GENDER DISCUSSION RELATED TO FAMILY FARMING IN THE STATE OF PARANÁ, BRAZIL

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ABSTRACT
In Brazil, there are over 14 million women in family farming. In the state of Paraná, 16% of the family farming businesses are run by women, and it happens likewise in the other states throughout the country as well, according to the 2006 Agricultural Census. However, despite its prominence concerning the agricultural development, many issues related to gender inequality in this social environment still endure. Therefore, it is relevant to discuss the question of the rural woman as an agent of transformation and her participation on the production level. In this regard, this paper aims to develop a discussion concerning the gender theme, in particular inside the rural area of the Paraná state. We discuss the types of land occupation and income sources of the farmers’ relatives, taking into account the impact that these variables cause on women, mainly. Finally, we talk about the public policies that are specifically related to the female farmers in family farming, most of all the PRONAF, and we present an overview of the Paraná state family farming current situation.

Keywords: Family farming, Public policies, Gender.

Introduction
The public policies related to agriculture that have been implemented in Brazil, starting back in the 1970s, have stimulated the last decade’s changes, by altering the economic and social organization from the rural sector of the country. On the one hand, this technology driven model that favors landlordism has given more relevance to agribusiness and it improved the country’s economic development by creating production surplus and widening its agricultural borders, among other positive features. On the other hand, the same policies have increased regional inequalities in the southern states in opposition to the northern ones, in addition to it, they have worsened income inequalities, which have made more difficult for the farmers to keep their lands.
Therefore, it is pretty relevant to understand that the rural woman lives a double exclusion, as, besides all these needs and rights that have not been met, there are several other rights that have to do with technical and age group conditions associated to important social issues such as: the rural patriarchal system; the production methods seen as masculine; how lands are owned; how family land heritage still happens; public policies access; among others.

The family farming business in Brazil represents close to 10% of the country’s agriculture GDP, almost 40% of the raw value of food production and it generates over 70% of the work force in the rural area. In the state of Paraná, however, there is a lack of data when we try to find out how the women are involved in the business. Very little is reported regarding their actual participation.
in production and revenue generation despite the 2016 Agricultural Census evidence, that shows us that 14 million women work in the family farming business and 16% of the family farming businesses are run by women.

Therefore, this paper aims to present an overview of family farming in the state of Paraná, emphasizing its relevance for the rural development. We also talk about the types of occupation and income in agriculture between the years of 2001 and 2008, with an analysis focused on gender and supported by a wide literature on the theme. Besides that, we discuss the public policies that are directed to the female farmer.

The family farming

Even though the rural and agrarian issues have boomed in Social Science studies only between the decades of 1970 and 1980, through the Sociology of Agriculture, with authors such as Veiga and Abramovay, there had already been a significant progress in this subject by the end of the 1980s. However, according to Schneider (1997) this approach is made out of, mostly, American authors who analyze the agri-food industry and the North American agriculture structures. Schneider (2006), also discusses four elements that make the definition of family farming. The first one is related to working methods, which are, mostly, based in exclusively family related work. The second one is about the obstacles that hinder the direct relation between agricultural production that even with technological insertion does not exclude the difference of operation between agriculture and industry. The third one is related to the social Marxist theory, where the interaction between family farming and the dominant system is not taken into consideration. However, it is well known that the relations between the family farmer with his/her social and economic environment happen through credit and funding that come from the industry, the state itself, among others. The fourth and main element concerns the family nature of the agricultural units, as it is at the core of the family idea that lies the base for the continuity of these units. These definitions are responsible for providing the family farming with the means for its economic, social, cultural and symbolic sustainability.

As for its concept, INCRA – National Institute of Colonization and Agrarian Reform, and FAO - Com relação ao seu conceito, o INCRA - Instituto Nacional de Colonização e Reforma Agrária e a FAO –Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, define family farming in their statistical files as: managing and investment in productive units are made by people who are related by blood or marriage amongst themselves, where most work is carried out by the family members and the ownership of production means belongs to the family, that changes the ownership from the inside after the current person who is responsible for that unit passes away or retires.

