Gender in family farming: an analysis of women's participation in the district of Angónia

Género na agricultura familiar: uma análise da participação da mulher no distrito de Angónia

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ABSTRACT
Family farming is fundamental to guaranteeing food security throughout the world and the practitioners of this activity are the target of many obstacles to their own development, especially women. Most women do not have legal ownership of the land they use for agriculture, and generally, the land is owned by their husbands with the advantage that husbands often have more schooling than women, and more. In recognition of the sector's challenges, the Mozambican government has prepared and enacted legal instruments that proclaim and defend women's human rights, particularly, and value peasants, in general, regarding the right of access to land. This text analyzes the participation of women in family farming in the district of Angónia. The district is characterized by a total population of 472,164 inhabitants of which 228,441 inhabitants are male. Family farming is the main agricultural activity practiced by smallholder farmers mostly organized in agricultural associations and clubs (strata that make up the association). A focus group discussion and 33 surveys were carried out with the aim of understanding the decision-making power of smallholders in family farming, especially women. The surveys were aimed at members of the Kabango and Chipindu clubs, which are members, respectively, of the Chigwirizano and Canhanja farmers' associations. The focal discussion groups were conducted at the district headquarters and involved smallholder farmers and producers from different associations. The data lead us to conclude that women have little participation in decisions about the activities of the family farming sector, from the definition of the means of production to be used, to the use of the income obtained from the sale of crops. Due to factors such as schooling, social conceptions and jealousy, women are limited to making decisions and, therefore, men's decisions are the most accepted and respected.

Keywords: family farming, Women's Participation, decision-making.

RESUMO
A agricultura familiar é fundamental para a garantia da segurança alimentar em todo mundo e os praticantes desta actividade são o alvo de muitos obstáculos para o seu próprio desenvolvimento, sobretudo as mulheres. A maioria das mulheres não tem posse legal das terras que usam para a prática da agricultura e, geralmente, as terras são pertencentes aos seus maridos pela vantagem de, muitas vezes, os maridos terem mais escolarização que
as mulheres, e não só. Em reconhecimento aos desafios do sector, o Governo moçambicano preparou e promulgou instrumentos legais que proclamam e defendem os direitos humanos da mulher, em particular, e valorizam os camponeses, em geral, no que diz respeito ao direito de acesso à terra. O presente texto analisa a participação da mulher na agricultura familiar no distrito de Angónia, suas acções e poder de tomada de decisão, em relação ao homem, portanto numa perspectiva analítica da desigualdade de género. O Distrito de Angónia caracteriza-se por em uma população total de 472,164 habitantes, dos quais 228,441 habitantes são do sexo masculino e 243,723 do sexo feminino; a agricultura familiar é a principal actividade agrícola, praticada por pequenos agricultores maioritariamente organizados em associação e clubes. Uma discussão em grupos focais e 33 inquéritos foram feitos com o objectivo de entender o poder de decisão dos pequenos produtores na agricultura familiar. Os inquéritos foram dirigidos aos membros dos clubes de Kabango e Chipindu, que fazem parte, respectivamente, das associações de agricultores de Chigwirizano e Canhanja. A discussão em grupos forais foi conduzida na sede do distrito e envolveu pequenos produtores e produtoras de diferentes associações. Os dados conduziram-nos a concluir que as mulheres pouco participam nas decisões sobre as actividades do sector agrário familiar, desde a definição dos meios de produção a usar, ao uso dos rendimentos obtidos pela venda das culturas. Devido a factores como escolarização, concepções sociais e ciúmes, as mulheres são limitadas a decidir e, por isso, a decisão do homem é a mais acatada e respeitada.

Palavras-chave: agricultura familiar, participação da mulher, tomada de decisão.

1 INTRODUCTION

Family farmers are key to food security around the world. However, they face many obstacles to their own development and, in some cases, are deprived of government support (FAO1, 2014). According to the 2017 Census, Mozambique has 30,066,648 inhabitants, of which 15,565,452 inhabitants, corresponding to 52%, are women.

