



Rural Succession: the young farmer's view

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Abstract

The rural exodus was a relevant factor in the transformation of Brazilian agriculture from the 1950s/60s. Abramovay *et al* (1998) identified an aging process motivated by the absence of young people from rural areas. Later, Spanevello (2008) reports that the emptying of the rural environment occurs due to the lack of successors to proceed with the activities of the family establishment. In order to understand better what encourages young people to stay in rural areas, this research faced the following problem: what are the factors that influence young farmers' decision making to remain or not in rural areas? The objective was to analyze the factors that influence the succession process from the young farmer's perception. Exploratory research and semi-structured interviews were carried out in 32 rural family farms in the Region of the Missions-RS. It was concluded that young people remain in the family establishment mainly due to the influence of the family background, family encouragement, seeking to develop alternatives with family members to maintain a satisfactory quality of life for the family group. Those who do not remain are influenced by the family group's inability to deliberating autonomy and failing to demonstrate satisfactory financial security for all members.

Key words: Family farming. Family agribusiness. Family succession. Rural development.

A Sucessão Rural: o olhar do jovem agricultor

Resumo

O êxodo rural foi fator relevante na transformação da agricultura brasileira a partir dos anos 1950/60. Neste cenário Abramovay *et al* (1998) identificaram um processo de envelhecimento motivado pela ausência de jovem do meio rural. Mais tarde, Spanevello (2008) relata que o esvaziamento do meio rural ocorre pela falta de sucessores para proceder com as atividades do estabelecimento familiar. Para compreender melhor o que incentiva a permanência do jovem no meio rural, esta pesquisa fez frente ao seguinte problema: quais são os fatores que influenciam a tomada de decisão do jovem agricultor em permanecer ou não no meio rural? O objetivo foi analisar os fatores que influenciam no

processo de sucessão a partir da percepção do jovem agricultor. Realizou-se uma pesquisa exploratória e entrevistas semiestruturadas em 32 propriedades familiares rurais da Região das Missões-RS. Concluiu-se que os jovens permanecem no estabelecimento familiar principalmente por influência da trajetória familiar, incentivo da família, buscando desenvolver com os familiares alternativas para manterem uma qualidade de vida satisfatória ao grupo familiar. Os que não permanecem são influenciados pela deficiência do grupo familiar em deliberar autonomia e não demonstrar uma segurança financeira satisfatória para todos os integrantes.

Palavras-chave: Agricultura familiar. Agroindústria familiar. Sucessão familiar. Desenvolvimento rural.

Sucesión Rural: la perspectiva del joven agricultor

Resumen

El éxodo rural fue un factor relevante en la transformación de la agricultura brasileña a partir de las décadas de 1950 y 1960. En este escenario, Abramovay *et al* (1998) identificaron un proceso de envejecimiento motivado por la ausencia de jóvenes de las zonas rurales. Posteriormente, Spanevello (2008) refiere que el vaciamiento del medio rural se produce por la falta de sucesores para proceder con las actividades del establecimiento familiar. Con el fin de comprender mejor qué es lo que motiva a los jóvenes a permanecer en las zonas rurales, esta investigación abordó el siguiente problema: ¿cuáles son los factores que influyen en la toma de decisiones de los jóvenes agricultores sobre permanecer o no en las zonas rurales? El objetivo fue analizar los factores que influyen en el proceso de sucesión desde la perspectiva del joven agricultor. Se realizó una investigación exploratoria y entrevistas semiestruturadas en 32 propiedades rurales de familias en la Región de Missões-RS. Se concluyó que los jóvenes permanecen en el establecimiento familiar principalmente por la influencia de la trayectoria familiar, el estímulo familiar, buscando desarrollar alternativas con los familiares para mantener una calidad de vida satisfactoria para el grupo familiar. Los que no se quedan están influenciados por la deficiencia del grupo familiar en deliberar sobre la autonomía y no demostrar una seguridad económica satisfactoria para todos los miembros.

Palabras clave: Agricultura familiar. Agroindustria familiar. Sucesión familiar. Desarrollo rural.

1 Introduction

In the first half of the 20th century, the Missions Region suffered a change in its territory, due to the presence of European immigrants, who constitute a new scenario, which starts to be identified as a rural environment of small properties, characterizing a basic economy family (WESZ JUNIOR; TRENTIN, 2005). From the 1940s, producers are encouraged to participate in an integration process, relating to the large industrial and cooperative conglomerates, thus, the modernization encouraged by the State and foreign capital led to the exclusion of farmers who produced individually. In this context, participation in local and regional markets by non-integrated farmers become more difficult and complex, making it impossible to remain in the countryside and, consequently, encouraging the rural exodus of these small farmers.

In an attempt to remain in the countryside, these farmers gradually changed their activities, moving from pig production to the dairy cattle chain and, later, for the process of small-scale agro-industrialization, with a diversification of

industrialized products. This aggregation of value in the transformation of the raw material produced within the property is what will characterize it as a family agro-industry property, bringing about the concept of an agro-industrial region.

