

Rural youth: a perspective of agricultural labor from their protagonists

Juventudes rurales: una perspectiva del trabajo agrícola desde sus actores

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Resumen: Mediante entrevistas a personas jóvenes del sur del Estado de México, se construyeron sus trayectorias laborales, resaltando las limitantes y motivaciones que las condujeron a llevar a cabo actividades agrícolas. El objetivo es evidenciar los puntos de inflexión en su vida productiva que culminó en la realización de una actividad agropecuaria. La presente investigación contiene cuatro secciones que detallan conceptos como juventudes rurales y agricultura familiar, mostrar el vínculo de las juventudes y el agro, así como debatir los retos y oportunidades de este bloque poblacional en las labores agrarias. Los principales resultados muestran dos vertientes que limitan la participación juvenil en el campo: tenencia de la tierra y una ruptura en el relevo generacional. La conclusión gira en torno a debatir la capacidad de agencia de las juventudes rurales al elegir estrategias de sustento, haciendo uso de nuevas tecnologías y quitando los estigmas respecto al trabajo agrícola.

Palabras clave: relevo generacional, México, sistemas agrícolas, sustento, trayectorias laborales.

Abstract: To carry out this work, interviews were conducted with young people from the south of the State of Mexico. The labor trajectories of the individuals were constructed, with emphasis on the limitations and motivations that led them to carry out agricultural activities. The objective was to evidence the milestones that marked a turning point in their labor trajectory that culminated in the realization of an agricultural activity. This research contains

four sections explaining concepts such as rural youth, family agriculture, illustrating the link between youth and agriculture, as well it discusses the challenges and opportunities of this population group in agricultural work. The main results show two aspects that limit youth participation in agriculture: land tenure and a rupture in the generational relay. The conclusion revolves around debating the agency capacity of rural youth in choosing livelihood strategies via new technologies and removing the stigmas of agricultural work.

Key words: generational relay, Mexico, agricultural systems, livelihood, labor trajectories.

Introduction

The study of young populations is of great interest for various disciplines in social sciences. The XX century and the present one both have been highly fruitful for the study of youth and a large number of phenomena and processes entailed. The present article focuses on agriculture as a labor strategy.

For a long time, analyzing the youth population in the rural sphere was not an interesting topic for social sciences (de Guevara, 2019; Cruz and González, 2014). Young populations were only noticed in research works carried out in the urban environment. These approximations describe such populations on the basis of cultural elements, for instance youth associations (band), or in the sense of belonging to a cultural and/or social expression, always from urban and periurban contexts nevertheless (Feixa, 2012). Even if the earliest approaches and descriptions of youth populations seem to represent the reality of these age groups, their social dynamics are not the same in the urban as in the rural environment, since those who belong to the latter also experience prejudice, inequalities, discrimination and stigmatization.

The widely disseminated dichotomy regarding urban and rural spheres, in spite of not being valid in the academic sphere anymore, seems to be in social microspheres (Berardo, 2019). Presently, we are able to notice urban, periurban and rural spaces, as well as analytical approaches such as new rurality (Rojas 2020; Salinas and Sanmartín, 2020); however, the ideas that link the rural, agriculture, livestock, and countryside are still a constant. Owing to the above, the goal of the present article is to analyze the livelihood¹ strategies of youth populations and the role of agriculture in such strategies.

1 We understand the concept of livelihood as defined by Long (2007: 116): “The concept expresses the idea that individuals and groups strive to make a living, facing uncertainty, responding to new opportunities and choosing various positions of value”. In this way, the concept involves a material and a tangible part, as well as intangible aspects of identity and belonging.

As regards the concept of livelihood, there is the notion of agency, which Long (2007: 48) defines as:

The capability to express social experience and design ways to deal with life, even under the most extreme forms of coercion. Within information limits, uncertainty and other restrictions (for instance, physical, regulatory or economic-political); social actors possess the “capability to known” and “capability to act”. They try to solve problems, learn how to intervene in the flow of social events around them and to a certain extent, are aware of their own actions, observing the reactions of others to their behavior and noticing the various contingent circumstances.

