

WOMEN FARMERS, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND FAMILY SUCCESSION: An Analysis From the Perspective of Social Innovation

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ABSTRACT

Women farmers have social and economic relevance, especially in family farming, which has been increasingly recognized. However, the context is still one of male prevalence. One of the aspects that contributes to a reduction of these social differences, as well as to women's empowerment, is the entrepreneurial activity of women farmers. When women have access to farm product control and management activities, including being responsible for commercialization, their autonomy and power increase, reducing differences between genders. Considering this context, the present research aimed to understand the characteristics of family succession in light of the theoretical lenses of social innovation and female entrepreneurship. To this end, five factors were observed: personal, financial, educational, family, and public policy aspects. This is a research with a quantitative and qualitative approach, with a case study. The scope of the study was female entrepreneur family farmers in the city of Getúlio Vargas - RS. It is concluded that the protagonism of women in family farming positively influences the permanence of daughters in the countryside. To promote gender equality, the role of women in production, management, commercialization, and access to public policies must be recognized and favored, stimulating and supporting women's income generation, valuing existing knowledge, recognizing them as active participants in the economy, ensuring rights, opportunities, and participation in property decisions.

Keywords: succession process; female entrepreneurship; social innovation.

MULHERES AGRICULTORAS, EMPREENDEDORISMO E SUCESSÃO FAMILIAR: UMA ANÁLISE NA PERSPECTIVA DA INOVAÇÃO SOCIAL

RESUMO

A relevância social e econômica da mulher agricultora, especialmente na agricultura familiar, vem sendo cada vez mais reconhecida, entretanto o contexto é ainda de prevalência masculina. Um dos aspectos que contribui para uma redução dessas diferenças sociais, bem como para o empoderamento feminino, é a atuação empreendedora das mulheres agricultoras. Quando as mulheres acessam o controle produtivo e a gestão de atividades dentro da propriedade rural, inclusive sendo responsáveis pela comercialização, sua autonomia e poder aumentam, reduzindo diferenças entre os gêneros. Considerando esse contexto, a presente pesquisa teve como objetivo compreender as características da sucessão familiar à luz das lentes teóricas da inovação social e do empreendedorismo feminino. Para isso foram observados cinco fatores: aspectos pessoais; financeiros; educacionais; familiares e de políticas públicas. Trata-se de uma pesquisa de abordagem quanti e qualitativa, com estudo de caso. O escopo do estudo foi mulheres agricultoras familiares-empendedoras do município de Getúlio Vargas – RS. Conclui-se que o protagonismo das mulheres na agricultura familiar influencia positivamente a permanência das filhas no campo. Para promover a igualdade de gênero, deverá se reconhecer e favorecer o protagonismo das mulheres na produção, gestão, comercialização e acesso às políticas públicas, estimulando e apoiando a geração de renda das mulheres, valorizando conhecimentos existentes, reconhecendo-as como participantes ativas da economia, garantindo direitos, oportunidades e participação nas decisões da propriedade.

Palavras-chave: processo sucessório; empreendedorismo feminino; inovação social.

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INTRODUCTION

The rural environment in Brazil has undergone numerous developments in production, technology, and productivity. Despite this progress, gender differences remain a bottleneck that impacts the well-being of the population and the sector's development. Notably, women face challenges of autonomy and empowerment on rural properties, including family farming (Breitenbach; Corazza, 2021). Family farming is a significant sector in Brazil, with 10.1 million inhabitants working in it, accounting for 77% of rural establishments and 23% of the country's total area (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics [IBGE], 2017). However, women are under-represented in management roles, with only 19% of agricultural establishments having women in management positions, and 0.59% of women (29,916) being rural property owners (IBGE, 2017).

Moreover, the family succession process in agriculture typically prioritizes men, and leadership roles in this context are associated with being male (Cavicchioli; Bertoni; Pretolani, 2018; Troian; Breitenbach, 2018; Pini, 2005). Despite playing a central role in agricultural activities, raising children, and domestic tasks, rural women do not receive due appreciation and recognition (Chanana-nag; Aggarwal, 2020). The need for improvements in family farming is therefore highlighted, with an emphasis on the inclusion of women as social protagonists in the sector.

In addition, management in family farming is predominantly carried out by men, and the succession process in agriculture favors the male gender (Cavicchioli; Bertoni; Pretolani, 2018; Troian; Breitenbach, 2018). In this context, being a leader is associated with being a man (Pini, 2005), thereby reinforcing the scenario of inequality. Furthermore, despite playing a central role in agricultural activities, childcare, and domestic tasks, rural women are not given the appreciation and recognition they deserve (Chanana-nag; Aggarwal, 2020). Therefore, family farming requires improvements to achieve its full development, with a focus on the inclusion of women as social protagonists in the sector.

