9 Decision-making by urban farmers

Like in many other urban farming contexts, men and women in Langas played varying decision-making roles in urban agriculture. The roles were mediated by a multiplicity of factors, and achieved varying outcomes for the farming households and for individuals as well. This is the focus of the present chapter. But first, I shed some light on men's and women's relative decision-making power and roles within the household more generally.

Decision-making at the household level

Many respondents – men and women alike – seemed to uphold the cultural norm that designates men as the main decision-makers for their households. While this role is a natural derivative of the role of breadwinner, Chapter 4 and 6 demonstrated how men's role as breadwinners for their households had become tenuous owing to changing economic circumstances that increasingly pushed women in the vanguard of household provisioning. It is no wonder therefore that men's decision-making power would become tenuous as well. As one woman noted:

> Some men want to be the ones to make all decisions just because they are men but they are unable to provide for their families. Life has become so difficult and lately the men are not getting jobs to do out there. Most of them are just keeping indoors because they have nothing to do leaving their wives to fend for their families. So women have also been forced to work hard. If you wait for your husband to decide for you about what to do your family will go hungry. And when they (men) cannot find money to buy food for the families they become even harsh and demand food from their wives even when they have not provided.
>
> (Mama Sella, 30 May 2009)

Indeed, it was readily evident that not only did the women wish to be involved more in decision-making at the household level, but that many of them actually wielded considerable leverage in household decisions and that there was also a growing recognition among men of the value of such involvement to household sustenance. Nonetheless, whether their wives contributed the most to household

livelihoods, men would still insist on being final authorities regarding decision-making in the household. One of many testimonies, Njoroge's was illustrative of this. Njoroge was responsible for all farming activities on his plot. He kept pigs (his main source of income) and chickens, and grew a variety of crops on his plot mainly for household consumption. His wife, on the other hand, operated a second-hand clothes business in one of Eldoret's designated markets where she owned a stall. Njoroge conceded that his wife's business was the main source of income not only for the household, but also for inputs for his farming activities. As to his decision-making power in the household relative to his wife's, he commented as follows:

> We consult on many issues such as payment of school fees, developments on the plot, how to get money for pig feeds, how the second-hand clothes business is going on, etc. Even when I want to sell pigs, I consult her then we know what to do with the income. But I am the final authority in my household. My wife knows that. I can even decide that she closes the second-hand clothes business.
>
> (Njoroge, 23 May 2009)

Notwithstanding their apprehension about men's continued claims on their socially constructed roles as the main decision-makers, many women did not explicitly or actively challenge this position. Rather, they seemed content to bargain for greater involvement in decision-making within the confines of their social spaces – which they exploited to demonstrate their capabilities in making decisions – and through persuasion and subtle contestation. However, there were a few cases where women were more assertive and actively contested their husbands' monopoly in decision-making. Even then, there seemed to be clearly delineated boundaries as to what kind of decisions women could execute on their own and the ones that were reserved for the men. Generally, women were the main decision-makers on issues related to home-keeping, child care, and day-to-day running of the household, including dietary issues and purchase of minor household items. On the other hand, decisions related with education of children, housing, household investments and acquisition of fixed assets were a preserve of men that even the most independent and assertive of women could not undertake without involving their husbands.

Consistent with studies from other African contexts (see e.g. Angel-Urdinola & Wodon 2010),[1] various accounts indicated that women who had their own sources of income and/or made significant contributions to household livelihoods were more likely than not to play a more significant role in decision-making. It was apparent too that whereas women's increased contribution to household livelihoods was welcomed by men, the autonomy and decision-making power that

[1] From their economic analysis of intra-household decision-making in Nigeria, Angel-Urdinola & Wodon (2010: 397) concluded that "when they are the main contributor of income, women win substantial decision-making power".

attended such contributions were, in certain instances, masculinity-threatening. This was especially the case with men who faced uncertain prospects in their own economic circumstances. For instance, it was noted in Chapter 6 how, while supportive of his wife's financial success that had assured household livelihood resilience following his lose of employment, Baba Daddy was increasingly worried about losing his voice in the household, leading him into exploring strategies to improve his own financial circumstances in order to regain the voice. Mhubiri captured men's anxieties over their authority and claims to decision-making power inherent in their inability to provide for their families as follows:

> Nowadays, men are forced to allow their wives to engage in business (…) This is the only way for the households to survive economic times like the ones we are experiencing today (…) Unfortunately, when women start generating and handling money, it brings problems and disharmony in the family. Women become disrespectful of their husbands when they start getting money of their own. Some marriages have even broken as a result. In the past when women stayed at home, there was a lot of order and harmony in the way family affairs were run.
>
> (Mhubiri, 30 May 2009)

In contrast, men who were household breadwinners, in fact, tended to cede only limited decision-making power to their wives beyond the latter's socially constructed spaces. While the women in such circumstances were constrained to consult their husbands in most cases before doing anything whenever men's support was required, the men did not usually deem it necessary to seek the opinion of their wives on most issues. But as the excerpts below imply, women's limited decision-making power was not predicated on their weak economic status alone. It was also predicated on their supposed limited capabilities, and augmented by their lack of agency as well as their acceptance of, or resignation to, social constructs of men as main decision makers.

