegal people than with my own family and those that have papers.

Lourdes' comments about feeling more comfortable hiring undocumented workers speaks to the vulnerabilities that undocumented workers face, including their job precarity being taken advantage of by not giving them their breaks and praising them for not "complaining" as much as their documented and citizen counterparts. Mari, 40 says that sometimes you can tell who has "papers" by noticing who is more likely to assert their rights. She said that she has seen women complain to the bosses that undocumented women are taking their jobs because they do not complain about their working conditions. She says that their silence "comes from necessity. They need their jobs, even when they are abused."

A person's documentation status is not always known. Some participants described a situation in which women were more likely to reveal their legal status previously, but seem much more reserved under the Trump Administration. In addition,

there has been more overt "othering" that has caused people to feel like they should not disclose their immigration status. Faviola, 25 says that,

> After Trump, I've heard some ladies say, 'well, I'm ok because I'm legal.' They make the other ones feel less than them. They'll stay quiet; they're not going to say 'oh I'm not legal.' I think that just because you're legal in this country doesn't mean they're less than you. For me, people are people. Even if you don't have papers, we're all equal. But I've seen some of the girls do that.

Many of the women described increased discussion about immigration policies and fear of deportation for themselves and their children. This speaks to the multigenerational punishment these women and their families face, a process in which undocumented parents and their U.S. born children share in the risks associated with undocumented status (Enriquez 2015):

> People are scared. Most of them have little kids and there's so much fear of deportation. That's the fear that a lot of people have. What will happen to their kids? If they go back to Mexico they don't have nothing over there. It's not the same wage as here. People are really scared about this.

Working immigrant mothers face an added layer of complexity to the challenges they face in their everyday lives. Public discourse often uses "controlling images" (Collins 1990) to paint undocumented mothers as unfit or opportunists who use reproduction as a strategy to gain public benefits to the detriment of mothers who are US citizens (Romero 2011). One-third of the women in my sample (all of whom were citizens or permanent residents) believed that undocumented workers have an advantage in obtaining public benefits. They cited the fact that since the undocumented often worked under other peoples' social security numbers, it is unreported income, leaving them eligible for more government benefits if they have children born in the United States who are minors.

Of the four *mayordomas* that I interviewed, they were split on their personal sentiments towards undocumented immigrants, but they each perceived that undocumented women had it easier than legal citizens or immigrants. Aida, a 62 year-old packinghousehouse mayordoma said that her boss would notice that the same worker came back the next season with a different social security number,

> So I'll go ask and they tell me that they're using a different number because they made too much on the number they used last year so they reduced their food stamps. They say, 'another girl told me to use a different number so I can get my aid back.' For the legal people, we cannot do this. I don't have anything against them because they're human beings, but there's abuse.

Aida's comments highlight the internal resentments that exist among farmworkers based on access to public benefits by undocumented women. The other side of this experience, however, is much more violent. Lola, a 44 year-old undocumented mother of four who works in the fields most of the year and in the packinghouse for one season a year describes her experience at work as "I'm always uncertain, I'm always fearful [of ICE and deportation]." When asked if she knew other undocumented people in the packinghouse and how she knew they were undocumented, she answered,

> We don't really talk about too much because of fear that the bosses will hear us and not hire us back the next year. It is harder to get a job in the packinghouse as an undocumented person. Sometimes I have realized that a person is undocumented because we come to work the next season and we both are working under different names. Sometimes you forget that they are using a different name and you call them by the name you knew them by the last year. They will correct you fast. We have to change names in order to get hired using a social security number.

She explained that the reason people have to use other social security numbers once they max out their unemployment benefits for that number or if the number is compromised in some way. Although other workers' may hold resentment over undocumented women using this method to get unemployment benefits, the alternative is for these women to not have any money to hold them over until the next harvest season and risk financial ruin. In addition, undocumented women also work under extreme stress over being "outed" and potentially fired or deported. Lola shared an experience she had at a packinghouse after working there for ten years,

> I was fired a couple years ago from a packinghouse I had worked at for a decade. I was fired for not having a social security number after some people from the government ran all of the workers' documents through a machine that verified the numbers. They called me to the office and told me that I was illegal and that I needed to leave the premises immediately. They didn't even let me get my lunchbox or my car, and security walked me out of the gate as if I was some type of criminal. I called my kids' father crying and he came to the packinghouse and they let him enter and get my lunchbox and my car. I was so humiliated. I didn't do anything wrong for them to have treated me that way.

Unfortunately, Lola was not the only worker who had a traumatic experience with ICE that day. She described a chaotic scene with many women running out of the building and some hiding behind stacks of cardboard boxes when the immigration officials entered the building. She says that she did not run or hide and that she "left it in God's hands." She says that looking back, although the experience still giver her anxiety and brings tears to her eyes, it could have been worse. "I have kids, at least they didn't take me away from them." Lola's story highlights the ways in which farmworkers who are privileged as U.S. citizens or

as permanent legal residents' resentments are shortsighted and are actually complicit in creating more barriers for undocumented workers who face many more obstacles to creating and sustaining their lives in this country.

Rural Isolation Limits Employment Opportunities

Exclusionary municipal political boundaries contribute to socio-spatial inequalities experienced by those who live outside of city limits in low-income unincorporated areas. The lack of public transportation adds to the geographic barriers between work and home as well as limiting childcare options, which creates additional challenges for rural women who are disproportionately responsible for unpaid reproductive labor. While there is a substantial amount of research conducted on spatial inequalities in urban areas, there is a lack of research on how spatial inequalities have impacted poor and working rural women generally and in the rural Valley in particular.

As work becomes more precarious because of drought conditions, many farmworkers who live in isolated low-income unincorporated communities need to travel further distances to get to work. If they do not have a car, do not drive, or have to share a single car for the household, many women pay for daily rides from coworkers. The prices range from $5-7 a day, an expense that has proven to be prohibitive when the distances are further and the hours are cut. In particular, women on the western part of Fresno County, an area that has been hit particularly hard by the drought describe the burdens placed on their families, as they often have to travel an hour each way for work. Ana is a 32-year-old mother of two young children whose commute is now an hour long as the drought eliminated jobs closer to her home described a challenging transportation

situation for work and for taking her kids to school, given that she does not drive. She says, “I often tell my husband to teach me how to drive, especially since my kids are growing up and they’ll be going to different schools.” She also described the support she received from one of her coworkers from whom she gets a ride to and from work each day:

> When our hours were very minimal, she told me that I didn’t have to pay her for the rides for that month. She charges 5 dollars a day. She told me not to pay her because the other women don’t have young kids and don’t pay for babysitting. Since I do, she gave me a break. She told me to give that money to the babysitter instead. For me, that is some real support. My other coworkers will often give me things for my kids too, like clothes that their kids have outgrown. My friend that I get a ride from, for me, she’s an angel from heaven.

Josefina, a 38-year old packing house worker, described some of the housing challenges she faced as a low-income single mother,

> I lived in the “country” [an unincorporated area] for years because I couldn’t afford anything else in town. I lived in trailers because as a single mom, I couldn’t afford rent and only paid about $300-$400 a month. We relied on propane to heat our house and our water. There were many times when we didn’t have any heat or hot water.

One freezing winter morning, Josefina turned on her car and let it run to warm up before she ran inside to get her young daughter to take her to the babysitter’s house before heading to work. During the five minutes she was inside gathering her child, somebody came by and stole her car that had her work gear, wallet, and phone. “Those were really dark times for me,” she said. Josefina’s housing and income challenges impacted her ability to get to work in order to provide for her family.

Diana, a 21 year old resident of western Fresno County described a challenge she had confronted while trying to get work at a packinghouse, “If you live in a small town,

your town probably doesn't have a packinghouse or all these stores where you can apply to work. So in a smaller town you *have* to work in the fields. You have to. So I think the smaller the town, the more impacted it is. Living in Avenal, I feel isolated from the world." Diana described having lived in other parts of the county where it was easier to find work in a packinghouse, but since moving with her family to this area her options were limited to working in the fields.

Gender-Based Hierarchies and Discrimination

My sample included women who worked in various types of jobs *within* farm labor, including packinghouses, where the fruit is packed, and the fields where the fruit is picked. My interview participants described the inequalities that exist among different types of agricultural jobs. A person's gender, level of experience, age, and English language fluency all impact the type of work they have access to. The majority of workers in the fields are men, while women make up about 1/3 of field workers according to my informants, an estimate in line with the U.S Department of Agriculture estimate (2020). Work in the fields is seen as more labor-intensive and physically strenuous. It takes place outdoors in triple digit heat during the summer months and freezing cold during the winter months. The majority of the produce in the region includes stone fruit (plums, peaches, nectarines), citrus, and grapes. The hiring is done by male *mayordomos* or foremen. Many women preferred to work in the fields, despite the sun and the heat, citing less surveillance and bullying by supervisors compared with working in the packinghouses. "In the fields, there's more freedom to stretch your legs, not like the packinghouses where someone is always watching you," said one participant.

Interview participants described work in the packinghouses as less physically demanding (though still described as *muy pesado* or very physically difficult by some of the women) and is typically dominated by women. The packinghouses vary by size, a characteristic that has implications for the work environment, including work hour flexibility, resiliency to weather-related changes, and overall work climate (including community-building opportunities). They range from small, concrete patches covered by a corrugated tin roof in the middle of acres of fruit trees to massive factory-like buildings that dot both the empty country roads as well as located in the Valley's cities and towns.

In the packinghouses, regardless of the size, the *mayordomas*, or "floor ladies" are promoted by the owners from the "line workers" to oversee the process and supervise the women workers. In my sample, mayordomas were typically an older (45+) Mexicana with years of experience in the packinghouses and/or fields. Depending on the packinghouse, these mayordomas often have discretion over hiring and firing. Lala, is a 61-year-old mayordoma and self-described *Tejana* who worked as a migrant farmworker with her family as a child. They eventually settled in the Valley and she began working in the fields and eventually in the packinghouses where she quickly moved up the ladder and was made supervisor. She explained her role as at the packinghouse: "A lot of the girls think I'm mean or too strict, but I don't do anything the owners don't tell me to do. I don't care when they [the workers] complain because the owners know that I'm just doing what they say." Some of the workers in Lala's packinghouse described several incidents they had with her that ended up with them crying. "She could be so mean to us. She yells at us all the time and is always telling us that we're packing too slow even if we

are going fast," says Tere, 65, who has worked for Lala in the same packinghouse for the past 20 years. For the mayordomas, they described the stressful position they are in in regards to hiring, firing, and meeting the bosses' expectations. On the other hand, the drought did not affect them financially. As one put it, "We get paid the same no matter how much fruit there is. When some of the girls found that out, they were mad, but that's just how it is." All of the women described the mayordomas as having a very important role in terms of hiring, firing, and shaping the job climate and work conditions.

Faviola, a 25-year-old woman born in Mexico who immigrated to the US as an infant, works in both the fields or the packinghouse depending on the season. In a mix of English and Spanish, she explained why she prefers field work, "You're working hard and fast, but at least you have some interaction with people and fresh air, not the loud machines of the packinghouse. In the packinghouse, they don't let you talk to each other or chew gum. They're constantly breathing down your neck. You can only talk to other people during your lunch break." Banks Munoz (2008) finds parallels between surveillance and punishment tactics as well as the ways that gender, racial, and immigration status segregation is utilized at two transnational factories as a form of control, where this "divide and conquer" strategy weakens solidarity among workers. Much of the literature on Latinx immigrant farm labor omits an analysis of how this labor is also stratified by gender. This is a significant gap, given that women make up more than 30 percent of all farmworkers (U.S. Department of Labor 2018).

Research into the dynamics in other industries also revealed hierarchies that had clear race, gender, and citizenship implications. Allison, Herrera, Struna, and Reese

(2018) uncovered a "matrix of exploitation" among warehouse workers in Southern California, highlighting how the subordinate position of the worker, such as undocumented workers and women, presents justification for differential treatment by management. Some participants described employer discrimination against women for jobs in the fields. Juliana, 61 believes that jobs that require using a ladder to pick fruit pose a particular disadvantage for women. She spent 10 years working the fields and has worked in packinghouses for the past 30 years. She describes the challenges for women working in the fields:

> A lot of farmers won't let women go up in the *escaleras* (ladders) to pick fruit from trees. It's rare. A lot of farmers are afraid of getting sued if the women get hurt. They don't want to take a risk. They don't want girls. I can say probably like 2-3 percent of farmers will let women do that work. Guys have a better chance to get more jobs.

Most of the interviewees said that although women have been historically underrepresented in the fields, the drought-related job losses have created a situation that has furthered discrimination against women. Mari, 40 says,

> Women don't get the same opportunity that men do. It's bad right now because there's already less and less jobs, so the handful of jobs that they would always be given, they're already filled. And all the other ones, even if they were unisex positions, are all filled by men. That makes it harder on families, because the wife comes home, and she has to tell her husband and family, "I didn't get this job" and husbands get mad because they're under pressure and they need the extra income to help support the family. It's horrible.

Bertha, a 54 year old undocumented Mexican woman who has worked as a migrant farmworker in the fields and packinghouses throughout California since she was in her 20s, echoed the sentiment. She says that a male hiring supervisor told her, "We don't hire women here. He said it right to my face." In 2019 she broke her hand when she fell while

carrying a ladder in the fields while picking peaches. She was out of work for six months and when she returned, her employer refused to rehire her. Instead, she heard from a friend that they were hiring workers in an Alaskan fish canning factory. She decided to take the job in 2020 and due to Covid-19 labor shortages, they paid for her flight and pay her $12 an hour plus room, board, and fresh uniforms daily. Her husband, who lived in Mexicali, Mexico with her children, contracted Covid-19 and passed away while she was in Alaska. “We were saving money to get our (citizenship) paperwork together, but now I am alone here,” she said.

Sexual Violence in the Workplace

In addition to sexism and discrimination women farmworkers face in hiring and job security, women also face the threat of sexual assault and harassment in the workplace. While the exact prevalence of workplace sexual violence and harassment among farmworkers is difficult to determine due to the challenges of surveying a seasonal, migrant, and often unauthorized population, the problem is serious (Morales Waugh 2010).

Literature suggests that 50 percent of women will experience workplace sexual harassment during their careers, but the rates may be higher among women of color working in male-dominated environments (Kim et. al 2016). Women make up about one-third of all farmworkers in the U.S. and over 60 percent are undocumented, making them a vulnerable minority in the agriculture industry. Because they are low-income, non-English speaking, and work in male-dominated environments, they face higher risks of workplace sexual harassment (Waugh 2010; Murphy, Samples, Morales, Shadbeh 2015).

Morales Waugh (2010) argues that although exact prevalence of workplace sexual harassment among farmworkers is difficult to determine due to the challenges of surveying a seasonal, migrant, and often undocumented population, the problem is serious.

Andrea, a 51 year-old mother and naturalized citizen who began working the fields when she first immigrated in the late 1980s shared her experience with sexual harassment,

> I have experienced sexual assault two times at the current packinghouse I work at. When I told my supervisor, they fired the guy and they told me that they didn't reveal who made the complaint because I was so worried that he would come after me. Thank God I never heard from him again. The second time, it was a supervisor who used to try to talk to me all the time and he started touching me even after I told him I didn't like the way he was touching me. He said that's just the way he was, but I was so uncomfortable. After that, it escalated and he started sending me sexual text messages. I had to go to the main boss to let them know what he was doing and they fired him too. Luckily I have not experienced it since then, but I know I'm not the only one that has gone through that kind of thing.

Sexual violence and harassment in the agricultural workplace are fostered by a severe imbalance of power between employers and supervisors and their low-wage, immigrant workers. Victims often then face systemic barriers-exacerbated by their status as farmworkers and often as undocumented workers-to reporting these abuses and bringing abusers to justice. This power imbalance often affects young women, recent immigrants, and single women. For example, Bea, 22 year old packinghouse worker described an experience with a teenage coworker who was being harassed at work and ended up leaving the packinghouse after her complaints weren't taken seriously. "This young girl, my friend, felt like she was being harassed every day. This guy would just spend all day

staring at her. It made us all uncomfortable, but it was really creepy for her. She finally complained but that guy had worked there for a long time and she was new so they didn't do nothing to the guy. They told her that she was just spreading gossip and that there was no proof. She ended up just quitting." Women often experience powerlessness in these types of situations. Particularly for young women against men who have been there longer and who hold more power.

Griselda, 53 year old packinghouse worker who spent decades as a migrant worker in the fields also described feeling powerless against the men she worked with in the fields, particularly as a young woman working alone in the fields. "I went through some bad stuff with the men I worked with when I first started working in the fields. As a young woman, I didn't really know about sexual harassment. I knew how I felt with what this man was doing to me, but I didn't know that it was supposed to be prohibited and that I could make a formal complaint. In those days, it was everywhere, forget about it. The mayordomos, the workers, the supervisors, the farm owners, all of them felt like they could harass you in any way they wanted."

She says that today, that would not have happened to her. "Now there is more information that women receive about their rights. Of course there are farms where nobody cares if the men treat women in this way, but at least it is not normalized anymore. Now women feel like they have more power than they did then [in the 1980s and 1990s]."

Unfortunately, many women continue to experience harassment in the agricultural field. Janey, a packinghouse worker who was sent to a major city on the east coast to

train factory workers at a sister company was partnered up with a mechanic who began harassing her almost as soon as she began working. “Every time I would tell him about something at work that needed to be fixed by him, he would say, ‘I’ll only do it if you give me a kiss,’” she said. “I’m not that type of woman at all and I told him to stop, but it just got worse. He would sneak up behind me and try to touch me, tell me how beautiful I am and that he likes me. He even followed me to my hotel one day. It was so horrible. I didn’t know what to do. I was over there by myself and it got to be too much to handle. I finally reported him to the main bosses and they gave him an opportunity to resign.” She said that the trauma she experienced led her to return to the Valley, despite the better pay and opportunity for advancement with that other position. “I was really scared after that, I didn’t want to be without my people again, especially not around any men by myself,” she said. Janey’s experience with assault, harassment, and stalking is not uncommon among women in her position. Women who report incidents to managements can potentially suffer retaliation, get fewer hours, more abusive treatment, or lose their jobs altogether. In Janey’s case, she was essentially pushed out of this new position which would have afforded her some mobility in her company.

The gender discrimination that limits the types of jobs women can get and the treatment they receive at the workplace are social borders that women traverse on a daily basis. These social barriers often intersect with the political borders and create dire situations for women who live at the intersection of multiply marginalized socio-spatial locations. Additionally, the challenges associated with living in isolated, rural areas and

the increasing effects of the climate crisis all add dimensions to how these borders manifest themselves in the lives of women workers.

CONCLUSION

Women farmworkers experience a distinct agricultural labor structure that is stratified by gender and citizenship status. In the fields, where the fruit is picked, women are often discriminated against because of their gender, while in the packinghouses, undocumented workers have a much harder time getting hired and live in fear of being exposed. For undocumented women, they experience uniquely challenging experiences in the workplace via the threat of deportation and exploitation of their legal status by employers. Moreover, their access to paid work is limited because this is an isolated rural geographic context where many residents lack access to basic services, including access to public transportation. Meanwhile, the climate crisis has led to more drought, which further limits their access to paid work

In the workplace, women farmworkers simultaneously face gender discrimination and xenophobia all while the increasing heat and drought is limiting the number of jobs and creates more dangerous working conditions. Women farmworkers also deal with heightened vulnerability to sexual assault and harassment in the workplace and they often have little to no recourse, particularly if they are undocumented, single, and/or young women. These vulnerabilities intersect with each other in ways that have been understudied by sociologists.

My research also highlighted how, in the context of a tight labor market and anti-immigrant climate, racial or xenophobic discrimination was reproduced by some of the

women farmworkers themselves. On the other hand, my research also reveals how women with more resources, such as access to vehicles, sometimes assisted other women lacking such resources. In doing so, my analysis attends to diversity and inequalities among these farmworking women that shape their interactions with one another.

Racialized immigrant workers' vulnerability to deportation despite their designation as essential add to the terror of living in a nation that views the life of immigrants, people of color, women, and low-income workers as expendable. For the undocumented women who are highly vulnerable to these crises and who deal with marginalization based on their race, class, gender, national citizenship, and place of residence, an intersectional perspective is crucial in understanding group dynamics and policy interventions as the struggle for survival becomes more acute with each new crisis. Throughout the United States, farmworkers play a critical role in the nation's food supply yet they continue to work in unsafe conditions and deal with discrimination on multiple fronts. As we continue to witness how the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic reverberate throughout our society and economy, the disconnect between the concept of "essential workers" and the dignity and protections needed for the most vulnerable communities become much more palpable.

