

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36489/nursing.2020v23i270p4826-4835>

# Women from the rural environment: perception as to their work process in the field

**ABSTRACT** | Objective: to understand how rural women perceive their work process in the field. Method: Field research, descriptive, exploratory, with qualitative analysis, conducted in the municipality of Cascavel / PR from January to July 2018 with 29 women. Results: According to data collected through interviews, with women rural workers, having as a guiding question, "Tell me what you see in the work you do in the field", we built 05 Discourse of the Collective Subject (CSD), and 08 central ideas were highlighted, namely: Occupation; Family support; Family union; Social interaction; Quality of life; Freedom; Pleasurable activity; Life option. Conclusion: The research reveals that women rural workers understand their work as a powerful tool from an integrative perception that adjusts not only the productive point of view, but also in the social, environmental and cultural aspects.

**Keywords:** Women Working; Agriculture; Perception.

**RESUMEN** | Objetivo: comprender cómo las mujeres rurales perciben su proceso de trabajo en el campo. Método: Investigación de campo, descriptiva, exploratoria, con análisis cualitativo, realizada en el municipio de Cascavel / PR de enero a julio de 2018 con 29 mujeres. Resultados: De acuerdo a los datos recolectados a través de entrevistas, con trabajadoras rurales, teniendo como pregunta orientadora "Dime qué ves en el trabajo que haces en el campo", construimos 05 Discurso del Sujeto Colectivo (CDS), y Se destacaron 08 ideas centrales, a saber: Ocupación; Apoyo familiar; Unión familiar; Interacción social; Calidad de vida; Libertad; Actividad placentera; Opción de vida. Conclusión: La investigación revela que las trabajadoras rurales entienden su trabajo como una herramienta poderosa desde una percepción integradora que ajusta no solo el punto de vista productivo, sino también en los aspectos sociales, ambientales y culturales.

**Palabras claves:** Mujeres Trabajadoras; Agricultura; Percepción.

**RESUMO** | Objetivo: compreender como as mulheres rurais percebem o seu processo de trabalho no campo. Método: Pesquisa de campo, descritiva, exploratória, com análise qualitativa, realizada no município de Cascavel/PR de janeiro a julho de 2018 com 29 mulheres. Resultados: Conforme dados coletados por meio de entrevista, com as mulheres trabalhadoras rurais, tendo como questão norteadora, "Me fale o que a senhora vê de bom no trabalho que realiza no campo", construímos 05 Discurso do Sujeito Coletivo (DSC), e destacado 08 ideias centrais, sendo elas: Ocupação; Sustentamento da família; União familiar; Interação social; Qualidade de Vida; Liberdade; Atividade prazerosa; Opção de vida. Conclusão: A pesquisa desvela que as mulheres trabalhadoras rurais entendem seu trabalho como uma ferramenta poderosa a partir de uma percepção integradora que ajusta não só o ponto de vista produtivo, como, também, nos aspectos social, ambiental e cultural.

**Palavras-chaves:** Mulheres Trabalhadoras; Agricultura; Percepção.

## Nelsi Salete Tonini

Nurse. Female doctor. Professor at the State University of Western Paraná, campus Cascavel / PR.

ORCID: 0000-0003-4704-7634

## Elizabeth Aparecida de Souza

Nurse. Master. Professor at the State University of Western Paraná, campus Cascavel / PR.

ORCID: 0000-0002-0839-680x

## Leda Aparecida Vanelli Nabuco de Gouvêa

Nurse. Female doctor. Professor at the State University of Western Paraná, campus Cascavel / PR. ORCID: 0000-0001-6641-7114

## Maristela Salete Maraschin

Nurse. Master. Professor at the State University of Western Paraná, campus Cascavel / PR.

ORCID: 0000-0003-2184-5056

## Sebastião Caldeira

Nurse. Doctor. Professor at the State University of Western Paraná, campus Cascavel / PR.

ORCID: 0000-0003-2827-1833

## Marcia Regina Silverio S. Barbosa Mendes

Nurse. Doctor. Professor at the State University of Western Paraná, campus Cascavel / PR.