In this way, a tangible livelihood is conceptualized and mainly represented in economic or food support –produced for self-consumption–, while intangible, as the sense of belonging to a place, identity aspects –recognizing themselves as farmers–, the sensation of welfare from the production their own food, among others, enabled by the capability to act, in this case, of the youth population.

Literature on the agricultural and rural sphere reports abandonment of the countryside; in Latin America, 80.5% of the population lives in cities, while in the Mexican case, stats indicate that people increasingly migrate to “the city” (INEGI, 2021; Grynspan, 2019; Carton, 2009). Even if these aspects are true, in reality the rural environment is still important because of the processes that begin there; at present, not only peasant families live there, current dynamics allow other social actors to concur in it.

The integration of agriculture into the young population livelihood strategies depends on the establishment of life trajectories. In this sense, the present article evinces personal and familial situations the young population has experienced and which exemplify the various ways agriculture becomes part of the people’s lives and assimilates into their livelihood strategies.

Rural youth

For decades in social sciences, population studies only focused on adults, which rendered other individuals such as women, youth and children invisible (Weisheimer, 2013). One of the milestones that defined studies on youth populations was social movements, which stirred social researchers to notice that such population was unchecked, relegated and even ignored deliberately (Marsiske, 2015). Even if such sector was noticed, it did not mean that all youth populations in the country were taken into account for initially attention focused on the cities’ (Santillán and Pereyra, 2020).

In the first half of the XX century, social research in Latin America had a strong tendency defined by patterns established by European studies. The earliest works on youth engaged in disclosing the problems and characteristics of such sector, focusing on the urban sphere, and only recognized the existence of another population sector, the rural, which was often described as vulnerable (Pérez *et al.*, 2008). During the second half of the XX century, there was interest in specifically deepening into rural youth contexts; in this regard, Argentina, Colombia, Brazil and Mexico are at the forefront of this sort of research (Feixa, 2020; Injuve, 2020).

A first approach to rural young populations was developed from ethnicity, sexual condition, the environment where they live, age, among others, begin age the most recurrent factor, as it also allows a second approach: statistics. Seemingly, resorting to an age range standardizes the concept, however, reality is more complicated, since officially the international agencies propose a range between 15 and 24 years of age to define whether an individual is a youth (CEPAL/OIJ, 2004). Nevertheless, each country defines its own range domestically.² In Mexico, every individual between 12 and 29 years of age is considered a youth (Imjuve, 2020).

Based on the above, there are two age standards to define who is a youth and who is not. The national, which is used in the stats of each country, and the one of international agencies, which may vary depending on the institution. In this way, there are at least two parameters to define this category, solely on the basis of age. However, in works of social nature, this concept is usually redefined according to the characteristics of the place under study or some rituals that mark the culmination of a stage and the beginning of another (Costa *et al.*, 2019; De Picciotto, 2019).

The most interested in finding out about the problems that affect youth, starting from a concept based on age in order to have a standard, are the academy, government, and some nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). The first sector evolved from social studies that narrated the reality to others increasingly dynamical that focus on current topics (Rebollo and Carreras, 2017). The second is interested in creating policies and programs in favor of youth populations. For their part, NGOs address specific issues of the sector, which may be diverse and try to bridge the gaps mainly overlooked by the

2 For Nicaragua, the range goes from 18 to 30; Dominican Republic: from 15 to 35; Brazil, Chile, Cuba, Spain, Panama, Paraguay and Peru: from 15 to 20; Guatemala and Portugal: from 15 to 25; Bolivia, Ecuador and El Salvador: from 15 to 24; Argentina: from 14 to 30; Uruguay: from 14 to 29; Honduras: from 12 to 30; Costa Rica: from 12 to 35; and in Colombia: from 12 to 29 (Secretaría General Iberoamericana, 2008).

government. After finding out who interacts with the youth, it is necessary to ascertain their problems and challenges to outline guides to solve or lessen such difficulties. According to Fandiño (2011) and *Consejo Nacional para Prevenir la Discriminación*, Conapred (2018) [National Council for Discrimination Prevention], youth face challenges in five main topics: 1) social exclusion; 2) citizenship and political; 3) inclusion without consent; 4) due to their values; and, 5) regarding future hopelessness. As a solution, Fandiño (2011) put forward empowerment; for its part, Conapred (2018) proposes respect and greater participation of youth in decision making that relates to them.

