

Notes from the Graveyard of the Global Land Grab: The Role of Agricultural Research in Mozambique from the Portuguese to ProSavana

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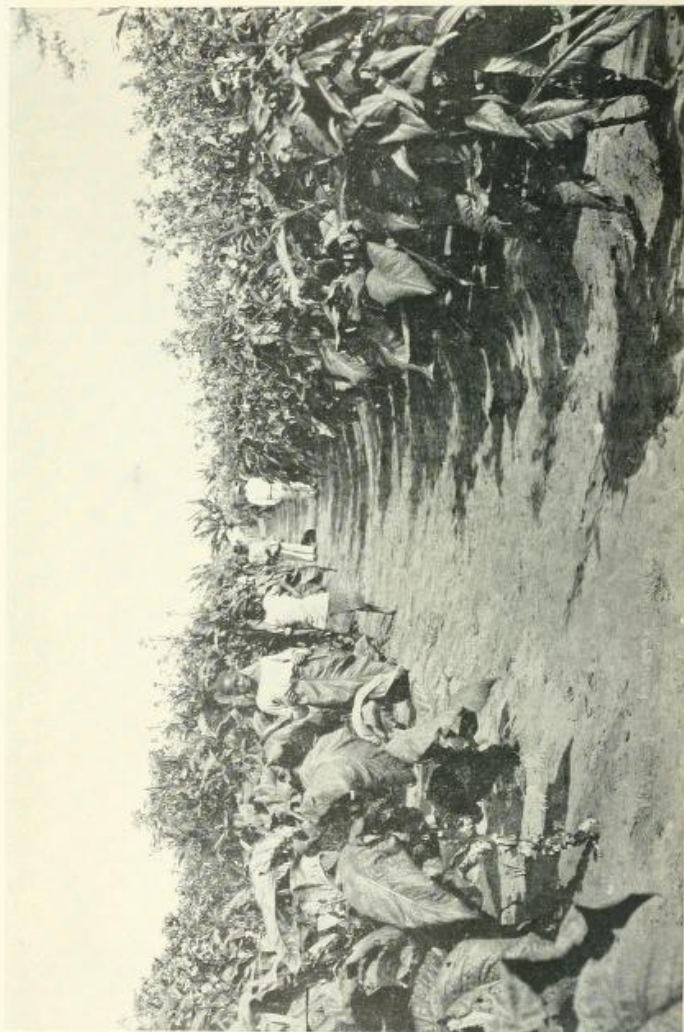
Literature on rural Mozambique

Many studies of Labor, particularly the role of forced labor and 'native labor' in agriculture;

But very few studies of one group of workers: the scientists employed to develop agriculture in the territory.

Many studies on the agrarian political economy more broadly;

But very few studies of the production of knowledge in agriculture.



AMERICAN TOBACCO AT UMBELURI.

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MOZAMBIQUE · ITS AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

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WITH A MAP AND 16 ILLUSTRATIONS

T. FISHER UNWIN

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The Conditions of Labor

- Foreign-trained
- Highly dedicated to both agriculture and the territory
- Deeply under-resourced
- Scientists became bureaucrats, managing their own reports and accounts

In 1929, Egídio Inso, then Director of Agriculture wrote to the Governor:

“It can be seen from the analysis of these lines [in a longer report], the clear palpable fact that we had only two officials, the ones from the Agronomic Services Section, who are to be employed for merely bureaucratic work. That is why the forest guards and staff are busy with bureaucratic work. That is why agronomists and technicians are busy with bureaucratic work. This alone was the reason for asking you to organize the services...”

Source: *Boletim Agrícola e Pecuário* (1929 No 1 and 2, January and June) LM. “A agricultura na Colónia de Moçambique” by Egídio Inso, pp. 5-15.

The Conditions of Labor

- Foreign-trained
- Highly dedicated to both agriculture and the territory
- Deeply under-resourced
- Scientists became bureaucrats, managing their own reports and accounts
- Regional divisions (along bureaucratic lines) rather than by crop, as the scientists requested
- Work subordinated to the demands of the (often poorly-adapted) *colonos*.

The Production of Knowledge

- The focus of research was embedded in a plantation mode of production
- The Mozambican native was seen as labor rather than as a farmer
- Most of the research focused on new varieties – plant breeding
- Lack of attention to land management
- Separation of research and extension

““We produced a lot of knowledge but that knowledge was not well used.... We did not work very much in relation to the traditional food crops; one notes that we did not have any improved material in corn, manioc or peanuts but the debt goes beyond that because we didn't take forward any work that would have helped in relation to this area, not only in regards to crops and techniques but most importantly in terms of valid systems capable of substituting traditional ways, which the growing pressure on the land was making incapable of maintaining the fertility of the soil..”

Source: Mario de Carvalho, 1989, *Accao dos tecnicos agrarios portugueses em Mozambique e seu possivel papel no ambito de eventual cooperacao com aquele Pais*, 107 – 117.

The Conditions of Labor: contemporary

- Trained in the exterior
- Highly motivated and committed
- Ongoing lack of resources – forced to chase funding

The campo as a laboratory

“People criticize us because they have never worked with farmers – if you have never worked with farmers, then it all looks easy.... You can’t look at the way people are living now and say they should continue to do the same thing they’ve been doing and that is how they will develop – people aren’t going to develop doing what they’ve been doing. So we’re trying out new things...we learn from the Japanese, the Brazilians, and we try out new ideas to see what works.”

(Interview, DNEA, December 2016)

The Conditions of Labor: contemporary

- Trained in the exterior
- Highly motivated and committed
- Ongoing lack of resources – forced to chase funding
- Working without an in-depth body of knowledge from previous generations of scientists
- Separation of research and extension

“Widespread small-scale farmer’s family in rural areas is living in residence with thatched roofs, and exterior walls of brick, sun-dried brick or soil. There is the exterior walls of some braided bamboo and hey. In the house is a dirt floor. Size and quality of each residence are not observed large difference. Standard of living is presumed the same level. It should be noted, even in remote areas there is an enclosure of the rest room in the corner of the garden where it left a residence. Number of family members of an average family is five or six.” (sic, Study, 3-13)

The Production of Knowledge - PI

- Focus on a plantation mode of production
- Focus on new varieties
- Rural Mozambicans as laborers through contracts
- Discrimination of the labor force as not having a “culture of work”

Without a “culture of work” (O’Laughlin, 2016)

In Brazil... “we had German immigrants in Brazil who knew how to work with machines, they knew how to work with large-scale crops, and we had Italian immigrants who knew how to work with fruits and machines, they had a very old agricultural tradition. We had Japanese immigrants who worked on small farms and knew how to work with irrigation and horticulture.... In Mozambique you don’t have this. In Mozambique you only have the people (*os povos*), native people who don’t have any tradition of advanced agriculture. The agriculture in Mozambique is still very old, it’s very primitive.”

(Interview with PI Scientist, July 2015)

The Production of Knowledge - PI

- Focus on a plantation mode of production
- Focus on new varieties
- Rural Mozambicans as laborers through contracts
- Discrimination of the labor force as not having a “culture of work”
- Lack of adoption of new technologies
- Separation of research and extension

Obrigada! Sugestões, comentários, revisões bem vindas.

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