



Agricultural Policy Research in Africa



UNDERSTANDING GENDER AND SOCIAL DIFFERENTIATION IN THE CONTEXT OF AGRICULTURAL COMMERCIALISATION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR LIVELIHOODS IN RURAL MALAWI

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ACRONYMS

APRA	Agricultural Policy Research in Africa
OH	original household
MHH	male-headed household
FHH	female-headed household
HCI	Household Commercialisation Index
FISP	Farm Input Subsidy Programme
FGD	focus group discussion

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Agricultural commercialisation is widely recognised as a catalyst to economic growth and development in low and middle-income countries. This study investigates gender and social differences in agricultural commercialisation in rural Malawi. Specifically, we analyse different levels of agricultural commercialisation among gender and wealth categories; the specific gender and social issues that facilitate or impede agricultural commercialisation among gender and wealth categories; and their implications for commercialisation and livelihoods among gender and wealth categories. We use both qualitative and quantitative data from central Malawi districts of Mchinji and Ntchisi to understand these dynamics. We use longitudinal quantitative study data of 217 households originally interviewed back in 2007 and tracked in 2018, and 302 branching-off households (households that were formed by members of the original households). Qualitative data is drawn from focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews as well as in-depth life histories. The study finds that there are more households that are *'hanging in'* than those that are *'stepping up'* and *'stepping out'*, with notable differences among gender and wealth groups. Over the study years, there had been an increase in commercialisation but female-headed households (FHHs) and poorer households are less commercialised compared to male-headed households (MHHs) and richer households. This is explained by the lack of resources to accumulate productive assets including land, agricultural inputs, and labour; lack of ownership of assets such as livestock; and lack of access to agricultural extension services. There are also prevailing factors among FHHs such as lack of participation in decision-making, lack of control of resources and income, and men taking over 'women's crops'. The impact of these differences is evidenced by the poor food security situation, reliance on *ganyu*¹ and social safety nets, poor housing conditions, and exchanging labour for materials and income, which also puts women at a more disadvantage position to engage in commercial agriculture. In conclusion, agricultural commercialisation is a 'chicken and egg' situation where the prevailing conditions among FHHs

and women, as well as poor households, hinder them from being commercialised, and their non-participation in commercial farming prevent them from improving their situation.

¹ *Ganyu* is a term used to describe short-term, informal labour, which is often paid for in cash. It covers a wide range of labour activities including on-farm and off-farm (Sitienei, Mishra and Khanal 2016).

1 INTRODUCTION

Agricultural commercialisation creates employment for rural households and improves their standards of living. It is perceived to be a means to enhance rural farmers' livelihoods. Most agricultural-based economies consider the transition from subsistence to commercial agriculture as a positive step towards economic development (Carletto, Corral and Guelfi 2017). One of the priorities for Malawi, as a country heavily dependent on agriculture, is to promote agricultural commercialisation as a way of boosting the country's economic base. The objective is ultimately not only to improve the economy of the country, but also the livelihoods of the majority of Malawians. Studies have demonstrated how agricultural commercialisation impacts on livelihoods, for instance Radchenko and Corral (2018) on food security and household nutrition, Rabbi *et al.* (2017), and Eskola (2005) on improvement of household welfare.

Although agricultural commercialisation is deemed to be essential, for reasons already mentioned, the question is, who does agricultural commercialisation benefit? This paper attempts to answer this question by shedding light on who (among the different gender and wealth categories) is benefiting from agricultural commercialisation, and how different are the livelihoods of different gender and wealth categories. The paper focuses on differences among MHHs and FHHs but also among men and women in MHHs. In terms of wealth categories, the study focuses on four wealth groups: the poorest, the poor, the better-off, and the rich. The conceptualisation of this paper is based on the understanding that agricultural commercialisation is happening, but to various degrees for different social groups. Commercialisation is also leading to different outcomes for the different social categories; some will lose while others will win. The reason for this is partly due to the different social relationships they share. The political economy of agricultural commercialisation may very much concern the social conditions of the process of agricultural commercialisation, because farmers' activities are completed in relation to other peoples', for example in issues related to labour, ownership of land, inputs, tools and materials used in the activities, and claims on benefits of the process of commercialisation (Bernstein 2010). In other words, we are looking at the relations between people that shape

how agricultural commercialisation is organised, and also at people's capacity to organise themselves, to make decisions about commercial agriculture, and carry them out.

We use data from a Malawi Agricultural Policy Research in Africa (APRA) study to understand gender and social differences in agricultural commercialisation. This paper looks at social differentiation in terms of gender and wealth among small-scale farmers, with the understanding that small-scale farmers are not homogenous. With regard to social differentiation based on gender, there is growing literature on gender in agriculture pointing to the subordinate position allocated to women who engage in agricultural production (Momsen 2004; Brydon and Chant 1989; Boserup 1970). Other scholars have also written on the active role that women play both as subsistence and cash crop farmers, but pointed out that often men are the ones that are regarded as farmers while women are regarded as gardeners or helpers (Brydon and Chant 1989).

Both men and women engage in cash crop production activities as a survival strategy to secure better livelihoods and become more self-reliant financially. Mojirayo (2014) noted some factors that lead to an increase in female participation in cash crop production, such as rural male migration, an increase in the number of FHHs, and women's inability to work beyond the petty trading level due to a lack of education. There is also growing literature on men's and women's crops explaining that women and men concentrate on different crops, depending on their lucrativeness and requirement for specific skills (Lifeyo 2017; Oduol *et al.* 2017; Orr *et al.* 2016). For example, in Malawi, groundnuts have been traditionally seen as a women's crop with men concentrating on tobacco.

This paper will fill an evidence gap that exists by providing a Malawian perspective on gender and social differentiation in agricultural commercialisation, since information on the Malawi experience is scanty. In addition, the paper contributes to the current policy debate on the roles of women in agriculture, the economic empowerment of women and the benefits of agricultural commercialisation among different social and gender categories in reducing poverty and

improving people's livelihoods. With this background, the main aim of this paper is to understand the gender and social differences in smallholder agricultural commercialisation in Malawi and the implications for livelihoods. Specifically, the paper interrogates the levels of agricultural commercialisation and differences in livelihood outcomes among MHHs and FHHs as well as among different wealth categories. Furthermore, the paper investigates gender differences in access and ownership to land, control over land, access to productive resources, access to extension services, household decision-making, and asset accumulation. Understanding these differences will shed more light on factors that either enable or impede agricultural commercialisation or benefits from agricultural commercialisation among the gender and wealth categories.