> I make most decisions in this house. I rarely consult my wife because I have no time for that. I normally think through my decisions well and so I do not have to consult her. My wife cannot question the decisions I make.
>
> (Mudavadi, 1 July 2009)

> I am the main decision-maker. I just inform my wife what I am planning to do. I do not consult her except on issues to do with the household. If you told women about what you want to do, they would block developments because they do not focus far. If they know you have money, they want you to buy them clothes and household items… She (the wife) does not even know where my school is. Even the plot I bought recently, she just came to know about it during the transaction.
>
> (Ongeri, 7 June 2009)

> As the man of the household, I am its head so I make all important decisions. But my wife also has her space. She makes all decisions regarding how she runs the kitchen.
>
> (Lang'at, 3 August 2009)

A woman's level of education and exposure was an important factor in decision-making. As Chebet's case demonstrates, the more educated and exposed a

woman was the more likely she would be involved in making decisions at the household level. A university-educated woman and a former senior civil servant of many years' experience, Chebet made most of the decisions about her 'profitable' dairy farming enterprise. As she put it: "How would I allow anyone to intimidate me with my level of education, exposure and work experience? How can I be unable to make decisions at the household level? My husband rarely goes against my decisions because I always think them through thoroughly. He respects that." However, whereas she makes many decisions without informing her husband, Chebet admitted that there were other decisions that she consulted him while others could only be taken with his participation:

> If he would be around, he would be making some decisions. But when I make decisions, I inform him about it (...) Communication has also been made easier such that if I really must consult him then I just talk to him on phone and we agree. If the fence goes down or the house starts to leak, I will just look for somebody and pay him to fix the problem. I do not have to consult him on such things. Or if a labourer decides to quit his job, I will simply replace him with someone else after which I just inform my husband about the decision. However, when it comes to household development and investments, we normally sit together and agree on what we want to do. Then each of us will make their contributions individually. We do not necessarily put our incomes on the table. We individually plan for small things.
>
> (Chebet, 23 May 2009)

A woman's stage in life course was another important factor. Older women (e.g. Mama Daddy and Chebet) participated in decision-making with greater autonomy than younger women. This may relate to accumulated experience in making or participating in making decisions that might have given them the confidence to make decisions and/or earned their husbands' confidence in their (women's) ability to make decisions. Another possible explanation is that as women grow older and their children mature, they somehow overcome some gender-based cultural sanctions and demeaning cultural practices such as wife battering and therefore feel a greater sense of autonomy and agency to do things the best way they know how. As Sonkoro lamented:

> The fact that my wife is the one who generates most of the household income has not affected our household relations (...) But you know when women become older, they become more independent. In the past, my wife would consult me on almost everything. But nowadays she makes many decisions on her own except those involving major issues where we consult. For instance, last week she just sent somebody to tell me that she had gone to our rural home and that she would be there for one month. In the past, she could not do such a thing without telling me. I cannot do anything because I know that she knows what she is doing and she has gone to look after our property in the rural home anyway. Besides, we do not have a small child in the house that would require her care.
>
> (Sonkoro, 22 May 2009)

While older men like Sonkoro (57 years) may have sometimes begrudgingly given in to their wives' increasing independence, remarks by Onyancha (31) and Makori (35) below may imply that younger men were more inclined to willingly

involve their wives in decision-making. They tended to do so partly to placate women for instrumental reasons – that is, as a means of accessing women's resources, and extracting women's acquiescence and support in implementing their (men's) decisions. Such gestures also seemed to have been informed by increasing levels of gender awareness:

> I make decisions together with my wife (…) If I decide alone, my wife will feel bad and think that I do not recognize and appreciate her and that I look down upon her because she is a woman. Besides, sometimes I realize that whatever I am planning to do will require her participation to make it successful (…) I also get involved in her plans to try to help her succeed so that she does not blame me if she fails. When I have money, mostly my wife is the one who suggests what we should do with it (…) My wife has good development ideas.
>
> (Onyancha, 23 May 2009)

> I am the main decision-maker, although I try to encourage my wife to contribute towards making decisions but she always leaves many decisions to me. She fears failure so she would rather I make the decisions because she believes I understand most of the things I plan to do. But sometimes when I am not there or I am sick she makes decisions. Like now she is in our rural home where she has been for now one week doing everything related to our farm. I do not mind her making decisions or doing anything but she prefers to ask me for my opinion most of the time.
>
> (Makori, 30 May 2009)

Dennery's (1996) study among urban farmers in Nairobi suggests that consultations for instrumental purposes work both ways. That is, women may also consult men just to play it safe in an apparent show of their deference to the latter's authority, and as a strategy of enlisting men's support for their decisions.