CHAPTER III:

COMMUNITY CONDITIONS: SPATIAL INEQUALITIES RELATED TO HOUSING, TRANSPORTATION, ENVIRONMENT, AND HEALTH

"Si no tienes carro en este pais, es como no tuvieras pies."
Not having a car in this country is like not having feet.
- Nati, 65 year old farmworker

INTRODUCTION

The physical landscape of California's San Joaquin Valley is as much a part of the experience of those who live there as the relentless sunshine and heat. The geography and topography intersect with social inequalities and climate change-related disasters in a way that creates a unique experience for those at the margins whose livelihoods depend on the land. For the women in these communities who harvest the nation's fruits and vegetables and who are disproportionately responsible for the reproductive labor in their homes, these spatial inequalities impact their life chances due to limited and unequal access to housing, clean public water and unpolluted air, public transportation, and other basic public services. This chapter highlights the connections between housing segregation, access to clean water, and climate change and how they intersect and compound the challenges faced by women farmworkers in this region, many of whom have little to no legal or political recourse to address them. For undocumented folks, migrant farmworkers, and their families, the borders that they face exist on multiple dimensions of their lives and are constantly shifting as they adapt and respond to crisis after crisis. The ongoing volatility in the weather, including more frequent extreme heat,

freezes, and droughts, along with disproportionate rates of asthma, diabetes, and other chronic health problems, and the stress and vulnerability to the novel coronavirus have each disproportionately affected this community.

My research based on 35 interviews with farmworking women finds that the history of residential segregation, precarious water access and access to basic social and health services intersect with being undocumented, being poor, and being on the frontlines of the impacts of the climate crisis. A critical analysis of these intersections adds to the much needed discourse around the lives of the residents who live in an area that is the embodiment of labor exploitation as well as spatial and political inequalities that impact their entire communities. I argue that for women farmworkers, the racist, exclusionary aspects of this region's history reverberate today and add to the challenges that are created by labor exploitation, a water crisis, climate change, and the pandemic. Farmworkers are at the center of these crises. It is imperative that we understand the relationship between these areas in order to fully reckon with the historical, political, and social implications as well how they intersect in communities whose existence and health is critical to the infrastructure of the country.

This chapter focuses on the inequalities that women in the Valley face in their communities related to housing, municipal boundary-making, transportation, air and water, and health. I begin this chapter with a discussion of the history of residential segregation in the Valley which has led to lasting impacts seen in today's low-income unincorporated communities which lack basic services and face political disenfranchisement. I then explore the challenges with commuting and transportation

given the lack of transportation infrastructure in this isolated rural region. Next, I discuss environmental factors and the role of the climate crisis that has impacted access to clean air and water. Finally, I discuss how the lack of healthcare access due to the lack of health insurance and the shortage of hospitals and clinics in rural communities negatively impacts health outcomes for farmworkers and their family members.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Spatial Inequalities: Housing Segregation in the San Joaquin Valley

Housing Segregation in the Valley: Historical Background

The Valley has a long history of residential segregation that has negatively impacted communities of color. Research shows that neighborhoods with majority African American and Latino populations have less access to supermarkets, higher prevalence of fast food establishments, greater exposure to air pollutants, and less access to high quality health care (Williams and Collins 2001; Riley 2017). Furthermore, schools serving mostly students of color, which are more likely to be located in low-income neighborhoods and to have poorer physical infrastructure, lower average test scores, fewer students in advanced placement courses, and higher dropout and teenage pregnancy rates than more racially integrated schools or those serving mostly white students (Frankenberg 2013; Denton and Massey 1988). This kind of structural inequality limits access to opportunity for students, their families, and entire communities, contributing to generational, often inescapable cycles of poverty. In a report prepared for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities, Abood (2014) highlights the demographic changes happening in the

Valley, which has experienced a decline in the overall number of white residents and increasing percentages of residents who are Latino since the 1990s. However, while the region is diversifying as a whole, racial and economic segregation continues to divide communities at a neighborhood level.

The segregation that persists today can be traced back to the mid 19th century, when Chinese settlers, the first non-white settlers to arrive in the Valley, saw strict land use policies segregate and contain them to certain sections of Valley cities (Abood 2014). Despite the ongoing attempts to terrorize Chinese communities, the most sweeping act of discrimination and racism came in 1882 when President Arthur signed the Chinese Exclusion Act, which prohibited the immigration of Chinese laborers and drastically reduced the number of Chinese farm laborers in the Valley. In the early 20th century, new waves of Asian immigrants from Japan, the Philippines and India arrived to work in the fields of the Valley. Like the Chinese before them, they also faced extreme housing segregation and were only allowed to live in certain neighborhoods. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1942 and the subsequent government order that all Japanese families be sent to internment camps where they were held without rights, farmers who relied primarily on Japanese agricultural labor struggled to find sufficient workers.

The Bracero Program of 1942 allowed for the importation of temporary contract laborers from Mexico to meet the demand for low-wage farm workers (Library of Congress 2020). Because of continued housing discrimination and the sudden availability of vacant homes, many of these new immigrants settled in the former China-and Japan towns in Valley cities, as well as shanty homes and labor camps, where migrant

farmworkers lived in often subpar housing provided by farm owners, outside of the city limits. After Congress extended the bracero program which was initially established as a temporary wartime measure, there were up to 200,000 braceros who worked in the Valley in the 1950s.

The process of urban renewal, redlining, and the construction of high density, low-income housing projects accelerated the segregation of lower income communities of color on one side of town, and higher income, whiter communities on the other (Dymski 2006). In the Valley, "racially concentrated areas of poverty" are not limited to urban jurisdictions. Rural communities throughout the region have also experienced the consequences that come with land use and policy decisions, resulting in a highly segregated landscape. During the 1930s, severe drought and dust storms ravaged states including Oklahoma, Arkansas, Mississippi, Texas, and Kansas, which consequently came to be known as the Dust Bowl. The Dust Bowl exodus brought over 200,000 migrants to California, with over 70,000 settling in the Valley (Paris 2014)

While the white migrants transitioned away from farm labor, the shanty camps and villages they once inhabited provided housing for the next generation of agricultural workers. Fringe communities swelled as more immigrants arrived from Mexico and Central America and often these communities grew without government intervention or urban planning, becoming unincorporated communities. As a result, they often lacked basic public municipal infrastructure like housing wastewater and public water systems (Huang and London 2012). These neighborhoods also tend to have higher rates of environmental pollution due to their proximity to highways, toxic waste incinerators,

meat packing plants, industrial dairies, all of which contaminate their water systems (Vaughn 2021).

Unincorporated Communities

Unincorporated communities are often adjacent to municipal boundaries but lack basic city services such as access to city water supplies, trash and sewer services, streetlights, sidewalks, and police services (Anderson 2008). The current disparities affecting residents of low-income unincorporated communities in the San Joaquin Valley and elsewhere in California are deeply rooted in political, economic, and social dynamics. Low-income unincorporated communities have been shaped by hundreds of years of exploitation of human labor and natural resources, racist actions, institutions and ideologies, and California's problematic system of public finance and land use regulation (Flegal et al. 2013: 10). In this section, I will address the various discussions about how low-income unincorporated areas are classified and how their challenges are mapped. I will also discuss the historic and racial components to how these communities evolved and the environmental dangers and political disenfranchisement associated with living in these areas.

Unincorporated areas are a larger umbrella term for neighborhoods and communities that have varying levels of adjacency to incorporated cities. Their histories, political structures, demographics, and access to resources vary dramatically. For this project, I am specifically referring to the over 122 low-income unincorporated communities which have a combined population of more than 400,000 people living in the unincorporated settlements of the eight San Joaquin Valley counties (Rubin et al.

2007). These communities range from remote settlements in farm country to neighborhoods that have been surrounded by, but are not part of, the Valley's fastest growing cities.

Over the years, there have been several different ways by both the local residents and government officials of defining and naming these communities (Galarza 1977; Rochin and Castillo 1993; Rubin et al. 2007; Mukhija and Monkkonen 2007; Anderson 2008). For different reasons, the definitions and names used, whether by local residents or government officials, have not always served to help further research, assessment, and planning to improve conditions in these communities. For example, all the settlements in the San Joaquin Valley commonly referred to as *colonias* are unincorporated but not all unincorporated communities exhibit social and economic conditions associated with *colonias* (Rubin et. al 2007; Mukhija and Mason 2012). Throughout my own data collection process, most of my residents did not know the term "unincorporated area." Instead, they used the terms "the country," "*la colonia,*" "*una area asi afuera de la ciudad"* (a community outside municipal boundaries), and "*parte del condado"* (part of the county).

Although many residents of unincorporated areas in the Valley refer to their communities as *colonias*, translated as *neighborhoods* in English, most of the focus of *colonia*-related policy and research has focused on unregulated, substandard settlements in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. As a result, a key criteria traditionally used to identify colonias includes relatively close proximity to the Mexican border (Mukhija and Monkkonen 2007). Some scholars argue that the policy and practice of naming

settlements with poor infrastructure and living conditions as colonias, a Spanish-language name, can be misleading and prejudiced and argue for revised terminology (Rochin and Castillo 1993). However, other scholars differentiate between colonias as a policy-related term and a demographic-based one, which is measured more from census data rather than discerned from the development process, or the housing and living conditions (Mukhija and Monkkonen 2007). A demographics-based term is seen as "less value-ridden, and more prideful and celebratory of its defining attributes" (Mukhija and Monkkonen 2007: 476), with a legacy of *colonias* in California first referring to rural communities and towns with Mexican-American farmworkers and Mexican immigrants working in agriculture (Galarza 1977). Rochin and Castillo (1993) argue that the more demographics-based usage of *colonia* in California draws attention to the effects of public policies and structural conditions that do not support the social mobility and well-being of the residents. In contrast, the Texas-inspired policy usage focuses on living conditions and is a synonym for slums. "The Spanish-language name inevitably draws pejorative attention to its Latino residents" (Mukhija and Monkkonen 2007: 483).

Other scholars have highlighted the similarities between colonias and low-income unincorporated African-American enclaves, typically understood as areas with Black rural poverty, a pattern of socioeconomic decline in segregated rural and peri-urban communities of the South (Anderson 2008). Anderson (2008) also discusses how the racial identities attached to the names of these two patterns, one signaled with language and the other with color, have isolated the patterns from one another, drawing scrutiny

away from their underlying local government and economic structures and toward the people who occupy these spaces. As Anderson says,

> By their very name, colonias are a racialized category-a label originally rooted in community pride and culture that, in certain policy and media contexts, has become a stigmatized expression denoting poverty, dilapidation, and filth. The use of the term in policy, government, and grant making contexts is suggestive of the pattern's branding as an importation from the Third World, a housing pattern that has leaked across America's southern border from Mexico (Anderson 2008: 1118)

Comparing colonias and Black low-income unincorporated areas reveals commonalities between the two that sheds light on important issues. Both types of communities tend to originate as highly unregulated subdivisions on unincorporated land, and they lack adequate public investment due to racial discrimination, persistent poverty, a scarcity of housing alternatives, and in many cases, vulnerable or damaged land (Anderson 2008).

Tracking Unincorporated Communities

Rubin et al. (2007) argue that the fragmentation and under-resourced ways in which unincorporated communities are governed make it difficult to collect useful data about their conditions compared with communities in incorporated cities. As a result, information about the resources and conditions is uneven, inconsistent, not transparent and generally insufficient for assessment and planning. The US Census Bureau is one of the most accessible sources of demographic data for unincorporated communities, yet it does not capture all unincorporated communities, particularly when they are low-income (Flegal et al. 2013). Census Designated Places (CDPs), which are unincorporated communities that are surveyed and tracked much like cities and towns. Typically, counties submit the names of communities that they recommend become Census

Designated Places. Having CDP status means that residents and local governments have more and better access to information about their communities and how they have changed over time.

Flegal et al. (2013) found that across the state of California, 2.8 million additional people live in unincorporated areas that were not defined as CDPs. As a result, these communities are not only usually left off of maps; they are rarely tracked in any systematic way, and are largely invisible to the larger public and policymakers. The authors estimate that at least 310,000 people live in low-income unincorporated communities in the San Joaquin Valley (70,000 more than what the Census Bureau included in its low-income census designated places in the San Joaquin Valley (Flegal et al. 2013). Part of the reason for this is that many of these low-income unincorporated communities are too small, lack clear boundaries, or are simply not sufficiently known or recognized to be included in the census as a place. With the exception of surveying individual households, communities are left without a reliable source of data to describe their neighborhoods.

The majority of residents of low-income unincorporated communities in the Valley are Latinx residents who hold low-wage and dangerous jobs, lack social services and public transportation, and confront severe and cumulative environmental contamination of their air, water, and land (London et al. 2018). The well-being of the nearly 350,000 residents living in hundreds of low-income unincorporated communities throughout the San Joaquin Valley is therefore an important environmental health and social justice issue that demands urgent attention by policymakers, public agencies, and

advocates. The demographics of low-income unincorporated communities, also known as disadvantaged unincorporated communities (DUCs) compared to those of unincorporated communities not considered disadvantaged (UCs), as well as those of incorporated communities (ICs), are strongly skewed on racial and ethnic lines. For example, while Latinos make up just under half (48.9 percent) of the total population of the San Joaquin Valley, they represent over two thirds (67.9 percent) of the residents in DUCs, and only 37 percent of residents in the comparatively wealthy UCs. Meanwhile, whites make up 36.5 percent of all SJV residents, but make up only 24.6 percent of DUC residents, and over half (53.9 percent) of other UCs (London et al. 2018).

Municipal Underbounding, Governance, and Disenfranchisement

Municipal underbounding is a term coined by urban geographers to describe annexation policies and practices in which municipalities grow around low-income minority communities, leaving them outside the reach of city voting rights and municipal services (Anderson 2008; Aiken 1987; Lichter et al. 2007). In their 2013 study on unincorporated communities in California, Flegal et al. (2013) describe the development of these communities during the agricultural and industrial boom of the early and mid-twentieth century. Many of these communities developed on the edges of cities where industry was concentrated and housing was cheaper. As the cities grew, they annexed land around the unincorporated communities, thereby avoiding and excluding communities of color and low-income communities. As Flegal et al. (2013: 10) describe,

> Decades of neglect and exclusion by cities and counties have been reinforced by the state's counterproductive system of taxation and land use policies. These communities find themselves stuck between the county and their neighboring city. The city does not want to invest in county

> territory, nor does the county wish to invest in a community that, once improved, will be more attractive for incorporation by a neighboring city (Flegal et al. 2013: 10).

In addition to their precarious statuses and history of racist and classist exclusion, many of the challenges of these communities come from their political disenfranchisement. Legal scholar Michelle Anderson (2010) highlights the ways in which municipal underbounding excludes residents of these communities from voting rights and in city elections and, in many cases, municipal services. Other research finds that the practice of excluding low-income unincorporated communities from investment in basic land use planning has effectively replaced explicitly racist zoning laws inherited from the 1960s (Marsh et al. 2010; Anderson 2008). Geographers characterize this process as a type of gerrymandering, historically used by small cities and towns, especially in the American South, to avoid annexing black communities; this reduces their voting power and denies them municipal services (Aiken 1987; Lichter 2007).

Mukhija and Mason (2012) label cities exercising municipal underbounding as 'reluctant cities.' They argue that although annexation by adjacent or surrounding reluctant cities is neither a panacea nor the only solution to the infrastructure shortages, it is an important avenue for service provision in poor unincorporated areas. Marsh et al. used GIS mapping to highlight how cities and towns used boundary manipulation that disadvantaged minority groups both politically and materially, arguing that although "the invisible barriers that mark racially disparate municipal boundaries are often difficult to discern on the ground, but they can readily be made visible through mapping" (Marsh et al. 2010: 60). Their data showed how cities often preferred to grow by leapfrogging

underserviced neighborhoods, leaving a pattern of unincorporated areas as political and spatial islands within the boundaries of municipalities. The processes of municipal underbounding are important to acknowledge because they provide a direct look at the mechanisms that produce landscapes of residential segregation (Marsh et al. 2010; Anderson 2008). Mukhija and Mason (2012) argue that racism is the driver of municipal underbounding and exclusion. Municipalities, however, deny charges of racial discrimination. They claim that their motives are economic and that they lack the necessary financial resources to annex poor neighborhoods and provide them with urban services. The unwillingness of cities to incorporate such neighborhoods creates serious problems of racial, social, and environmental injustice.

Residents of low-income unincorporated areas typically lack basic public infrastructure, including public transportation and clean water. They also lack political representation because these communities are "mapped out" of local democracy. Unincorporated areas rely on only one tier of local government, usually the county government, while urban areas within municipalities rely on both city and county governments (Anderson 2008). Counties serve as "passive administrative subdivisions of state government and are viewed as fixed and immovable," a stark contrast to municipalities, "where acts of incorporation, annexation, deannexation, and consolidation enable territorial self-determination" (Anderson 2008:1140). The challenges that come with high rates of poverty in unincorporated areas and the dangerous and degrading absence of public investment in the physical state and safety of their neighborhoods are compounded by a lack of political voice. This creates many challenges not just for the

communities as a whole, but also for individual families and family dynamics. The multidimensional borderlands that low-income residents in these majority Mexican and Mexican-American rural communities traverse cannot be understood in isolation, instead, the legacy of segregation, the realities of living in unincorporated communities, and structural inequalities have had a major impact on many areas of farmworkers' lives, including their vulnerability to public health crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic.

Housing and Covid-19

The structure of low-income communities in the rural Valley and the challenges with finding clean, dignified puts residents of greater risk of exposure to Covid-19. For many low-income Valley families, it was not possible to follow public health recommendations to isolate at home during the spread of the virus. Not only did many farmworkers have to continue to work to pay basic household bills, but the high cost of living created overcrowded living conditions. Parents, children, in-laws, and grandchildren must often live in the same house or rooms for financial reasons and migrant workers who live in labor camps also deal with communal, crowded living conditions with high rates of turnover (Wozniaka 2020). Overcrowded housing conditions exacerbated the toll of the Covid-19 pandemic on some of California's most vulnerable and hard-hit communities (Manke 2020; Casado Sanchez 2021). The structure of housing became a public health issue, with Governor Newsom having to take executive action in order to help curb the spread of the virus in the poorest communities by implementing the Housing for Harvest program to help farmworkers quarantine in hotels if they tested positive for Covid-19 (Botts, Cimini, Gee 2021).

Poverty and crowded housing conditions contributed to the high rates of Covid-19 among farmworkers in the Valley. A 2020 CalMatters report that focused on the link between Covid-19 and crowded housing in California found that the hardest hit neighborhoods had three times the rate of overcrowding as the neighborhoods that have largely escaped the virus' devastation. Those neighborhoods also had twice the rate of poverty. In the least affected neighborhoods, about half of residents are white, while in neighborhoods most heavily infected by the virus, 82 percent of residents are people of color. Finally, their findings revealed that about two-thirds of Californians in overcrowded homes are "essential workers" or live with at least one "essential worker" who had to work in person during the Covid-19 pandemic (Botts 2020). These findings demonstrate how many California residents experience the devastating impacts of the intersections of race, poverty, and overcrowded housing, as result of a long history of racially discriminatory housing policies and insufficient funding for public housing.

Transportation and Commuting Challenges

As feminist geographers point out, there are significant gender differences in commuting patterns (Taylor and Ong 1995, Blumen 1994, Bondi 1992, Valentine 2007, Fernandez and Su 2004, Blumenberg 2004). Blumen (1994) argues much of the literature on inequalities in commuting times and the spatial mismatch between home and work has focused on men. As she points out, a woman's familial role heavily affects her allocation of commuting time because she is often expected to be available to fulfill the needs of other family members throughout the day, even when she works for pay. As she puts it:

> Even in two-earner households with young children where the strategy is to take sequential scheduling, men's schedules are more optimal, while those of women remain the less flexible. Commuting is considered to be the most tension-producing activity by mothers of young children, but not by fathers, and this is because mothers' commuting, unlike fathers,' connects two sets of inflexible responsibilities (Blumen 1994: 228).