Therefore, it is the connection between land, work and family that distinguishes family farming from other methods of agricultural production. Family farming is also defined by the family being the owner of the production means and, in addition to that, working at the property, which associates family, production and work, where all used resources are eventually transferred to another member of the family, in other words: that it not only ensures the current family its subsistence, but also the next generations (WANDERLEY, 2001).
According to Buainain et al. (2014, p. 33), “os aspectos da agricultura familiar, diferem do grande empresário rural, não pelo tamanho, mas pelos valores sociais e pela lógica social, econômica e política que os norteia”. To the authors, the family farmers are able to understand and value the land that is a fundamental aspect of their everyday lives. Contrary to the traditional rural landowners, who relate to the land in a more abstract way, that involves income above all, in other words, as an instrument of a rational relation where there is a perspective of exchange value based on production.

According to Ivaldo Gehlen and José Bica de Mélo (1997), for the family farmers, land represents a work place that is necessary both for economic production and family subsistence in all of its regards: biological, social, religious or political. Therefore, it contributes for the formation of their identity and social lives. The authors claim that the reasons that make the farmers stay in their activities “se explicam não somente por motivos materiais, mas também subjetivos, que atribuem significado à sua existência e ao futuro, garantindo, assim, a coerência de sua identidade” (GEHLEN and MÉLO, 1997 p. 105-106).

There was a decline in the number of these establishments, which is an effect of the fast urbanization and rural depopulation that took place in the state and country as a whole since then.

Chart 1 - Historical view of the rural family farming establishments in the state from 1980 to 2006.

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1 Our translation: “the aspects involving family farming differ from the traditional rural businessman not because of its size itself, but because of the social value and economic, political and social logic that guides it”.

2 Our translation: “are explained not only by material motivation, they are also subjective and grant meaning to their existence and future, which ensures, therefore, coherence for their identities”.

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More than 80% of the agricultural establishments in the state of Paraná were related to family farming and in none of the mesoregions this percentage was below 75%. Another relevant element to be taken into account concerning this data is that only 10% of these family farming establishments were run by women. If, on the one hand, this percentage is not really representative, considering all the family farming establishments in the state of Paraná, there are 29 thousand rural properties that are managed by women and, throughout the country, this number was of 13%.

Public Policies for Family Farming

Public policies can be defined as the area that tries to, at the same time “put the government into action” and/or analyze this action and, whenever it is necessary, to propose changes concerning how these actions are being carried out (Celina Souza, 2006). Having this definition as our guide inside the agricultural discussion, Valter Bianchini (2010) states that State intervention over the Brazilian agriculture was marked by the presence of incentives to the production that was destined to exportation and was related to big land owners. The 1960s and the 1970s were defined as a time of huge government related incentives aiming the modernization of agriculture with the creation of technological packages which were destined to the farmers. Therefore, it is during this period that are created the SNCR – National Rural Credit System, EMBRAPA – Brazilian Agricultural Research Company, responsible for the development of research related to the new technologies and techniques that could increase the production, besides implementing these improvements in the rural area through promotion, assistance and rural extension. Nevertheless, during the 1990s some state-owned enterprises were extinct; this retraction of public policies worsened the crisis in the agricultural sector and made the government set forth some market regulation policies and incentives to this sector. The lack of government assistance to farmers led to more demands aiming for more credit and, therefore, it originated the PRONAF - National Program for Strengthening Family Farming.

According to Ricardo Abramovay and José Eli da Veiga (1999), the need for public policies that were directed to family farming is justified by what is called market failure, in which this sector ends up not having positive results concerning occupation and income generation, due to the lack of infrastructure for work improvement, alongside the obstacles created by the banking sector regarding the financial services.

The PRONAF was created on June 28th, 1996, through the decree nº 1.946 and its objective was to support rural development that is based on family farming by strengthening of technical and economic conditions. It aims to integrate this class into the local development plans, which would, in turn, provide the workers with resources to increase their productive capacity, as well as job and income creation.

Angela Kageyama (2003) States that the PRONAF aims to support a sustainable development of the rural area, by improving productivity, job creation, income and life quality through funding for agricultural activity and for activities that are related to rural tourism and craft production as long as they are carried out in community areas.

Chart 2 shows the total of agreements and values that were destined to PRONAF in the state of Paraná, from 1999 to 2011. By bringing data concerning this policy we show how it is the main
public policy related to family farming and how it has a specificity concerning women, as we will talk about after the chart.

Chart 2 – Number of agreements and values on PRONAF, between 1999 and 2011, in the state of Paraná.

