
Contract farming in Mozambique and gender inequalities within and across rural households.

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Résumé

This paper analyses the implications of contract farming on gender inequalities in rural Mozambique. Contract farming is often considered one of the major tools of agribusiness development. It broadly includes those arrangements under which producers commit to providing a pre-defined quantity of a crop to a buyer firm. This paper exploits a panel dataset (2002–05) collected by the Mozambican Ministry of Agriculture among a nationally representative sample of rural households to explore contracts' implications for gender equality both across and within households. We look at both the participation of female-headed households in contracts and the impact of establishing a contract on a set of intra-household women empowerment indicators. Concerning the first, our results confirm a (small though significant) effect of selection out of contracts of households where a woman is the household's head. With regard to the second, we may expect contrasting effects to be at work: on the one hand, increased income may improve households' livelihoods and women's living conditions; on the other, we may expect a shift of control over the household's assets towards men. We find different results according to the indicator used; after controlling for selection bias, we find no effect on control over land but a negative effect on women's access to extension services. These results are discussed in the light of the interaction between cash crop production under contracts and food production, and (though preliminary) in the light of qualitative evidence on the gendered effects of contract farming in Mozambique.

Mots-Clés: Mozambique, contract farming, gender inequalities, food production

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