ORCID: 0000-0002-1944-0482

## INTRODUCTION

Among the economic, social and political transformations that have occurred since the 20th century, the advancement of women's work in the productive sectors can be highlighted to meet the demand of organizations and to meet a desire for professional growth. In this way, the entry of women into the job market fulfills two desires: the

first refers to the woman's need to increase family income and a personal need for growth; and the second due to the need of organizations. In Brazil, from the second half of the 19th century until after the first great war, the economic and cultural outlook changed, which caused a great change in female behavior. With industrialization and urbanization, women started to have more information, occupying more space on the streets, working and studying.<sup>1</sup> The collaboration of women in the production process is not recent, there are records that historically reveal the contribution of women to the product generated in the economy, which has been present since the Industrial Revolution and replaced the form of artisanal work. The landmark of the insertion of the female labor force was the First World

Received on: 07/30/2020

Approved on: 08/24/2020

War, because the shortage of workers generated by the war needed to be supplied, since the men were in the battles. Currently, what is perceived is the growing intensity and diversity of this work, as women are present in practically all sectors of society, including those considered male, such as the metal-mechanic sector, and, it can be said, that in agriculture and agribusiness, are carrying out activities that require more than repetitive tasks, that is, they are participating in the property business.<sup>1</sup>

Aside from public policies in the country that seek to foster family farming and those that recognize rural women's rights, such as retirement, maternity leave, among others, it is emphasized that there is still a need to expand their social and economic recognition. In 2017, at the United Nations General Assembly, the "United Nations Decade for Family Farming (2019-2028)", led by the Foundation of the United Food and Agriculture Organizations (FAO), was approved. In this campaign, it was understood that a favorable regulatory environment is necessary, considering that the family and the countryside represent a unity and that they not only perform economic functions in the rural economy, but, above all, develop environmental, social and cultural functions that leverage this sector of society.<sup>2</sup>

Gender-based inequality, in which women bear the consequences of not having access to political, economic and social opportunities, has been an international issue since 2015, through one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations (2015-2030), entitled "Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls". It is considered that publicizing the needs of various areas of this portion of the population, in an intensive and extensive way, is opportune in this historical context in which the information that follows is

“

The central question in this work concerns: how these women, in a region in the west of the state of Paraná, where the large grain plantations predominate, perceive their life in rural areas, in family farming. Therefore, the objective of this work was to understand how rural women perceive their work process in the field.

”

still representative in the rural context in the Country: "although they are responsible for producing more than half of all the world's food, women are marginalized in rural areas. Only 30% are formal owners of their land, 10% are able to get credit and 5% receive technical assistance".<sup>2</sup>

Such aspects are expressed in data that indicate that rural poverty affects more women, when compared to men. In keeping with the FAO campaigns carried out in partnership with the United Nations (UN) in Brazil, the main one is entitled "Rural Women, Women with Rights", and in 2020 its fifth edition was launched.<sup>2</sup>

It should be noted that national studies, which corroborate the rural women's living and working conditions mentioned in general above, were developed in different contexts. Women contribute significantly not only to family development and income, but, above all, they are related to the development of the communities in which they live.<sup>3</sup>

As the rural environment is not homogeneous, as it is constituted in Brazil by different social, productive and cultural backgrounds, it is necessary to provoke knowledge of rural contexts in their specificities, in order to understand how the conditions and ways of life of women are produced there.<sup>4</sup>

In view of the precedent, in which there are macro-structural issues, but also singular issues involving rural women, this research seeks to meet a group of rural women who live and work in family farming. The central question in this work concerns: how these women, in a region in the west of the state of Paraná, where the large grain plantations predominate, perceive their life in rural areas, in family farming. Therefore, the objective of this work was to understand how rural women perceive their work process in the field.