The agricultural sector is the most important for female employment in Mozambique. The report of the 2019 Women’s Coordination Forum for Women in Development, within the scope of the National Conference on Rural Women, reported that of the 52% of all women in the country, 90% are of working age and work in the countryside (NHAVOTO and NTAUAZI, 2019). However, most women do not have legal title to the lands where they practice agriculture, as these lands (most) belong to their husbands, given the advantage that men are more literate than women (WFP, 2016) – it is not this alone is the strong reason, but above all due to a patriarchal and patrilineal system that favors and gives primacy to men who are considered the heads of the family.

1Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations / The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.
Mozambique has laws and regulations that proclaim and defend the human rights of women particularly, and value peasants in general, regarding the right of access to land. The Land Law 6/79 of 3 July was updated in 1997 to, in part, “guarantee access and security of tenure to land for both Mozambican peasants, as well as national and foreign investors”, in the face of the new political-economic dynamics of the moment (MOÇAMBIQUE, 1997).

In the indicators measured by FAO (2015, p.20), in the report “Gender and Land Statistics”, in Mozambique, only 23.1% of women are agricultural owners. The agricultural owner is “the civil or legal person who makes the main decisions on the use of resources and exercises management control over the operation of the agricultural holding” (FAO, 2005 apud by FAO, 2015: p.08).

“Family farming in Mozambique is the economic activity that occupies a large part of the population, reaching more than 75% of the citizens” (MOSCA, 2017, p.69). That is why FAO (2014, p. 03) recommends that “policies should support family farming to innovate in systems that recognize their diversity and the complexity of the challenges faced”.

In recognition of this need, the Mozambican Government prepared and enacted instruments that support family farming with the aim of minimizing the challenges faced by citizens, especially women:

a) The Constitution of the Republic of Mozambique (2018), in its article 36, recognizes that “man and woman are equal before the law in all areas of political, economic, social and cultural life”;

b) The Land Law nº 19/97 of 1 October, in its article 1, number 15, provides that the land is the exclusive property of the Mozambican State, however, in article 10, it states that “they may be subjects of the right of use and use of the land by national, collective and individual persons, men and women, as well as local communities”.

The District of Angónia is located northeast of Tete Province, on the plateau of the same name, with an altitude of 1,300 m. It is located between the parallels 14º 46’ and 15º 14’South and between the meridians 33º 46’ and 34º 54’, with a superficial area of 3,427 km². It is limited to the north and northeast by the Republic of Malawi, south and southeast by the District of Tsangano and west by the District of Macanga5 (Fig.1), in the province of Tete.

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According to the results of the 2017 Census, the district of Angónia has a total population of 472,164 inhabitants, of which 228,441 are male and 243,723 are female.

In relation to the 2007 Census data, the district of Angónia recorded, in 2017, an absolute growth of 173,349 inhabitants, corresponding to an intercensal growth of 58% and the average annual growth of this population is 17,334.9 inhabitants. As the data document, the female population is dominant in the total population of the district and this population grows, on average, by 8,879.7 inhabitants per year.

The main occupation of the populations of the district of Angónia is family farming, and men who practice this activity, in the total population of working age in the district, correspond to approximately 32% and thus women represent the majority, at 68%.

Smallholder armers associations in Angónia are formed by groups of clubs, whose administrative structure generally coincides with the administrative division at the locality level. The clubs are generally composed of around 25 smallholder farmers, and these are dispersed according to the location of the respective local villages. It is worth mentioning that most of the names of the clubs are, coincidentally, names of the communities or villages themselves.
The present work seeks to understand the gender perspective in family farming in the district of Angónia, questioning the limit of women's participation in family farming, in terms of decision-making. It uses quantitative and qualitative methods in data analysis, seeking to explore the researched object through comparative methodologies.

The work describes the object studied based on a literature review and the data that support it were obtained through two techniques of data collection in the field, namely, a survey aimed at smallholder farmers members of Kabango clubs (15 respondents) and Chipindu (18 respondents), and a focus group discussion with smallholder farmers from different associations and clubs.

