

Public policies on Food and Nutrition Security in the empowerment of women farmers

Políticas públicas de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional no empoderamento de mulheres agricultoras

Políticas públicas de Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional en el empoderamiento de las mujeres agricultoras

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Received: May 10, 2024. Accepted: Aug 6, 2024

Abstract

The research verified how the implementation of actions to promote Food and Nutrition Security, carried out in the Federal District, influenced the empowerment of women farmers in two pre-rural settlements, namely: Chapadinha and Pequeno William. Interviews and document collection were carried out in the government organizations responsible for implementing public policies. The impact of the actions and policies analyzed on the empowerment of the interviewees was observed. The research showed the difficulty in accessing land in both communities studied, and Chapadinha is still in the process of becoming official, therefore, it has restrictions on making investments in productive and social infrastructure. The existence of water insecurity was also observed, especially in Pequeno William, which limits food production by female farmers, and prevents them from accessing institutional procurement programs. The interaction between water, energy and food was evident in the case studied, since the success of Food Security and nutrition policies equally depends on water and energy security, according to the Nexus approach.

Keywords: Feminism, Family farming, Nexus Approach, Federal District, Rural settlements.

Resumo

A pesquisa verificou de que forma a implementação de ações de promoção da Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional, executadas no Distrito Federal, influenciaram o empoderamento de agricultoras em dois pré-assentamentos rurais, a saber: Chapadinha e Pequeno William. Foram realizadas entrevistas e o levantamento de documentos em órgãos responsáveis por operacionalizar as políticas públicas. Observou-se o impacto das ações e das políticas analisadas sobre o empoderamento das entrevistadas. A pesquisa mostrou a dificuldade de acesso à terra em ambas as comunidades estudadas, sendo que o assentamento Chapadinha ainda está no processo de oficialização, logo, tem restrições para realizar investimentos de infraestrutura produtiva e social. Também foi observada a existência da insegurança hídrica, especialmente no Pequeno William, o que limita a produção de alimentos pelas agricultoras e as impede de acessar programas de compras institucionais. A interação entre água, energia e alimento ficou evidenciada no caso estudado, visto que o sucesso das políticas de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional depende igualmente das seguranças hídrica e energética, conforme abordagem Nexus.

Palavras-chave: Feminismo, Agricultura familiar, Nexus, Distrito Federal, Assentamentos rurais.

Resumen

La investigación verificó cómo la implementación de acciones de promoción de la Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional, realizadas en el Distrito Federal, influyó en el empoderamiento de las mujeres agricultoras en dos asentamientos rurales, a saber: Chapadinha y Pequeno William. Se realizaron entrevistas y recolección

de documentos en órganos responsables de la implementación de políticas públicas. Se observó el impacto de las acciones y políticas analizadas en el empoderamiento de las entrevistadas. La investigación mostró las dificultades para acceder a la tierra en ambas comunidades estudiadas, y Chapadinha aún está en proceso de oficialización, por lo que tiene restricciones para realizar inversiones en infraestructura productiva y social. También se observó la existencia de inseguridad hídrica, especialmente en Pequeno William, que limita la producción de alimentos por parte de las agricultoras, y les impide acceder a programas de compras institucionales. La interacción entre agua, energía y alimentos fue evidente en el caso estudiado, ya que el éxito de las políticas de Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional depende igualmente de la seguridad hídrica y energética según el enfoque Nexus.

Palabras clave: Feminismo, Agricultura familiar, Nexus, Distrito Federal, Asentamientos rurales.

INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the 21st century, family farming began to gain ground in terms of social and economic importance in Brazil. The sector has been recognized for its potential to contribute to achieving Food and Nutrition Security (FNS) in the country, being directly linked to income generation and improving the quality of life for a large part of the Brazilian rural population (Ramos, 2015). This recognition was largely achieved through the implementation of public policies for this sector. These policies made it possible for Brazil to be removed from the United Nations (UN) Hunger Map in 2014 (Santos, 2021). Although these policies have been instrumental in making progress, successive dismantling has led to hunger returning to critical levels in Brazil (Brito, 2023).

Women who work in agricultural production, often alone, contribute to the positive impact of the family farming sector on FNS of Brazilian families. Many researches seek to contribute to the debate on the importance of gender equality in the countryside, and the issue is also addressed in the UN's 2030 Agenda, in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5, which aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

The 2030 Agenda was designed so that the themes of the goals were interlinked. In this sense, the Nexus approach, from the perspective of analyzing the interactions between the 17 SDGs, is a strategy for accelerating the achievement of the Agenda. By finding synergies and contradictions between these objectives, more effective solutions can emerge for the problems addressed (Liu *et al.*, 2018). Thus, SDG 2 aims to end hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. When it

comes to research analyzing the interaction between SDGs 2 and 5, the synergies and contradictions between these two topics are not necessarily intuitive (Stockholm Environment Institute, 2017).