The PRONAF is a new agricultural policy assisted by the government in order to establish a new development model in which farmers can have meaningful improvements in their lives and work; it is, also, an updated social management concept that provides agriculture with the same means that are available to urban sectors.

Abramovay and Veiga (1999) state that in the state of Paraná, 47.2% of the resources – in the studied timeline – were destined to soy production and 15.6% to tobacco production, which means that there had been credit concentration, and that resources were used where it was easier to trade products. Concerning the aforesaid data, during the whole decade of 1990 there was a lack of credit for agriculture. It was something recurrent in family farming back then. Thus, “disponibilizar 737 milhões a 101 mil agricultores familiares não pode ser considerado um desempenho ruim, mesmo que a maior parte dos benefícios esteja entre os mais abastados dos agricultores familiares”3 (ABRAMOVAY and VEIGA, 1999, p. 36).

**Gender Discussion related to Family Farming**

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3 Our translation: “to make 737 million to 101 thousand farmers cannot be considered bad performance, even though, most benefits are given to those who have more wealth among the family farmers”.
The woman is directly related to the production of goods and services and has never been away from work in all times and places. She has contributed to family subsistence and is, often, its principal maintainer. In many different social conditions, ethnicities, creeds, her trajectory is defined by countless distinctions, which is seen as the ‘history of women’ in several classification groups: the peasant woman, the worker, the black woman, etc. Interdisciplinary, a technique that has been highlighted by historians lately, takes over an important role on women studies, and it is defined as: “O desenvolvimento dos novos campos de pesquisa como a história das mentalidades e a história cultural reforça o avanço na abordagem do feminino”⁴, (SOIHET, 2011, p. 264).

To Joan Joan Scott (1995), the emergence of the history of women as a study area walked alongside feminism, with the struggle for improving professional conditions. Besides that, it widened its limits in History, that is to say there was reciprocity in both movements. Fighting for equal rights and for the end of men’s oppression over women has been a priority for feminism in Brazil. By the end of the 1970s there was uneasiness concerning theory discussion and political movements and because of this the “women” category was questioned and the “difference” was introduced as a concept to be analyzed: “a fragmentação de uma ideia universal de ‘mulheres’ por classe, raça, etnia e sexualidade associava-se a diferenças políticas e sociais no seio do movimento feminista”⁵. Therefore, from a unique identity, women started to conceive themselves in a multitude of identities. Collective manifestations of discontent and the protest of several different groups exposed the strong disagreement and disenchantment concerning the traditional social and political structures of universal theories, academic formalism, discrimination, segregation and feminine silencing.

To Maria da Glória Gohn (1995), the Brazilian feminist movement, throughout its trajectory, has been a struggle for achieving women rights in politics, work, life conditions, reproductive autonomy, sexuality, among others in which being a woman involved situations of oppression. The feminist movement’s emancipated women from private life, granted her right to vote, to study and to exist in the public spaces. Concerning the struggle to equate women to men, the fight is for the right to be in professions that were considered to be exclusively masculine. Besides that, working the same number of hours than men and in the same functions does not mean liberation and equality as “isso pode ser uma dupla escravatura, pois ao mesmo tempo, trabalhava a profissão e no lar, duplicando sensivelmente a sua jornada de trabalho”⁶ (VIEIRA, 2005, p. 235). Considering that, historically, women were endowed with the household functions of: cleaning, children hygiene and home administration as a whole, she then took over another kind of work. Studies show that this change took effect on social relations. This behavioral change resulted in a

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⁴ Our translation: “The development of new research areas such as the History of Mentalities and Cultural History strengthens the progress on approaching the feminine”.
⁵ Our translation: “the fragmentation of a universal idea of ‘women’ by class, race, ethnicity and sexuality was associated to serious political differences inside the feminist movement”.
⁶ Our translation: “that might be a double enslavement, as at the same time she works in her profession and at home, which doubles her work hours”.

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series of outcomes, such as the Law of Divorce, that allowed for the women to separate from her husband and other rights that can be found in the art.5º, I, Federal Constitution; that emphasizes that men and women are the same in rights and obligations (GUALBERTO and HONORATO, 2012).

We agree with the authors when they state that women harvest the products of her own emancipation. In other words, her freedom from the private environment cost her extra functions at first, as she could not leave the mother, wife and housewife functions aside.

The Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie states: afirma “Sejamos todos feministas”⁷. Some question it: after all, what do women want? We can answer this question with the feminist movement’s demands: equality and respect, sharing household chores, access to areas where the masculine presence still predominates (politics), solutions for health and violence against women. The author also states that, even though many improvements for women’s emancipation have been achieved, the gender issue still endures and must be solves: “temos que melhorartodosnós, homens e mulheres, temos que melhorar”⁸ (ADICHIE, 2015, p. 50).

We must continuously improve our actions, our movements and emphasize the relevance of the debate on feminine social emancipation, through acknowledging women as an owner of rights and duties inside society, so that there might be a consistent change on people’s – men and women – thoughts.

It is relevant, in order to exemplify the gender discussion related to family farming, to present a definition that was given by two farmers, a man and a woman, about “what does it mean to be a family farmer?” – a question that is part of an interview questionnaire from the research of one of this article’s authors: the male farmer says: “it is a category that heavily supports this country, because the food that the people from the city eat comes from us, the family farmers, who produce it. I am very proud to be a family farmer”.

The female farmer answers: “being a family farmer is everything to me, because I make my living out of it. All of my activities, my family, my animals, and our money relies on that. We can plant what we eat, in the healthiest way as it is possible and, because of that, we do not need to buy many things. The place is nice and we live well, peacefully – even though we have a lot of work to do”.

It is clear in their answers that the male farmer acknowledges himself in his social class and is aware of how well appreciated his work is – as these were the aspects that were mentioned. As for the female farmer, it is relevant to emphasize how she did not use the first person singular: I. She only mentioned the activities that are part of her work routine: house, family, property, healthy eating habits, economy and life quality.

Whether in the farm or in the city, women, despite having a fundamental economic role, was commonly considered to be weaker and less capable than men, which required the constant presence of the male figure – father or husband. Because of this, they were seen and treated as uncap able in society. The relations between genders and, therefore, the women social position

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⁷ Our translation: “Let us all be feminists”.
⁸ Our translation: “all of us must improve, men and women, we must improve”. 

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inside her family and inside society as a whole is part of a wider domination system that began in ancient times and still endures, dictating the social roles lived by both men and women. Friedrich Engels (2009), when discussing the origins of family, private property and state, claimed that family, home and sexuality are all products of the changes in mode of production. Therefore, the dismissal of the maternal rights was the defeat of the feminine gender in the universal history, when men took hold of how the home would operate and the women’s condition was lowered to that of a servant, slave of men’s pleasure as a reproductive tool. The passage from matriarchy to patriarchy is related to the emergence of private property and the concept of “family” is related, since its origins, to service and work.

The first work division between men and women was related to their offspring, just as the first social class opposition that took place in history coincided with the antagonism between them. In monogamy, the first class oppression consists in the masculine oppression over the feminine gender. Thus, the social order followed by men under a certain society is conditioned by these two kinds of production: the level of work development and by family. Actually, when we understand the social relations from what we see as material conditions, we can understand the creation of knowledge related to the multiple determinations that dictate material transformations as a whole. Therefore, the historical subject (both sexes) cannot be understood outside their historical and social context where they were produced, or where they produced themselves.

Chart 2 presents the evolution of the number of women and men working on agricultural activities in the state of Paraná, from 2001 to 2008. There was a significant decrease on agricultural occupation throughout this period both for men and women, but the number is higher when it comes to women. From the total of women, 56.6% worked in agricultural activities, whereas men were 78%, a 21.7% difference.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agricultural activity</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
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<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Researchers have been thinking about the reasons for such results concerning the agricultural family units from the state of Paraná and they state, according to Anita Brumer (2006) that these families are organized in a patriarchal structure, which favors men and weakens the women’s bargaining power inside her own family, which stimulates migration to other activities. Besides that, women are not usually seen as partners inside the properties, regardless of the kind of work they do. Her activities are often considered “help” and, therefore, they end up having little power over the decisions that are made, that is to say, the female farmers get only the reproductive role (without economic and social recognition) while men get the productive one.