It may be said that the academy finds out the problems that affect youth, the government, by means of its institutions, addresses and remedies problems, while it legislates at once so that difficulties are avoided in the future; whereas NGOs offer attention for specific issues such as social reinsertion, victim support and public health issues. Even if this is the ideal schema, reality is desolating, since in the rural sphere poverty conditions aggravate everything, from the absence of institutions to the invisibility of their problems, mistaking them for customs, as it is the case of teenage pregnancy (Madrid *et al.*, 2019; Oxfam, 2016; Trucco and Ullman, 2015).

The economic aspect is a decisive factor in any sphere, and the rural is not the exception. The concerns and necessities of youth population are subjected to budgetary availability, prioritizing aspects such as health care, security, communication means, among others, making it almost impossible to solve all of their problems. Adding to the above, the current conditions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic between 2020 and 2021 complicate and worsen the situation of youth populations in the rural environment, which turns into lack of opportunities, unemployment, labor precariousness, among others.

In the Latin American context, information from the International Labor Organization (OIT, 2019) before the havoc wreaked, referred a local economic deceleration that directly affected the creation and/or incubation of new employment opportunities, the quality of existing job posts, self-employment and decreased paid work in the private sector, stressing labor precariousness in the region (OIT, 2019). With the lockdown and its extensions, salaried employment suffered a noticeable drop in comparison with informal employment and unemployment, which increased (OIT, 2020a).

The health crisis affected the youth to a larger extent, as their unemployment rate changed from 2.7% to 23.2%; that is to say, one out

of four youth lost their job (OIT, 2020a). Mexico was not the exception, according to figures from *Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía*, INEGI [National Institute of Statistics and Geography] (2020), youth unemployment grew to 25%. As a response, in the rural sphere the number of self-employed, subordinated and paid workers engaged in agriculture increased (OIT, 2020b). This scenario demonstrates that labor precariousness is ever present.

Studies by Lucatero and Gaxiola (2019), and Martínez *et al.* (2019), among others, disclose the precariousness of people who work without a labor contract, do not have social security and legal labor benefits; as well, there are increasing numbers of highly trained individuals. Moreover, they point at labor flexibility as the cause of this phenomenon. For measurement purposes, this precariousness is usually related with poverty indexes.

Family farming

Agricultural systems in Mexico are mainly classified into three categories: conventional, traditional and organic; each is defined by various scales and needs (Reyes *et al.*, 2018). Even if it may be said that in general mass production yields the highest revenues, the importance of traditional agriculture as a livelihood for rural peasant families shall not be put aside. Last but not least, organic agriculture that covers a growing demand of certified produces, adding more value to this sort of production.

Conventional agriculture has the largest scale; therefore, it produces the most and serves as a reference for mass production. It focuses on monocultures, uses agricultural machinery, agrochemicals and irrigation (González and Velasco, 2015; González, 2008). It is common to divide this system into intensive and extensive. One refers to the maximization of production capacity in the short term, using available local natural resources; the other deals with methods of mass production and uses improved seeds, fertilizers, agrochemicals, irrigation, fostering the highest yield by surface unit (Norzagaray, 2010).

For Mexico, conventional agriculture grows produces such as: avocado, tomato, chilies, red berries, bell peppers, among others (SIAP, 2021; SADER, 2020); this form of agriculture is bound to supply domestic and foreign demand of crops, vegetables and fruit. However, being mass and costly makes it unsuitable for every culture, especially from the economic standpoint; that is to say, in addition to higher yields, this sort of agriculture is an important source of incomes for those engaged in it.