According to Stockholm Environment Institute (2017), several studies have already shown how increased female empowerment in the countryside is directly proportional to improved FNS and agricultural productivity. However, there is little research that seeks to understand how the promotion of the different dimensions of FNS can interact with female empowerment in rural areas (Stockholm Environment Institute, 2017). Therefore, the main objective of this article is to understand whether the promotion of FNS dimensions, through public policies, has influenced the female empowerment of the women interviewed. To help achieve the main objective, the main difficulties faced by these women in their experiences as agricultural workers were also identified. Furthermore, the article also identified the perception of the women farmers interviewed about the changes that have been taking place in public policies for family farming since 2019, and sought to understand how they participated in the Federal District's institutional procurement policies.

For this study, work is divided into productive and reproductive. Productive work is valued socially and economically, as it is usually carried out by men in public places to provide for their families. On the other hand, reproductive work, also known as social reproduction work, is generally carried out by women in the private environment of their homes. This work involves feeding the family, cleaning, maintaining the house and looking after the children and other family members. Reproductive work, on the other hand, is valued neither socially nor economically (Arruzza; Bhattacharya; Fraser, 2019).

In family farming, family relationships are very important. Thus, the activities carried out by family members within the domestic environment are mixed with their roles in the productive sphere (Silvestro, 2001).

Therefore, in the majority of cases women are mainly responsible for the tasks associated with caring for the other members of the family, ranging from feeding, cleaning and maintaining the house in general. In the productive sphere, they carry out tasks related to

maintaining gardens in their backyards, producing food for their families' consumption and selling surpluses; farming and larger-scale production on the property, with or without their partner or other family members; raising and caring for animals, especially small ones; extractivism; collecting water, and processing food such as sweets, cheeses, breads and jams (Heredia; Cintrão, 2006).

In cases where there is a need to work on other properties to supplement the family's income, women usually also carry out these services, with their partners and/or with their children, where appropriate. However, the payment is one-off and is usually made directly to the head of the family, who is often the man (Heredia; Cintrão, 2006).

The social and economic devaluation of reproductive work has a profound impact on the lives of these women, so that the invisibility of their work in production leads to the conception that the activities they carry out are just a help to the man who is really responsible for the work. Often even they themselves have this perception, not seeing themselves as farmers (Pacheco, 2002). This invisibility not only has an impact on the economy - denying them the right to a pension, labor rights, regularized documentation, access to education and training, credit and other assets - but it can also have a direct impact on their health (Ramos, 2015). A study carried out in São Paulo found that because they believed they were only helping their partners on the plantation, women did not think they were exposed to the risks of pesticide contamination and did not attend clinical examinations as part of a project carried out in the region to analyze the consequences of pesticide use (Viezzler *et al.*, 1996).

In this sense, some research investigates strategies that have the potential to overcome these gender disparities. According to Quisumbing and Meizen-Dick (2001), increasing women's empowerment is one of these strategies and can be enhanced by providing basic resources for these women. The authors suggest strengthening the asset base of women farmers by providing them with access to natural, physical, human, social, financial and political capital. Natural capital refers to access to natural resources such as land, water, inputs for planting and other natural resources; physical capital refers to resources such as houses, access to health services, infrastructure, transportation, electricity and other technologies; human capital refers to education and technical knowledge; social capital

refers to collective organizations, associations and cooperatives; financial capital, access to financial resources; and political capital, the legal and institutional bases that enable women to achieve all these other assets.

METHODOLOGY

The research used the Nexus approach, from the perspective of the integrated analysis of the SDGs, to understand the interaction between SDGs 2 and 5 in the context of family farming in the Federal District.

To achieve the main objective of the research, open-ended interviews were conducted with women from the Pequeno William settlement and the Chapadinha pre-settlement. Pre-settlement is considered, however, when families live and farm in the area without having had access to regularization and the establishment of the settlement.

We opted for open-ended interviews in which the interviewer introduced the subject of each question and the interviewees were free to talk about it. This type of interview is used when there is a need to understand individual cases, depending on the specifics of each situation, with the aim of obtaining as much information as possible (Boni; Quaresma, 2005).

Interviews were conducted and analyzed with nine women leaders and key informants from both communities, five of whom belonged to the Pequeno William settlement and four to the Chapadinha pre-settlement. The interviews were conducted in September and October 2021.

