

The rural as a space for the construction of knowledge and decisions in the life of young people



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ABSTRACT

The human being, throughout his development, builds his personality and, from adolescence, many changes occur in the person's life, added to the new thoughts and ways of acting that arise. These transformations lead young people to look at their

living space and at the activity developed by the family in an analytical and critical way, making them reflect on the present reality. Given this scenario, the present work sought to know the vision of young people in 3 Family Farming communities in the Southern Region of Bahia in relation to their perception of the place where they live and the family farming activity. The objectives were operationalized through the application of forms, following the ethical precepts of Resolution 466/12. The results indicate that the local youth still perceive the place as pleasant and with the potential to provide a pleasant life, however, as a professional possibility, Family Farming is not an option for the majority.

Keywords: Family farming, Attachment to place, Belonging.

1 INTRODUCTION

From the historical and/or geographical identity, the feeling of belonging can manifest itself in various ways and vary according to the profile of each human group (FREITAS, 2008). This construction occurs as the members of the community strengthen and strengthen their relationships, thus building a collective history that will be responsible for establishing their identity. In an increasingly pasteurized reality, the author emphasizes that the aspects related to this construction should receive greater attention.

The construction of its individuation and its identity takes place initially in the family, which will also contribute to its sense of belonging, to the place, to the customs, etc. The family develops from two essential functions that are the establishment of a sense of belonging to that group and the individualization of its members, that is, the individuals who encompass these family nuclei will not fail to build their own identity that, like the other structure, is constantly evolving (MINUCHIN; FISHMAN, 2003).



Family, individuality and the sense of belonging are factors that influence the way rural youth build their identity, establish themselves in society and social roles, which in turn affect their future and potentially their own. they affect their choices that affect the communities in which they live.

With the emergence and growth of large agricultural enterprises called agribusiness, it becomes practically paradoxical to draw attention to family farming, which should be discussed, because it involves an immense theoretical framework to be made.

According to the IBGE, family farming is responsible for 70 to 80% of the food that reaches the table of Brazilians. With a contribution of 35% to the country's GDP, it would be unthinkable not to pay attention to this sector, especially to the rural youth who could be the guardian of this history.

Faced with this scenario, it is intended to unveil the feeling of belonging of young people to the place in which they live, as well as their perception in relation to the family agricultural activity of those communities.

Thus, the guiding question of this work arises, which is: how do young people perceive the place in which they live, the family agricultural activity and how do they see themselves through the perception of those who live outside the community?

2 THE PLACE IN CONCEPTUAL CONTEXT

The concept of place goes beyond the geographical dimensions, expanding to the most varied existing socio-cultural areas. Thus, the interpretation for the word place may vary according to the established interdisciplinary connections. Therefore, these variations contribute to the development of several interpretations for the concept (MARANDOLA JR., 2012 apud SUESS; LEITE 2018).

Faced with such a variety of interpretations, it is necessary to seek a balance between theory and practice, so that the concept is applied to modernity. It is essential that there is a relationship between what was experienced by the individual, added to the theoretical and scientific concepts (ENTRIKIN, 1991; VIGOTSKY, 2018 apud SUESS; LEITE, 2018).

Given this scenario, unifying these ideas, we can define place as any locality in which it has meaning to a person or group of people, so that these environments in which they are or have been, transmit a sense of belonging to those individuals (TUAN, 2011 apud SUESS; LEITE, 2018).

The term community comes from historical and social processes. In this sense, as well as the word place, this term ends up generating the most diverse considerations about the areas in which they refer (SILVA; HESPANHOL, 2016). From the conceptual point of view, according to Ferreira and Luz (1974) communities are a group of individuals who share a strong cohesion, that is, who share something in common, such as the gypsies, riverside dwellers and quilombolas, examples of communities present in contemporary Brazilian society.