## METHODS

Descriptive, exploratory research, with qualitative analysis, carried out with women living in the coverage areas in Family Health Units in the rural area of the municipality of Cascavel / PR, West Region of the State of Paraná, the data collection occurred in the period of January to July 2018. 29 women rural workers participated in the study, all of whom were enlightened about the research and signed the Free and Informed Consent Form (ICF). The interviews were conducted by appointment, being conducted by the guiding question: Tell me what good you see in the work you do in the field?

The collected data will be presented according to the Collective Subject Discourse (Discurso do Sujeito Coletivo - DSC) method, as well as for data analysis and interpretation. According to, the discourse of the collective subject is, in short, a form or device designed to make the collectivity speak directly.<sup>5</sup>

This technique consists of selecting, from each individual answer to a given question, the Key Expressions, which are the most significant parts of these answers. These Key Expressions correspond to Central Ideas, that is, the synthesis of the content expressed in the Key Expressions. With this material, synthesis speeches are constructed, in the first person singular, called DSCs, where the thinking of a group or collectivity appears as if it were an individual discourse, using a discursive strategy, which makes the given social presentation clearer.<sup>5</sup>

The research was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the State University of Western Paraná (CEP / Unioeste), according to opinion number 2,356,516 and CAAE 78560217.0.0000.0107. The guidelines of Resolution 466 of 2012 were respected.

## RESULTS E DISCUSSIONS

As for the sociodemographic characteristics, the age range ranged from 21 to 70 years, with a greater concentration in the age groups 31 to 35 and 46 to 50 years, both with five women (17,24%), with the lowest ages between 21 and 25 years with two cases (6,89%) and the older ages of 66 to 70 years with three women (10,34%). Regarding marital status, women who lived at home with a partner or spouse, that is, married and in a stable relationship prevailed, making a total of 25 (86,20%). For the skin color 26 (89,65%) declared themselves white and three (10,34%) brown. Regarding the number of children, there was a predominance of two children, totaling 15 (51,70%), between four and six children six women (20,68%).

The data collected through an interview is presented, with rural working women, in relation to the question, "Tell me, how good you look at the work you do in the field?", We built five DSCs, eight central ideas were highlighted, these being: Occupation; Family support; Family union; Social interaction; Quality of life; Freedom; Pleasurable activity; Life option. Below are the DSCs constructed, as well as the central ideas extracted from the speeches which are discussed and referenced according to the pertinent literature on the themes.

### 1st Collective Subject Discourse

We have work, this is the positive part, I do not consider it difficult, it is good to see the creation if the plants grow and multiply, you know what you are planting and consuming, we say, that working in the field is a life option. For those who like everything is good. It's good because you have control of your food.

**Central Ideas: Occupation; Life op-**

### tion

According to the Collective Subject Discourse, the importance of women's work is noted. They are the women responsible for caring for the family, for the creation of small animals and for the products grown in the yard and orchard, and also contribute to the tasks considered productive, that is, with the production of dairy, beef and breeding. Given these data, we can say that these women are also responsible for monetary income and do not act only as a helper, they are workers and deserve to be recognized for their reproductive and productive work.

And even though these activities are pleasurable for women, their mandatory character is striking and accentuated, since there is no option to choose between carrying out these activities or not.<sup>6</sup>

### 2nd Collective Subject Discourse

The positive is the income that comes into the house, you are taking the bread, and we are not in need, if the husband is not earning, you have to earn. Which is a good thing, a positive thing, you are feeling useful. We have everything here. I have a degree in History and Geography, but my income here is higher.

### Central Ideas: Family support;

Women farmers worldwide contribute actively to the production of staple foods, being responsible for more than 50% of the foodstuffs produced. In developing countries, for example, it is known that women account for 43% of the agricultural workforce, ranging from 20% in Latin America to 50% in Sub-Saharan Africa. The 2010-2011 edition of the publication "The World State of Agriculture and Food", prepared by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), points out that, if women had the same production resources available

to men, they could increase the productivity of their crops by 20 to 30%. And this data is more alarming when it comes with other projections: if the conditions between men and women in the countryside were equal, agricultural production in developing countries would increase by 2,5 to 4%, which could reduce from 12 to 17% the number of hungry people in the world.<sup>7</sup>

The presence of rural women in family agricultural production is a fact. Even in invisibility, it cannot be denied that they are occupying land, planting, harvesting and cultivating and often earning a living from their families with their work, as reported by the research participants.