In order to draw up the interview script, references were made to actions to promote Food and Nutritional Security, based on the II District FNS Plan (II PDSAN). The theoretical basis for analyzing female empowerment came from Quisumbing and Meizen-Dick (2001).

To this end, natural, physical, human, social and financial capital were analyzed. The script made it possible to ascertain whether or not there was an impact of these actions and policies on the female empowerment of the interviewees, by studying their access to the

aforementioned assets. It is important to emphasize that the survey that enabled the analysis of political capital was not carried out through interviews.

According to Quisumbing and Meizen-Dick (2001), political capital refers to the legal and institutional bases necessary for women to access the other assets listed. Therefore, in order to analyze political capital, we conducted a literature search and consulted the Ministry of Citizenship, through the Federal Government's Integrated Platform for Ombudsman and Access to Information (Fala.BR), in order to identify specific programs and legislation for women farmers in the region studied in 2021.

The interviews were transcribed and analyzed using hermeneutics as a theory and method of interpretation. Hermeneutic interpretation for qualitative research in the social sciences aims to reconstruct the processes of interaction that take place between the researcher and the interviewee, producing a more tangible sense of the information or the social construction of the reality in question in the discourse analyzed (Köller, 2003).

In order to analyze the data, we selected excerpts from the interviews that were related to the following themes: land, water, inputs for production, animal husbandry, home, transportation, health, infrastructure, electricity, basic sanitation, garbage collection, education, technical training, association, cooperative, women's group, loan, grant, income, sexual division of labor, differences in treatment between men and women, perceived difficulties as farmers, time spent on domestic activities, changes in public policies and the reach of public policies. The choice of these excerpts was based on the capitals that make up the concept of female empowerment that guides the research. Therefore, this selection was intended to help identify the interviewees' access to these assets and determine under what conditions this access took place, if at all.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of Interviewees and Participation in Institutional Procurement Programs

The table below shows the profile of the interviewees, with data that enabled analysis of the individual context of each of them. These characteristics can influence women farmers' relationships with production and were important for analyzing the interviews

and understanding the gender relations and dynamics present in each of the families. The names of the interviewees have been replaced by nicknames, inspired by flowers, to protect their identity.

Chart 1: Information on the profile of the interviewees.

Nickname	Territory	Age	Marital status	Education	Do you have children?
Daisy	Pequeno William	58	Married	Postgraduate studies	Yes
Rose	Pequeno William	52	Divorced	Master's Degree	Yes
Orchid	Pequeno William	44	Single	High School Incomplete	Yes
Violet	Pequeno William	27	Single	Higher Education Incomplete	Yes
Azalea	Pequeno William	29	Single	Higher Education Incomplete	Yes
Petunia	Chapadinha	63	Single	High School	Yes
Marigold	Chapadinha	41	Knautia	Technical Education	Yes
Begonia	Chapadinha	71	Married	High School	Yes
Hydrangea	Chapadinha	34	Married	High School	Yes

Source: Own elaboration (2024).

The following table links the guidelines of the II PDSAN to each asset of the concept of female empowerment, according to Quisumbing and Meizen-Dick (2001).

Chart 2: Public policies addressed and their classifications.

Interview topics	PDSAN Guideline II	Active for empowerment
Access to water	Guideline VI	Natural Capital
Access to land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Guideline II ● Guideline IV 	Natural Capital
Infrastructure, electricity, basic sanitation, health services and garbage collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Guideline II ● Guideline VI 	Physical Capital
Encouraging collective organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Guideline II ● Guideline V 	Social Capital
Education, training and ATER policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Guideline II ● Guideline III 	Human Capital
Loans, grants, institutional procurement programs (Food Procurement Program - PAA, National School Feeding Program - PNAE and Agriculture Production Procurement Program - PAPA-DF), income transfer programs, and other sources of income.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Guideline I ● Guideline II 	Financial Capital

Source: Own elaboration (2024).

With regard to participation in institutional procurement programs, in Pequeno William, Daisy, Rose, Orchid, Violet and Azalea's participation in the Food Procurement Program (PAA) took place at the beginning of the settlement process, in 2014, and was facilitated by the Integrated and Sustainable A, together with a financial incentive from the Banco do Brasil Foundation (FBB), made it possible for 16 families to produce collectively in the settlement and sell their produce to the PAA. As well as enabling participation in the PAA, the PAIS also facilitated the multiplication of seeds, which were being used by the settlers up until the date of the interviews.

In the Chapadinha pre-settlement, the farmers Petunia, Marigold, Begonia and Hydrangea were supplying food to the PAA through the Procurement with Simultaneous Donation modality, via the National Supply Company (Conab) and the Adhesion Term in 2021. In addition, Chapadinha farmers also supplied the National School Feeding Program (PNAE) in 2021. There was no supply to the Agriculture Procurement Program (PAPA-DF) by the women farmers interviewed in either territory in 2021.