2 THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS AND A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In African agriculture, one of the most important dimensions of social differentiation is gender because it is used to determine social power relations, asset accumulation and livelihood opportunities inside and outside the household (Dancer and Hossain 2018). Another dimension of social differentiation considered here is wealth. In this case, households were categorised based on local definition of wealth and description of different wealth categories. According to Dancer and Hossain (2018), wealth can be measured by looking at trends in accumulation of assets and social inequalities. This study investigates whether different wealth groups lead to asset accumulation and social inequalities existing in the communities. This information is used to provide insights on differences in levels of commercialisation among gender and social categories. It is worth mentioning that these dimensions often overlap, for instance, a household may belong to the specific wealth category as a result of the gender category.

Dancer and Hossain (2018) pointed out different theories that are useful in analysing social differences in the context of agricultural commercialisation in Africa. This study will draw from the social differentiation and social difference theory which discusses struggles that exist over resources as well as situations and processes that produce and deepen inequality and exclusion for certain social groups (Hall, Scoones and Tsikata 2017; Peters 2004; Berry 1993). Dancer and Hossain (2018) examined the significance of agency (the actor's or group's ability to make powerful choices; systemic and processual factors) that affect the individual or household's capacity to move along different pathways of agricultural commercialisation. This theory will help to answer the question: Who wins or loses from the process of agricultural commercialisation? This will be examined through analysing the decision-making processes, access and control over resources and benefits as well as the outcomes of commercialisation across gender and wealth groups.

Furthermore, the paper draws on the concepts of marginalisation and exclusion as explained by Dancer and Hossain (2018) which imply multiple deprivations arising from mutually reinforcing practices and structures that devalue people's cultural or social

beliefs or restrict their access to economic activity or political power. The authors explain that these concepts have helped to explain differences in levels of commercialisation and livelihood trajectories among gender and wealth categories.

The study also looks at differentiation based on wealth groups. This is explored with the understanding that farmers are not homogenous, differences exist which on the one hand presents differences in involvement cash crop production and on the other hand, differences in benefits realised from commercial farming. In Henry Bernstein's (2010) book, *Class Dynamics of Agrarian Change*, argue that there is no single class of peasants or small-scale farmers; they are differentiated based on different criteria, one of which is land size, the other is type of farming. Again, Edelman and Borras (2016) in their book, *Political Dynamics Of Transnational Movements*, explained that land based working classes are not homogenous; they are differentiated socially based on a number of factors including their location in social relations around poverty, control over means of production such as land, labour, capital and technology; with land access and ownership being the most important one. Edelman and Borras (2016) described the various categories of peasants including the rich, the poor and the middle farmers. This study explores social differentiation of small-scale farmers in the context of agricultural commercialisation, in particular, the wealth category engages and benefits from commercialisation and the implications of these differences for their livelihoods.

Furthermore, the paper draws from the feminist political economy theory to explain the differences in benefits from agricultural commercialisation among MHHs and FHHs. Feminist political economy theory analyse gender issues within the broader political economy theory contending that changes in gender relations are a consequence of the changes in the overall political economy; thus economic liberalisation, globalisation and agrarian change (Dancer and Tsikata 2015). They further postulate that political economy approaches are useful as they pay attention to gender relations in the households and local spaces, which is the focus of this study.

Even though this study generally considers gender dimension of social difference in terms of MHHs and FHHs, as heads are assumed to be farm managers, other studies have recognised that it is important to also consider intrahousehold gender dynamics, which could have implications for access to resources and benefits, control over resources and benefits, decision-making and ownership. For instance, Jackson (2003) recognised that it is a mistake to assume complete separation of men and women interests within the households. She further contends that interests of men and women in the households are both separate and joint, which makes gender struggles more complicated as women may not always act as expected to the idea that they are a separate category with interests separate from those of men (Jackson 2003). In this paper, apart from looking at gender differences among MHHs and FHHs, we also examine gender differences between men and women in MHH, especially in terms of land ownership and decision-making.

Studies have demonstrated how the reality of women being active participants in both subsistence and cash crop production has for a long time been ignored (Brydon and Chant 1989), and women have been allocated a subordinate role in agricultural production (Momsen 2004; Brydon and Chant 1989; Boserup 1970). The engagement of both men and women in cash crop production has been seen as a survival strategy and for improvement of livelihoods, women play more of a role in commercial farming as a result of reasons noted earlier. Nevertheless, Mojirayo (2014) reported that the migration of men can be regarded as a kind of empowerment for women as it encourages women's determination to survive without waiting for their husband's remittance or presence to make a living.

Women's involvement in cash crop production shows their genuine desire to enhance their socio-economic status, and women generate income gains by shifting from subsistence to cash crops. The participation of women in cash crop production is significant in reducing poverty at household level, and challenges the dominance of men in cash crop production, hence improving women economic status and participation in decision-making. Even though women participation in cash crop production can be seen as increasing work loads for women, as they combine both domestic and commercial work, it is a more prestigious work that gives them a voice both in the family and in the community (Orr *et al.* 2016).

Despite the fact that women's participation in cash crop production is seen as being lucrative, their full participation is hampered by problems with land tenure, credit facilities, direct access to production inputs for

their crops and direct market access (Mojirayo 2014). Moser (1993) recognizes the roles of women being productive, reproductive and community, which have been summarized as housework, child care and subsistence food production. These roles have increased with female involvement in commercial agriculture. Women usually combine two or more crops including cash crops but for men it is normally one crop (Mojirayo 2014). Orr *et al.* (2016) found that commercialisation of cash crop disempowers women because traditionally, women are seen as providers of food and men as providers of wage goods. Therefore, when these food crops become commercialised, the gender roles conflict. When this occurs, men then assert their roles as providers of wage goods to gain control of household income from food crops and women end up becoming farm labourers. This has also been regarded as threatening conjugal contracts because it is seen to be reversing the gender roles. Momsen (2010) noted that modernisation in agriculture has altered the division of labour between the sexes, increasing women's dependent status as well as workload. Some scholars have also postulated that the commercialisation process has displaced women by men from their farm activities leading to housewifization, a situation of rendering women to domestic affairs with little or no decision-making power. In as much as Orr *et al.* (2016) agree with Mojirayo (2014) that involvement of women in cash crop production appear to have contributed to women's work or burden by combining both domestic and commercial work; they contend that it is a more prestigious work that give them both a voice in the family and in the community.