As such, the male-centered spatial mismatch hypothesis is an incomplete model for researchers, planners, and policymakers to study socio-spatial inequalities that center low-income women of color.

Women who are residents of rural, low-income unincorporated areas face additional transportation barriers. The transportation realities of such residents vary because homes are more spread out in some areas than in others. In some cases, residents live in remote areas that are located far away from jobs, retail stores, and public institutions. Burke et al. (2005) argue that some of the transportation challenges come from the fact that there are not sufficient numbers of people living in most unincorporated areas to justify the provision of sufficient and regularly scheduled public transit routes. Access to transportation services of any kind is extremely difficult for low-income rural residents who either own no vehicle or one vehicle, which often operates unreliably, and is needed by multiple family wage earners. When the vehicle develops mechanical problems, the family is often left without a means of transportation in areas that are far beyond walking distance from work, public schools, public services, and stores. This has potentially larger implications, as appointments cannot be kept in nearby towns and it becomes difficult to purchase and transport groceries and water.

The embodiment of multiple identities, including being an undocumented Latino immigrant creates additional transportation challenges for working *and* living, which

impact many farmworking women in the Valley because of the threat of deportation. García (2017: 478) uses the concept of racializing 'illegality' as a way to describe the "active and ongoing processes of a larger status that conflates race, legal status, nativity, and generation status." Her work also uses an intersectional perspective as a way to demonstrate how racializing "illegality" develops and how it relates to other social locations among Mexican and Mexican-American women in an anti-immigrant climate (García 2017). This process has real consequences for many women and their families, as it perpetuates social inequalities, heightened surveillance of Latinx residents, and for the undocumented, fear of detention and deportation.

Romero (2008) also uses an intersectional approach to examine the effects of immigration raids in mixed-status families. She argues that intersecting inequalities related to race, class, ethnicity, as well as citizenship status affect the enforcement of immigration laws. Similar to García (2017), Romero also describes how law-enforcement agents and immigration legislation contribute to the racialization of "illegality." Emphasizing how immigration agents target their border enforcement efforts within low-income Latino communities, her research found that,

> Residing, shopping or working in low-income areas populated with Latinos placed racialized Latinos at more risk of being stopped for citizenship inspection than persons who appeared to be white, regardless of their citizenship status (Romero 2008: 147).

Additionally, class markers such as those related to dress, cars, or bicycles, also placed working poor Latinos at more risk than middle-class Latinos.

Baker's (2004) research on the discrimination faced by Mexican immigrant women in Iowa also suggests that race and class-based discrimination constrains their

mobility. Her ethnographic research found that the women were often afraid to drive a car, walk down the street, or visit their children's school for fear of harassment by immigration agents and deportation. As she carefully documents, strategies for living without documentation (e.g., driving without a license, not going to their children's school, working with false identification) and in a hostile environment are fraught with fear and logistical problems.

Environmental Racism and Exclusionary Policies: The Lack of Clean Air, Water, and Healthcare in Low-Income Rural Latino Communities

Air Pollution

Farmworkers in the Valley confront many environmental health problems related to climate change that put their health at risk. This population exists in what Huang and London (2012) have portrayed as a "spatially and racially patchy 'riskscape'" for its many small, rural low-income communities where poverty, racism, and marginal living conditions increase their vulnerability to environmental health hazards and non-communicable diseases (Velasco-Mondragon et al. 2016; Gomez-Vidal and Gomez 2021). London et al. (2018) found that increased concentrations of ozone and particulate matter, which tends to worsen climate change, place the health of millions of Valley residents at risk. In the coming decades farmworkers in particular will face immediate and direct health risks given that they labor outdoors in the fields and along the roads where this air pollution is generated and ozone concentrations are very high. The historic wild fires that raged throughout the state of California throughout November of 2018 created extremely toxic environments for all residents, especially farmworkers who had

to continue picking produce with minimal or no protective covering surrounded by a toxic cloud of smoke (Paquette 2018).

This is not a one-off incident. Climate change is expected to increase concentrations of ozone and particulate matter. As a result, the frequency of summer ozone air pollution and larger, longer-burning fires are likely to increase. This is important to air quality and public health because ozone aggravates respiratory diseases like pediatric and adult asthma, chronic bronchitis, and emphysema (London et al. 2018). These problems exacerbate problems of air pollution that are already high in rural areas due to the dangers of large-scale corporate farming:

> In California, industrial farming has turned fields into factories not only terms of how it organizes labor, but in terms of belching vast quantities of gaseous materials that harm surrounding residents. Farm machines, pesticides, dust storms, ruminants, field burning, and fleets of shipping trucks all contribute in their own way (London et al. 2018: 8).

The San Joaquin Valley has some of the most polluted air and accounts for the second worst air quality region in the United States, accounting for extremely high rates of childhood asthma (von Glascoe and Schwartz 2019; Alcala, Cisneros, and Capitman 2017; Greene 2018). In the Valley, the mountain ranges trap air pollution in, where an inversion layer forms while keeping air contaminants confined and in high concentrations, especially on warm and hot summer days. In addition to agriculture, some of the main contributors to air pollution are oil drilling operations, large industries, and truck and automobile traffic along Interstate 5, and Highway 99. Breathing in ground level ozone is dangerous as it can trigger a variety of health problems like throat

irritation, chest pain, and congestion, and can lead to severe lung damage making infants, and the elderly more vulnerable to respiratory and other illnesses (Greene 2018).

Lack of Access to Clean Public Water

Access to clean, affordable water is also a major concern for many working-class communities in the Valley. Climate change is negatively affecting groundwater by indirectly promoting increased water contamination. This is because changes in average temperatures and temperature extremes will expand the ranges of agricultural weeds and alter the abundance and types of many pests (London et al. 2018). In East Porterville, a small, low-income, predominantly Mexican unincorporated community in Tulare County where the entire city has run dry due to the historic drought of 2011-2016, hundreds of families now rely on trucked-in water. Abramsky (2015) describes how journalists poured into the town, lured by the headline of a city without water. As he points out,

> East Porterville is, in fact, only the tip of the iceberg, Smaller, more invisible settlements throughout the great farming valleys of California are in crisis-many from a lack of water, but also from a loss of jobs…On the outskirts of cities, the lack of water simply highlights all of the other social inequities that afflict these small satellite communities.

The high levels of water contamination and the demographics of the most impacted areas make this a prime case of environmental racism.

For many who live in disadvantaged unincorporated communities (DUCs) access to clean water is a critical issue. In California and other states, the majority of residents receive their drinking water from a community water system that delivers clean drinking water. Anderson (2008) argues that there is a misconception that the lack of access to water is exclusively a problem in poor, developing countries. Instead, millions of families

in the United States live in DUCs that face drinking water challenges (Anderson 2008; Moore et al. 2011; Jepson 2012). Ample research confirms that many low-income unincorporated communities lack potable water as well as other basic public infrastructure such as sidewalks, trash collection, streetlights, police services, and political representation (Balazs and Ray 2014).

The Central Valley has some of the worst groundwater quality in the state, which results from the lack of environmental protections and pollution related to corporate farming. In 2005, its 18 counties (of the state's 58) accounted for 51 percent of the state's reported Maximum Contaminant Load violations, including 78 percent of those involving nitrate (Moore et al. 2011). Contamination derives primarily from the use of agricultural fertilizers and pesticides, and from wastes associated with confined animal facilities and food processing. Using water quality data from 1999-2011, researchers found that many small community systems serving high percentages of Latinos were delivering water with high nitrate levels (Balazs et al. 2011). It is an especially acute problem, given that 87 percent of the 667 community water sources in the San Joaquin Valley are reliant on groundwater (State Water Resources Control Board 2017).

Impacts of Drought

The drought that began in 2012 and ended in 2017 was California's most severe drought in at least 1,000 years (National Integrated Drought Information System 2020; Griffin and Anchukaitis 2014). Residents of the state did not experience the drought in the same ways or with the same intensity. The rural Central Valley was hit the hardest by its impacts. During the height of the drought, surface water allocations were drastically

cut, with some irrigation districts receiving 0 percent of their water allocations (Greene 2018). The agricultural sector in the Valley adapted to the decrease in available surface water for irrigation in three ways: (1) fallowing land, (2) increasing groundwater pumping, and (3) switching to high-value crops (Cooley et al 2015, Greene 2018; Howit et al. 2014). Since the 1970s, groundwater has provided an average of 43 percent of the Valley's water supply (Faunt et al. 2016).

During the drought, groundwater accounted for 70 percent of the water supply due to increase in groundwater pumping (Faunt 2016, Greene 2018). Over-pumping groundwater is a dangerous practice which can cause the ground to sink, thereby damaging infrastructure. It also unleashes dangerous levels of arsenic, which move into groundwater aquifers that supply drinking water for over a million people and irrigate crops in the nation's richest farmland (Levy, Jurgens, Burow, Voss, Faulkner, Arroyo-Lopez, Fram 2021). Meanwhile, economic studies estimate that the drought caused the loss of 17,100 jobs in 2015 (Howitt et al 2015), and 4700 jobs in 2016 (Medellin-Azuara et al 2016), including both direct seasonal farm jobs and indirect agricultural jobs. These economic studies provide a partial outline of the impact of the drought on farmworker employment, but do not address other costly impacts of the drought, such as reduced access to clean water, and public health problems tied to increased air and water pollution.

In 2022, California finds itself in another extreme drought, with the first two months of the year on track to be the driest in California history (California Drought Monitor 2022). In early 2022, 99 percent of California is at least in the "Moderate

Drought" category as listed by the California drought monitor, and two thirds of the state is in the "Severe Drought" category (California Drought Monitor 2022). This current drought, which began in 2020, leaves water suppliers relying on their stored water supplies or resorting to groundwater pumping once again (Becker 2022). Across the Western United States, the region is now in what is known as a "megadrought" that began in 2000 is now considered the driest two decades in the region in at least 1,200 years, a situation in which climate change is largely responsible (Fountain 2022).

Drought not only affects access to clean water, it also reduces air quality. During heat waves, the air becomes stagnant and traps emitted pollutants, often resulting in increases in surface ozone. Heat waves and drought also dry out vegetation and provide more fuel for wildfires whose smoke is a serious medical hazard (Peterson, Karl, Kossin, Kunkel, Lawrimore, McMahon, Vose, and Yin 2013). The air quality in the region has had severe impacts on Valley children. von Glascoe and Schwartz (2019) find that children of Mexican-origin farmworkers in the Valley have exceptionally high rates of asthma compared with children of Mexican descent in both the United States and Mexico. In the Valley, childhood asthma rates sometimes approach double the national rates for children under 18. Between 2009 and 2016, the lifetime prevalence rate for Mexican-American children under the age of eighteen in the Valley fluctuated between 16 percent and 22.2 percent. In comparison, the national prevalence for this cohort was consistent at around 12.7 percent (von Glascoe and Schwartz 2019). Industrial farming conditions systematically expose children of farmworkers to environmental toxicity over which they have little or no control, including pesticide exposure, bovine contamination,

agricultural field burning, and substandard housing, all of which contribute to high prevalence of asthma among children. von Glascoe and Schwartz (2019) argue that the application of structural vulnerability and structural violence frameworks can be used to better explain these complex environmental injustices.

Disparities in Healthcare Access

The state of California has over seven million residents, the majority of them Latino, African American, and Native American, who live in Health Professional Shortage Areas, a federal designation for counties experiencing shortfalls of primary care, dental care, or mental health care providers (California Future Health Workforce Commission 2019). These shortages, which partly stem from governmental failures to invest in public healthcare and healthcare training, are the most severe in some of California's largest and fastest-growing regions, including the Inland Empire, the San Joaquin Valley, and in the most rural areas. The Valley for years has struggled to attract medical doctors with physician-to resident ratios well below what medical experts say is needed for adequate health care: there are only about 45 primary care physicians for every 100,000 people, that's 15 to 35 fewer doctors than experts say is needed to provide high quality care for all Valley residents (Tobias 2020).

The lack of hospitals and shortages of primary care doctors in rural Valley communities creates barriers to health care access, forcing farmworkers to travel many miles with limited access to transportation to urban centers for the care they need (Natsoulis and Slooties 2020). One outcome resulting from the distance to healthcare providers is that residents of rural communities also tend to suffer more severe forms of

chronic diseases than people who have an easier time accessing health care. Those living longer distances from doctors often put off care until it is too late (Tobias 2020). Combined with higher rates of diabetes, asthma and other lung diseases, and serious heart conditions, Valley residents have been vulnerable to health related challenges even before the pandemic (Healthy Fresno County Dashboard 2019).

Access to health insurance is another major issue in the Valley, which results from anti-immigrant policies and gaps in U.S. public health insurance policies. All eight San Joaquin Valley counties are classified as Medically Underserved Areas and Populations and although only about 8 percent of Californians have no form of health insurance, a disproportionate share are immigrants; they make up 27 percent of the state but 48 percent of the uninsured (Cha 2021; Natsoulis and Slooties 2020). Although Governor Newsome has recently expanded state sponsored Medi-Cal insurance to more undocumented workers, many farmworkers earn just above the income threshold ($17,609 for single people, $23,792 for a couple, and $36,156 for a family of four) (Ibarra 2022). While most Californians who earn over the Medi-Cal limit can get subsidized coverage through Covered California, undocumented people are not allowed to buy insurance through the marketplace under the federal Affordable Care Act. Finally, additional barriers to healthcare access includes provider bias, less access to culturally appropriate healthcare services, and misinformation that leads to fear of visiting doctors, particularly for undocumented residents who fear that it puts them or their family members at risk of deportation. As a result of such barriers to healthcare,

immigrants have been more reluctant to seek Covid-19 testing and treatment compared with other groups (Rodriguez-Diaz 2020).

For low-income, and immigrant communities, rural isolation, environmental racism, and exclusionary public policies negatively impacts their housing conditions, access to clean air and water, and access to healthcare. These problems are inter-connected and have disproportionate impacts on the most vulnerable residents, including low-income Latinx undocumented immigrant women and their family members.

FINDINGS

The following section presents findings from 35 interviews with farmworking women and focuses on four key areas that reflect the inequalities in their low-income, rural, and immigrant communities, including housing, unincorporated communities, water, transportation, and how these inequalities impact health outcomes for the residents of these communities. My research finds that borders manifest themselves along lines of municipal boundary-making, a legacy of housing segregation for working-class residents of color and immigrants, and geographic inequalities, all of which limit access to clean, public water and exacerbate the negative impacts of climate change among Valley residents. As a result, farmworking women in the Valley and their families face extreme heat and drought conditions. Women who work and live in this region lack the resources, infrastructure, and political representation to ensure that they have their most basic needs met; they often lack decent housing, transportation, clean air and water, and healthcare. These inter-connected issues are illustrative of the combined impacts of social and political borders on farmworking women in their communities.

Housing Conditions

The lack of access to secure and dignified housing has been a problem that farmworkers have faced over the past 70 years. The lack of decent, affordable housing as a public health concern has been magnified by the effects of climate change, lack of water, increasing climate-change related temperatures, and the Covid-19 pandemic. Lola, a 44 year-old mother of four discussed the challenges she has faced as a mother, undocumented person, and as someone who has been a single parent off and on for the past fifteen years. She was a migrant farmworker when she came to the U.S. in the late 1990s, traveling between Arizona and California until she decided to settle down in the Valley where she met her then-partner and had two children. After her husband was convicted of murder when her two eldest children were under 10 years old, she struggled to pay rent and lived with relatives and in garages until she was able to rent a home with the help of her new partner after she had her younger two children.

> The house was not in the best neighborhood and there were times that we struggled to pay the light bill, but the house had a lot of problems too. The landlord refused to fix some electrical problems, so we sometimes ran extension cords from the neighbor's house so that we had some light to cook or to turn on fans when it was hot outside.

After they were evicted when the landlord sold the house, Lola, her partner, and her two youngest children lived in the garage of a friend's house. "It was so hard sometimes, not having our own space, but we were able to finally get the place we're at now," she explained.

She and her family moved to a house in a neighboring unincorporated area and although it is not her "dream home," she enjoys having space for her children to run and

play. For Lola, many of the challenges she faced with her housing situation were compounded by not having a car. “When I didn’t have a car, I felt like I had no options,” she said. The most challenging aspect was getting to and from work given the lack of public transportation in her area. She had to rely on inconsistent rides from co-workers or having to pay hundreds of dollars a month “para ir de raite [to pay for rides from coworkers].” She said that she was grateful that her children were able to get to and from school on their school bus, even when they lived out in the “*colonias* [unincorporated areas]” but that it was hard always having to rely on other people to help her with grocery shopping and doctors’ appointments.

Another challenging issue was that, as an undocumented person, she often didn’t feel safe being out in public with her children. “Being undocumented, there are a lot of problems that we have every day, a lot of fear and stress,” she said. She highlighted the fear of getting caught in an ICE checkpoint, or getting pulled over with no driver’s license. “It’s scary for myself, of course, but I worry the most about my kids. What will they do without me?” Lola’s experience demonstrates the challenges that many women in the Valley face. Many Latina farmworkers in this region face a combination of poverty, housing insecurity, lack of transportation, and citizenship status, which create multiple barriers for their upward mobility and well-being.

Bea, a 21-year old packinghouse worker and high school graduate also discussed challenges associated with not having stable housing. “When I was kid, we lived in garages or slept in a hotel when my mom was having a hard time paying rent. It was just her taking care of me and my brother. It was really hard, yeah.” When asked about her

goals in life, she answered without hesitation, “I would love to buy my mom a house so that she doesn’t have to worry about rent ever again. I would like to help her and my little brothers to have the luxury of owning their own home and not renting a home or worrying if something goes wrong, then they’re not going to have a home anymore.” Bea went on to discuss the challenges of having an undocumented mother:

> It makes me scared for her that she will get deported one day. It creates a lot of stress for me and my brothers. It also makes me really mad the way they treat my mom at work. They fired her from her job [at a packinghouse] one time because they found out she was using another person’s social [security number]. They embarrassed her in front of everyone and made her leave without being able to take her stuff. Every time I think about it, I get mad.

The stress of insecure housing that Bea experienced as a child was compounded by the stress of her mother’s status as an undocumented immigrant and the lack of respect she felt her mother experienced. This speaks to Enriquez (2015) concept of “multigenerational punishment” in which U.S.-born children of undocumented immigrants share in the stress and dehumanizing experiences that their parents face. Although Bea is no longer homeless, the specter of one day losing her home looms large for her.

Many migrant farmworkers have experienced even more housing insecurity, a situation that has been exacerbated because of job shortages related to the extreme weather related to climate change and the Covid-19 pandemic. Teresa is a 50-year old migrant farmworker originally from Mexicali near the U.S./San Diego border, an area she considers her home base. She described the housing challenges that come with being an undocumented worker who has to follow the crops from Arizona, through the Valley, and all the way up to Oregon. “We have to find our own housing, except for in Oregon where

we live in housing provided by the company," she explains. "It is not the nicest housing, but it is nice to know that we have a place to lay our heads at night. In Phoenix, myself, my husband, and another couple would rent a room. It is the same thing in the Valley." She described the challenges they faced with housing insecurity, but discussed how she was grateful that they were able to travel with a large caravan and felt safety in numbers. The social networks she created with other farmworkers during her travels have been extremely important for her survival. Like many other farmworkers, she often shares her living space with other workers in order to make ends meet, "I lived with another two couples while we traveled from farm to farm. They had a car and I always knew that we would be able to get to work on time. Those other people are my friends, that's how it is in this life, it is so important to have friends, people that you can share expenses with," says Teresa.

Teresa moved back to Mexicali during the early part of the pandemic in late 2020. She decided not to risk getting sick so far from her children who were living in Mexico with family members, so she went back to them. "I missed out on a lot of work, but I felt better knowing that if we get sick, at least we would be together," she said. She discussed the challenges with her crowded, multigenerational household in this way:

> There are nine people living in a three bedroom house. My daughter, her partner, and her three kids, my other daughter lives with us with her new baby, and my younger son and myself. It is usually fine because we all pitch in with the rent and expenses, but it was hard when Covid-19 came to our house. My son-in-law caught it at his factory job, then one by one we all got sick. Luckily nobody had to be hospitalized but it was very scary.