This context also poses a challenge to the achievement of the development goals outlined at the global level based on the 2030 Agenda. Specifically, Goal 5 prioritizes "achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls" (Pnuma, 2015) and calls for changes in the context of gender inequality. Thus, the gender difference in family farming is a pressing issue that demands immediate action (Kristjanson *et al.*, 2017). This context has a broad impact on many other spheres in rural and urban areas, with particular emphasis on the increased rural-urban migration of young women (Breitenbach; Corazza, 2019). Factors such as predominant patriarchy, male domination, the social division of labor, women's double roles in both household and agricultural work, preference for male children in succession processes, and the heavy manual labor performed by women are present in agriculture and have a significant influence on the decision of young women to migrate to urban areas (Breitenbach; Corazza, 2019; Lawson; Lahiri-Dutt, 2020).

One of the factors that contribute to reducing these social differences and empowering women is the entrepreneurial activity of female farmers (Vedana *et al.*, 2023). When women take control of production and management of specific activities on rural property, including marketing, their autonomy and power increase, reducing gender differences. This has been observed by Mota, Nascimento and Schmitz (2020) in a study of women involved in oil palm

farming in Pará, by Breitenbach and Foguesatto (2023) in a study in Rio Grande do Sul, and by Toaldo (2021) in a bibliographical review. Given this context, the following question arises: Can female entrepreneurship in family farming also help to reduce rural-urban migration among rural youth women and contribute to expanding family succession processes where young women are the successors?

Based on these research questions and problems, the present study aimed to comprehend the features of family succession in agriculture through the theoretical perspectives of social innovation and female entrepreneurship. The study set the following specific objectives: a) to assess the impact of women farmers' entrepreneurship on family farming succession processes and how it occurs; b) to examine the attributes of rural female entrepreneurship and how they are influencing the activities of family farming and the upcoming generations. To carry out the research, the theoretical bases of social innovation and female entrepreneurship were used. The following sections will detail the methodological procedures, theoretical framework, data, analysis, and final considerations of the research.

METHODOLOGY

The present research is qualitative-quantitative and used the case study method with entrepreneurial women family farmers in the municipality of Getúlio Vargas. According to Eisenhardt (1989), the case study is a research method widely used in the social sciences and consists of a thorough and exhaustive study of a case, in a way that allows broad and detailed knowledge.

The case study focuses on family farmers in Getúlio Vargas, Rio Grande do Sul. Within this population, the study considers entrepreneurial women who are mothers and daughters, aged between 13 and 63 years, and who either live together or have maintained family ties despite their daughters studying and living in town. To select the sample, a survey was conducted on the composition of families residing in rural areas of Getúlio Vargas, with data provided by the Riograndense Association of Technical Assistance and Rural Extension Enterprises (Emater/RS), through reports published by the municipality. We applied a filter to select older women, children, young adults, and adults for our study. From this filter, we identified women entrepreneurs in these communities, including their daughters who either live with them or have left to pursue their studies but maintain family ties.

We believe that women entrepreneurs in family farming can supplement the family's income. In selecting the sample, we considered inclusion and exclusion factors (refer to Table 1). As a result, we selected 33 women (15 mothers and 18 daughters) residing in the communities of KM 13, KM 08, Mato Preto, PIO X, Linha Cinco, and Capela Santa Catarina, in the municipality of Getúlio Vargas-RS. We contacted them by phone to verify their interest in participating in the research before proceeding to the questionnaire application stage.

Chart 1 – Composition of the sample, considering inclusion and exclusion factors

Exclusion factors for sample composition	Inclusion factors for sample composition
<p>a) Elderly women with no possibility of succession;</p> <p>b) Adult women who are not elderly, without female daughters, or whose daughters have already migrated to the city;</p> <p>c) Girls/children under the age of 13, who are not part of the group chosen for the research;</p> <p>d) Young women who do not have a financial or succession relationship with their parents, as they have already migrated to the urban environment or no longer maintain a financial relationship with the family;</p> <p>e) Men were not part of the surveyed universe.</p>	<p>a) Rural women entrepreneurs: fifteen (15) women entrepreneurs in agricultural activities: agroindustries of sausages, milk derivatives, and fresh <i>cassava</i>; women who sell their products at the local trade and fair and who work in milk production and grain production;</p> <p>b) Young women: eighteen (18) young people who live in rural areas or are studying, but have family ties linked to rural areas;</p> <p>c) Have access to the internet, as the research was carried out during the social isolation caused by the 2020/2021 coronavirus pandemic.</p>

Source: Prepared by the authors based on research data (2022).