Unlike previous concepts, the word territory does not necessarily bring an idea of sentimentality or belonging. In modern terms, territory is a space defined by power relations, which divide it into the so-called borders (SOUZA, 1995 apud NÓBREGA, 2013).

However, although in a first analysis the term territory is linked to the delimited space, it can also be seen from a perspective of the affective dimension, with emphasis on the topophilic link resembling the concept of place (RIBEIRO; MATTOS, 2002 apud NÓBREGA, 2013).

Despite the varied perspectives these words may encompass, they have something in common. The fact that given a context, all of them, especially the term place, can be related to the feeling of belonging, makes them in the field of topophilia, that is, in the sector in which the study of the attachment of a human being to a certain specific area is intended.

3 COMMUNITY AND ITS RELATIONS

For Gomes (1999) the concept of community is quite flexible and can include from a small social group, a village, a neighborhood, a school, a residents' association, a union or any other type of governmental institution or not, reaching an entire city. This diversity of conceptual possibilities is due to the comprehensive multiplicity of social relations established by people and in different contexts.

Marriage, family, kinship, the church are institutions that can be considered communities, from the moment they come together as groups, establishing links with each other, sharing common spaces and interests (SCHILLING, 1974; KOENIG, 1962 apud GOMES, 1999).

Gomes (1999, p. 73) brings another way of thinking about community, based on the statements of Nisbet (1978), when he characterizes it from individuals and their web of social relations, describing that it goes beyond the limits of the local community, relating to emotional issues, personal relationships, moral engagement among others.

The concept of community can be understood from the concept of social group since there is some degree of organization sharing psychological and physical space and sharing beliefs, attitudes and values (GOMES, 1999).

For Spinelli Junior (2006, p. 1) "the word community can be used to describe from villages, clubs and suburbs to ethnic groups and nations [...] the community is structured from a sense of community, from a sense of belonging to a particular collectivity."

As you can see, the conception of community is a challenge, because it is polysemic, because it has a great conceptual diversity and because of its strong emotional appeal (SPINELLI JUNIOR, 2006).

For Scarparo and Guareschi (2007, p. 102), "the term community is polysemic and has been characterized by providing broad and diverse possibilities of problematization."



Based on critical social psychology, Sawaia (2000) analyzed some conceptualizations and examined some of these formulations, concluding that the dichotomy between the individual and society, linked to the process of historical development, is significantly reflected in the establishment of conceptions of community.

Weber (2005) highlights that the social relations established are determinant for the definition of a community. Being that these will be guiding the actions of its inhabitants. The author also states that this conception is based on an aspect of solidarity, involving the emotions and traditions of those involved.

For Gusfield (1995 apud LUCA, BRIANEZI; SORRENTINO, 2010) one can think of it from an existential organization where people relate, establish a sense of identity and a narrow notion of cooperation and solidarity, that is, from a sense of belonging and not from a geopolitical establishment.

It is also understood the "social ties and informal systems of exchange of resources between people" instead of individuals aggregated by neighborhood and small cities, it will be possible to glimpse the existence of interpersonal relationships. Interrelationships that are built in function of a real context that is governed by human wills, which can be composed of ties of blood or place, as well as parental relationships, coexistence and even friendship (LEMOS, 2009, p. 203).

Geographical boundaries are not the exclusive way to define a community, that is, it must also be understood from its values, its symbolic entity and its codes of conduct (SPINELLI JUNIOR, 2006).

For the notion of community to be established from those who live in it, it is necessary that there is a consensus as to the feeling of belonging, where the entire symbolic and historical framework is shared, even if the individuality of each member is preserved. In this way, it is understood that those who compose it share in a similar way the process of feeling, believing and acting (COHEN, 1985 apud LEMOS, 2009).

4 SENSE OF BELONGING AND ATTACHMENT TO PLACE

According to Gastal and Pilati (2016) the human being has a natural tendency to live in groups and, historically, those who associated with others of the same species, had higher chances of survival.