Decision-making in female-headed households was less nuanced. Single women were invariably the main decision-makers for their households, largely because, as one of them put it, "after all there is no one else to consult".[2] It is noteworthy that autonomy in decision-making among widows was also high even if there were grown-up sons and other adult males in their households. For instance, although Mama Shiko, a widow since 1990, stayed with her son who was a teacher in a local primary school, she made most of the decisions on the plot. The son described his role as follows: "I only assist her once in a while when she asks me to. Otherwise she plans most of the things by herself."[3] Women with spouses who were regularly absent from the household for reasons of working far away in another town were also more likely, out of necessity, to take responsibility for the day-to-day running of their households (e.g. Chebet, above) – hence the characterization of such households as female-managed households (Mutoro 1995; van Vuuren 2003). However, as we have already noted, some decisions were made through consultation over phone while others had to await their husbands.

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[2] Redempta, interviewed on 26 May 2009.
[3] Kimani, interviewed on 2 June 2009.

The foregoing discussion lends credence to the conceptualisation of household decision-making as some form of bargaining. According to this conceptualisation, an individual's bargaining power in the household depends on the strength of the individual's fall-back position, being the individual's personal situation and endowments that determine how well-off he/she may be were the co-operative arrangements within the household to fail (Agarwal 1997). It follows that "An improvement in the person's fall-back position (…) would lead to an improvement in the deal the person gets within the household" (*ibid.*: 4). In this particular case, women's bargaining power improved with their level of education, economic independence, and age.

Decision-making in urban agriculture

The analysis in this section focuses on men's and women's relative roles in the initial decision to farm, the choice of crops and livestock, and in the use of inputs, agricultural produce and income.

Crop cultivation

• The decision to farm

Consistent with the general perception that subsistence home gardening is dominated by women, it appeared to be the case that in most instances it was a woman's idea that the household undertakes farming. However, as was demonstrated in Chapter 6, men were increasingly turning to urban agriculture and taking the initiative to farm as well. In the most part this was in response to men's deteriorating economic circumstances occasioned by loss of or dwindling non-farming income sources. There were also many cases where men who had initially opposed their wives' decision to farm or were indifferent about it ended up embracing the activity and supporting their wives:

> Since I do not have a full-time job, I decided to involve myself with farming to enable me support my family. I get food from the plot and I am also able to pay school fees for my children.
>
> (Langat, 3 May 2009)

> Keeping chickens was my wife's idea. One day she told me that it was important that we try to keep chickens. Although I initially didn't think they would be very helpful, I agreed with her and even helped her in taking care of them. (…) I later came to realize that they are very important. Unfortunately, we lost our chickens during the post-election violence. After getting some money recently, I decided that we start keeping chickens again.
>
> (Makori, 30 May 2009)

The case was also mentioned of Baba Daddy (see Chapter 6) who, shortly after losing his job, was initially 'disappointed' by his wife's decision to cultivate crops on his plot on account that farming was demeaning to his status and that the plot would better serve as a car parking lot. However, Baba Daddy would

eventually sell his car when his economic circumstances worsened and come to appreciate the benefits of urban farming to the sustenance of his household. He subsequently took more interest in and 'fully' supported his wife's farming activities.

Access to and control over farming resources was another important factor in men's and women's involvement in the initial decision to farm. As the primary resource in urban farming, one's control over land is a particularly important leverage in decision-making regarding whether or not the land should be used for farming, and which activities to undertake. Since men controlled most of the plots accessed by the farming households (see Chapter 7), it would therefore be expected that most farming activities were undertaken on men's initiatives or only with their consent – explicit or tacit. Women secured the consent to farm household plots through different forms of intra-household negotiation and bargaining.