As a data collection instrument, a questionnaire was used with closed-ended multiple-choice questions and open-ended questions that allow for free written responses and enable the presentation of ideas. For this purpose, the Informed Consent Form was used. For closed-ended questions, the Likert scale and/or multiple-choice options were used as response options. According to Appolinário (2007), this is an attitude scale in which the respondent indicates the degree of agreement or disagreement regarding the analyzed aspect.

For the development of interview questions, the questions were based on theoretical references to entrepreneurship and social innovation. The questionnaire was developed using Google Forms and was sent online via WhatsApp, remaining available from March 3, 2021, to April 15, 2021, during which time all women in the sample responded to the survey. For the analysis of quantitative data, the data were tabulated in an Excel spreadsheet, and then the data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, considering mean and standard deviation.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Women family farmers and rural family succession

Family farming is characterized as a rural property with an area of up to four fiscal modules that practice activities in rural areas, employs predominantly family labor, has family income primarily linked to the property itself, and has management and work on the property handled by the family, with the possibility of occasional hiring of labor. These are the criteria established by Law number 11,326, of July 24, 2006, responsible for establishing the criteria for identifying the category and presenting the guidelines for the formulation of the National Policy for Strengthening Family Farming (Pronaf). The fiscal module, according to the National Institute for Colonization and Agrarian Reform (Incra), varies according to each municipality, and in Getúlio Vargas, each fiscal module corresponds to 20 hectares. According to data from the 2017 Agricultural Census, there were 555 family farming establishments in the rural areas of Getúlio Vargas.

This category encompasses small rural properties, traditional peoples and communities, agrarian reform settlers, silviculturists, aquaculturists, extractives, and fishermen, according to the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAPA, 2022). Family farming also differs by its particular relationship with the land, productive activities, and other natural resources. In this sector, the family shares responsibility for property management, and the main source of income comes from agricultural and livestock production. Additionally, diversity in production is another characteristic of the sector, which often adopts subsistence production for the market/commercialization (Schneider, 2006).

The Brazilian Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Supply considers family farming to be the sector with the highest participation in the production of food available for consumption by the Brazilian population. The Special Secretariat for Family Farming and Rural Development (SEAFDA) offers various credit lines for family farmers through the Pronaf program, including Pronaf Agroindústria, Pronaf Mulher, and Pronaf Jovem (BNDES, 2020). However, women have little visibility in accessing credit and financing services because financial and investment control is still predominantly offered to men, and women are rarely the owners of the land used (Spanevello; Matte; Boscardin, 2016).

The role that women play in society, specifically in agriculture, is crucial in shaping the career decisions of their daughters. The decision to remain in rural areas as successors or to migrate to the city is strongly influenced by how rural women are treated and the opportunities available to them (Breitenbach; Corazza, 2021). However, the number of daughters identified as successors in agriculture is low (Lobley; Baker; Whitehead, 2010).

This situation highlights the unequal relationship between men and women in agriculture, exacerbated by the sexual division of labor (Silva, 2019). In Brazil, the work of women farmers is often unrecognized and they face prejudices in rural areas (Villwock, Germani; Roncato, 2016). The patriarchal nature of the family is mostly responsible for this situation, which consequently affects the lower interest of young women as possible successors of rural properties (Kessler, 2006).

Although there are women operating tractors and machines, as well as performing important functions on the property, in many cases women are still seen as “helpers” to their husbands or fathers in agricultural or income-generating activities (Villwock; Germani; Roncato, 2016; Suess-Reyes; Fuetsch, 2016; Breitenbach; Corazza, 2021). Women farmers, as well as those in urban areas, still demand equality with men, against sexism and violence. In rural areas, through the Movements of Rural Working Women (MMTR), they demand family succession, which, due to gender issues, still favors male offspring. In addition, they fight for the right to retirement, maternity leave, access to credit, and recognition of the profession of a farmer to mitigate the invisibility of women’s work on farms (Spanevello; Matte; Boscardin, 2016).