The gender implications of agricultural commercialisation on women's farming is not uniform. Studies have demonstrated that local social norms and practices concerning gendered roles and participation in decision-making must be considered when examining the gender consequences of commercialisation (Smalley 2013). The impact of smallholder commercialisation on gender depends on the available resources and who controls the income generated. Commercialisation leads to increase in income levels for small farmers but some researchers have expressed fears that commercialisation can weaken the role of women and their control over resources and income due to the household moving from subsistence to commercial. As the food crop shifts to cash crops, it attracts more men's attention (Drafor 2014). This was also observed by Gurung (2006) who noted that women loose income and control as products move from farm to markets, and men may take over production and marketing even of 'traditional women's crops' when it becomes financially lucrative to do so. Drafor (2014) further noted that the

ability of women or resource poor farmers to move into commercial farming requires resource availability, access to technologies and market opportunities. Thus, women need to adopt strategies that will allow them to bypass the gender constraints, which would, in turn, permit them access to the land, capital and other production resources (Drafor 2014).

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design, data collection and analysis

The paper uses data from the APRA programme in Malawi. The APRA study was completed in Mchinji and Ntchisi districts in central Malawi. The APRA study took a subset sample of Mchinji and Ntchisi of a 30-year-old study conducted by the School of Oriental and African Studies in collaboration with National Statistical Office as part of the evaluation of the Agricultural Input Subsidy Programme. The 2006/2007 data was regarded as a benchmark and households were regarded as 'original households' (OH). The total sample for the two districts that were interviewed in the baseline were 240 households. We therefore targeted 240 households that were interviewed in 2007 to be revisited and any households that have branched off from the OHs. The districts were selected because they produce most of the groundnuts in Malawi, a cash crop that has been key in the recent past but also riddled with aflatoxin management issues.

To start with, in 2018, we conducted a reconnaissance study where we chose one site in each district to conduct key informant interviews and FGDs with smallholder farmers. The aim of the reconnaissance study was to understand commercialisation activities and livelihood changes in general before embarking on a large-scale tracker study. We heard interviews with district level officials from National Smallholder Agricultural Association of Malawi, Trade Officers, Agribusiness Officers, and Agricultural Extension Development Officers. We also conducted FGDs with smallholder farmers, which comprised members and non-member of farmer organisations in each district.

During the second phase, we aimed to track the 240 OHs and all the other members that had branched off from their OHs. We managed to interview 217 households (103 from Mchinji and 114 from Ntchisi) representing a success rate of 90 percent in tracking the OHs. Since we were also interested in how individual members livelihoods are influenced by agriculture and its commercialisation; we also tracked household members who had 'branched off' from the OHs of which about 302 (143 from Mchinji and 159 from Ntchisi) were successfully traced and interviewed.

The second phase was predominantly quantitative using a structured questionnaire where modules on crops production, harvests, marketing, demographic information, income, and expenditure, household asset conditions, infrastructure, food, and nutrition situation were covered. To triangulate information, we also collected qualitative data using FGDs and key informant interviews simultaneously with the survey. The qualitative data was collected from club and non-club members from the same communities in which we conducted quantitative study. Data was collected through FGDs, key informant interviews, and the same modules were covered.

Furthermore, during the third phase, we conducted life histories involving a few selected households. We randomly selected households per livelihood trajectory to participate in life history interviews. Based on analysis of quantitative data, households were categorised into five livelihood trajectories based on the Dorward *et al.* (2009) framework of livelihood trajectories, '*hanging in*', '*stepping up*' and '*stepping out*', with an addition of '*dropping out*' (Mushongah 2009). According to our study, '*dropping out*' households are those whose main source of income was agriculture in 2007 but in 2018 they rely on piece works or other income sources. The aforementioned include social assistance and remittances or they are on a social cash transfer programme; '*stepping in*' households are those whose agricultural income in 2007 was zero and their main source of income was not agricultural sales in 2007. In 2018, their main source of income was agricultural sales and they are not on social cash transfers; '*hanging in*' households are those whose main source of income was agricultural sales in 2007. In 2018, it remains, but in addition, they have not expanded or diversified and they are not on social cash transfers, their calculated farm income change is less than 25 percent; '*stepping up*' households are those whose main source of income was agricultural sales in 2007. They have expanded and diversified and their main source of income remains agricultural sales in 2018. Their calculated income change is greater than or equal to 25 percent; '*stepping out*' households are those whose greater proportion of income was agricultural sales in 2007. It is non-farm sources of income in 2018 and they rely on salary or business income as

their main sources. For OHs the survey aimed for 12 interviews in each livelihood trajectory whilst for branching-off households, it was eight interviews. The life histories documented the role of agriculture and groundnuts commercialisation through different stages of the life cycle (i.e. family background, childhood and adolescence, youth, young adulthood, late adulthood, and older age).

Quantitative data was analysed through descriptive statistics to generate means, frequencies, and cross tabulations in Statistical Package for Social Scientists and Stata. Qualitative data was organised in Atlas ti. and analysed using content analysis to generate themes, codes, and quotations in Atlas ti. We also make a comparison between the two districts and between OHs and branching-off households.

The key analysis variables are gender, wealth category and Household Commercialisation Index (HCI). We looked at gender based on the sex of the household head and differentiated MHHs and FHHs with assumptions that these heads are the ones managing their farm and agricultural activities. We also looked at gender by analysing the dynamics between men and women in the MHHs with the understanding that men and women have different opportunities and challenges. Wealth category was determined based on local description of wealth and these were categorised more broadly into poorer (poor and poorest) and richer (better-off and rich) households. Another key variable was the HCI, which shows level of agricultural commercialisation of a household by looking at the proportion of total production that is marketed. We recognise that agricultural commercialisation can be looked at from different angles including from the input side where we look at the amount of purchased inputs used, from the output side by looking at the proportion of marketed output, from the land dedicated for commercial crops, and also from the level of mechanisation (APRA 2018). Here, quantitative data was implemented to present HCI, which examined commercialisation from the output side. Nonetheless, our qualitative data also shed more light on the other measures. The index of 0 shows no commercialisation and 1 as total commercialisation.