Women studies have shown the attributes of these occupations, as well as the masking of the ordinary domestic work, usually considered as unproductive and unpaid. To understand the women as a social being in history shows a social condition that was imposed to them over time, through social and economic needs, as Joana Maria Pedro (1996) reminds us. To analyze and comprehend how these social relations were built alongside the oppression suffered by women throughout history and the mechanisms that allow it to keep existing is something crucial to overcome these issues. The relations between men and women and, subsequently, the women’s position inside the family organization and society as a whole are made by a wider domination system. It is necessary to analyze the origins of women’s exclusion of certain tasks as well as how they end up being kept in traditional roles and occupations that were naturalized as naturally feminine.

In Brazil, the colonization carried out by Portugal consisted of a domination structure based on heritage and assets. The economic power of those who were then considered head of the families was what maintained society structure. This is how the Brazilian society consolidated its domination structure, and it was characterized as a patriarchal and patrimonialist society, which was the rule in many other nations around the globe at the time. In this kind of structure, regardless of the social class where women were integrated, her submission to men was evident. Heleiethlara Bongiovani Saffioti (2013), states that, in order to understand the women’s role inside the capitalist society, it is necessary to understand the relations between her position and capitalism itself, as well as how the period itself was organized alongside the elements of historical and society formation as a whole.

As for the contribution of men and women to family income, Chart 3 shows that the main source of men’s income is agriculture itself, as it represents 53.5% of their earnings; on the other hand, women’s main source of income is made up of pensions (9.5%). Agriculture income, for them, represents only 3.7% of the total earnings.

According to Kreter e Bacha (2006), income that comes from social transfers has a very valuable economic role for women in agriculture. Before the Constitution of Brazil’s 1988 advent there had already been old-age retirement for the female rural worker, but after marriage they lost this right as the benefit was passed on to the head of the family: the man. Another very important aspect of it is that women have a higher life expectancy than men (77.9 - 71.6) but retire 5 years before them (55 - 60), which might justify the significance of their retirement earning. 21.4% of their earnings are not related to agricultural activities. It is relevant to notice that women have only 15.1% of participation inside the family earnings, hence, there is a long way
ahead of us until the income on the rural area can be balanced, as it is evident that the female workers generate income but cannot take advantage of it. Historically, women have been limited to the domestic environment as well as to formal education: as it was something exclusive for the bourgeoisie and boys (GONÇALVES, 2006). Family roles are built throughout history and change how they work in private and public spheres and according to the social class they belong to.

Perrot (1988) states that since the 18th century, women have fought for their rights for employment, whether by supporting their husbands against their gradual replacement by machines, or by fighting against the replacement of themselves by industrial sewing machines, that takes away 6 jobs at once in a single work day. Also, according to Hobsbawm (1988), women’s emancipation has happened separately according to the social class. In the country, women had already assumed some roles that were primarily masculine.

In 1880, the first bourgeois women to take new roles appear, and they are called “the new women”. In 1900 the number of women in the industry started to increase, due to the creation of a series of new professions and leisure activities that were aimed to single women. Hobsbawm (2008, p. 136) writes that “A industrialização do século XIX (em oposição à industrialização do século XX) tendeu a fazer do casamento e da família a carreira principal da mulher da classe trabalhadora que não fosse forçada pela total pobreza a assumir outra atividade”9 (HOBSBAWM, 2008, p. 136).

HeleithIara Bongiovani Saffioti (2013), writes that in order to understand the women’s role we must, by thinking about the rhythm of historical time itself, focus on the relations between their place inside society and the elements that are unique to the historical formation and social organization. The author also discusses the educational perspectives and the feminist movement, aiming to elucidate the model of education that was directed to women and how it helped on forming their social roles. Concerning the family structure, women performed their natural functions – mother, offspring – and, besides that, they also performed as domestic workers and the responsible for socializing their children. This social construct is still impregnated in our current cultural standards. The replication of social roles, both in the rural and the urban areas, is still pretty evident, regarding the place that is destined to women. Even though they are economically emancipated, and that their income is compatible to the income of men, they are still imbued with the domestic functions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chart 3 – Contribution of family farmers in family income in the state of Paraná.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Woman (%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pension and retirement</td>
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9Our translation: “The 19th century industrialization (in opposition to that from the 20th century) made family and marriage the working class women’s main career if they were not forced, by complete poverty, to undertake another occupation.”.
In Chart 3 we have the percentage of the agricultural population organized by gender, and we see that the number of men and women that work in the Brazilian rural area is similar: 54% are men and 46% are women, not a meaningful gap between them. However, it is also evident that there is a discrepancy concerning the access to the main public policy aimed for family agriculture, the PRONAF, with only 14% of its participants being women and 86% men.