This cultural habit that conditions the way of life in rural areas, reproducing gender differences, has been present since the childhood of rural youth, perpetuating itself into youth and adulthood (Brumer, 2007). However, one of the main consequences is the greater migration of women who seek autonomy in the city (Brumer, 2007; Galindo, 2019). Among the many factors that impose difficulties for young people to stay in the countryside (Castro *et al.*, 2013; Anjos; Caldas, 2005; Brumer, 2004), the negative weight around the presence of women as managers of rural property adds up, making it difficult and even compromising their stay in the

countryside and, consequently, in family succession (Brumer, 2007; Breitenbach; Corazza, 2017; Troian; Breitenbach, 2018; Matte *et al.*, 2019).

Female entrepreneurship and social innovation

The term entrepreneurship directly involves the concept of an entrepreneur, which has been defined by different authors throughout history. Moletta (2020), for example, relates the term to the act of creating a company. For the author, an entrepreneur is a person responsible for creating a business or innovating in business activity or strategy, with a focus on obtaining competitive advantages in the market. Schumpeter (1950), one of the first authors to refer to the term, makes a direct connection between entrepreneurship and the act of innovation, considering entrepreneurs as central to innovation actions in the world. According to the author, as entrepreneurs innovate, they make old business strategies outdated. The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM, 2019) disseminates the term as the act of entrepreneurship, which involves any attempt to create a new business (autonomous activity and/or new company) or expand an existing enterprise.

Studies have shown that women are increasingly encouraged to create their businesses. According to GEM (2019), in a survey conducted in the same year, 51.5% of new ventures are managed by women, and entrepreneurship usually arises for two reasons: necessity (no other job options available) or opportunity (a business to be pursued). In the state of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, in 2018, there were about 1,040,000 women entrepreneurs, representing 44% of the total number of entrepreneurs in the state. Regarding gender, 54.2% of men who started their businesses did so by opportunity, and 45.7% out of necessity. In contrast, 45.8% of women started their businesses by opportunity and 54.3% out of necessity (GEM, 2019).

Despite the prevalence of a sexist culture that has inhibited women's democratic and political strengthening, mechanisms such as workplace safety, low-cost microcredits, and gender equality policies have boosted their economic empowerment (Maguire; Ruela; De La Torre, 2016). However, according to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), inequality is still pronounced in the division of tasks that men and women perform at home. This inequality is expressed in the fact that women, compared to men, develop more than triple the amount of unpaid domestic work and care (UNDP, 2019). In addition to this, gender inequality is recognized as very complex, being one of the largest barriers to human development (UNDP, 2019).

It is in this context that entrepreneurial activity has been a resource used by women to reconcile family life with work, usually in search of income supplementation (GEM, 2019). From these initiatives, while women devote themselves to housekeeping, they lead different economic activities to support their families, further increasing the disparities in women's work and economic gaps compared to men (Torres, 2019).

The concept of social innovation, in turn, relates to female entrepreneurship since the activities led by rural women are easily characterized as social innovation. This occurs because these women usually seek to solve problems that they share among themselves, and the benefits sought are broad, involving the entire community to which they belong (Torres, 2019). This can change the structure and culture of communities, enabling social transformation.

The concept of social innovation derives from the idea that "social innovation is the generation of new solutions that have an impact on solving social problems, involving actors and

stakeholders in promoting change in social relations” (Agostini; Marques; Bossle, 2016). Social innovation is therefore understood as a process that produces tangible or intangible results, also considered an essential element for economic growth, generating local development and thus promoting the well-being of all involved (Maguire; Ruela; De La Torre, 2016).

Social innovation can also be seen as a driving force for positive changes in women’s lives, enabling access to basic services and income growth. Moreover, when it has the active participation of actors, it can be the object of self-determination, the acquisition of new knowledge and skills (D’Agostini; Freitas; Agostini, 2020). The pursuit of recognition and decision-making power of women entrepreneurs must be linked to social innovation, which is understood as the result of creativity, the ability to change, reinvent and innovate, and, with this, putting ideas into practice, improving the quality of life of people (Araújo; Cândido, 2015).

DATA ANALYSIS

Characterization of female farmers and respective properties

This section aims to characterize the women farmers who were part of this research, as well as their respective agricultural production units. Data collected from the questionnaire indicate that the age of the female farmers/entrepreneurs who responded to the survey ranges from 31 to 63 years, while the age of their daughters varies between 13 and 28 years. Only four girls are under the age of 16, and two are 28 years old. The remaining nine are in the age range of 17 to 20 years, meaning that the majority of daughters are young or teenagers. The age of the mothers ranges from 31 to 63 years (5 women aged between 31 and 39 years; 7 between 40 and 49 years; 1 between 50 and 59 years, and 1 between 60 and 63 years), highlighting that there is a proximity between the age of adult daughters and young mothers.