2 MATERIALS AND METHODS

In order to carry out this research work, a methodology applicable in social studies was applied, which led to the production of a report that analyzes gender relations in the agricultural sector, but, specifically, the participation of women in relation to men in family farming, in a context of responsibilities and decision-making power.

As for the objectives and to obtain more in-depth and comprehensive results, this text combines quantitative and qualitative methods (mixed research). This simultaneous use of quantitative and qualitative methods allowed, on the one hand, a numerical analysis of data collected in the field and, on the other hand, to understand the complexity and details of the information obtained in the field.

As for the approach, the text reflects a case study for “an exhaustive deepening of the researched object” (Gil, 2008, p. 58). According to this author, the case study allows for the detailed knowledge about the phenomenon, the exploration of real-life situations with not clearly defined limits, preservation of the unitary character of the object studied and the explanation of the causal variables of a given phenomenon in complex situations.

Data collection in the field was carried out using two techniques: a survey aimed at 33 smallholder farmers organized into two producer clubs (Kabango and Chipindu); and a focus group discussion aimed at smallholder farmers and producers from different associations and clubs. 15 members participated in the Kabango Club and 18 members participated in the Chipindu Club. The selection of this sample was random, in a database of the organizations of smallholder farmers of the District of Angónia, provided by the services of economic activities.
3 LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 FAMILY FARMING

Defining family farming implies, later, verifying some factors related to “ownership and management, labour use, and physical or economic size” (FAO, 2014, p. 8). FAO defines agricultural holder as the “civil or juridical person who makes the major decisions regarding resource use and exercises management control over the agricultural holding operation” (FAO, 2005, apud in FAO 2014, p. 8). The farmer, in this case, has technical and economic responsibility for the area where he practices agriculture and can assume all responsibilities directly, or delegate responsibilities related to the management of day-to-day work.

Mosca (2017) synonymizes the concepts of family farming and smallholder farmers/producers, deducing, that smallholder farmers are those who dedicate themselves to producing for their livelihood, which is the general characteristic of family farming.

Smallholder farmers practice “labour-intensive production, especially family, little integrated into the market of factors (inputs, machines and money – land, wage labor and other sources of non-agricultural income), which produce essentially for reproduction of the family as an economic and social unit” (MOSCA, 2017, p. 69).

In her literature review, Caminhas (2022) tries to define family farming considering three main elements such as management, ownership and type of work, and kinship degrees. The author adds that the food consumed by the family is, generally and mostly, produced by the family itself, thus characterizing self-consumption.

3.2 THE PARADIGMS OF GENDER RELATIONS IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

On the African continent, the economic (poverty) and social crises that have been taking place for a few years after the independence of the States (since the 1950s) have jeopardized the quality of life of the populations, such as the low rates of hope of life, infant mortality, the increase in illiteracy, especially for women – the deterioration of the quality of educational, health, justice, employment services, rising crime rates, including gender-based domestic violence (CASIMIRO, 2014).

The author also refers to the efforts of African States (despite elite power struggles) to value women, such as the “Women in Development” (WID) Strategy of the 1960s, which “contributed to the growing sensitivity of the needs of female producers and reproducers, and made possible a greater visibility of their activities, concerns and
desires (CASIMIRO, 2014, pp.149-150). However, the implementation of this strategy was not happy (p.150):

For not having questioned power relations and division of tasks at the household level, for not having challenged the primacy of male power, for not having questioned the remote cause of existing oppressive gender relations and the way they affect the process of production, reproduction, and distribution.

Therefore, the strategy was more focused on reducing inequalities between women and men at the expense of women themselves, involving them in productive activities outside the domestic sphere and, unfortunately, multiplying their working hours (CASIMIRO, 2014).

Mozambique, like other African countries, experienced, shortly after independence, a moment of restructuring and development that did not last for long. A few years later, the country experienced a stagnation of its economy and, consequently, a successive worsening of an economic and social crisis – the one considered “social disorder” by the author Casimiro (2014).