Teresa's experience is very common to many farmworkers. Research finds that the chance of agricultural workers in California dying has increased by more than 35 percent

overall, and nearly 60 percent for Latinos during the Covid-19 pandemic between 2020 and 2021 (Chen, Glymour, Riley, Balmes, Duchowny, Harrison, Matthay, Bibbins-Domingo 2021). These trends are partly related to the high rate of farmworkers and Latinos living in crowded, multigenerational households, which make it hard to quarantine. They also result from the lack of workplace protections and lack of healthcare that disproportionately impact farmworkers and Latinos (Casado Sanchez 2021; CalMatters 2020).

In 2020, California Governor Gavin Newsom created the 'Housing for the Harvest' program, an initiative to provide temporary hotel housing to farmworkers who need to isolate due to Covid-19. Unfortunately, few workers took advantage of the program. As of June 2021, a full year after the program launched, the state had spent $155,000 to provide just 137 hotel rooms for farmworkers in 13 counties (Botts 2021). The state began to incentivize quarantining by paying farmworkers $500 if they quarantined at home, and $1000 if they quarantined in a hotel (Botts 2021). Unfortunately, workers who were previously infected were not eligible to receive the funds retroactively; they were only available after the date of implementation.

There are several reasons why many farmworkers did not take advantage of the program. First, there is pervasive fear that using governmental programs will result in deportation, particularly for undocumented workers and their family members. In addition, many farmworkers did not or could not leave their families for an extended time and the program needed either a positive Covid-19 test or a physician's recommendation, obstacles that proved to be vast for many farmworkers who had less access to Covid-19

tests or the doctor (Botts, Cimini, Gee 2021). Over 60 percent of farmworkers are undocumented and they have some of the lowest rates of health insurance (Marcelli and Pastor 2015). A major shortcoming of this program is that it does not address the root issue that contributes to high rates of Covid-19 among farmworkers: farmworker families need decent and affordable housing.

Griselda, a 56-year old undocumented mother of two grown children has also experienced stress because of her housing situation. She stopped working in the fields a year ago because of pressure from her husband. “I felt like I was working two jobs, one in the fields and the other one taking care of my husband. Cooking, feeding him, cleaning the house... It was very exhausting,” she explained. In order to make ends meet, they took in a boarder to rent a room in their two-bedroom house. He is a friend of a relative and he also works in the fields. “He mostly keeps to himself and he doesn’t ever use the kitchen,” she said. I asked her if she had any extra worries about having another person in her home during the pandemic, and she replied that she did, “but luckily he is not really in the house too much. I still worry because I don’t know where he goes or who he associates with and the germs spread fast.”

Challenges of Living in Unincorporated Areas

Housing challenges for farmworkers also intersect with the inequalities that result from living in a low-income unincorporated area. For many of these residents, the challenges that come with housing insecurity are exacerbated by living in isolated areas, sometimes in large and dense communities and sometimes in homes that are miles from their nearest neighbor.

Juana, a 40 year-old single mother discussed one of the challenges she has had living in an unincorporated area:

> Living out in the country, you live off of propane to heat your water and your house. If you run out of propane, you have no hot water. That has happened to me quite a few times. You know, not being able to pay for all that stuff out there living out in the country. Also, you know, the conditions of the house and the way stuff is out there, they're [unincorporated areas] not really good neighborhoods. I have been robbed before and someone once stole my car when my kids were smaller. It is not easy to live out there but I can't afford anything else.

Although Juana is fluent in English and has some training beyond high school, she ran into problems during her time as a nurse's assistant and had her license revoked. She went back to working in a low-wage packinghouse job and had a hard time making ends meet on her low income.

> The reason I made the choice to live out here [unincorporated area] was because you know, being so young and then having four kids on my own… It was really hard to actually be able to pay rent in a nice neighborhood in a nice area. You know, I would always go for whatever was cheaper. I lived in a trailer for a lot of years and I was paying $300-$500 at the most. And with the jobs and stuff that I had, it was really hard for me to be paying rent, you know? So that's the reason why I was always out in the country because it cost less. Obviously, the neighborhood was not going to be that good, because it was so cheap and stuff. Now that I'm older, more wiser, I save more. I understand more how to do it. Just having my financials a little bit more settled, I'm able to pay more rent and now I live in a much nicer neighborhood.

Although it is often cheaper to live in unincorporated areas, there are other challenges with which residents must contend. Dalia, a 53-year old mother of four and packinghouse worker has been the main caretaker for her elderly parents who live in an unincorporated community. She spends most of her days at her parents' house located right outside municipal boundaries and discussed her experience of living in an unincorporated area in this way,

> We live out in the country. We don't have access to city pumps or city water, sewer or plumbing. We rely on our own well and we can burn our trash if we want. Just recently we started to have a trash pickup. Before that, we either had to fend for ourselves, either take the trash to the dump or burn it in the back. We used to have a big hole in the back where they would just dump the trash in the days when you could just burn stuff.

Her parents' house is on a property that is across the street from a large packinghouse that was built on land that was previously unincorporated, but was annexed as soon as the building went up. As she explains,

> The crazy part about it is that on our side of the street, it's considered County. Across the street, it's part of city limits. There's a big packinghouse, an international shipping company, they're within city limits. They have city water, sewer, they have everything that the city has. Right across the street from where we live, literally right across the street, there's no street lights. Its dark.

When asked about the possibility of annexation by the city, she pointed to the class dimensions of municipal boundaries: "It's the city's decision. The city decided to annex that side of the street because it was going to be an economic benefit to them. My dad's side of the street wasn't a benefit for them. Unless my dad would have sold to that company, they would have made our side of the street city limits." Dalia's account is an example of municipal underbounding and in this case, the potential city tax revenues from her family's home were not considered valuable enough to be annexed. Instead, annexation would have only been possible if they would have sold their land to a large shipping company located across the street.

Living in an unincorporated area also exacerbates challenges with access to clean water, with many of the residents relying on well water. Maribel, 57 discussed the challenges with living in a rural area in the context of the drought,

> You have to be very conservative with your water because you never know when the well is going to go dry. It costs a lot of money to get a surveyor to come out to tell you how much water you have left. If a normal resident runs out of water, it is your responsibility to hire someone to try and drill a new well. It costs many thousands of dollars. The big farmers can just use up as much water as they want, even if it is in the artery of another well. It's not fair to the regular person, the poor person that lives next to these fields.

Although challenges with accessing water is endemic to the Valley's unincorporated communities, Maribel's experience as a low-income resident of an unincorporated area highlights the challenges of having to compete with large farmers for access to water. Most low-income residents do not have the resources to find water if their main source is taken over by a much more powerful company, further exacerbating potential water shortages that low-income residents face.

Lack Of Public Transportation

Transportation is an obstacle that many rural residents navigate on a daily basis in order to provide for their families. Although some areas have public transit buses to run to the local cities, many areas are left without any form of public transportation. During the historic drought of 2011-2017, many workers were forced to travel further to get to work due to fallowed fields and less work. Maria, a 45-year old mother and packinghouse worker discussed the challenges with transportation, particularly as the drought forced workers to have to travel further. "The people from this area, they leave for work at 5am and they don't return until 6pm because they have to travel so far to find any work when there is not enough water for the fields around us. They're not getting paid all of those hours. Some of those hours are just driving and traveling."

Many of the women whom I interviewed discussed the financial burden of having to pay for a ride to travel to work. For many women who share one car per household, their husbands typically take the car and women will catch a ride with coworkers who will drive them for a price of anywhere from $5 to $8 a day. Luz, a 32-year old packinghouse worker described the financial burden associated with travelling to work:

> There's a girl who takes me to work for $5 daily for six or seven days a week. Imagine how much it adds up, especially when you think of what it takes to eat. And of course, the work is so hard. You sometimes don't have enough to make ends meet and a person has to work because the bills don't wait
> .

For Luz, spending an extra $35 a week for transportation on her low income highlights the extra financial burden that farmworkers have because of challenges with transportation and the rural, isolated nature of the work, which is often located many miles from her home. It also speaks to the low-wages that many farmworkers receive, where every dollar spent can significantly reduce the family's overall budget.

The lack of public transportation and marginalization of residents of unincorporated communities is an added stressor for families, particularly for mothers. Teresa, a 50-year old single mother discussed challenges with getting her children to school on time when there was no school bus available to take them, "My kids' school is about four miles away, not far enough for the school to send a bus to us [in an unincorporated area], but it was really hard when our car was not working. I sometimes had to walk with them to school."

Lack of Access to Affordable Food and Clean, Safe Water

The drought was a common theme in the interviews, with many unincorporated residents discussing the challenges with having to cut back on their water usage and those

who live within municipal boundaries discussing the price of water increasing dramatically. As UC Irvine researchers find, the drought was contributed to the rising cost of water, which in turn, increases the cost of groceries (Goettsch 2021). The U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Price Outlook shows that the prices of staple foods such as meats, poultry, and fish as well as fruits and vegetables outpaces the 20-year historical averages (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2022). This can partly be attributed to rising labor costs and rising fuel prices with the Covid-19 pandemic, but the deepening drought is causing scarcity of water, which also contributes to the increased cost of food (Burlig 2021).

Raquel, a 30-year old woman who works in the fields and packinghouses discussed how the drought was impacting her household in this way:

> When it comes to the drought, one of the main things that it is impacting my family is the cost of food. It has affected the price of produce in the grocery stores and everyone is working less hours. So you have less money and all the prices have gone up. Once water goes up, everything goes up, especially groceries and basic necessities.

Dalia, who lives within municipal boundaries but spends most of her days in an unincorporated community taking care of her elderly parents, explained the privilege she feels in regards to water usage:

> I can come here to my house and I'll water the dirt because I don't want so much dust. Then I go to my mom and dad's and I think, they only have a limited amount of water. I have to be conservative with their water. But sometimes I'll think, 'so and so was over there watering their gutter, I can water down this dirt too.' So yeah, it affects different people differently depending on where they live and it's important to remember that.

She went on to describe her experience living in a community with many undocumented workers, specifically in regards to water conservation: "This community is mostly

Mexican with a lot of undocumented people. And they're probably the most conservative with water than anybody else." When prompted why she believed this, she answered, "Because it impacts them directly. Because they know that if there is no water, they don't have a job. And if they don't have a job, there is no food on the table." This last idea speaks to how the most marginalized workers are the ones who are most impacted by drought.

Water security is defined as "the ability to access and benefit from affordable, adequate, reliable, and safe water for wellbeing and a healthy life" (Jepson et al 2017: 3). Many rural Valley households, particularly in unincorporated areas, depend on household wells. As the drought intensified and groundwater use intensified, many shallow household water wells dried up. Fresno County reported 230 well failures and Tulare County reported 2,261 well failures (State of California 2017). The lack of trust in the local water for unincorporated communities emerged with almost every single participant, particularly for residents of unincorporated areas. Juana described some of the county programs to help the residents access clean water, "Sometimes when the water is contaminated, the county as a place that they give you a box of water because the water is not good to drink. They tell you to just use it to wash clothes and shower and wash dishes and stuff."

Betty, a 21-year old packinghouse worker who lives in an unincorporated area described how her family does not trust the tap water to be safe and that buying water costs money, time, and sometimes limits their intake. The lack of clean affordable water

is especially problematic given that her father-in-law is diabetic and will sometimes resort to sugary drinks if they have not purchased water,

> We never drink from the tap. I don't like it. It tastes weird and sometimes we get notices in the mail to boil it, so we don't trust it here. We usually buy bottled water or get the 5-gallon jugs. It's hard, because it starts to cost a lot of money and it's hard to have to go to the store in town to refill the jugs. Sometimes we just don't and we'll drink whatever else we have at home.

Betty's observations underscore the public health problems that tend to result when households lack access to clean running water.

Teresa also discussed getting notices about toxic drinking water:

> I got a message saying that in my area that something bad happened to our water and to not use any tap water. We didn't use that water to cook or drink, but we used it to wash clothes and for our baths. I was worried because they did not tell us what the problem was with the water, but I was glad that at least they told us. They also put out some stations for us to get free water. Luckily none of my family ever got sick.

Griselda, a migrant farmworker told a very similar story during the time she was working in the fields in Southern California's Imperial Valley, "We got a message telling us to boil the water because the pesticides were in our water and we could get sick. I could not always make it to the area where they were giving the free water, but I always boiled the water before I cooked with it or drank it."

These notices that residents receive from their counties about contaminated water is in line with research that shows that Valley water systems are some of the most polluted in the nation (Meadows 2017; Moore, Matalon, Balazs et al. 2011). Scientists believe that contamination will become more pervasive as the environment gets hotter, drier, and as farmers continue to over-pump ground water supplies. However, ascribing water insecurity to drought and climate alone masks the economic, social, and political

inequities that produce vulnerabilities. Historical patterns of settlement and segregation in the Valley are associated with differences in household access to municipal water and dependency on wells (Greene 2018). As Greene (2018: 289) argues, "The precarity of seasonal farm labor, the lack of investment in water infrastructure, and the lack of access to social services are all important determinants of drought vulnerability in the region."

Healthcare Access and Inequalities

Health challenges for women farmworkers in this region are undoubtedly impacted by their working and housing conditions, pollution, and vulnerability to chronic illnesses. The demographics of this region also include some of the least insured residents in the state. When the Covid-19 pandemic began in early 2020, the disparities in access to healthcare and the continuing effects of increasing heat and extended droughts shined a light on the inequalities that farmworkers face when it comes to their health. Almost two-thirds of uninsured individuals (65 percent of adults and 63 percent of children) live with at least one family member who is an immigrant. Low-income immigrants without green cards—many of whom are undocumented—are less likely to have public health insurance or access to employer insurance compared to immigrants with US citizenship or green cards (Cha 2021). California recently voted to cover all low-income children and young adults, regardless of immigration status, but most undocumented immigrants are older and therefore ineligible. A limited version of Medi-Cal covers emergencies and specific types of care, but it is not comprehensive coverage (Cha 2021). In addition, my participants also deal with health issues related to air pollution, including asthma and allergies.

Lola, a 44 year-old undocumented and uninsured mother, discussed her challenges with living with a chronic health condition while having to work in the fields to support her two young sons.

> I'm not really sure how to pronounce it, it sounds like "*lupes*" (Lupus) and I was diagnosed two years ago. It has gotten so bad that not even a fly can land on me without feeling intense pain. My defenses were through the floor and I was in so much pain that I struggled to get out of bed. Eventually it got to the point that the doctor put me on disability for five months because I could no longer walk. I did not have the strength or energy to brush my teeth.

She went on to discuss the challenges that came with being a farmworker who often got paid by piece rate, "On the days that I was in a lot of pain, I was working so slow. My paycheck was a lot smaller, but a little was better than nothing. It hurt me to have to rely on my older children for so much." During the pandemic, she described an intense amount of stress, constantly worried that she would be infected and that as an immuno-compromised person that she would be hospitalized, or worse. When her 9-year old son contracted Covid-19 at school once classes resumed in person, there was no place for him to quarantine. "What was I supposed to do? I made sure to disinfect everything and we all wore masks at all times. My son had a fever and cough for a few days, but it didn't last long. Thank God nobody else got sick," she said.

Teresa, an undocumented migrant farmworker described her experiences with injuries at work,

> I've had so many accidents at work that have impacted my life. I have to keep working though, right? One time last year I was in the fields and slipped and I fell off the machine [combine harvester] that was harvesting the lettuce. I hit my knee really hard and they stopped the machine and they told me to step aside. I had a really bad scrape on my knee, but I did not want to go to the hospital and miss a day's work. Also, I didn't have insurance… Another time, a part from the machine slipped and hit me in the face. I had a huge gash on my face. This time, I

> had to go to the hospital for stitches but I didn't want to go. My coworkers convinced me to go to the clinic so that I would not have to pay, but I was upset that I had to miss work. I was in a lot of pain for weeks after that injury.

The lack of health insurance that many undocumented workers face has been a real challenge for workers who have been injured on the job. Many workers who contracted Covid-19 also faced this predicament: whether to go to the hospital and have to deal with the charges, or stay at home and try to weather the virus on their own.

Guadalupe is a 50-year old undocumented migrant farmworker from Mexico. Her family lived in Mexico while she worked throughout the U.S. Southwest, spending most of her time working in the fields of the Valley. When the pandemic hit, she risked not being able to return in order to be closer to her four children, including her pregnant teenage daughter. "I was scared that we would get sick, but if we did, at least we would be together," she said. Unfortunately, during that time, her daughter's partner contracted Covid-19 at his workplace in a factory and it spread to everybody in her home. One of her younger sons was hit the hardest, but nobody was hospitalized partly because of the lack of health insurance and health care access and because the virus passed relatively quickly. "It was so scary during that time, I did not know what was going to happen to us," she said.

Although she had already been vaccinated in the U.S. when they offered them at her work, Guadalupe received another vaccine two months later in Mexico in order to come back across the border.

> I wanted to come back on a work visa, but since I was not authorized at the time I received my first vaccine, I couldn't show them that proof since it would incriminate me. I figured I would just get another vaccine here in order to be able to go back. Two vaccines are better than none, right?

She ended up moving back to the U.S. to work in order to help her daughter who had given birth two months before our interview. She was having a hard time finding work, so she was selling food to the farmworkers in her old community in Fresno County. “It was hard leaving my family, but I had to make more money to send home.”

Not all the families in my study were as fortunate as Guadalupe’s when it came to Covid-19. Bertha, a 60-year old undocumented migrant farmworker has worked throughout the Southwest since 2015. Her college-age children and her husband were in Mexico while she was in the U.S. working to save enough money to get her children a visa. Her husband had been working towards getting his documentation so that he could join his wife without fear of deportation. She was in Fresno when she got the news that her family contracted Covid-19, but she was hopeful since their symptoms seemed to be mild. “I got a call one day from my older son saying that his father suddenly took a turn for the worst. They took him to a hospital but he died soon after.” She immediately went to Mexico to take care of the arrangements and to be with her children. She had saved $10,000 to bring her family to the U.S. and she lost her husband and had to use part of the funds for his funeral services and to get herself across the border again. “I was devastated. I took two weeks off of work and then I came back to the U.S. When I started work I broke my hand and wasn’t able to work in the fields for a couple of months. So I sold food while I healed.”

She heard from one of her friends in the fields that they were hiring workers in a fish factory in Alaska and that they would pay for the flight, room, and board to work there during the season since they were having a hard time finding workers during the

pandemic. At the time of our interview, she had just landed in Alaska the day before. “They pay $12 an hour, give me a room, food, and fresh uniforms every week. I am very tired, but I am determined to get my kids to the U.S. and to save enough money for their college education here,” she said.

Finally, several of my participants discussed health challenges related to bad air quality, with asthma and allergies being two of the main issues that many Valley residents confront. “Living out here in the country,” said Gio, 23 year-old packinghouse worker and unincorporated community resident, “the main thing I can say is that my allergies make my life really hard. Especially when they spray the crops by my house or when the almond harvester is going through the fields and it kicks dust up all over. It gets so bad that I feel like a prisoner in my own house sometimes.” She also described her boyfriend having to “stay locked in his room with the windows down and the air conditioner on 24/7” because his asthma attacks have worsened throughout the years. Although she herself is uninsured, another one my participants, Lola explained to me her experience with having an asthmatic son, “One of my sons has very bad asthma. Sometimes when the air is really bad he will have an attack and I have to take him to the emergency room for a breathing treatment. He has had attacks at school when they let the kids out even when the air is bad. I tell him that he can’t spend too much time outside. I’m so happy that at least he is covered [by health insurance],” she said.

Another participant, Dalia, 53 described her experience with a 20 year-old son who has had breathing issues since he was two months old,

> "My son caught a respiratory virus that is very common here in the Valley when he was an infant. After that, he developed asthma and it has impacted my entire family's lives since then. We always have to be watching the reports on the air quality because his asthma attacks have been so bad over the years that there was a few times that I thought we wouldn't make it to the ER in time. He could never play sports and sometimes he would get mad at me when I wouldn't let him go outside. He's an adult now, but I still worry about him."

The accounts from my participants highlight the ways in which lack of healthcare and/or health issues stemming from dangerous working conditions, Covid-19, and air pollution, have impacted their lives. These issues are intertwined with the realities of living in this rural region, which include large disparities in health outcomes largely based on where you live and on your citizenship and socioeconomic statuses.

