

Evolution of agriculture and farming systems in the Chokwe, Mozambique

Castilho Mussa Amilai, PhD¹

Eduardo Mondlane University, Mozambique
amilai2002@yahoo.com.br

This paper is related to the characterization and understanding of the evolution of agriculture and farming systems as well, as established in irrigated area of the district of Chokwe, Gaza Province, located in the South of Republic of Mozambique. The dissertation is organized in five. The first chapter introductory. This chapter briefly describes the country and the studied region. Then it presents the general research problem. The research questions investigated in this study include: how do smallholder farmers adopt agricultural practices aimed at improving soil fertility in different farming systems? The studied hypothesis comprises whether socio-political conflicts experienced in each one of the studied historical periods - especially the colonial period, the establishment of Eduardo Mondlane Irrigation System (SIREMO), and the era after the start of economic liberalization in Mozambique – led to considerable changes in the farming systems in the irrigated area of Chokwe. A correlation between social differentiation and different smallholder farmers' farming systems in the Chokwe irrigated area is observed. Lack of financial resources seems to have forced smallholder farmers operating in the irrigated areas of Chokwe to either completely abandon their agricultural production plots or reduce their agricultural production activities with special emphasis on irrigated land, making them impoverished. In general, the results of the study show that from the social-agrarian point of view of the agriculture, smallholder farmers located in the irrigated area of Chokwe are divided into 5 categories, namely impoverished, auto-consumption, consolidated, employers and rural entrepreneurs. The farming systems of irrigated areas of Chokwe sustain the characteristics of an ancestral agriculture with the risk of, instead of improving, further impoverishing rural areas and perpetuating rural exodus. Land availability is not a limiting factor because uncultivated land suitable for agriculture is still plenty. Finally, the so-called Green revolution by itself cannot be regarded as a miracle because the problems of the agricultural production in the irrigated area are very complex and require a broader approach beyond the simple intensification of the agricultural practices or mechanization.

Key Words: farming systems, irrigation system, smallholder farmers'