From this social disorder, significant impacts on social and gender relations became visible, and led to the creation of national movements and strategies for the emancipation of Mozambican women (CASIMIRO, 2014, p.186)

The fight for the affirmation of women showed how, throughout the Armed Struggle, it was also possible to begin to dismantle the previous forms of objectification and ‘promotion’ of women, taking the first steps towards gender social relations based on equal rights and duties. In this process, women and men were, at the same time, transforming agents and subject to be transformed, through a process of creating a new type of society.

Gender relations are the result of experiences historically constituted in each society and, therefore, Seidler and Oliveira (2010) consider essential to analyze how the social relations of the space under study are structured, considering the dynamics of people when they relate to each other.

According to Brumer (2004, p. 211) women have a subordinate position in the agricultural sector, from the point of view of division of tasks:

The tasks performed in the sphere of production (production destined for commercialization) are only counted as part of a collective effort, most of the time the woman appears only as ‘help’ […] and men are practically the only ones responsible for contacts with the abroad (contact with extension workers, banks, unions, cooperatives, firms selling inputs and buyers), […] they (women) do not have the necessary technological knowledge to manage the agricultural establishment.
Thus, it can be understood that for Brumer (2004), the work of women in agriculture remains practically invisible, despite their strong involvement in food production, given that they have no contact with the outside world of the activity and, therefore, the woman does not manage the resources originated from this production. For Caminhas (2022), women have stood out in family production and assume the management of self-consumption destined for the family and for sale at fairs, therefore, that female performance in Family Agriculture can contribute to the practice of the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda (SDG 1, SDG2, SDG3, SDG5, SDG10 and SDG11).

The numbers presented by Cunguara (2011) guide us to reflect on the possibility of the existence of a strong relationship between women's schooling and their empowerment in agriculture and, above all, in the decision-making power for personal, family and community development.

The Graph of the Gender Parity Index (GPI) of the population aged 15 and over by main occupation in Mozambique, according to INE (2017) shows that there is a gender disparity for small traders, peasants, and domestic servants in favor of women. In other occupations, the GPI is below 1, which shows that there are more men in these occupations than women, especially independent artisans, and non-agricultural workers.

In the context of domestic work, the time that men and women dedicate to caregiving tasks and performing these jobs is different, being disproportionate for women, who generally work longer hours than men, with consequences for their leisure and well-being (graphic 1). Graph 2 shows the disparity in favor of women in the agriculture, forestry and fisheries and trade and finance (INE, 2017).

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3Between 2004 and 2009, 89.3% women practiced agriculture, against 67.5% of men. In the same period, 56.7% of women had attended primary school, against 62.7%.
Graph 2. Gender Parity Index of the population aged 15 and over by field of activity, in Mozambique

Source: INE (2017: 26) These graphs come, once again, to justify the importance of women in ensuring food and nutrition security in the country, however, given the low level of education, their ability to make decisions in this sector is therefore questioned.

3.3 DETERMINANTS OF GENDER INEQUALITY IN THE RURAL AREA

Oxfam (2008) considers that poverty is another determinant for the failure of women's leadership and participation, referring that they face it even in terms of marginalization and not only material privatization. “Those living in poverty often have little or no opportunity to influence the political, economic and social processes and institutions that control and shape their lives and keep them trapped in a cycle of poverty (OXFAM, 2008, p. 01).

In addition to poverty, institutional prejudices towards gender, “the skepticism and lack of confidence in women's ability to lead and the stereotypes and prejudices about their role in society and their lack of aptitude for their leadership role and taking decision-making, are other great challenges for all women” (p. 05).

Agy (2018, p. 369) when researching gender inequalities in rural contexts in Mozambique, reaffirms the finding of Cuaguara (2016), therefore, stating that, in Mozambique, “women are often the weakest actor, particularly with regard to access to resources, such as income or land, or the level of civic and community participation”. However, the author enhances the country's efforts to alleviate women's poverty and, above all, minimize existing inequalities in the population. and, as a result of these efforts, in some sectors some progress is noted, but in others progress is very slow.

In his research on “Gender and Its Relevance to Macroeconomic Policy”, Stotsky (2006) defines gender as the rules constructed by a given society that weigh on the expected behavior of women and men, disregarding all biological differences between them.