CONCLUSION

This chapter highlights the ways in which municipal and national borders intersect with rural isolation, social and economic inequalities, climate change, and a pandemic. The nature of these political borders serves to maintain a historical system of segregation and subjugation of immigrants and poor people. Low-income Mexican immigrant women experience these borders in a unique way that is understudied by sociologists. The impacts of spatial inequalities, such as disparities in access to community resources and lack of access to public transportation, and how they interact with gendered expectations for women to do more family and domestic work is important to explore from a feminist intersectional perspective. Understanding inequalities based on race, class, gender, and citizenship as borders gives us conceptual tools to reconceptualize the interaction of socio-spatial inequalities and how they manifest

themselves in ways that impact all aspects of working women's lives. Using a multidimensional framework to understand these experiences also allows for a lens that incorporates the transnational experience of many immigrant women farmworkers.

As we move forward in a world where climate change will continue to disrupt our society, change the nature of our jobs, and exacerbate health challenges, farmworkers are the canaries in the proverbial coal mine. The climate crisis will only serve to exacerbate inequalities related to residential segregation, racism, sexism, and xenophobia. As Ybarra (2009: 176) argues, "Considering the bioregional, ecological aspects of the US-Mexico borderlands expands our understanding of how colonization, exploitation, and racism impact the land, its people… Increasingly limited access to clean water, healthy food, and livable land may create a hierarchy that reproduces the oppressions that brought this crisis."

Having a qualitative account of how these issues impact women farmworkers is important in order to have a more complex understanding of how climate change reverberates through multiple dimensions of life in rural communities. Some impacts, such as water insecurity are easy to connect to the drought, but other issues such as underemployment and lack of health insurance are also related to marginalized social conditions and a changing economy amid the climate crisis. As Greene (2018: 289) argues, "While some of the drought impacts are not easily separated from existing marginal conditions in rural communities, drought is not experienced apart from them." Too much of farmworker life is hidden from public view because of the social and political marginalization of these low-wage, largely Latino, immigrant workers. The

impacts of municipal boundary-making, inequalities, and climate change need more attention from policy-makers, particularly for women, in this region.

CHAPTER IV:

FAMILY DYNAMICS: HOW PAID AND UNPAID LABOR CHALLENGES INTERSECT AT HOME FOR FARMWORKING WOMEN, MOTHERS, AND THEIR CHILDREN

> *It is so difficult sometimes because there are so many moments when I wish I could be here with them but I can't, especially because I am undocumented. I can't leave the U.S. and return easily, so I have to wait a long time between visits to minimize the risk for me and my family. Also, when you're working in the fields, you can't just leave or miss work. So yeah, it's hard. It's hard because you have responsibilities at work so I look at it as a sacrifice for a short while in order to make sure my kids have a roof over their head and food in their stomachs. It's just such a heavy feeling having my kids over here and I am over there.*
>
> -Teresa, 50-year old undocumented mother

INTRODUCTION

For women whose work days revolve around their home and family lives, social and cultural borders intersect with political borders and impact their entire families. This chapter examines the lives of women at home and focuses on the experience for women as working mothers, their unpaid reproductive labor, and how Covid-19 has transformed their lives as they navigated the stress of balancing paid labor with raising their children, transnational motherhood, educational challenges related to pandemic-related virtual learning for their children, and structural inequalities that have put their families at the front lines of the pandemic.

Previous chapters demonstrated that Mexican farmworking women in the Central Valley face sexism at work, precarious employment, and other inequalities and problems that impact their communities, such as residential segregation, subpar housing conditions, and lack of access to clean air and water. This chapter provides an intersectional,

transcultural, and transnational perspective on the experiences of Mexican women farmworkers that extend beyond their lives at work. I examine how these women farmworkers experience life at home as mothers, partners, daughters, and neighbors and I explore the challenges that exist for women outside of the workplace that are part of a shared experience with other working mothers. This chapter documents the physical and emotional toll these women face as working mothers, particularly as many of them navigate single parenthood and transnational motherhood while also experiencing life as undocumented immigrant women. Additionally, the social borders that women navigate also include unequal divisions of unpaid reproductive labor in their home, with women doing the lion's share of housework, coordinating childcare, and navigating their children's educational institutions. Finally, Covid-19 created additional challenges for women and their vulnerability was exacerbated by long-standing underlying inequalities, including living in multigenerational households which added to the risk of catching the virus and it spreading quickly. Many also faced challenges of being an immigrant parent with limited technological literacy and uneven access to high speed internet, both of which exacerbated the challenges of virtual learning.

This chapter begins with an overview of literature on the experience of working mothers, including the challenges for women who are undocumented, those who are single, and those whose children live in Mexico while they work in the U.S. I then look at unpaid reproductive labor dynamics and patriarchal family structures that create challenging conditions and a "second shift" (Hocschild and Machung 1989) for women after they come home from their paid labor positions. Finally, I explore structural issues

related to disparities in broadband and the digital divide which has impacted families as they navigated virtual learning throughout the pandemic.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mothers of Color & Immigrant Latina Mothers: Blurred Lines Between Productive and Reproductive Labor

Social reproduction, or reproductive labor, consists of those activities that are necessary to maintain human life, daily and intergenerationally. This includes how we take care of ourselves, our children, our older, sick, and disabled relatives, and our homes. Reproductive labor encompasses the purchasing and preparation of food, shelter, and clothing: the routine daily upkeep of these, such as cooking, cleaning, and laundering; the emotional care and support of children and adults; and the maintenance of family and community ties (Hondagneu Sotelo 2012; Glenn 2009).

For many households, reproductive labor is typically the domain of women (Duffy 2005). Marxist feminists in the 1970s and the 1980s placed the gendered construction of reproductive labor at the center of women's oppression. They pointed out that this labor is performed disproportionately by women and is essential to the industrial economy (Hartsock 1983; Jaggar 1983; Smith 1974). Yet because it takes place mostly outside the market, it is invisible, not recognized as 'real work.' Glenn (2009) argues that men benefit both directly and indirectly from this arrangement-directly in that they contribute less labor in the home while enjoying the services women provide as wives and mothers, and indirectly, in that, freed of domestic labor, they can concentrate their efforts in paid employment and attain primacy in that area. In this way, the gender

division of reproductive labor in the home is connected to and reinforces the gender division in the workplace.

Historically, families of color have struggled to maintain family units in the context of racialized assaults on their families and culture. Dill (1988) argues that African-American, Chinese-American, and Mexican-American women in the 19th century were treated by their employers primarily as individual units of labor rather than as members of family groups, and they labored to "maintain, sustain, stabilize, and reproduce their families while working in both the public (productive) and private (reproductive) spheres. Thus, the concept of reproductive labor, when applied to women of color, must be modified to account for the fact that labor in the productive sphere was required to achieve even minimal levels of family subsistence" (Dill 1988: 429). Even long after industrialization reshaped roles among middle class white families where white women adopted a culture of domesticity, women of color continued to cope with extended work days that included subsistence labor outside the family and domestic labor within the family. For women farmworkers, the lines between reproductive labor and productive labor continue to be blurred, and it means more work both inside the house and outside of it in order to maintain their families in every way. As Dill argues,

> In the productive sphere, racial-ethnic women faced exploitative jobs and depressed wages. In the reproductive sphere, however, they were denied the opportunity to embrace the dominant ideological definition of 'good' wife or mother. In essence, they were faced with a double-bind situation, one that required their participation in the labor force to sustain family life but damned them as women, wives, and mothers because they did not confine their labor to the home (Dill 1988: 430).

Glenn (1992) also presents a race-gender analysis in the labor of social reproduction; an area that she argues has been explored as a form of gendered labor, but not as labor that is simultaneously racialized. She uses an intersectional perspective to argue that when feminists perceive reproductive labor only as gendered, they imply that all women have the same experiences with domestic labor and is therefore a basis of a common identity of womanhood. As Glenn describes, "By not recognizing the different relationships women have had to such supposedly universal female experiences as motherhood and domesticity, they risk essentializing gender-treating it as static, fixed, eternal, and natural" (Glenn 1992: 31). Specifically, she argues that African American, Mexican American, and Japanese American were drawn into domestic service by a combination of economic need, restricted opportunities, and educational and employment tracking mechanisms. Once employed in these low wage, low prestige jobs, "their supposed natural inferiority was confirmed" (Glenn 1992: 32). Many Latina mothers have used innovative income-earning strategies that allow them to work in the paid labor market while simultaneously caring for their children. For example, Zavella (1987) highlights the long history of Mexican women performing agricultural work alongside their children or engaging in seasonal work.

Some experiences are unique to undocumented and Latina women who bear the additional burden of mothering in a context of what Abrego and Menjivar (2011) call "legal violence." Contemporary legal conditions and enforcement practices require them to mother while also managing the fear of forced separation from their children (Abrego and Schmalzbauer 2018; Dreby 2015; Golash-Boza 2015). Despite the challenges,

undocumented immigrant mothers also have agency as they navigate patriarchal expectations and legal violence in different places. Abrego and Schmalzbauer (2018) use the lens of "multidimensional agency" to "make visible the ways that 'women, embedded within a patriarchal structure, adapt, negotiate, resist, and/or transform the meaning of schemas or normative orientations' of patriarchy in their labor as mothers" (Abrego and Schmalzbauer 2018: 11). The agency they wield becomes more complex when they live with more constraints on their relationships with their children, particularly for mothers who have migrated to the U.S. without their children.

Transnational Motherhood

For women who have migrated to the United States without their children to work, their experiences with the labor market, parental roles, and mothering are all drastically impacted. Scholarship has documented the way that increased transnational migration of women has reconfigured the shape of immigrant families (Zavella 2011; Dreby 2015; Dreby and Schmalzbauer 2013; Menjivar 2000; Hondagneu Sotelo 2012, 1994). Theorists have long noted that immigration often occurs in stages, with one family member, once established, sending for a spouse or children to join them (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994). Historically, the demand for industrial and agricultural workforces encouraged the migration of single Mexican men, but feminist scholars have found that the growth of the service economy in post-industrial United States has led to an increasing demand of *'braceras'*-women migrant workers (Horton 2008; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2012; Sassen 2000). Horton finds that women are increasingly migrating alone to

find work, thus "reconfiguring the shape of the immigrant family and transnationalizing the very meaning of motherhood" (Horton 2008: 24).

In their research on Latina immigrant women in Los Angeles, Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila (1997) coin the term "transnational motherhood" to understand how immigrant mothers transform the meaning of motherhood as they accommodate spatial and temporal separations from their children and apply this to their research on Latina domestic workers. Similarly, in her research on transnational mothers who migrated from El Salvador to the U.S., Horton describes the experience of undocumented immigrant women as, "Physically absent but recognized and remembered in El Salvador, they are physically present yet invisible and disavowed in the United States. Neither citizens nor transnationals, they are noncitizens whose very noncitizenship is immobilizing" (Horton 2008: 40). Horton (2008) highlights the ways in which the strain and suffering of this situation is not only experienced by the migrant mother; instead, it is shared with their children as they all endure the impacts of their mother's undocumented migration and poverty. Her work finds that migrant mothers negotiated their decision and changing parental role, gifts and remittances become the "currency of transnational love." Yet, she argues, "children often contest the grounds of this exchange. As mothers' undocumented status indefinitely prolongs family separations, their social vulnerability reverberates within the intersubjective space of the family, an intimate space stretched across national borders" (Pg. 40).

Once in the United States, many women who have migrated for work often have very difficult lives, particularly those of lower socio-economic status who are often

relegated to overcrowded housing conditions or unsafe neighborhoods where their movements are restricted, particularly for the undocumented. Dreby and Adkins (2010) find that despite the challenges that migrants face in the U.S., they also have access to resources not available to their non-migrant family members by virtue of living in an industrialized nation, including technology, education, and employment opportunities, albeit to a much lesser degree than U.S. citizens (Menjivar and Abrego 2009). Their family members in their countries of origin, however, may feel hyper-dependent on their migrant family members and deal with benefits that are channeled to them through remittances that may be inconsistent.

During period(s) of separation, transnational families maintain strong ties. In addition to financial remittances that help family members back 'home' live more securely, phone calls often keep families connected (Dreby 2006). These strategies are critical for helping to maintain the relationships between migrating parents and their children who stay in their home countries. Schmalzbauer (2008) argues that transnational communication and financial remittances do more than just maintain ties between parents and children; they also serve as a channel for social remittances, in this case ideologies, values, and ideas about life in the United States.

Immigration laws are also a key component in impeding Latina immigrant mothers' lives in multiple ways. By creating obstacles for mothers and children from migrating together, causing and prolonging family separations, and allowing Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents to conduct worksite and home raids, and by facilitating record numbers of deportations (Abrejo and Menjivar 2011). They argue that

contemporary immigration laws at the federal level as well as those at the state and local levels, along with their implementation, are a form of legal violence that not only restricts immigrant women's ability to mother their children but also brings suffering to these women as mothers.

Families of Color in Rural Communities

Although much of the aforementioned research has focused on the experiences of women in urban settings, women of color in rural communities face the challenges of motherhood in a very different context. As Abrego and Schmalzbauer (2018) argue, each place of settlement has distinct regional and local economies that shape job opportunities and patterns of spatial segregation, population size, and history of co-ethnic communities. Built environments and natural landscapes further impact immigrants' physical and socioeconomic mobility by limiting their access to education and employment (Dreby and Schmalzbauer 2013). State and local policies also facilitate or, in the case of unincorporated communities, block access to services, all of which contribute to the challenges that Latino immigrant mothers face socially and economically.

Dill and Williams' (1992) research on race, gender, and poverty among single African-American mothers in the rural South also sheds light on the many challenges that rural women of color often face. In this context, poor women tend to be in the worse paying jobs, are more isolated than other workers, and tend to have fewer options than other groups because of the "limited-option environment." In addition, many women from rural areas tend to be situated in jobs with very low-wages and seasonal employment. Combined with the burdens of child-care and other gender-specific factors,

there tends to be very little upward economic mobility (Zavella 1987). Typically, seasonal farm jobs do not provide health insurance or other employment benefits and often these women are more vulnerable to poverty as their work histories tend to be punctuated by periods of seasonal unemployment (Dill and Williams 1992).

Life in rural communities also impacts access and quality to childcare, which directly impacts working mothers. Both formal childcare arrangements (school and community settings) and informal childcare arrangements (relative care, parental care, neighborhood care) have a significant impact on the economic and social conditions of low-income families (Malik 2019; Kesler 2020). However, Park and Choi (2022) point out that most research on childcare availability, effectiveness, and choice has been conducted in urban areas, starkly underestimating the value of informal childcare settings and working mothers' financial contributions in rural areas.

Childcare and Other Carework

In poor communities throughout the world, women are in charge of most household carework (Aranda 2003; Chant 1994). Women play an especially important role as mothers, charged with ensuring the health and well-being of their children and community. Hochschild and Machung's (1989) concept of "the second shift" provided an important framework for the gender division of labor in the home: most men were unwilling to share the burden of work in the home and thus employed women came home to a "second shift" of housework and childcare, increasing gender inequality in terms of total time spent doing work. Patricia Hill Collins (1994) terms the productive and reproductive labor that poor women do to ensure the survival of their children and

community *motherwork*. Schmalzbauer (2004) argues that poor women develop creative motherwork strategies to ensure that their families are financially secure. They often work more than one job or piece together multiple part-time assignments to make ends meet (Schmalzbauer 2004; Myers and Cranford 1998). When there are no jobs, many seek employment in the informal economy, where wages are low but formal training and certification is not required and work is flexible.

For parents who have to work away from home, they often depend on care networks beyond mothers to help in the raising of their children (Schmalzbauer 2004; Aranda 2003). Collins (2005) describes o*ther-mothers* as the grandmothers, sisters, aunts, daughters, neighbors, and friends who care for family and kin when bloodmothers are absent or unavailable. They are crucial pillars of support for poor families and communities (Collins 2005; Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997). In kin networks of other-mothers, *mothering* is defined by acts of nurturing and caring and not by a biological relationship between mother and child (Schmalzbauer 2004).

Mothers rely on extended kin networks for childcare for a variety of reasons, including the relatively lower costs than other care arrangements and because women in lower-paying jobs often have variable work schedules that necessitate flexibility in their childcare arrangements. Park and Choi (2022) outline key factors that impact women's childcare decisions. First, relatives or community networks tend to be more flexible, which lends itself to variable work schedules. Second, single-parent households more commonly rely on relative care than two-parent households. Finally, compared to urban areas, rural communities have limited access to formal childcare settings and families in

these regions typically have to commute long distances for both work and formal childcare. For low-income and immigrant women in the Valley, agricultural work does not lend itself to fixed daily schedules and there is a dearth of formal childcare options. This research highlights the roles of community and kin networks in childcare.

A common theme that emerged in the interviews was the role of siblings in helping their mothers raise their younger siblings. Previous scholarship has revealed children of immigrants, particularly girls, take key roles in helping their households to settle in their new nation and community, including serving as 'culture brokers,' through which they mediate relationships, information, and services between the immigrant household and the institutions of the host society (Hafford 2010). Valenzuela (1999) found three primary tasks that summarize the roles that children undertake in assisting their household settlement, including serving as *tutors*-children served as translators, interpreters, and teachers for their parents and younger siblings. They also serve as *advocates*, a role in which children intervene, mediate, or advocate on behalf of their parents or their households during difficult financial, legal, or other complicated transactions or situations. And lastly as *surrogate parents*, in which they undertake nanny or parent-like activities in the caring of younger household members and in other household tasks. Activities that children performed in this realm included cooking, dressing, bathing, transporting, babysitting, caring, and providing for younger siblings (Valenzuela 1999). For child and youth caregivers, they are often positioned between their parents and their younger siblings. Hafford (2010) found that sibling caregivers are

the most important socializing agent in the younger child's life, especially since the siblings may spend more time together than they do with their parents.

In my research, participants often discussed how their children, especially their daughters played an important role in their families, including taking care of siblings and doing the housework while their mothers worked. In addition, the Covid-19 pandemic thrust many families into virtual learning. With 25 out of the 35 participants in my sample identifying as monolingual or primarily Spanish speaking, and two-thirds of them immigrants, the new education format created challenges both technologically and linguistically for many of the mothers. In these situations, most of them relied on their elder children to help their younger children with their classes and schoolwork.

Education and the Digital Divide

For many families in my study, childcare overlapped with educational challenges, particularly as the Covid-19 pandemic forced most students into virtual learning. During the pandemic, the crucial role of parents in their children's educational success became more important than ever with the shift to virtual learning. Immigrant parents of young children have been disproportionately likely to face serious obstacles to taking on these roles due to low levels of formal education, limited English proficiency, employment as essential workers, and/or digital access barriers (Hoftstetter and McHugh 2021; Rani 2020). While online instruction itself has proven to be particularly challenging children who are English learners, its reliance on the availability of parents to directly facilitate or supervise their children's daily participation further compounds the disparities already experienced by these families.

Immigrant parents of school-age children comprise a large portion of California's families, including 40 percent of all parents of children ages 0 to 4 years and 45 percent of all parents children ages 5 to 10 years in California. Among immigrant parents of children below the age of five years, 57 percent are Latino and of the immigrant parents of children with ages of 5 to 10 years, 60 percent are Latino (Hofstetter and McHugh 2021). Immigrants also represent a disproportionate share of parents of young and elementary-school-age children without a high school diploma or equivalent. Despite immigrants representing less than half of the total population of parents in California, 76 percent of parents of children ages 0 to 4 years and 79 percent of parents of children ages 5 to 10 years without a high school diploma were immigrants (Hofstetter and McHugh 2021). The combination of high rates of limited English proficiency and lack of formal education creates challenges that affect the school readiness and educational success of their children. Additionally, immigrant populations were more likely to be essential workers (who had to continue to work in-person) and less likely to receive any government assistance (Bair and McBride 2020). These disparities have strong gender implications, given that mothers are disproportionately responsible for reproductive labor.

Another factor that has impacted working-class, immigrant, and rural communities includes the lack of access to high speed internet. Even before the pandemic, Latino immigrants were less connected to high speed internet than other low-income families. Ten percent of immigrant Latino families had no internet access at all, compared with 7 percent of U.S.-born Latinos, 5 percent of Whites, and 1 percent of

Black (Rideout and Katz 2016). In California, the digital divide was persistent. In 2017, 27 percent of households with children did not have high speed internet connection and 16 percent of low-income households had no internet at all. Seven percent did not have a desktop, laptop, or tablet at home, a share that was more than double among low-income households (Gao, Lafortune, and Hill 2020).