With an identity of small properties, an average of 12.5 hectares and economically dependent on the agricultural sector, the agro industries play an important role in regional development, being supported and encouraged to develop by the municipal and state governments, as well as entities such as the Missões APL, the Technical Assistance and Rural Extension Company / Southern Association of Credit and Rural Assistance of Rio Grande do Sul (Emater/Ascar -RS) and trade unions.

According to the Economics and Statistics Foundation (ESF) of the State of Rio Grande do Sul - RS (2013), the Missões Region, located in the northwest of RS, in 2010 had a total population of 248,016 inhabitants; from these, 175,877 lived in urban areas and 72,139 lived in rural areas. In the 2017 Agricultural Census, it was identified that the number of family farming establishments has been reduced by 23.33%, that is, it became 16,728, while in non-family farming there was an increase to 3,754 establishments.

In this way, investigating family succession and the factors that influence whether or not the young farmers stay on becomes relevant in this region, which is characterized by agro-industrial family farming.

This study used the phenomenological method, which allows us to build a dialogue between succession and family agribusiness, emphasizing the family relationship present in these rural development, characterizing as an exploratory research, using a quantitative and qualitative approach. As for data collection, the investigation of this research took place in three municipalities in the Missões Region: Entre-Ijuís, Giruá and Santo Antônio das Missões. A closed questionnaire was used to collect socioeconomic data on the families of the 32 agro industries. After this survey and in search of answers about the trajectory and family succession, an in-depth semi-structured interview was applied in three agro industries in each municipality.

This study is initially divided into an Introduction, followed by Section 2, which deals with the process of family succession and also youth and the responsibility for the family establishment. Section 3 deals with the characterization of the Region of Missões/RS in the 21st century; section 4 describes the factors that influence whether or not young people stay in the rural establishment, and ends with the study's conclusions.

2 The process of family succession

Over the years, the Brazilian countryside has seen its population decline, demonstrating that the rural exodus is a relevant factor in the social transformation of Brazilian agriculture. In recent decades, however, especially since the 1980s, public policies have been intensified to meet the demands coming from the rural environment, in order to keep individuals in this environment.

It's worth mentioning that the excess of people leaving the countryside led Abramovay et al (1998) to identify that the masculinization and ageing of the countryside was growing and that girls were leaving the countryside much more

than boys, due to the precarious prospect of taking over ownership - if they stayed, they would probably have the role of subordinate. In order to discover other truths, other authors have tried to identify what were the facts that had been taking place, in order to understand this intense dynamic of the population leaving the rural environment.

Thus, based on research carried out by Stropasolas (2006, 2010) and Aguiar and Stropasolas (2010) in Santa Catarina western, located in the southern region of the country, it was found that masculinization and aging were occurring due to low birth rates in rural areas and by the daughter's exclusion process in the possible transfer of the rural establishment, thus causing them to move to urban areas in search of new opportunities.

In addition to the authors already mentioned, Sacco dos Anjos and Caldas (2006), Costa (2010) and Spanevello (2008) point out that the rural areas of Rio Grande do Sul also present a masculine and aging characteristic. Spanevello (2008, p. 19), in his research, states that:

The implications of the demographic depletion of the rural environment, especially due to the departure of the young population, are the lack of successors to continue the family establishments, in addition to the progressive increase in the aging of the rural population.

Stropasolas (2014), for his part, states that the number of children per family has been decreasing, intensifying smaller family nuclei, driving "ageing at the base", as the author calls it, which means that the elderly population has been overtaking the young population. Consequently, in a few years, there tends to be a change in the "profile and characteristics of demands for public policies in rural communities" (RENK; DORIGON, 2014, p. 142).

Due to these characteristics, that concern about the survival of the small-scale rural farming has been the subject of discussion in order to understand its behavior in the face of the changes that have taken place. Several authors have carried out investigations on the succession process, taking into account the factors that encourage young people to remain or not in the family establishment. Thus, Brumer and Spanevello (2008) detail that girls believe more than boys that no one in the family will stay in the family establishment as a possible successor.

In this sense, it is worth quoting Stropasolas (2010, p. 26-27) again, when he says that young people, especially girls, have been questioning themselves about their "[...] social condition marked by a lack of autonomy and income opportunities", refusing to continue their parents' profession as farmers and finding it better to live in urban areas. Consequently, they compromise "[...] the continuity and role that family businesses play in the economic and social development of the vast majority of municipalities" (STROPASOLAS, 2010, p. 27).

This behavior stands out because young people have a different interests and projects than the generation that manages the establishment, causing conflicts and discomfort in family life. As explained by authors such as Abramovay (1998, 2000), Stropasolas (2006, 2010), Aguiar and Stropasolas (2010), the conflicts between generations living on the rural property occur because of the way in which management is carried out by the father. In this regard, it is worth mentioning the

parents' intransigence in not corroborating the ideas given by their children, not letting them implement new projects and develop productive activities that could bring benefits; thus, the children feel excluded from decision-making and do not have a satisfactory income from the activities carried out on the property.