Based on this data, according to the Ministry of Agricultural and Livestock Development, the PRONAF Women was created in 2003. It is a public policy that seeks to build and expand the women’s economic autonomy by acknowledging their work and family farmers. In order to have access to this line of credit, the only required document is the DAP – Declaration of Suitability – that is provided EMATER – Paraná Institute of Technical Assistance and Rural Extension – or INCRA – National Institute for Colonization and Agrarian Reform – and create a project, that can also be made with the aid of those same institutions. This can be an individual or a group project and it can be related to agricultural and non-agricultural activities, rural tourism, handicraft, bakery, among others. The amount of resource made available can get to R$36,000.00, with an annual interest rate from 1 to 5%, that is to say: this is an investment line, but up to 35% of the total amount made available can be used as defrayal and working capital. However, to the female farmers from agrarian reform groups, the capital made available does not follow those same rules.

According to Alonso (2009) and Gohn (1995) the changes inside the social movements inside the feminist groups themselves result of ongoing discursive and strategical disputes. In fact, the debate and the dispute over goals and the most adequate strategies to promote social and cultural transformation come primarily from the true feminism and think about its own meaning. Alvarez, Dagnino and Escobar (2000) investigated the feminist activism as well as the other social movements from the second half of the 20th century. According to them these movements face against the social and economic adjustment programs from the period, which are inspired by neoliberalism. The neoliberal state shrinking process makes society as a whole undertake social responsibilities that are avoided by the government. Therefore, the transformation of these movements’ agendas into political entities, which redefined the meaning of concepts such as “development” and “citizen”, entails something that the authors name as “cultural policies”. This new concept, studied by the cultural studies, aims to investigate the relations between culture and politics, examining the potential of this cultural policy in order to promote social change. In other words, through this concept it is possible to
analyze the constitutive link between culture and politics, and the redefinition itself that this perspective entails.

Concerning the Brazilian reality, according to Célia Regina Jardim Pinto (2006), the civil society started to shape itself more organically in the last decade of the 20th century, which is an effect of its own organization, and because of the new roles it faced: “a presença da sociedade civil no cenário político trouxe novos sujeitos para o espaço público, o que gerou um conjunto de imprecisões quanto a sua natureza”\(^\text{10}\) (PINTO, 2006, p.652).

The diversity of this constitution happens because it is formed by several different groups, institutions and people with different extents of organization, public engagement and relation with the State itself. According to Pinto (2006), the civil society is composed from mothers’ clubs to global institutions, such as the Amnesty International. It is a crucial concept in order to understand the difference between the civil society and the organized civil society. The civil society is how society organized itself, where each individual finds its own place within it as a citizen; therefore, he/she needs to plan his/her own activities in order to participate in the spaces of decision making. As for the women, a political emancipation process is imperative. It must facilitate their access and participation effectively, not only as someone who benefits from the public policies but, also, as an acting agent on the creation of laws that are aimed to fight gender inequality.

Chart 3 – Composition of the rural area population and access to PRONAF. 30% of the family agriculture establishments had funding in 2006.

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\(^{10}\) Our translation: “the presence of civil society in the political scenario has brought new individuals to the public arena, and this resulted in a series of inaccuracies concerning its own nature”.

The Documentation Program for Rural Women Workers is another public policy aimed for women from rural areas and its goal is to provide, for free, basic civil documents. At first, it might seem irrelevant to create a public policy that is exclusive for women in agriculture, aiming to provide something as basic as basic documents (ID, CPF, Electoral card, birth/marriage certificates). However, studies suggest that there is a high percentage, 24%, of working women without these documents. This numbers take into account women from all regions of Brazil, including those who live in quilombola and indigenous communities. This highlights the need for a policy like the aforementioned so that the female farmers can have access to other policies that focus this group, such as the PRONAF Women, for instance.

To finish the discussion about gender in family farming, we point out that, in 1983 the first State Council for the Feminine Condition and the Program for Social Assistance and Women’s Health were created; and, in 1985, we see the emergence of the first Police Station for Women’s Defense and the National Council for Women’s rights.