Each of the assets for empowerment is discussed below, based on the profiles drawn up.

Natural Capital

For the purposes of this research, natural capital is understood to consist of natural resources such as land, water and inputs for planting (Quisumbing; Meizen-Dick, 2001). The interviews revealed that, despite the political opening up to the family farming sector, access to land was hampered by the bureaucracy involved in the land regularization process. The families that make up both territories studied had to put strong pressure on government institutions to win their plots. The word "struggle" recurred when it came to winning plots in the territories. As a result of this difficulty in completing the settlement process, families in both territories spent a long time in encampments with no infrastructure.

Access to water was a difficulty reported in all the interviews in Pequeno William. The five women interviewed in the pre-settlement mentioned the lack of water as a barrier to

maintaining quality production on a larger scale, which makes it difficult for them to participate in institutional procurement programs.

Water insecurity is a long-standing problem in the settlement, and other studies carried out in Pequeno William have come to the same conclusion, demonstrating the obstacles caused by water scarcity. According to Ramos (2018), the low availability of water was one of the main difficulties reported by the interviewees in her research in the Pequeno William settlement. According to Deus (2018), water insecurity was a difficulty reported by all the interviewees for the settlement's progress towards sustainable rural development.

In the Chapadinha pre-settlement, some of the farmers had access to a public policy that provided a community well through the National Institute for Colonization and Agrarian Reform (INCRA), via the Association, but not all members of the community have access. Therefore, the women farmers interviewed who are better off financially and did not have access to this policy built their wells on their own. One of the interviewees, as in the case of Pequeno William, reported water insecurity as a factor limiting her production and, consequently, a greater supply for institutional procurement programs. On the other hand, another interviewee mentioned that the income from her participation in the institutional procurement programs has enabled her to build a dam on her plot, which she uses to store water for irrigation.

The results obtained on natural capital reinforce the relevance of carrying out integrated analyses in the light of the Nexus approach, as the various components of the 2030 Agenda are mutually affected (Liu *et al.*, 2018). When analyzing practical cases, such as those studied in this research, it is clear that SDG 6 (which addresses water security), SDG 7 (which addresses energy security) and SDG 2 (which addresses Food and Nutrition Security), directly affect other goals, such as SDG 5 - the subject of this study - but also SDG 1 (which addresses the eradication of poverty) and SDG 3 (which addresses the guarantee of health and well-being), for example.

Physical Capital

For the purposes of this research, physical capital is understood to be related to resources such as housing, health care, infrastructure, transportation, electricity and other technologies (Quisumbing and Meizen-Dick, 2001). Therefore, the questions related to this asset were intended to check whether participation in institutional programs helped the interviewees to access these resources. Moreover, questions were asked about the interviewees' access to basic sanitation, garbage collection and health services.

In the Pequeno William settlement, the women farmers mentioned that the settlement's structures (mainly the opening of roads) were built by the settlers themselves. According to Rose, the structures of the Pequeno William settlement, such as the opening of roads, for example, were all made by the settlers "by hand".

Access to transportation, both public and private (the possibility of purchasing their own vehicles), was a difficulty mentioned in all the interviews in both territories. Two of the interviewees mentioned that participating in institutional procurement programs made it possible to buy their cars. According to them, participating in institutional procurement programs gives them security because they know when the money will come in, so they know that on that day they will be able to pay off debts and make long-term plans.

Regarding basic sanitation, the interviewees said that the septic pits on the plots in both territories were provided by the Brazilian Micro and Small Business Support Service (Sebrae). The organization provided the materials and instructed community members on how to build the pits.

As for building houses, none of the interviewees mentioned any kind of government support in this regard. However, some of the women farmers mentioned the funds from institutional procurement programs as one of the sources of income that enabled them to build their homes. Rose, from the Pequeno William Settlement women's group, said that when she arrived in the settlement, she was in a situation of social vulnerability and didn't have the financial resources to build a space where she could live with her daughter, but she was taken in by another black woman from the settlement until she was able to build a house on her plot. According to her, the funds to build her space were also earned from the

income from deliveries to the PAA, as well as from other forms of food marketing and banana fiber handicrafts.

The interviewees from Pequeno William had access to Installation Credit, which is initial support provided by INCRA for initial investments in production. According to Orchid, this was one of the first credits they received when the settlement was made official in 2014. At the time of the interviews, at the end of 2021, she was awaiting the release of a loan from the *Minha Casa Minha Vida* (My House, My Life) Rural Program to finish building her house. Still in Pequeno William, interviewee Orchid mentioned the source of income from the PAA as fundamental for her to start building her house, and claimed that the program had significantly improved her quality of life.