Regarding the productive activities developed in rural properties, it is observed that annual crops (beans, corn, wheat, and soybeans) are the main activities in 14 families, with only one of them not working with annual crops. They are followed by other productive activities such as dairy farming (6 properties), fruit growing (3 properties), vegetable farming (3 properties), and other activities such as pig and poultry farming (5 properties). According to data from the IBGE – Agricultural Census (2017), regarding grain production, the harvested area in the municipality of Getúlio Vargas is: corn grain (2,700 hectares - ha), corn silage (305 ha), soybean grain (15,286 ha), and wheat (1,829 ha).

Family agribusinesses appear in only 4 of the 15 rural properties surveyed. None of the young women intend to stay on the property to work solely in agribusiness, while 4 of them prefer to remain in the rural area reconciling activities on the property with agribusiness activities. However, 6 prefer to remain living on the rural property and work in the city, and 5 prefer to live and work in the city. This characterizes that agribusiness is still not an activity that can guarantee the succession of work from mothers to daughters and the maintenance in the countryside. One of the explanations for this is that in family farming, labor is predominantly from the family itself. Therefore, combining production activities, agribusiness, and care for home and family simultaneously can generate overload for women (Breitenbach; Foguesatto, 2023).

In 2021, there were 9 family agribusinesses registered in the municipality of Getúlio Vargas, the same number as the previous year (Emater, 2021). The possible stagnation in the emergence of new agribusinesses may be because the agribusinesses in the municipality sell most of their food in institutional markets through the Food Acquisition Program (PAA). These programs, PAA and Pnae, encourage family agriculture by ensuring commercialization, generating income, and promoting food production (Parizotto; Breitenbach, 2021). However, since the start of the 2020 school year, the world has faced the pandemic caused by Covid-19, leading to a health and social crisis that has impacted various sectors, including education and the economy. As a result of the disease's aggravation, schools remained closed for a long period, making it impossible to receive products for school meals (Gazolla; Rufino, 2021). This has impacted the difficulty in marketing food produced by family agriculture and, to some extent, the increased social vulnerability in the sector (Breitenbach, 2021; Gazolla; Rufino, 2021). To a certain extent, this instability may have also affected the responses and perceptions of the study participants.

Regarding the level of education, a contrast can be observed between generations. Only one mother has completed higher education; 7 mothers have completed secondary education, and 7 have incomplete secondary education. Despite having lower education, eight of the entrepreneurial farming mothers expressed interest in taking some type of training related to the work they do, especially in the areas of administration, property management, and agribusiness. The others responded that they do not currently feel the need. In the generation of successors, all the daughters are in educational training, with 2 having completed higher education and 6 studying at the higher education level, 5 having completed secondary education, and 5 studying at that level. This attests to the fact that girls/women have more educational opportunities than their mothers did.

Over the years, public policies providing access to municipal school transportation have benefited students from rural areas to attend urban schools. Another important factor is access to private transportation, as families invest in transporting students to other educational centers in the northern region of the state. Additionally, easier access to universities, institutes, and other colleges in the region explains the higher level of education. These factors, combined with a cultural shift towards recognizing the importance of education, have opened up opportunities for young women in rural areas to see education as a pathway to a better life.

Relationship between entrepreneurship, social innovation, and family succession

This section aims to explore the perspectives of rural-urban migration and family succession from the perception of young female farmers and their entrepreneurial farming mothers. Additionally, this scenario is discussed through the theoretical lenses of female entrepreneurship and social innovation. To this end, Table 1 presents the research results, with a focus on professional and personal perspectives, as well as the incentives received from parents.

Table 1 – Perspectives on the professional and personal future of young female farmers, daughters of entrepreneurial female farmers

Young female farmers daughters of entrepreneurial female farmers		Number of answers
Perspectives on the professional future	Staying on the rural property and working in the city	6
	Live and work in the city	5
	Staying in rural areas reconciling activities on the property with agro-industrial activities	4
	Stay in farming as an owner	3
	Staying in rural areas, but working in non-agricultural activities (agribusinesses)	0
	Living in the city and working in the countryside	0
Reasons to stay in rural areas	Likes the productive activities developed in rural areas	6
	It is a cozy, quiet place and provides conditions for socioeconomic growth.	4
	Proximity to family	3
	Parents want it to remain in the family estate/succession	2
	Dislikes the urban environment	2
	More comfort and quality of life	1
Parental incentives	Encouraged to stay in rural areas	12
	Not encouraged to stay in rural areas	6

Source: Prepared by the authors based on research data (2022).