4 RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Gender, wealth, and livelihood trajectories

More generally, our study finds that there are more farming households that are *'hanging in'* in agriculture than those which are *'stepping up'* and *'stepping out'*, with notable differences among gender and wealth groups (Table 4.1 and Table 4.5). From Table 4.1, it can be observed that on the one hand, there is a higher percentage of FHHs that are *'hanging in'* compared to MHHs. On the other hand, there is a small percentage of FHHs *'stepping up'* than MHHs. We also note from Table 4.5 that by looking at the description of the poor and poorest households, they are more likely to be *'hanging in'* and others *'dropping out'* than they are to be *'stepping up'* or *'stepping out'*, unlike better-off and rich households.

4.2 Gender, wealth groups and agricultural commercialisation

Table 4.2 shows HCI by gender of household head. We found statistically significant differences between MHHs and FHHs as MHHs had HCI than FHHs with an average HCI of 0.58 for MHHs and 0.50 for FHHs. This shows that MHHs are more likely to be

commercialised than FHH. The gender differences in levels of commercialisation could be due to factors such as different access to productive resources such as agricultural inputs and land. In a study in Ghana, Djurfeldt, Dzanku and Isinika (2018) noted that often MHHs and FHHs have differential access to productive resources which affects productivity; differential access to markets between men and women due to issues of mobility and transaction costs, which can be managed more efficiently by men than women. Our study also found that mainly FHHs are those that have poor access to productive resources such as agricultural inputs, land, and labour. This can also be collaborated by Mutabazi, Wiggins and Mdoe (2013) who found that female farmers had less access to irrigated land, hence they were at a disadvantage of being less commercialised.

In Table 4.5, we present different characteristics of wealth groups based on local description, and from the description, we observe a trend of prevailing conditions among poorer households that can disadvantage them in as far as commercial farming is concerned. Conditions such as poor access to agricultural inputs, labour (since they usually sell their labour), land (since

Table 4.1: Livelihood trajectory by sex of household head (%)

	1		2		3		4		5	
	OH	Branching-off households	OH	Branching-off households	OH	Branching-off households	OH	Branching-off households	OH	Branching-off households
Male	2(3)	4 (13)	10(13)	10 (32)	18(23)	17(54)	35 (46)	34(108)	35(45)	35 (113)
Female	-	0	22 (11)	20 (14)	16 (8)	14(10)	20(10)	22(15)	41(20)	43(30)
N										

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Note: 1 = *stepping out*, 2 = *dropping out*, 3 = *stepping up*, 4 = *hanging in*, and 5 = *stepping in*

Source: Authors' own

Table 4.2: HCI by sex of household head

	2007 OH		2018 OH		2018 branching-off households		2018 all households	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Average	0.22*	0.13	0.54*	0.43	0.61	0.62	0.58**	0.50
N	194	45	159	57	270	32	429	89

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Source: Authors' own

they normally rent out their land), and other productive resources. This resonates with what Djurfeldt, Dzanku and Isinika (2018) alluded to that resource poor households lag behind in the process of agricultural commercialisation because they lack efficiency due to inadequate productive resources. They struggle to operate under harsh and unfavourable conditions such as weather and market failures, and also, they become even more marginalised due to the accumulation of the well-off farmers, which is at the expense of these worse-off farmers.

Our findings agree with what has already been documented by other studies, which can prompt us to conclude that in the process of agricultural commercialisation, households that are headed by women are less likely to effectively commercialise than those controlled by men. During our FGDs, participants also echoed the challenges that FHHs face to effectively commercialise. Some of these challenges are in line with availability of labour, capacity to invest in inputs, and mobility issues.

“In a FHH, there is less development in terms of farming as women lack capacity to acquire inputs such as fertiliser.”

4.3 Gender of decision-maker and household commercialisation

With respect to decision-making, access and control as well as ownership of productive resources and benefits of agriculture, we found that mainly decisions regarding production and control of resources are made by men in MHH (Table 4.3). We observed that there is a higher percentage of households in which plot decisions and control of income is completed by men than decisions or control, which are carried out by women or jointly. This trend is observed among both OHs and branching-off households. Previous research has shown that there is a relationship between land rights and decision-making at household level. For example, Djurfeldt *et al.* (2018) found in their study

of three Malawi villages that it is predominately men who are the decision-makers despite both genders completing the activities. There is a link to land tenure rights, which is mainly the men’s domain. Women’s control of household income is low despite evidence that when women have control of household income, it benefits not only them but also their children and entire families (Quisumbing, Meinzen-dick and Njuki 2019).

Our study finds some indirect links between land rights and decision-making. It was clear in some cases that despite women owning land (inherited or given), decisions on what happens to the land including crop choices are made by men. During FGDs, it was revealed that men make decisions about what happens on the land, which affect their farming activities. This, in turn, means the choices favour men. Hence, some women preferred joint decision-making and joint control of both resources and income as this has potential to benefit both men and women. Although, we observed that among both OHs and branching-off households, a very small percentage reported that plot decisions and control of income were completed jointly. However, we observed mixed views on this, while others preferred joint decision-making, some women preferred men having an upper hand in decision-making. According to women, it works better that way and they are able to harvest enough as men are the ones that provide for the household and that it is difficult for women to assume this role. Similarly, Sell and Minot (2018) in Uganda found that women made decisions regarding food crops and not cash crops, although in our case we referred to all farm decisions. On the contrary, Raidimi (2014) in Limpopo, South Africa, considered that women were taking part in all activities of the agricultural enterprises in the household.

“We women do not have control; we must obey our husbands and that is what I do.”

“The man is the head of the family, so he makes the last decision in the house.”

Table 4.3: Household decision-making (proportion reporting)

Variable	OH 2018	Branching-off households	Whole sample
Male head	0.74 (216)	0.89 [*] (302)	0.83 (518)
Male head control crop income	0.62 (206)	0.71 [*] (302)	0.67 (519)
Female head control crop income	0.27 (206)	0.13 [*] (302)	0.19 (519)
Plot decisions made by male head	0.65 (217)	0.75 [*] (272)	0.71 (478)
Plot decisions made by female head	0.23 (217)	0.10 [*] (272)	0.16 (478)
Plot decisions made jointly	0.16 (199)	0.17 (272)	
Income controlled jointly	0.18 (210)	0.23 (302)	
N in brackets			

^{*}*p*<0.10, ^{**}*p*<0.05, ^{***}*p*<0.01 *p*-values show significance of results at different levels

Source: Authors’ own

Our study brings out an interesting nuance to the debates on decision-making in relation to agricultural developments, as often it is assumed that women are not the decision-makers but are disadvantaged and losers in the process. However, understanding their real experiences is what can bring useful insights for policy makers to make informed choices. We also established that MHHs are more likely to control income in the household with very strong statistically significant differences observed (Table 4.3). Besides, we also found that male heads are the ones that predominately interact with markets, which gives them an opportunity to have access to the income realised, and an advantage to use the income. FGDs revealed that experiences of women have shown that when this happens, male heads have an opportunity to utilise the money in ways that benefit them more and benefit the women or the household less.