Traditional agriculture is characterized by amalgamating technologic elements with ancestral cultivation practices, in such manner that there is reduced use of agrochemicals with animal-origin manure; limited use of agricultural machinery and/or work animals to carry out agricultural activities; though, irrigation may be present or not. It is worth pointing out that from this sort of system comes food for rural populations (González, 2018; Cahuich, 2012; Gliessman, 1999). Expressions of this agriculture are the systems: milpa, orchard, terrace, chinampas, wetland, among others.

Torres *et al.* (2020) point out that at in difficult times such as those over the Covid-19 pandemic, the relationship of human beings with their environments, on the basis of knowledge inherited from their forefathers, specially emphasize the revalorization of traditional agriculture, to stop seeing it as subsistence farming and refer to it as a livelihood for present generations and generational relays. The diversity of forms in which traditional agriculture is present allows adapting and maintaining this human-nature relationship regardless of production scale.

Agriculture, seen as a livelihood at microscale, is propitious for traditional agricultural systems, since to a large extent they depend on family workforce and other variants such as reciprocal community work (González, 2018). Family farming may concur in various ways and agrarian schemas, it is no longer exclusive of a model. However, in order to be considered livelihood, it is necessary to bear other factors in mind, among them, possessing agricultural lands, water availability and even generational relay

When peasants are not the proprietors of agricultural lands, people look for strategies that enable them to work on hired lands or by means of agreements between owners and producers, underscoring there may be land without peasants, not without owners though (Guadarrama, 2020). When peasants have this natural resource, the surface tends to decrease over time owing to various factors such as: erosion, soil impoverishment, land allotment for inheritance, among others. The above means that traditional agriculture is still practiced, nevertheless increasingly fractioned (González, 2008).

Another important factor in peasant agriculture is generational relay, as it depends on the continuity and repetition of agricultural activities by new generations (Jiménez *et al.*, 2019). There are works (Hernández, 2016; Vizcarra *et al.*, 2015) that consider generational relay a strategy to rescue traditions, methods and know-hows. They recognize, however, that the participation of knowledgeable individuals and young people, the replacements, is necessary. Notwithstanding, seemingly such individuals are growing increasingly distant from agriculture, this is why it is essential to make the importance of this relay evident.

Relationship between youth and agriculture, has the countryside actually been abandoned by this sector?

In works such as those by Trujillo (2019) and Carton (2009) there are references to an abandonment of countryside tasks by economically active population in various latitudes. However, it is also indicated that the elderly in the rural sphere still heavily depend on this activity. Entire families depend on peasant agriculture for self-consumption, as a source of employment to earn a salary –agricultural day laborers³–, or as a complementary activity for livelihood, as reported in the last economic census in Mexico (INEGI, 2020). Children and youth also participate, mainly when their families have lands or are farmers,⁴ reason why they learnt the tasks, albeit this does not mean they are interested in carrying on with the generational relay (Sandoval, 2018; Hernández, 2016).

There is a discourse that states young people do not want to carry on with labor activities inherited from their parents, mainly if these relate to agriculture. However, this discourse does not consider there is a difference between what is desirable and what is possible (Miranda and Corica, 2015; Corica, 2012). The idea that new generations shall “improve themselves” was largely implanted in the children by their parents, since they want a better future for their offspring and prevent them as much as possible from suffering the lacks experienced by their parents (Sandoval, 2018).

In works with employed young people, such as those by Hernández *et al.* (2020) and Murguía *et al.* (2017), it is stated that options for employment in their close environment depend on their schooling, the existing labor activities and their social relationships. Plus, the results from the works above show various livelihood strategies; in subsequent paragraphs, the link between this population sector and agriculture in order to verify if there is indeed abandonment of this activity.

In order to analyze, the perception of youth about agriculture as a livelihood strategy, the ethnographic model was utilized (Guber, 2001), which is the basis for the present article. The tool to develop labor careers was semi-structured interview (Albuquerque *et al.*, 2014), which was held with young individuals in Malinalco, State of Mexico, with a view to discovering

³ A person that receives a salary in exchange for their labor force in activities in production processes proper to the countryside. In most of the cases, wage is paid by the day and is called *jornal* [*i.e.*, a day of work] (SEDIA, 2015).