According to the young female farmers, staying in the rural area and working solely in agribusiness activities, as well as living in the city and working in the rural area, is not of interest to any of the interviewees. Perhaps, because some are still undecided about their future choices, or because they are still young.

On the other hand, when asked about the main reason for staying in the rural area, the responses were diverse. It can be observed that more than 50% of the daughters enjoy the productive activities developed in the rural area, and consider staying in the rural area because it is a cozy and peaceful place. Regarding the social, organizational, and autonomy insertion of these young female farmers, it can be observed in Table 2 that some of the daughters have already begun to participate in business activities, especially through the Declaration of Aptitude for Pronaf (DAP) and association with cooperatives and representative entities of farmers.

Table 2 – Social and organizational insertion and autonomy of young women farmers, daughters of entrepreneurial women farmers

Social, organizational insertion and autonomy of young women	number of answers
Is associated with a cooperative	4
Participate in youth group	1
Join a farmers' association	3
Have a bank account	15
Has Declaration of Aptitude for Pronaf (DAP)	5

Source: Prepared by the authors based on research data (2022).

In addition, the research also identified a bottleneck related to entertainment and social interaction activities aimed at young women in rural areas. What predominates are typical community lunches and parties in the countryside. There are no significant activities that attract permanence and social relationship among participants. As examples of actions that occur, technical and leisure trips stand out, in which 7 young women participate, and collective sports in which 4 young women are practitioners.

From the point of view of the participation of rural young women in operational and managerial activities of rural properties, it was found that 12 young women are encouraged by their parents to have innovative ideas and actions, but they do not feel motivated to do so. Also, 11 of them do not develop any individual activity on the property to generate income, and 7 help with activities. Only 2 receive part of the value generated by the production of the property, and another 16 have to ask for money whenever they need it, and their parents decide whether to grant the money at their discretion. This situation is uncomfortable for young women, as they would like to have their own money for leisure, to buy their clothes and personal belongings, as well as to invest in studies or make a financial reserve for adulthood.

Division of labor, double shift, and entrepreneurship

Another area that this research investigated concerns the difficulties that women farmer entrepreneurs face when starting their businesses. For them, the main challenges they face when wanting to innovate and start a business on their property are the lack of technical knowledge, as well as the demand to reconcile personal and professional life, causing conflicts in their multiple roles as mothers, wives, homemakers, and entrepreneurs. In addition to the multiple roles developed by women, household services are entirely their responsibility, such as shopping for the household (food, cleaning supplies, clothing), preparing meals for the family, taking care of the garden and orchard, cleaning and organizing the house, and cleaning and taking care of gardens and surroundings.

Despite these challenges, the research participants feel secure and fulfilled, balancing their activities with family care and services on the property. According to them, 12 feel that their family (husband, daughters, and other family members living on the property) supports their choices for professional growth. In addition to working in the field and doing household chores, 6 women have some agricultural activity that is their responsibility and generates income on the property; 4 of them are responsible for the production and commercialization of

products through the family agribusiness, and 2 women are responsible for the production and commercialization of products at the city's producers' market.

Table 3 shows the activities that women perform on rural property in the business area. What is perceived is that male participation is no longer so predominant. With this data, there is an indication that women are starting to get more involved and participate in activities related to the business area.

Table 3 – Activities carried out by entrepreneurial women farmers in the business area

Activities carried out in the agribusiness area	Yes	No
Performs banking services (deposit or withdraw funds)	10	5
Forward bank financing projects	5	10
Contacts technicians and rural extension workers	8	7
Participates in decision-making on investments and allocation of financial resources on the property	8	7
Participates in meetings and technical courses	9	6
Sells agricultural and/or animal production	7	8

Source: Prepared by the authors based on research data (2022).

Regarding health and personal care such as dancing and practicing sports, it was noticed that the surveyed women (mothers) had little or no time for self-care. Out of the 15 participants in the survey, 12 of them responded that they had never been to gyms. Regarding medical care (9), dental care (11), and routine exams (8), most of them responded that they do it at least every six months. On the other hand, it can be observed that family vacations or just going out with family and friends are also part of the lives of a few women. Out of the 15 surveyed women, 6 have never taken family vacations, 6 rarely go out with their families, and 1 of them said she has never gone out with her family; in addition, 5 of them have never gone out with their friends. It can be noticed that the care for nails, hair, and skin is also low or very rarely experienced by women from the rural area.