“Farming was going on well but my friend would just eat the money and because I don’t like quarrels, I would just humbly stay and look at how things were going, I would also get shouted at for no reason so I finally made the decision to go back home. This was a shock to me. My husband had changed because of the benefits of farming. He started making more money, which attracted the woman he married to want to be part of his success, so I decided to just move out of the house instead of sharing a husband.”

The relations between men and women also bordered on crops cultivated. As demonstrated elsewhere by Ngcoya and Kumarakulasingam (2017); de Brauw

(2015); Doss and Haven (2002) that there are variations in what are referred to as ‘men crops’ and ‘women crops’ with differences arising from complexity of crop production and labour roles related to a crop among others. In our study, we learnt that long ago, men concentrated on growing tobacco while women focused on cultivating groundnuts. Even though both genders shared an interest in maize (which was predominately a food crop), it was still the men that interacted with the markets for both tobacco and groundnuts. Nowadays, men are shifting from tobacco to groundnuts because on the one hand, it is worth noting the challenges being faced in the tobacco sector which include: 1) the crop becomes expensive to grow due to heavy input depended nature and with sky locating prices of inputs and lack of subsidies; 2) declining prices of tobacco at the auction floors, which is a result of both the reduced quality of the leaf produced and market problems; 3) due to reduced demand for tobacco with increased health concerns of smoking on an international scale, the demand for tobacco leaf is reducing. On the other hand, groundnuts are becoming more manageable to produce as they do not require heavy investment in inputs and it has become lucrative on the market. This is similar to what is happening in Ghana where there is male dominance in cash crop production and growing male control of the food crops as they become commercialised (Djurfeldt, Dzanku and Isinika *et al.* 2018). The implication is that women are being denied an opportunity to maximise the potential that groundnuts is currently having to earn them income. Of course in other settings, like Zambia, women

Table 4.4: Income sources by household head

	2018 OH		2018 branching-off households		2018 all households	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Crop sale	0.84	0.80	0.75	0.66	0.78	0.72
Livestock sales	0.30	0.11	0.20	0.09	0	0.10
Livestock products	0,06	0.05	0.01	0.03	0.03	0.04
Remittances	0.12	0.14	0.04	0	0.07	0.01
Assets	0.03	0.02	0.04	0.03	0.04	0.02
Business enterprise	0.22	0.14	0.37	0.16	0.31	0.15
Social cash transfer	0.04	0.14	0.01	0.03	0.02	0.10
Public works program	0.08	0.10	0.03	0.03	0.05	0.01
Other safety nets	0.01	0	0.001	0	0.01	0
Salaried non-farm income	0.08	0.02	0.11	0.06	0.10	0.01
Farm-work <i>ganyu</i>	0.33	0.54	0.52	0.62	0.45	0.60
Other <i>ganyu</i>	0.11	0.05	0.16	0.16	0.14	0.01
Any <i>ganyu</i> work	0.35	0.56	0.55	0.70	0.48	0.60
Salary	0.12	0.04	0.15	0.13	0.14	0.07
N	159	57	270	32	429	89

^{*}*p*<0.10, ^{**}*p*<0.05, ^{***}*p*<0.01

Source: Authors' own

were happy that men were joining in groundnuts cropping and providing help with labour by expanding production to earn more income (Orr *et al.* 2016). This study noted that FHHs are confronted with inadequate capital investment into farming and inadequate labour, which may constrain their commercialisation.

4.4 Diversity of income sources, gender, and agricultural commercialisation

Men and women engage in different economic activities. Women are more likely to diversify into non-farm economic activities while wage employment is chiefly dominated by men. We found that households are more likely to receive income from crop sales and less likely from livestock sales. However, differences were observed among MHHs and FHHs where more MHHs are likely to receive income from both crops and livestock sales while more FHHs are likely to receive income from *ganyu* than MHHs (Table 4.4). These differences are observed across OHs and branching-off households.

These findings agree with what Djurfeldt, Dzanku and Isinika *et al.* (2018) found that male managed farms own more livestock than female managed farms. In addition, income differences and diversification differences exist among MHHs and FHHs. The aforementioned scholars found that MHHs are more likely to receive income from agriculture compared to FHHs as FHHs are more likely to engage in non-farm income sources such as agricultural wages. It was also noted that *ganyu* generated more income for FHHs and MHHs. This shows gender differentiation regarding access to profitable enterprises as income from *ganyu* may be less compared to income from crops and livestock sales, and predominately used as a coping mechanism from struggles of providing for basic needs for the households. Again, this just confirms the disadvantage position FHHs are in the process of agricultural commercialisation as their already inadequate labour

is being divided between *ganyu* and their farms, which therefore affects their productivity, leading to a lack of surplus to sell.

“My parents used to do ganyu in exchange for farm inputs but sometimes they could buy inputs such as fertiliser.”

“When I was young, my parents had three mains’ sources of livelihoods, farming, tearoom business and ganyu. Ganyu was often done by my mother. She did ganyu when the household was running short of food.”

“The main source of livelihood in my family was farming followed by ganyu.”

In relation to income sources and wealth groups, we also observe from Table 4.5 that poorer households are less likely to engage in farming for commercial purposes, hence, they are less likely to receive income from crops sales. They are also less likely to own livestock, hence, less likely to receive income from livestock sales. Furthermore, we observe that poorer households are the ones that are engaged in *ganyu* as they often sell their labour to richer households.