With regard to electricity, according to Rose, in Pequeno William the women farmers have access to formal electricity from the state distributor. However, in order to get the poles installed, they had to open roads on their own so that the distributor could install them. According to the interviewee, there has been no government support for this type of structure, which is a basic prerequisite for installing the electricity grid. In Chapadinha, there is no access to formal energy distribution. This is because Chapadinha has not yet been officially established as a settlement, so the community cannot invest in social or productive infrastructure. Thus, it was observed that in both territories there is energy insecurity, since part of it is guaranteed by the Federal Government.

When asked about access to health services, the women interviewed in the Pequeno William settlement said that, when they need it, they seek care at a Basic Healthcare Unit (UBS) located in a region close to the settlement. However, according to Rose, this was also an achievement of the settlers, who put pressure on the government to provide health care in the rural area where the settlement is located.

In Chapadinha, the interviewees also reported that there is a UBS close to the area, in Lago Oeste, where most of them seek care when they need it. Hydrangea said that in July 2021, the association in which she participates managed to establish a partnership with the government and brought the *Carreta da Mulher* (Women's Wagon) to the community. On that day, the action aimed to assist 100 women. Several services were offered, including

health services such as psychosocial care, medical consultations, exams and vaccinations (Correio Braziliense, 2021). Petunia also said that in the past there used to be a health professional who came to provide healthcare services in the area, but that this no longer happens because it's not an appropriate place for this type of service.

Human Capital

According to Quisumbing and Meizen-Dick (2001), human capital is related to these women's access to education and technical knowledge. It was unanimous in the interviews, in both territories, that the work of the DF Technical Assistance and Rural Extension Company (Emater - DF) in providing technical instruction for production, and in providing handicraft and entrepreneurship courses is one of the main positive consequences of the GDF's public policies on Technical Assistance and Rural Extension (ATER).

Furthermore, Marigold said that the experience of participating in institutional procurement programs brings her technical knowledge of production, which, according to her, gives her autonomy. According to the interviewee, as she goes through the process of producing and delivering programs, she gains knowledge, which gives her the autonomy and confidence to guarantee a good quality product.

Hydrangea mentioned an entrepreneurship course brought to the Chapadinha women's group by Emater - DF, which taught them issues such as pricing, sales strategies and the like. According to her, the course was very important for seeing the real value of the products they have on their farms and for optimizing the sales process. In the Pequeno William Settlement, an important part of the banana production of the women farmers is done in order to produce handicrafts with banana fiber. According to Rose, this process began with training courses offered by Emater - DF for this purpose, which gave the women farmers other income alternatives.

Social Capital

Social capital is related to women's participation in collective organizations, associations and cooperatives (Quisumbing; Meizen-Dick, 2001). As already mentioned, Pequeno William has a very well-structured women's group, a reference in this type of organization, the *Panteras Negras* (Black Panthers). In general, the participating women farmers describe the group as a safe space for relaxation, culture and the dissemination of knowledge. When asked about their participation in the Association, the Pequeno William women farmers mentioned that the main benefit of this participation is the possibility of accessing the machinery made available and accessing public policies.

Unlike the women's group in Chapadinha, called *Raízes da Terra* (Roots of the Earth), the *Panteras Negras* group was not created with the aim of promoting participation in public policies, although its existence makes it possible for them to participate in calls for proposals that have this prerequisite. The Black Panthers, also called the Commune by the women farmers, was a space conceived by Rose. The idea was to provide the settlement community with a space for study, research, culture, leisure and hospitality. The space has a library and an area for courses.

According to the creator of the space, the idea came from her own experience. As mentioned earlier, when she arrived in the settlement, she was in a situation of social vulnerability and didn't have the resources to build a house. So she was taken in, along with her daughter, by a black woman, and she stayed there until she was able to build her own home. Since then she has taken in other black women, activists from the Landless Rural Workers' Movement (MST), or students who need accommodation until they finish their studies. The space has also been used to receive women at risk due to marital and/or family conflicts. It was possible to see that some of them have a high level of education, such as Rose, who has a master's degree in Rural Education and Environmental Education from the University of Brasilia (UnB). As the interviewee told the story of the group's creation, it was clear that she was proud of her career and her intention to support other women to finish their studies whenever possible. She said proudly that two of the women she took in at this space finished their doctorates thanks to the refuge and support provided by the Black Panthers group.