It can be said that these relationships of conflict are connected to the internality of the family relationship. Woortmann (1995) describes that the departure of young people from the rural areas is involved in the “dynamics of functioning of the rural environment and the local social fabric”, because there are relations of kinship and neighborhood, identifying that the family is not isolated, but builds relationships of work and reciprocity throughout life (SPANVELLO, 2008). In this direction, Silvestro et al (2001) consider the decline in the rural population to be aggravating, as rural areas are characterized by family farming, causing a change in the social, cultural, demographic and economic characteristics.

The next section aims to explore the topic in order to help understand the issues and dilemmas of young rural people in relation to the succession process in the rural establishment.

2.1 Youth and the responsibility of the rural family establishment

It can be said that family farming is a social category that seeks, through the process of generational succession, to guarantee the maintenance of the family establishment without causing distortion its social, cultural, demographic and economic characteristics. As expressed by the author Spanevello (2008, p. 22), “the logic of succession is based on the need to maintain the family heritage represented by the land”. This logic takes shape when the patriarch finds a successor and manages to establish the transmission of the state, determining the economic and social conditions offered to the children, which may or may not be effective.

Considering this logic, it is essential to make an interlocution with a passage by Stropasolas (2014), in which he states that the patriarch is torn between two choices that define the family trajectory: on the one hand, he wants one of his sons to succeed him, in order to maintain the family tradition; on the other hand, the son seeks new opportunities in the urban environment, as a way of creating possibilities for financial autonomy (RENK; DORIGON, 2014).

Following this reasoning, Abramovay et al (1998, p. 27) describe that:

In addition to food and raw materials, until the end of the 60s, farmers in southern Brazil produced something even more important to them: new family production units, either right where they lived – by sharing out their land – or by constantly trying to “put their children to work”.

Many families believed that the objectives of the productive establishment and the aspirations of the individuals in the family nucleus were merged. Sometimes, however, these goals were not put into practice and, sporadically, one of the family members had a personal goal that did not go according the plan. Abramovay et al (1998) state that family succession appears in agriculture when this mutual relationship of objectives in the family establishment disappears. The integrity of the paternal domain and the installation of other children, configuring a

dual objective on the part of the family establishment, manages to be idealized until the early 1970s, as explained by Abramovay et al (1998, p. 28):

Through the institution of the *minorato* (also called *ultimogeniture*) whereby paternal land is passed on to the youngest son who, in return, is responsible for looking after his parents during their old age;
The permanent effort to provide older children with the means to reproduce their status as farmers;
The value placed on farming as a means of fulfilling adult life;
High spatial mobility and a particularly dynamic land market among farmers.

Based on Abramovay's comments, it is also worth mentioning Spanevello's view (2008, p. 51), according to which "[...] the allocation of children to agriculture was largely favored by the opening up of the available land market, both within establishments, such as in municipalities, regions or other states". In this way, the patriarch was able to keep his son in rural areas with the identity of a farmer. For Gasson and Errinton (1993), as a tradition, the family farm was passed on from one generation to the next, with the patriarch wanting to pass on his land to the next generation, thus establishing the family tradition (SPANVELLO, 2008).

From the 2010s onwards, regional institutions such as Emater/Ascar-RS, REMAF, among others, began to identify that the traditional form, recognized as a minority, in the succession process, presents itself differently. What has emerged is that the eldest son is more likely to remain on the property than the youngest son. This is because the younger son has a greater incentive to study than the older one.

Clearly, the process of family succession involves a range of perspectives that provide a very broad interpretation of what can positively or negatively affect the effective passing on of the family establishment. Spanevello (2008, p. 53) reports that "the willingness or predisposition to be a farmer is acquired by the children as part of a process of action by the whole family". Going further, he adds that:

Practices such as socialization at work and other guidelines, such as funding for studies, the purchase of other areas of land for the installation of others end up being aimed at guaranteeing the continuity of the establishment (SPANVELLO, 2008, p. 53).

As expressed by the author, it is essential that the family takes an active part in the succession process and that the relationships developed are designed to maintain the family's traditions. In this dialogue, based on research carried out by Aguiar and Stropasolas (2010) and Silvestro et al (2001), other relationships for succession will be presented.

The son, clearly aware that he will be the successor of the family property, is made aware that complete management will only take place when the patriarch believes that the time has come to step back from activities and responsibility or to retire. When the young family member, whether or not being the successor, has the autonomy to make insertions and share interests regarding the property and the family activity (as is usually the case with the son who is defined as the successor), he demonstrates a more intense involvement. The son who doesn't want to take over, on the other hand, demonstrates his lack of interest. There may also sons who are interested in continuing in agriculture, but, due to the small amount of land that

the family owns and the lack of capital to buy other plots, he moves to the urban environment (RENK; DORIGON, 2014). Thinking about the reproduction of the family farm, migration to the urban environment, is sometimes not just a decision to leave, but an option to find an activity that provides the necessary structure for social reproduction.