The comments below further substantiate the role of a household's economic status and access to farming resources in mediating men's and women's initial decisions to commit their households to urban farming. They also suggest various other factors such as differences in farming knowledge and personal agency:

> Before we started cultivating this plot, it was lying idle. At home my parents were farmers. I grew up helping them and I liked it. So when I saw this idle land, I cleared it, and then grew crops on it. I do everything related to farming. I decide what to plant. I weed, spray and harvest. I even go as far as buying the seedlings and my husband is okay with it. He does not mind what I plant. (…) My husband is a driver. He usually comes home in the evening so he finds when I have done everything. We do not depend on this plot for everything because my husband pays school fees but we buy household commodities like cooking fat and salt using the money we get from selling vegetables. He takes care of school fees while I ensure my family has something to eat.
>
> (Anyango, 17 August 2009)

> When I was growing up, my parents were not practicing any farming. And since I only managed to go to school up to class four, I never had a chance to learn agriculture in school either. But when I got married, and we got this plot, my husband decided that we farm the plot to supplement our income. I had no choice but to learn by doing.
>
> (Waithera, 3 May 2009)

• Choice of crops

It is apparent from the data presented in Table 9.1 (see also Appendix 9.1) that, taking together decision-making instances involving all crops (N=419), female spouses were more likely than their male counterparts to have chosen crops for cultivation. The data further revealed significant differences between men and women in their preferences for and decision making roles in respect of different types of crops. Women played a more dominant role in the choice of food crops[4],

[4] It should be noted that although these crops are categorized here as food crops, they also, to varying degrees, generated income for some households. However, they were primarily cultivated for home

while men showed greater preference for income-earning crops. Compared to other food crops, however, men's role in decisions about maize cultivation was not only more enhanced, but also comparable to women's.

Table 9.1 Decision-making on the choice of crops, by gender of respondent (%)

	N	Men	Women	Joint
All crops[5]	419	22	50	26
Food crops (incl. maize)	314	21	49	28
Maize	91	30	34	36
Income-earning crops	37	38	27	35

Note: Some percentages do not add up to 100% because household members other than the male household head and/or the female spouse also took decisions on the choice of crop.

Chi-square: $X^2=13.37$; df=4, $p=0.01<0.05$.

Men's keener interest in maize is not entirely surprising given their responsibility for household provisioning, and seen against the backdrop of difficult economic circumstances. It is instructive that in local parlance, looking for work to earn an income goes by the Kiswahili expression *kutafuta unga*, which literally translates to 'looking for maize flour'. Thus, men's diminished ability to earn adequate and reliable income from non-farming activities to support their families led many of them into taking the decision to cultivate maize. There were many instances whereby men showed more interest in maize cultivation than their wives. Because of women's responsibility for household vegetable needs, they generally preferred to grow vegetables. Besides, vegetables also generated some income that enabled them to purchase other essential household items as well as to meet their personal needs. The following comments are illustrative:

> My husband had wanted us to grow maize on the whole plot but I did not agree with the idea. I suggested that we spare a small portion for vegetables because as a woman I know the importance of growing vegetables. I need vegetables in my house every day. If I don't grow my own then I have to buy every day. Where do I get the money from?
>
> (Mama Ben, 8 June 2009)

> When I started farming I used to plant maize on the whole plot. I later decided to try different vegetables. My husband was reluctant at first. He did not agree with my plans to abandon maize. But I know how to handle him. I planted the vegetables when he was away (…) It is now seven years and I have never gone back to maize since. Each day I sell *sukuma wiki* worth at least Kshs. 100. I use part of it in the house and save the rest with my social groups (…). The reason why I stopped planting maize is that you only harvest once and the produce

consumption. Similarly, the crops categorized as income-earning crops (i.e. *suja*, green pepper and *dhania*) – and which are omitted from the group of food crops – were for all intents and purposes food crops, except that the overriding motive for their cultivation was income-generation.

[5] Although included here, 'other crops' (i.e. tree crops and/or non-essential crops), which were cultivated in a total of 68 instances, are excluded from subsequent analysis.

> only lasts the family just a few months. But *sukuma wiki* takes only three months to mature and after that you harvest for a long time.
>
> (Mama Daddy, 9 August 2009)

The preferences for different crops were also based on men's and women's relative levels of knowledge about crops. As was demonstrated in Chapter 7, these too were related to gender roles and responsibilities, and relative spatial mobility. Amanda[6] noted that she decided which traditional vegetables to grow because her husband did not know much about the vegetables and that he did not even know how seeds of some vegetables looked like. But she also confessed her own limited knowledge about strawberries, which her husband had grown on the plot, and which she had never seen hitherto. Amanda's husband, Waswa,[7] first learnt about strawberries from a farmer who supplied a local supermarket he worked for. Upon realizing that "one could earn so much money from a small packet of strawberries", Waswa sought to know from the farmer about what goes into producing the fruits. His request to visit the farmer for advice was granted. After his visit to the farmer's garden, Waswa concluded that "it was not a big deal to cultivate strawberies" and decided to also cultivate the crop as a means of diversifying his income sources.