Socio-Historical Psychology "recognizes that the need for social belonging is a universal human condition, for which all groups and individuals fight incessantly, at the same time that they suffer when they do not achieve this insertion" (TAVARES, 2014, p. 193).

The same author emphasizes from the propositions of Baumeister and Leary (1995) that the need for belonging is characterized as what moves individuals to establish and maintain quality social bonds, that is, it is not a search solely to belong to a group, but a quality bond, where there is also a desire to be accepted.



The need for acceptance is inherent to all human beings, however, the motivation for this purpose varies according to the characteristics of each individual, that is, "there is variation in the strength and influence of the need for belonging in the life of each individual, which indicates the importance of understanding this phenomenon also from a dispositional perspective" (GASTAL; PILATI, 2016, p. 286).

Gastal and Pilati also highlight that the construct that each individual makes during his process of belonging, will influence the way he interacts in the social environment in which he is inserted, and when this happens favorably, his adaptation to the environment becomes more positive, strengthening the establishment of bonds.

The conception of belonging can be complemented with the conceptualization made by Tuan (1980) regarding topophilia. The author defines it as the relationship of affection between individuals and a particular place or physical environment, which can vary in intensity, and in the way they express it. He also points out that as a concept it may seem diffuse, but as a personal experience it is something extremely concrete and vivid.

In the relationship of individuals with the environment, the response can permeate between purely aesthetic bonds, superficial and ephemeral pleasures, to those that are deeper, because it is the place where memories are built, where one lives, how far one draws sustenance for survival. "Topophilia is not the strongest human emotion. When it is irresistible, we can be sure that the place or environment is the vehicle of emotionally strong events or is perceived as a symbol" (TUAN, 1980, p. 107).

The collective memory built by the community must be constantly reinforced and maintained, since it reflects on the maintenance of identity, pride and the feeling of belonging to the place and, consequently, of its survival. The historical and geographical identity must be reinforced and maintained, because its lack can result in a partial or complete decharacterization, having very serious consequences for young people, who will distance themselves from their origins (FREITAS, 2008).

The feeling of belonging manifests itself in several ways, depending on the community studied (LE BOURLEGAT, 2000). This whole conception is being built as the components of a given community establish and strengthen their interactions and relationships. Thus, each human group will constitute its own identity. A construct that, according to Freitas (2008), is fundamental in the face of an increasingly pasteurized reality.

Freitas (2008) points out that excelling in the union and cohesion of the groups that make up the community is an important strategy for the rescue and strengthening of the sense of belonging and identity with the place. This intervention, associated with the historical rescue, will be reflected in the awareness of the past of those who live there. All these associated factors will contribute to the individual to elaborate his feeling of love for that place.



A group of visitors or tourists builds a relationship with the place, but in a sense of novelty and superficiality of what is seen. Already those who live and coexist there, there are a number of variables that are determinant for their sense of belonging to be strengthened, among it can be highlighted the local culture, its myths and traditional knowledge (TUAN, 1980).

Identity and belonging are not only related to love in relation to the place, they are variables that reflect on the development of the community, that is, "the result of the territorial, economic and cultural ties of a given geographical space generates a feeling, which in turn, is of great relevance to the concept of Local Development" (FREITAS, 2008, p. 44).

The feeling of belonging in the community is also addressed by Tuan (1980) as an aspect that permeates its constitution, through the established social relations, which will result in traditional and emotional connections of its members. Freitas (2008, p. 45) says that, "the stronger such emotional bonds are, the greater the sense of belonging of individuals in a group or community. Feeling [...] indispensable for the solidification and preservation of a certain group of people."

The identity and the sense of belonging that are established with the place where they live, are important for the permanence of the individual in the community and, as well as for its development.

5 ADOLESCENCE AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF VISION

To evaluate family functioning, in all its complexity throughout its life cycle and in the midst of all environmental changes, as well as that of each individual, it is necessary to make a study about the differentiation of the Self (NEVES, 2011).