⁴ There is also a portion of this demographic sector that hires as agricultural day laborers in small, mid and large agri-food industries.

their ways to earn money for family support. People who participated had to meet the following criteria: a) being between 15 and 30 years; b) living in the area under study; c) having a job or becoming recently unemployed; d) being connected with the agricultural sector directly or indirectly; and, e) representativeness of women and men among respondents; Table 1⁵ provides information about them.

Methodology

A total of 13 youth was interviewed; seven men and six women. The analytical line was agriculture as livelihood strategy among young populations in the rural sphere. Results are shown after the configuration of three segments: 1) agriculture as an actual option; 2) agriculture as a temporary activity; 3) agriculture as a main option. Data were analyzed considering the actor-based approach (Long, 2007) and labor trajectories (Dávila and Ghiardo, 2018; Maca, 2017).

The interviews describe such trajectory underscoring the milestones that motivated significant changes in their experience, in addition to telling about their relationship with the countryside. To hold the interviews, it was necessary to find out the participants' family context and also their own social and family relationships, since they are a facilitating link at the moment of becoming employed for the first time. The questions that guided this ethnographic fieldwork were: what are the livelihood strategies of youth population? And, how does agriculture integrate with such strategies?

Results

One of the first divergencies noticed in the interviews comes from gender differences. Men envision the possibility of permanently hiring in agricultural activities, either because their families own agricultural lands or because they were taught in childhood. Conversely, women, in spite of having the same characteristics as men and usually support on field activities, they do not see themselves as peasants or land workers.

In the specific case of female respondents, some identify as peasants, since they receive support from state and federal governments for agricultural activities; while others do not see themselves as such because they perceive their participation in the field as complementary to men's. Women mainly identify with tasks associated with homemaking. Plus, there is an important

⁵ Such table is in Annex, at the end of the article (Editor's note).

milestone for them, when they start living with a partner and agricultural activities are relegated by house chores, which become more relevant.

Segment 1: agriculture as an actual option

In this segment we find youth who because of the agricultural heirloom of their family are close to agricultural tasks, which they were taught in childhood in parallel to basic education. Nevertheless, at a later stage in life, a fortuitous event occurred and made them drop out of school and fully engage in agricultural activities.

In this segment, at least four essential characteristics are noticed in the object of analysis: 1) the main activity of the agricultural livelihood; 2) there are more men than women; 3) it is a mix of labor inheritance and generational relay; and, 4) women in this category receive help from a relative. The following interview excerpt presents a man who represents this section:

My dad taught me to work the land, and ever since I remember, he took me to the field so that I learnt the trade. I went to school, but only finished secondary. So when I dropped out of school I fully engaged in working in my dad's plot [...] When I was 18 I got married and my dad helped me build a little house in the corner of his *solar*,⁶ he also gave me the tools and a tract of land (2 hectares) so that I had where to work and support my family [...] In time, I became a taxi driver to earn some extra money because money is tight, but I don't neglect my plot, I grow maize, fava, and squash, despite they're just for self-consumption (man, 27 years).

There are four cases similar to the above; two men who, unable to find an activity to earn their livelihood, see in agriculture the ideal option to do so. The other two cases involve women and are slightly different, as they are single mothers and are assisted by a relative to work the land. They see themselves as peasant women who grow vegetables for trade and crops for self-consumption.

Segment 2: agriculture as a temporary activity

This segment comprises people with a profession or still studying but, which owing to various reasons, had to pause their labor aspirations in order to earn their livelihood temporarily by means of agricultural labor. However, in their short- and middle-term plans, they will change the means, leaving agricultural tasks in second or third place, to pursue a career in the trade they studied or are studying.