The income motive and the need to enrich household diet were particularly important factors in men's dominant role in the choice of *suja*, *dhania* and green pepper. There was also evidence to suggest that although women's control over decisions related to *sukuma wiki* may be predicated on their gender roles and responsibilities, it also in a way reflected the fact that the typical *sukuma wiki* garden was only a few square feet and generally considered by men as being too small to generate any meaningful income, if at all. It seemed that where men's economic circumstances were unstable and the crop's economic value more obvious, men tended to make decisions in favour of *sukuma wiki* cultivation. For some men, like Siberi, cultivation of *sukuma wiki* came to be seen as the most important source of household livelihood:

> The most important crop on this plot is *sukuma wiki*, which we use and sell to cater for family needs. The demand for *sukuma wiki* is high compared to *saga* and *suja*. Besides, *sukuma wiki* also withstands both the rainy and dry seasons (…) We cannot manage without this farm because the money I earn is not enough to pay school fees and cater for other needs. We rely on this farm for our daily food requirements (…). I decide what to plant, buy seedlings then leave the rest of the work for my wife.
>
> (Siberi, 21 July 2009)

The role of income-earning value of crops and household economic circumstances as factors in gendered meanings of crops and home gardens was also captured by Gitau's circumstances (see also Chapter 6). With his off-farm welding

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[6] Interviewed on 26 July 2009.
[7] Interviewed on 1 August 2009.

and fabrication business not doing well enough to enable him support his family, Gitau decided to focus a lot more attention on urban farming as a major source of livelihood for his family. He made most of the decisions on the plot, including which crops to cultivate:

> I decide what to plant on my plot but I allow my wife to grow some vegetables so that she can sell and get money to cater for kitchen needs (…) Since I am the breadwinner in this family, I ensure that I make the right decisions concerning what to grow to avoid losses. I decide what to plant, provide the seedlings and then my wife plants and weeds the plot.
>
> (Gitau, 22 August 2009)

Aside from underscoring the gendered interests in crop cultivation, comments by Mama Daddy, Mama Ben and Gitau above also offer glimpses into the role of power relations in household decision-making, and how women used their social spaces to negotiate and contest men's power in pursuit of household and/or personal interests.

• Use of crop products

Table 9.2 reinforces the notion that urban residents take up urban agriculture primarily to improve household food security (compare the data in the second and sixth columns). The data on all categories of crops show that crop cultivating households were more likely to consume than to sell their produce (see also Appendix 9.2). Maize, one of two widely cultivated crops – the other being *sukuma wiki* – was sold in only 7% (N=95) of maize-growing households and consumed in 95% of the households. As has already been mentioned, this relates to the fact that the vast majority of home gardens were too small to produce any surplus maize grains for sale, and in most instances, the produce realized could last the households only a few months.

More generally, it appears that women had a greater say than men about the consumption of crop produce, and that women's and men's relative roles did not vary significantly between the different crop types (see Table 9.2). Except for

Table 9.2 Decision-making on consumption and sale of crop products, by gender (%)

	Consumption				Sales			
	N	Men	Women	Joint	N	Men	Women	Joint
All crops	373	15	60	23	170	22	46	29
Food crops (incl. maize)	285	15	59	24	130	18	49	29
Maize	90	20	42	38	7	14	43	43
Income/diet	32	19	56	25	25	40	32	28

Note: Some percentages do not add up to 100% because household members other than the male household head and/or the female spouse also took decisions about consumption and/or sale of crop products.

Chi-square: X^2=11.724; df=6, p=0.068>0.05.

crops cultivated primarily for income, women again played a bigger role than men in deciding the sale of crop produce. Considering decision-making patterns regarding choice of crops, it would appear that men and women exercised more control over the use of produce from the crops that were chosen by them.

Women's dominant role in decisions about the sale of crop produce, as in the case of consumption, can be attributed to their gender identities and roles, and their equally dominant role in taking responsibility for the crops (see Chapter 10). It also helped that *sukuma wiki* – the most widely sold crop (accounting for 42% of all instances, N=170) – was generally considered by men as a woman's crop grown primarily for home consumption. For this reason, many men may not have had a say regarding the sale of *sukuma wiki* either because of social norms, or because they were simply not aware that any sales worth their interest would be made of the vegetable in the first place. This was both unintentional and strategic on the part of many women. Because men spent most of the time outside their homes, they may not have been available for consultation by their spouses whenever need arose to sell part of their produce. On the other hand, the financial pressures accompanying women's home-keeping and reproductive roles could have led women into taking the decisions unilaterally in order to meet urgent household needs. Indeed, in certain instances, women might have taken the decision to sell part of farm produce with the knowledge that their husbands would not approve of such actions. It was especially common for women to deliberately conceal the income-earning value of the crops from their spouses thereby effectively excluding them from any decision-making role in that respect. This strategy was adopted by women to enhance their own incomes to be able to attend to personal obligations, but also in order to bolster household 'strategic income reserve' that would come in handy in the event that their spouses' incomes declined or dried up (see Chapter 10).