For Bowen (1978 apud NEVES, 2011, p. 7) as a characteristic of personality, "the differentiation of the Self involves the ability to distinguish the thought system from the emotional system and the ability to preserve autonomy in a context of deep intimacy with the closest people".

The differentiation of the *Self* can occur in two different, distinct, more interrelated ways. The first occurs through intrapsychic aspects, which are related to the individual's capacity for self-regulation, that is, it is the ability that the person has to differentiate feelings from thoughts, directing him to an intellectual or an emotional system. The second happens on an interpersonal level, which is responsible for maintaining autonomy, even in the face of its relationship with the other (NEVES, 2011).

Guimarães (2014) when resuming the ideas of Bowen (1991) points out that the members of a family will experience the sense of individuation or differentiation and belonging. For him, "belonging means the guarantee that the individual has to be part of a certain family with its own beliefs, values, myths, prejudices and rules, which form its family identity" (p. 55).

Bowen defines differentiation as "an instinctive vital force of the human being that drives the development of the child to growth, so that he can become an emotionally independent person, an



individual with the capacity to think, feel and act for himself" (BOWEN, 1991 apud GUIMARÃES, 2014, p. 55)

The differentiation that will occur throughout the growth of the young person begins in his family and will have an impact on his ability to become a unique individual. In other words, if during their development process there is no stimulus for an emotional individualization, in which the bonds established between family members are so close as to limit the formation of their subjectivity, this will result in an individual with restrictions to think, act and feel on their own (GUIMARÃES, 2014).

In the process of differentiation, young people evaluate the precariousness of life in rural areas, experienced in childhood and observed in the day-to-day life of their parents, turning their gaze to the city. At this moment he observes the difference between the social role of those who live in the countryside and in the city. In this perspective Lima et al. (2013) resumes the work of Castro (2009) by observing that living conditions and even the fact of living in the countryside, generate a stigma of devaluation, causing young people to think that migrating to the urban is the only option for a better condition in all aspects.

6 METHODOLOGY

The research, which has municipal coverage, is being developed in the Municipality of Ilhéus, located in the South of Bahia and 456 km from the Capital Salvador, has a territorial area of 1,760,111 Km². The average per capita income of private households in the rural area is 246.25 reais (1,104.83 reais per household situation) and in the urban environment of 400.00 reais (2,081.58 reais per household situation) (IBGE, 2010).

The SEI (2009), in its report of Statistics of the Municipalities of Bahia, presents that Ilhéus has in its spatial area the State Park of Serra do Conduru, the APA of Lagoa Encantada and Rio Almada and the APA of Costa de Itacaré/Serra Grande, in addition, it is possible to find the Private Reserves of the Natural Heritage Salto Apepique, Boa União, Helico, Fazenda São João, Mãe da Mata and Fazenda Arte Verde.

The target audience of this study was, primarily, young people of both sexes, between 13 and 17 years of age, however, individuals below and above this age group were also allowed to participate in the study, when requested. The communities studied were those of Tibina, Retiro and Vila Cachoeira, both belonging to the municipality of Ilhéus – BA.

The data collection matrix was composed of open and closed questions. In this study, a record was made, aiming at the objective of this study.

Data collection was based on Resolution 466/2012. It took place in the communities of Retiro, Tibina and Vila Cachoeira from June 2021 to August 2022. Before its application, a previous visit was carried out in the localities to clarify the objectives of the research and the necessary authorizations.



Initially, the most appropriate time, condition and place were observed for the reading and clarification of the Free and Informed Consent to be carried out, always taking into account the peculiarities of the research participant and his/her privacy.

The ICF was read in its entirety and all complementary information was provided in clear and accessible language, using the strategies most appropriate to the culture and the reality studied. After the clarification and signing of the Terms of Consent and Assent, data collection began. For data processing and processing, *the IBM SPSS Statistics 22 software was used* . This research is approved by the CEP through the CAAE: 28074720.3.0000.5526.