Although rural Americans have made strides in adopting digital technology over the past decade and have narrowed some digital gaps, rural adults remain less likely than suburban adults to have home broadband access and less likely than urban adults to own a smartphone, tablet, or computer (Vogels 2021). In a 2018 Pew Research Center survey, adults who lived in rural areas were more likely to say access to high-speed internet was a major problem in their local communities, including 24 percent of rural adults compared with 13 percent of urban adults and 9 percent of suburban adults (Whitacre and Gallardo 2020). One key reason for this includes the lack of consistently dependent broadband access infrastructure (Whitacre and Gallardo 2020). With the high numbers of school-age children lacking home internet access, the breadth of the U.S. digital divide was exposed during the 2020-2021 Covid-19 pandemic as schools struggled to pivot to online instruction. This new format has been a particular burden for working-class immigrant parents, given the multiple obstacles they face with navigating linguistic, technological, and logistical issues with supporting their children.

Internet access is not simply something households have or do not have since there is a range of access to internet services among households. The quality of families' internet connections as well as the kinds and capabilities of devices they can access all

have consequences for parents and children. Rideout and Katz (2016) highlighted the different ways that lower-income families may connect to the internet, including broadband access at home, via a data plan on a mobile device, or by using wi-fi enabled devices in local places that offer them access. When internet access is intermittent-either because families have trouble paying monthly service charges or are using the internet only in community locations-they face constraints on what they can access online, compared with those who have consistent access. The devices that families own and feel comfortable using also matter. Complex tasks, like submitting a job application or a homework assignment, are much more difficult to accomplish on a smartphone than on a computer. For farmworking women, their social locations in terms of their class status, language barriers, and educational levels intersect with deep-seated digital divides. Moreover, their status as essential or in-person workers with long workdays and the contexts of living in rural communities further constrain digital divides within their households. Each of these factors, and their combination, creates many challenges for their school-age children's virtual learning and their ability to support it.

INTERVIEW FINDINGS

Key findings in this chapter highlight the ways in which women farmworkers navigate motherhood and reproductive labor while navigating multiple borders in other dimensions of their lives. The challenges that emerge from the inequalities in the labor market and from social and spatial inequalities that exacerbate the effects of poverty deeply shape women's home lives and reproductive labor. This section focuses on the

lived experiences of women of color as a result of having to bear primary responsibility for negotiating the demands of work and family.

This research finds that women face added challenges at home with their families due to the realities of working backbreaking jobs, while volatile work schedules and labor precarity make it challenging for mothers to attend to their children and their gendered domestic responsibilities, including facilitating childcare and housework. My work also finds that older siblings, particularly daughters take up the brunt of this carework while their mothers work. The impacts women and their children face as working mothers is compounded by the spatial inequalities that result from living in isolated, rural communities often leave them unable to find affordable, reliable transportation to work, grocery stores, school, and doctors' appointments. Finally, women farmworkers have faced unique challenges related to the Covid-19 pandemic's resulting shift to virtual education. Many women in these communities have limited English proficiency and technological literacy, making it challenging to support their children in online schooling.

I begin with an analysis of the ways in which women farmworkers balance their paid labor responsibilities with raising their children, including the experiences of transnational mothers. I then highlight the ways in which women navigate reproductive labor in their homes, including childcare strategies and challenges, division of household chores, and their children's education, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Navigating Multidimensional Borderlands as a Working Mother

One of the most prominent themes that emerged from my data were the challenges associated with being a working mother. This topic has long been examined

by feminist sociologists, but seldom with a focus on contemporary women farmworkers. My research explores how women farmworkers' intersecting identities present distinct challenges related to combining motherhood and employment in the agricultural industry, including unstable working hours, long shifts, lack of healthcare, paid leave, and childcare. Farmwork is hard on women's bodies and on their families. Like other women, farmworkers face social pressures to be present for their children, the cultural norms that call for women to take care of their homes, children, and husbands. Yet undocumented immigrant women also face the consequences of political borders that tend to constrain their access to a living wage, social safety net, and a life free from the fear of deportation; these are all part of the multidimensional borders that many women farmworkers face on a daily basis.

Many of my participants described the sacrifices they felt they had to make for their families' survival due to their work, with few options for alternative types of employment. Juana is a 38 year-old packinghouse worker with five children ranging in age from their late teens to ten years old. She has been a single mother off and on for most of her children's lives and she discussed the anxiety that she has felt over the years:

> Working while being a mom has been a real big sacrifice. As a mom and as a single parent, I got to sacrifice a lot of time. I was worried about gangs when my kids were home alone so much. Even for good stuff, like if my kids got an award at school, I wasn't always there. Their little Christmas programs, I wasn't there for my kids. I think once my kids started growing, they were actually the parents because they would go see their brother or sister to support them. When my older daughter got a little older, I would send her on field trips with my younger one. I mean, it's really, really hard. And I think that I have missed out a lot on my life, but I think that they understand the reason and why you have to do it.

Her older kids also babysat her younger children for years, something that she says ensured a close bond between her kids, but she laments that her older kids didn't get to do a lot of "normal kid stuff."

Juana also expressed regret about the toll that being a working mom has had on her close family members. Her sister's son whom she helped raise had committed suicide a few months before our interview. He had been suffering from depression and addiction for years and had spent part of his childhood living with Juana and her children. She reflected on the culture of work, particularly for mothers and its impact on children:

> It's really hard because in this culture you work nonstop, you know? I think as parents, we miss out a lot on our kids' lives and we really don't get to see or understand their pain. And I just really think that my nephew was really overlooked a lot of times by my sister and, you now, just a lot of issues that have gone through the family and stuff.

Juana was only able to take off a week to grieve her nephew's death and she said through tears that she had not fully accepted it yet. "This kind of stuff gets you off guard, and you don't have the money for the burial and stuff. So during that week off, my boyfriend, my kids, my brother, my mom, and my two sisters, we would go to the swap meets and stuff and ask for donations. And you know, we were able to get the money. We got it really quick because we were, what is the word? Busybodies, yeah."

Juana received no financial support over the years by her children's father, which contributed to her family's financial stress, particularly when faced with unexpected expenses. As she put it:

> You know, there's been moments where I just feel like, you know, being a single parent, I don't get any child support for my kids and I don't get that support that I feel that I should be getting. And there's moments that I have to live up to my check and then there's moments where I can actually save. But then you always have those moments when something pops up, the breaks [are] down, or my daughter needs help with the baby or something. And I guess sometimes I have that stress where it's just like there's months that I'm ok, and then there's months that I'm just all bad.

Like Juana, many of the women I interviewed, especially single mothers experienced the stresses associated with trying to support a family with a precarious, low-income job.

Griselda, a 53 year-old mother of grown children also recounted her experience as a single mother. She migrated to the United States in the 1990s after her divorced. As she described,

> I lived in Mexico and my kids were little and I was able to be with them all the time. But I separated from their father and I was alone. I had to leave the house to go to work. If I didn't work, we didn't eat, we couldn't pay the electric bill, nothing. I had to work. It was so hard but I had to leave my kids in order for all of us to survive. Also, there were times when I worked very long hours and I would be so worried about my kids, falling apart inside, as they say.

Griselda discussed how grateful she was that she was able to migrate with her children, but she expressed regret about not being able to spend time with them because of long hours working in the fields and the packinghouses in the Valley.

For many farmworking women in the Valley who have to balance paid labor with childcare, the lack of child supervision is a pressing issue. Andrea is a packinghouse worker and mother to three grown sons who spent many years working in the fields. She explained that she sometimes took her boys to the fields with her to work when they were younger during the summers, both to help bring in extra income and to save money on a babysitter. She described the challenges of being a working mother and being away from

her children for most of each day, particularly when she began to worry that her older sons were getting involved with gangs, “You are constantly worrying about them. Luckily my kids aren’t on the streets too much anymore.” Andrea’s experience speaks to the challenges for working mothers to be able to provide adequate supervision or high quality childcare for their kids when they are at work, particularly given that the schedules are not always consistent. Her account also highlights the long history of farmworkers taking their children to work as a family unit to make financial ends meet.

Her youngest son attended the local state university, the only one of her three sons to do so. Andrea said, “I am so proud of him and I wanted to support him, but it was hard because we have very little resources and also I am a single mother.” They decided that he would stay at home and drive back and forth to school. “Fresno is over an hour away, but it was cheaper than having him live at the school. I pack him lunch every day to save money.”

Faviola is a packinghouse worker and a mother of a young daughter. She has also experienced anxiety about leaving her children at home, particularly after seeing some of her coworkers’ children begin to get into trouble while their parents were at work. As she put it,

> The lack of supervision for children who are at home is very stressful for parents. Parents are working, ensuring their survival and kids are getting into drugs, listening to their friends instead of their parents. It’s harder when there’s a drought because parents are traveling hours each day to get to and from work. They leave at 5 a.m. and won’t be home until 6 p.m.

This experience speaks to the ways that the challenges that women farmworkers' experience as working mothers are distinct and daunting. The fact that their livelihoods are so closely tied to the land make climate change another source of stress when it relates to being apart from their children for longer periods of time each day in order to travel further for work.

Transnational Motherhood: How the Climate Crisis and the Covid-19 Pandemic Have Affected Parenting

Mothers who are also migrant farmworkers confront seasonal separations from their children; they sometimes migrate to the United States, and then move hundreds of miles, and sometimes even across U.S. state borders, in order to find work while their children stay at home in Mexico. For Tere, 50, being apart from her children and grandchildren in Mexico while she works in the U.S. is a topic that brought up visible emotions of grief regarding her separation from her family, "Typically I work six months in California, six months in Arizona. But since the droughts have been really bad here, I have spent about four months in Oregon picking spinach, chard, and lettuce. I am further away from [my family] for longer."

She went on to discuss the challenges of being apart from her children for so many months at a time, "Even though the climate is much nicer in Oregon, I prefer to work in Phoenix because even if I can't see my children all the time, I feel better knowing that I am closer to them." She said that when she is in Phoenix, during a good year she was able to see her kids every two to three months, but the time between visits when she was in the Valley or in Oregon was much longer.

I asked her if she had ever taken her children with her to work in the fields. She responded that she tried to shield her children from the pain and heat of working in the fields, with the exception of one season a few years back: She responded,

> I always told my children that education was the key to their success, but a couple years ago my 15 year old daughter was doing really bad in school and she kept saying that she didn't want to go anymore. I decided to take her with me to the fields to pick lettuce. She lasted two full days before she came crying to me and said that she would rather be in school. She started doing much better after that (she laughed).

When asked about the challenges she's faced as a working mother, she said, "It is so difficult sometimes because there are so many moments when I wish I could be here with them but I can't, especially because I am undocumented. I can't leave the U.S. and return easily, so I have to wait a long time between visits to minimize the risk for me and my family. Also, when you're working in the fields, you can't just leave or miss work. So yeah, it's hard. It's hard because you have responsibilities at work so I look at it as a sacrifice for a short while in order to make sure my kids have a roof over their head and food in their stomachs. It's just such a heavy feeling having my kids over here and I am over there."

After returning to Mexico to help her daughter with her new baby, she is planning on returning to the U.S. to work in three months. As she explained,

> I need to go back because we need things here at home and it is impossible to provide for my family here. The salaries are so low in Mexico that a person can't do it. It's not like working in the United States where you can earn money much faster. I also want to be here with my kids and grandkids and I don't want to leave them alone. I don't know anything for certain these days. I just wish I could help them more without having to leave them.

Tere's experience with transnational motherhood is becoming more common as the numbers of women migrant workers are on the rise. Horton (2008) finds that the feminization of migrant labor has coincided with changes in border enforcement policy, which dramatically shaped immigrant families. After the passage of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act in 1996, the Border Patrol doubled in size, resulting in an increase in the number of immigrant deportations and more frequent family separation within border communities (Andreas 1998; Horton 2008).

Maribel, 58 also discussed the challenges of parenting from the other side of the border as an undocumented mother. After living on the Mexican side of a border town where she lived her entire life working tough service jobs, including cleaning houses, taking care of elders, selling tamales, and working at swap meets, she came to the U.S. in 2015 at almost 50 years old. She entered the U.S. so that she could send money back home to her teenage children in order to ensure that they had enough money to be able to afford college. While in the U.S., she experienced discrimination based on her age and gender while she followed the crops throughout the Southwest. "My biggest goal in life was to be able for my kids to study at university. My husband is too old to do this work on this side [of the border] but I knew that I would do whatever it took to make that happen, even if I had to leave them for a while to do this work," she said. She told me that her children expressed frustration with their mother being gone for long periods of time, but that, "they knew I was doing for them." Still, Maribel expressed guilt that she left them at home during the Covid-19 pandemic, "Everybody was so scared of the virus.

My kids would call me all the time to check on me because they were worried. I really felt so bad that we couldn't all be together during that time." The experience of mothers engaging in 'intensive mothering' from afar, including attempting to follow normative gender roles regarding motherhood through sending money and regularly telephoning their children often still results in feelings of distress and guilt about 'abandoning' their children (Parrenas 2005; Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997; Horton 2009).

Reproductive Labor: Childcare, Housework, and Education

Gendered structures pattern people's behaviors by providing them with a set of guidelines of their roles and statuses in a community (Risman 2004). Patriarchy is often defined as a hierarchical structure of male domination that places a higher status on men's human, cultural, and social capital compared to that of women (Kandiyoti 1988). Within this traditional understanding of patriarchy, the masculine and feminine have been historically defined in opposition to one another by assigning primary provider roles in public spaces to men while constraining women to nurturing roles confined to private spaces (Ayala and Murga 2016). However, despite the significant growth in women's labor force participation, this type of division of labor has never really been true for poor women, who are disproportionately women of color, and who have always had to work (Segura 1984; Parrenas 2000; England, Garcia-Beaulieu, Ross 2004).

Although women have significantly increased their labor force participation and reduced their housework while men have increased slightly their hourly contributions to housework over time in the United States, women still do at least twice as much routine housework as men (Coltrane 2004). Bianci et al. (2012), however, argue that simply

focusing on the gender division of 'housework,' usually defined in terms of tasks such as cleaning, cooking, yardwork, and household repairs, etc. was insufficient for understanding the division of labor within households. The sociological literature of the 1990s concentrated on housework in assessing inequality in the gender division of labor and gave relatively little attention to childcare and other forms of carework. Although wives' and husbands' time allocation may be more similar, mothers' and fathers' work patterns remain quite different. Understanding the gender division of care work, not just housework, is crucial for understanding gender inequality within households and labor markets. "Housework can be left undone-at least for a while-and it can be 'fit in' around busy work schedules. Consequently, it does not present the barrier to women's market work and occupational mobility that caring for children often does" (Bianci et al. 2012: 60). Having a more nuanced understanding of how carework operates helps us to appreciate the amount of labor that goes into daily household chores and care work routines, the constraints on women's employment that caring for young children presents, as well as the labor involved in navigating and facilitating childcare while also being employed.

Childcare

Childcare was one of the biggest challenges for farmworker women, whether they were single parents or with a partner. For recent immigrants who do not have a large network of family or friends, it can be hard to find high quality, affordable care for their young children. Chavela, 32 discussed the challenges she faced as a recent immigrant

with young children and a husband while working 12 hours shifts at a packinghouse in this way:

> I had to leave my kids at their babysitters and my husband would pick them up in the afternoon around 3 p.m.. He worked nights during this time. He worked nights, so he would have to drop them off at another sitter's house before work and I would pick them up at 10 p.m.. It was so hard for me because my youngest son got sick and neither of the sitters told me that he had been refusing to eat. My son began to lose weight and get blotches on his skin, but I didn't notice because they went to sleep as soon as we got home in the evening and I was up making lunch for the next day, cleaning the house, washing clothes, everything. I would wake up by 5 a.m., dress my kids in the dark, and drop them off by 7 a.m.. I wasn't getting a lot of sleep. One day during my day off, I was bathing him because my husband said he didn't get to bathe him that morning. That's when I noticed the blotches on his skin. The next day I asked his afternoon babysitter about his blotches and she said, 'Oh yeah, I noticed them. Maybe he has them because he hasn't been eating very much.' I asked his morning sitter and they said he had barely been eating. This was really scary for me and I knew that I had to find another job. It was one of the worst moments for me as a mother and I felt like I was failing my children.

Chavela eventually worked at another packinghouse where she worked eight-hour shifts during the day and had weekends off. She said that although her husband "was a good man," that she felt that she was the one who had to change her place of employment to make sure she spent more time with her kids. "I like the new arrangement much better. I have breakfast with my kids and I'm home by the time they come home from school. By the time my husband comes home, the house is clean, food is cooked, and I got to spend more time with the kids," she said. Chavela's story is one that came up often with the working mothers I interviewed. Women, time and again were disproportionately responsible for maintaining their homes and caring for their children, even if both partners worked the same number of hours outside of the home, and the spouse most likely to change their employment to fulfill their child care obligations.

Luz is a 33 year old packinghouse worker who lives with her husband, two kids, and a younger brother. She described childcare as the area she most needs help with. “I get help with unemployment in the offseason, which is good, but I never get any help with childcare! Like me, for my two children, I pay one hundred dollars per week. Even if I work that’s already half a day of work pay that… And if you carpool, you have to pay thirty or forty dollars and your lunch for the week is another almost hundred dollars and there goes the three hundred you were going to make that week.” Luz describes a situation where mothers, who are expected to be primarily responsible for child care or arranging paid child care, have to consider whether their low-wage job is worth it to leave the house, a situation that most men do not contemplate.

One way to mitigate the challenges of having to work while their children stay at home includes having older children take on the role of caretakers for their younger siblings. Janey, a 38 year-old mother of four explained that her children got to school via bus every day, which made it easier for her to get to work on time via carpool with another packinghouse coworker. She said,

> My kids were already trained. It was like, ‘Ok you guys got to wake up, get ready for that bus, and make sure everybody gets on the bus. Make sure everybody gets to school.’ And I would always tell my older daughters, ‘You know, you’re in charge so if somebody doesn’t make it to school, it’s on you.’

Bertha, a 60-year old migrant field worker similarly described how her older children took care of her younger children: “I would sometimes bring my older kids to work with me, but when they got older, their role changed to take care of their younger siblings in Mexico. They really helped me out a lot.”

Both Bertha and Janey's experiences, of relying on older siblings are common among immigrant and working-class mothers. One important aspect of this includes the gendered pattern in caretaking by which daughters most often provide physical caretaking of their younger siblings (Wikle, Jensen, and Hoagland 2018), thereby reinforcing the same gendered structure in which women are primarily responsible for carrying out most of the carework and other reproductive labor within households.

Housework

Women still do most of the housework and child care, even though women's participation in the labor force has increased considerably (Coltrane 2004; Poortman and Van Der Lippe 2009). Coltrane (2004) found that while it is true that women have reduced and men have increased slightly their hourly contributions to housework, women still do at least twice as much routine housework as men. In my research, I found a very clear gender division of labor when it comes to housework within farmworking women's families such that women often do the tasks that tend to take longer or occur more regularly. For example, Belen, a 20 year-old packinghouse worker discussed the imbalance in housework at her home in this way:

> Me and my mom do all the cleaning. My older brother picks up after his dogs, but it is definitely not equal. With my little brothers, I try to instill something different for them. I tell them to pick up their toys, make sure they don't make a mess in the bathroom, things like that. I want them to know that boys should help out around the house too.

Belen's mother has been dealing with health issues over the past few years, so she has often had to pick up the slack and do all of the housework despite living in the house with three other people (three brothers and a stepfather).

Maria, 47 also discussed the imbalances that existed in her home before she divorced her ex-husband. She came to the U.S. as an undocumented immigrant at the age of ten and began working in the fields when she was 12 years old. She got married, had five children, and at the age of 27 decided to get her GED against her ex-husband's wishes. She was then able to move up in the packinghouse work hierarchy and worked as a security guard. "When I was 29, I decided to get my farm labor contractor's license and my husband was a *machista* and was not happy about this because it meant that I would be spending less time at home and so he told me that I had to stop working," she explained. "I worked at the packinghouse during the harvest season, but I am the one who managed all of our finances and knew what we needed. He didn't understand that with five children we couldn't manage without me finding work full-time. Also, I wanted to help out my younger brothers who were so smart and with some education could really make something of themselves." She eventually divorced and began working full time as a labor contractor. Her three eldest daughters all have master's degrees and now work for a local community college as a financial aid officer, director of the Trio Program, and the other is a librarian. One of her two younger brothers became a teacher and the other is a mental health professional. "I feel proud that I was able to help my family succeed after struggling so much with my ex-husband," she said.