Women's relatively greater control over the sale of crop produce might also be attributed to their responsibility for food preparation. As explained by female farmers in a different Kenyan urban context (Dennery 1996), women's responsibility for preparing food puts them in a vantage position to know how much produce is required for household consumption and the surplus, if any, that could be sold. This may also explain why women's role in decisions about crops that were cultivated primarily for income and dietary diversification was only slightly lower than men's (see Table 9.2). As with the performance of certain tasks, men's involvement with decisions related to certain crops was, in some cases, also dictated by cultural sanctions and social construction of masculine (public) and feminine (domestic) spaces.

Besides consumption and sale, some crop products were put to other uses as well. Maize stalks were re-used on plots as mulch, and as animal feed and cook-

ing fuel. Maize cobs were also used as cooking fuel. Women made most of the decisions about these uses. They made the decisions in three-quarters of the instances where maize stalks were re-used on plots, and in 85% and 58%, respectively, where they were used as animal feed and fuel (N=19, in both cases). Regarding decisions about the use of maize cobs as fuel, women's role was similarly high (86%, N=37).

Some crop-cultivating households also gave away part of their produce to other people. While such gestures were rare – they were reported in only 14 cases – they constituted an integral part of social capital formation (see Chapter 8), and women were the main decision-makers as they singularly made the decision in ten of the cases and jointly with their husbands in the rest. As would be expected, the inclination to share agricultural produce with others is contingent upon social relations and availability of surplus.

• Use of income from crop cultivation

The level of control over the useof income from gardening varied between men and women depending on the type of crops involved (Table 9.3). Women were the sole decision-makers in the majority of instances involving food crops – and indeed all crops considered together – but had an equal say as men where income-generating crops were concerned (see also Appendix 9.3).

Table 9.3 Decision-making on use of income from crop products (%)

	N	Men	Women	Joint
All crops[8]	170	13	58	28
Food crops (incl. maize)	130	9	64	27
Income-earning crops	25	32	32	36
Others	15	13	60	27

Note: Some percentages do not add up to 100% because household members other than the male household head and/or the female spouse also took decisions about consumption and/or sale of crop products.

Chi-square: $X^2=12.454$, df=4, $p=0.014<0.05$.

Women's control over use of income from gardening could be attributed to their similarly dominant role in deciding the sale of produce. The reasons advanced for the latter in the preceding section are equally valid in this particular case, viz. men's regular absence from the home and, more so, women's tendency to conceal income from their husbands. Yet in many other cases where men con-

[8] Although included here, 'other crops' (i.e. tree crops and/or non-essential crops), which were cultivated in a total of 68 instances, are excluded from subsequent analysis.

sidered crop cultivation as an important source of household income and means of safeguarding their own personal incomes, they tended to cede decision-making power regarding use of income. Often this was accompanied with the rider and/or expectation that, in exchange, the women would not receive routine budgetary support for household upkeep. In other words, women were expected to trade-off their social claims on men's personal incomes for freedom to make decisions about how to use income generated from their gardens.

> I sell vegetables to buy essential household items because that is my responsibility. The vegetables earn me up to Kshs. 50 per day and I use the money to buy what I lack in the house. My husband never asks me for the money after selling vegetables so long as I do not ask him for the house budget.
>
> (Muhonja, 2 June 2009)

> I decide what to grow, my wife weeds and then I spray and she sells the vegetables. I never ask how much she gets from the sales. I usually tell her to use whatever money she gets to buy what she needs in her kitchen.
>
> (Mudavadi, 1 July 2009)

> It could be argued that ceding control over use of income may also have been borne out of men's realization of the futility of monitoring such incomes, and suspicions that their spouses would conceal such incomes anyway. As one man commented:
>
> My wife can sell chickens and ducks without telling me. I normally don't ask. (...) When she sells vegetables, she does not tell you everything. If you have a dairy cow, you will not be there all the day to see how much milk it produces.
>
> (Mhubiri, 30 May 2009)

For some women, such arrangements tended to enhance their ability to play their reproductive roles, exercise some autonomy, and build social capital as a means of accessing financial credit with which to enter the non-farm informal sector (see Chapter 8). Of course this would be more probable where agricultural productivity is high. But where productivity is low relative to household and personal needs, such arrangements would increase women's burdens of supporting their families.

• Decision-making on inputs

The respondents were also asked about which household members made decisions on the use of different inputs. It turned out that decision-making power varied between spouses depending on the type of input involved and the source location for the input (see Table 9.4). Men had a bigger say where chemical and/or market-purchased inputs were involved, while decisions about the use of organic and/or locally available (and especially home-based) inputs were mostly taken by women.