### 3rd Collective Subject Discourse

Peace, less robot, there is no excitement, there is a peace that we don't find in the city, I don't exchange this life here for anything, we are always in contact with nature, we don't have that concern for the children, what are they doing? Where are? Here they are together, working, even though we have some disagreements, they are here, it brings us peace, even though it is hard work, we have fun. We usually say that at night, if you stay quiet, you can almost hear the grass growing. If we relate well with the whole neighborhood, that's what happens, we are happy. There are always a lot of people who visit and we receive with joy, that is friendship, social relations in the countryside, it is different, you visit the neighbor more, you talk more with people.

### Central Ideas: Family Togetherness, Social Interaction

The understanding of the family as a unit of analysis is justified by its importance as an integrating agent of social relations within the agricultural production units. However, the family is a space for the production and re-



The understanding of the family as a unit of analysis is justified by its importance as an integrating agent of social relations within the agricultural production units. However, the family is a space for the production and reproduction of values whose meanings go beyond the logic of kinship and economic rationality.



production of values whose meanings go beyond the logic of kinship and economic rationality.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, the family should not be understood only as a group structured according to the historical and cultural conditions that surround it. It is also necessary to consider the set of values that guide and give meaning to social practices within the family since it brings together individuals through a network of relationships that includes, like any social relationship, an ideal part of thought, as well as of representation. The complexity of the transformation process in the Brazilian rural world can be better understood when the analyzes are focused on the relationships between the social agents involved in the dynamics of social reproduction. This means incorporating the complex range of relationships that define and redefine the family.<sup>8</sup>

It is observed in the reports that farmers usually visit acquaintances, as well as receive visits, which reiterates our understanding that "working collectively" is clearly different from "interacting socially". All this dynamic makes us believe that the hypothesis that there is a network of social interactions that favors consistent exchanges between rural women and between them and other actors cannot be rejected. The network of relationships generated by the farmers, with some interacting more intensely than others, but without any level of isolation. Communication can play a strategic role in the development process limited to changes in the living conditions of families, as it facilitates exchanges and approximations between people. This relationship, in turn, is part of the social adjustment itself and tends to be more intense, or effective, in terms of quality, the more consolidated the network of interactions where this communication takes place. The idea is of close inter-

dependence, functioning as a cog in a virtuous circle.<sup>9</sup>

#### 4th Collective Subject Discourse

Everything is good, moving with the land is great, wonderful. I used to deal only with people, now with the land, it doesn't compare, there's no explanation. I worked in the army for 21 years, stopped and came to live there, it's another life, I don't even know how to explain. It's a wood stove, my food is different, everything healthy. You plant it yourself, most of what you do, the meat you produce, we don't use pesticides, there's nothing preservative, even my exams have improved. My husband says my stress is over. For me it is pleasant to be on earth, it is not a difficult job, it is tiring, but you know that you have your food, without poison.

#### Central Ideas: Pleasant; Quality of life

The quality of life of the worker reflects environmental factors, which range from precarious working conditions to the form of work organization, human relations in the work environment. It can be said that the women rural workers in question consider their quality of life, whether

physically or morally, preserved in the work environment, which makes the appearance of occupational diseases difficult.

Although there are numerous definitions, there is no widely accepted definition of quality of life. So, it is important not only to include factors related to health, such as physical, functional, emotional and mental well-being, but also other important elements of people's lives, such as work, family, friends, and other everyday circumstances, always keeping in mind that perception of the person who intends to investigate himself is paramount.<sup>10</sup>

Like quality of life, certain aspects of our life such as happiness, love and freedom, even expressing feelings and values that are difficult to understand, there is no doubt about their relevance. It is a concept for which even an operational definition is difficult to come up with. Quality of life, according to the author, has been an idea widely spread in society at the risk of trivializing the subject due to its ambiguous, indiscriminate or opportunistic use.<sup>11</sup>

#### 5th Collective Subject Discourse

The good thing about living and

working in the fields is that you feel free, you own yourself, you are your boss. If you work, you win, otherwise you won't. Everything is good, freedom is good, doing what you like is good. We have no commitment to schedule.