In line with what was said earlier, when discussing the perception of regional players, it is worth mentioning that young people know that someone will have to take over the succession, with the responsibility of looking after their parents in old age. Of course, the delay in defining a successor makes that young people have a horizontal view of the profession that may have in the future, making it difficult to dialogue about how everything might work out on the family farm. In this respect, the formalization of public policies helps families to manage the passing on of assets between generations. Also noteworthy is the development of mechanisms for access to land by young people who become farmers (RENK; DORIGON, 2014).

In this sense, it is also worth mentioning Morelo (2018, p. 117), who state that the French government prioritizes the recovery of family farmers for those young people who are interested in staying in rural areas and not expanding existing farms, supporting projects that they deem viable in long term. Also in support young people, the national union of young farmers helps them to formalize their projects. The authors also report that in France and extending to the entire European community, there is a call for young people to remain in rural areas, as a food security strategy. For this support, as a public policy aimed to encourage young people to stay, the French government analyzes whether young person has the profile, technical qualifications and minimum structure to be able to develop agricultural activities, providing a greater degree of accuracy in investment strategies.

In this respect, the research by the authors mentioned above shows that the young people defined as successors on farms in southern Brazil are accompanied by the patriarch in the day-to-day activities on the property. There is no specific preparation for taking over the management and activities of the property. It is also clear that, in rural areas, there are few young people seeking professional qualification and many with a low level of schooling (RENK; DORIGON, 2014).

It is clear that the rural environment has been in constantly changing over the last few decades. Goodman et al (1990) point out that other processes introduced, such as the modernization of agriculture, have led to changes in the social reproduction of family farmers, with the logic of expanding the market by encouraging a significant increase in production and productivity on an industrial scale. Marsden (1989) adds that this modernization is accompanied by the insertion of technology into the capitalist logic of production, leading to a re-signification of production with a focus on global markets. This situation forces farmers to implement formal processes that until then had been done according to their family upbringing, leading them to develop a professional management of the establishment, with qualification and increased production. In order to do this, chemical and artificial products are used (fertilizers, genetically transformed seeds, pesticides); industrial good and inputs are purchased; and commercial policies are based on international values, based on the stock exchange (SPANLEVELLO, 2008).

Silva (1982) points out that the changes that have taken place in agriculture are relevant in the social, economic and environmental context, thus causing:

The departure or exodus of the population from rural areas, the individualization of agricultural work due to the use of labor-saving technologies, the reduction of subsistence farming and the depletion of natural resources, the exhaustion of the local land market, land concentration and the impoverishment of farmers who have not been able to enter the productivity logic. (SPANVELLO, 2008, p. 54)

According to Silvestro et al (2001) and Champagne (2002), the transformations that have taken place in rural areas have made it clear that the process of succession has been directly impacted by these changes, as it carries with it the vagueness and uncertainty generated because the rules and patterns established in previous years are being mitigated, with no prospect of new succession patterns emerging, generating doubts and questions (SPANVELLO, 2008).

In an attempt to understand the theory of succession in rural areas and to blend the perceptions that discuss the logic of development in rural areas, the next section presents the Missões Region as the territory of this research.

3 The characterization of the Missões Region/RS in the 21st century

In order to characterize of the Missões Region, data is used that shows the regional reality based on governmental and academic studies and research institutions such as FEE, IBGE and the Socioeconomic Atlas of Rio Grande do Sul. In addition to these, it is also worth mentioning the material called COREDE Missões-RS Socioeconomic Profile, produced by the Rio Grande do Sul State Government's Department of Planning, Mobility and Regional Development (SEPLAN), which makes excellent contributions to the territory under study.

The Missions Region is geographically located 450 kilometers from the capital, Porto Alegre. In the west, it shares a border with Argentina, with which it does not have a firm economic link, as it does not have an agile road infrastructure¹. As the border is separated by the Uruguay River, the link is made by water transport (ferry crossing), which is expensive for commercial transactions. The Missions Region shares borders with COREDES belonging to the same Functional Region², as well as with COREDES from other Functional Regions. Located to the north of the Missions Region is COREDE Northwest Frontier; to the south, COREDE Vale do Jaguari; to the east, COREDE Colonial Northwest; and, to round off the geographical reference, to the southeast is COREDE Western Frontier. According to the division established by the Regional Development Council (COREDE), created in 1991, the Missões Region is made up of twenty-five municipalities³, as shown in Figure 1.

¹ There is no bridge connecting the borders, but there is a river crossing by ferry, and in the Missions Region there is only one legal crossing with a Federal Revenue Service outpost in the municipality of Porto Xavier/RS.

² According to SEPLAG (2019), COREDE Missões, COREDE Northwest Frontier, COREDE Colonial Northwest and COREDE Barn belong to Functional Region 7.

³ Bossoroca, Caibaté, Cerro Largo, Dezesseis de Novembro, Entre-Ijuís, Eugênio de Castro, Garruchos, Giruá, Guarani das Missões, Mato Queimado, Pirapó, Porto Xavier, Rolador, Roque Gonzales,

Figure 1 - Municipalities in the Missões Region



Source: Portal das Missões, 2020.