It should be noted that besides requiring access to the market, the agricultural inputs associated with men also required access to financial resources and a cer-

Table 9.4 Decision-making on use of inputs for crop cultivation, by gender (%)

Input	No. of resp. using (=N)	Men	Women	Joint
Market purchased inputs				
Chemical fertilizer	79	42	22	37
Pesticides	76	47	28	21
Insecticides	29	34	28	38
Improved seeds	83	28	28	41
Sub-total	267	38	26	34
Organic/local inputs				
Manure	87	23	60	15
Crop residue	53	19	53	26
Local seeds	49	31	49	20
Sub-total	189	24	55	20
Total	488	33	37	28

Note: Some percentages do not add up to 100% either because of rounding, or because household members other than the male household head and/or the female spouse also took decisions on the use of inputs.

tain level of modern agricultural knowledge and information. Men fared better than women in all these respects.

Livestock keeping

• Choice of livestock

Table 9.5 suggests that the decision to keep large livestock was mostly taken by men while women made the choice in a majority of cases involving small livestock. As was apparent in Chapter 8, men in Langas were the declared owners of large livestock – even where such livestock were purchased by women or with women's contribution. Given the monetized nature of the urban setting, large livestock (in particular) constituted an important form of liquid assets that could easily be converted into cash income whenever need beckoned.

The keeping of large livestock, especially dairy cows and pigs, required considerable financial investment, technical knowledge about animal husbandry, and high labour input. Access to and control over these resources was therefore an important factor in leveraging decision-making regarding whether or not to keep the livestock. Thus, women's decision-making power with respect to large livestock was limited by their weak financial positions and limited agricultural knowledge and information.

As Wandera's comments below indicate, women with access to financial resources wielded considerable influence on decisions relating to the keeping of large livestock. The labour demands and subsistence value of certain livestock,

Table 9.5 Decision-making on choice of livestock, by gender (%)

	N	Men	Women	Joint
Large livestock				
Cows	36	47	14	39
Sheep	42	52	17	24
Goats	9	44	22	22
Pigs	14	57	7	29
Sub-total	101	50	15	30
Small livestock				
Chickens	57	19	56	25
Ducks	21	33	33	29
Sub-total	78	23	50	26
Total	179	39	30	28

Note: Some percentages do not add up to 100% because household members other than the male household head and/or the female spouse also took decisions on the choice of livestock.

especially dairy cows, also necessitated consultations between spouses in many cases. Some form of concurrence about the need to rear livestock and how to share responsibility was deemed critical for the success of livestock-keeping projects:

> I was encouraged (to keep cows) by a workmate who kept cows in Yamumbi estate. He told me how he benefited from the cows in terms of getting milk for the family and earning some income by selling milk. I visited him and saw for myself how well his animals were doing. I then took my wife there so she could also see for herself. When we came back we discussed and agreed that keeping dairy cows was a good idea. My wife then raised most of the money needed to buy the first cow. She got the money through a women's merry-go-round group. I added my contribution and we bought the cow. If you want to be a good farmer, you must involve your wife in the decisions you make. For instance, when we started keeping cows in 1993, I was still working at Rivatex. Were it not for my wife, we couldn't have even bought the cows in the first place, let alone taking care of them.
>
> (Wandera, 30 May 2009)

• Use of livestock inputs

It can be inferred from Table 9.6 that men made most of the decisions about input use in livestock-keeping households. They took the decision in two-thirds of all the 175 instances where different livestock inputs were used; women did so in one-tenth of the instances, and both spouses consulted in one in every four instances. Considering the type of inputs involved, the role of men and women in decision-making can, as in the case of crop cultivation, be similarly explained in terms of gender differences in knowledge and information, spatial mobility, and financial endowments. Women's limited role in decisions related to use of inputs

Table 9.6 Decision-making on use of inputs for livestock keeping, by gender (%)

Input	No. of instances (=N)	Men	Women	Joint
Improved breed	9	67	22	11
Veterinary drugs	62	87	6	3
Feed supplements	51	67	8	10
Urban waste	25	40	16	40
Crop residue	24	42	29	29
Ethno-vet. Medicine	4	100	0	0
Total	175	67	12	14

may also be attributed to the fact that the livestock they were involved with – i.e. small livestock – were mostly of the traditional free-ranging type that required little input sourcing.

• Use of animal products and income

Differences were noted between men and women in their respective responsibilities for the decisions as to whether livestock products should be consumed and/or sold (see Table 9.7; also Appendix 9.4). Considered in terms of large and small livestock, it turns out that most decisions about committing small livestock products for both home consumption and sale were taken by women.