7 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To date, 5 communities have been studied and 3 tabulated, the latter being described and discussed here. In these localities, 68 people were surveyed, with 66.2% (45 people) female and 33.8% (23) male.

As for age, 14 are between 10 and 12 years old, which is equivalent to 20.6% of the sample; 47 are between 13 and 17 years old, representing 69.1% of the total and 7 over 18 years of age, which is equivalent to 10.3%. In order to have the exact notion of the age distribution, below in table 1, the details of the research.

Table 1 – Detailed age distribution of the people surveyed in the 3 communities.

<i>Age</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>>18</i>
<i>Qtade</i>	4	2	8	9	11	9	10	8	4	3
<i>%</i>	5,9	2,9	11,8	13,2	16,2	13,2	14,7	11,8	5,9	4,4

Source: Research data

As you can see, almost 70% of the people interviewed are in their teens. Phase in which very important changes are happening in their lives, either in parental relationships or in their own lives, where decisions end up being made, towards adult life.

Oliveira (2018) highlights that adolescence is a complex phase of human development, where the search for the construction of an identity, for acceptance and appreciation in groups happens and a possible withdrawal from the family nucleus can occur.

It is at this stage that many conflicts can occur, causing their perception of things (which has already been influenced by the urban) to take directions that lead them to look beyond the limits of the community and family agricultural activity.

Understanding that the relationships established by young people and with them exert a strong influence on the way they perceive both the place in which they live, and their view of the outside, they were given the following proposition: "What do you think people think about who lives in the countryside?"



Based on the questioning described above, it was identified that 5.9% (4) believe that people think that it is a place full of bush and that it has nothing; 16.2% (11) think that those who live in the urban area perceive them as dumb people, who are incapable of anything, judging them as beasts of the woods. Already 8.8% (6) think that the residents of the rural area think that they are poor and miserable, only 2.9% (2) of them believe that they think they are people who have knowledge about the forest and about agriculture.

They think that the people who judge them, do not really know the field (26.5% - 18), hence they create a blurred and prejudiced vision, which often leads to those who live in the countryside, suffer mockery wherever they go (according to the comments of the interviewees themselves). A good part of them do not have an idea formed in relation to what was asked (30.9% - 21). Already 8.8% (6) believe that the external view is that there is a quiet and cool place to live.

When we group the perceptions that lead to assumptions of negative judgments, we have 60.3% of the total, that is, most young people have the perception that others do not have a good judgment in relation to the place where they live. In reports that are expressed throughout the data collection, it can be assumed (still without solid basis, because this was not the focus of the study) that many think this way because they experience *bullying* at school and where they live outside of there.

Only 8.8% believe that the perception of people living in the urban area is positive in relation to the rural. When performing a more detailed analysis of the answers, crossing them with age, there was no significant difference between the answers, that is, it was expected that the older ones would have a more accentuated negative perception, however there was no such relationship.

When asked to express their perception of the life they may have while remaining in the rural community, 47.1% (32) project a good life, 50% think their lives will be regular/median (34) and 2.9% (2) think it will be a bad life. The place where they live still provides them with security, tranquility and good social relations, even with the precariousness of health, leisure, etc.

The family agricultural activity is historically developed in the communities studied for many years, but over time it has been increasingly abandoned by its potential successors and runs the risk of suffering significant impacts, whether economic, social, cultural, historical, etc.

The rural exodus directly affects family farming, impacting the family, its structure and the local economy, and the rupture of the ties that have been established with its members may occur, and causing them to seek the urban area in search of better living conditions (SANTOS; SILVA; OLIVEIRA, 2009; CASAGRANDE; SOUZA, 2012; FONSECA, 2015). Abramovay et al. (1998) emphasize that the noises in the succession process within the countryside may compromise the future of rural communities and, consequently, of family farming.