Chapadinha is also a benchmark when it comes to women's organization. According to the interviewees, the pre-settlement is mostly made up of women. According to Petunia, the women's group in the territory, called *Raízes da Terra* (Roots of the Earth), was created so that they could take part in a call for proposals called the Rural Women Who Produce for Sustainable Brazil Award, during the Dilma government (2011-2016). This is one of the main examples found in this research of the influence of public policies on access to social capital. In order to participate in public policy, the women got together, created the group, won the public notice and were able to invest in production and also in structuring the pre-settlement. According to Ramos (2021), the group was created through an invitation from Emater - DF, which drew up the report of experiences to compete for the award. As a result of this award, the women in the group were invited to take part in the prize-giving ceremony and to meet former district governor Agnelo Queiroz and then-president Dilma Rousseff. The interviewee who provided this report said that, after winning this award, the government began to see these women farmers, and that she feels very honored to be part of this journey (Ramos, 2021).

In general, the women interviewed in Chapadinha said that one of the main benefits of the women's group are the courses, which are usually supported by Emater - DF. They have access to courses in a wide range of areas, from technical production training to handicrafts and entrepreneurship.

As mentioned above, according to Hydrangea, another important benefit brought by *Raízes da Terra* was the *Carreta da Mulher* project, which offered several services, such as consultations, exams, psychosocial care, debates on legislation and ways to combat gender violence, help with issuing artisans' cards, registering for government programs and workshops on painting and planting succulents (Correio Braziliense, 2021).

Financial Capital

According to Quisumbing and Meizen-Dick (2001), financial capital refers to everything that gives women access to financial resources, from sources of income from marketing their products to loans, financing, incentives and benefits from government cash transfer programs.

In general, the interviewees at both sites were unanimous when it came to income from institutional procurement programs. All of them mentioned access to the PAA and PNAE as their main positive point, because they know when and how much they will be paid. Most of the women farmers also work at fairs or deliver baskets. According to them, the income from the fairs and the programs complement each other.

In general, the money for day-to-day expenses, such as food, hygiene and so on, comes from the income generated in markets, such as fairs or by delivering products in baskets and the like. The income acquired from participating in institutional procurement programs is generally used to invest in their farms, buy cars or pay off debts, to name but a few. While on the one hand the assessment is positive regarding access to institutional procurement, on the other hand there are difficulties in accessing production financing.

With regard to participation in the National Program for Strengthening Family Farming (PRONAF), two of the nine interviewees were able to access this credit. They considered PRONAF registration to be bureaucratic. According to Rose, many documents are required and it is also necessary for the person wishing to apply to have a structure, which many farmers in the communities don't have, such as access to a computer, internet and printer. With regard to grants, four of the nine women interviewed had already received some kind of grant, two of whom said that they had received a specific grant for women, *Fomento Mulher* (Woman Grants). This credit is made possible by INCRA and is specifically for families benefiting from agrarian reform. It is provided in order to help with the purchase of basic necessities, durable household goods or equipment, so that the settlers can start or invest in production (INCRA, 2021). The women farmers who have already accessed the development program were satisfied and said it was an easy process, with little bureaucracy.

With regard to the federal government's cash transfer programs, three of the nine interviewees said that they had once received *Bolsa Família* (Family Aid) but no longer do, while another three said that they still do and that the program is an important way of supplementing their income, especially when it comes to buying food for the family.

Marigold mentioned that she used to receive *Bolsa Família*, but lost the benefit when she registered her children for an INSS benefit, which they are entitled to because her husband died. She said that she missed the benefit a lot, because she received it at the end of the month, when the food in her house was running out, so she used it to supplement the family's food. This report reinforces the importance of the *Bolsa Família* program as a complementary social policy for guaranteeing FNS.

Political Capital

Based on the concept of female empowerment adopted in this research, political capital refers to the legal and institutional bases that enable women to achieve all these assets (Quisumbing; Meizen-Dick, 2001). In other words, for women to have access to all the assets mentioned so far, there needs to be a legal basis. A complementary study was therefore carried out on public policies for family farming that have a potential gender bias.

The mobilizations and pressure exerted by women's farming organizations over the years have resulted in some moves on the part of the Brazilian state to include gender issues in public policies for family farming. In 1985, the Rural Women's Support Program was created with the aim of studying and developing action plans to provide better working conditions for women farmers. In 1988, the Project to Support the Organization of Rural Women began to be developed by the Brazilian Technical Assistance and Rural Extension System, with the aim of preparing extension workers for a gender-sensitive approach. However, with the dismantling of public policies for family farming during the Collor government, these actions were discontinued (Heredia; Cintrão, 2006).