#### Central Ideas: Freedom

In this discourse it is clear the empowerment of women, understood as the process of achieving autonomy, self-determination, thus implying the liberation of women from the bonds of gender oppression, from patriarchal oppression. In this sense, the main objective of actions aimed at empowering women is to provide the conditions for them to question, destabilize and organize themselves with a view to eradicating the current patriarchal order.<sup>12</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

The research reveals that women rural workers understand their work as a powerful tool from an integrative perception that adjusts not only the productive point of view, but also in the social, environmental and cultural aspects that women's work represents in the rural environment. 🌱

## References

1. Medeiros, PF, Guareschi NMF. Políticas públicas de saúde da mulher: a integralidade em questão. *Rev. Estudos Feministas*, Florianópolis; 17(1): 296, janeiro-abril/2009.
2. Fao. Fundação das Organizações Unidas para a Alimentação e a Agricultura. *Década das Nações Unidas para a Agricultura Familiar (2019-2028)*. Brasília; 2019.
3. Siliprandi E, Cintrão R. As mulheres de Aquisição de Alimentos (PAA). *Rev. Segurança Alimentar E Nutricional*, 18(2), 13-32, 2011.
4. Gomes RCM, Nogueira C, Toneli MJF. Mulheres em Contextos Rurais: Um Mapeamento Sobre Gênero e Ruralidade. *Psicol. Soc.* vol.28 no.1 Belo Horizonte jan./abr. 2016.
5. Lefèvre F, Lefèvre AMC. O discurso do sujeito coletivo: um novo enfoque em pesquisa qualitativa (desdobramentos). 2.ed. Caxias do Sul: EducS; 2005.
6. Andrade RJ, et al. Relações sociais de gênero no meio rural brasileiro: a mulher camponesa e o lazer no início do século XXI no Brasil. *Revista Brasileira de Educação Física e Esporte*, São Paulo, v. 23, n. 1, p. 39-49, jan./mar. 2009.
7. Martins V. Fazendo gênero: Unisinos. Mulheres agricultoras: práticas e discursos de resistência. Florianópolis, 25 a 28 de agosto de 2008. (Acessado em junho de 2020). Disponível em: [http://www.fazendogenero.ufsc.br/8/sts/ST3/Vera\\_%20Martins\\_03.pdf](http://www.fazendogenero.ufsc.br/8/sts/ST3/Vera_%20Martins_03.pdf).
8. Mattei L. A relevância da família como unidade de análise nos estudos sobre pluriatividade. *Rev. Econ. Sociol. Rural* v.45 n.4 Brasília out./dez. 2007.
9. Araújo ABA, Jerônimo CEM. Interações sociais, comunicação e desenvolvimento rural de agricultores familiares. *Revista do Centro do Ciências Naturais e Exatas - UFSM, Santa Maria*. v. 12 n. 12 ago. 2013, p. 2726- 2733.
10. Lunardelli G, Souza EF, Nodari TMSN. Qualidade de vida no trabalho: um estudo das trabalhadoras da indústria metal mecânica no meio oeste de Santa Catarina. *Scientific Electronic Archives*. Vol. 10 (4) August 2017.
11. Pereira EF, Teixeira CS, Santos A. Qualidade de vida: abordagens, conceitos e avaliação. *Rev. bras. Educ. Fis. Esporte*, São Paulo, v.26, n.2, p.241-50, abr./jun. 2012.
12. Sardenberg CMB. Liberal vs liberating empowerment: a Latin American feminist perspective. *Pathways Working Paper 7, Pathways of Women's Empowerment*, Brighton, UK; IDS – Institute of Development Studies, 2009.