Foguesatto et al. (2014) emphasize that the discontinuity of the succession process within Family Agriculture is worrisome, since it may compromise the maintenance of this valuable activity, with local and national economic, social and cultural significance

The succession process has been weakening and ceasing to be practiced by families and the rupture of this succession causes the older generations to stop transmitting their values, cultures, traditions and power to the younger ones (STROPASOLAS, 2006).

Thinking of unveiling the thinking of young people about this reality, they were asked about the knowledge of knowledge about Family Farming and its function, that is, what level of importance this activity has in their vision.

Of the total, 80.9% (55) of them consider it a very important work. Of this total, 23 attribute the valuable source of food and income to the family, so that there is no need to travel to the city to buy some products; 9 individuals do not know how to explain the reason for their answer and the remaining 23 mention that it is an activity that provides the reunion and union of the family, enabling personal learning. They consider 10.3% (7) to be unimportant, referring to a job that does not arouse their interest and that takes a long time of life; 1.5% (1) think that it is an unimportant field of activity, but do not express the reason for this perception; 7.4% (5) did not know how to give their opinion.

However, when they were consulted about their intention to work in this area or develop any type of professional activity related to Family Agriculture or agriculture in general, 7.4% (5) have not yet thought about the subject and have not formed an opinion; 13.2% (9) wish to work in agriculture and 79.4% (54) do not intend to pursue any profession or activity related to the rural.

In this debate may arise questions that populate the thoughts of those who live in the countryside that are related to the decision to "stay or leave?". Regarding this doubt, which permeates the thinking of young people, Lopes and Carvalho (2017 apud CASTRO, 2005) affirm that their migration can be a serious problem, however it can be valuable for family farming to receive the attention it deserves.

8 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Considering the importance that Family Farming has for those directly involved with it and also for the country, not only for its supply with agricultural products, but as an activity of significant cultural and historical relevance, it is unthinkable that our eyes as researchers, extensionists and citizens do not turn to this worrying reality.

It is perceived that young people establish a strong bond with the place and with the people they live with, however, this same bond is not reflected when it comes to family farming activity. As young people advance in their development, they are faced with the boundary between youth and adulthood. At this moment they need to decide which path they will follow for the maintenance of



adult life (in all aspects, including professional), arising there the questions and abstractions, causing their gaze to turn many times to the urban.

What is perceived in the communities studied - some followed over many years - is that most young people end up leaving their place of origin in search of better living conditions, however the lack of professional training/qualification and other factors, lead them to jobs that do not provide the minimum of dignity. About this relationship, Furlani and Bomfim (2013) highlight that large cities present themselves in a deceptive way, with their multiple countless stimuli, but that in fact they are only an individualistic expression of particular worlds. Faced with this, it is questioned whether the young people who arrive in search of this oasis will be able to have access to them. The answer seems very obvious: in the reality we know today, NO!

When they go out in search of this new life, they will be able to experience two situations: the first is to remain in the city, even in precarious and degrading conditions; the second is to return to the field. When this young man decides to return to his community, his bond with the place may be compromised and his relationship with agricultural activity even more.

These young people, already adults, will remain in the community until there is a possibility of leaving or selling the inherited land, causing the areas cultivated by Family Agriculture to become the target of real estate speculation and other investees, who most of the time have no interest or link with the agriculture in question, much less with the place.

Young people, by disengaging from this valuable and important activity, through no fault of their own, most of the time, leave behind the opportunity to build a dignified life with the potential to, at the very least, ensure personal and family food security.

This work concludes with the certainty that it is necessary that actions in all spheres are taken effectively. Within the academy, in research, teaching and extension with real focus and interest in Family Farming and not only for compliance with legal standards and requirements or for scientific production and even for personal promotion. In government agencies, be they municipal, state or federal, not only with the creation of laws, standards, etc., but with real investments and effective actions.

Unfortunately the impact of the precariousness or even the extinction of Family Farming as we know it, will only be realized on the day that people "discover" that what is under their tables comes from it.



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