4.5 Wealth categorisation and agricultural commercialisation

Apart from gender, this paper interrogates social differentiation in terms of wealth category in the context of agricultural commercialisation. With the understanding that in different communities there exists different wealth groups as a result of continued differences in access to resources and other opportunities. In addition, as commercialisation is taking place, there exists continued antagonism of classes of capital and labour. Wealth ranking exercise was carried out to analyse different wealth groups that exist in communities we were working based on their own definition of wealth and characteristics that differentiate these groups as shown in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Wealth ranking

Characteristics	Poorest	Poor	Better off	Rich
Food situation	No food. Usually go hungry. They do not grow anything because they lack inputs.	Have food but not enough to last to the next harvest. They eat food but not with six food groups and meat is rarely in their diets.	They have enough food produced but are capable of buying if it runs out. They eat well but not all the six food groups; meat is part of their diets sometimes.	They harvest a lot of food, which last to the next harvest. They eat good food, all six food groups.
Land	Have land but are unable to utilise it because they do not have the means. They usually rent it out.	Have land but no more than 0.4ha. They also rent out land to the rich.	They own average size of land between 0.4–1.6ha, they also rent in land.	They have large pieces of land between 2–4ha and they can rent in additional land.

Livelihoods	Rely on social safety nets, piece works (<i>ganyu</i>).	Also rely on piece works (<i>ganyu</i>) for survival.	They grow diversified food and cash crops. They harvest enough for food and remain with surplus for sale.	They grow a range of crops for food and large-scale commercial farming. They practice irrigated farming; they grow crops on monocropping and crop rotation because they have a substantial amount of land.
Agricultural inputs	They usually lack inputs. They use local and recycled seeds. They sell Farm Input Subsidy Programme (FISP) coupons.	They do not have adequate inputs; they apply little and late. They use local or recycled seeds. They also access inputs from FISP.	They use certified seeds; they use inorganic fertilisers. They use herbicides and pesticides.	Use large amounts of inputs, certified seeds, fertiliser, pesticides, herbicides.
Labour	Exchange labour for money and other necessities.	They exchange labour for inputs.	They rely on both family and hired labour.	They hire labour, they have tenants on their farm.
Assets	They do not have livestock or other productive assets.	Have basic assets such as hoes, small livestock (chickens, goats) in small numbers, some have bicycles. They get loans from village banks but struggle to pay it back.	They can have livestock such as chickens, goats, pigs, cattle. They also have oxcart, bed, mattress, cell phone, radio, television. They have good equipment such as watering cane, ploughs, and can access tractors.	They have oxcart, beds, mattress, phones, radio, television, plough, ridger, a number of good hoes, treadle pumps, tractor, watering cases. They have livestock (cattle, goats, chickens, pigs) in large numbers.
Housing condition	Dilapidated houses (leaky roof, mud floor, compacted bricks, or unburnt bricks). They wear rags.	Grass thatched houses, mud floor and unburnt bricks. They have poor clothes and struggle to provide for their household.	Grass or iron sheet roofs, good with burnt bricks.	They have good houses with iron sheets, it has a gate, burnt bricks, decent and spacious, they have servants. Their dressing is good.
Transportation	They do not have any means of transportation.	Some have a bicycle but most of them do not have any means of transportation.	They can afford to have a motorcycle for transportation.	They have good means of transportation, motorcycle and sometimes a car.
Others	They are usually the elderly, physically challenged, FHHs, child headed households, widows, orphans, and the sick.	There are more FHHs in this group than MHHs.	They are members of farmer groups and cooperatives. There are more MHHs than FHHs.	They have enough cash income; they get loans from commercial banks; they secure markets of crops they grow and can even grow on contract. These are more MHHs.

Source: Authors' own

Four main wealth categories were observed: the poorest, the poor, the better off and the rich. Different characteristics were considered and these include: food situation, land, livelihoods, agricultural inputs, labour, assets, housing condition, and transportation. Generally, we observe that on the one hand, different

characteristics of the poorest and the poor, put them in a weaker position to effectively commercialise. For instance, this is demonstrated by the following: lack of agricultural inputs; lack of labour by selling in exchange for immediate needs such as food; lack of assets; inability to work the land due to insufficiency in inputs

and labour. On the other hand, the better off and the rich are more likely to commercialise for the following reasons: access to adequate land (rent in additional land; capacity to work the land using their own or hired labour; assets; capacity to access agricultural inputs.

4.6 Accumulation and agricultural commercialisation

There exists longstanding debates about female access, control and ownership of productive assets (Quisumbing *et al.* 2019; Johnson *et al.* 2016; Doss *et al.* 2015; Quisumbing *et al.* 2014). Djurfeldt, Dzanku and Isinika (2018) report that there is bias against women in access to productive assets, credit, and information which limits their participation in value chains of high value. We learnt from our study that availability of various assets in the household improves livelihoods and that the important assets include livestock, oxcarts, land, and hoes. Of these, land is the most important productive assets for commercial agriculture. Generally, there are differences in asset ownership between MHHs and FHHs (Table 4.6 and 4.7) and also between richer and the poorer households (Table 4.5). Table 4.6 gives us the differences in asset index over the period of the study (2007-2018) and its correlation with agricultural commercialisation, and we note that there was no correlation in 2007 but correlation existed in 2018. This shows that over the time, households have accumulated assets. We also acknowledge

differences in asset indices among MHHs and FHHs from Table 4.7 with MHHs having a higher index than FHHs.

We also observed that asset ownership is different among MHHs and FHHs, and there were mixed views regarding this. While some indicated that it is difficult for women on their own to accumulate assets, some indicated that they do when they are without their husbands compared to when they are without them. The main reason for the difference is that on the one hand, those that fail to accumulate assets while with their husbands, their relations when it comes to access and control of income differs when they are alone, on the other hand those that can accumulate indicate good relations with their husbands, will be able to accumulate assets. This also sheds more light on policy making decisions for there not to be one size fits all interventions for different categories of women whose experiences are different and understanding their actual experiences are crucial. We also established a relationship between household ownership of livestock and sex of the household head as well as wealth categories where we found that FHHs and poorer households are less likely to own livestock than MHHs (Table 4.8) and richer households (Table 4.5). The implication is that livestock ownership has been linked to better livelihoods as livestock not only provide a source of food but also a cushion for households to sell livestock in times of need. Livestock

Table 4.6: Pair wise correlation with commercialisation index (OH in 2007 and 2018)