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4The author cites the following instruments: such as PARPA I, II, Agenda 2025, Strategic Plan, Millennium Development Goals – MDGs.
Gender inequalities, in turn, are understood by Jackson (2006) as the set of social conditions in which women are at a disadvantage, including their economic opportunities, political and legal status, personal freedoms, family obligations, access to education and cultural representation.

According to Reis (2018) “gender inequality creates different opportunities and responsibilities for men and women” (p. 06) and, therefore, is still a characteristic of most societies, in which men have, on average, a relatively better in social, economic, and political terms.

According to Villard, Pryck and Suttie (2010) it is important to study gender inequalities, and especially those that weigh on women, in rural areas, in the family agrarian sector, because (1) it allows the fight against extreme poverty because, according to the MDGs (Millennium Development Goals), combating poverty requires specific attention to gender equality issues as it recognizes that women are disproportionately represented among the poorest individuals in the world; (2) the potential for women to contribute to the overall development and well-being of their communities, when social and economic policies and institutions that promote gender equality are in place; (3) women face a variety of economic and social disadvantages that restrict their ability to acquire land and productive inputs, such as pesticides and fertilizers, and access to markets; (4) trends towards the feminization of unskilled family farming, which means that women are increasingly being marginalized into an inferior status of unskilled agricultural work; and (5) women appear to be trapped in more vulnerable and unstable segments of the rural labor market, especially in the agricultural sector – the demonstrated feminization of unskilled employment.

These authors find 7 causes that determine gender inequalities. If well analyzed, the last 6 best describe the disadvantaged situation of women in rural areas (p. 84-98): i. The invisible but powerful role of social institutions (p. 84)

The social institutions referred to are the practices transformed into stable rules of behavior, which include the traditions, customs and social norms that govern the functioning of rural societies.

These social institutions predominantly act as restrictions on women's activities and reduce women's ability to compete on an equal footing with men in the labor market. Generally, these social institutions are governed by patriarchal ideologies of rural societies.
Some of these patriarchal ideologies encourage that, for example, “it is the obligation of women to work at home, taking on reproductive and unpaid tasks; women are less capable of managing assets” (p. 84).

ii. The burden of domestic work and time poverty (p. 85-86)

“The presence of rigid and socially sanctioned gender roles in rural societies severely restricts women's choices regarding how they allocate their time between different paid activities and non-productive and domestic activities, giving rise to the incidence of time poverty” (p. 85). Culture, religious beliefs and social norms are all factors that dictate that unpaid domestic work (such as collecting water, childcare, cooking and washing clothes) is the domain of female family members.

iii. Unequal access to assets (p. 88-91)

This cause can be seen because of the previous cause. Numerous laws, traditions and social norms often prevent women from gaining equitable access to asset control in rural societies. One of the examples the authors cite is access to land. According to the authors, based on an experience from India, the land where the woman practices agriculture is often in the name of the father of her children. Consequently, if a man dies or remarries, the woman is completely dependent on others for survival.

This limited access to control over goods and assets harms women's economy and makes them vulnerable to an unbreakable cycle of poverty.

iv. Gender differences in education and instruction (p. 91-93)

According to the authors, education and instruction are fundamental determinants for access to employment in any job market, but also, in family farming, they guarantee assimilation for the adoption of more profitable technologies. Generally, higher levels of educational attainment for men contribute to their greater ability to access more skilled jobs and more opportunities in the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors.

Migration (p. 93-94)

According to the authors, in some countries, culture and social institutions dictate that migration is generally the domain of men, while women remain at home to perform household chores and reproductive duties. This trend delays the evolution of women and burdens them with heavier domestic tasks.

v. Lack of advocacy power and voice (p. 94-98)

Factors that contribute to autonomy and bargaining power within the family include education, an independent income, new responsibilities due to the migration of a
spouse, personal inheritance assets, and participation in community decision-making processes.