Discussion of the data with the involved theories

Women have different ways of entrepreneurship, they develop strategies, and value quality of life, in other words, they need to know how to manage their time, making it possible to balance professional commitments with family ones. They divide their attention between home, children, marital relationships, and their personal life, which is why they seek greater flexibility and end up choosing the path of entrepreneurship (Tanure, 2014). The surveyed women, in addition to the multiple roles they play between domestic services and family care, which are entirely their responsibility, also assist in some agricultural activity that generates income on the family property. Moreover, there are women who, in addition to the above, as shown by the research, produce and/or market their products through a family agribusiness or at the rural producer fair in the city of Getúlio Vargas. According to Nazzari, Bertolini, and Brandalise (2007), with the advancement of capitalism in rural areas, family agriculture had to restructure

itself, discovering the diversification of subsistence production, with the sale of surpluses. Most women farmers, for cultural reasons, dedicate themselves mainly to domestic or subsistence activities (Spanevello; Matte; Boscardin, 2016). The authors' ideas are confirmed when it is observed that in rural enterprises, for these women, family well-being as a whole is prioritized over personal well-being. The responses given by the surveyed mothers about personal care, health, and leisure are rarely part of their routines. For rural women, leisure activities are still linked to issues of home, family, husband, and participation in church (community). According to Schwengber and Pinheiro (2014, p. 77), "women's time for rest and recreation is tied to the programming and organization of children, parents, husband, grandchildren, as well as involvement with the community through the organization of festivals and religious activities."

Such behavior, of sacrificing one's well-being, has a negative impact on the succession process. Young female farmers do not agree with the reality faced by their mothers, where family and property are always the top priority. In this case, the young women do not desire for themselves and their future the same fate of hard work and low appreciation that they observe in their mothers' trajectory as farmers, which impacts their lower interest in becoming successors (Brumer, 2004; Breitenbach; Corazza, 2020).

On the other hand, Dandolini (2018) shows us that entrepreneurial women seek to conquer their professional and personal space, their financial independence, and opportunities to have their businesses, balancing work and family. The flexibility of schedules is one of the reasons that leads women to become entrepreneurs, as being the owner of their businesses, they believe that they will be able to balance work and family (Strobino; Teixeira, 2014). However, this was not what was observed in the research with female farmers, as the autonomy to work as they wish is very distant from happening, such as the possibility of having flexible schedules to better balance their professional and family life.

In practice, they have difficulties in balancing the work on the field with the time dedicated to the family, home, church (community), and especially leisure, personal care, and well-being. Before becoming entrepreneurs, they only had the role of taking care of the home and the house, and from these movements, they started to assume the role of formal workers, becoming responsible for complementing the family income, and in many cases, being the only financial provider of the household (Parasuraman; Greenhaus, 1997).

Society's expectations regarding gender roles have changed very little over time, and traditional gender socialization patterns persist in new generations. It is possible to observe that issues related to household chores are still directed as women's duties, occurring at any age, including among children and adolescents (Sorj, 2008). This culture is more strongly present in rural areas (Brumer, 2004).

Contrary to household services, which are performed solely by women according to research data, there is an indication that women are starting to become more involved and participate in activities related to the business area of the rural property. "Women's participation plays a very important role in the productive sphere, as an artisanal tradition in product manufacturing, marks in many cases the starting point for activity expansion in terms of scale and work rearrangement" (Mesquita, 2012, p. 10).

When an individual enjoys what they do, they are more dedicated and always seek to update themselves. According to Oliveira, Silva, and Araújo (2014), by being passionate about

their work, female entrepreneurs contribute to the development of their businesses. For most of the surveyed mothers, the main challenges they face when wanting to undertake and innovate in the property are the lack of technical knowledge and the difficulty of reconciling personal and professional life, causing conflicts in their multiple roles as mothers, wives, homemakers, and entrepreneurs. However, other mothers feel secure and fulfilled, reconciling their activities with care for the family and services performed on the properties. They also mention that their family (husband, daughters, and other relatives who live on the property) support them in their choices for professional growth. Entrepreneurship is a term that implies a way of being, changing a current situation, with a different perspective, a world conception, and a way of relating, with all its characteristics, entrepreneurial activity makes work and pleasure go hand in hand (Dolabela, 2008).

Family agroindustries enable farmers and their families to remain in rural areas while involving all family members in production processes through short supply chains, transforming raw materials produced on the property and selling them in the local municipality, thus boosting the local economy (Balestrin; Deggerone, 2018). Family agroindustries were found in 4 out of 15 surveyed rural properties, and 5 women showed interest in starting a new enterprise on their properties.