The economic base of the Missions Region is sustained by agriculture and livestock farming, with a low incidence of industry. According to the COREDE Missões Socio-Economic Profile (2015), agriculture in the Missões Region stands out for its cattle and pig farming, while the cultivation of commodities such as corn and wheat, as well as cassava crops, are also important. The industry is not very significant in the region, being more explored in the processing of primary products, such as agro-industrialization on family farms.

The COREDE Missões Socioeconomic Profile (SEPLAN, 2015, p. 8) highlights that:

In terms of social indicators, health and income generation and appropriation are at worrying levels. Education is in a better position, although it has a high percentage of adults with incomplete primary education.

The transportation infrastructure is deficient in the road sector, with five municipalities still lacking asphalt access. Water transport is underused, as it has potential, especially on the River Uruguay. The sanitation infrastructure is also deficient, especially in the number of bathrooms or toilets connected to the mains or septic tanks.

In this scenario presented about the Missions Region, we can highlight, in relation to demographic characterization, that the population of the municipalities has been decreasing, causing a different look at the movement of the territory. In the 2010 Demographic Census, the IBGE indicated that the population of this region was 248,016 inhabitants, distributed as follows: 71% lived in urban areas and 29% lived in rural areas. Over the last ten years, this figure has fluctuated somewhat: between 2000 and 2010, the population grew by 5% in urban areas and fell by 24% in rural areas.

Salvador das Missões, Santo Ângelo, Santo Antônio das Missões, São Luiz Gonzaga, São Miguel das Missões, São Nicolau, São Paulo das Missões, São Pedro do Butiá, Sete de Setembro, Ubiretama and Vitória das Missões.

According to the COREDE Missões Socio-Economic Profile (SEPLAN, 2015, p. 10), in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, some regions, such as the "northern border, the northwest and part of the south", show greater movement of the population to other regions, especially the rural population. This movement is more concentrated towards the east of the state of Rio Grande do Sul (RS), the outskirts of the Porto Alegre Metropolitan Region and the Gaucho Coast Region.

This migratory movement of the population means that some regions showed negative demographic growth between 2000 and 2010. With a high population loss of around 6% over the same period, it can be seen that within the Missions Region there are some municipalities with population growth in urban areas and others with a decrease in rural areas.

The municipalities of Eugênio de Castro (+35%), Salvador das Missões (+29%) and Sete de Setembro (+28%) are the ones with the highest urban population growth, while the municipalities that have lost the most population in rural areas are Santo Ângelo (-62%), Caibaté (-49%) and Eugênio de Castro (-41%).

According to the COREDE Missões Socioeconomic Profile (2015), some municipalities, such as Bossoroca, Garruchos, Caibaté, Pirapó, Dezesseis de Novembro, São Nicolau, Guarani das Missões and Santo Antônio das Missões show stagnation or loss of urban and rural population in the same period.

This reduction in population in the Missions Region is manifested by the low supply of jobs and income, a low fertility rate and low life expectancy. Data from the RS Economics and Statistics Foundation (2013) shows that over a 10-year period, the Missions Region has seen a significant drop in population in the 0-4 age group: in 2010, there was a 34% decrease compared to 2000. On the other hand, the 65 over 80 age group grew by 30%, showing that the population of the Missions Region has aged in 10 years due to the low fertility rate.

In order to provide a better understanding of why the Missões Region shows data that goes against the development of the territory and why it is one of the regions in the state of Rio Grande do Sul that loses the most population, we studied the socio-economic development of the municipalities in relation to the three basic areas for human development.