Variable	2007 Correlation coefficient (p-value)	OH 2018 Correlation coefficient (p-value)
Asset index	0.0471 (0.4695)	0.2178 (0.0012)
Total Livestock Units	0.1231 (0.0574)	0.2178 (0.0012)
Purchased commercial fertiliser	0.1693 (0.0087)	0.1936 (0.0050)
Received subsidised fertiliser	0.0568 (0.3821)	0.1411 (0.0415)
Poor (subjective assessment)	-0.0726 (0.2633)	-0.0595 (0.3828)
Number of Individual shocks	0.1177 (0.0693)	-0.1202 (0.0772)
Satisfied with life	0.1182 (0.0682)	0.1090 (0.1092)
Land holding (ha)	0.0963 (0.1377)	0.2111 (0.0022)
Obtained credit	0.1254 (0.0524)	0.1688 (0.0128)
Hired agricultural labour	0.0165 (0.7998)	0.1364 (0.0489)

Notes: p-value measuring significance of the correlation are presented in brackets

Source: Authors' own

Table 4.7: Household asset index and sex of household head

	2007 OH		2018 OH		2018 branching-off households		2018 all households	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Asset index	0.322	-1.388	1.592	1.026	1.278	0.925	1.394	0.9896
N	194	45	159	57	270	32	429	89

^{*}*p*<0.10, ^{**}*p*<0.05, ^{***}*p*<0.01

Source: Authors' own

Table 4.8: Total livestock units by sex of the household head

	2007 OH		2018 OH		2018 branching-off households		2018 all households	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Total livestock units	0.828	0.247	0.943	0.231 [*]	0.315	0.074 [*]	0.548	0.174 ^{***}
N	194	45	159	57	270	32	429	89

^{*} $p < 0.10$, ^{**} $p < 0.05$, ^{***} $p < 0.01$

Source: Authors' own

Table 4.9: Land ownership by sex of household

	2007 OH		2018 OH		2018 branching-off households		2018 all households	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Average land sizes	2.171	1.289	2.178 ^{***}	0.963	0.857	0.619	1.341 ^{***}	0.832
N	194	45	159	57	270	32	429	89

^{*} $p < 0.10$, ^{**} $p < 0.05$, ^{***} $p < 0.01$ the p -values are showing differences in land sizes owned by MHHs and FHHs at different levels of significance.

Source: Authors' own

ownership can also be linked to more opportunities of commercialisation among those households that own livestock, especially women. This is because in conditions where ownership of valuable assets is not conducive, livestock is an alternative way of owning assets. Furthermore, it is easier for women to own livestock than it is to purchase and own land and also have control of productive assets. According to Quisumbing *et al.* (2014), livestock has become one way of holding wealth among women in societies where legal systems and cultural norms make it difficult for them to accumulate assets. However, the situation here means FHHs are at a disadvantage since they are unlikely to own livestock and land.

4.7 Land, gender, wealth groups and commercialisation

Land is an important resource in as far as agricultural commercialisation is concerned. We tried to investigate land ownership, access and control by gender and linkages to commercialisation as well as wealth groups' land ownership and commercialisation. We found that land access is predominately through inheritance but with commercialisation, households resort to renting in additional land to expand production. We also learnt that during the time land was available in abundance, people would access land through chiefs² but this does not happen anymore. We found that most households generally have low land holdings, and that there are significant differences among MHHs and FHHs and among the different wealth groups. MHHs and richer

households are more likely to own more land than FHHs (Table 4.7) and poorer households (Table 4.5). This can breed a chicken-egg relationship where those with more land can engage in commercial agriculture and also those that are commercialising, acquire additional land to expand their production for commercial purposes. We also find a relationship between land holding sizes and household commercialisation where low land holding sizes are associated with low levels of agricultural commercialisation.

In terms of land ownership and gender at household level, we found that ownership of land depends on who inherited it. If the wife inherited the land from family relations, the land is owned by her and vice-versa³, however, decisions and control of what happens on the land, in most cases, is carried out by men. Djurfeldt, Dzanku and Isinika (2018) reported that the matrilineal system regarding post marital residence where the couple moves to stay at the wife's village was linked to the strongest land rights to women. Their study found that men still had made decisions on how to use the land, for instance where to rent it out or which crops to be grown on the land. This is in agreement with what we found.

4.8 Access to extension services and agricultural commercialisation

Despite extension services being crucial for provision of information on technologies and crops, which is essential for commercial farming. Studies have shown

2 Chiefs were, and in some cases are, still the custodians of customary land and they have the authority to distribute the land to their subjects for free.

3 During interviews when people were asked how much land does the household have, they would mention the size and separate to say so much is for the wife and so much is for the husband.

Table 4.10: Access to extension services by sex of household head

	2007 OH		2018 OH		2018 branching-off households		2018 all households	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Received any extension service	0.263	0.089***	0.868	0.754**	0.851	0.781	0.862	0.764***
N	194	45	159	57	270	32	429	89

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Source: Authors' own

Table 4.11: Food security situation

	2007 OH		2018 OH		2018 branching-off households		2018 all households	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Food consumption score	-	-	45	39*	46	36	46	38
Dietary diversity score	-	-	5.94	4.89***	6.3	5***	6.18	4.93***
Adequate food past month	0.701	0.644	0.409	0.263**	0.422	0.344	0.417	0.292**
N	194	45	159	57	270	32	429	89

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Source: Authors' own

that most FHHs do not have access to these services even though they need them the most (Quisumbing *et al.* 2014). Some authors also have postulated that this has to do with their access to land and productive assets as well as their wealth status (Quisumbing *et al.* 2014). This is because they do not see the need to engage with extension services if there is not enough capacity to farm or succeed in farming. Furthermore, extension services could be demanding in terms of resources and time.

In Malawi, Ragasa and Niu (2017) found that males are more likely to receive agricultural related advice than females and that women in MHHs are less likely to receive extension advice than women in FHHs. We looked at the differences in access to agricultural extension services among male and FHHs. We found that the majority indicated that they have contact with extension workers. However, regarding the type of extension services, the majority of FHHs indicated they have not received any extension service and differences between FHHs and MHHs are statistically significant (Table 4.10).

What this means is that the majority of FHHs are less likely to receive agricultural extension services related to commercial farming, hence, they are less likely to be competitive in pursuing commercial agriculture than MHHs. However, this could also be because the majority of them are less commercialised compared to the MHHs, hence, they do not see the need for receiving extension services related to commercial agriculture or they are not targeted by extension service providers. The trend is similar when it comes to wealth categories

and access to extension services, most likely, it is the better off households that are enthusiastic about extension services related to commercial farming compared to the poorest.