Rural women only began to have access to social security from 1991, even though this right was won in 1988. A clear example of how access to political capital influences female empowerment is mentioned in the research carried out by Heredia and Cintrão (2006). The authors found that access to social security has considerably changed the lives of elderly rural women. A striking consequence of the need for rural women to have access to social security rights is the tendency for older women to live alone, the so-called feminization of old age. According to Silva (2000), half of the women insured under the

social security system were widows. Other research has shown that women's life cycles are generally longer, and that there is a tendency for men to remarry and leave their former partners (Silva, 2000).

In order to see if there were any public policies with a gender bias still active in 2021 in the region studied, we consulted the citizen information portals of the district and federal governments, and the II PDSAN, in order to identify targets that had a gender bias. To verify the specific situation in the Federal District, consultations were made with the Federal Department of Agriculture (SEAGRI - DF) and Emater - DF, through the Electronic Citizen Information System (e-SIC/DF). Emater - DF was consulted through protocol no. 00072.000008/2022-46. In response to the request, Emater DF's Socio-Family Development department replied that there are actions aimed specifically at rural women.

According to Emater - DF, the number of women served by the company today exceeds 10,000 rural women. However, it was not possible to obtain the total number of women in rural areas of the Federal District in order to understand the percentage representation of the number provided by Emater - DF, in relation to the universe of women farmers in the region. The company also serves 15,776 rural properties, 5,268 of which have women as owners or co-owners. As mentioned in the interviews conducted in this research, in July 2021 Emater - DF, in partnership with the Women's Secretariat and the Association of Rural Workers in Family Agriculture (ASTRAF), brought the *Carreta da Mulher* to Chapadinha, a mobile unit with various services aimed exclusively at women in the community (Correio Braziliense, 2021). In October 2021, Emater - DF held an event to commemorate International Rural Women's Day (October 15). The main topics were femicide, sexual abuse, domestic violence, self-worth and female empowerment. In addition to the conversation circles, the event included musical performances and group dynamics (Correio Braziliense, 2021). The Company also mentioned the *Momento Mulher Rural em Pauta* (Rural Women's Moment on the Agenda), a meeting where six women representing rural communities in the Federal District had the opportunity to present their demands to the secretaries of state.

Also in response to the request made under protocol no. 00072.000008/2022-46 in the Electronic Citizen Information System (e-SIC/DF), Emater - DF's Rural Economic Development management also highlighted the existence of a development program aimed exclusively at women, Fomento Mulher. This promotion was created within the framework of the Installation Credit, as part of agrarian reform policies, with the aim of making the activities of settled women more visible. This development can be used collectively or individually to set up a production project, whether agricultural or not, so that it must be done in the name of the woman who owns the plot (Molina; Leite, 2019).

In response to the request made under protocol no. 00070.000050/2022-87, also in the Electronic Citizen Information System (e-SIC/DF), SEAGRI - DF informed that the unit consulted does not have any active public policy with a potential gender bias at the moment.

A survey was therefore carried out to find out whether these policies exist at the federal level. In consultation with the Integrated Platform for Ombudsman and Access to Information (Fala.BR), information was requested from the Ministry of Citizenship, under request protocol no. 71003.019021/2022-31, on the existence of public policies for rural women. In response to the question, the Ministry said that in the list of federal programs under its coordination, there are no specific policies for rural women. However, it said that one of the priorities of the *Alimenta Brasil* (Feeding Brazil) Program is the participation of women farmers, thus fostering the empowerment and economic inclusion of rural women. By 2022, women will represent 50% of the Program's beneficiaries.

When analyzing the II PDSAN, among the 183 goals present, it was possible to find only one goal dedicated specifically to women farmers. The research carried out on political capital led to the conclusion that there were some advances in the early 2000s, with FNS policies aimed at family farming, which gave female family farmers access to the assets mentioned in this paper.

Perception of FNS Public Policies

The main difficulties perceived by the interviewees related to the fact that they are women farmers were identified.

Three of the interviewees are married. The answers confirmed facts that are often exposed in the literature on gender relations in family farming, which shows that women are generally responsible for the private space of the home, and when they work in production they are often seen only as helpers, not as workers (Ramos, 2015). They are all mainly responsible for domestic chores in their homes. Only one of the married interviewees reported that she shares household chores with her partner. When asked about their work in production, the married women farmers put themselves in a position of assisting the main people responsible for this work, who are their partners, a fact that also coincides with the work of Ramos (2015) and that of Viezzer *et al.* (1996) about gender relations in agriculture. According to Ramos (2015), women often find it difficult to see themselves as farmers and see themselves as helpers, which causes problems at social and economic levels, such as preventing them from accessing labor rights.