Lola, 44, also discusses the challenges of having a "second shift" (Hocschild and Machung 1989) despite working in the fields and dealing with an auto-immune disorder. "I do everything in my house. I get home from work, I make dinner, I clean the bathrooms, I wash clothes, and sweep. In the rest of my family's daily routine, the only

thing they are responsible for is to take out the trash but they usually don't do it so I end up doing it myself," she says.

Education and Covid-19

The Covid-19 pandemic brought an incredible amount of stress and strain on families and institutions. With the majority of school-age children pivoting to virtual learning throughout 2020-2021, families had to find a way to ensure that their children would continue to receive an education. This proved to be particularly challenging for working-class, immigrant, and undocumented parents. "My kids are still doing virtual learning, more than a year after the pandemic first started," said Teresa, a 50-year old undocumented migrant mother.

> I feel like it's been a lot more difficult because it doesn't seem like my kids are learning enough and they are really struggling. It seems like schools are really just winging it. I would prefer that they return to class in person because this whole thing has not been good for them or for me.

Her kids' school in Mexico did not provide a computer or tablet for them, so she bought one herself, "I bought them a laptop, finally. Before that, they were using my cellphone because they needed the internet to connect. It was so hard for them to keep up on a little phone, so I had to save for months for that laptop."

The digital divide is more than access to high-speed internet and Teresa's children's experience of not having a proper device on which to take instruction is common among many low-income families living in school districts that did not provide laptops to children.

Carmen reflected many of the sentiments among farmworking women regarding the difficulties of virtual learning on families when she said: "It's hard sitting in front of a

computer screen all day, especially for my younger kids. And well for me too. I can't wait for everything to go back to normal" Carmen, a packinghouse worker with four children, two of which are school age, said that her older children have helped her younger children with navigating virtual learning. Older siblings helping younger siblings with virtual learning was a theme that came up with every family who had school age children and who had to transition to online learning. Belen, a 20 year old packinghouse worker spent much of her off time helping her two younger brothers with their virtual classes and schoolwork. "They gave him an iPad and I helped him every day. He started having a really hard time waking up in the morning, so we would physically have to wake him up to get to class. Luckily, I feel like my little brother was already pretty comfortable with computer stuff even before the pandemic, so he got the hang of it pretty fast. But it was still really hard for us, especially me because I feel like most of the responsibility of his education landed on me since my mom works in the fields and leaves for work very early every day." Having an outsized role in her brothers' education was not new for Belen, but during the pandemic her role became vital as a surrogate teacher and advocate for her younger brothers, despite also living with an older brother who did not engage in this type of labor.

Working mothers had a hard time across the board throughout the pandemic. But for undocumented women with limited English proficiency, the challenges they faced were compounded. Lola, an undocumented immigrant mother with kids ages 5 and 9, relied on her older children to help her younger children get through virtual learning:

> My nine year old has so much patience with his younger brother. For me, it is really difficult because none of their teachers speak Spanish and I don't speak English. I knew a few words, but it is not enough. I felt so bad for my kids, my older one would have to leave his online class and tell his teacher, 'Hold on, I have to help my little brother' and he would step away to help my younger son. He understood that his mom can't help in that way and that he would have to help his brother.

Lola worried about the long-term impacts of missed learning among her children. She lamented,

> With my elder son, it wasn't as hard for him because he knew some things about the way that school works. What I saw more than anything was that my son who was in kindergarten was so new and he didn't know about what school is, how to read, nothing like that. So it was really hard for me to help them with school and I feel like he didn't learn as much this past year. This year he is about to enter first grade and right now he has the coronavirus. I just hope that this doesn't affect him for the rest of his life.

Lola's lack of formal education, computer literacy, and limited English proficiency all impacted the ways in which she was able to support her children during this time. In addition, she cited that she often did not even have the time to be there with her children because of her packinghouse work schedule, which varied depending on how much fruit was brought in that day to be packed. A long day was 12 or 13 hours, while a short day could be as little as a four hour shift. She cited not knowing what her schedule would be until she got to work in the morning as a major challenge she faced while trying to support her children.

CONCLUSION

This chapter highlights the ways in which social, cultural, and political borders interact and impact the home and family lives of women farmworkers. When considering the ways in which women's paid and unpaid labor interact, it is difficult to separate the

different spheres of these women's lives into distinct categories. This chapter highlights the ways in which their lives as paid laborers, in which they work alongside men in the fields, and in packinghouses, where they mostly work alongside other women, impacts their lives at home. The patriarchal dynamics in households, in which women perform most of the unpaid labor of maintaining their homes and raising their children, often comes at a high cost, including missed or limited employment and income opportunities and physical exhaustion.

My research found that for women who are undocumented immigrants and/or migrants, the challenges and stressors faced as mothers are compounded by threats of deportation and having to leave their children for long stretches of time in order to ensure their access to income, which is necessary to their family's health and survival. This issue has become more acute as climate-change related droughts have increased the amount of time and distance that women work far away from home. My work also finds that the rural nature of these women's communities coupled with lack of public transportation and lack of formal childcare centers makes farmworking women more reliant on community and kin networks. They often rely upon older siblings, usually daughters, to carry out carework responsibilities for their younger siblings. As a result, the daughters of farmworkers are often faced with limited opportunities in their education and with extracurricular activities because they spend so much time caring for their younger siblings. Finally, the Covid-19 pandemic changed the structure of education, impacting childcare options for working mothers while simultaneously creating linguistic and technological obstacles for Spanish-speaking parents to support their children's

education. These challenges are exacerbated by the lack of widespread high-speed broadband infrastructure in rural communities as well as limited access to wifi and appropriate devices necessary for virtual learning.

This chapter helps us to better understand how farmworking women's gendered domestic duties intersect with their working and living conditions. Many of these families live in poor rural communities, which lack public transportation and basic necessities, including clean water and air. Their jobs usually do not provide them with health insurance or paid sick leave. Their working conditions are often brutal, with sexism and racism rampant among the mayordomos and the other workers. Multiple crises, including the impacts of Covid-19 and vulnerability to the effects of climate change all provide the context in which these women work and live. All of these issues need to be looked at as part of a holistic experience that farmworking women navigate on a daily basis in a way that is much different than the experience of farmworking men.

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CHAPTER V:
CONCLUSION AND SCHOLARLY IMPLICATIONS

> I intended *Borderlands* not only to spread, but also to produce knowledge. In *Borderlands*, I intended to problematize the relationship between reader, writer, and text-specifically the reader's role in giving meaning to the text. It is the reader who ultimately makes the connections, finds the patterns, that are meaningful for them…. The reader's co-creation of the book makes me, the author, realize that I am not the sole creator. There are certain things that the author sets up for the reader, but the reader is, to some degree, a co-author. This is even more true when the reader responds to the book in writing-with a book review, a critical paper, etc. the text is not a fixed text. The words will always be the same words, right? As long as they keep printing the book, the words remain the same. But the text will be different with each reader and each reading. The text will move and reveal something new every time you read it.
> - "On Writing *Borderlands/La Frontera*" (Anzaldua, 2009)

This project has highlighted some of the working and living conditions of one of the most marginalized communities in the country. Farmwork is not easy. *Es un trabajo muy pesado*, very hard work. It is one of the most important, but least compensated jobs. This dissertations explores the people who help to produce our food. The ones who have full, complex lives outside of the single dimension of dominant the narratives about farmworkers which only sees them as tropes of poor immigrant workers stooped in the fields. Mexican women farmworkers work in an industry that is often invisible to most people, despite everybody reaping the benefits from their labor. The women in my study also live in the San Joaquin Valley, a region that is often misunderstood or maligned for its poverty and rurality, despite being in the middle of the richest state in the union. This project is my attempt at shedding light on the experiences of these women in these communities and giving them space to speak in their own words about the issues that have impacted their lives at work, at home, and in the communities where they live and raise their children.

Throughout the United States, farmworkers play a critical role in the nation's food supply yet they continue to work in unsafe and unsanitary conditions. As we continue to witness how the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic reverberate throughout our society and economy, the disconnect between the concept of "essential workers" and the dignity and protections needed for the most vulnerable communities become much more palpable. Racialized immigrant workers' vulnerability to deportation despite their designation as essential add to the terror of living in a nation that views the life of immigrants, people of color, women, and low-income workers as expendable. For undocumented immigrant women who are highly vulnerable to these crises and who deal with marginalization based on their race, class, gender, national citizenship, and place of residence, an intersectional perspective is crucial in understanding group dynamics and policy interventions as the struggle for survival becomes more acute with each new crisis.

Life in the borderlands is not only defined by oppression. In fact, Anzaldúa (1987) argues that the culture, art, music, and language that emerges from borderlands should be acknowledged and celebrated. The diversity that exists in the Valley and the ways in which women in this region have responded with resiliency and love to the myriad challenges they encounter including banding together to support their friends and neighbors and celebrating each other's families and successes. However, borders are also be sites of extreme disenfranchisement, marginalization, and violence. These borders are sometimes erected as a form of social control, including the criminalization of undocumented immigrants. The impacts of the criminalization of undocumented immigrants is often shared by the entire family, even among family members who are

citizens or legal immigrants who share in the stress and economic impacts of having an undocumented family member.

My research has demonstrated that economic and social inequalities can are exacerbated by environmental crises, such as droughts and increasing heat caused by climate change, which is disproportionately impacting the poorest and most vulnerable communities, many of which live in arid regions. In the case of farmworkers, they are experiencing the impacts of the climate crisis first hand because their livelihoods depend on the land and the harvesting of food that is contingent upon the environment. The lack of access to clean water and the polluted air that continues to become more toxic disproportionately impacts those who labor outside in hot arid climates. The rural context compounds these issues because of the lack of access to primary health doctors, fresh and affordable food (a grim irony considering that many farmworkers cannot afford the food that they harvest), and the lack of public transportation all make life very difficult for those who live at the intersection of multiple types of borders.

In this dissertation, I have introduced a multidimensional borderlands framework. This theoretical framework combines insights from intersectional feminist perspective s with Gloria Anzaldúa's insights regarding the role of social and political borders in reproducing multiple forms of exclusion and inequality that operate across different contexts and institutions. By examining how social and political borders interact and negatively impact farmworking women's home and family lives, in addition to their experiences at work and in their communities, my research provides a holistic understanding of the intersectional ways that racism, sexism, classism, and xenophobia

impact women farmworkers' everyday lives. This dissertation highlights the unique experience of life in a particular rural region and adds to a more complex understanding of how social locations vary depending on the context. In this chapter, I provide an overview of the key findings of each empirical chapter that are based on my analysis of interviews with 35 women farmworkers. After discussing the scholarly and policy implications of my research and theoretical perspective, I conclude by identifying directions for future research.

OVERVIEW OF KEY FINDINGS

In chapter 2, I examine how social and political borders impact Mexican women farmworkers' paid work experiences and constrain the employment opportunities of low-wage women workers in the Valley. My findings reveal that women farmworkers face myriad challenges in the workplace. First, women's citizenship status impact the types of jobs they have access to within the agricultural industry and how they are treated in the workplace. Women who work in the fields picking fruits and vegetables, jobs that are typically male-dominated, are often discriminated against because of their gender and perceived physical "weakness." In contrast, packinghouses where the fruits and vegetables are packed and shipped from, jobs that are typically female-dominated. Undocumented women are often barred from applying for packinghouse jobs because of stricter background checks that exclude those without their own social security number. Their status as undocumented immigrants creates extremely challenging conditions for securing paid jobs and financially supporting their families.

This chapter highlights the role of spatial inequalities and how rural isolation impacts farmworkers' paid labor opportunities. Specifically, the geography of the region includes rural isolation with almost no public transportation infrastructure. This issue has become more challenging as extreme California droughts have dried up jobs and farmworkers are forced to travel further to get to work in other communities. Women workers are then faced with the burden of facilitating childcare while also having to navigate their own transportation to and from work, the cost and hassles of which sometimes discourages their employment.

This chapter also finds that there exists a more competitive work environment stemming from the increasing threat of deportation and general anti-immigrant sentiment that increased under the Trump administration. My research finds that many undocumented workers are more hesitant to disclose their status not only because of the fear of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) workplace raids and threats of deportation, but also because of fear that their coworkers will harass or mistreat them.

Chapter 3 focuses on community conditions specifically related to housing, transportation, the environment, and health. This chapter highlights the findings which include the ways in which the physical landscape of the region intersects with social inequalities and climate-change related crises, thereby creating unique challenges for those whose livelihoods depend on the land. The history of housing discrimination in the Valley allows us to have a better understanding of how these legacies persist in the forms of low-income unincorporated communities which dot the Valley's landscape and exacerbate inequalities for its residents, mostly immigrant workers, and families. These

inequalities are based on the lack of basic services that are afforded to residents of the region's municipalities, such as access to city water, transportation, trash collection, street lights, and police services. I review research that documents high levels of environmental contaminants in the region, which along with the impacts of the climate crisis, has limited residents' access to clean air and water and contributed to high rates of chronic illnesses in the region, especially among its poorest residents. Finally, I discuss how the lack of healthcare access due to lack of insurance and lack of hospitals and clinics in rural communities negatively impacts health outcomes for the most vulnerable residents.

Chapter 4 focuses on family dynamics for farmworkers and how paid and unpaid labor challenges negatively impact women's home lives. This chapter provides an intersectional, transcultural, and transnational perspective on the experiences of women farmworkers that extend beyond their lives at work. In this chapter, I examine how women farmworkers experience life at home as mothers, partners, daughters, and neighbors and I explore the challenges that exist for women outside of the workplace that are part of a shared experience with other working mothers. This chapter documents the physical and emotional toll these women face as working mothers, particularly as many of them navigate single parenthood and transnational motherhood while also experiencing life as an undocumented immigrant woman. My research finds that the social borders that women navigate also include unequal divisions of unpaid reproductive labor in their home, with women doing the lion's share of housework, coordinating childcare, and navigating their children's educational institutions. Finally, Covid-19

created additional challenges for women and their vulnerability was exacerbated by long-standing underlying inequalities, including living in multigenerational households which added to the risk of catching the virus and it spreading quickly. Many also faced challenges of being an immigrant parent with limited technological literacy and uneven access to high speed internet, both of which exacerbated the challenges of helping their children with virtual learning

SCHOLARLY IMPLICATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE FIELD

The concept of intersectionality is powerful, especially in its ability to make connections between multiple systems of oppression. It provides a language and analytical tools that help us to have a more nuanced understanding of what life is like for those who exist at the intersections of multiple relations of domination. The research questions that guided my work were built upon this theoretical foundation, such as: What is life like for those whose livelihoods and everyday lives are simultaneously impacted by gender, racial, and class oppression, labor exploitation, the U.S. immigration regime (or deportation and detention industrial complex), rural isolation, residential segregation by race and class, transnational motherhood, lack of access to clean water and air, and climate change? How can an intersectional lens help scholars and policymakers understand that these issues impacting Mexican farmworking women and their communities are not separate, and that there are in fact hundreds of thousands of farmworkers, arguably the most essential workers, who live at the intersection of multiple systems of inequality?

By envisioning the intersecting impacts of these systemic inequalities as types of borders that affect people in multiple dimensions of their lives, we can develop language that speaks to the sometimes visible, sometimes invisible, but always visceral experience of living in the borderlands as a low-wage immigrant woman worker in a male-dominated industry in a rural context at the cusp of the point of no return for the existential threat of climate change (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 2022). Conceptualizing borderlands as multidimensional allows for an analysis of intersecting inequalities not only among social groups and identities; but it also takes into account the role of geography and political borders that operate at multiple scales. By taking account the role of space and understanding intersecting inequalities in spatial terms, I am adapting an Anzalduan borderlands framework while building on emerging research by intersectional feminist geographers.

For women farmworkers in the Valley, a multidimensional borderlands perspective provides a more holistic view of how it is nearly impossible to separate the multiple spheres of women's lives and how multiple and intersecting borders impact their opportunities and experiences in the labor market. These workers often simultaneously confront extensive labor exploitation and difficult working conditions, gender discrimination that limits the types of jobs they can access, nativism and exclusionary immigration policies that keep undocumented immigrants in perpetual fear of deportation. Moreover, as residents of low-income unincorporated areas they are disenfranchised from local political representation and have limited or no access to public

municipal services. These are all examples of the multidimensional nature of borders that confront Mexican women farmworkers in the Valley.

Another key contribution of my research and theoretical approach is that it highlights how intersecting inequalities among women farmworkers often has contradictory impacts within this group. There is an incredible amount of diversity and inequality even *among* these women, including differences based on citizenship status, levels of English proficiency, those who are migrant workers versus those who are permanent residents, those who live within versus outside of municipal boundaries, those with more or less family resources, those who live closer or further from jobs, those with or without access to cars or stable housing, and varying strengths of social networks. As McCall (2005) argues, intersectional feminist theory highlights intra-categorical inequalities, which allows for a more nuanced understanding of how these inequalities impact communities. Likewise, a multidimensional borderlands framework highlights how spatial as well as socioeconomic inequalities are reproduced among, and divide the experiences of, social groups and communities that are often presumed to be homogenous.

This dissertation contributes to ongoing Chicana intersectional feminist scholarship which argues that intersectionality has been underdeveloped when it comes to Chicanas/Latinas (Segura and Zavella 2008; Baca Zinn and Zambrana 2019). These scholars argue that although a key contribution to intersectionality has been Latinas' critical engagement with structures of domination that operate in a transnational space, the role of political borders, national immigration policies, and migration are not reaching

broader intersectional feminist discussions. Building on theoretical insights of women of color activists and scholars in earlier decades (Anzaldua and Moraga 1981; Anzaldúa 2009; Moraga 1983; Romero, Hondagneu-Sotelo, Ortiz 1997), various sociologists have examined the experiences of Latina immigrant and migrant domestic workers in urban centers (Parrenas 2005, Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994) and Mexican and Chicana cannery workers in rural areas (Zavella 1991, Ruiz 1987). Adding to this stream of Chicana/Latina feminist scholarship, this dissertation advances our understanding of the conditions facing low-wage, Mexican immigrant, migrant women workers in rural communities in multiple areas of their lives.

The climate crisis is having disparate impacts and exacerbating existing social, economic, health and spatial inequalities and is forcing women to adjust their lives in order to navigate these impacts. A key question critical feminist scholars can ask themselves is: While women workers continue to contend with oppressive systems based on race, class, and gender at work and at home, how can we better understand, and best address, the uneven impacts of climate change among them? How can we better understand the disproportionate impacts of climate change among rural regions such as the San Joaquin Valley, that are being largely ignored by policymakers? I believe that a multidimensional borderlands framework helps to organize these ideas, while maintaining an intersectional lens.

Although this dissertation is a case study that focuses on women farmworkers in one California region, the *multidimensional borderlands* framework has much to offer other feminist scholars. For example, it can be applied by other Chicana feminist, critical

race, and intersectional scholars, including geographers, to analyze the experiences of other marginalized communities and groups at the intersection of multiple marginalized identities and who interact with various types of borders and boundaries in their everyday lives, such as other low-wage, immigrant, women, and queer workers employed by other industries or rural women of color located in other regions. Finally, this framework could also be applied to understand those who are both marginalized and privileged or groups that are multiply privileged, including analyzing how such groups benefit from and reproduce particular kinds of social and political boundaries. A multidimensional borderlands lens thus has much to offer feminist scholars, especially those interested in analyzing how social groups and communities navigate, reproduce, and are impacted by multiple and intersecting socio-spatial inequalities, boundary-making, and crises.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Despite farmworkers crucial role in our society, they continue to face myriad challenges and borders in multiple areas of their lives. This dissertation makes theoretical and empirical connections between challenges that women face in their workplaces, communities, and homes in the context of rural isolation and climate change. One of my main objectives is to make connections between the economic, social, political, and environmental problems in farmworking communities in order to give policymakers and advocates more analytical tools and insight into how to best address them.