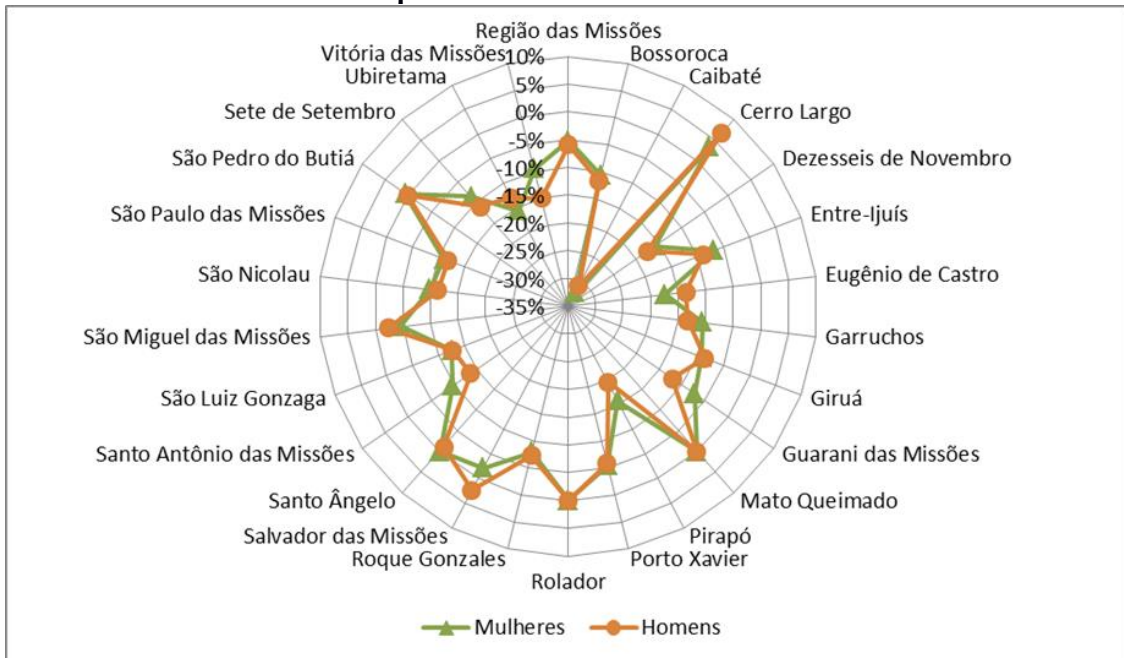
According to the FIRJAN Municipal Development Index (2018)⁴, in 2016 the Missions Region achieved a moderate level of human development, with 0.7156, very close to the state level, but higher than the national index, which was 0.6678. Of the 25 municipalities in the Missions Region, Ubiretama, Vitória das Missões and Roque Gonzales are the municipalities with the lowest IFDM.

With regard to the employment and income index, it is regular, and may be one of the factors that contribute to the migration of the population in search of regions that offer better conditions in this regard. Still observing this scenario, it is noticed that 17 municipalities are in the regular level – score from 0.4 to 0.6 – and only three municipalities are classified in the moderate level, between 0.6 and 0.8 – two of which are considered strategic cities in the Region. In the education and

⁴ According to FIRJAN's methodology, the IFDM variable, the municipality is classified by four levels of development, where between 0.0 and 0.4 is considered low development; between 0.4 and 0.6 regular development; between 0.6 and 0.8 moderate development and between 0.8 and 1.0 high development. For more information, visit: <https://www.firjan.com.br/ifdm/>

health criteria, the municipalities of the Missões Region already fit into the moderate and high levels, ranging from 0.6 to 0.8 and 0.8 to 1.0.

Graph 1 – Variation by gender in the municipalities of the Missões Region in the period from 2000 to 2010



Source: Prepared by the authors based on FEE (2017).

Looking at the movement of the Missions Region, it can be seen from the men and women categories in Graph 1 that over the same ten-year period, the Missions Region had a 6% reduction in men and a 4% reduction in women. This reduction may be related to population migration to other regions, mortality and low birth rates. In this scenario, the three municipalities that stand out due to the reduction in population are Caibaté (32% fewer women and 31% fewer men), Dezesseis de Novembro (16% fewer women and 18% fewer men) and Pirapó (16% fewer women and 20% fewer men). This analysis also shows that the municipalities that maintained or increased their rates were Cerro Largo (3% more women and 7% more men), Salvador das Missões (2% more men) and São Pedro do Butiá (1% more women).

Another point to consider is the territory's population density. Three municipalities stand out for having the highest population density: Santo Ângelo, with 112.5 inhabitants/km²; Cerro Largo, with 75.6 inhabitants/km²; and Porto Xavier, with 37.1 inhabitants/km². It is also worth mentioning the three municipalities with the lowest population density: Garruchos, with 3.9 inhabitants/km²; Bossoroca, with 4.2 inhabitants/km²; and São Miguel das Missões, with 6.1 inhabitants/km².

In the analyses carried out in the territory, it can be seen that the movements in relation to rural establishments show the transformation that has been taking place over the years. According to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (2017), establishments belonging to non-family farming grew by 0.16% from the 2006 Agricultural Census to the 2017 Preliminary Agricultural Census. On the other hand, it should be noted that family farming establishments, defined in accordance with Law No. 11.326, fell by 23.33% over the same period. In 2006, the

total number of establishments in the Missions territory was 25,565 and in 2017 it fell to 20,482, a reduction of 19.88% over a decade.

The Missions Region is characterized as a territory of small farms. According to Law No. 11.326, family farms have a total landholding structure of up to 4 fiscal modules, which represents a maximum of 80 hectares. According to data from the 2006 Agricultural Census, at the time there were 21,817 family farming establishments and 3,748 non-family farming establishments. Although the number of family farming establishments has decreased, according to the 2017 Agricultural Census, on the other hand, there has been a small increase in non-family farming.

According to Ortiz (2019), the 2017 Agricultural Census shows a decrease in the participation of family farming, and it is clear that territorial promotion strategies for the Missions Region must be part of a planning system based on the need for social and economic reproduction that contributes to maintaining family farming in the region. It is therefore essential to highlight the factors that influence young rural people as to whether or not they will remain on farms with rural family agribusiness in the Missões Region, which is explained in the next chapter.