According to Alvarez (1998) women are present in several different kinds of spaces and are not committed only with the classical political struggle. They also fight for public policies such as the gender quota laws. The authors states that many feminists say that, regardless of NGO’s technical competence, they refuse to accept rules that are imposed by the government and, because of that, they end up losing gender projects and being silenced and marginalized inside the public debate. Alvarez (1998) also writes that it is acceptable to negotiate in order to achieve dialogue and progress concerning the public policies. It is important to understand that the political area, the parliaments and the UN are places for debate; they are cultural and political courts.

That is why it is relevant to know the spaces where women are currently acting inside society. The Latin American feminism is a discursive acting space; it is not a social movement in its classical sense. According to Sonia Alvarez, Evelina Dagnino and Arturo Escobar (2000), on the one hand, the feminist movement organizes itself by acknowledging that being a woman, both in public and private spaces, entails definitive consequences for life and, therefore, there is a specific struggle happening here: the transformation of gender relations.

The Brazilian feminist movement, throughout its history, fights for achieving and establishing women’s rights on politics, work, life conditions, and reproductive autonomy, among others where being a woman involves facing oppressive situations (LOURO, 2012).

Women’s studies show the peculiarities of these situations, as well as how this system of oppression manages to mask the domestic work that is considered as unproductive. They also describe life and work conditions as a whole, pointing out the social, political, economic and legal inequalities, exposing the oppression and submission faced by women.

The collective manifestation of dissatisfaction and discontent of several different groups exposed their disagreement concerning the traditional social arrangements, politicians of universal theories, academic formalism, discrimination, segregation and feminine silencing.

Over the years, the feminist movement went from a movement that claimed for social rights such as the vote and the access to education and work to one that claimed for public policies that could assist women who had been incorporated into the world of work. They gained access to the school, as students and teachers, to factories, offices, hospitals and the political sphere. However,
social functions that have been, historically, directed at women: marriage and maternity. Women have conquered civil rights even though this ended up causing them to have double work hours when performing as a wife and mother alongside other professional activities.

We understand that a mentality shift is crucial for all Society. Both men and women need to acquire historical knowledge in order to comprehend how society is historically formed as well as concepts such as family and social roles that every person is imbued with since birth. Men and women are both social actors who must have equal rights and must have proportional tasks, that do not overload neither. Women must be respected and known not as mere assistants of men: both build, work and edify.

Conclusion
Within the Brazilian agrarian complex, family farming has a prominent role, as a way of living that has as its main attribute to withstand and resist a process of exclusion from public policies throughout the history of Brazil. It has gradually conquered its space inside a capitalist system which works for the agribusiness.

Therefore, all changes that family farming has been put through over the decades have altered how the family units work. To some, this is resistance, to others, adaptation: to all of them, this is a process of being able to keep their way of life.

As for the public policies, mainly when we talked about the PRONAF, it is evident that it aims to create a new agricultural strategy, with the state being a crucial component: to outline a new sustainable development system. The data concerning family agriculture – 2006 Agricultural Census – is relevant due to its relation with the space we have studied.

Inequality between men and women is something build, it is not born within the individuals themselves, but as the result of an imposition of life in society. This difference between the gender roles is related to social ranking of the space among societies regarding men and women. To women, due to their role as mothers, are imbued activities from the domestic sphere; while to men, there is a more effective place in the public sphere: this is what makes them more socially appreciated, as this is a sphere that is more directly related to power and authority.

For that matter, besides being imbued with domestic tasks, the women who work as farmers play a major role in other farm activities, but they are still seen as mere assistants to men. They have double – sometimes triple – work hours that ends up not being considered as productive work, even though their work is directly related to the income, as much as the work of their husbands. Therefore, it is an urgent matter to elucidate that fact, due to the amount of overload that has been assigned to the female family farmers. Female family farmers must be empowered and we all must understand that they are social actors that are relevant and deserve to be acknowledged as such: just like men already are.

The matters that still need to be discussed and might be better developed in further studies were put here as a way of arousing individual reflection and as suggestion for future researches: what does it mean to be a woman in the rural area? Is there a distinction between them and women from other social spaces? How can the female farmers look for dialogues in order to discuss matters that dissolve the idea of homogeneity inside family farming work? And how can we
debate further issues such as hierarchy/power, production and social reproduction inside the families?

Bibliographic References