Rural organizations (farmers associations, for example) that mobilize and represent women are also essential for raising awareness around rights and giving women more voice and power in relation to their employers and family members.

vi. Differing female preferences are often ignored in market-led approaches to poverty alleviation (p. 98)

According to the authors, women were less willing to compete than men, underestimate their opportunities for success and generally opt for low-risk/low-return outcomes when compared to men. This trend is particularly visible among the poorest segments of rural areas.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 THE DECISION-MAKING POWER IN FAMILY FARMING

This subtitle analyzes the question of who decides (man, woman, or both) in the actions of the production chain to use the income obtained from agriculture, made by smallholder farmers selected within the clubs chosen for the survey.

In the question of who makes decisions in the agricultural activity (graphs 3 and 4), from the definition of the means of production, the way of storage, sale of harvested products and application of income, the dominance of men in decision-making in almost all areas of productive chain, especially in determining the means of production, quantity for the market, and selling price of agricultural products is visible. Although in some cases the woman appears to defy the trends, in general, it can be said that women do not participate with the same influence in decision-making processes among farmers in the district of Angónia.

It is worth mentioning that from the focus groups discussion it was possible to know that men have a considerable power to influence the final decisions, therefore, even in activities considered purely feminine, they (men) influence with great power in the actions and results.

The two smallholder organizations selected, the Chipindu and Kabango clubs belonging to the associations of Canhanja and Chigwirizano, respectively, reflect a scenario discussed by the authors Villard, Pryck and Suttie (2010), Agy (2018), Oxfam (2008) and Cuguara (2016) in this text.
Given the greater fertility of the soils of Angónia, which imply for greater production and the fact that smallholder farmers are organized in associations and/or agricultural cooperatives, many are the social and development projects of the agricultural sector implemented in this district, which are closely linked to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, the information in the graphs shows that the 5th SDG (gender equality) still requires a lot of work.

The graphs show that, apparently, the participation of women in agriculture is insignificant and this may be due to their low level of education, to social prejudices that cause the underestimation of women's ability.

Regarding the decision on the markets and prices for the sale of the products harvested from their production, Ms. Efigénia Lucas from the Makwangwala club, who participated in the focus group discussion, clarified in the following terms:

> We decide many things together (men and women), including product prices and better markets, but our husbands' decisions cannot be ignored because they are more informed about prices and markets – Efigénia Lucas from Makwangwala Club.

From the dialogues held with the focus groups, it could be seen that women, rather than prefer their own underestimation or were less willing to compete than men, measure
the consequences of any bolder acts, because the society where they are inserted cannot allow them.

Mr. Carlos, president of Chiguirizano agricultural association, who also participated in focus group discussions, said that jealousy interferes with women’s participation in training or activities related to extension.

“Some husbands do not allow their wives to participate in the meetings that take place there at the association's headquarters, because of jealousy” – Mr. Carlos, president of the Chiguirizano agricultural association.

Schooling is also seen as a determinant in this process of participation, where the less educated, the less likely they are to participate in decisions. At least this is one of the justifications found by Mrs. Cristina, a member of the Ntanchi club who also participated in the focus group discussions.

We women can’t speak Portuguese well and we let our husbands go to agricultural association meetings on behalf of our family” – Ms. Cristina, member of the Ntanchi club

Graph 5. Levels of education in the respondents of Clube Chipindu

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5 In Mozambique, in addition to the official language (Portuguese), there are different local languages in each province.
Thus, it is worth agreeing with Brumer (2004) who states that women’s work in agriculture remains practically invisible, as it is practiced only in the field, while men bear the visible responsibility for contacts and contracts with the abroad (contact with extension workers, banks, unions, cooperatives, input sellers and buyers).

Brumer’s thinking, although studied in a rural-brazilian context and in 2004, can be compared to what can be verified in the rural-mozambican context and, therefore, calls into question the structure of the graphs, especially in the indicators that point to a greater decision sharing between men and women in family farming, for example, the decision on the destination of the income obtained from the sale of agricultural products. In this case, Brumer (2004: 210) directly states, according to his data, that women “do not manage the resources originated from the sale of crops”.

The participation of women in family farming, in a decision-making perspective throughout the production chain, requires a paradoxical observation. While, on the one hand, we can see high numbers of women getting involved in agricultural activities, on the other hand, we can find that men are the ones who decide about them.
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