6 Plot where a house is built.

In this segment, one notices at least three characteristic aspects: 1) agriculture is not the main activity, i.e., it is complementary for earning a livelihood; 2) the pandemic aggravated, or was a decisive factor that forced youth to postpone their labor plans; and, 3) there is no particularity for any gender. As noticed in the following interview excerpt, the subject already has a profession, but nowadays makes his living in a diversified manner, though he expects to start his career in the future so that it becomes the main livelihood means.

I hold an undergraduate degree in Education, but I haven't been able to find a *plaza*,⁷ I've only had internships, so for as long as there's no job as a teacher, I work as a(n) [agricultural] day laborer, *macuarro* [helper in construction], salesmen or whatever it takes to make honest money [...] I thought that getting a *plaza* would be easy, but the situation was complex and the pandemic made it worse (male, 23 years).

In the interviews there are three similar cases: two women and a man; the latter had to abandon his studies because of economic problems motivated by the pandemic, while one of the women lost her job and the other has not found one. Even if the four report carrying out itinerant activities, including agriculture, they all hold expectations for professional development working in their careers.

As pointed out by Corica (2012), the interviews made it clear there is a stressed difference between expectation and reality as regards labor.⁸ This condition is not a constant, but it is mentioned in many an interview, regardless of the respondent's gender. In this sense, the world of the desirable lacks meaning when there is need to make a living or contribute to the livelihood of the household.

In some cases, as those in this section, the situation seemed to be momentary and it was a matter of finding new opportunities, but in other cases, reality shattered the respondents' illusions, who have to look for a job to survive, pausing or suspending their aspirations. One of the respondents expressed that she only managed to finish secondary and her parents were no longer able to economically support her schooling, which made her look for domestic work and in the family orchard.

This testimony evinces what Sandoval *et al.* (2018) pointed out regarding secondary students in the rural sphere.

7 A permanent post as a teacher.

8 There is also a collective image about the idea of progress, development or wellbeing, fostered by the preponderant market actors and governments. Plus, in the southern region, there are migration scenarios and the links with the youth's aspiration for the "American dream".

Segment 3: agriculture as a main option

This segment comprises the population that decided to work the land because of conviction, as it considers that working the land and living in the rural environment is synonym to tranquility. That is to say, we refer to people who consider themselves farmers, they find the necessary livelihood strategies in agricultural activities. Such sector also has representativeness among the respondents.

In segment 3, at least four essential characteristics present in the analysis are noticed: 1) the main livelihood activity is agriculture, 2) there are more women than men (by contrast with the first segment); 3) people usually commit to carrying out the activity of their own volition; and, 4) women receive help from a political project, which motivates them to take up agriculture. The following interview excerpt is the case of a young woman representative of this section.

[...] I have always liked politics and one day came a group of engineers to talk about vegetables and offered us greenhouses and micro tunnels as requested by beneficiaries; [...] my family was benefitted with a greenhouse and two micro tunnels, which we have in the orchard beside [my house] and we harvest vegetables that we sell to the neighbors, and as it is protected we can harvest all the time (woman, 26 years).

This approach to agriculture is the same for other three respondents; one man and two women. Gender disparity comes from governmental supports to set up a livelihood strategy aimed at vulnerable groups or conditioned political campaigns, which have women as main recipients. In this way, a niche of young people interested in agriculture appears, and makes it its main livelihood strategy; in spite of receiving support, the activity is carried out voluntarily.

The youth-agriculture relationship is currently active, however, despite agriculture needs labor force, a high percentage of rural population—particularly young—is often unemployed or underemployed (IICA, 2020). New labor forms from technologic advance foster new experiences; a concrete case is distance work, very common during the pandemic. Over the lockdown, social media served as a marketing channel for various products—among them agricultural. However, current young generations and technologic advance need to be drawn to training, techniques, knowledge, among others. In the rural environment, the above expresses in different ways, as not all the households have Internet access, and data in smartphones are limited.

There are diversified employment options that offer a wide variety of methods to make a living in the rural environment; though, there are many restrictions that prevent youth from accessing such options. Moreover, there are two elements to consider regarding youth in their families: the first is the parents' desire to improve in their children, either because they perceive their family situation as precarious and do not want the same for their children; the second has to do with lack of support from children to parents.