4 Factors that influence whether or not young people stay in the rural establishment

Several authors have researched the factors that influence whether young people stay in rural areas or leave, i.e. whether or not they decide to stay in rural areas. In this respect, Brumer (2001) points out that young people staying in rural areas is linked to the guarantee of a monthly income, based on earnings from agricultural activities carried out on the family farm. Others, such as Abramovay et al (1998) and Carneiro (2001; 2007), point out that in order for the family succession process to take place, it is necessary to work on certain elements that meet the needs of young people, such as income, family relationships, inclusive public policies, digital communication and educational training. These points can be seen through a general reading of the property characterized as family farming.

Troian and Breitenbach (2018, p. 798) highlight authors such as Spanevello, Drebes and Lago (2011), Abramovay et al (1998), among others, pointing out that young people are encouraged to stay in the countryside by factors such as: technical institutions aimed at promoting rural extension, with rural extension programs that generate job opportunities for young people; farmers' cooperatives acting as providers of credit, technical assistance, productive and informational improvement and social promotion; strengthening local groups and farmers' organizations; initiatives and activities aimed at leisure, through meetings that encourage exchanges of experiences, recreational games, among others; technology, modernization of the countryside, machines and equipment that make it easier to carry out agricultural activities, reducing the drudgery of work; valuing rural areas and recognizing the importance of agriculture; in addition, policies aimed at rural youth cannot be limited to agriculture alone, but must include, for example, quality education, encouraging the development of innovative projects that make the rural environment an option for life.

Based on these readings, this research sought to identify whether properties with rural family agro-industries have different factors that define whether or not

young people stay in the rural establishment. Thirty-two family farms with agro-industries were interviewed, and a questionnaire was sent to parents and children, with the aim of understanding the factors that influence young people to remain or not in the rural family establishment, some of which have already undergone the succession process, but the parents still remain on the property.

When asked what influences a young person's decision to stay or leave the family farm, the answer was that young people don't stay because most farms, even those with agro-industries, are focused on producing grains such as soybeans, corn and wheat. These properties generally have a cash flow when these products are sold, making it impossible for young people to have a monthly income, which doesn't allow them to have financial freedom, forcing them to ask the patriarch every time they need to.

Not only the monthly income, but also the benefits that an urban wage earner receives, such as the 13th salary and vacations, are attractive to young people in rural areas. Another point that stands out is that growing grains for sale in natura, with the intensification in quality and quantity produced, requires farms to modernize technologically, which becomes unfeasible due to the size of the productive area that families have. This means that they are unable to invest in high-tech equipment and machinery, such as tractors with air conditioning and GPS, for example.

As a result, young people prefer to move to urban areas or even to another larger property with more resources, which offers comfort and doesn't require them to be exposed to the sun or the cold to do their work. This finding is in line with the perspective of Marsden (1989) and Goodman et al (1990), when they report that the modernization of agriculture is linked to the introduction of technology to increase productivity on an industrial scale, with the intention of meeting the needs of global markets.

Another factor to be mentioned is that young people start working with their fathers from an early age and, along the way, they acquire knowledge, skills and experience, but the patriarch doesn't accept his son's opinion in the development of the activities, which leads to discouragement. Another detail is the frustration of the harvest, when all the work that has been done over a period of time doesn't generate a satisfactory yield⁵.

It is also believed that, since the 1990, young people have become more interested in studying, not least to make it possible to develop the property, seeing that it is viable to continue their parents' work, but making it clear that they need to study to be able to maintain the property and not have to leave (Interviewee 31). In this sense, the weakness of rural schools is apparent, since several localities no longer have schools and others teach the first grades of elementary school, from 1st to 5th grade, and then the children and young people have to go to a school in the urban center. Some parents believe that one of their children's interests in moving to urban areas is the relationship they have with urban schools, that is, young people from rural areas suffer from the need to travel to study and experience urban life.

Another point observed in the survey concerns management skills, because it's not enough to know how to produce, you need to know how to market the

⁵ If the farmer doesn't have the funding, his financial gain could be zero for that period.

product produced, how to commercialize an agro-industry, conquer new markets, etc.

The patriarchs' thinking is in line with the four basic characteristics of a successor in Vidigal's view (1996): knowledge of the market, of the laws; knowledge of production; competence to lead, to command the activities that need to be carried out by the other members of the family; and the ability to identify one's strengths and weaknesses, known as self-knowledge.

Another aspect mentioned as negative for staying is the bureaucracy involved in getting agro-industries authorized. As Interviewee 8 said, "young people want a monthly income and not to be dependent on a small annual income from planting soya in a small area". He adds that the agro-industry is an alternative for young people to earn a monthly income. But the demands made on the quality of the product developed by the agro-industry have forced families to invest in expensive physical structures and equipment, which is another point that discourages young people from staying. Because they don't know all the processes involved, they can't identify the viability of this investment in order to stay in rural areas.