The observed movement in this case study highlights that social innovation is an essential process for societal progress, seeking sustainable alternatives for collective well-being. Analyzing different contexts, social innovation has been observed to contribute to community and territorial empowerment, socio-economic development, resolution of social and environmental issues, and transforming local realities (Moulaert; Mehmood, 2020; Bataglin; Kruglianskas, 2022; Agostini; Bitencourt; Vieira, 2019).

However, despite the positive impact of entrepreneurship, the prospects of family succession for the daughters in this research were not positive. One possible explanation is that fieldwork is seen by families, especially daughters, as labor-intensive and physically demanding work for women. This result is corroborated by the findings of Breitenbach and Corazza (2019), who mention that the migration of young people from rural areas to cities, particularly girls, is a worrying trend.

Regarding the challenges faced by the daughters in innovating and starting businesses on their properties, they reported having the encouragement and support of their parents, but in practice, they do not feel motivated to do so. Perhaps because most of them do not develop any individual activities on the property to generate income, they have to ask for money every time they need it, and their parents decide and grant the money at their discretion.

It is also noticeable that no more expressive factor attracts young women to stay in the countryside and social relationships among participants. Regarding involvement in entities and associations, young women have little participation, as reported in the research. Perhaps these are some of the reasons why young rural producers seek financial independence in the city and have presented themselves as true dilemmas among the surveyed families. According to Furlani and Bomfim (2010), the city offers diversity that the countryside often does not have, such as universities and other forms of work that are not strictly rural activities, that is, options for working and studying.

On the other hand, when asked if they are encouraged to stay in the countryside, most daughters say yes, because it is with their mothers that they learn from an early age about life in the countryside, and the challenges they will face if they take over inherited properties. From these reported perceptions, the role of women in family farming is clear. In this sense, it is necessary to empower these women, valuing and recognizing the importance of female workers in rural areas as a way to ensure the development of family farming (Silva; Mendes, 2015).

Female empowerment is a long process and does not happen overnight. In this sense, it is worth considering that these women have been advancing in actions and results to break personal paradigms created by gender issues, in which women should stay at home taking care of children and the house. For this to happen, there is a need for a set of social and political changes aimed at transforming gender relations.

Thus, a framework is proposed in Figure 1, based on the findings of this research, both theoretical and empirical. Family succession in rural areas still has an environment dominated by men, in which gender aspects are influential so that female daughters do not stay in the countryside, or even if they stay, do not exercise leadership roles. Through the lens of social innovation and female entrepreneurship, five central elements are observed: personal, financial, educational, family, and public policy aspects. Three theoretical lenses were analyzed: social innovation, female entrepreneurship, and family succession.

Figure 1 – Framework with the synthesis of research findings



Source: Prepared by the authors based on research data (2022).

To better understand the Figure, it should be noted that the text under the black bars of each of the five elements provides a solution to the issue highlighted in the first line (above the dash), in order to promote gender equality in the countryside, encourage women to stay in the rural area and encourage female entrepreneurial initiatives. When analyzing the scheme proposed in Figure 1, it also shows challenges in each of the five elements observed, namely: personal space; income increase; activities in the business areas; unappreciation; and gender equality. For each of these challenges, a solution approach is presented, in the sense

of promoting gender equity in the countryside, favoring the permanence of women in the countryside, and encouraging female entrepreneurial initiatives.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Thus, based on the presented data, it is evident that young women, unlike their mothers, have greater recognition of their social, cultural, and economic roles. They take on new spaces in the labor market and have the freedom to choose their professions. Along with their mothers, these girls learn from an early age about life in the countryside and the challenges they will face if they inherit properties. They also develop new skills and competencies, acquire new knowledge and wisdom, and learn to be entrepreneurs and protagonists of their own stories. They are redefining their lives with new quests for knowledge and recognition, creating a new generation for rural life.

It can be inferred that promoting gender equality requires recognizing and promoting women's leadership in production, management, marketing, and access to public policies, encouraging and supporting women's income generation, valuing existing knowledge, acknowledging their active participation in the economy, ensuring rights, opportunities, and participation in property decisions.

Considering the relevant responses addressed by women and their daughters who participated in this research, it is evident that there is still a vast field to be studied when it comes to "female entrepreneurship and family succession in rural areas." There is much to be done, and it is necessary to involve women and their daughters in the management, succession of rural property, and in society in general to which they belong. This highlights the importance of valuing female empowerment and social innovation in rural properties, thus stimulating the development and well-being of rural families.

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