4.9 Food security situation, gender, and wealth groups

Studies have shown a strong association between gender and food security. For example, in their study in Bangladesh, Sraboni *et al.* (2014); Sraboni and Quisumbing (2018) found that increases in women economic empowerment had a positive effect on calorie availability and dietary diversity at household level. In this study, we examined the differences in food security situation among the MHHs and FHHs, and we found that more FHHs had a lower food consumption score of (38) compared to MHHs (46); and majority of FHHs had a lower dietary diversity score of (4.93) compared to MHHs (6.18). The differences are statistically significant and few FHHs (0.292) had adequate food for the past month compared to MHHs (0.417) (Table 4.11).

A similar trend can be observed among the different wealth categories (Table 4.5), as poor and poorest households food runs out quickly as they do not harvest enough nor they have the means to purchase food compared to the better off and the rich. Similarly, the diets of the poor and poorest are limited compared to the better off and rich households. Overall, the food security situation of the FHHs and the poorer households is poor compared to the MHHs and the richer households.

5 CONCLUSIONS

This paper is aimed at understanding the differences in terms of gender and wealth categorisation in the context of agricultural commercialisation as part of the larger APRA study in Malawi. Specifically, the paper discusses the relationship between gender of household head and level of agricultural commercialisation but also wealth category and participation in commercial farming. Furthermore, the paper looks at differences in access to land, decision-making, access to extension services, asset accumulation and how these impact on household agricultural commercialisation. The paper also discusses the differential outcomes of agricultural commercialisation among gender and wealth categories mainly in terms of food security situation at household level.

More generally, our study finds that there are more households that are *'hanging in'* than those that are *'stepping up'* and *'stepping out'*, with notable differences among gender and wealth groups. MHHs are more likely to commercialise than FHHs, and richer households are more likely to commercialise than poorer households. This can be attributed to the differences that exist in access to productive resources such as land, agricultural inputs, capital, labour, and livestock which we noted. Poorer households are less likely to commercialise because of their poor access to inputs, labour (since they often sell it), land (since they often rent it out) and other productive assets. The results suggest that the situation in the two study districts is largely undesirable as more people are not doing well with farming. From a gender perspective, the situation is worrisome as more FHHs are not doing well. Furthermore, the results suggest that agricultural commercialisation has not really taken off to desirable levels despite the fact that it is happening and it is evident that more households, especially FHHs and poorer households, are at a disadvantage.

Men in MHHs are more likely to be decision makers regarding activities carried out on the plots and control of crop income. Despite some women preferring joint decision-making, some preferred that men be the ones making decisions and explaining their experiences. Men are good at assuming this role and are responsible for providing productive resources. In some cases where the land is owned by women, decisions on the

land are made by men. Control of income and benefits from farming is mainly by men, this is also the case because it is chiefly men who interact with the markets; hence they have the opportunity to access the money.

We also observed that there is a shift from men concentrating on tobacco while women concentrated on groundnuts, especially during the Kamuzu era to the present day where men take a keen interest in groundnuts farming because it is becoming more manageable to grow and also lucrative on the market. The shift in interest of men has the potential to rob women of their opportunities and reduce their income source options. Again, this was viewed differently among women, while others considered it as disadvantaging women, others looked at this change in interest as being positive as men are providing more labour and resources into groundnut farming.

Despite men and women engaging in different economic activities, we observed that more households are likely to receive income from crop sales than livestock sales and more MHHs are more likely to receive income from both cash and livestock sales while more FHHs are likely to receive income from *ganyu*. The trend is similar among wealth categories as poorer households have to depend mainly on income from *ganyu*. The gender and wealth differences in access to profitable enterprises could have negative effects as often income from *ganyu* may be less unpredictable but also often at the expense of their labour.

We identified four categories in terms of wealth and these are the 'poorest', 'poor', 'better off', and 'rich'. The poorest are characterised by poorer food security situation; low land sizes; poor livelihoods; lack of agricultural inputs; inadequate labour; poor assets; poor housing conditions; lack of means of transportation; and female headship. The richer households are characterised by an improved food situation; high land holding sizes by renting or buying additional land; better livelihoods; better access to agricultural inputs; using both family and hired labour; more assets and livestock; better housing conditions; better means of transportation and mobility; availability of disposable income and male headship. Despite poorer households being less commercialised, there is some degree of commercialisation among these

households and the observation was that it is mainly distress selling among these households and most of them sell their produce to better off farmers.

Livestock, oxcart, land, and hoes were mentioned as the main productive assets. But among these, land was mentioned as the most important one. Overtime households have accumulated assets but differences are noted along the lines of gender and wealth categorisation where MHHs have tended to accumulate more assets than FHHs and richer households have more assets than poorer households. In terms of land, MHHs and richer households own or access more land than FHHs and poorer households because of the ability to rent in among richer households and the tendency to rent out among the poorer households. Land ownership was mainly carried out through inheritance and both men and women in the households could own land depending on who inherited it. However, we observed that land ownership does not guarantee control as decisions about land usage are predominantly made by men.

We also found out that FHHs and poorest households are less likely to access extension services, especially those related to commercial farming compared to MHHs and better off households. FHHs and poorer households are less likely to own livestock compared to MHHs and richer households. This puts both FHHs and poorer households at a disadvantage as access to extension services can help farming households to improve their productivity and hence have surplus to sell. In addition, livestock ownership can help households to earn income for agricultural inputs and labour.

In terms of food security situation, we observed that on the one hand, FHHs have lower food consumption score and dietary diversity score compared to MHHs. On the other hand, poorer households eat less diversified food and are likely to go hungry as the food runs out faster unlike richer households. This is not surprising because of their general livelihood situation, which is inferior compared to MHHs and richer households.

6 IMPLICATIONS

The policy implication of these findings is that as the process of agricultural commercialisation is taking place, it is imperative to pay attention to who is benefiting from it among both genders because the initiatives may be working to benefit one group (men) at the disadvantage and expense of the other group (women). Furthermore, it is dangerous to treat smallholder farmers as a homogenous group as they are differentiated and these differentiations have implications on agricultural commercialisation initiatives.

Another implication is that there is a need to understand views of both men and women in the household regarding issues that are affecting them in the process of agricultural commercialisation. For example, while it is generally regarded as negative that men make all of the decisions, not all women perceive it this way.

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