The difficulty of transporting production is another obstacle; due to the precariousness of the roads, traffic is compromised on rainy days, leaving many localities isolated, depending on the weather conditions. It is also worth mentioning the type of product produced in the agro-industry and the degree of involvement required as an aspect that interferes with the young person's decision. As Interviewee 11 said, daily work in the agro-industry starts at 5am and ends at 10pm. This high level of demand, combined with the devaluation of the products when they are sold, means that young people don't want to stay in this activity. In addition to these factors, there is also the intense inspection of properties that have agro-industries, since they have to account for everything that is produced.

On the other hand, it is believed that young people's desire to stay in farming is related to their love of it and their desire to follow in the same footsteps as their parents. Another highlight is related to support from public policies, with financial incentives. One way in which the government can support young people to remain in rural areas and develop their activities is to use the succession policy for French farms as an example. As described by David Morelo⁶, the French government's main focus is on restoring farms, rather than prioritizing the expansion of existing farms. The government also supports projects developed by young people that show long-term profitability/viability.

Another aspect to consider is that the young person needs to visualize the financial result that the agro-industry delivers to the family nucleus. On this point, Interviewees 5 and 28 said that the income from the agro-industry covers all the production, administrative, family and property costs in its various activities. Flexible working hours and the autonomy of being able to do what one likes are other points raised by the interviewees as positive reasons for young people to stay in rural areas. The countryside offers a tranquility and quality of life that is different from the city.

⁶ Young French family farmer. Chapter from the book Financial cooperativism and family farming: generating sustainable development, organized by Cledir Assisio Lagri and Edivan Junior Pommerening, 2018. Appendix D.

In the view of both parents and children, the positive point for the young person to stay is the continuity of the family's career, when the investment made to formalize the agro-industry is sustainable. It's worth mentioning that many end up staying in the informal sector because of indecision about who will continue. The interviewees realize the importance that their production has in relation to the economic, social and cultural context of the territory to which they belong. From the family's point of view, the following points stand out as attractions for young people to stay: working at home with the family; not having to leave to look for another income; something profitable; selling the product to the customer with freedom; having a monthly income; family development; producing correctly, meeting health requirements; contact with the world; meeting people; putting their studies into practice; having their own business.

These factors interact with what parents and children perceive over time, which is recorded as a popular saying: "the road is done". This means that the most difficult part has already been built by the parents, which is the creation, formalization and marketing (customer network). The son will have everything organized to continue what was built by the patriarchs.

Access to education and technology are points that are seen as important for young people to be able to stay on the family farm, given that the countryside is in a process of continuous transformation. With the introduction of technology, young people are required to study in order to continue developing activities on the farm. In the view of those interviewed, young people who do not seek knowledge will not have a prosperous future in agriculture.

These factors can be analyzed in Table 1, which highlights the incentive for young people to stay in the countryside or not.

Table 1 - Factors influencing young people's decisions

STAY at the rural establishment	DO NOT STAY at the rural establishment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desire to follow the same activity as their parents - continuity of the family path; • Support from public policies, with financial incentives. • Visualize the financial result that the agroindustry delivers to the family nucleus; • Flexibility working hours and the autonomy of being able to do what you like; • Tranquility and a different quality of life from the city; • Putting your studies into practice - having your own business. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focused on producing grains such as soybeans, corn and wheat - making it impossible for young people to have a monthly income - the benefits that an urban wage earner receives, such as 13th salary and vacations; • Technological modernization - exposure to the sun or cold to do the work; • Accepting the child's opinion in the development of activities; • Lack of rural schools - precarious roads; • It is necessary to know how to market the product produced, how to commercialize an agro-industry, conquer new markets, etc.; • The bureaucracy involved in licensing agro-industries - demands on product quality; • The type of product produced in the agro-industry and the degree of involvement required.

Source: Prepared by the authors based on research carried out in 2019.

Table 1 shows that it is not just one factor that plays a role in a young person's decision to remain in the family establishment, but a set of factors that go beyond the boundaries of public policies.

Conclusions

The aim of this study was to analyze the factors that influence the succession process based on the perception of young farmers on rural family farms with agro-industries in the Missões region of the state of Rio Grande do Sul/Brazil. In this way, the 32 family farms interviewed make it clear that it is not just one factor that influences the young person's decision to remain in the family establishment, but a set of factors that go beyond the boundaries of public policies to encourage and support the social category to which the young person belongs. These factors are much more intrinsic to the trajectory of life, the way in which family development is conducted. It can thus be highlighted that young people end up not staying due to the low financial return provided by the property's production matrix, with the agro-industry being treated as a supplement to income and not as the main source, with young people not perceiving a guarantee of monthly income, a 13th salary.

Inefficiency in technology is also a negative point. But another point that really stands out is the behavior of young farmers in relation to commercial conduct, as many don't feel comfortable selling and charging money. One point to be explored in possible future studies is the issue of the behavior and profile of young farmers. Another agenda that stands out for future studies is the specialization of young farmers in the area in which they work on the family farm, when young people who show an interest in staying report that they intend to study and return to the farm, not least because they believe it is possible to have a better quality of life. In this way, we can see that studies on family succession in family farming have a lot of ground to cover.

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