What kinds of policy changes are needed in order to improve the lives of farmworking women in the San Joaquin Valley and other regions in the United States? In the workplace, a living wage and protections from ICE, including amnesty for

undocumented immigrants or more pathways to legalization, would ensure that farmworkers have the financial stability and physical safety to perform their important work and live their lives more peacefully. Labor law reform and more funds for labor law enforcement would help give more protections for women in the workplace, including discrimination based on their gender and more vigilance, recourse, and support to ensure women's safety from sexual assault. Greater protections or unionization and worker organizing would also serve to improve working conditions. In addition, universal health insurance coverage, regardless of citizenship status or income thresholds, and more investment in culturally competent health services infrastructure, outreach, and training would ensure that these vulnerable workers would be able to get the health care they need. The lack of healthcare options and access for many of the Valley's poorest residents has been in the spotlight during the Covid-19 pandemic and the need is greater than ever.

The expansion of the social safety net to ensure that women have access to high quality, free or affordable childcare would be an investment for the entire region. More investment in safe, high quality, and affordable housing for low-wage workers and their families is critical, as this research has shown that overcrowded and unsafe living conditions are a social determinant of health. More access to English language classes, immigration support services, and vocational training programs would also go a long way to ensuring that farmworkers will be able to earn a decent wage and have opportunities for professional advancement. This is especially important as the climate crisis is making farmwork untenable for many workers.

Transportation is a critical issue for many residents' livelihoods, education, and health. Investment in public transportation infrastructure, particularly for those in the most isolated communities would be a major improvement to their quality of life. In addition, reevaluation of municipal boundary-making as it relates to unincorporated communities and changes in governance structures to ensure that residents of low-income unincorporated communities have political representation at the local level would allow for the opportunity for residents to have a say in the conditions and directions of their communities. Access to clean and affordable public water is also critical, particularly for those who live in unincorporated communities. More governmental regulation of over pumping wells and exclusion of city water supplies is also needed. Finally, the Covid-19 pandemic has fast-forwarded the growing role of virtual work, education, and the need to expand and improve Wi-Fi connectivity for all residents. More investment in high-speed broadband infrastructure in rural communities is needed more than ever.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS & FUTURE RESEARCH

The Covid-19 pandemic and the need to follow health and safety guidelines related to it constrained my participant outreach plan which limited my research sample. The deadly virus that has been ravaging the globe made it impossible for me to go to the Valley in order to conduct face-to-face interviews for my second round of data collection and therefore made my snowball sampling technique less potent. In my experience, having in-person interactions in people's homes or other neutral locations helps develop trust and rapport that often translates into referrals for other potential research

participants. Because I was forced to conduct my interviews over the phone or through FaceTime, I feel as though my ability to recruit more participants was stunted.

Another research limitation is that the vast majority interviewees are from Fresno County, making it less representative of farmworker communities in other regions in California or other states. My sample included all Mexican and Mexican-American women who either spoke Spanish or English, therefore excluding the perspectives of women farmworkers from other countries or those who speak other languages or indigenous dialects. Future research that focuses on the multidimensional borders that farmworkers face should include perspectives from indigenous workers and those who come from other counties or states, including those closer to the U.S.-Mexico border or new immigrant destinations, in order to have a more nuanced perspective about the challenges they face at work and in their communities.

As one of the most vulnerable populations to the climate crisis, farmworkers have borne the brunt of its impacts. The climate crisis has had devastating impacts on their working conditions, employment opportunities, and public health. More research needs to be done on the adaptations and survival strategies that vulnerable rural communities are using to navigate the increasingly powerful effects of climate change, including more extreme heat, droughts, wild fires, and contaminated air and water. As climate change continues to ravage the livelihoods of so many, low-wage workers will have to adapt to the increasingly volatile climate challenges.

My research revealed some of the adaptations and survival strategies that families are using as farm jobs are declining, which deserve further exploration in future studies.

For example, the challenges with finding work that pays a living wage and the intersecting crises of the pandemic and climate change has forced many Valley residents to adapt to their situations through a variety of survival strategies. Similar to what has been found among poor women in urban areas, (Edin and Lein 1997), many of the women interviewed for this study discussed having to participate in the informal labor economy in order to make ends meet in their households, including babysitting, collecting cans to recycle, cleaning homes, or selling food out of their homes or cars.

Teresa, a migrant farmworker was working in the fields during the morning and she started cooking food at home to sell to her coworkers for lunch. She said it was too exhausting to do both, so she decided to dedicate herself to selling food to the workers in the fields she once worked herself, "My coworkers started putting in a lot of orders every day, and since I make everything from scratch, they love it. I have been selling food for four months now and I make the same amount of money I did working in the fields. It is really hard work too, but at least I can do it at home, not in the heat of the fields." She explained that she is transitioning to cooking instead of looking for work in the fields because they are hiring less women now. Plus I'm getting older and I don't like to travel so much. I'm scared of getting the virus."

Another common adaptation that many workers are choosing is to move due to the climate crisis, particularly the drought, increased heat, and lack of work. Tere, a 65 year old field worker said

> Yes, there is a lot less work. I wonder what is going to happen if [the drought] continues and people keep losing work. Undocumented workers can't always open up unemployment. The mayordomos work us so hard and we can't say

> anything about it. I'm thinking I may have to go back to Mexico if things get worse with the heat and the drought.

When I asked her if she knew many workers who were going back to Mexico due to the drought, she answered, "Well I'm not sure because it's so hard. *Ni para atras, ni para adelante* [we can't go back, we can't go forward.]" She became a citizen in the last 10 years and she said that her "life has changed, thank God. Now I know I can open up my unemployment." She added, "But for [undocumented people], life is very hard. I know this is true because I lived it."

Although the historic drought of 2012-2016 was historic, California is once again reeling from the impacts from another drought. Reports show that rural communities all over the state are losing population, including the many unincorporated communities that exist in the Valley (Vega 2021). About one third of my participants described hearing about or knowing people who have moved away to find work or a better quality of life. Oralia, 23 was also thinking about moving out of the Valley, "I've seen it and I've thought about it too, moving out of here. Nobody is trying to live like this all their lives. People want to do something about it but there's nothing we can do because we're in a bad drought. If you don't have a job, you do something to find a job. People are really concerned, I'll tell you that."

Finally, more research needs to be conducted on the resistance strategies and activism in farmworker communities. Over the last two decades, new farmworker organizations have emerged to help to train to organize for better conditions, pay, and healthcare. Such organizations include La Cooperativa Campesina de California, which focuses on job training, employment and service resources across the state. Lideres

Campesinas, meanwhile, focuses on grassroots and political mobilization efforts to organize farmworker women to become more politically active, including advocacy, leadership training, and voter drives and know-your-rights workshops, among other initiatives. Through the training and advocacy led by organizations such as these, and local chapters of the United Farm Workers, women farmworkers are organizing to push back against many of the challenges highlighted in this dissertation.

Farmwork has long been reliable, albeit seasonal, industry in which to find work. For generations, workers from Latin America have come north looking for work in the fertile fields of the Central Valley. Although the work has always been difficult, seasonal, and poorly paid, the landscape of work, both figuratively and literally, is changing rapidly with the rise of extreme heat, drought, and increased exposure to wildfire smoke. These changes are shifting the nature and boundaries of the industry. A multidimensional borders lens provides an analytical framework that acknowledges and highlights the dynamic role of social and political borders in the lives of immigrants, their families, and rural communities. More research needs to be done in rural areas if we value the communities whose labor feeds the nation.

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APPENDIX I:

Interview Guide-English

Preliminary Demographic Characteristics

1. What is your age?
2. What is your race/ethnicity?
3. Are you currently employed? If so, do you work full-time or part-time? Do you have more than one job?
4. Are you employed directly by the company or are you employed through a labor contractor or a temporary agency?
5. What is your current occupation(s)? Have you worked at any other jobs in the past year? If so, in what occupation(s)?
6. What is your marital status?
7. Do you have children? How many? What ages?
8. What's your highest level of educational attainment?
9. In what country and state were you born? (the next questions are for immigrants and will be skipped for those born within the U.S.)
    a. What is your immigration status? (probe: U.S. citizen, legal resident, undocumented, etc.)
    b. What year did you come to the US?
    c. Did you come the Valley directly, or did you live anywhere else?
    d. How well do you speak English? Fluently, somewhat fluently, or very little or not at all?

Work

1. What type of work do you do? What is your job title?
2. Can you describe a typical day or week at work?
3. How long have you worked at this location?
4. How many hours do you work per week? Does your work schedule change much during the year and week to week?
5. Are you given advanced notice of your work schedule for each week and each day? How much advance notice do you have for your work schedule and if you are asked to work extra hours or over-time?
6. When you get to work, do you know when your work shift will end each day?
7. What was your income for last year? Will it be more or less this year?
8. How do you get to work each day? About how many miles to get to work?
9. Have you ever had any transportation challenges with getting to work?
10. How did you hear about this job?
11. Who is responsible for hiring/firing at your workplace?
12. What is the hiring process like? How does it compare to other places you've worked?
13. As far as you know, are there undocumented people at your work?

14. What would you say are some challenges/advantages with being undocumented?
15. What gives you an advantage for getting hired? A disadvantage?
16. What kinds of jobs have you previously worked in the past year? How about previous years?
17. How does this workplace compare with others you've worked at (if applicable)
18. How would you describe the working conditions at your place of employment?
    A. Have you ever experienced sexual harassment at work or seen instances of sexual harassment against any of your coworkers?
    B. Do your regularly get paid for overtime? Has there ever been a time when you didn't get your full paycheck for some reason?
    C. Do you always get to take your regularly scheduled breaks? Has there ever been a time when you did not get paid for your breaks?
19. Have you ever been injured at work?
20. Is water provided for you at work?
21. Do you feel that there is favoritism at your job?
22. Are you part of a union?
23. Do you feel a sense of community with your coworkers? Your employers? How so?
24. If work is seasonal, what do you do in the offseason to pay the bills?
25. Have you ever done any informal work, such as child care, selling food, recycling, etc?
    What type of work did/do your parents do?
26. What are your favorite parts of this job? Your least favorite?

Family/Household

1. How many people live in your household?
2. What are the ages of each person and their relationship to you?
   (Probe: How many children do you have currently in your household?
   Do your parents or your parents-in-law live with you?
   Is there anyone else living with you? (siblings, cousins, friends, roommates or tenants, step-children, etc.).
3. How many people in your household work?
   Do any children under 18 work in your household?
   Do these children work only during school breaks or do they work year-round?
4. If you feel comfortable, how would you describe your sexual orientation? Are there any LGBTQ people in your family or friend circle? What challenges have you/your family faced because of your/their sexual orientation?
5. Does your household have a car? How many?
    a. Who are the main drivers in your family?
    b. Is your car/are your cars in good shape or does it/they need repairs or break down a lot?

6. Do you have any family living in Mexico or other places abroad? Do you help support them or do they help support you? How often do you communicate with these family members? Are you able to visit them regularly?
7. Have you ever allowed a relative to live in your home for a period of time because they needed a place to live?
8. Do you have any undocumented folks living in your home?
    a. Who? What ages?
    b. What are some of the challenges with being undocumented?
9. *If they have children under the age of 18 or provide caregiving for elderly, disabled, or sick relatives:*
   How do you balance being a mother (or family caregiver) and working?
    a. Do you pay for child care/elder care? If so, how much do you pay? Do you consider this affordable?
    b. Are you satisfied with your current caregiving arrangement or do you wish you had more or better help with the children (or dependent relatives) sometimes?
    c. What happens if your caregiver gets sick or cannot watch the children for some reason?
10. Are there any extended family members or elders that you help support?
    a. What type of support do you provide?
    b. Who helps you with this work? How?
11. *If married*: How long you have you been married?
    a. Does your spouse work? Where?
    b. Do they help with the children? Household chores? How much and with what tasks?
12. Would you say that housework is divided equally in your house? How do you split up housework?
13. Are there any health-related issues that you deal with in your family? Such as? If a child/elder gets sick, who usually takes care of them?
14. Do you have health insurance?
15. *If you have kids*:

Who is responsible for taking the kids/elders to their doctor's appointments?

    a. How do you get there?
    b. How far do you have to travel to get to your appointments?
16. If you have kids: How far is your kid's school from home? How do they get to school?
17. Do you have a smart phone with internet?
18. Do you have internet access at home? Is it reliable?
    a. If not, where do you or your children go to access internet services?
19. How long have you lived in your current place of residence?
    a. Do you own or rent?
    b. How do you like living there?
    c. How many bedrooms and bathrooms?

    d. Do you have a yard or a garden? If so, do you plant any fruits or vegetables or raise any chickens or other animals for food? If so, do you do this for financial or for other reasons?
    e. Have you had to spend money on repairs/are there any major repairs that you need in your home?
    f. Do you feel that you have adequate heating and cooling?
20. Do you feel that your family is financially stable? Why or why not?
    a. Has there ever been a time that you have struggled financially? What was the situation?
    b. What bills are hardest to keep up with?
    c. Have you or other family members ever had to skip a meal or reduce your meals because of lack of food?
    d. Have you or other family members ever needed medical care and not been able to obtain it for financial reasons or because of work? If so, please describe the situation.
    e. Has your family ever been in debt? Do you have a comfortable savings?
    f. Do you get financial support from family, friends, church, or any other organizations?
    g. Is there ever any tension or conflict in your family due to household bills or spending?
21. Do you or any family members receive any type of welfare or public benefits?
22. When do you think you will be able to retire? (If applicable) When do you think your spouse will be able to retire?
23. Can you describe your family life during a typical workday?
    a. Can you describe your family life during the weekends?
    b. What do you and family members do, from when you wake up to go to bed?
    c. What activities do you or other family members most enjoy doing as a family together?
24. Do work schedules ever make it difficult for your family to spend time together and make plans? Who spends the least time with family due to work?
    a. Who spends the most time with family and taking care of other family members?
25. Who in your family prepares family meals?
    a. Who eats family meals together?
    b. Does anyone have to miss these meals because of their work schedule or other obligations?
26. What kinds of celebrations are the most important in your family and how do you celebrate them?
    a. Is it ever difficult to celebrate holidays or birthdays the way you wish you could celebrate them due to lack of time, resources, or inability to travel to be together?

27. Did your family take any vacations or travel together last year or is this difficult to due to lack of time, resources, or inability to travel?
    a. *If they have children:* What do your children usually do during school vacations and summers?
    b. *If they have young children:* Who takes care of them during school vacations and summers?
28. What are your goals or aspirations for your family/kids?

Community and Neighborhood

1. How long have you lived in this town (or "area" if living in an unincorporated region)?
2. Do you live in an unincorporated area?
    a. Do you get city services such as water, streetlights, trash services, sidewalks, police, emergency services?
    b. If you call the police, does the city police or the sheriff respond?
3. How did you decide to live in your community?
4. Do you have other family who lives in your town? Who?
5. Do you feel connected to the community you live in? If so, what or who gives you that sense of connection?
6. Do you belong to a church? If so, probe on which church, how often they attend it, and what kinds of church activities they participate in.
7. Do you know of any support with food or clothing that your community has?
8. Do you know your neighbors? How long have you known them? Do you spend time with your neighbors? If so, what do you do together and how frequently? Do you and your neighbors help ever each other out? (If so, probe for details)
9. Are you or your family members active within any other community groups or organizations, or centers in the community? Does anyone belong to a union?
    a. Do you or any of your family members participate in organized sports or a sports team? If so, what kind?
10. What is your favorite thing about living where you live? Least favorite thing?
11. Does your community celebrate any events or holidays together? Do you participate in these celebrations or activities? Why or why not?
12. Have you ever had any problems getting fresh, clean water?
    a. Do you drink water from the tap? If not, how do you get water to drink, cook, bathe, wash dishes?
    b. If water from a well, have you ever had any problems with the well running dry or with contamination?
    c. If buy bottled water or 5 gallon jugs, how much would you say you spend on bottled water a week? Month?
    d. Has your water bill stayed pretty constant?
13. Can you talk about how how climate issues affect your work and/or life? (Drought, heat, water and air issues?)
14. Do you have access to public transportation?
    a. What type?

    b. Is it affordable and/or consistent?
15. Where do you and your family usually obtain their health care? (clinic, private doctor's office, emergency room)
    a. Are you and your family members able to obtain the health care you need in terms of medical care, dental care, vision, and mental health? Why or why not?
16. How far is the closest grocery store from where you live?
    a. Do you usually drive there? If not, how do you get your groceries?
    b. Do you feel satisfied with the quality of fruits and vegetables at your local grocery stores?
    c. Have you ever felt that items were overpriced compared with other stores you've been to in other cities?
17. What is your opinion on the schools in your community? *If they have kids, probe more on this:*
    a. Does the school provide after-school care, programs, or sports? Is this affordable? Have your children ever been put on a waiting list for after-school care?
    b. Do you and your family members participate in any after-school activities or other school-related events?
    c. Do you feel welcome at your children's school or have you ever felt uncomfortable there? Do you like your children's teacher(s)?
    d. Do your children receive any free or reduced cost meals at school?
18. Are there any community or educational resources that you take advantage of? (Such as afterschool programs, community centers, adult classes, health clinics, etc)
19. Are you eligible to vote? If so, are you registered?
20. Have you ever voted in any local elections?
    a. Did you vote in the presidential election of 2016? How about 2020?
    b. If not, what was the main reason you did not vote?
    c. How did you make your voting decisions?
    d. Was it easy to cast your ballot? Absentee or polling place?
    e. How did you get there?
    f. Do you know your local mayor and/or other elected representatives?
    g. What are the most important political issues you would like our next president to address?
    h. How do you feel about the Trump presidency? Do you feel like there have been any changes in your life since he was elected?
    i. Do you and your family/friends/coworkers discuss Trump or his policies? What are the main topics of discussion?
21. Have you ever attended any public meetings hosted by local politicians or schools?
    a. What type of meetings?
    b. How many would you say you've been to?
    c. How did you hear about the meetings?

22. Have you ever done any volunteer activities through or for an organization?
    a. If so, how did you first become a volunteer? Did you approach the organization yourself or did you become involved in some other way?

Pandemic-Related Questions:

1. Has the pandemic affected you or your family? How so?
2. Is anybody working during this time in your household? How many?
3. If Yes:
    a. Where do your other family members work during this time?
    b. Have they had to change jobs? Have their hours been reduced, increased?
    c. Did your family qualify for any stimulus money from the government? Did you receive it?
4. Has anybody lost their jobs due to the pandemic? How long have they been without work?
    a. Were they able to get unemployment benefits?
    b. If not, how have they been able to pay their bills? What sacrifices/lifestyle changes have they had to make?
5. Agricultural workers were considered "essential workers" and have continued to work during this pandemic. What have been some of the challenges you've faced during this time at your workplace?
    a. How do you feel that your workplace has handled this pandemic?
    b. Does your work provide any masks, gloves or any other personal protective
        i. equipment?
    c. Has anybody tested positive for the virus since at your workplace that you know of?
        i. If yes: were you all notified?
    d. Are there less, the same, or more employees during this time?
6. Do you feel safe at work?
    a. What measures has your workplace taken to ensure that workers stay safe?
7. Do you feel like your bosses/supervisors/mayordomas care about your personal well being during this pandemic?
8. How have your coworkers discussed this pandemic? Do you feel like most people are taking more precautions (i.e. wearing masks, increased hand washing, social distancing, etc).
9. If you have school age children, can you describe what it has been like at home since the schools shut down?
    a. Are your kids receiving online instruction? How many of them?
    b. Have you had to take on the role of teaching your children? What has this experience been like?
        i. If not: who has taken on that role?
    c. Who babysits your children since they've been home?
    d. Do you have a laptop at home with internet?
    e. Does your child continue to receive free/reduced cost lunch from their schools?

    f. Does your child's school provide any additional services such as tutoring, parent support, technology support?
10. Who has done the shopping for groceries and essential supplies for your home during this pandemic?
    a. Do you feel safe when you have to leave your home for shopping, groceries, etc?
11. Do you feel that this pandemic has created more stress for your family? In what ways?
12. Does your family have a plan if somebody were to get sick? Such as:
    a. -Job loss
    b. -Healthcare
    c. -Childcare
    d. -Quarantine options
13. Do you feel like the local, state, or federal government has done a good job handling this crisis?
14. Is there anything else you would like to add regarding the pandemic or any other issues we've discussed?
15. Have you received your vaccine?
    a. If so, did you schedule an appointment online? How did you access the vaccine?
    b. If not, are you planning on receiving it?
        i. If not, why not?