Table 9.7 Decision-making on the use of animal products, by gender (%)

	Consumption*				Sales**			
	N	Men	Women	Joint	N	Men	Women	Joint
All animals	168	18	42	40	111	30	32	37
Large livestock	56	21	27	52	64	45	13	41
Small livestock	112	17	49	34	47	9	60	32

Note: Some percentages do not add up to 100% because household members other than the male household head and/or the female spouse also took decisions about consumption and/or sale of livestock products.

Chi-square: * $X2=7.853$, df=2, $p=0.02<0.05$; ** $X2=31.337$, df=2, $p=0.00<0.05$.

In the case of large livestock, women's say was only marginally higher than men's in consumption-related decisions, but men controlled the sale of animal products in the majority of cases. An important point to make here is that most of the sales related to large livestock involved live animals. Pigs and sheep were the most commonly sold animals. In this respect – as in the case of small livestock too – culture, social norms, intra-household power relations, market information,

and control over the livestock were important influences on decision-making patterns relating to livestock sales. I illustrate this point using the cases below.

> My husband owns everything on this plot so in case he wants to sell any of the livestock, he never consults me and I never ask for the money. What I know is that he uses some of the money to pay school fees and pockets the rest. The only things I am allowed to sell are the vegetables, milk and eggs (…) My work is to milk the cows and I decide how we use the milk. We use part of it in the house and sell the rest. My husband never asks for the money but he expects me to use the income I receive from the milk to buy other food items and basic household requirements. He does not ask for the money. He only wants to see that there is food and that I do not ask him for any money as long as I am selling milk.
>
> (Kerubo, 6 June 2009)

> I used to have eight cows, seven dairy cows and a bull but because of school fees I sold all of them in 2002. (…) The cows belonged to me. I am the one who bought them (…) I used to get an average of Kshs. 8,000 per month from milk sales. I used to take the money myself from the buyers at the end of the month. I would then decide on how much to give my wife for household use.
>
> (Lusuli, 20 July 20090)

> When I want to sell pigs I do not consult my wife as doing so brings about quarrels, especially when she gets to know the selling price. I usually do not want to give her any money after paying school fees.
>
> (Obachi, 6 June 2009)

> Since he (the husband) is the one who struggles with the cow everyday when he milks the cow we usually wait for him to decide how much milk to leave for us and how much to sell. He has some regular customers who take milk everyday and pay at the end of the month. He gives such customers priority and he does not want them to miss out. He normally puts aside milk for his customers before he gives us whatever remains.
>
> (Muhonja, 2 June 2009)

The comments above suggest that men and women were less inclined to consult their spouses about the sale of livestock if they considered the livestock as personal property over which they had full control. Obachi's statement also indicates that while rooted in traditional gender relations, men's unilateral decisions to sale livestock were also an important strategy of excluding their spouses from sharing in the income accruing to the sale of the livestock. Whether or not men and women were involved in decision-making about sale of animal products or ceded decision-making power to their spouses also depended on their labour contributions.

But as Table 9.5 shows, the level of consultation between spouses in the contexts of the two uses (i.e. consumption and sales) for livestock products was both high and comparable. It must be noted that the proportion of mutual decisions was particularly high where large livestock were involved. This owes not only to the fact that large livestock were an important form of household liquid assets, but also that the keeping of large livestock was a labour-intensive venture requiring, in some instances, division of labour and roles between men and women. As a result of this, labour contribution became an important basis – on the part of

women in particular – for being involved in decisions relating to the sale of the livestock (see Chapter 10). Consultations between men and women were especially common in the case of dairy cows; the additional reason being that cow milk was an important part of household nutrition and source of regular income. Thus, regardless of whose initiative it was to keep it, a dairy cow was considered more of a household asset than a personal asset and therefore disposing of it was more often than not a consensual decision between spouses. In the ten instances where cows were sold, men and women jointly decided in seven of the cases.

Mama Sella's account refered to ealier in Chapter 8 also points to the influence of social norms and intra-household power relations on men's and women's control over the sale of live animals. Traditional patterns of livestock ownership and responsibility-sharing necessitated that women who owned sheep and pigs consult their husbands whenever they wished to sell the animals. This was also reinforced by women's relatively limited access to market information.

Besides using livestock products for consumption and sale, livestock keepers also shared some livestock products with friends and neighbours, although this occurred on a limited scale. Such products included animal manure and bird droppings (N=11), but also live birds (N=5). In this respect, women were the main decision-makers, having taken decisions to give away the products in two-thirds of the cases. Women may have been obliged to give away the products partly as a reciprocal gesture inherent in social relations and, in the case of manure, because it relieved them of the burden of disposing of the waste. In either case, giving away such products was an integral part of social capital formation among livestock keeping households.