Azalea mentioned her own physical structure as a difficulty she perceived as a woman farmer, which she said made it difficult to carry out the heavier tasks involved in agricultural production. According to the interviewee, this difficulty is aggravated by her limited income, as she can't afford to hire helpers, so she realizes that her production is limited as a result.

With regard to other issues perceived by the interviewees, the difficulties brought about by the sexual division of labor were one of the main challenges in all the interviews. All the women interviewed have at least one child, and six of the nine farmers are single, widowed or divorced, and do not have partners to share the household chores and childcare. This was mentioned by them as a fact that overburdens them, limiting their rest time, because when they are not working on agricultural production or handicrafts, they are doing some domestic chore or looking after their children. Violet also works outside the home to supplement her income, so she has four children, works and goes to university. She gets help from her family, who live on the same plot, to do all the chores.

In addition to the work overload reported by all of the interviewees, Azalea mentioned unequal pay as one of the challenges she perceived. When analyzing the data in the category "difficulties as women farmers", it is possible to make a link between the gender-related problems mentioned in the interviews. Most of them stem from the sexual division

of labor. Water insecurity affects women more than men, as they are responsible for household chores that require the use of water. Furthermore, when there is no supply, they are responsible for fetching water, and they face many challenges as a result, as in the case mentioned by Azalea (Heredia; Cintrão, 2006).

The economic devaluation of women's work outside the private sphere of their homes also stems from the sexual division of labor. Women who provide rural services for other producers are paid less than men who carry out the same activities as them. The difference in pay depending on the gender of the individual carrying out the activity in question is one of the main consequences of the sexual division of labor (Paulilo, 1987).

Similarly, the division of space between individuals in society also affects women's participation in public spaces and in organizations such as cooperatives and associations. The case of the female farmer interviewed who was prevented from holding her position in the Pequeno William settlement association is an example of gender discrimination, which stems from the division of spaces between men and women. According to this structure, women should not participate in activities outside the private environment of their property and must obey what is imposed on them by the men in charge.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the data collected, the relationship between the implementation of FNS policies and women's empowerment became clear. Land regularization policies have proved insufficient. Chapadinha still doesn't have an official settlement title, even though the occupation of the territory began 17 years ago.

ATER policies are considered to have given women farmers access to natural, financial, social and human capital. In terms of natural capital, this occurs through the supply of production inputs, such as fertilizers and seeds; in terms of social capital, through technical guidance in the creation of associations and women's groups; in terms of financial capital, through the opening of public calls for institutional procurement programs and guidance on adapting to the prerequisites necessary for these communities

to participate in institutional procurement programs and credit granting programs; and in human capital, through courses and capacity building.

Encouraging the creation of cooperatives, associations and women's groups has also boosted the empowerment of the women interviewed, since organization makes it easier for women farmers to take part in institutional procurement programs, and to access machinery and training, thus enabling them to access physical, financial, social and human capital. In addition, these organizations have facilitated the creation of bonds in welcoming spaces and the exchange of knowledge.

Institutional procurement programs are a way of selling production, since when they participate, women know how much they will be paid and when, and this is a guaranteed income. These policies provide access to natural, financial and physical capital. With financial autonomy, they are able to make long-term plans, pay off debts and make bigger investments in their production, as in the case of the farmer who bought her car exclusively with the money she received from PAPA - DF, and the farmer who was able to make bigger investments in her production by buying an irrigation pump. The water-food relation was evident in the reports collected, since the interviewees who were in a situation of water insecurity had difficulty participating in these programs because they didn't have enough water to produce the quantity needed to deliver the food.

Access to PRONAF, on the other hand, has enabled women farmers to increase their income, invest in their homes and agricultural production, and gain greater comfort and dignity. However, participation in the program has been assessed as bureaucratic, limiting access for people who don't have the necessary structures to enroll in the program, such as access to a computer with internet and a printer.

Regarding the difficulties perceived by the interviewees about their experience as farmers, the data obtained in this research is in line with what has been shown in feminist theories and in studies on gender relations in family farming. Married women farmers tend to see themselves as helpers to their partners, understanding that their main role is related to domestic activities. The work overload resulting from the accumulation of production and social reproduction tasks was reported by all the interviewees as one of the

main difficulties as a woman farmer. Moreover, clear examples of gender discrimination were found, such as the case mentioned in one of the interviews, which denounced the pay gap when female farmers provide external services for other producers and receive lower pay than men who provide the same service.

The research concluded that with the implementation of the policies studied, the potential to leverage the female empowerment of the interviewees was evidenced, and could provide them with access to natural, financial, physical, social and human capital in the Pequeno Willian settlement and in the Chapadinha pre-settlement during the period studied.

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