To sum up, the premise of youth is to establish that in view of lack of employment and study options, agriculture and trades are the support of generations that do not manage to find a conventional job. Even if it is true that agriculture can be considered self-employment and produces economic and intangible benefits for practitioners, it is also true that it is not always the first option for youth populations when they envision their insertion in labor market. Nevertheless, the main problem they face is land tenancy and water-related issues, since they are not proprietors of resources, they only increase the numbers of day laborers.

Challenges and opportunities for rural youth in the agricultural labor sphere

From interviews with young people directly or indirectly linked to the agricultural sector, reflections that underscore opportunities for this sector are noticed. Employment options in the countryside, temporary or permanent, are still tangible choices for young individuals and in specific cases are part of youth employment perceptions. In turning points such as the Covid-19 pandemic, which worsened formal employment, agriculture has served as supportive livelihood activity.

There are challenges as well, these revolve around demystifying the current schema of rural agriculture. The generalized idea about this particular sector has to do with precariousness and poverty; however, the perspective expressed in the interviews makes it evident that agriculture is an actual employment activity, tangible and accessible for everyone, which might serve as a main or complementary livelihood means, in addition to providing identity and belonging to those who practice it.

From the academy, it may be supported on the conversion of conventional agriculture into organic and / or agri-ecologic agriculture, as this production schema is the perfect dichotomy: on one side, it produces economic incomes directly for the producers —tangible aspect—; on the other, the intangible part is related to eating healthful foods, less agrochemical products and thereby, propitiate welfare.

Conclusions

The present work offers a classification of youth population into three segments. One: those who perceive agriculture as a tangible option to earn their livelihood, regardless of their labor aspiration, that is to say, they ended up in this activity fortuitously. In the second segment, we find those who engage in agriculture, while they find another livelihood strategy; however, they do not see themselves in this activity in the middle and long-term. In the third segment, we find young people working in the countryside of their own volition for they find their livelihood, personal realization and governmental supports in agriculture.

The goal of this article is to evince the relationship between agriculture and livelihood strategies for the youth's livelihood. From this comes out that: 1) the pandemic brought agriculture to light as a feasible economic strategy and intangibly for young population; 2) governmental supports are an incentive for such population to motivate and become farmers or to carry out an agricultural activity; and, 3) youth with a peasant background perceive this activity as a momentary or permanent strategy to obtain their livelihood, primarily or complementarily.

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Annex

Table 1

Respondents' description

No. interview	Gender	Age	Family status	Schooling	Current work	Relationship with agriculture or livestock rearing
1	Woman	25 years	Married, two children	Secondary	Homemaker	Helped in farming tasks up to her marriage
2	Male	27 years	Married, three children	Secondary	Taxi driver and farmer	It has a plot and is a farmer
3	Male	23 years	Single, no children	Undergraduate degree	Merchant and day laborer	Learnt farming tasks, but does not have a plot
4	Woman	29 years	Single mother, one child	Secondary	Merchant	Looks after a family orchard
5	Male	28 years	married, two children	Incomplete undergraduate degree	Farmer	Has a plot and is a farmer
6	Woman	26 years	Single mother, one child	High school	Homemaker	Has a plot and grows vegetables

7	Male	20 years	Single, no kids	Secondary	Farmer	Has a plot and is a farmer
8	Male	18 years	Single, no kids	Incomplete secondary	Merchant	Helps his father shepherd livestock
9	Male	22 years	Married, on child	Secondary	Day laborer	Performs farming tasks, but does not have a plot
10	Woman	16 years	Married, no kids	Incomplete secondary	Homemaker	Helps her husband in farming tasks
11	Woman	21 years	Married, one child	High school	Homemaker	Engaged in breeding fowl and rabbits
12	Woman	22 years	Married, one child	Undergraduate degree	Merchant	Helps her husband in farming tasks
13	Male	21 years	Married. No kids	Undergraduate degree	Day laborer	Performs farming tasks, but does not have a plot

Source: own elaboration based on fieldwork data.

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